Chapter 4

Epistemic Discrimination

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Word count:

Abstract: This chapter provides a critical overview of issues relating to epistemic discrimination. It begins by introducing the reader to the most prominent account of epistemic discrimination: Miranda Fricker's (2007) discussion of epistemic injustice. Two limitations of Fricker's position are highlighted: (i) it underestimates the understanding possessed by victims of epistemic discrimination; (ii) it underplays the damage done to the epistemic character of members of dominant groups. Other accounts of epistemic discrimination that avoid these shortcomings—Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* and Charles Mills' discussion of white ignorance—are then introduced. Next, there is an examination of two specific mechanisms through which epistemic discrimination can manifest: silencing and implicit bias. It is shown how the two can interact. Finally, measures that can be used to reduce epistemic discrimination are discussed, with special emphasis on the benefits of being informed by the aforementioned understanding of victims of epistemic discrimination.

Introduction

Epistemic discrimination is prejudice, bias and discriminatory action suffered by individuals in their position as epistemic agents, that is, as individuals who can acquire knowledge, justified belief or understanding. Epistemic discrimination can be intentional or unintentional. It can be the result of the actions of an individual or deep structural inequalities in society, or a combination of the two. When epistemic

discrimination against someone occurs, a person unduly denied access to the resources and opportunities that they would need to be successful givers and recipients of epistemic goods like knowledge. They are often denied these resources and opportunities, as a result of their social group membership. Members of stigmatized and marginalized groups are especially vulnerable to epistemic discrimination because of the stereotypes that others apply to them and their exclusion from positions of power in which they could facilitate an improvement to their epistemic situation. Epistemic discrimination can be both an epistemic and an ethical harm because people suffer significantly from being denied the status of knower.

Fricker's Epistemic Injustice

To get a general handle on the phenomenon of epistemic discrimination, let us begin by considering a subset of cases of epistemic discrimination that have been widely discussed in the recent literature in philosophy and beyond: the cases of epistemic injustice identified in Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power & the Ethics of Knowing*. Instances of epistemic injustice involve epistemic discrimination because when they happen people are treated unfairly in "in their capacity as a subject of knowledge, and thus in a capacity essential to human value." (2007: 5) Fricker identifies two types of epistemic injustice: *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice*.

Testimonial injustice

The first form of epistemic injustice, testimonial injustice, directly relates to the phenomenon of speakers providing testimony; aiming to bring hearers to understand something, by saying, telling, or asserting something, via speech, writing or other

means of communication. When a speaker provides testimony, an assessment is made about their credibility as a testifier. Things can go wrong in the process of assessing an individual's credibility: there can be *credibility excess*, the speaker can be given more credibility than they deserve, or *credibility deficit*, the speaker can be given less credibility than they deserve (Fricker 2007: 17). Fricker identifies cases of testimonial injustice with cases in which people suffer a credibility deficit. In her view, testimonial injustice occurs "if prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given." (ibid.: 4) What is the explanation of this credibility deficit? The application of a stereotype or stereotypes relating to the social identity of the speaker distorts the perception of the credibility of the speaker.

The example of Marge Greenleaf from Anthony Minghella's film *The Talented Mr Ripley* is used by Fricker to illustrate testimonial injustice. When her fiancé Dickie goes missing, Marge attempts to persuade his father that Tom Ripley is responsible for his disappearance. She has some strong evidence to support her claim but it is dismissed on the basis that it is mere women's intuition: "Marge, there's female intuition, and then there are facts." (Minghella cited by Fricker 2007: 9) Marge's testimony is dismissed on the basis of a stereotype about her gender: females are not driven by facts and are instead dependent on intuition. As a result of the application of the stereotype, Dickie's father has a distorted perception of the credibility of her testimony, failing to give her testimony the credibility that it deserves, so she suffers a credibility deficit.

The *Talented Mr Ripley* example can also be taken to support a point made by Jose Medina (2011, 2013): that credibility excesses can cause testimonial injustice. Medina claims that assessments of credibility are often comparative and contrastive by their nature. Where some people are given more credibility than they deserve, others are consequently given less. This can be seen happening in the *Talented Mr Ripley* case. Tom Ripley is trusted when he should not be. Marge's testimony is compared to his and unduly found to be unreliable. Because of the credibility excess given to Tom Ripley, Marge suffers from a credibility deficit.

Although instances of epistemic injustice are only a subset of the cases of epistemic discrimination, all instances of testimonial injustice are cases of epistemic discrimination. People who are subject to epistemic injustice are unduly treated as if they do not have the capacities for knowledge, understanding and insight. People who are treated in this way can consequently be excluded from discourses that would enable them to acquire more knowledge and understanding. They are therefore unduly denied the resources and opportunities that they would need to be successful givers and recipients of epistemic goods like knowledge.

For Fricker, epistemic injustice is an epistemic vice that can be rectified by developing the epistemic virtue of *testimonial justice* (Fricker 2007: chapter 4). The virtue of epistemic justice involves critical awareness of the distorting influence of identity prejudice on one's perceptions of the credibility of hearers. It involves recognizing that an imbalanced power relation between a speaker and a hearer, which is determined by their relative social identities, can lead to a distorted perception of who can be a possessor of knowledge, and of who can learn from whom. For

example, it can involve recognizing that where a man has more power than a woman, the credibility of a woman can be perceived in a distorted way: she can become treated as someone who is unable to provide the man with knowledge. Simple critical awareness does not suffice for testimonial justice, however: the hearer must correct for the influence of identity, factoring in how their perceptions are likely to have been distorted by the application of identity stereotypes and increasing the credibility given to testimony of those whom one is likely to have judged too critically.

Fricker's discussion provides an important contribution to our understanding of how epistemic discrimination can occur as a result of stereotyping. It should not be assumed, however, that epistemic discrimination only occurs when someone has a *false belief* about the credibility of members of a particular social group.[1] Epistemic discrimination can occur as a result of a true belief about the credibility of members of a social group. For example, young children might be correctly viewed as statistically less likely to be reliable sources of information than adults. Nonetheless, a specific young child, Ben, might rightly claim to be treated unfairly, and wronged in his role as an epistemic agent, if he gives testimony that contradicts that given by an adult and his testimony is not taken seriously. To see why this is a case of epistemic discrimination, compare it to a case in which Ben's testimony is not taken seriously because he is known to be a liar. In the latter case, Ben's testimony is not taken to be credible because of a true belief about his epistemic character, so it does not wrong him as an epistemic agent. The judgment that Ben is unreliable reflects that someone has made an effort to take him seriously enough as an epistemic agent to consider what sort of agent he is. In contrast, in a case in which Ben's testimony is not taken seriously simply because he is a child, he suffers discrimination because he is denied

the status of knower without this being a reflection on his previous epistemic performance. Although the judgment that he is unreliable reflects the statistical reality that adults are generally more reliable testifiers than children, Ben could still claim to be a victim of epistemic discrimination (cp. chapter 3).

Hermeneutical Injustice

The second form of epistemic injustice identified by Fricker is *hermeneutical injustice* (2007: chapter 7). Hermeneutical injustice occurs when the powerful within society have access to the hermeneutical resources required to understand their own experiences but the powerless lack these resources, due to structural inequalities in society. As a result of the lack of hermeneutical resources, those who lack power are unable to gain self-understanding because they do not have access to the conceptual resources that would enable them to understand their own experiences, they are unable to articulate their situation to others, and can be rendered troubled, confused and isolated.[2] For example, women occupy a position of powerlessness relative to men. One consequence is that concepts like *post-natal depression* and *sexual harassment* did not enter common understanding until recently. Fricker claims that individuals suffering from post-natal depression or undergoing sexual harassment were consequently previously unable to develop a proper understanding of their negative experiences, or to articulate this understanding to others. The lack of conceptual resources was due to the way that those in power constructed social understanding. Powerful men could, for instance, control how sexual harassment was interpreted by labeling it *flirting* and saying that those who complained lacked a sense of humor. Hermeneutical injustice is discriminatory because while a whole society might lack the hermeneutical resources to understand a phenomenon like *sexual*

harassment, only the powerless victims suffer a systematic deficiency in their ability to understand their own experiences. This deficiency can lead to downstream disadvantages to the powerless, as they can lose confidence in their self-awareness and ability to articulate their experience. Others who lack the hermeneutical resources, such as a harasser in a sexual harassment case, do not suffer the same costs.

Fricker proposes that hermeneutical injustice can be corrected via the virtue of *hermeneutical justice*. Hermeneutical justice is structurally very similar to testimonial justice; they both involve reflexive awareness that leads to a correction of one's credibility judgments. When assessing the credibility of the testimony provided by members of social groups who may be marginalized due to their social identity, hermeneutical justice requires considering what an individual's testimony would be like if they possessed rather than lacked the hermeneutical resources to understand and articulate their experiences.

Limitations of Fricker on Hermeneutical Injustice

While Fricker's discussion of hermeneutical injustice provides important insights about how people can undergo epistemic discrimination, it can be criticized on the basis that it misrepresents both the epistemic harms caused to members of the non-dominant group and the epistemic damage done to members of the dominant group.

Rebecca Mason (2011) argues that non-dominant groups can develop non-dominant hermeneutical resources through which they can understand their own experiences, even while others, including those who are a part of the dominant group, cannot understand them. She provides an alternative interpretation of the case of sexual

harassment to illustrate her point. She claims that prior to the introduction of the term *sexual harassment* women understood their experiences of harassment and were able to discuss it among themselves. The lack of hermeneutical resources among the dominant group only prevented members of the non-dominant group from articulating their experiences to members of the dominant group. Misunderstanding of sexual harassment was not collective but instead restricted to those in the dominant group. The hermeneutical injustice suffered by the non-dominant group was therefore more circumscribed than Fricker suggests although still serious and damaging.

Meanwhile, Medina (2013) argues that Fricker underplays the damage caused to the epistemic character of members of the dominant group. He claims that hermeneutical injustice can lead members of the dominant group to develop poor epistemic character traits. They display *meta-ignorance*: ignorance about the insensitivity that they display to members of the non-dominant group due to the lack of hermeneutical resources. This meta-ignorance manifests epistemic vices such as arrogance, laziness and closed-mindedness. They therefore develop poor character traits in relation to their lack of hermeneutical resources.

These criticisms of the details of Fricker's account of hermeneutical injustice highlight a danger that can arise in discussions of epistemic discrimination. In cases of epistemic discrimination, the victims of the discrimination are harmed in their position as epistemic agents, but it would be wrong to assume that this always means that they lack understanding in contrast to others. As Mason (2011) argues, members of non-dominant groups can persevere and develop their own unique set of conceptual resources through which to understand their experiences. Meanwhile, as Medina

argues, members of dominant groups can display systematic ignorance. There can be circumstances, then, when people who suffer epistemic discrimination can have an understanding that members of dominant groups lack, even due to the epistemic discrimination perpetrated against them.

Other forms of epistemic injustice

While Fricker focuses solely on testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, it is worth noting that there are other forms that epistemic injustice could take. For instance, Christopher Hookway (2010) emphasizes how a person can be wronged in her position as knower because she is taken to not be able to provide a contribution to a debate or discussion. She might be viewed as a credible recipient and source of information, but not as someone who can ask insightful questions that could progress debate and discussion. There are potentially numerous other forms that epistemic injustice can take.

In sum, then, the most prominent recent discussion of epistemic discrimination focuses on two forms that it can take, both of which are described as cases of *epistemic injustice*: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Epistemic injustices count as instances of epistemic discrimination because they are cases in which people are unduly denied access to the resources and opportunities that they would need to be successful givers and recipients of epistemic goods like knowledge. It is important to note, however, that Fricker's discussion, in particular the discussion of hermeneutical injustice, can be viewed as over-estimating the lack of understanding of members of the non-dominant group while underplaying the epistemic deficiencies of the dominant group.

Epistemic Discrimination and Black Feminist Thought

In contrast to Fricker's work on hermeneutical injustice, Patricia Hill Collins' work identifies ways that people who suffer epistemic discrimination can gain understanding, particularly about injustice, as a result of being victims of the discrimination. Collins' work focuses on how a whole community of people—Black women—suffer epistemic discrimination by being excluded from political and social discourse. She describes how economic, political and legal forces have combined to lead to the burying of the ideas of Black female intellectuals, with the knowledge that they produce being ignored. Where Black females are employed as menial labor, denied educational opportunities and negatively stereotyped, it is possible for those in positions of power to ignore the knowledge that they produce. Meanwhile, the suppression of this knowledge is itself a social force, maintaining social inequalities by suggesting that Black women are willing collaborators in the processes that lead to their own oppression (Scott 1985, cited in Collins 2000). Their credibility is further undermined by this interpretation of their behavior, seeming to raise the question of why those who would willingly collaborate in their own oppression should be respected and listened to.

These harms are manifestations of epistemic discrimination. Black women suffer in their roles as epistemic agents, being denied the opportunities to give and receive knowledge through channels that are open to other people. However, Collins emphasizes that in spite of, and sometimes because of, suffering epistemic discrimination, many black women have a gained a distinctive viewpoint opposing issues of social, political and economic injustice.

The economic, political, and ideological dimensions of U.S. Black women's oppression suppressed the intellectual production of individual Black feminist thinkers. At the same time, these same social conditions simultaneously stimulated distinctive patterns of U.S. Black women's activism that also influenced and was influenced by individual Black women thinkers (Collins 2000: 12).

Racial segregation and the development of all-black communities have fostered the development of ideologies that resist the negative images of black women often used to control them. Meanwhile, the position of black women as *outsiders-within* (1986) in white households and academic communities, has enabled them to develop a unique view of the inconsistencies, oppositions and contradictions found in the ideologies of the dominant group (2000: 11). The insights gleaned through these painful experiences have the potential to provide a unique contribution to understanding social oppression and inequality as it occurs more widely.

Collins therefore emphasizes how black women thinkers have made epistemic gains, developing unique insights, in part as a result of epistemic discrimination (as well as other forms of discrimination) that they have suffered. However, as a result of epistemic discrimination, black women thinkers and the black feminist thought that they produce remain buried on the periphery of intellectual thought. This means that members of other groups, including the dominant group, are unable to benefit from the insights that black women thinkers gain.

The discussion in *Black Feminist Thought* is thus in contrast to positions that focus predominantly on a lack of understanding on the part of victims of epistemic discrimination. Collins emphasizes how those who are subject to epistemic discrimination can consequently develop a unique understanding. Others, members of the dominant group who do not suffer directly from the discrimination, can lack the same understanding because the insights of the non-dominant group are marginalized.

Ignorance and Epistemic Discrimination

Charles Mills (2007) also emphasises the relationship between epistemic discrimination and the ignorance of members of the dominant group. Mills focuses on what he describes as *White Ignorance*. White ignorance occurs when people are ignorant about: (i) the privileged position of whites relative to non-whites, (ii) the adverse impact of the privilege on non-whites, and (iii) the need for action to reduce this impact. White ignorance prevents those who occupy a position of privilege from recognizing the need for action to reduce inequality, discrimination and their negative effects—action that would reduce their privilege. It is maintained through the concepts that people acquire from their social upbringing and the way that these concepts influence what they perceive and how they remember things. For example, the concept of "color-blindness" is acquired through social upbringing and has obscured the need for action to repair the damage done by past inequities. Those who aim for colour-blindness might intend that people should be treated equally, but they fail to recognize the advantages afforded to whites over non-Whites, and the need for differential treatment to rectify continued inequalities.

How does white ignorance relate to epistemic discrimination? Mills describes how white ignorance is maintained through testimonial injustice. Non-whites who might provide information to rectify misinformation and error about the privileged position of whites and the exploitation and discrimination of non-whites are prevented from having the opportunity to do so. For example, the work of Black scholars is marginalized, predominantly being published in journals that are not read by the mainstream White academic community. Testimony about the systemic nature of oppression and white privilege and about efforts required to combat it that might be contained in this work is thereby marginalized, given inadequate attention and credibility.

Mills' discussion therefore shows how the ignorance of the dominant group can be maintained through epistemic discrimination. The dominant group makes material gain because they do not become aware of the need to change the social system to reduce their privilege. However, they gain as a result of an epistemic deficiency on their part: white ignorance.

White ignorance also relates to hermeneutical injustice as non-whites who live in societies in which white ignorance prevails can lack understanding and the ability to articulate their experience of discrimination and marginalization. White ignorance is something that can be suffered by non-Whites as well as whites, if both are situated in a society in which the ignorance prevails (Mills 2013). Non-whites who are ignorant of white privilege can therefore lack the hermeneutical resources required to understand their experiences of discrimination and marginalization. However, it is also important to recognize that there can be an imbalance in the hermeneutical

resources available to whites and non-whites. As Collins (2000) and Mason (2011) suggest, people who are a part of a non-dominant non-white group can develop a good understanding of their own experiences of discrimination and marginalization. They can develop non-dominant hermeneutical resources that remain unavailable to members of the dominant group. Where they can struggle is in articulating their experiences to others who lack the hermeneutical resources that they have gained through their experiences. In cases like this, epistemic discrimination will once again go hand-in-hand with ignorance on the part of the dominant group, to whom members of the non-dominant group will be unable to articulate their experiences.

In sum, then, Mills, like Collins, provides support for the conclusion that epistemic discrimination against members of a specific non-dominant group can lead them to suffer as they are denied opportunities in their roles as epistemic agents: to provide testimony and sometimes to understand their situation. But they both also emphasize how epistemic discrimination can contribute to an epistemic deficiency on the part of members of the dominant group: it can lead them to be ignorant.

Mechanisms of epistemic discrimination

The three sections above have described forms of epistemic discrimination and highlighted ways that discrimination can lead to epistemic harm to those who are victims of the discrimination and epistemic deficiencies in members of dominant groups who are not victims. This section focuses on providing details of two specific mechanisms through which epistemic discrimination can be perpetrated: silencing and implicit bias, highlighting how the two can interact.

Silencing

When silencing occurs, damage is done to the ability of individuals to speak and be heard. They are prevented from being fully-fledged epistemic agents, engaging in the practice of giving and receiving reasons. Kristie Dotson (2011) identifies two types of silencing: *testimonial quieting* and *testimonial smothering*.

Testimonial quieting "occurs when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower." (Dotson 2011: 242) For Dotson, a person who commits testimonial quieting refuses to play their part in an exchange of testimony by failing to recognize the contribution that can be made by another person due to the person's membership of a certain social group. Dotson cites Collins' (2000) work as identifying an example of testimonial quieting: when black women are stereotyped and marginalized they are treated as if they are not knowers. Their testimony is silenced because they depend on the uptake of an audience who refuses to listen. There can be long term harms associated with testimonial silencing. It can damage the intellectual courage and epistemic agency of individuals who are systematically silenced and harm the intellectual traditions of whole communities.

It is important that any characterization of testimonial silencing is not too narrow. Collins' work, which is cited by Dotson, provides an example of testimonial silencing that occurs as a result of false stereotypes about black women: that they not knowers. However, testimonial silencing can occur under other conditions. First of all, testimonial silencing can occur as a result of a true belief rather than a false stereotype about a social group. To see this point, re-consider the case of the young child Ben. Let us suppose once again that young children can be correctly viewed as statistically

less likely to be reliable sources of information than adults. Ben's potential audience refuses to listen to a complaint that he makes against an adult because they truly believe that young children are not as reliable as adults. There would be a strong case for saying that Ben is discriminated against through the mechanism of testimonial silencing although he is not listened to as a result of a true belief. Second of all, testimonial silencing might occur without the involvement of the specific stereotype that members of a certain group are not knowers. Suppose that a person correctly judges another person, Mary, to be very knowledgeable, perhaps more knowledgeable than they are. They are motivated to silence Mary to prevent her from exposing their lack of knowledge. They refuse uptake of her testimony, thereby damaging her intellectual courage and sense of agency. She is wronged as a result of actions that seem to be appropriately described as silencing without this being the result of the operation of a stereotype of members of a social group as lacking knowledge.

Whereas testimonial silencing involves one person acting directly to silence another, testimonial smothering occurs where a speaker self-silences. One remains silent because one "perceives one's immediate audience as unwilling or unable to gain the appropriate uptake of proffered testimony." (Dotson 2000: 244) The speaker remains quiet about certain matters, keeping her testimony to a minimum, to avoid being misinterpreted by hearers who have demonstrated an inability to comprehend her. To illustrate this phenomenon, Dotson provides the example of black domestic violence victims in the United States who remain quiet about their experiences in order to avoid appearing to corroborate the stereotype of black men as violent. They keep quiet because they believe that testimony about their experiences will be misinterpreted as supporting the general social stereotype. According to Dotson,

epistemic violence is committed against people who are subject to testimonial smothering by hearers who display an inability to engage in appropriate uptake of testimony, thereby preventing the victims from providing fuller testimony.

Implicit Bias

Increasingly, philosophers as well as psychologists are noticing that *implicit biases* can also provide a mechanism through which epistemic discrimination can be perpetrated. Implicit biases are "fast, automatic, and difficult to control processes that encode stereotypes and evaluative content, and influence how we think and behave" (Holroyd & Puddifoot forthcoming; chapter 32). They are mental states that associate members of a social group with some attribute or affective response (e.g. aversion or attraction) and can operate without the awareness of the agent. When implicit biases operate, they can influence the way that an epistemic agent perceives individual members of a social group. As implicit biases operate automatically and unintentionally, even those who are explicitly committed to egalitarian principles and hold egalitarian beliefs can be prone to making biased judgments when under the influence of implicit bias. An example of the operation of an implicit bias is the following: Ulmann & Cohen (2007) found that people ranked the characteristics *being streetwise* or *being well educated* as important to being a police chief when attributed to a man but the same characteristics were deemed unimportant when attributed to a woman. What seems to happen here is that people associate being a police chief with being male and view characteristics associated with males as more fitting with the role than characteristics associated with women. Where judgments of this sort are automatic and unintentional they are classified as implicit biases. Other widely

studied implicit biases include those associating black men with violence and men but not women with careers.

How do implicit biases function as a mechanism through which epistemic discrimination can manifest? They can influence downstream evaluations of individuals' capacities as epistemic agents. Implicit biases can lead the testimony and evidence provided by members of low-status, stigmatized groups to be given less credibility and attention than it deserves while testimony and evidence provided by members of high-status groups is given more credibility and attention than it deserves (Saul 2013). Implicit biases can lead evidence that is consistent with a stereotype to be noticed, attended to and remembered while evidence inconsistent with a stereotype is ignored and/or forgotten (Levinson 2007; Puddifoot forthcoming). They can lead behavioral evidence about members of a social group to be viewed in a way that is consistent with the stereotype of their social group (Devine 1989; Puddifoot forthcoming). This means that if members of a social group are stereotyped as incompetent or unreliable sources of knowledge then evidence about their epistemic character will be attended and remembered in a distorted way that is consistent with the stereotype. Implicit biases can therefore lead to epistemic discrimination because they can lead members of stigmatized social groups to be treated as poor epistemic agents, and poor sources and potential recipients of knowledge, so they are denied the resources and opportunities to engage in the practice of giving and receiving epistemic goods like knowledge.

It is worth noting that implicit biases can have negative effects, leading to epistemic discrimination, whether or not the associations that they encode reflect some aspect of

reality (Puddifoot forthcoming). Let us return once again to the example of Ben. Suppose that you harbor an implicit bias associating adults more strongly than children with the provision of reliable testimony. This association might reflect the reality, which is that adults are generally more knowledgeable, and therefore more likely to provide accurate information, than young children. Nonetheless, if this implicit bias influences your judgment of Ben's testimony when he is trying to explain what an adult has done, then you are likely to view his testimony in a distorted way. For example, you will be likely to notice inconsistencies and implausible features of his testimony rather than its strengths, such as the detailed descriptions he gives. You will be likely to judge his testimony unduly harshly, treating him as if he knows less than he does, and therefore harming him in his role as epistemic agent.

Silencing and Implicit Bias: where the two interact

While silencing and implicit bias can operate as separate mechanisms through which epistemic discrimination occurs, implicit bias can also lead to silencing and, more specifically, testimonial smothering. Recall that testimonial smothering occurs when people believe that their testimony will not receive appropriate uptake (Dotson 2011). When a potential hearer displays signs that they will not receive the testimony of a potential speaker in an appropriate manner, the potential speaker can self-silence, to avoid being misinterpreted. Subtle behavioral signs can indicate that there will be a lack of appropriate uptake and levels of implicit bias have been found to predict signs of this sort. They have been found, for example, to predict the amount of eye-contact and seating position choice (i.e. how closely people sit together) that occurs in inter-group interactions (see, e.g. McConnell and Leibold, 2001; Dovidio, Kawakami and

Gaertner, 2002). If a person does not make eye contact or chooses to sit far from you, these behaviors can reasonably be taken as an indication that they do not want to speak with you, and that they will not willingly receive your testimony. Other subtle behaviors, as well as less subtle ones, caused by the influence of implicit bias could be taken to provide an indication that someone will not provide appropriate uptake. Under such conditions, testimonial smothering might occur.

Excessive discussion of implicit bias

While there has been increasing interest in implicit bias and the way that it results in epistemic discrimination, there is also growing recognition that the focus of attention on implicit bias has the potential to obscure other causes of epistemic discrimination. Sally Haslanger (2015), for example, argues that while implicit biases can explain some forms of discrimination, explanations that are too focused on the phenomenon are guilty of over-emphasis on the role of the individual and their biases. By focusing too much on the individual's biases, the role of social structures—networks of social practices—is left under-estimated and under-examined. Another thought that is commonly articulated is that discriminatory behavior is often attributed to implicit bias when a better explanation would focus on explicit, intentional bias.

In sum, then, silencing and implicit biases operate as mechanisms through which epistemic discrimination can occur. They can interact: implicit biases can lead to silencing. However, it is important to remember that implicit biases do not provide the only source of either silencing or other forms of epistemic discrimination. Structural inequalities, unequal power relations, and personal motivations to prevent other people from having a voice can lead people to engage in discriminatory practices,

such as a lack of uptake of certain people's testimonies. Given that epistemic discrimination can occur through various mechanisms, successful actions to reduce epistemic discrimination are likely to need to take various forms. It is to this issue that we turn in the next and final section.

Correctional Measures

Much of the most interesting discussion of epistemic discrimination has focused on the viability of various measures that might be adopted to reduce the discrimination. Fricker (2007) emphasizes the role of the individual, arguing that each person should engage in critical reflection with the aim of cultivating personal epistemic virtues, of testimonial justice and hermeneutical justice. However, doubts have been raised about whether attempts by individuals to develop epistemic virtues via critical reflection will suffice to combat the negative effects of epistemic discrimination. Motivated by these doubts, authors have proposed a number of alternative strategies to mitigate epistemic discrimination.

Problems with Critical Reflection

Benjamin Sherman (2016) highlights some practical problems with individual measures to mitigate testimonial injustice. Fricker (2007) claims that critical reflection can enable us to correct inappropriate credibility assessments, compensating for the negative impact of prejudicial social stereotypes. However, Sherman argues that critical reflection is unlikely to be useful in many cases in which people are prejudiced. Sherman thinks that most people are likely to judge their own beliefs to be correct, and are therefore unlikely to change them on critical reflection. With respect to testimonial injustice, they are likely to think that their current

credibility judgments are appropriate. It might be expected that other people could persuade them of their errors, but their choice of advisers is likely to be influenced by their prejudice: they will choose to listen to people who agree with them. In addition, their critical reflection will be subject to confirmation bias, leading them to view evidence in support of their prejudice assessments to be of higher quality than evidence that challenges them.

Similar problems arise with respect to hermeneutical injustice. Attempts to mitigate hermeneutical injustice through critical reflection will only be successful if people are aware on reflection of any lack of hermeneutical resources. However, as noted by Medina (2013), people can display meta-ignorance, that is, ignorance about the available hermeneutical resources. If they are epistemically arrogant, they will be unlikely to notice their lack of hermeneutical resources even under the close scrutiny of critical reflection.

Where critical reflection does lead one to doubt one's existing credibility judgments, another problem can arise. According to Fricker, one must correct one's assignments of credibility, increasing them where they are found through critical reflection to be too low. But there is little reason to think that our processes of critical reflection will lead to an accurate assessment of precisely how much lower our credibility assessments are than they should be. Consequently, there is a danger that we can over- or under-correct our credibility judgments (Kelly & Roedder 2008).

Implicit biases can contribute to the problems associated with critical reflection. Because implicit biases can operate beyond the agent's conscious awareness, an agent

can engage in critical reflection but fail to notice that they are biased, or the extent to which they are biased, and therefore fail to appropriately correct their judgments (ibid.).

Ameliorative Strategies from Social Psychology

Social psychologists have developed a number of strategies to tackle epistemic discrimination that do not rely on individuals being able to identify the nature of their discriminatory practices or ways to rectify their judgments via critical reflection. This section introduces a small sample of illustrative strategies.

Many acts of epistemic discrimination occur as a result of social stereotyping, associating members of a social group more strongly than others with certain attributes.[3] The extensive literature within social psychology on social stereotyping outlines ways to reduce epistemic discrimination by reducing stereotyping and its negative effects. Irene Blair and colleagues (2001) present evidence that participants who consider counter-stereotypical examples, e.g. strong women, show reduced stereotyping (see Saul 2013 for philosophical discussion). Other evidence suggests that the formation of *implementation intentions*, specific "if-then" action plans such as "If I see a Muslim, I will think peace" can reduce the activation of negative stereotypes (e.g. Stewart & Payne 2008, see Saul 2013; Madva 2016 for philosophical discussion). Meanwhile, reduced access to information that might activate a social stereotype—such as information about the social group membership of an individual—can prevent the activation of the stereotype (Steinpreis et al 1999). While the former two strategies are measures that the individual should take if they want to prevent social stereotyping, institutions can implement the latter type of strategy, e.g.

employers can ensure that information about the social group membership of job candidates is removed from their application material so that those involved in recruitment do not engage in stereotyping (Steinpreis 1999; discussed in Saul 2013; Anthony 2016). Where stereotyping is reduced, a reduction to epistemic discrimination can follow.[4]

Structural Changes

While social psychologists have tended to focus on measures that can be taken by individuals and institutions to reduce the negative impact of epistemic discrimination, some philosophers have emphasized the need for deeper structural changes to society. Elizabeth Anderson (2010) argues that integration is a prerequisite for the elimination of discrimination. Influenced by Anderson's work, Medina (2013) claims that reduction of epistemic discrimination will only be achieved if members of different groups confront each other's perspectives, so that the perspective of the dominant group and its unjust ideology are challenged. For Haslanger (2015), the social practices that prevent equality between groups need to be changed in order to produce the equality that would be required to reduce epistemic discrimination. Underlying many of these ideas is the thought that as the distribution of power—economic, social and political— determines the degree of epistemic discrimination encountered by individuals and groups, to remove or substantially reduce the threat of epistemic discrimination, changes are needed to existing power structures.

The implementation of strategies to change individuals or institutions is not inconsistent with deeper societal reform. Individualistic and structural explanations of epistemic discrimination do not have to be viewed as in opposition, providing

competing accounts of how we should reduce discrimination. Instead, the take home message is that we should avoid two forms of complacency. We should not think that if we have taken action to change our personal practices we are not complicit in more widespread epistemic discrimination. Nor should we get so focused on implementing changes to social structures that we forget to ask what we can do to change our institutions or ourselves as individuals.

Epistemic Discrimination in Discussions of Epistemic Discrimination

An interesting recent development in research on epistemic discrimination is the increased awareness that discussions of the phenomenon can lead to further epistemic discrimination. Dotson (2011) argues that it is possible to define epistemic injustice too narrowly, excluding many experiences of marginalized groups. Where new hermeneutical resources such as the concept of epistemic injustice do not capture some people's experiences, this can lead to further hermeneutical injustice and silencing. Rachel McKinnon (2016) describes how "there's a long history in black feminist thought, and other feminists of color, that should be seen as also working on issues of epistemic injustice" (438). The lack of uptake of these ideas, until a white academic philosopher, Miranda Fricker, raised them can therefore be viewed as "an instance of epistemic injustice" (ibid). Similarly, Jules Holroyd and I (forthcoming) highlight how members of stigmatized and marginalized groups have previously described their experiences of unintentional bias and yet wide-ranging interest in the phenomenon only arose in the wake of growth in scientific research on implicit biases. The lack of uptake of the testimony of marginalized groups can be viewed as an instance of epistemic discrimination. Circumstances like these can lead to silencing of members of marginalized groups if they recognize that their attempts to convince

others of problems that they see within society fail while testimony to the same effect provided by scientists, or established white women, is widely discussed. These circumstances can lead, for example, to testimonial smothering (see section 5).

An important lesson about how to tackle epistemic discrimination can be learnt from this self-reflection by philosophers, especially when it is combined with the insights discussed in section 3 from Collins (2000). The lesson is that it is counterproductive to ignore the testimony of those who are victims of epistemic discrimination. Reduction of epistemic discrimination might involve critical reflection on one's own practice and comprehension of psychological studies of prejudice and discrimination, personal efforts to tackle one's own bias and structural changes to society (e.g. changes to laws and efforts to increase integration). However, solutions are likely to be most fruitful, and lead to minimum collateral damage in terms of the production of further epistemic discrimination, if they involve listening to the testimony of those who suffer due to the phenomenon. Those who have been subject to epistemic discrimination can contribute greatly to our understanding of the nature and scope of the problem. As Collins (2000) suggests, victims of injustice can gain a good understanding of it. And, as Medina (2013) suggests, the best way to reduce epistemic discrimination can be to confront other perspectives and experiences, especially those of marginalized groups.

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Further Readings:

Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press) is the most-discussed work on epistemic discrimination. *Race and epistemologies of ignorance* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), edited by Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana, contains Charles Mill's "White Ignorance" and a series of other papers relating to ignorance. Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* contains her ideas about the epistemic discrimination faced by black women. José Medina's *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press) is another important discussion of ignorance and epistemic discrimination. For an overview of research on epistemic issues arising from implicit bias see Brownstein, M. & Saul, J. (eds.) (2016) *Implicit Bias and Philosophy, Volume 1: Metaphysics and Epistemology* Oxford: OUP. Sullivan, S. and Tuana, N. (eds.) (2007).

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[1] There is some debate about whether stereotypes should be defined as inaccurate (see, e.g. Blum 2004; Beeghly 2015). Fricker is not committed to the idea that stereotypes must always be inaccurate but does focus on cases in which stereotypes lead to distorted judgements of the credibility of members of particular social groups.

[2] A lack of hermeneutical resources, for example the resources to understand and articulate the experience of sexual harassment, can lead to an inability to understand other people as well as oneself. For instance, if I do not possess the concept of sexual harassment I might not be able to understand my friend's experiences in the workplace. However, Fricker focuses specifically on how a lack of hermeneutical resources can produce a lack of self-understanding. For more on why a broader conception of the negative consequences of hermeneutical injustice might be called for see the discussion below of the ways that people who are not victims of epistemic discrimination, and therefore do not lack self-understanding due to hermeneutical injustice, can nonetheless remain ignorant due to a lack of hermeneutical resources.

[3] On some accounts of stereotypes, they are not all about members of social groups, e.g. *birds have wings* might be a stereotype, but for the sake of the current discussion focus will be on what I call *social stereotypes* which are about social groups.

[4] Note that the claim here is not that all epistemic discrimination will be reduced if stereotyping is reduced. As has been highlighted elsewhere in this chapter, epistemic discrimination can occur in the absence of stereotyping so even a full reduction of stereotyping would not guarantee a full reduction in epistemic discrimination.