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Recognition and Epistemic Injustice in the Epistemology of Disagreement

Kirk Lougheed
McMaster University

Abstract: Conciliationists hold that when an agent encounters peer disagreement about one of her beliefs she has a (partial) defeater for that belief and hence must lower her confidence or suspend judgment about that belief. Non-conciliationists, on the other hand, deny that peer disagreement need always constitute a (partial) defeater when an agent encounters it. But both conciliationists and non-conciliationists agree that no problem arises when two opponents disagree but aren't epistemic peers. If they aren't epistemic peers, then one opponent is necessarily the epistemic superior of the other. There is no problem in such a case since the epistemic superior is well within her (rational) rights to disregard her opponent. When an agent wrongly fails to recognize her opponent as an epistemic peer this constitutes a recognition injustice with serious epistemic consequences. There are also cases where an agent's opponent isn't her epistemic peer due to epistemic injustice. I conclude that (i) recognition injustice and epistemic injustice are illicit ways of escaping the sceptical pressure posed by conciliationism; (ii) if recognition injustice and epistemic injustice didn't occur there would probably be more cases of epistemic peer disagreement and; (iii) it is epistemically beneficial to foster the existence of peer disagreement.

I. Introduction

There is a recent and ever-growing literature on the epistemology of disagreement. This literature focuses on the question of how an agent ought to respond when she encounters epistemic peer disagreement about her belief that proposition P. Two agents are epistemic peers if and only if they are equally likely to be right about whether P or it's difficult to tell who's more likely to be right about whether P. Conciliationists hold that when an agent encounters peer disagreement about P she has a (partial) defeater for P and hence must lower her confidence or suspend judgment about P. Non-conciliationists, on the other hand, deny that peer disagreement need always constitute a (partial) defeater for P. There are views that take a more dynamic approach but conciliationism

and non-conciliationism represent the two main positions in the literature. Everyone recognizes that no (epistemic) problem arises when two opponents disagree but aren't in fact epistemic peers with respect to whether P. This is because once an agent recognizes that her opponent isn't her peer she has a reason to discount her opponent's assessment of P, or at least count it less than her own.

I explore connections between the epistemology of disagreement and different types of recognition injustice and epistemic injustice. When an agent wrongly fails to recognize her opponent as an epistemic peer this constitutes a recognition injustice with serious epistemic consequences. There are also cases where an agent's opponent isn't her epistemic peer due to epistemic injustice. I conclude that (i) recognition injustice and epistemic injustice are illicit ways of escaping the sceptical threat posed by conciliationism; (ii) if recognition injustice and epistemic injustice didn't occur there would probably be more cases of epistemic peer disagreement and; (iii) it is epistemically beneficial to foster the existence of peer disagreement so these types of injustices are especially epistemically harmful.

II. The Epistemology of Disagreement

The recent epistemology of disagreement literature is vast and ever-growing. In this section I summarize some of the main themes in literature, though I make no attempt at completeness. Conciliationists hold that when an agent encounters peer disagreement about P she has a (partial) defeater for P and hence must lower her confidence or suspend judgment about P. A prominent strategy in defense of conciliationism is to hold that without a *dispute independent reason* to remain steadfast in the face of disagreement one is arbitrary or begging-the-question against one's

opponent. This idea has come to be known as the *Independence Principle*. David Christensen is one of the best known defenders of conciliationism and independence. He asks readers to consider the following case:

Suppose that five of us go out to dinner. It's time to pay the check, so the question we're interested in is how much we each owe. We can all see the bill total clearly, we all agree to give a 20 percent tip, and we further agree to split the whole cost evenly, not worrying over who asked for imported water, or skipped desert, or drank more of the wine. I do the math in my head and become highly confident that our shares are \$43 each. Meanwhile, my friend [epistemic peer] does the math in her head and becomes highly confident that our shares are \$45 each. How should I react, upon learning of her belief (Christensen 2007, 193)?¹

Imagine that there's no easy way to explain the disagreement. Both friends have equally good track-records. Neither friend is especially tired, distracted, or inebriated. Without a dispute independent reason Christensen claims that the disagreement should prompt us to suspend judgment about how much is owed on the bill. Christensen and others have argued that lessons from idealized cases carry over to more complex cases of disagreement.² Some argue that the entire debate about conciliationism rests on whether the Independence Principle is true (Christensen 2011, 1; Kelly 2013, 37).³

Non-conciliationists, on the other hand, deny that peer disagreement need always constitute a (partial) defeater for P. Considerations in favour of non-conciliationism include the fact that conciliationism can lead to mistakes because an agent might be forced to revise in the face of peer

¹ Elga's Horse Race Case (2007, 166-167), Feldman's Dean in the Quad Case (2007, 207-208), and Matheson's Thermometer Case (2015a, 71) are also designed to generate similar intuitions.

² Lougheed (forthcoming) challenges this idea.

³ See also Matheson 2015a. Moon forthcoming defends a modified version of Independence. Lord 2014 rejects Independence and related principles. Lord points out that Independence has gained significance in other philosophical debates: Copp 2007 relies on it in defending moral independence. Independence is also appealed to in evolutionary debunking arguments found in Street 2011 and Vavova 2014. I will not discuss these connections any further in this project.

disagreement even though it turns out that she's right. Others worry that conciliationism entails widespread scepticism. But since widespread scepticism is false, then conciliationism must be false. Conciliationism has also been accused of self-referential incoherent (Elga 2010, Pittard 2015). Still others have worried that conciliationism forces an agent to be spineless or lack an important type of self-trust.

Finally, early work in the epistemology of disagreement often suggests that in order for epistemic peerhood to obtain, two agents must have strict evidential and cognitive equality with each other. Sometimes brief definitions are offered at the start of an article before the author proceeds to offer her main argument. There are a number of problems with positing evidential and cognitive equality as necessary conditions for peerhood. First, the concepts of evidence and cognition are far from uncontroversial. There is no straightforward account of evidence or cognition so it might take a lot of work to cash-out the meaning of these terms. Second, and more importantly, it's doubtful that strict evidential and cognitive equality ever obtain in real-world cases of disagreement (King 2012). Even two identical twins will not have *exactly* the same evidence or *exactly* the same cognitive processes. In light of this it might be tempting to water down the strict evidential and cognitive equality requirement to a weaker 'rough' or 'approximate' equality requirement. But it's possible that even slight differences in evidence or cognition can explain why two opponents arrive at different conclusions. In such cases the opponents are reasonable to remain steadfast and it's difficult to see how the existence of disagreement raises any sort of sceptical challenge

A more promising way to understand the notion of epistemic peerhood is that two agents are epistemic peers if and only if they are equally likely to be right about whether P or it's difficult to tell who's more likely to be right about whether P. This allows for differences in evidence and

cognition while simultaneously keeping intact the pressure that conciliationists are attempting to generate. In cases where an agent knows her opponent's track-record about whether P is equal to hers she can't ignore her opponent's judgment about P, even if their evidential and cognitive situations differ. Admittedly, in the real-world it might be uncommon for an agent to know her opponent's precise track-record, particularly on certain topics. But if she can't tell whether she's more likely to be right about whether P she isn't justified in downgrading her opponent. She needs some positive reason to disregard or downgrade her opponent. Or at least this is what the conciliationist is likely to maintain. In any case, this is a way to generate a puzzle about epistemic peer disagreement without relying on an overly strict notion of peerhood that will never obtain in the real-world.

III. Recognition Injustice and Epistemic Injustice

For the rest of the paper I'm going to assume that some (non-trivially weak) form of conciliationism is true. Or at the very least, I'm going to suppose that there is no obvious or easy way to avoid the apparent sceptical pressure posed by (non-trivially weak versions of) conciliationism. By sceptical pressure I refer to the fact that if conciliationism is true then when an agent encounters peer disagreement about P she must lower her confidence in or suspend judgment about P. There is widespread disagreement about most important religious, political, and ethical beliefs. If conciliationism is true then a certain degree of scepticism about a whole host of beliefs is required. In this section I suggest that it's possible that there are cases where an agent avoids facing epistemic peer disagreement about her belief that P because she commits a recognition or epistemic injustice. I argue that either type of injustice amounts to an illicit (if not

always intentional) way of escaping the sceptical pressure of conciliationism. I'll take each type of injustice in turn.

1. Recognition Injustice

Mattias Iser explains that recognition theory has both a normative and a psychological component. For instance, recognizing another person as free and equal comes with important normative implications, particularly surrounding the nature of obligations. Iser explains that “[m]ost theories of recognition assume that in order to develop a practical identity, persons fundamentally depend on the feedback of other subjects (and of society as a whole)” (Iser 2013). If such recognition is always negative then a person will struggle to form a positive self-identity (Fanon 1952; Iser 2013; Taylor 1992) Iser explains that:

Recognition theory is thought to be especially well-equipped to illuminate the psychological mechanisms of social and political resistance. As experiences of misrecognition violate the identity of subjects, the affected are supposed to be particularly motivated to resist, that is, to engage in a ‘struggle for recognition’ (Iser 2013).

The label ‘identity politics’ describes certain groups attempting to gain political recognition. But minority groups aren’t just fighting for distribution of certain goods. It’s about what standing persons should have vis-à-vis other persons (Young 1990). There are many interesting debates involving recognition theory. For instance, what is recognized, how it is recognized, by whom is it recognized, and on what grounds is it recognized? Some worry that focusing on recognition takes away from important political issues surrounding the distribution of goods. Others worry that seeking recognition simply plays into the hands of dominant social groups who are in control of who is recognized (Iser 2013).

Before applying the idea of a recognition injustice to the epistemology of disagreement it's important to understand what I mean by 'recognition'. I'm not going to offer necessary and sufficient conditions for 'recognition' (indeed many recognition theorists would abhor such an attempt); rather, I'm going to offer an approximate definition that will serve my purposes without being unnecessarily controversial. Contra Paul Ricoeur (2005) I'm going to assume that there's an important difference between recognition and identification. It's possible to identify something without actually recognizing it. For genuine recognition to occur *both* parties must positively evaluate one another.⁴ Recognition entails, minimally, having some kind of pro-attitude toward the other party in question.

It seems that much of recognition theory focuses on the perspective of individuals seeking recognition through a variety of methods, including political resistance. This fact is worthy of discussion in itself, but I want to shift to the perspective of the oppressor, or at the very least of those who fail to appropriately recognize certain individuals or groups. Notice that recognition theory has been understood almost entirely within a political and moral framework. But there are important epistemic implications here, especially when one reflects on recognition injustice within the context of disagreement. Recall my definition of epistemic peerhood: Two agents are epistemic peers if and only if they are equally likely to be right about whether P or it's difficult to tell who's more likely to be right about whether P. A recognition injustice can occur when agent S fails to *recognize* that her opponent is her peer about whether P. More precisely, she fails to recognize her opponent appropriately at all, and hence fails to recognize her as a peer.

⁴ This definition is intended to be consistent with the term 'acknowledgement'. For more on the definition of understanding see Appiah 1992; Cavell 1969; Markell 2003; Neuhaus 2010. There are themes of self-recognition in the phenomenological tradition that I won't spend time on here. See Honneth 1992; Kojève 1947; Williams 1997. For more on political recognition see Blum 1998; Taylor 1992; Thompson 2006.

What I'm referring to isn't an instance of S simply making a mistake in assessing her opponent or missing some piece of information about her opponent she ought to have had. S fails to recognize her opponent as an epistemic peer because she fails to recognize her in the moral and political sphere. The group her opponent belongs to doesn't have the requisite political, social, or moral standing, and hence recognition that would allow members of that group to be considered epistemic peers. Minority groups seeking recognition can clearly commit this injustice against one another. But in all likelihood this type of injustice will occur between members of a dominant social group failing to recognize members of a minority group. Finally, consider that this doesn't entail that the members of the unrecognized group aren't in fact epistemic peers. There could be nothing that they're obligated to do in order to be recognized as such. The fault could be entirely with agent S. Call this specific type of recognition injustice, *recognition peer injustice*.

Notice the possible consequences of recognition peer injustice: Agent S will *miss* cases of peer disagreement about P when she commits recognition injustice about who her epistemic peers are with respect to P. She will either come to believe (falsely) that there is more or less peer agreement about P than actually exists. In some cases she may come to believe that there is little to no peer disagreement about P when in fact there is a large amount of peer disagreement about P. This means that recognition injustice may sometimes lead an agent to wrongly think she's escaped the sceptical pressure of conciliationism. She may look around and find no disagreement about her belief that P. But this happens only because she commits recognition injustice. Recognition injustice, then, has serious epistemic consequences within the context of disagreement.

To conclude this section, I want to stress that recognition peer injustice is compatible with different understandings of recognition. Many of the different understandings of recognition will

allow that in some cases a recognition injustice implies that one wrongly fails to acknowledge an epistemic peer. I also want to point out that I haven't made any claims about how much such injustices occur. They have clearly occurred in the past when one reflects on the treatment of women, ethnic minorities, people with intellectual and physical disabilities, and those part of the LGBTQ community. I make no claims about how much recognition peer injustice is currently occurring, but lessons from history suggest it's naïve to think we're consistently avoiding recognition peer injustice.

2. *Epistemic Injustice*

Whereas recognition injustices are cases where one fails to appropriately recognize an epistemic peer as such, there are cases where an agent's opponent *isn't* her epistemic peer about whether P because of epistemic injustice. If her opponent hadn't experienced epistemic injustice then she would have been a peer with respect to P. In explaining the concept of epistemic injustice Elizabeth Anderson writes:

Dominant groups tend to accord epistemic authority to themselves and withhold it from subordinates by constructing stigmatizing stereotypes of subordinates as incompetent or dishonest. They promote, as external markers of epistemic authority, characteristics they have, or are stereotypically supposed to have... that subordinates lack or are stereotypically supposed to lack. They also hoard opportunities for gaining access to these markers – for instance, by denying subordinate groups access to higher education. Such power-distorted practices of assigning epistemic authority commit an epistemic injustice against members of subordinate group, undermining their ability to participate in collaborative inquiry (Anderson 2017).

Miranda Fricker's (2007) canonical work on epistemic injustice focuses on testimonial and hermeneutical injustices. Testimonial injustice can occur if an agent gives her opponent less credibility in her assessment about P than is (epistemically) deserved, simply because the opponent is part of a certain social group. Fricker's favourite example comes from the all-white jury in *To*

Kill a Mockingbird who refuses to believe the testimony of a black defendant. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when a group is so (socially) powerless that they don't have the conceptual resources to understand some of their experiences. Sexual harassment in the workplace before the women's rights movement is a possible example of hermeneutical injustice (Goldman and Blanchard 2016).

Fricker is careful to stress that the harm here isn't merely practical; it's also epistemic. Since Fricker holds that part of the intrinsic value of humans is their rational capacity, harming someone as a knower ultimately constitutes an intrinsic harm. As I will discuss later on, Fricker rightly observes that epistemic injustice also hurts the perpetrator since she might fail to gain new knowledge (Goldman and Blanchard 2016). Fricker and others (Alcoff 2010; Anderson 2012; Daukas 2006; 2011; Medina 2011; Sherman 2016; Turri et al 2017) discuss different ways to avoid epistemic injustice, but that will not be my focus. Rather, I want to explain some of the potential consequences of epistemic injustice within the context of peer disagreement.

Testimonial injustice has obvious application to peer disagreement. If agent S wrongly disregards the testimony of her opponent about whether P because she is prejudiced against her opponent's social group then she commits an epistemic injustice. It's plausible in some cases where this occurs the opponent should be considered the agent's epistemic peer. In committing this epistemic injustice the agent has avoided the sceptical pressure of conciliationism. Her opponent isn't her peer so there's no peer disagreement to worry about. But as long as one accepts that testimonial injustice is inappropriate then it follows that it's inappropriate as strategy (even if indirectly) to avoid conciliationism. If testimonial injustice is the only reason why the agent's opponent isn't considered her epistemic peer, then she hasn't successfully avoided peer

disagreement. If she corrected the testimonial injustice then peer disagreement about P would emerge.

With respect to hermeneutical injustice Heidi Grasswick explains that it is an “example of how some forms of knowledge important to marginalized groups may be difficult or even impossible to access as a result of systems of power relations that do not support the development of the necessary conceptual resources for that knowledge” (Grasswick 2016). The application of hermeneutical injustice to peer disagreement might be less obvious than testimonial injustice but it exists. If agent S’s opponent isn’t her peer because she lacks certain relevant conceptual resources needed to express her disagreement, and she lacks them because of oppression, then S hasn’t successfully avoided the challenge of conciliationism. For had her opponent belonged to a group which was treated fairly then she would have been agent S’s epistemic peer about whether P.

Nathan Ballantyne (2014) argues persuasively that counterfactual disagreement is just as serious as actual disagreement, at least in disciplines like philosophy. If there are nearby possible worlds with epistemic peers who disagree with S about whether P then this constitutes a defeater for P. Similarly, if a hermeneutical injustice occurs such that agent’s S opponent isn’t her peer in the actual world, the sceptical threat from conciliationism can remain intact if in a nearby (fairer) world her opponent would have been her peer. S’s opponent would have been her peer if the social group she belongs to isn’t subject to hermeneutical injustice in the nearby world. If one wonders just how close these possible worlds are to the actual world just reflect on the reasons for protest and activism. Think of the social and moral progress made in the last 500 years. It’s easy to imagine our world being a fairer place. Modal intuitions may differ here. But it’s not implausible to think that there are nearby possible worlds where S’s opponent isn’t subject to hermeneutical injustice

and hence is S's peer with respect to whether P. If hermeneutical injustice the reason why the agent's opponent isn't considered her epistemic peer, then she hasn't successfully avoided peer disagreement. If she corrected the hermeneutical injustice then peer disagreement about P would emerge.⁵

IV. The Epistemic Benefits of Cognitive Diversity

Thus far I've argued that (i) recognition injustice and epistemic injustice are illicit ways of escaping the sceptical threat posed by conciliationism and; (ii) if recognition injustice didn't occur there would be more cases of acknowledged disagreement and if epistemic injustice didn't occur there would be more cases of epistemic peer disagreement. In this section I'm going to argue that (iii) it is epistemically beneficial to foster the existence of peer disagreement. Within the context of peer disagreement, if less recognition and epistemic injustice occurred the better it would be for inquiry.

In *On Liberty* John Stuart Mill famously argues for the political value of free speech by appealing to the epistemic benefits of the free speech. He writes:

But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error (Mill 1859, 87).⁶

⁵ Related is that when hermeneutical injustice occurs there is epistemic ignorance. Such instances of ignorance are sometimes purposefully achieved in order for a group to maintain a certain power dynamic (Grasswick 2016; Alcott 2007). This isn't to say that all forms of epistemic ignorance are avoidable or even bad, but within the context of hermeneutical injustice they are problematic (Townley 2011).

⁶ While Aristotle isn't a defender of democracy (at least not in any straightforward sense) his cryptic remarks on the wisdom of the many suggest he also believes a variety of opinions is epistemically beneficial. See the *Politics* 1281a 39 – 1281b 7; 1286a 27-30.

In recent decades there has been some empirical evidence to suggest that Mill is correct to hold that dissent is in fact epistemically beneficial for inquiry (removed for anonymous review). The relevant empirical data, particularly in psychology is ever-expanding, so in what follows I only attempt a brief survey.

Scott Page argues that heterogeneous groups composed of less talented individuals consistently outperform homogenous groups composed of more talented individuals with respect to cognitive tasks such as problem-solving prediction (2007).⁷ There are some important parameters required for this claim to be true. The tasks in questions must be sufficiently difficult and the individuals in questions cannot be so completely different from one another as to fail to offer a valuable different perspective. For instance, it would be beneficial to have doctors with different specialities, perhaps along with other scientists working on a medical problem. But it wouldn't be helpful to have a beat poet working on the problem too. Having said this, Page claims that when these constraints are met, cognitive diversity will *always* trump ability. Notice that the cognitive diversity that would be created by avoiding recognition and epistemic injustice falls squarely within Page's constraints. If the (epistemically) harmed people in question are (or would be) equally likely to be right about whether P, they clearly aren't too far afield to be outside of Page's requirements.

Cognitive diversity might also help to combat any pernicious effects from confirmation bias. This bias manifests itself when “[p]eople tend to search for evidence that will confirm their existing beliefs while also ignoring or downplaying disconfirming evidence” (Duarte et al, forthcoming). Psychologists suggest that confirmation bias is difficult to avoid in almost any

⁷ See also Surowiecki 2004.

setting. Even studying critical reasoning only leads students to temporary suppression of bias. Likewise, Academics with high IQs are prone to offer more reasons in favour of their own views, rather than being more open to opposing ideas than lay people with lower IQs and less education (Duarte et al, forthcoming). Thus, “people are far better at identifying the flaws in other people’s evidence-gathering than in their own, especially if those other people have dissimilar beliefs” (Duarte et al, forthcoming; Mercier and Sperber 2011; Sperber et al 2010).

In a scientific research community where the end goal is epistemic (i.e. true belief, understanding, knowledge, etc.) widespread agreement coupled with confirmation bias “can be devastating for scientific communities by leading to widely-accepted claims that reflect the scientific community’s blind spots more than they reflect justified scientific conclusions” (Duarte et al, forthcoming).⁸ Duarte et al also notes that the widespread political agreement in social psychology entails that anonymous review is less likely to be a fair process which is able to detect errors and judge the merits of research fairly (Duarte et al, forthcoming).

Psychologists have further explored the positive epistemic impact that a dissenting minority can have on group decision-making. Majority based decision-making often creates strong pressure for group conformity and thus leads to groupthink (Duarte et al, forthcoming; Fiske, Harris and Cuddy 2004). A dissenting minority is able to disrupt group cohesion norms. This is epistemically beneficial if the group norms are problematic. For instance, in science such minority disagreement is epistemically beneficial because it causes scientists to think more deeply about their research (Duarte et al, forthcoming; Crano 2012). Thus, “[t]he many benefits of these processes have been borne out by research on minority influence, which shows that the deeper thought produced by dissent can lead to higher-quality group decisions” (Duarte et al; Crisp and

⁸ In a community where social cohesion is the main goal it’s possible that widespread agreement and confirmation bias is socially beneficial.

Turner 2011; Moscovici and Personnaz 1980; Nemeth 1995; Nemeth, Brown and Rogers 2001). Confirmation bias might be problematic in individual reasoners, but less so in cognitively diverse groups where such biases may begin to cancel each other out. In other words, disagreement may help to avoid the negative effects of biases.⁹

Another reason in favour of cognitive diversity is that it is beneficial to inquiry when inquirers genuinely believe the propositions they are examining. Since beliefs are involuntary this means a cognitively diverse group of people is necessary to achieve genuine belief diversity, as opposed to having researchers merely entertain hypotheticals. Jonathan Matheson nicely summarizes some of empirical literature that supports this idea. He writes:

Mercier (2011)... suggests that we tend to seek out arguments that confirm our antecedently held beliefs. Such confirmation bias is a detriment to both individuals and like-minded groups. In addition Dawson et al. (2002) provide evidence that we are better at finding falsifying data regarding arguments and opinions with which we disagree. So, groups with genuinely dissenting parties will do better in terms of placing appropriate checks and balances on the reasoning and arguments deployed in the group. This conclusion is confirmed with work by Schulz-Hardt et al. (2002). They found that groups with genuine disagreement performed better than those where the disagreement was merely contrived by using various ‘devil’s advocate’ techniques. Evidence suggests that we reason better with respect to beliefs that we actually have than we do with respect to ‘devil’s advocate’ beliefs. So, groups with genuine dissent do better at avoiding both belief bias and confirmation bias (Matheson 2015b, 140-141).

So this is another epistemic reason in support of cognitive diversity. To conclude this section I want to reflect on an idea from Christopher Hookway that is summarized by Anderson:

⁹ Another important bias I won’t discuss in this section but is clearly relevant to this paper is that of implicit bias. It’s possible that implicit bias contributes to the existence of recognition and epistemic injustice. It’s interesting to observe in some cases where implicit bias didn’t occur there would be less recognition and epistemic injustice. Not only that, less recognition and epistemic injustice will sometimes lead to more cognitively diverse groups that can help counteract such biases. If implicit bias is the only factor at play it’s difficult to see how this cycle could be broken.

Hookway (2010) identifies an injustice analogous to testimonial injustice in practices that exclude people from participating in inquiry more generally. Such participation need not take the form of offering testimony, but may involve other acts such as asking questions, suggesting hypotheses, raising objections, and drawing analogies. When others fail to take such contributions seriously out of prejudicial stereotyping of the contributor, this is also an injustice. It injures the speaker not as a knower but as an inquirer (Anderson 2017).

It's worth pausing to reflect on the implications of this point. When both recognition peer injustice and epistemic injustice occurs inquiry loses out because of the epistemic benefits associated with peer disagreement. I've stressed that either peer disagreement isn't recognized or it doesn't emerge because of such injustices. But it's not just disagreement that's important, it's participation from a cognitively diverse group that's important for successful inquiry. Recognition and epistemic injustice could cause one to wrongly disregard important questions, hypotheses, and analogies that would benefit inquiry, even if it's not disagreement per se doing the work in such situations. This further expands the scope of the problems associated with recognition and epistemic injustice in the context of inquiry beyond the problems I've highlighted associated with peer disagreement.

V. An Objection: Practical Reasons versus Epistemic Reasons

It's clear that there are moral reasons to avoid recognition and epistemic injustice. I've suggested that there are underappreciated epistemic implications too, since when these injustices occur one may be illicitly avoiding the sceptical pressure of conciliationism. I've further argued in Section IV that there are important benefits to cognitive diversity so these injustices turn out to be especially epistemically harmful. A natural objection to this is to claim that I have conflated practical reasons with epistemic reasons. It might be practically rational for an agent to maintain her belief that P in the face of disagreement, especially in research contexts. But if conciliationism

is true, then it is nevertheless epistemically unjustified or irrational for her to continue to believe P (Feldman 2011, 157; Christensen 2007, 216).

Elsewhere I've argued that this type of objection is misguided because it fails to recognize the distinction between synchronic epistemic reasons and diachronic epistemic reasons (removed for anonymous review). Epistemologists both past and present have tended to focus only on synchronic epistemic reasons (Matheson 2015b). These are epistemic reasons agent S has for believing P right now at time T1. But agent S could gain epistemic reasons for P at some future time Tn. Such reasons are properly epistemic because they are *evidence* for or against P. In some cases an individual researcher may have reason to suppose she is in a similar situation to a past situation where remaining steadfast about P led to diachronic reasons about P. If her situation is relevantly and sufficiently similar to a past situation then she is epistemically rational to remain steadfast about P. Another way of understanding the above argument for cognitive diversity is as a general research *strategy*. There is evidence to suggest that disagreement is epistemically beneficial so researchers should practice strategies that foster disagreement. This includes maintaining belief that P in the face of peer disagreement about P. Finally, it's worth noting that the very idea of research might not be coherent if diachronic reasons aren't accorded at least some epistemic significance. This is because if agent S thought she had all of the epistemic reasons for P right now, what could make her epistemically rational to inquiry into whether P? More remains to be said here, but this is sufficient for the purpose of meeting the objection.¹⁰

VI. Conclusion

¹⁰ An all-things-considered epistemic rationality would account for both synchronic and diachronic reasons. I make no claims about the details of such an account.

I've argued that both recognition injustice and epistemic injustice have serious epistemic consequences. Within the context of the epistemology of disagreement when an agent fails to recognize that a peer really is her peer or unfairly dismisses testimony she illicitly avoids the sceptical pressure created by conciliationism. She also potentially loses out on important epistemic goods associated with cognitive diversity. While I admit my case isn't decisive, I offered reasons to support of the idea that cognitive diversity is beneficial for inquiry. Cognitively diverse groups perform well at tasks like problem-solving and prediction. It may also help alleviate the pernicious epistemic effects of confirmation bias (among others). These reasons are epistemic, though a distinction should be made between synchronic epistemic reasons and diachronic epistemic reasons. If this is right, then I have added a further complication to the disagreement literature, and even more reason to work towards avoiding recognition and epistemic injustices.¹¹

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