

TRUST, DISTRUST, AND EPISTEMIC INJUSTICE

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ABSTRACT. This essay investigates an underappreciated way in which trust and testimonial injustice are closely connected. Credibility *deficit* and credibility *excess* cases both (in their own distinctive ways) contribute to a speaker's being harmed in her capacity a knower. But moreover, as we will show—by using the tools of a *performance-theoretic* framework (e.g., Sosa 2015; 2017; 2016; Carter 2019; forthcoming)—both credibility deficit and credibility excess cases also feature *incompetent trusting* on the part of the hearer. That is, credibility deficit and excess cases are shown to manifest qualities of thinkers that are inconducive to trust's being reliably fulfilled. What this implies is an interesting result about testimonial injustice: to the extent that we want to mitigate against testimonial injustice—one promising way to do so will be to target incompetent trusting of the sort that underlies it. We conclude by outlining and defending what we take to be a promising substantive version of such a mitigation strategy, one which is centred around the cultivation of higher-order trusting competences.

1. INTRODUCTION

Epistemic injustice has—since Miranda Fricker's (2007) landmark work on the topic—become increasingly well understood as its own genus of *epistemic harm*, with testimonial injustice as a species of particular interest for social epistemologists.¹ Put roughly, testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker receives an unfair deficit of credibility from a hearer due to prejudice on the hearer's part, resulting in the speaker's being prevented from sharing what she knows.

The more we learn about the prevalence of testimonial injustice and its damaging effects, the more important it becomes to know how to best address it.² Part of what makes this so

difficult to combat is that the mechanisms driving testimonial injustice are often sourced in biases of which we are generally unaware.³ This paper explores one specific and largely unexplored⁴ strategy for combatting epistemic injustice, by focusing on the ways in which it is generated by *defective ways of trusting*. The central line we want to advance is that by becoming a more skilled truster—that is, by developing our trust-relevant abilities and, crucially, better understanding their *limits*—we can at the same time help to minimize our contributions to epistemic injustice.

Here is the plan: §2 describes two faces of epistemic injustice, *credibility deficit* and (more controversially) *credibility excess*, and explores how each contributes to harming a testifier in her capacity as a knower. §3 then discusses trust as an attitude with its own constitutive normativity, with a focus on what *competent* (and incompetent) trusting involves. §4 shows how credibility deficit and credibility excess fail to constitute competent trusting for different reasons, and §5 suggests strategies for mitigating testimonial injustice by targeting its sources in incompetent trusting.

2. TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE

On Fricker's (2007) account, testimonial injustice occurs when a speaker is harmed in her capacity as a knower by receiving an unfair *deficit* of credibility from a hearer due to *prejudice* on the hearers' part. Our prejudicial dysfunctions in our testimonial practice fall into broadly two categories. Firstly, prejudice can result in the speaker receiving more credibility than she otherwise would have—*credibility excess*—or it results in her receiving less credibility than she otherwise would have—*credibility deficit*.

To make these ideas concrete, consider Fricker's example of a speaker's accent which carries a social charge that affects how the hearer perceives the speaker, e.g., it indicates—given background assumptions on the part of the hearer—a certain class or educational background. It also carries an *epistemic* charge; it can have a significant impact as to how much credibility is afforded to the speaker, as a prejudice towards someone's accent may inflate or deflate the credibility of the speaker, in turn causing the hearer to miss out on knowledge.

The popular example of testimonial injustice that Fricker presents is taken from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, where Tom Robinson, a black man on trial after being falsely accused of raping a white woman, has his testimony dismissed due to the prejudiced preconceptions of the jury which is formed by their racial stereotypes. In this case, the jury has made a deflated credibility judgement of Tom Robinson, meaning he is unable to convey to them the knowledge that he has of the true events which occurred.

At first glance, credibility excess (e.g., imagine giving undue credibility on a specialized health matter to a GP that outstrips actual expertise, generating on them an undue burden) both seem like cases of testimonial injustice, broadly construed; at least, it might seem initially unprincipled to restrict the category of testimonial injustice to credibility deficit cases. Though, on this point Fricker holds firm. First, she holds that whilst some cases of credibility excess may be cases of injustice with regards to *distributive unfairness* (i.e., someone has more of their fair share of the good), credibility is not—like wealth or healthcare for example—a good which belongs within the distributive model of justice. Accordingly, in cases of credibility deficit, the injustice suffered by the hearer should not be characterized as a failure to receive one's share of the good, as this would fail to capture how the speaker is wronged. Instead, Fricker maintains, testimonial injustice of a philosophically interesting sort is a distinctively *epistemic* injustice, viz., a kind of injustice in which someone is wronged specifically in their capacity as a knower. Credibility deficit can fit this definition, however, credibility excess does not. As she summarises:

[...] while credibility excess may (unusually) be disadvantageous in various ways, it does not undermine, insult, or otherwise withhold proper respect for the speaker qua subject of knowledge; so in itself it does her no epistemic injustice, and a fortiori no testimonial injustice. (2007, 20)

One notable line of resistance on this point is due to José Medina (2011). As Medina sees it, Fricker's restriction of testimonial injustice to credibility deficit cases is problematic because credibility judgements, deficits *and* excesses—are implicitly comparative and contrasting. Epistemic injustices, according to Medina, are produced principally by two intrinsically interrelated phenomena: a *lack of recognition* (credibility deficit) and *epistemic privilege*

(credibility excess). The excess of epistemic privilege enjoyed by some constitutes, at the same time, an injustice that is directly related to the credibility deficits of others.

Medina captures this intrinsically relational way of thinking about credibility deficit/excess by (among other things) drawing from scientific studies which show that, e.g., students in American universities automatically tend to give more authority and credibility to male teachers than female teachers, to white teachers than to non-white teachers and to native speakers of English as to those with foreign accents, and to those perceived as heterosexual as to those perceived as non-heterosexual. The credibility excess that is afforded to male, white, native-speaking, heterosexual teachers, as evidenced by such studies, positively correlated with the credibility deficits of the teachers who are not members of this group.⁶

For our own purposes, we can remain neutral on the crux of the dispute between Fricker and Medina. What is of relevance going forward is that credibility deficit and credibility excess both plausibly *contribute* to testimonial harm, even if only the former (as Fricker submits and Medina denies) distinctively *constitutes* that harm.

3. COMPETENT TRUSTING

We'll consider in the next section how both credibility excess and credibility deficit bear important connections to trust. But in order to get these connections in proper view, it will be helpful first to clarify trust's *constituent normativity*. Doing this will shed light on what good (and bad) trusting involves, and eventually, how testimonial injustice manifests the latter.

With this in mind—and drawing from the *performance normativity framework*⁷ (PNF) that has gained traction in epistemology and elsewhere as a framework for organising performance evaluations—consider that any performance (athletic performance, doxastic, etc.) with an aim can be evaluated along three distinct dimensions. First, we can ask did the performance *succeed* in attaining its aim?; Second (and regardless of how we answer the first question) we may ask: was the performance *competent*? And third, we can ask whether the performance was *apt*—viz., successful *because* competent.

Take, for an illustrative case, the performance of an archer firing a shot at a target. If (and only if) the shot actually hits the target, it is *successful*; that is, it succeeds in attaining the aim

internal to the performance of archery. Even if it misses, though, the shot might still be competent; it is *competent* if only if the shot manifests a form that reliably enough (in appropriate circumstances) would issue in success. Just as a shot can be successful while not being competent, a shot can be competent without being successful (e.g., you might miss the target, having used reliable form, due to dumb luck). Aptness, on the PNF model, demands not just success and competence, but also that the success be *because* of the competence; only a shot that is successful because competent (and not merely successful *and* competent⁸) is an apt shot.

The three distinct dimensions of performance evaluation according to PNF, *success*, *competence*, and *aptness*, apply not only to athletic performances like shooting at an archery target, but also to *any* performance-type with an aim that is internal to that kind of endeavour of which that performance is an instance. The most influential application of PNF in contemporary philosophy is in epistemology (and particularly in virtue epistemology⁹), where—with respect to the performance of *belief*, specifically—success, competence, and aptness line up neatly with *truth* (i.e., successful belief), *justification* (competent belief) and *knowledge* (i.e., apt belief).

As one of us has argued elsewhere¹⁰, some of the key philosophical payoffs that virtue epistemologists have enjoyed by applying PEF to ‘belief’, *qua* performance, also extend, *mutatis mutandis*, to *trust*—and in particular, to what philosophers of trust call *three-place trust* (S trusts X to take care of something Y, as opposed to *two-place trust*, e.g., S trusts X).¹¹ The central idea here is as follows. Just as a belief ‘misses its mark’ and is not successful (even if it’s well justified, rational, etc.) if the target belief is false, likewise, three-place trust (hereafter, ‘trust’) has (even if perfectly reasonable, etc.) missed *its* mark if the trustee does not in fact take care of things as entrusted to. For example, there is a sense in which your trusting your cousin to keep a secret is simply not successful if your cousin spills the beans. Of course, if your cousin had never spilled the beans before and was in fact a very reliable person generally, then your trusting them with the secret might have been *competent* in a way that, say, trusting a child would have not been. Trusting your cousin and those with a similar responsibility profile ordinarily enough results in your trust not being betrayed. Whereas, trusting a child does not reliably enough end up in your trust not being betrayed, even if a child on occasion might successfully fulfil the trust you place in them.

The fact that competent trust and successful trust can come apart in both directions parallels the way that competent and successful belief can come apart in both directions (e.g.,

true beliefs can be unjustified/incompetently formed, and false beliefs can be justified/competently formed). Moreover, just as you can have a successful belief (true) that is *apt*—viz., when the belief’s correctness manifests a belief-forming competence—likewise, your trusting someone to ϕ can also be apt; this will be whenever successful trust manifests (i.e., is *because of*) a competence to trust successfully reliably enough.

What might such a trust-relevant competence look like? It falls out of the PEF framework that a trust competence will be a disposition to trust successfully (i.e., to have the trustee take care of things as entrusted) *reliably enough*. (Compare: an *epistemic* competence is a competence to attain epistemic success, viz., true beliefs, reliably enough). But all of this just invites the further question: what kind of qualities of a truster will actually dispose her to reliably—when she trusts someone with something—have her trust *fulfilled* as opposed to betrayed?

We can gain some traction here, we suggest, by using characteristic features of trusting *incompetence* as a reference point for getting a grip on what the positive features of a trusting competence might involve. Three salient personal qualities that can easily lead a truster to *unsuccessful* trust are the following. First, one might have an overly naïve *or* cynical perspective on others’ abilities and intentions, which can lead the truster to overestimate or underestimate the trustee’s competence or good will in a particular trust exchange. In the former case, one might, trust a complete stranger (perhaps a teenager) to invest a large amount of money for them. In the latter case, one might, for example, assume that all (or a some large subset of all) individuals are ‘selfish’ and as a result disproportionately refrain from trusting even reliable and trustworthy individuals with basic tasks or to relay information.

A second kind of disposition that might too often lead one away from successful trust is *introspective*. Some individuals, due to distortions they have in their introspective capacities, lack an accurate view of themselves that leads them to take on unnecessary risks of betrayal. To take an example from recent film, Jimmy Hoffa’s character, as portrayed by Al Pacino in Martin Scorsese’s *The Irishman*, was ultimately betrayed by a mafia group which he refused (even given ample warnings) to believe would ever betray him. His refusal to believe this, however, was not grounded in any attitudes he had about the mafia or their intentions, *per se*, but due to a misconception of his own (in)vulnerability that was grounded in an inflated sense of his own importance—both generally, and to the mafia.

A third quality of character that can easily increase one's risk of betrayal is a distorted perception not of (i) others' abilities or intentions (e.g., Robinson's Jury); or (ii) of one's own value or worth (Hoffa's character), but rather (iii) of the gains that betrayal would afford to the trustee and the felicity by which it could be achieved. A poor calibration on this score could result in disproportionately *incentivising* such betrayals, e.g., by too often entrusting high-value information with little expected payoffs and where betrayal could not easily enough be detected.

The foregoing three varieties of trusting *incompetence* point to at least three distinct qualities we can reasonably expect will contribute to *competent* trusting—viz., to manifesting dispositions that reliably (enough) issue in successful as opposed to betrayed trust. These qualities involve a suitable reliability threshold when it comes to assessing: (a) others' abilities and intentions; (b) oneself, including one's values and beliefs; and (c) expected gains by (and felicity of) betrayal. Reliability along these three dimensions can be expected to contribute to one's being a competent rather than an incompetent truster (even if not it is not exhaustive of it) given the conduciveness of reliability along these dimensions to successful trust.

4. CREDIBILITY DEFICIT AND EXCESS AS INCOMPETENT TRUSTING

Let's now bring the discussions from §§2-3 together. We've seen from Fricker and Medina that both credibility deficit as well as credibility excess contribute in their own ways to testimonial injustice, and this is the case regardless of whether credibility excess (as Medina maintains and Fricker denies) itself actually *constitutes* testimonial injustice.

In this section, what we want to suggest is that both credibility deficit as well as credibility excess not only contribute to testimonial injustice, but also that they constitute manifestations (respectively) of *incompetent* trusting, and that this can be shown (in the case of both credibility deficit and credibility excess) with references to one or more of the three dimensions of competent/incompetent trusting we considered in §2.

Let's begin with *credibility deficit*, using Fricker's illustrative Tom Robinson case from *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a reference point. Notice, for starters, that in this example, the jury badly misjudges *both* Tom Robinson's abilities and his intentions to communicate the truth. This misjudging, which derives from the jury's identity prejudice leads the jury not towards, but away

from, trusting successfully. To draw an analogy with an epistemic case involving perception: if (due to a prejudice against the designers of a building) one misjudged their abilities and intentions such that they anticipated incompetence and deceptiveness, one might withhold judgment on whether, for example, what they are seeing is what it looks like, as opposed to trusting their senses, which would have delivered the truth.

Additionally—and apart from these prejudiced beliefs the jury holds about the hearer—the jury’s own introspective defects are plausibly part of the problem as well. Just as, e.g., Jimmy Hoffa’s distorted view of his value blocked him from appreciating his own vulnerability to betrayal, likewise, Robinson’s jury’s distorted view of their own methods of belief forming (e.g., they think they are forming beliefs on the basis of evidence, but they lack access to the fact that they are not) blocks them from giving the credibility to the speaker that would typically be necessary to have enabled trust in the first place.

In the case of *credibility excess*, consider how misjudging ability and intention can also play a structurally similar (albeit, inverse) kind of role in leading to the betrayal of trust. In our example case, the jury clearly misjudges Bob and Mayella Ewell, who are members of a privileged racial group, as unimpugnably competent and sincere testifiers. And this zealous kind of misjudging, which derives from identity prejudice that substantially benefits these testifiers, leads the jury not towards, but away from trusting successfully. In short, their prejudiced inflation of the Ewell’s aptitude and integrity contributes in a direct way toward the jury’s betrayal of the trust that is so disproportionately placed in them.

Likewise, the jury’s own introspective defects plausibly compound their capacity to avoid betrayal by the Ewell’s. In particular, their distorted view of their own methods of belief forming (e.g., they are oblivious to the way their own view of themselves in connection with the Ewells is artificially inflating their assessments of how credible the Ewells are) blocks them from giving due consideration to the abundant counterevidence to this testimony that they encounter at the trial.

And thirdly, in connection with credibility excess, it’s worth highlighting that that the jurors’ identity prejudice benefiting the testifiers leaves the jurors inappropriately attentive to the extent to which the Ewells in this case stand to both gain substantially through betrayal and that they can achieve this highly beneficial aim without much risk of detection.

In sum, then, the takeaway lesson from this section can be summarised as follows: credibility deficit and credibility excess line up in important ways not only with testimonial injustice but also with incompetent trusting. That is, not only (as discussed in §2) do both kinds of credibility distortions contribute to testimonial injustice, by promoting (and in the case of credibility deficit, by additionally constituting) the harming of a testifier in her capacity as a knower; but further, both credibility deficit and credibility excess cases feature (in different ways) several of the key markers of incompetent trusting (i.e., features of trusters that dispose them away from attaining successful trust), which were are plainly manifest in both cases of credibility deficit and credibility excess.

What this all points to is that—to the extent we want to mitigate against testimonial injustice—one promising strategy for doing so would be an indirect one: in short, to target the incompetent trusting. And thinking about targeting testimonial injustice this way—e.g., through the route of targeting incompetent trusting—comes with a pleasing advantage: there is, from within the PEF framework, already a helpful structure in place for organising this kind of strategy, one that involves the development of *metacompetences*, that is, second-order competences to (to a first approximation) suitably regulate one’s exercise of first-order competences. Let’s turn now to getting this positive idea in view.

5. TRUST, METACOMPETENCE, AND MITIGATION OF TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE

Even those who have a competence to do something reliably might at the same time have a poor perspective on the *limits* of their own competence. To take a familiar example from Ernest Sosa (2015), suppose a huntress, Diana, is *more competent* than she thinks; she fires an arrow at a target in the twilight fog from a considerable distance, and hits it. Diana might think her shot is lucky; but she’s wrong, and this is because she *underestimates* how reliable she is when firing a shot in those conditions. When firing in those conditions, not easily would she have missed.

As Sosa describes the case, the shot is *apt*—it is successful because competent. However, even so, there is a sense in which Diana’s shot has room for improvement, when we evaluate it as a performance. After all, Diana’s shot, though apt, could *easily have been inapt*. Even though she has an impressive competence to shoot arrows at targets (in those conditions) reliably, she lacks the ability to discern whether she is within, our outside, the limits within which she’d be

suitably reliable to take have taken the shot. Given this poor perspective, she very easily would have shot *beyond* her competence in this case and so very easily would have shot inaptly.

A higher zone of performance quality lacks this feature through better risk management. Compare: (i) a shot that is apt, but which could easily have been inapt; with (ii) a shot which is apt, but wouldn't easily have been inapt. Whereas Diana's shot falls into the former category, we can imagine the following kind of performance falling into the latter category: a shot that is not only apt (successful because competence) but also such that not easily would the individual—say Diana*—have *taken* the shot *were* it have been inapt.

What distinguishes Diana from Diana* is *not* archery skills so much as it is the capacity to *govern* those skills through a skilled assessment of their limits. Within performance-theoretic virtue epistemology, the term 'metacompetence' is used to describe these kinds of 'higher-order' or 'reflective' dispositions thinkers have to *regulate* their first-order dispositions.¹² A meta-competence, in a given domain of endeavour, D, is a competence to reliably enough attain not merely the first-order D-aim, but to attain the further aim of *aptly* attaining the D-aim, reliably enough (see, e.g., Sosa 2015, 69; cf., Carter 2019, §9). It is in virtue of possessing this kind of higher-order competence, for example, that Diana* (but not Diana) will refrain from shooting when just a bit too far outside the threshold from which, if she took the shot, it would be apt; whereas both Diana and Diana* are competent at shooting arrows, only Diana* has a competent view of her own competence, and so understands where the limits of this competence lie; and this understanding in turn regulates when she will decide to shoot as opposed to forbear.

Transposing things now to the arena of trust, specifically: the distinction between a trust competence and a trusting metacompetence is as follows. Whereas the former involves the disposition to trust *successfully* reliably enough (i.e., to trust such that the trustee takes care of things—including providing the truth, in the epistemic case—as entrusted) when one tries in appropriate conditions, the latter involves a disposition to *trust aptly* reliably enough. Just as Diana*, but not Diana*, understood the limits of her own competence in light of the relevant meta-competence she has to assess her own archery prowess, an epistemic agent possesses the kind of metacompetence that matters for trust when she can reliably recognise the limits of *her* competence to trust successfully reliably enough.

What the possession of such a metacompetence in the archery versus trust cases involves, of course, is entirely different. The former involves good risk assessment abilities when it comes

to assessing how one's reliability at hitting a target is sensitive to different kinds of archery performance conditions (e.g., high winds, distance from target, lighting conditions, etc.), as well as a capacity to assess which kinds of performance-relevant conditions are the ones that actually obtain.

Trusting metacompetence, on the other hand, involves good risk assessment abilities when it comes to assessing how one's reliability at *trusting successfully* is sensitive to various kinds of factors, as well as a capacity to assess when such factors obtain. We've already seen, in §3, that whether one is reliable (or unreliable) at trusting successfully depends on how well one performs along (at least) three salient dimensions: at assessing (a) others abilities and intentions; (b) oneself, including one's values and beliefs; and (c) expected gains by (and felicity of) betrayal on the part of the trustee. Whereas a competent truster simply needs to *be* reliable along these dimensions—this will *de facto* lead her to trust successfully reliably enough—a meta-competent truster will need to be able to *reliably assess* how she measures up *vis-à-vis* (a-c), and what the relevant situation one finds oneself in demands of her *vis-à-vis* (a-c).

We're now in a position to connect the foregoing discussion of trusting metacompetence with testimonial injustice. Given that credibility deficit and excess cases are both cases of incompetent trusting (from §3), one entirely straightforward way to mitigate against testimonial injustice will be to simply *become* more competent at trusting—that is, to develop those qualities (e.g., a-c) in virtue of which one will be disposed to trust successfully reliably enough.

But this just raises the question—what can we do to mitigate testimonial injustice if we're *already* (in some ways) incompetent along (a-c); or, put another way, suppose we are not already functioning reliably along (a-c). How should we then mitigate against epistemic injustice in the non-ideal scenario where we find ourselves regularly in social communication with others (including potentially vulnerable or traditionally marginalised parties) *while at the same time* lacking one or more dimensions of reliability along (a-c)?

It is here where we think a focus on trust-relevant metacompetences has special value as a strategy for mitigating testimonial injustice. Suppose, for example, that Jay is a juror on Robinson's case and—like the rest of the jurors—Jay's identity prejudices affect how he views both Tom's and the Ewells' abilities as well as their intentions (respectively) to tell the truth on the issue of the crime at hand. This quality of Jay's, of course, contributes to making him *incompetent* as a receiver of court testimony; when receiving such testimony, this quality too

easily leads him away from trusting successfully, e.g., by leading him to have his trust betrayed (as it is) by the Ewells as well as preventing him from placing trust (which would not have been betrayed) in Tom's word.

Now, Let Jay* be just like Jay in so far as Jay* also harbours identity prejudices that draw him towards a distorted view of both Tom's and the Ewells' abilities as well as their intentions. But stipulate that Jay*, unlike Jay, has worked to better cultivate an understanding of his shortcomings as a truster when it comes to accepting others' capacities to testify competently and sincerely. He realises, e.g., through reflection, education, and therapy, etc., that he is subject to identity prejudices that are deeply seated in him, due to his upbringing.

As a result, Jay* has a competent view of his own reliability (and indeed, unreliability) when it comes to assessing the court testimony and Jay does not. Unfortunately, this difference between Jay* and Jay in terms of trusting metacompetence does not simply cause Jay* to *not* be drawn to afford more credibility to the Ewells than to Tom. He, like Jay, still finds himself pulled in the direction of accepting what the Ewells are saying and rejecting what Tom is saying.¹³

While the metacompetence he possesses does *not* afford Jay* the ability to not be drawn in the direction he is, it does afford him the power to appreciate this limitation, and through this appreciation, to empower himself to avoid mistakes in both directions when it comes to his response to the Ewells and Tom, respectively. Unlike Jay, Jay* will not simply *trust* the Ewells say and *distrust* what Tom says even though doing so aligns exactly with his prejudice-driven inclinations (as it does with Jay's).

Here it will be helpful to briefly draw an analogy with visual-perceptual competence and metacompetence; suppose you are afflicted with a form of red–green colour blindness that prevents you from reliably identifying red things as red and green things as green. The matter of how you interact with the red- and green-coloured world around you will be a function not only of the colour-blindness but also, importantly, of the extent to which you recognise it. Oblivious to the affliction, you will make judgments in line with your perceptually incompetent inclinations to find green things red and red things green, etc. However, if you understand the limits of your visual competences, you will be positioned to react *differently* to apparent red and apparent green, e.g., by agnosticism in some cases, and in others, to let other kinds of evidence you have about the colour you appear to see override what your senses seem to tell you.

By parity of reasoning, Jay* (but not Jay), is positioned so as to recognise the limits of his (in)competence, when it comes to trust in connection with the Ewells and Tom, and through this recognition, is better positioned to resist the inclinations he has to simply (like one with red-green colour blindness but who is unaware of this) assent to these inclinations.

To be clear, the possession of metacompetence, through the acquisition of a better understanding of one's competence, doesn't simply *cause* one to resist the relevant inclinations that align with one's (first-order) incompetence. (Compare: an intellectually vicious individual, even *aware* of red-green colourblindness, might simply and dogmatically assent to red and green appearances nonetheless, as a result of a more general intellectual viciousness). It does, however, better *position* a thinker to do so, and so to trust (or refrain from doing so) *against* the kinds of inclinations that would result in unjust credibility deficit and excess. By working to cultivate not only competences in trusting, but metacompetences to better appreciate the limits of our trusting reliably, we position ourselves to refrain from contributing to testimonial injustices *even in circumstances* where our trusting would otherwise be incompetent in such a way that would have likely brought it about. Whether we in fact do as these metacompetences position us to do will, however—and analogously with the perceptual case—depend importantly on what other kinds of virtues (and vices) we have.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Testimonial injustice is prevalent and harmful, and there are a range of ways (epistemic, moral, and political) we might legitimately try to combat it.¹⁴ This essay has explored just one very specific way. By appreciating how testimonial injustice is sourced in trusting incompetence, we equip ourselves with resource to tackle testimonial injustice from within the kind of framework in which the management and regulation of other kinds of incompetences has been fruitfully explored.¹⁵

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NOTES

¹ See, for example, Kidd, Medina, and Pohlhaus (2017); Maitra (2010); Wanderer (2012); (2017); Pohlhaus Jr (2014); Medina (2011; 2013; 2017); McKinnon (2016); Coady (2017); Bondy (2010); Luzzi (2016); Battaly (2017).

² See in particular the essays in Sherman and Goguen (2019).

³ For some recent discussions of epistemic injustice and bias, see, e.g., Goguen (2016) and Peet (2017).

⁴ For an important though different take on the relationship between epistemic and trust than we are pursuing here, see Origi (2012).

⁵ Both species of epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutical, involve one's being harmed in her capacity as a knower, with the latter species being due to unfair deprivation of concepts necessary for the expression of one's ideas. For some representative recent discussions, beyond Fricker's own, see, e.g., Beeby (2011), Crerar (2016), Medina (2012), Simion (forthcoming).

⁶ Medina suggests further that testimonial injustice in the form of credibility excess also occurs in Fricker's paradigm case of Tom Robinson. On Medina's interpretation of the case, credibility differentials were already in place even before Tom and his accusers entered the witness stand; and, in the eyes of the jury, they were corroborated and augmented in their testimonies. Arguably then, according to Medina, the discrediting of Tom's testimony does not happen in a vacuum; his credibility is not undermined independently of the credibility of those around him, but in fact, the disparaging of his testimonial authority is achieved through the epistemic authority implicitly given to his questioner: who due to their membership of certain privileged social groups is recognized as more credible. Medina concludes 'on my view, the novel illustrates how a credibility excess—that of whites, and more specifically that of Mayella's testimony and that of the prosecutor's questioning—constitutes a misplaced trust that can easily harm others and contribute to the perpetuation of social injustices' (2011, 24). For further discussion, see §4.

⁷ The performance normativity framework has been pioneered in work by Ernest Sosa (2007; 2010; 2015; 2017), both as a framework for evaluating performances in general, and epistemic performances in particular. For further discussion, see, e.g., the essays in Fernandez (ed.) (2016), as well as Carter (2016; 2019; 2020; forthcoming) and Kelp et al. (2017).

⁸ An example of a performance that is successful and competent but not apt is the following: suppose you fire a shot from reliable form, which is blown off target due to a surprise gust of wind—and then—blown back *on course* due to a second fortuitous gust of wind, such that it hits the target. This kind of shot is competent, and it is also successful, but the success is not because of the competence, but because of luck. For discussion of this and similar cases, see, e.g., Sosa (2010) and Pritchard (2012; 2015).

⁹ See, along with Sosa, Greco (2003; 2009; 2010; 2012), Turri (2011; 2016) and Zagzebski (1996).

¹⁰ See Carter (2019; 2020a).

¹¹ For a discussion of this difference, see, e.g., Holton (1994) and McLeod (2015).

¹² For other philosophical approaches to metacognition outside of virtue epistemology specifically, see for example Proust (2013) and Morton (2012).

¹³ Compare here with a similar case familiar from the assertion literature, which is Lackey's (2008) RACIST JUROR case. In this case, a racist juror votes and asserts in accordance with what they know the evidence requires, while at the same time, harbouring private beliefs that align with racism.

¹⁴ See especially Sherman and Goguen (2019) as well as Meehan (2020).

¹⁵ Carter's work on this paper is part of the 'A Virtue Epistemology of Trust' (#RPG-2019-302) project, which is hosted by the University of Glasgow's COGITO Epistemology Research Centre, and he is grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for supporting this research. The authors would also like to thank Gerry Dunne.