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Interpretive injustice

The moral dimension of understanding

Abstract: This article explores the moral dimension of understanding, focusing on the concept of interpretive injustice. Drawing on work on epistemic injustice, it examines how language and interpretive practices reflect and perpetuate dominance and oppression. Two forms of interpretive injustice are defined: ignorance and misinterpretation. Ignorance arises from a lack of engagement with minority hermeneutical resources, while misinterpretation involves the misattribution of meanings by dominant groups. The article argues that interpretive injustice causes both epistemic and moral harm. It also challenges the emphasis on macro-level power dynamics, suggesting that interpretive injustice can also be done to members of dominant groups. Interpretive injustice need not be systematic to constitute a moral wrong. The refined definition of the notion recognises that interpretive injustice occurs when an utterance is interpreted using the hermeneutical resources of a different sociolinguistic group despite relevant differences between these resources.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, Epistemic injustice, Interpretive injustice, Virtuous hermeneutics, Hermeneutical injustice

Introduction

Every literate English-speaking person understands this sentence. It is such a simple task that a child can do it. However, if this seemingly unproblematic practice is thoroughly examined, it turns out that it raises, among others, moral questions.

Meaning is a product of social interaction. It is a matter of certain social institutions, and its defining inferences are at least implicit in a language game. The foundation of the language game is a public practice. Public interactions of agents are saturated with power relations; language and interpretation make no exceptions. There is a working of power in interpretive practices. Discourse is intertwined with relations of dominance and oppression and can be unjust and harmful.

In this article, I discuss the moral dimension of understanding. I draw on works by Fricker, Medina, Pohlhaus, and others on epistemic

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injustice, especially *hermeneutical injustice*, and apply them to interpretation. I am more concerned with hermeneutics as an art of understanding and not so much with the transfer of knowledge, so I make a particular shift in perspective. I focus on injustice that may occur even in cases where there is no intended or unintended transfer of knowledge, for example, when the speaker asks a question or lies. To avoid confusion and obscuring the difference, I use the term *interpretive injustice*. However, I believe that it can be conceived as a hermeneutical injustice in a broad sense of the term.

The article is structured as follows.

In the first section of the article, I explore the concept of hermeneutical injustice, a type of epistemic injustice that involves the marginalization of social experiences due to a lack of appropriate linguistic or conceptual resources. Initially focusing on Fricker's insights, I delve into the expanded framework that includes hermeneutical domination, hermeneutical ignorance, and the structural factors contributing to this form of injustice. I will examine how hermeneutical injustice operates across various domains. My exploration emphasizes the practical and experiential consequences of hermeneutical injustice. I discuss how the denial of epistemic trust leads to a lack of self-trust, affecting autonomy and self-worth. Beyond its epistemic ramifications, I argue that hermeneutical injustice is fundamentally a moral transgression, disrupting the core of individuals' identities. Drawing a connection to Young's conceptualization of oppression, I explore how hermeneutical injustice parallels the dynamics of oppression by curtailing one's capacities and embodying forms of cultural imperialism and marginalization.

In the second section, I aim to expand the considerations to the field of hermeneutics. My investigation begins with an examination of interpretation within the dominant framework. While maintaining the perspective of the wronged party, I wish to highlight an additional dimension, not extensively explored by Fricker or others, called interpretive injustice. I preliminarily define the notion and consider two types of it: ignorance and misinterpretation. Ignorance occurs when the dominant group lacks hermeneutical resources, either unconsciously or deliberately disregarding those of the minority. It manifests as an inability to comprehend the inferences and implications of concepts used by the minority, rendering them void for the interpreter. On the other hand, misinterpretation occurs when the concepts are present in the dominant group's sources but carry different content and connotations. This leads to the attribution of meanings not intended by the speaker, causing frustration, and undermining the speaker's subjectivity and recognition within the community. The resultant harm mirrors that of hermeneutical injustice, encompassing both epistemic and moral dimensions.

Later, I explore the aspects of interpretive injustice, challenging the focus on domination in the context of oppression. Contrary to the prevailing literature, I argue that both epistemic and moral harm can occur even among members of a dominant group. By expanding and generalizing the concept of interpretive injustice, my aim is to apply it to general hermeneutics, not solely within linguistic interactions involving dominant and marginalized groups. I posit that employing one's inferential background, diverging from the speaker's, is epistemically non-virtuous, hindering knowledge acquisition and harming the speaker, regardless of her group affiliation. I emphasize that interpretive injustice need not be systematic to constitute a moral wrong, urging attention to micro-level power dynamics. The refined definition of the notion acknowledges that interpretive injustice occurs when an utterance is interpreted using hermeneutical resources from a different socio-linguistic group, despite relevant differences between these resources.

1. Hermeneutical injustice

1. 1. Description and scope

As Fricker pointed out, there are different kinds of epistemic injustices (Fricker 2007, 6). Among these, the hermeneutical injustice stands out. It is the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding because of hermeneutical marginalisation (Fricker 2007, 158). The marginalised group cannot express their experience due to a deficit in hermeneutical (linguistic) resources. They simply lack concepts. For instance, Fricker highlights how women faced difficulties expressing specific unpleasant experiences before the concept of *sexual harassment* was established. According to her, hermeneutical injustice prevents social understanding and deprives the subject of self-understanding (Fricker 2007, 149).

Other scholars have built upon Fricker's framework and extended it because it was considered too limited (Dotson 2012, 25). One significant extension is the exploration of hermeneutical domination. In this context, the dominant group imposes a supposedly collective understanding on everyone (Catala 2015, 428). The failure of dominant knowers to learn and incorporate marginalised epistemic resources has also been scrutinised (Posey 2021, 46). This investigation seeks to understand how dominant groups neglect or dismiss valuable insights from marginalised communities. Scholars have questioned whether hermeneutical marginalisation is a consequence of injustice rather than its cause, diverging from Fricker's account (Catala 2015, 429). Epistemic exclusion has also become a focal point of research (for example, Petherbridge 2023, 41), defined by Dotson

(2012, 24) as an infringement on the epistemic agency of knower that reduces her ability to participate in the epistemic community. The link between hermeneutical injustice and the theory of recognition has also been explored, especially the relation between epistemic injustice and withholding mutual recognition of the subjects.¹ Hermeneutical injustice is viewed not merely as an isolated occurrence but as connected to broader dynamics of power and privilege in society.

In addition to hermeneutical lacunas, scholars have examined other situations. One such scenario involves the deliberate exclusion of the progressive vocabulary used by a subaltern group from broader collective epistemic schemes (Giladi 2023, 138). This form of exclusion can be termed hermeneutical ignorance (Medina 2017, 43), suggesting a wilful or active disregard for the linguistic and conceptual contributions of marginalised communities (Pohlhaus 2012, 729; Medina 2013, 39; Posey 2021). In the words of May (2014), this practice creates a situation where the minority, or subaltern group, essentially speaks into a void. Their expressions, experiences, and language are sidelined or dismissed, leading to a significant gap in understanding and social recognition. This aspect highlights the importance of acknowledging not only the absence of certain concepts but also their exclusion.

Hermeneutical injustice is often attributed to structural factors (Fricker 2017, 54), as public practice and institutions can systematically disregard and invalidate the epistemic labour of certain groups and cultivate ignorance around them (Sertler 2023, 173). The roots of hermeneutical injustice are intertwined with and reinforced by relations of dominance and oppression (Pohlhaus 2017, p. 16). This form of injustice is seen as a manifestation of power and privilege, perpetuating social inequalities (Tuana 2017, 126).

The practical implications of hermeneutical injustice extend across various fields. For example, individuals dealing with illness often experience hermeneutical marginalisation (Fricker 2017, 58). Health providers, acting as authorities in their field, may unintentionally cause epistemic injustice (Steward and Freeman 2023, 304). This can occur when their perspectives and interpretations overshadow or dismiss the experiences of patients. Hermeneutical resources, including the knowledge and perspectives of indigenous communities, are frequently marginalised (Petherbridge 2023, 48). The experiences of asylum seekers are often inadequately understood (Sertler 2023, 174). This lack of accurate understanding can have significant consequences for the rights and well-being of these individuals. Hermeneutical injustice can also manifest within family settings. Specific experiences, such as marital rape, may be subject to hermeneutical injustice before the recognition and acknowledgement of such issues in broader discourse (Sullivan 2017, 206). Parents and teachers, too, can reproduce

ignorance and contribute to the perpetuation of injustice within educational settings (Medina 2013, 146). Even within the academic discipline of philosophy, there may be contributions to epistemic injustice (Pohlhaus 2017, 14). This could involve the neglect or marginalisation of specific philosophical perspectives, particularly those arising from individuals or groups traditionally underrepresented in the field. Experts may contribute to this injustice by ignoring or blocking inquiries into marginalised experiences.

Note also that some struggles and forms of injustice remain publicly invisible, yet they persist (Honneth 2003, 120). Generally, the oppression and following injustice may be based on (perceived) race, sex, gender, origin, class, age and others.

Hermeneutical injustice aligns with Young's conceptualisation of oppression, manifesting in two distinct dimensions (Young 2011, 40ff). In its most general sense, oppression curtails individuals' capacity to develop and exercise their inherent capabilities while stifling the expression of their needs, thoughts, and feelings. This parallels the dynamics of hermeneutical injustice, where those affected find themselves impeded from articulating their worldview, expelling them from useful participation in social life. Secondly, hermeneutical injustice embodies a form of cultural imperialism. The dominant meanings embedded in mainstream discourse act as agents of exclusion, rendering the perspectives of marginalised individuals invisible (Young 2011, 59). Their worldviews are overshadowed and, in effect, suppressed by the prevailing cultural norms. This dual impact underscores the nature of hermeneutical injustice within the broader context of oppression.

1. 2. Moral and epistemic harm

The ramifications of epistemic injustice, including its hermeneutical variant, extend beyond theoretical concerns to impact on individuals at a practical and experiential level. While epistemic injustice can lead to legal, economic, or political injustice (Nielsen and Utsler 2023, 75), my primary focus is on the harm it inflicts at an epistemic and moral level.

Epistemic injustice has bad consequences for the self and others, but mainly, it is characterised by its intrinsically undignifying nature (Congdon 2017, 243). It is important to stress that “injustice” in theoretical language is experienced as social injury by the affected (Honneth 2003, 114). This emphasises that the harm is not merely an abstract or conceptual concern but is rooted in the lived experiences of those who encounter obstacles to their recognition and understanding. The core of the problem is not theoretical but primarily practical.

The epistemic transgression encompasses, among other things, the omission of novel knowledge. The knower's vantage point significantly shapes both the content and the manner in which knowledge is acquired (Tuana 2017, 126). Those belonging to marginalised groups often possess unique insights or perspectives distinct from the dominant group. Failing to recognise and incorporate these perspectives creates a hermeneutical gap, limiting the potential breadth of knowledge accessible to society.

The individual subjected to epistemic injustice suffers, as a knower, harm in their rational capacity—an essential facet of human value (Fricker 2007, 45). This harm manifests in the form of silencing, misunderstanding, or marginalisation (Medina, 2017, 43). Individuals from marginalised groups are frequently treated as lesser beings (Fricker 2007, 136) and unfairly characterised as intellectually inferior (Medina 2013, 27). Such depictions not only perpetuate prejudice but also lead marginalised individuals to internalise negative attributes wrongly ascribed to them, fostering a negative impact on their self-perception and self-trust (Honneth 2023, 19). This erosion of confidence in one's own cognitive abilities represents a diminution of the individual's autonomy and self-worth.

Hermeneutical injustice transcends mere epistemic ramifications; it is fundamentally a moral transgression. Its impact reverberates through the core of individual's identities, disrupting the very constitution of subjectivity. Engulfed in this injustice, individuals grapple for recognition, striving to assert their existence in the socio-epistemic landscape.²

Hermeneutical injustice is harm done to the flourishing of the human organism (Sullivan 2017, 205). The moral gravity of this injustice is compounded by its involvement in a form of epistemic misrecognition, perpetuating wrongful assessments of individual's knowledge and experiences (Mikkola, 2023, 199). Furthermore, it represents a rejection of the status of full partnership in social interactions (Fraser 2003, 29). The refusal to accord recognition becomes an act of disrespect that inflicts harm (Honneth 1995, 131). This denial diminishes individuals' agency, impeding their ability to fully participate in and contribute to the collective construction of meaning within society. In extreme instances, hermeneutical injustice can lead to what is termed “hermeneutical death” (Medina 2017, 41).

2. Interpretive injustice

Fricker and other scholars associate hermeneutical injustice with the experiences of marginalised groups. In public spaces, these groups encounter oppression manifested through acts such as being overlooked, denied space, or having their voices dismissed. They frequently lack access to key institutions where shared meanings are constructed, ranging from

academic and media realms to political arenas. Marginalised individuals are often unjustly perceived as intellectually inferior, stripped of authority, and deemed less credible based on characteristics like background, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, or health.

Hermeneutical injustice, at its core, inflicts both epistemic and moral harm. The harm is evident on both ends of the relationship—the speaker and the listener. For the listener, the loss of knowledge is apparent, as they miss out on understanding the lived experiences of a significant segment of society, hindering their ability to collaborate effectively. The more impactful consequences are borne by the oppressed, and they create a basis of investigation for contemporary literature (Medina 2013, 3). Hermeneutical injustice engenders a stifling silence, impeding the expression and comprehension of their experiences. This forces the marginalised to expend significantly more energy and resources merely to articulate their thoughts (Posey 2021, 2). The disproportionate epistemic burden is akin to deprivation of resources, a scenario where one is unable to communicate crucial aspects of their existence. This limitation extends to self-awareness, creating a situation where doubt creeps in about one's cognitive abilities, eroding the fundamental aspects of human capacity. This self-doubt is exacerbated when others dismiss one's perspectives, diminishing one's subjectivity and relegating them to the status of a less rational or complete person. Exclusion from the broader social practices of meaning-making and sharing denies them the ability to contribute their experiences to shared resources, rendering those experiences non-existent for the dominant group. In essence, they are stripped of the agency and capabilities afforded to full subjects within the community.

2. 1. Distinction and extension

Fricker's focus is on the subject's inability to articulate their experience due to a deficiency in hermeneutical resources. Put simply; the person lacks access to appropriate words because her situation lacks significance to the dominant group, which controls the discourse. There exists a linguistic void, such as the absence of a concept like *sexual harassment*. However, I want to examine different situations. Consider a scenario in which there is no hermeneutical lacuna: the speaker has an appropriate concept that is available in the language of a particular group. In this case, the members of the group have modified a word that already exists in the language, introducing semantic changes by adding or removing certain inferences. This is not unimaginable; take, for example, the concept of *demagogue*, originally devoid of negative connotations.

When the speaker articulates a sentence incorporating a reformed concept, her intention is to convey content including novel inferences.

However, these new inferences, and consequently the content of the concept, may not be universally accepted by all language users. If the interpreter is not from the same group and applies her own background inferences, she fails to grasp the intended content. In this situation, it is not a deficiency in resources on the part of the speaker but a distortion on the part of the interpreter. The listener misses an opportunity to gain new information and understand the true nature of things.

A parallel situation arises when members of a particular group introduce a new concept. Consider, for example, the term *sexual harassment* coined by feminist groups. In the not-too-distant past, if the interpreter was a member of the dominant group, perhaps a man, and applied his own background inferences (or lack of them), he would fail to grasp the intended content.

In the scenario of inducing a semantic change, initial misunderstandings may occur, which could be viewed as interesting phenomena rather than a problem causing harm. However, consider a situation where one group holds dominance in a society and opposes the linguistic change of shared resources. This dominant group refuses to accept the reformed meaning in general public discourse, using its power to prevent members of the minority group from expressing their experiences. This can be described as wilful hermeneutical ignorance (Pohlhaus 2012, 715). In this context, an alternative schematisation is available but is deliberately ignored by the dominant group. Simultaneously, through this practice, the dominant group ensures the preservation of its position of power. The minority is unilaterally reinterpreted and incorporated into the "correct" framework, with its life experiences acknowledged only at the margins of society as something odd. This situation may be a correlate of hermeneutical dominance (Catala 2015, 425) or epistemic exclusion (Dotson 2012, 24).

In what follows, let us consider a more straightforward situation where we are not dealing with a nascent concept. The inferences of the concept are presumed to be already fixed within a particular (marginalised) discourse.

For instance, consider a society where a dominant group shaping the mainstream discourse is inherently rational and atheistic. In this context, imagine a member of a religious subgroup discussing concepts like grace and virtue in an attempt to convey understanding and encourage conversion. The majority, interpreting within their dominant framework devoid of religious inferences, might fail to grasp the inferences related to tranquillity, God, and their consequences from the speaker's perspective. As a result, the intended information would not be effectively communicated. If someone from the majority attempted to summarise the speech, even with good intentions, the content would likely be significantly altered. It

becomes challenging to provide an accurate account of religious discourse in purely secular terms. This alteration of the original message could lead to frustration for the speaker, who may feel unrecognised and unaccepted within the community, potentially fostering group hostility.

The instances of interpretive injustice described involve an epistemic harm akin to that of epistemic injustices. In the last scenario, the interpreter misses out on new information, irrespective of its truth value. The crucial point is that the assessment of the veracity of the information can only occur after the utterance is understood. Even if a statement is false, it still conveys information, and the interpreter cannot dismiss it without due consideration.

Moreover, the situation encompasses a moral wrong. The marginalised utterer is effectively prevented from effectively communicating her experience or beliefs. She is excluded from the essential practices of meaning-making and meaning-sharing. This exclusion leads to the perception of the speaker as less rational, as the interpreter applies her own inferences that she deems more sensible. This denial of alternative perspectives constitutes a moral wrong against the speaker, impeding her from being a fully participating member of the human cooperative community. The failure to appreciate her point of view during deliberation can result in psychological harm and undermine her recognition within the community. This diminishing of subjectivity and the treatment of the utterer as an object are morally objectionable and constitute an injustice.

2. 2. Preliminary definition and forms

A preliminary definition of interpretive injustice, based on the above considerations and examples, can be articulated as follows: It occurs when the expression of an individual from a marginalised group is interpreted using dominant hermeneutical resources, even in the presence of significant differences between the resources of the dominant and marginalised groups.

This conceptualisation implies at least two distinct types of interpretive injustice: ignorance and misinterpretation.

Ignorance refers to scenarios where the hermeneutical resources of the dominant group have deficiencies. Conversely, within the discourse of marginalised groups, resources are available but are disregarded. Ignorance can manifest unconsciously, stemming from inherent blindness, and may even be institutionally protected. Alternatively, it can be a deliberate choice to overlook and consciously remain unaware of the hermeneutical resources of the minority (cf. Pohlhaus 2012, 729). In interpretation, it manifests itself as ignorance of all the inferences and implications of the used notion. It renders the concept void and nonsensical for the interpreter.

Misinterpretation differs from ignorance in that, even within the hermeneutical sources of the dominant group, the concepts are present. However, these concepts carry different content, inferential connections, and connotations. In the case of this form of interpretive injustice, the application of majority resources to a speech from the minority results in the interpreter attributing meanings or commitments that do not align with the speaker's inferential framework. Notably, the speaker did not intend to convey the interpretations ascribed to her. When this practice becomes systematic, speakers experience frustration, as the interpreters consistently attribute meanings that the speaker does not desire. Moreover, it remains unclear to the speakers where these interpretations originate, as they do not align with their inferential framework or hermeneutical resources.

Misinterpretation also carries an element of arrogance, as it involves a claim to comprehend another's experience and its articulation better than the individual who underwent it. This not only diminishes the speaker's capacities but also degrades her, portraying her as less rational and resourceful. The consequences and harms of such practice were explained earlier, highlighting the impact on the speaker's subjectivity, knowledge transmission, and overall recognition within the community.

In instances of interpretive injustice, the harm mirrors that of hermeneutical injustice, encompassing both epistemic and moral dimensions. Once again, there is a loss of knowledge concerning others and how things are, constraining the expansion of cognitive horizons. The epistemic friction crucial for knowledge enrichment is nullified. On a moral plane, interpretive injustice reflects an imperfect recognition of the other. Similar to testimonial or hermeneutical injustice, the speaker is harmed in her capacity as a knower and full member of a meaning-sharing community. It is an instance of cultural imperialism, unjust hermeneutical domination, and disrespect.

2. 3. Second extension and its consequences

Until now, I have linked interpretive injustice with the context of oppression and marginalisation. However, it is essential to investigate if members of marginalised groups can also misinterpret or ignore individuals in dominant positions. The question now revolves around whether the utilisation of one's inferential background, when not shared with the speaker, constitutes epistemic and moral harm even when directed toward a member of a dominant group.

Contrary to the prevailing emphasis in contemporary literature on power dynamics and domination, I posit that moral harm can manifest even in members of a dominant group. This challenges the presupposition that harm is tied to situations involving hermeneutical marginalisation. I argue

that while situations involving hermeneutical marginalisation are indeed the most harmful and problematic, they are not the sole instances. Building on Dotson's (2014, 116) insight that epistemic injustices and oppressions are not solely reducible to social and political factors, my aim is to expand and generalise the account of interpretive injustice. This broader perspective allows for the application of interpretive injustice to general hermeneutics, encompassing every act of understanding. For the time being, I abstract from political factors, which I take to be a frequent reason for injustice but not an essential feature of the concept of interpretive injustice itself.

Employing one's inferential background when it diverges from speaker's is generally non-virtuous. When the interpreter applies her own background and misinterprets the utterance, she risks overlooking new knowledge, thereby impeding the flow of information in society and undermining cooperation. At an individual level, this practice harms the speaker in her capacity as a knower, mirroring the consequences of epistemic injustice discussed earlier. Importantly, these consequences remain regardless of whether the interpreter is from a marginalised or dominant group, as both scenarios result in a loss of knowledge and injury to the speaker.

In the scenario where the utterer holds a dominant position and the interpreter is marginalised, moral harm is also inflicted. The utterer is hindered from effectively communicating their experience or knowledge. At that moment, the speaker is perceived as less rational by the interpreter, who applies her own inferences that she deems more sensible. This constitutes a momentary denial of full participation in the cooperative community—a one-time refusal of reciprocal recognition of the other. Communicative, including interpretive, relations established in epistemic interaction must be reciprocal to be just and morally sound (Medina 2013, 93). It is inconsistent to demand recognition of subjectivity and knowledge from a member of the dominant group while simultaneously denying her the same recognition. Such a situation represents a form of distorted recognition and is arrogant.

Interpretive injustice does not need to be systematic or enduring to constitute a moral wrong. Even a single act of (mis)interpretation can be considered harmful. Moral wrongs, in general, do not necessarily require a systematic pattern. Just as a single instance of physical assault is morally wrong and inflicts physical and moral harm on the victim, a singular act of interpretive injustice is morally problematic.

It appears that the emphasis on power relations and the exclusive focus on marginalised groups may not be warranted for the broader concept of interpretive injustice. Instead, what remains essential is the disparity in hermeneutical resources between groups, stemming from their distinct social positions that influence the knowledge of their members.

This recognition implies the existence of a variety of alternative hermeneutical resources, which do, in fact, exist (Dotson 2012, 31). When employed in the interpretation of others, these resources have the potential to result in epistemic and moral harm, thereby constituting interpretive injustice.

The general reflections and loss of political dimension and marginalisation have to be reflected in the definition of interpretive injustice. A refined definition can be formulated as follows: Interpretive injustice transpires when the utterance of someone from one sociolinguistic group is interpreted using hermeneutical resources of different sociolinguistic group, despite the existence of relevant differences between these resources.

Conclusion

In this article, I have first dealt with hermeneutical injustice, exploring its various aspects and extended scope, including hermeneutic domination and ignorance. In considering its practical implications, I have highlighted the damage it does to marginalised communities, for example in health care and education. I emphasised its impact on self-confidence, autonomy and self-worth. I argued that hermeneutic injustice is a moral transgression that disrupts the core capacities and subjectivity of the individual.

Later, I turned to hermeneutics. I focused on situations where the lack of hermeneutical resources within the dominant discourse results from a failure to engage with existing relevant resources. The investigation started by examining interpretation within the dominant framework and introduced a concept of interpretive injustice. I identified two types of interpretive injustice: ignorance and misinterpretation. Ignorance occurs when the dominant group lacks hermeneutical resources, while misinterpretation occurs when concepts of the dominant group have different meanings to those of the minority. Both result in epistemic and moral harm.

I then shifted my focus beyond macro-level power dynamics, arguing that both epistemic and moral harm can occur even to members of dominant groups. I broadened the concept of interpretive injustice, extending its applicability to general hermeneutics, not limited to interactions between dominant and marginalised groups. By highlighting the negative effects of using an interpreter's own inferential background, I argued that such practices hinder knowledge acquisition and harm speakers regardless of their group affiliation. Furthermore, I claimed that interpretive injustice need not be systematic to constitute moral wrong and called for attention to micro-level dynamics. According to the refined definition, interpretive injustice transpires when the utterance of someone from one

sociolinguistic group is interpreted using hermeneutical resources of different sociolinguistic group, despite the existence of relevant differences between these resources.

Merely acknowledging the existence of interpretive injustice does not change anything. Injustices, by their very nature, demand rectification. Various scholars have proposed distinct approaches to address similar issues of epistemic injustice. Fricker advocates for rectifying testimonial and hermeneutical injustice through testimonial (2007, 86ff) and hermeneutical virtue (2007, 169ff). Medina (2017, 49) proposes disobedience and insurrection as means of rectification, while Dotson (2012, 34) emphasises the need for individuals to be aware of different hermeneutical resources to navigate them appropriately. Catala (2015, 432) suggests that expertise-based epistemic trust can undo testimonial injustice and, consequently, hermeneutical domination.

Given the specificity of interpretive injustice, I believe that we should generally interpret in a way that not only facilitates the acquisition of knowledge from the perspective of the interpreter, but also prevents harm to the utterer. This approach might be called *virtuous hermeneutics*. It should mitigate the effects of social prejudice against marginalised groups and contribute to the inclusion of their perspectives in societal deliberations. By recognising the social dimension of hermeneutics, a virtuous approach can contribute to the creation of a more just society that recognises everyone equally as a subject. To facilitate the goal of just and virtuous interpretation, intervention at the individual level is necessary. Given the structural dimension of injustice, this may not be enough; there must also be social resistance to injustice

Notes

¹ For a representative sample of contributions in this direction, see Giladi and McMillan 2023.

² For an exhaustive treatment of the struggle for recognition and its individual and social aspects, see Honneth 1995.

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