# Understanding Social Struggles

## On the Companionship of Theories of Epistemic Injustice and Recognition Theory[1]

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In recent years, there has been growing scholarly interest in the relationship between epistemic injustice and the concept of recognition. Although emerging from distinct traditions—analytic social epistemology on the one hand, and critical theory on the other—these frameworks converge on a central philosophical concern: the normative and political dimensions of subjectivity within social relations. Researchers have begun exploring how these two concepts intersect, with important contributions from scholars such as Congdon (2017), Giladi (2018), and Hänel (2020), among others. While much of this work has been productive in highlighting the role of recognition in addressing epistemic wrongs, the precise nature of the causal or constitutive relation between epistemic injustice and recognition theory remains underexplored. In the introduction, we aim to review the current literature, before briefly

discussing some of the key points that have structured our discussion on this topic over the last five years and carving out a clearer understanding of the relationship of failures of recognition and epistemic injustice by critically engaging with existing theories. We finish with an overview of the chapters in this book.

## 1.  Brief Literature Review

A review of the literature reveals two key points of concern. First, while theorists exhibit a sophisticated grasp of epistemic injustices—those wrongs related to the denial of knowledge, credibility, or authority—they tend to approach recognition in a more intuitive or undeveloped manner. Second, when recognition theory is addressed in greater detail, much of the focus centers around a Honnethian conception of recognition, which may limit the scope of inquiry into other potentially valuable perspectives. This paper argues that a broader engagement with diverse theoretical frameworks of recognition could shed new light on the constitutive role recognition plays in epistemic injustice.

We propose that there are at least three additional, fruitful understandings of recognition that deserve closer examination in relation to epistemic injustice. First, we explore a Marxist-Indigenous understanding of recognition, drawing on the work of Glen Coulthard, which emphasizes the intersection of colonialism, indigeneity, and epistemic silencing. Second, we suggest an Hegelian-Republican perspective, influenced by philosophers like Robert Brandom and John Pippin, which highlights the role of social practices and political recognition in shaping knowledge. Finally, we introduce a feminist understanding grounded in Hegelian thought, which challenges gendered epistemic injustices and the ways in which recognition structures knowledge within patriarchal frameworks. By exploring these distinct theoretical lenses, we aim to clarify the ways in which recognition can both enable and constitute epistemic justice, offering new avenues for understanding and addressing epistemic injustice in contemporary society.

### 1.1   Causal and Constitutive Relations

The relationship between epistemic injustice and recognition failures is a central concern in contemporary philosophical debates. While epistemic injustice, as conceptualized by Fricker (2007), concerns the wrongful treatment

of individuals in their capacity as knowers, recognition theory, as developed in the works of Honneth (1995) and others, highlights the role of intersubjective acknowledgment in the constitution of individual identity and agency. The intersection of these domains raises important questions about the nature of their connection: Are epistemic injustices primarily effects of antecedent recognition failures, or do they themselves function as acts of misrecognition? Is the relationship between these phenomena best understood causally, constitutively, or in some hybrid manner?

In assessing these questions, five guiding inquiries structure the current discourse:

(1) Is there a causal relation between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition such that epistemic injustices result from a prior history of recognition failures?
(2) Is there a causal relation between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition such that epistemic injustices render speakers vulnerable to future acts of recognition failures?
(3) Is there a causal relation between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition such that epistemic injustices (re-)produce ongoing misunderstandings of the social identity of marginalized and oppressed groups?
(4) Is there a constitutive relation between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition such that epistemic injustices constitute recognition failures (or some forms of recognition failures)?
(5) Is there a constitutive relation between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition such that recognition failures (or some recognition failures) constitute epistemic injustices?

Several scholars have proposed causal explanations linking epistemic injustice and recognition failures. Hänel (2020) argues for the first two causal relations, suggesting that epistemic injustice can be traced to historical patterns of misrecognition and that such injustices perpetuate further recognition failures. This account aligns with broader structural critiques of epistemic marginalization, wherein entrenched social hierarchies sustain cycles of epistemic exclusion. Similarly, McConkey (2004) advances the third causal relation, contending that epistemic injustice fosters distorted or inadequate representations of marginalized identities, thereby reinforcing societal misrecognition and misunderstanding.

Beyond causal explanations, other scholars maintain that the relationship between epistemic injustice and recognition failures is constitutive rather than sequential. Congdon (2018) articulates a position grounded in the moral dimensions of epistemic agency, arguing that being a knower entails a normative status that is both epistemic and ethical. As Congdon explains:

> "It is epistemic insofar as the label 'knower' indicates the roles one may legitimately assume within practices of justification and warrant, and ethical, in the sense that being a knower implicates one within interpersonal relations of answerability that invoke notions of justice and injustice, flourishing and degradation, virtue and vice, rightful treatment and moral injury" (2018, 2).

If epistemic agency is embedded within a broader moral framework, then being denied recognition as a knower is inherently a recognition failure. Such denial undermines one's normative standing within the epistemic community, restricting access to practices of justification and eroding the social preconditions for epistemic flourishing.

Similarly, Giladi (2017) emphasizes the role of epistemic respect in fostering individual self-confidence as rational enquirers. According to this view, recognition is not merely an external validation but a necessary condition for epistemic self-trust and participation. Failure to extend such recognition, then, is not simply an epistemic injustice but a fundamental act of misrecognition that shapes one's epistemic identity and agency.

These perspectives suggest that recognition theory is not merely related to epistemic concerns but is deeply embedded within them. The denial of recognition, whether as an act of misrecognition or as an effect of epistemic injustice, threatens one's standing as a legitimate source of knowledge and reason. The next section will explore how these insights inform contemporary approaches to epistemic justice, recognition, and the ethics of knowledge exchange in diverse social and political contexts.

## 1.2   Intuitive Notions of Recognition

Discussions of epistemic injustice, on the other hand, often rely on an intuitive understanding of recognition. However, these discussions sometimes diverge from or even obscure traditional recognition theory's deeper normative commitments. This section examines how intuitive notions of recognition function

in epistemic injustice literature and whether these usages align with or distort recognition theory's epistemic implications.

Some scholars argue that epistemic injustice stems from recognition failures. However, Mikkola (2022) challenges this assumption by contending that ignorance and recognition can sometimes function cooperatively. Drawing on Mills' racial contract, Mikkola suggests that the exclusion of people of color from full citizenship does not merely involve ignorance but also an implicit affirmation of normatively relevant properties of those excluded. In this way, recognition is present, but it serves an exclusionary function rather than one of epistemic validation.

Further cases of intuitive recognition arise in the work of Jackson (2022) and Freeman & Stewart (2022), who analyze epistemic injustices related to recognition failures in contexts of sexual violence and medical treatment. Jackson (2022) explores how men who have experienced sexual violence often face epistemic injustice due to societal reluctance to recognize them as victims. Freeman & Stewart (2022) extend this analysis to transgender and gender non-binary patients in medical contexts, arguing that misrecognition—such as failing to recognize a patient's gender identity—results in epistemic harms. While these discussions employ recognition in an intuitive sense, they sometimes lack a systematic engagement with recognition theory's deeper commitments.

Traditional recognition theory, particularly in the works of Honneth, frames recognition not merely as acknowledgment but as a necessary condition for subject-formation. That is, recognition is not only about being seen but about being conferred a normative status that underlies self-relation and agency. Misrecognition, therefore, does more than cause epistemic harm—it disrupts the very conditions under which one can develop a coherent sense of self.

This insight suggests that while epistemic injustice literature can illuminate aspects of recognition failures, it risks distorting recognition theory's epistemic dimensions by treating recognition too loosely. A more robust engagement with recognition theory would enhance the analysis of epistemic injustices by situating them within a broader framework of intersubjective dependence and normative subject-formation.

### 1.3   Honnethian Understandings of Recognition

Several scholars have drawn on Honneth's framework to interpret epistemic injustice as a form of misrecognition. Giladi (2017) argues that testimonial and hermeneutical injustices function as failures of recognition. Testimonial injustice denies marginalized speakers credibility, thereby undermining their status as rational agents, while hermeneutical injustice alienates individuals from collective epistemic resources, preventing them from fully participating in meaning-making processes. Giladi situates these injustices within Honneth's broader conception of misrecognition as a social pathology that obstructs self-realization.

Congdon (2017, 2018) similarly argues that epistemic injustice constitutes a form of misrecognition by eroding an individual's self-relation. Because recognition is essential for self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem, epistemic injustice disrupts these dimensions of practical self-understanding. Meanwhile, Petherbridge (2022) contends that epistemic injustice highlights a distinct epistemic dimension of recognition theory that precedes Honneth's three-tier model of love, rights, and solidarity.

While these interpretations enrich discussions on epistemic injustice, they also raise questions about whether Honneth's framework sufficiently captures the full complexity of epistemic harms. Other recognition theorists may offer alternative insights that better account for the nuances of epistemic injustice.

### 2.   The Discussion

Many of the contributions in this edited collection start from the insight that epistemic injustice can be fruitfully understood as a form of misrecognition or that a theory of epistemic justice is best situated within a broader recognitional framework; yet, these insights are developed into significantly different theories of the role that theories of epistemic injustice and recognition theory play in our philosophical attempts to understand social struggles and movements. In doing so, the contributions seek to bridge gaps between moral psychology, epistemology, and social theory, offering accounts of how subjects are wronged in their capacities as knowers, agents, and members of social communities and in how they resist such wrongs. Before we provide a brief summary of the chapters, let us point out some of the key themes that have emerged during our discussions on the topic.

## 2.1  Epistemic Injustice: Beyond the Cognitive Harm

Miranda Fricker's work has been seminal in identifying two central forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. Testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker's credibility is unjustly deflated due to prejudice, typically based on race, gender, or class. Hermeneutical injustice, by contrast, arises when a marginalized group lacks access to the shared conceptual resources needed to make sense of their experiences. Both are epistemic harms, yet Fricker insists they also bear moral weight: they wrong individuals in their capacities as knowers.

However, critiques of Fricker's account point to certain limitations. Scholars such as Kristie Dotson (2011) and Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. (2017) argue that Fricker under-theorizes the structural and affective dimensions of epistemic injustice, focusing too narrowly on individual virtuous responses. They call for a broader account that incorporates historical power structures and group-based epistemic agency. This shift opens the door to thinking about epistemic injustice not just as a deficit in knowledge practices but as a deeper form of social and moral misrecognition.

## 2.2  Recognition Theory: Subjectivity and Social Justice

Axel Honneth's recognition theory, building on Hegelian and post-Hegelian traditions, posits that individual identity is formed and sustained through intersubjective recognition. Honneth distinguishes three spheres of recognition: love (emotional support), rights (legal respect), and solidarity (social esteem). Failures in recognition—be they emotional neglect, denial of rights, or social devaluation—amount to moral injuries that impede the development of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem.

Recognition is not merely a matter of individual perception but is embedded within social institutions and cultural norms. Misrecognition thus entails more than subjective insult; it is a distortion of social relations that undermines personhood. From this perspective, the moral and psychological harm inflicted by misrecognition bears a strong resemblance to the epistemic harm described by Fricker and her interlocutors.

## 2.3  Epistemic Injustice as Misrecognition

The concept of recognition allows us to reframe epistemic injustice as a specific modality of misrecognition. When someone is treated as lacking epistemic credibility due to their social identity, they are not merely being underestimated intellectually; they are being denied recognition as a rational and trustworthy agent. Testimonial injustice, then, is not only an epistemic failure but also a failure of intersubjective respect.

Similarly, hermeneutical injustice reflects a lack of cultural recognition. When collective interpretive resources fail to include the experiences of marginalized groups, those groups are rendered unintelligible in the public sphere. This form of epistemic marginalization parallels the cultural misrecognition theorized by Charles Taylor and Honneth, wherein entire forms of life are excluded from social visibility and esteem.

This integrated account reveals that epistemic injustice undermines the very conditions of recognitional justice. To be denied credibility is to be denied moral respect; to lack hermeneutical resources is to be excluded from cultural belonging. Thus, epistemic injustice can be viewed as a double injury: it deprives individuals of both epistemic and moral standing.

## 2.4  Epistemic Struggles and Social Movements

Epistemic injustice and misrecognition are not merely philosophical abstractions—they are lived experiences that often animate social struggles. Movements for racial justice, gender equality, Indigenous rights, and disability justice are all, in part, struggles for epistemic recognition. Activists contest dominant narratives, demand credibility for marginalized knowers, and create new hermeneutical resources that render their experiences intelligible and politically salient.

For example, the feminist slogan "the personal is political" can be read as a collective effort to overcome hermeneutical injustice by naming and theorizing previously silenced experiences of oppression. Importantly, not merely by adding new or revised concepts to the dominant hermeneutical resources—as Fricker suggests in her account—but by shifting the entire epistemic system such that the statement becomes intelligible; thus, working in line with what Dotson analyzes as third-degree changes, where it is not sufficient to change our conceptual resources within a given epistemic system but where we have to change the system as such. Similarly, the Black Lives Matter movement not

only calls attention to racialized violence but also insists on the credibility and authority of Black voices in public discourse. These movements are epistemic interventions as much as they are political ones.

While recognition theory can help us understand these struggles as demands for visibility, respect, and inclusion in the interpretive and discursive frameworks of society, the task at hand is to dig deeper and to understand the call for changing the epistemic system entirely also for a call to change the entire recognition system. These struggles are not merely about legal rights or material redistribution, but about the transformation of the conditions under which individuals and groups are acknowledged as legitimate sources of knowledge and meaning.

Moreover, as José Medina and María Lugones have emphasized, epistemic resistance is a crucial element of (democratic) struggles. Marginalized communities not only suffer epistemic injustice but also develop counter-knowledges and resistant epistemologies—what Medina calls "epistemic counterpoints"—that challenge the dominant epistemic order. These counterpoints often emerge through collective praxis, storytelling, and grassroots organizing, and they serve to expand the epistemic imagination of society as a whole and to open the possibility for new systems.

Indigenous knowledge movements, for instance, not only seek land rights or political sovereignty but also advocate for the recognition of alternative epistemologies rooted in relationality, oral tradition, and ecological stewardship. The denial of such knowledge systems constitutes a deep form of epistemic colonialism and misrecognition. A recognitional approach helps us see that justice for Indigenous communities must include epistemic justice: the validation and inclusion of their ways of knowing within the broader epistemic community.

## 2.5  Normative Implications

Understanding epistemic injustice as misrecognition has important normative consequences. It shifts the locus of moral concern from individual cognitive failings to the institutional and cultural frameworks that sustain exclusion. It also demands a more comprehensive account of justice—one that encompasses not only distributive and legal dimensions, but also recognitive and epistemic ones.

In this view, epistemic justice entails the restructuring of educational systems, media representations, legal discourses, and other public institu-

tions to affirm the epistemic agency of all individuals and communities. It also calls for cultivating affective and attitudinal dispositions conducive to recognition—such as openness, humility, and solidarity—within epistemic practices.

## 3. Expanding Recognition Theory: Alternative Approaches

The general idea of this book then is that theories of epistemic injustice and recognition can and should be integrated into a unified normative framework; yet, we have to proceed with caution as not to oversee the way in which our current dominant epistemic system and recognition system makes certain things unintelligible and posits certain social groups outside of being bearers of recognition. The framework we have in mind allows us to understand epistemic harms not only as failures of knowledge but as moral injuries rooted in misrecognition. By situating epistemic justice within the broader project of recognitive justice, we gain a richer, more socially grounded account of what it means to be wronged as a knower—and of what it would mean to be justly recognized as one.

   In a world marked by deep epistemic inequality, this integration is not only conceptually fruitful but morally urgent. As such, philosophers must continue to explore the intersection of epistemology and recognition, illuminating the pathways by which knowledge, identity, and justice are inextricably linked. With this book, we hope to open the room for these discussions. Before we let the contributions of this book speak for themselves, we want to finish this introduction by raising some problems that might stand in the way of an emancipatory analysis of social struggles via the tools of recognition theory and theories of epistemic injustice. In doing so, we aim to examine the relationship between epistemic injustice and recognition theory, critically engaging with Marxist-indigenous, Hegelian-republican, and feminist perspectives. Its aim is to go beyond the current debate, following recent critiques both of Honnethian recognition theory and Frickerian epistemic injustice theory. For example, while Honneth's theory emphasizes recognition as essential for self-realization, alternative approaches reveal its complicity in structural oppression. Instead, Coulthard critiques liberal recognition for reinforcing colonial and capitalist domination. The Hegelian-republican tradition highlights hierarchical misrecognition and its role in maintaining inequality. And, feminist theorists foreground vulnerability and differential epistemic

visibility. By synthesizing these perspectives, we reframe recognition as both a mechanism of epistemic injustice and a potential site of resistance, linking it to broader struggles of social and epistemic transformation. Yet, we do not intent to give a conclusive argument for a specific relationship between epistemic injustice and failures of recognition; rather, we aim to raise key questions that any engagement with these theories should take seriously.

## 3.1 Beyond Honneth's Theory of Recognition

Beyond Honneth's framework, alternative recognition theories offer valuable insights into epistemic injustice. Marxist-indigenous critiques highlight the socioeconomic dimensions of recognition, arguing that recognition must be understood within the broader context of material power relations (Coulthard 2014). Hegelian-republican interpretations emphasize recognition as integral to social freedom and equality, challenging hierarchical forms of recognition (Brandom 2019; Forst 2017). Feminist perspectives introduce the notion of vulnerability as central to recognition, arguing that recognition operates within structures of power and differential exposure to harm (Oliver 2001, 2015; Petherbridge 2016).

These perspectives collectively underscore two critical insights: (1) recognition and vulnerability are distributed unequally across social structures, and (2) the struggle for recognition is not necessarily best understood as a struggle for recognition from those in power. Engaging these alternative models expands the scope of recognition theory and provides a richer framework for analyzing epistemic injustice, particularly in contexts of oppression and resistance. Future research should further integrate these diverse perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of recognition and epistemic justice.

The relationship between recognition and epistemic injustice becomes even more complex when examined through alternative theoretical lenses. While traditional recognition theory, particularly as formulated by Honneth, has focused on intersubjective acknowledgment as essential for individual self-realization, other critical perspectives emphasize the broader structural, political, and material conditions that shape recognition practices. This article's aim was to examines the intersection of epistemic injustice and recognition theory, exploring how alternative frameworks—Marxist-indigenous, Hegelian-republican, and feminist perspectives—reconfigure our understanding of recognition as both a site of oppression and a tool of resistance.

While traditional recognition theory, particularly as developed by Honneth, emphasizes intersubjective acknowledgment as essential for self-realization, critical perspectives highlight the structural, political, and material conditions that shape recognition practices and their epistemic consequences.

First, the Marxist-indigenous critique, drawing on Coulthard (2014), challenges the liberal model of recognition for its failure to account for the dual structure of colonialism, encompassing both ideological and material dimensions. Coulthard argues that recognition functions as a mechanism of power, wherein the settler-state co-opts indigenous struggles, reinforcing colonial and capitalist relations rather than dismantling them.

Second, the Hegelian-republican approach, as developed by Brandom (2019), Pippin (2006), and Forst (2017), critiques hierarchical recognition models that reinforce epistemic and material inequalities. This perspective highlights the ways in which over-recognition of dominant groups entrenches power imbalances while misrecognition of the oppressed can function as an epistemic and political counterforce, generating subaltern spaces of resistance and knowledge production.

Third, feminist approaches, particularly those of Oliver (2001, 2015) and Petherbridge (2016), expand recognition theory by foregrounding vulnerability as a fundamental condition of intersubjectivity. Feminist theorists argue that recognition and epistemic visibility are differentially distributed, shaping whose voices are heard and legitimized within dominant epistemic frameworks. This insight aligns with standpoint epistemology and the epistemology of ignorance, revealing how epistemic injustice is embedded in broader social structures.

By integrating these alternative perspectives, we reposition recognition theory within a more critical framework, demonstrating that epistemic injustice is not only a failure of recognition but also a consequence of structural inequities that demand transformative resistance.

## 3.2  Marxist-Indigenous Critique of Liberal Recognition

Glen Coulthard's *Red Skin, White Masks* (2014) presents a Marxist-indigenous critique of liberal recognition, arguing that dominant frameworks of recognition fail to adequately account for the dual structure of colonialism: both its ideological dimension (the politics of recognition) and its material foundation (socioeconomic structures). In this view, recognition is not merely a question of being seen or acknowledged by the settler-state but is deeply embedded in

the reproduction of colonial and capitalist power relations. Coulthard critiques the liberal model of recognition for two primary reasons:

- It assumes that recognition can be granted by those in power, positioning oppressed groups as dependent on the benevolence of the state or dominant society. This conceptualization frames recognition as a "gift" rather than a site of struggle.
- It neglects the materialist foundations of colonial and capitalist domination, failing to recognize how economic structures perpetuate epistemic and political subjugation.

For Coulthard, indigenous struggles for recognition must therefore be grounded in materialist and anti-colonial critique. He contends that for many Indigenous peoples, capitalism is not merely a parallel system but a function of colonialism, wherein recognition operates as a mechanism of power that both enables and conceals the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands and epistemic agency.

## 3.3 Hegelian-Republican Critique of Hierarchical Recognition

The Hegelian tradition of recognition theory is most commonly associated with the master-slave dialectic, yet its implications for epistemic justice extend beyond this historical paradigm. In republican and critical-Hegelian interpretations, recognition is understood not simply as a means of self-realization but as a precondition for social freedom and political agency (Brandom 2019; Pippin 2006; Forst 2017). Within this framework, recognition is not merely something the powerful bestow upon the marginalized; rather, it is a site of struggle that can be mobilized to challenge social hierarchies.

Two key insights emerge from this critical-Hegelian perspective:

- First, certain social groups receive an *excess* of recognition, particularly in the form of social esteem and authority, reinforcing epistemic and material inequalities. Over-recognition of dominant groups can distort social relations, entrenching power imbalances and epistemic authority.
- Second, the recognition struggles of marginalized groups can function as powerful counter-narratives. Subaltern communities do not merely seek recognition from the dominant; they also create alternative spaces of epistemic agency that resist and refuse oppressive norms. This understanding

highlights recognition as a political tool that extends beyond the deficit model of "seeking acknowledgment" and instead emphasizes the transformative potential of misrecognition and epistemic resistance (McBride 2013).

## 3.4  Feminist Approaches: Recognition, Vulnerability, and Epistemic Injustice

Feminist theory has long engaged with recognition as a critical component of justice, particularly in the context of gender, sexuality, and epistemic vulnerability. Drawing from Hegelian theory, feminist scholars argue that self-consciousness and subjectivity are not autonomous but develop through intersubjective relationships. However, this framework is expanded by the concept of vulnerability, which feminist theorists reinterpret in ways that challenge traditional notions of agency and recognition (Ferrarese 2011; Oliver 2001, 2015; Petherbridge 2016).

Three key arguments emerge in feminist discussions of recognition:

- Vulnerability is not reducible to physical harm or coercion; rather, it encompasses broader epistemic and social structures that determine who is seen, heard, and believed.
- Recognition, particularly in the context of epistemic injustice, is deeply tied to the visibility of marginalized groups. As Oliver (2001) argues, to be recognized is to be rendered visible within a given epistemic framework. However, this visibility is often conditional and constrained by dominant power structures.
- Vulnerability is differentially distributed. Certain groups are made disproportionately vulnerable by epistemic and social inequalities, a dynamic that parallels the selective distribution of recognition. Oliver (2015) notes that "some bodies are made vulnerable for the sake of the prosperity of others, " illustrating how recognition and epistemic power are stratified within social hierarchies.

Furthermore, feminist critiques of recognition intersect with standpoint epistemology and the epistemology of ignorance, demonstrating how dominant epistemic frameworks systematically exclude, distort, or appropriate marginalized knowledge. The struggle for recognition, therefore, is not merely

about gaining visibility but about contesting the epistemic norms that define who is recognized as a legitimate knower.

This section explored three alternative frameworks—Marxist-indigenous, Hegelian-republican, and feminist perspectives—to show that shifting our gaze towards other, often marginalized theories, can significantly deepen our understanding of how recognition functions in contexts of oppression, resistance, and epistemic agency.

## 3.5 Conclusion: Recognition, Epistemic Justice, and Social Freedom

These three alternative perspectives on recognition theory—Marxist-indigenous, Hegelian-republican, and feminist—offer a more expansive framework for understanding epistemic injustice. They challenge the notion that recognition is a simple remedy for epistemic exclusion and instead reveal its entanglement with structures of power, material conditions, and vulnerability. Two central insights emerge from this discussion:

1. Recognition and vulnerability are not evenly distributed; they are shaped by broader social structures and relations of power.
2. The struggle for recognition should not be understood merely as a plea for acknowledgment from the dominant but as an epistemic and political act that can challenge and transform oppressive systems.

By incorporating these perspectives, recognition theory becomes not just a framework for understanding epistemic injustice but also a site of critical resistance. Future research should further explore the intersections between recognition, epistemic agency, and political struggle, examining how marginalized groups actively reshape the epistemic conditions of their own recognition.

## 4. Summary of the chapters

José Medina's chapter starts the book's critical investigation by developing an analysis of epistemic injustice as a failure of recognition or *misrecognition*. He argues that the lack of epistemic recognition involved in epistemic injustices can only be properly identified and fought against from the epistemic vantage points of grassroot social movements of liberation. More specifically, he shows

that the "insider-outsider" status of the members of oppressed groups seeking liberation through grassroot social movements allows for: (1) the emergence of critical consciousness amid pervasive alienation and ideological distortion; and (2) the development of a critique that is both immanent and transcendent and can prefigure the melioration and self-transformation of social life through alternative economies of recognition. The arguments for these two claims address two of the problems facing the diagnosis of social pathologies, namely, (1) the problem of developing critical consciousness about forms of oppression that have become pervasive and invisibilized by ideological distortions and alienation; and (2) the problem of developing *transformative immanent critique* that is neither internal meliorism nor external interventionism, that is, a critique that doesn't come (entirely) from the outside (to avoid problems of paternalism and heteronomy), but doesn't remain (entirely) within the insider's perspective and is capable of transcending that perspective.

Jacob Blumenfeld explores the intersection of class and recognition theory, examining how the class structure degrades human dignity and autonomy. For Blumenfeld, class represents a moral injury to the status of being human. Unlike identity-based claims that seek recognition, the condition of class necessitates abolition. The paradox is that even though class can be diagnosed as a form of misrecognition, its rectification cannot be accomplished via recognition. To recognize class as a moral injury is to recognize that recognition cannot resolve the misrecognition of class. Undoing the epistemic injustices and misrecognitions of class rather demands the collective work of abolishing class itself.

Hilkje Hänel bridges social epistemology and Frankfurt School Critical Theory, focusing on how critical knowledge can be achieved by marginalized and oppressed knowers despite, what she calls, ideological ignorance and what could be described as false consciousness in Critical Theory's toolbox. Hänel attempts to show that ideological ignorance is not the only way in which emancipatory knowledge is blocked; instead, marginalized and oppressed knowers might decide—for many different reasons—to block access to emancipatory knowledge; a phenomenon that is sometimes labelled *strategic ignorance*. She then continues to discuss a tension between ideological ignorance and standpoint epistemology. If ideological ignorance can be tackled well by sharing knowledge and actualizing emancipatory and critical knowledge practices, it seems that any form of strategic ignorance is problematic for denying access to this deeply needed knowledge. In other words, if critical knowledge is not simply given but results from struggle and communal practices, then failing to

engage in struggle or communal practices for strategic reasons blocks access to critical knowledge. It would then follow that strategic ignorance is problematic for our knowledge systems—a conclusion that Hänel resists. Instead, she argues that strategic ignorance is a contextual phenomenon and that practices of recognition and resistance should take priority over our responsibility for ameliorating the epistemic system.

Breno Santos continues with an epistemological analysis. Building on the recent literature of the debate, he examines the connections between the talk of epistemic injustice as domination and the debate concerning the recognitive expectations we have as members of epistemic communities. To do so, Santos explores Amandine Catala's formulation of hermeneutical domination and assess if it fits a recognitive model of the moral responsibilities we have towards other epistemic agents. He then argues that epistemic domination has its roots in failures of recognition. These failures, as he'll show, affect the agent's freedom and autonomy as a rational enquirer. Thus, the way out of them will need to involve non-domination in the form of recognition and discursive control, something that Santos will argue for, before sketching a possible global version of hermeneutical domination that challenges the efficacy of local recognition and discursive control. Institutional remedies to this global type of epistemic injustice might not be able to account for the extent to which it affects our shared space of reasons with an overarching dominating power. To deal with the structural and institutional aspects of epistemic injustices and to secure non-domination and proper recognition, then, we'll have to go beyond the moderate, intra-institutional measures of deliberative democracy and propose radical measures to secure freedom and hermeneutical non-domination.

Clara Berlich's contribution investigates a specific class of cases of testimonial injustice, that is, cases, in which speaker and hearer stand in a non-trivial relation to each other – such as friends do, or lovers, or family members. The intuition is that these cases of testimonial injustice critically exhibit more, and even a distinct kind of badness than other cases thereof. To account for this intuition, it is argued that testimonial injustice in the context of intimate relationships is not only a manifestation of injustice, but also a specific form of betrayal; bringing it closer to theories of recognition than other forms of epistemic injustice.

Peimaneh Yaghoobifarah is concerned with applying both epistemic injustice theory and recognition theory in the context of schools. The contribution argues that children in general and students in the context of schools can be understood as a separate social group. And, that they, as a result of their stu-

denthood, can experience both testimonial and hermeneutical injustices. This marks an important distinction of multiply realizable epistemic injustice; including one that is not considered by Fricker. On the one hand, students, who are marginalized because they are marked as different from the dominant culture due to, for example, racialization or religious affiliation, can be treated in epistemically unjust ways because of their respective marginalization. This is a form of epistemic injustice well researched but not yet applied to students. On the other hand, students are additionally affected by epistemic injustice qua being students. This is a form of epistemic injustice that goes beyond the framework Fricker provides. Furthermore, the contribution shows how epistemic harms that students suffer from as a result of their marginalization or their student status can adequately be regarded as a form of misrecognition.

The second part of the book is reserved for musings; explorations of topics that have come up during our many discussions on the topic of social struggles, recognition theory and theories of epistemic injustice. These explorations aim to shed light on important topics, while also leaving room for continued discussion and development.

Karen Ng starts the musings with the attempt to develop a brief proposal how the concept of recognition can provide a helpful framework for an ethical understanding of relations within living nature; while acknowledging that there is something of an uphill battle to employing recognition as a viable concept beyond the scope of human relationships. Ng uses the term *ethical* here in a broad sense recalling Hegel's conception of ethical life or *Sittlichkeit*. Ethical relationships draw on character, dispositions, and the cultivation of habituated interactions, which gain their meaning from species-specific modes of living and can be judged as good or bad for some aim. For self-conscious creatures, ethical life and relationships can give rise to expectations or obligations, but the latter are not necessary for something to have an ethical character. Ng's suggestion will be that we can understand the relations between living beings as ethical in this broad sense, and that recognition is an appropriate concept for capturing, at least in part, the ethical character of these relationships. There are two key aspects to expanding the concept of recognition that she will pursue here. First, it is important to reestablish the essential connection between recognition and the concepts of life and love, which is most clearly articulated in Hegel's early writings. Recognition, paradigmatically expressed in love and friendship, crucially involves the apprehension of life and living form. Second, she will consider the possibility of proto-recognitive activities and processes in non-human life-forms, as well as the possibility of recogni-

tion and proto-recognition across life-forms, both human and non-human. In exploring these possibilities, what will hopefully emerge is the importance of the concept of recognition for understanding non-instrumental and ethical relationships among and between living beings, expanding the concept beyond its current, human-centric application.

Fabian Schuppert continues with an investigation of AI in the context of epistemic misrecognition. According to proponents of LLM, these technologies may seem neutral, even democratizing, as they supposedly promise to remove human bias and ensure a "level playing field." However, a closer examination reveals that LLM systems systematically reproduce—and even amplify—epistemic injustices and stereotypes about what counts as relevant knowledge, good writing, and rational argumentation. In addition, particular fields of inquiry are presented in very particular ways, meaning that existing stereotypes about what particular forms of knowledge can do and be are systematically reproduced. In doing so, LLM tools perpetuate existing power structures, making the privileged even more privileged, and foster a particularly insidious form of epistemic ignorance and epistemic domination.

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