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Religious Identity and Epistemic Injustice: An Intersectional Account

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Abstract

In this article, I argue in favor of an intersectional account of religious identity to better make sense of how religious subjects can be treated with epistemic injustice. To do this, I posit two perspectives through which to view religious identity: as a social identity and as a worldview. I argue that these perspectives shed light on the unique ways in which religious subjects can be epistemically harmed. From the first perspective, religious subjects can be harmed when their religion is racialized or when their gender and dress are mistakenly thought to be predictive of their beliefs and practices. As an instance of this, I focus on the epistemic harms facing Muslim women who practice veiling. From the worldview perspective, religious subjects can be harmed when we, by contrast, underestimate the force of the connections between religion, race, and gender. Such connections can give rise to intersectionally rich theologies that can in turn be marginalized and denied credibility. To illuminate the worldview perspective, I focus on Christian abolitionist and feminist Sojourner Truth.

Religious people often rely on the testimony of others to inform their religious beliefs. They also use testimony to, in turn, convey these beliefs to others. It is therefore striking that, although interest in testimony, particularly as a site of injustice, has grown steadily over the last few decades, the idea that religious people can be treated unjustly with respect to their testimony and testimonial exchanges remains undertheorized. Indeed, where we would expect to find a discussion of this kind—for instance, in the literature on epistemic injustice—we instead find that religious subjects are rarely mentioned. Moreover, the few who have discussed religion and epistemic injustice have tended to focus on the epistemic injustice that occurs to marginalized people *within* particular religious communities. That is, they have tended to focus on women and people of color, among others, who have their credibility diminished on account of their marginalization within their churches, theological traditions, or even religious studies or philosophy departments (Anderson 2010; 2012; Kidd 2017; Griffioen 2018; De Cruz 2019; Panchuk 2019; Hübel 2020; Panchuk 2020).

In this article, I aim to remedy what I take to be an oversight in the literature by exploring a different set of relations. I want to home in on how religious subjects relate to a secular environment, broadly construed, and explore the possibility that religious subjects can be negatively impacted in their knowledge-producing efforts because of that environment. To be sure, some emerging accounts have recognized this possibility. They have recognized that religious citizens seem to be in a unique position whereby they may have their testimony harmed in some way owing to the impacts of secularism (Kidd 2017; Lougheed 2019; Lee 2021).

Nevertheless, although these accounts have made valuable strides, I argue that they are not sufficiently attuned to how identities intersect to produce different harms for different religious subjects who must constantly negotiate their lives in spaces that are at once secular and shaped by the norms of a dominant religious worldview. In light of this, I aim in this article to develop an intersectional account of religious epistemic injustice.

To develop my account, I begin by providing, in the first section, a brief overview of epistemic injustice by way of Miranda Fricker's and José Medina's work (Fricker 2007; Medina 2013). In section II, I turn to emerging literature on religion and epistemic injustice that deals explicitly with the role of secularism in shaping epistemic injustice (Kidd 2017; Lougheed 2019; Lee 2021). As stated, although I agree with the direction current accounts are headed, I ultimately criticize their approaches to epistemic injustice and religion for not accounting for the intersectional nature of religious identity.

In section III, I offer my own account. I demarcate two ways of viewing religious identity: as a social identity, and as a worldview. These two aspects of religious identity inevitably co-exist and inform each other but distinguishing between them enables greater precision when it comes to articulating the epistemic harms religious people can face. In the first part, I focus on how religious social identities can be harmed by way of losses in our social knowledge of religious groups as internally complex and diverse. To illustrate the nature of the harm, I provide two examples: the testimonial harms of the racialization of religion and prejudgments surrounding Muslim women and religious dress. Turning to the second view, which highlights the nature of religious identity as a worldview, I then focus on how certain theologies can be epistemically diminished for religious adherents, even those who belong to a religious majority, like Christianity. As an example of this, in the third part of this section I consider the neglected religious testimony of Christian abolitionist and proto-intersectional feminist Sojourner Truth. I follow this by suggesting how religious worldviews can, more generally, be attributed credibility. In section IV, I briefly consider how one might further develop the conclusions reached in the article.

I. Epistemic Injustice

The wave of literature in recent years concerning epistemic injustice has been profound. Philosophers and other academics have been quick to recognize and articulate the importance of injustice as it relates to the production and transmission of knowledge. Before turning to what has been said (and not said) about religion in this literature, I will briefly lay out the dominant theories that have shaped the discussion so far.

For Fricker, who coined the term *epistemic injustice*, individuals can be harmed in their capacity as knowers when their testimony is wrongly diminished according to inequalities in social power. Fricker demarcates two kinds of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical. In cases of testimonial injustice, a speaker, testifying to

some aspect of their social experience, receives a deflation of credibility when the hearer harbors a negative identity prejudice toward the speaker (Fricker 2007, 4). This prejudice is the result of a widely held negative stereotype in the social imaginary, "distort [ing] the hearer's perception of the speaker" qua social type (36). The upshot is that the speaker is harmed distinctly in their capacity *as a knower*, which is a hybrid epistemic-ethical harm. Fricker argues that the purely epistemic harm in a case of testimonial injustice is a loss of knowledge. Either the speaker *or the hearer* loses out on some piece of knowledge being exchanged, which reflects "a moment of dysfunction in the overall epistemic practice or system" (43). Prejudice therefore operates as an "obstacle to truth" (43). In turn, the ethical harm, which coincides with the epistemic harm, is to be wronged in one of the very capacities that makes one a human being—one's capacity for reason (44). In failing to be being treated as a rational agent who is a giver of knowledge, on account of a false understanding of one's social type (that is, as someone who is not credible with respect to what they know), one must bear the pain of being "degraded *qua* knower," and so of being considered less than fully human (44).

Hermeneutical injustice, Fricker's second kind of epistemic injustice, occurs prior to the offering of testimony, and yet exposes itself in the attempt at articulating one's experience through testimony. The injustice is that of having one's experience rendered unintelligible, either to oneself or to others, on account of a structural prejudice in the collective imagination that manifests in our collective hermeneutical resources (155). Such exclusion from those resources has often been the result of belonging to a social group that does not have equal participation in the generation of social meanings, or collective hermeneutical resources, particularly those that are needed to make sense of an experience that one has a strong interest in knowing (6). Fricker's core example is that of women, with increased social power, coming to understand and name the harm of workplace sexual harassment (150–51).

Since its introduction, there have been two widely accepted adjustments to Fricker's view that are worth noting for our purposes here. First, it has been argued that both kinds of epistemic injustice are more deeply intertwined than Fricker acknowledged (Medina 2013, 96). As Medina rightly observes, when one is deemed unintelligible, one is often deemed *in*credible, and vice versa (96). It is because of the hearer's insensitivity to the speaker's credible testimony that the speaker is persistently denied the opportunity to generate new meanings; at the same time, it is also because certain voices are rendered less intelligible that their credibility is then further undermined (96). I will follow Medina's thinking here, taking for granted that testimonial and hermeneutical injustice are intimately related and often connected. That said, I do my best to articulate which is most apparent according to the different aspects of identity I consider, where testimonial injustices occur most often in cases where social identity is at stake, and hermeneutical injustice most often in cases where a person's worldview is at stake.

A second adjustment to Fricker's view is also warranted. Medina argues that although oppressed subjects can indeed have their experience rendered unintelligible to themselves, they may also often be able to access ways of knowing that only those who are marginalized will share (43). As Medina states, "these subjects often find themselves in need of certain bodies of knowledge in order to escape punishment or stigmatization, sometimes even to survive . . . developing forms of expertise that no one else has" (44).[1] As we will see, this addition is relevant to this article because religious subjects might need certain bodies of knowledge, that is, particular theologies and religious ways of knowing, precisely because of their social positioning as both religious and marginalized.[2]

II. Religion and Epistemic Injustice: Existing Accounts and Their Limitations

Let us now briefly turn to the work that has been done to articulate how the religious subject can be treated with epistemic injustice, of both the testimonial and hermeneutical kind. Three such accounts are worth noting for our purposes. First, as Kirk Lougheed describes it, religious subjects can be epistemically harmed when they pre-emptively supress testifying to a religious experience out of fear that "already existing (negative) prejudices about religion implies that their report won't be taken seriously by others" (Lougheed 2019, 88). Nonreligious subjects are then also epistemically harmed, since they miss out on the "intuitive knowledge" that could have been trans-ferred through such reports.[3] Second, as J. Y. Lee describes it, epistemic injustice of a similar sort might occur even out of anticipation and fear of negative prejudices, rather than existing or felt prejudices from a specific audience or an unwilling hearer (Lee 2021, 566).[4] Third, as Ian James Kidd describes it, epistemic injustice against religious subjects reporting their religious experience might be particularly "deep" because some secular spaces, particularly in academia, effectively "[rule] out the *possibility* of a verid-ical interpretation of religious experiences, of their being what their experients report and interpret them to be"; so, credibility itself is not just deflated, but is removed from possibility (Kidd 2017, 39; italics added).[5]

Importantly, in all these views, epistemic injustice against religious subjects, and the diminishing religious knowledge that coincides with it, emerges from the negative impacts of secularism. It is secularism that ultimately marginalizes religion, either fos-tering real or anticipated negative prejudices against religious adherents, that causes them to suppress their testimony. As Lee notes, even the "mere perception that one's religious experiences will be stigmatized owes to shifting norms related to a cultural trend towards secularity" (Lee 2021, 567–68). And for both Lougheed and Kidd, the impacts of secularism are hashed out specifically in terms of a naturalistic worldview that dominates in secular environments, particularly in academia. A naturalistic world-view involves understanding the world in physical, reductive, or "purely natural terms," thus excluding an experience that depends on the supernatural (Lougheed 2019, 88). As Kidd remarks, "[s]ince [supernatural entities] are judged not to exist, belief in them must be evidence of epistemic fault, usually to be explained in the terms of psycholog-ical and evolutionary terms" (Kidd 2017, 392–93). Again, the upshot is the wrongful suppression of a religious testimony, but the hermeneutic harms are present too; both religious and nonreligious subjects will receive less opportunity to make sense of religious experiences, be it others' or their own, when a naturalistic worldview removes the language, concepts, and resources needed for religious experiences to be intelligible.

I take these descriptions of epistemic injustice and religion to, for the most part, rightly capture the epistemic impacts of secularism on religion and religious people gen-erally, manifested particularly in the exclusionary impacts of a naturalistic worldview. That such a threat is exacerbated at the academic level is also well documented,[6] and so justifiably interrogated.

Still, two points are worth making. First, if we are focused on academic contexts as a site of epistemic injustice for religion and religious people, even if *most* students feel marginalized with respect to their religion in nonreligious academic contexts, and even if those in a religious majority report feeling excluded or ostracized, as some research suggests,[7] this marginalization does not occur in the same way for all students who are religious.[8] Those who adhere to a minority religion in the West, such as Jews

and Muslims, are reported to have "decreased sense of well-being and increased religious skepticism" in college contexts compared to those in a religious majority (Bowman and Small 2013). So, even if secularism is indeed a threat in academic contexts, it is unlikely to have a uniform impact on all religious people. My intent here is to offer a theoretical account grounded in intersectional epistemic injustice as to why this may be and how it may look.

A second point is that if secularism, and the naturalistic worldview that accompanies it, does not operate uniformly for all religious subjects, this may also be because secularism is not the only threat to religious subjects and the expression of their testimony. The impacts of secularism can be overshadowed (but also perhaps compounded) in contexts where a dominant religious worldview is also favored, as in some political contexts. As I write, I have in mind the current prevalence of a white Christian nationalist worldview in American politics, among other liberal democracies.[9] Importantly, as Saba Mahmood observes, "despite the commitment to levelling religious differences in the political sphere, modern secular governance transforms—and in some respects intensifies—pre-existing interfaith inequalities" (Mahmood 2015, 2). To Mahmood's point, as much as it might seem like secularism is simply at times replaced by, or is perhaps less threatening than, the rising popularity of white Christian nationalist views, matters are not that simple. As a recent and comprehensive account of the phenomenon of white Christian nationalism argues, the United States has both become "more diverse, secular, and cosmopolitan . . . *and* this [has] collided with a certain conception of America as a white Christian nation favored by God and ruled by white Christian men" (Gorski and Perry 2022, 103; emphasis mine). The result of this is a rising perception of white Christian nationalism as Christianity proper, but not just for Christians; non-Christians' understanding of what Christianity consists in is also compromised by this politically charged worldview (103). Thus, secularism is not the only threat to the expression of religious testimony, especially outside the university. Depending on the environment, secularism can simultaneously be shaped by dominant worldviews that would make the expression of a religious testimony challenging depending on whether one adhered to that dominant religious worldview. Another way of putting this is that although naturalism might make all religious experience dampened in credibility, a dominant worldview, such as white Christian nationalism, can shape which religious voices appear more or less credible, particularly over political matters, and can shape a nation's collective understanding of what Christianity itself *is* when certain voices are dominant.[10]

We should thus be motivated to develop, as I do below, an account of epistemic injustice and religion that can make sense of the experiences of, for instance, Black Christians in America, who might have their religious testimony treated with epistemic injustice (preemptively or otherwise) according to both secular norms and white Christian norms. And we should also be able to explain how these co-existing threats may operate differently still for the testimony of those whose religion is racialized or made hypervisible, such as for veiled Muslim women.

Ultimately, if secularism is indeed not the only threat to the epistemic lives of religious (and even nonreligious) individuals, at least not to all equally, then we also need to reconceive of the epistemic harms that might arise from a more complicated understanding of the threats at issue. And as I will argue, parsing this out successfully will hang on a better understanding of religious identity. The upshot is that epistemic injustice will manifest uniquely for different religious identities, which ultimately demands an intersectional approach.

III. Intersectional and Religious Epistemic Injustice

Before describing how exactly an intersectional approach can be used to understand the epistemic harms facing religious subjects, let me first establish what it means to look at epistemic injustice intersectionally. This requires a few remarks about intersectionality itself. Kimberlé Crenshaw uses the term *intersectionality* to challenge the use of single-axis frameworks to analyze race- or gender-based inequality as isolated phenomena. On Crenshaw's view, single-axis approaches do not capture how both forms of discrimination coalesce for Black women (Crenshaw 1991). The key idea here is that Black women face subordination on two fronts, racism and sexism, and thus are uniquely marginalized by the intersection, and multiple burdens, of both.

Since Crenshaw, intersectionality has been used, not without its critics, to describe many different intersections beyond race and gender. Patricia Hill Collins puts it, "[t] he term intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex social inequalities" (Collins 2017, 115). Unfortunately, Collins neglects to mention religion as a membership category, perhaps because there exists a "deeply contested and contextual terrain of whether religion is actually an oppressed form of difference or is itself an oppressive force" (Singh 2015, 658). We can simplify this contested terrain, however, by considering religion as a point of difference, rather than strictly a point of oppression, in an effort to better articulate the harms that fall on those who are not clearly oppressed *by their religion*, nor oppressed by secularity, whatever that might mean. Rather, religion may be a source of difference that is connected to other sources of difference and points of oppression (658).

Putting the ideas of intersectionality and epistemic injustice together, then, we can suppose that understanding different forms of epistemic injustice will depend not on treating identity as (or just as) a single axis of oppression, but rather as a point of difference that can shape other points of difference. Given this, we should wonder: how might the understanding and expression of religious knowledge depend on what other points of difference one occupies, and how those identities shape one's actual or perceived credibility? Might intersecting identities amplify undue burden in cases where expression of religious testimony is already challenging, as it seems to be in non-religious spaces?

To answer these questions, I want to consider a few cases of how religious people with intersecting identities face epistemic injustice. I do so through the lens of two perspectives on religious identity. The first, the social-identity perspective, is meant to highlight the aspect of ourselves that takes on a distinctly social meaning, usually outside of our control, and sometimes to our detriment. It is concerned with how religious identity appears to others beyond one's religious community, and has the potential to communicate distinctly demographic knowledge, such as the diverse identities, beliefs, and practices that makes up one's religious group.

The second view, the worldview perspective, involves conceiving of religious identity as an internally robust outlook through which we make meaning of our experiences in the world, and has the potential to communicate a reflective stance on how we see that world. Of course, this often involves taking into consideration and integrating the meaning of our different social identities, such as our race or gender. So, to be sure, the social-identity and worldview perspectives will not always neatly break down into distinct categories. However, distinguishing them can bring clarity to how epistemic injustice can occur differently depending on which aspect of identity we are attentive to.

How do these two perspectives—religious identity as social identity and as world-view—reflect the aims of intersectionality? As we will see in the following sections, it is precisely the intersectional nature of race, gender, and religion—their coalescing and shaping one another—that can prompt ways of knowing and corresponding epistemic harms. From the social-identity perspective, religious subjects can be harmed when their religion is racialized or when their gender and dress are mistakenly thought to be predictive of their beliefs and practices. From the worldview perspective, religious subjects can be harmed when, by contrast, we underestimate the force of the connections between religion, race, and gender, which can give rise to distinct and intersectionally rich theologies, and that can in turn be marginalized and denied credibility.

Religious Epistemic Injustice from the Social-identity Perspective

Let's consider a few cases that illuminate the social-identity perspective, and how it might inform our understanding of epistemic injustice in relation to religious individuals. The first concerns those who have their religious identity racialized, where a negative identity prejudice concerning race is intertwined with that of religion. The racialization of religion is a well-documented phenomenon (Joshi 2009; Al-Saji 2010; Meer 2013; Selod and Embrick 2013; Galonnier 2015; Garner and Selod 2015). As Khyati Joshi puts it, "[a] religious group is racialized when a group of people belonging to a specific religion (therefore having shared beliefs and traditions, etc.) becomes in the social imagination constructed as a 'race'" (Joshi 2009, 37). In turn, "an individual's race creates a presumption as to her or his religious identity" (37). Currently in the West, the racialization of religion is most likely to occur for Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims, who are considered a visible racial *and* religious minority. But of course, we can imagine different religions being racialized in different contexts, and across different periods of time, as Jewish people also have been.

What is wrong with racializing a religion? The most obvious wrong (which is perhaps also the wrong of racializing any group) is that it essentializes and stereotypes the adherents of the religion; "[i]t reduces people to one aspect of their identity, presents a homogeneous and undifferentiated view of communities, and overlooks the dynamic nature of ethnoreligious communities" (38). When considering the *epistemic injustice* that may result, however, we need to be more specific. For according to Fricker at least, stereotypes can sometimes be useful heuristics, "oiling the wheels of testimonial exchange" such that we make reliable assumptions about our interlocutor (Fricker 2007, 32).[11] In her view, stereotyping leads to epistemic injustice when it is *prejudicial*—that is, based on a harmful prejudgment about someone qua social type in a way that is not only unreliable, and so often false, but widespread enough to distort the image of a group in the collective imagination. So, the assumption that someone is Hindu because they are Indian, for instance, need not be prejudicial, but the assumption that someone is Hindu *and being Hindu is seen as a negative feature of that person,* can indeed be based on a prejudicial stereotype.

When it comes to religion and epistemic injustice, racialized religious identity may be the target of the pre-emptive epistemic injustice described by Lougheed (Lougheed 2019). That is, testimonial injustice can occur when the religious person suppresses their own testimony precisely because they are aware of a negative judgment not just about their religion, but about their race; they fear that the negative judgment about their race has transferred over to their religion, and the two have become intertwined. What is more, even if a subject suppresses their own testimony only out of an

anticipatory fear owing to their *not knowing* whether their interlocutor will understand their religious beliefs or practices, this fear is still contingent on the very concrete fear of having one's testimony distorted qua being a racialized subject (Lee 2021). And the religious speaker may then hold back speaking about their religion particularly in nonreligious contexts when they fear having it fall on ears that are not equipped to hear the nuances of their religious experience or beliefs. Of course, this may be because such environments are secular, and so there is already an obstacle to voicing one's testimony, but the racialized religious subject faces another obstacle, which is the way in which their religion is itself racialized. This is amplified when the dominant religion is unreflectively detached from race, where one's whiteness is "invisible" with respect to one's religion, as may be the case for white Christians in the West.

Consider the university, which has already been noted to lean toward secularism. We can see how someone whose religion is racialized in society at large will not want to offer a distinctly religious testimony in an academic environment insofar as this could feed existing racialized stereotypes about them. For instance, stereotypes that one is less than fully rational because of one's race may influence how one's interlocutor perceives one's religious testimony too, leading this testimony also to seem less than fully rational, less credible, and thus taken less seriously than it otherwise would have been. And certainly, the lack of expression of the testimony, held back from fear of prejudice against one's religion, may reaffirm the false idea that such beliefs held by the racialized religious subject are nonrational, and so not suited for academic discussion.

Even though actively testifying to religious beliefs or experiences in public environments such as the university has the potential to diversify a secular audience's understanding of the race–religion connection, the religious speaker may still risk strengthening the ties of existing interconnected stereotypes. This is especially the case if the audience is already not well-equipped with concepts that allow for an easy grasp of religious ideas in general, as the prevalence of naturalism suggests. Ultimately, in offering a religious testimony, the religious subject risks giving their audience even more content by which to misunderstand them, more content by which to degrade them qua knower, instead of doing the work of clarifying misconceptions. By bringing up their religious views in the university, for instance, the racialized religious speaker may risk being perceived as fundamentalist, as making others uncomfortable, irrespective of the content of the beliefs being communicated.

By holding back one's testimony for fear of this perception, there is a clear ethical harm to the religious speaker, who loses out on an opportunity to participate in knowledge-building projects and offering a religious contribution as a knower. But there is also an epistemic harm. There is a risk of further distorting or impoverishing *social knowledge,* whereby the complexity of one's religion is distorted from view in the social imaginary. By this I mean that the racialization of religion and religious identities may not only cause religious subjects to suppress their own testimony, but it prevents would-be hearers from inquiring into the nature of the religion that they presume racialized subjects hold. They may be ill-equipped to ask or may assume they already understand. Particularly under the dominance of a white Christian worldview, such perspectives might be dismissed as "other" in a way that would not occur to those views that are not racialized. In turn, the racialization of religion may only further isolate already marginalized religious communities such that opportunities for nonreligious people to appropriately challenge and grapple with religious knowledge in public are lessened or lost, as religious communities become the only safe space within which to discuss one's beliefs and live them out.

The racialization of religion comes into view even more clearly when we add another layer of social difference: gender. As one instance of this, consider the negative identity prejudice that has accompanied Muslim women in the contemporary West. Rashida Bibi notes that Muslim women have "become subsumed in narratives on forced marriage, gender violence and of course veiling and are thus understood through neat cultural icons . . . that present them as essentialized, homogenous subjects" (Bibi 2018, 65; Abu-Lughod 2002).

To see how prejudicial stereotypes against Muslim women can result in a distinctly social form of *testimonial injustice*, we must recognize the systematic loss of knowledge and systematic harm to religious women qua knowers of their religious beliefs. This harm has indeed been recognized by those writing on the exclusion of Muslim women's voices, showing how they are persistently excluded from secular and political spheres in which their religious lives and practices are at issue, such as the practice of veiling (Mahmood 2001; Scott 2007, 10; Parvez 2011, 289; Inge 2017, 4; Lynch 2022). This exclusion is an unfair denial of Muslim women's testimony insofar as it is a denial of the proper *credibility* that veiled women in particular should be attributed about the political issues that affect them most. Such denial may come from the legal requirements of *laicité*, or secularism, that forbid veiling in public spaces. This exclusion, in turn, may reinforce the stereotype that Muslim women lack autonomy or are thought to adhere to religious beliefs out of false consciousness. Thomas Lynch, writing on epistemic injustice and veiling, states that when Muslim women are viewed as "victims of a backward culture," then their rationality is denied, and if rationality is necessary for agency, then the "purported irrationality of Muslim beliefs render Muslims necessarily incapable of the agency necessary to *be credible*" (Lynch 2022, 4; italics added).

The particularly social nature of religious identity further comes to light when we focus on the role of dress as a social-identity marker for religious people, particularly women, and the role that it plays in expressing religious testimony. We could explore any number of religious forms of dress, such as the religious habits worn by Roman Catholic nuns, and veiling as it takes on different forms for geographical regions and religions. But at least for some Muslim women, as Lynch remarks, "the veil not only marks religious identity, but plays a role in the racialization of religious minorities" (1). Here, veiled Muslim women may face multiple axes of difference. Not only is their religion *racialized*, but they face the complexity of being a religious woman who is viewed as lacking agency, and face the burden of being hypervisible as veiled in secular spaces. As Alia Al-Saji observes, the simultaneous denial of veiled Muslim women's voices and persistent view that equates the veil with *oppression itself* makes it so "the veiled woman is at once hypervisible as oppressed and invisible as subject" (Al-Saji 2010, 891). This paradoxical burden put on veiled Muslim women's capacity to express their testimony is also notably unique for women in a way that doesn't occur to Muslim men who wear religious dress or religious women who do not wear religious dress.

We might wonder, still, how exactly dress can be the subject of testimonial injustice. Such a question demands that we ask not only how dress is connected to one's identity, but how it is itself a form of testimony; only then can we see how it can be subject to epistemic and ethical harm. To see this, consider Medina's idea that testimony and testimonial exchange can range "from silences and inchoate expressions to sophisticated propositional and discursive structures" (Medina 2013, 28). Religious testimony will also take on a variety of forms, including, for instance, direct argumentation for belief in God, explanation of one's conversion to a religion, or in the case of dress, the use of

symbolic representation to point toward the divine. As Lynne Hume remarks in *The Religious Life of Dress*, "[d]ress is more than a visual demonstration of allegiance to a particular set of beliefs. It is a sensory testimony of those beliefs" (Hume 2013, 9). That is, it pulls on the senses to testify to the sacred and one's devotion to it. In this sense, religious dress may be a visual representation, both a sensory and symbolic kind of testimony, expressing one's religious commitment, even where no verbal testimony or testimonial exchange takes place. Religious dress such as the veil, therefore, can do precisely what testimony does: that is, pass on knowledge from speaker (or "wearer") to hearer (or "seer"), particularly knowledge of one's religious commitment, but also, in virtue of this, the religious group to which one belongs.

But this process of communicating social knowledge is risky. Such communication can become distorted when the racialization of religion transforms a potentially informative testimony, via dress, into an object of prejudice. What exactly are the epistemic and ethical harms that result from such prejudice? First, concerning the epistemic, the racialization of religion may block agents from acquiring social knowledge that they otherwise would acquire if they did not judge veiling, or religious dress in general, in a negative way. What is at stake is knowledge of the diversity of the agents who engage in religious dress, and the diversity of the beliefs and practices these agents hold (that is, at the very least, that Muslim women are autonomous in these beliefs and practices).[12]

Prejudice arising from dress is perhaps unsurprising in its pernicious nature. This is because it can form with no engagement with the wearer beyond a mere visual "exchange," and again can be reinforced by already existing prejudices that are rooted in the racialization of religion. What knowledge is decreased or distorted is, overall, a lack of nuance in understanding internally diverse sets of beliefs, theologies, practices, personalities, genders, nationalities, classes, and races—A fuller intersectional analysis could explore every axis here! This isn't quite *religious knowledge*, but it certainly constitutes knowledge that is directly related to religious identity, since it is knowledge of *who religious people are* that is at stake.

Finally, what are the ethical harms of prejudicial judgment of those who wear religious dress? What is at stake is not always the silencing of people in religious dress (although, in some countries and regions, this certainly is the case). Often, religious dress can "speak" whether one wants it to or not. Unlike race, dress *can and often is* a much more reliable indicator of someone's religion. Yet, as the case of veiled Muslim women reveals, some religious dress "attract[s] more attention than others," depending on how discreet it is in the secular space it is in (Al-Saji 2010, 881). Given the hypervisibility of the veil in public, then, we can see that the ethical harm is likely the increasing denial of the voices of those we ignore or assume to understand based on the visible testimony of the veil. The ethical harm here is the depiction or assumption that Muslim women lack agency and rationality, and so credibility, which is difficult to defend against when the testimonial "exchange" is based simply on the appearance of religious identity markers (Lynch 2022, 4).

To summarize, racialization, gender, and dress represent a few salient intersections by which the social aspects of religious identity can be subject to epistemic injustice. Concerning the racialization of religion, individuals may preemptively suppress their testimony in order not to inflame those racial prejudices that are already operating against them. Concerning gender and religious dress, we see how racialization plays a similar role, but may especially burden and distort the testimonial expression for women who are rendered hypervisible via religious dress.

Religious Epistemic Injustice from the Worldview Perspective

The social-identity perspective shows us that epistemic injustice can result from *overestimating* our understanding of the connection between race, gender, and religion. When we conflate two or more of these social identities, we wrongly assume we understand how they intersect. However, *underestimating* the connection between race, gender, and religion can also give rise to epistemic injustices. Underestimating these connections has the potential to deny individuals the credibility to speak on specific *theologies* that are intimately shaped by their experience as racialized or gendered subjects, and so puts individuals at a conceptual disadvantage for developing and expressing these views.

Undoubtedly, this applies to those groups we focused on above, such as Muslim women in the contemporary West. However, one limitation to that analysis, via the social-identity perspective, is that it doesn't fully capture the experience of those religious people who are marginalized in society generally *and* who adhere to the dominant religion of a given society. I'm thinking here of Black Christian Americans. It's not as clear how race and religion can intersect for such people to give rise to epistemic injustices, given that the religion in question seems to not itself be marginalized nor clearly met with pervasive prejudice, as in the case of Muslim women and their perceived lack of agency. So, we can ask: how might epistemic injustice affect those who are indeed marginalized by race or gender, but whose religion is not obviously racialized nor marked out by social-identity markers such as religious dress? Part of the answer is found when we focus on how worldviews can be epistemically marginalized.

Let's begin with a better picture of what a religious worldview is.[13] To say that religious identity is or is composed of a worldview tracks a few existing ideas in the literature. For instance, Kidd notes that a religious worldview is a "conception of reality" (Kidd 2017, 392); Alvin Plantinga defines a religious worldview as "a sort of total way of looking at ourselves and our world" (Plantinga 2011, ix; Stenmark 2022), and John Cottingham likewise describes philosophy of religion as a "comprehensive 'synoptic' vision of things—one that endeavours to discern how (or how far) the different areas of our human understanding fit together" (Cottingham 2005, 2; Stenmark 2022). These descriptions capture the rough idea that though religion is a social identity for many people, it is also constituted by a lens-like quality through which one *sees* the world, and one's place in it, in part to arrive at satisfactory answers to deep and difficult questions about the nature of reality.

Of course, defining religious identity as a worldview is not to say that it does not connect to, or even stem from, the social aspects of one's identity, or one's behaviors and practices. Indeed, these will mutually inform one another. The worldview perspective nevertheless helps us see more clearly how religious identity can be importantly related to the development and expression of one's theological beliefs, and how these beliefs can oppose not just naturalism, but other dominant religious worldviews, even those associated with one's own religion. This is particularly apparent at the political level. To see how this is so, let us consider three advantages to the worldview perspective of religious identity and the expression of religious testimony.

First, by understanding a religious worldview to be integral to someone's identity, we can more easily see why raising political issues from a religious perspective might be of the utmost importance for religious citizens. Religious citizens may think it a matter of faith and integrity to not sever their public and private selves on political issues, and viewing religion as a worldview may help us, particularly the nonreligious among us, to see why.[14]

Second, and relatedly, viewing religious identity as a worldview captures why some religious people use their religion as an overarching perspective to orient and make sense of other aspects of their identities, such as their race or gender. This can be especially apt when these identities have been oppressed, and where a religious worldview is a strong motivating force to fight against oppression. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is an excellent example of this. It was not just because King was a Black man that he testified to the wrong of segregation. It was because he was a Black Christian man.[15]

Third, the worldview perspective has the advantage of making sense of how different theologies that arise from *within* or in response to the hegemonic perspective in a dominant religion, such as Christianity, can nevertheless be wrongly epistemically excluded. Leaving out the perspectives of diverse believers within Christianity can perpetuate existing and monolithic understandings of Christianity as a primarily white religion, at least in America, or as inherently linked with conservative, hierarchical, or nationalistic values.

In summary, the worldview perspective enables us to make sense of how religious identities may importantly shape political perspectives, make sense of race and gender as relevant to political issues, and, for the sake of epistemic *justice* for marginalized religious people, challenge hegemonic religious views and monolithic understandings of those views. With these elements of the worldview perspective in mind, then, let us turn now to one concrete example. The goal here will be to explain how the worldview perspective can help to illuminate the epistemic and ethical harms at play.

Sojourner Truth

To explore *all* of the liberation, feminist, queer, and womanist theologies that have challenged, for instance, a hegemonic and monolithic Christian worldview would be beyond the scope of this article. However, let us consider one example that reflects the beginnings of womanist theology in the West, a grouping of worldviews that stays faithful to the intersectional nature of religious identity we are exploring here. I have in mind here the testimony of nineteenth-century abolitionist, feminist, and Christian Sojourner Truth.

My focus on Truth is motivated in part by the fact that, although she has recently been viewed as a proto-intersectional feminist, her testimony is rarely seen as a distinctly *religious* testimony (Gines 2014; Smiet 2021). Indeed, as Katrine Smiet argues, "Sojourner Truth illustrates both how a particular *secular* version of feminist history becomes dominant, and also reveals the religious counter-discourses that exist alongside the mainstream feminist story" (Smiet 2021, 9; italics added). When we ignore the religious nature of Truth's identity and testimony, however, we lose out on what it means to be Black, a woman, and *Christian*. Such understanding isn't just important for the development of knowledge within a church; a secular society's collective understanding of Christianity and *who Christians are* is also at stake. Moreover, when we describe testimonies as narratives that focus only on race, or gender, particularly testimonies that also comment on issues of social justice, we miss what diverse perspectives can tell us about the religion that gives meaning to these social identities.

Truth's very identity is constitutive of her relationship to God. Truth changed her name from Isabella Baumfree to Sojourner Truth, meaning "itinerant preacher," under a purported call from God to fight for racial and gender equality. As Truth's biographer Nell Painter notes, "Isabella underwent a cataclysmic religious experience and the Holy Spirit, the power within Pentecost, remained a crucial force throughout her

life—a source of inspiration and a *means of knowing*" (Painter 1994, 462; italics added). Truth was able to use her faith not only to testify to her own unjust experience of racial and gender inequality, but to speak to the wrongness of racial and gender equality more broadly. As Smiet suggests, "Truth's faith not only *inspired* her to fight against injustices that she lived through in her own life and that she witnessed around her, it also provided her with *tools* to do so" (Smiet 2021, 88; italics added).

Notable instances of Truth's feminist Christian theology are found in her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech from 1851. Truth claims that Eve committing the first sin was a sign of women's strength. She states, "[i]f the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again!" (Smiet 2015, 11–12). Truth also elsewhere emphasizes the distinctly experiential component of faith for Black women that moved beyond relying on the authority of the Bible and depended on a personal experience with Jesus. Jacquelyn Grant claims, "[f]or Black women, the role of Jesus unraveled as they encountered him in their experience as one who empowers the weak. In this vein, Jesus was such a central part of Sojourner Truth's life that all of her sermons made him the starting point" (Grant 1989, 214). It was a "tough, active love [of Jesus] that empowered her to fight more fiercely for the freedom of her people" (214).[16]

Crucially, the religious nature of Truth's testimony was not just a testimony conveying the unjust treatment of Black Women, but a testimony conveying the gravity of that wrong. The gravity of the wrong, of course, was established with a particular theology (if unarticulated as such) that encouraged the idea that God stands for equality between people and "empowers the weak" (214).

One might think that we can simply remove the Christian elements of Truth's testimony and still understand its importance. However, it's not clear that removing the very spirit and force behind it does epistemic justice to what Truth claimed as a Black Christian woman. (Indeed, doing so may constitute an *in*justice). To be sure, Truth certainly depended on some values her fellow (Christian) citizens held in common at the time of her activism. And she simultaneously challenged these values to the extent that she demanded that the antislavery movement, and women's participation in it, be front and center of the Christian faith. However, in doing so, the point here is that Truth played a key role in expanding the values and saliency of these political issues, and thereby gave them political life by way of freedoms and rights for everyone, Christian or not.

Although Truth's religious testimony was in many ways successful in the abolitionist movement of the 1800s, we can (and should) also recognize that Truth nevertheless faced and still faces epistemic injustice. Painter notes that even in Truth's own time, she was aware of and worried about not being taken seriously (Painter 1994, 483). Truth had "a preoccupation with credibility" because "as a girl, she had been beaten and sexually abused, and as an enslaved worker, she had found her word doubted"; moreover, as a litigant "she was liable to be doubted in situations of the utmost seriousness," such as when she went to court against a white man over the loss of her son to slavery (463). We can surmise that doubt in her word hinged on the double burden of racism and sexism that Truth faced, but we would be remiss to think it entirely unrelated to her religious testimony as a spiritual leader. Indeed, as Painter points out, Truth was preoccupied with her credibility *as a spiritual leader* (463).

It is unclear what impact, if any, secularism could have had on Truth's testimony during her time, but a more recent analysis of Truth reveals the distinct impact of

secularism today (Smiet 2021). As Painter herself notes, "[i]n the work of secular-minded feminists resenting orthodox religion's power to oppress women[,] Truth's religion, always a puzzle for biographers, disappeared entirely" (Painter 1996, 270). We might think that Truth's religious testimony, having disappeared from view, has not been treated as equally *credible* nor *deeply related* to her testimony of racial and gendered injustice. Of course, isolating Truth's religious testimony from the rest of her story does not mean that all aspects of her testimony are thereby distorted; however, at the very least, "the story of Sojourner Truth shows that there is a tendency to treat race and religion as two different axes of difference that are to be discussed separately" (Smiet 2021, 19). Authors like Smiet are now showing that they need not be.

By discussing Sojourner Truth's religious testimony, I hope to have better illuminated why it is important to consider religious identity as a worldview, and why we should consider religious testimony as intersectionally related to the testimony of racialized and gendered individuals. Such considerations seem especially important for recognizing those womanist theologies that Black women may draw upon and develop in their making sense of and pursuit against oppression and injustice.[17] More broadly, it is important to recognize that when we deny the relation between religious ways of knowing, and the forms of knowing that arise from experiences of oppression, this constitutes an epistemic injustice. Why? It lessens our collective understanding of the connection between race, religion, and gender, especially when subjects are already marginalized according to race and gender. In what remains of this section, I would like to make this idea clearer by asking more directly what it might mean to attribute credibility to a worldview like Truth's as an act of epistemic *justice*.

Epistemic Justice and Credibility

It doesn't quite work to say that Truth's religion—Protestant and Methodist Christianity—was racialized (although this may be a future point of research worth considering), nor was or is her testimony distorted according to any obvious religious social-identity markers that she held. Truth's race and gender of course still played a role in shaping her theology, but this is better captured by showing how her Christian worldview coalesced with and subsumed an understanding of race and gender as oppressed. This worldview can, then, be denied *credibility* precisely when we deny the ways in which gender, race, and religion inform one another for the religious person.

But what does it mean to say that Truth was offering a *credible* testimony? We might grant that Truth was credible about her experience of *injustice*, but even if one's religious worldview helps one describe or cope with injustice, how exactly can it be credible, particularly if it competes with different religious views? Here, the story isn't so different from the one Fricker and Medina tell. It is indeed the epistemic access Truth had to her experiences of oppression that in turn shaped her religious testimony, and vice versa. So, we should wonder why we cannot extend the credibility that someone has over their experiences of injustice to their religious experience if they are indeed deeply related for the testifier and trusted by others in one's community.

Note that we can accept that Truth's religious testimony was credible without further supposing that Truth was *correct in her belief in God*. Truth may be testifying to the claim that God exists, as evidenced through her life lived in devotion to God, and this belief may or may not be successfully taken up by others. However, she, like many other religious people, is also testifying to the more modest idea that *if* God exists,

then God is a God for the worst off, the weak, the oppressed. *If* God exists, it is evidence of God's existence that God gives strength to the oppressed who indeed report this to be the case. And it is Truth's very experience of injustice that *enables her* to testify to *who God is*, and by testifying to how individuals like her, in all their suffering, can be aware of God's presence through injustice.

A related theological point is worth making here. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). If those who are subject to intersecting injustices are among the worst-off, socially, economically, and even epistemically, and in them people find God, surely such people occupy a special stance from which they can *know* about this God. But before we can help the least among us, we must hear them properly; we need to know their needs if we are to serve them, and by serving them, we can, if we are believing, serve God in turn.

Recall Medina's claim that oppressed "subjects often find themselves in need of certain bodies of knowledge in order to escape punishment or stigmatization, sometimes even to survive" (Medina 2013, 44). Why not extend this to bodies of theological knowledge? If white Christians in particular were to take Truth's religious testimony about who God is as inseparable from her oppression, they would take seriously the idea that Truth was in a position to know something they could not, something only knowable through experiences of survival. That is, they would recognize that Truth's experiences of racism and sexism, together with her religious experiences, suggest she was in a position to *know* something of theological importance that they could perhaps not know, at least not through direct experience, and so is something they must know precisely through testimony.

Of course, it is one thing to say that Truth's testimony can challenge the theological assumptions of other Christians, particularly white and male Christians (or those who, as stated at the outset, hold white Christian nationalist views that degrade other races or gendered identities), but it is another thing to say that she can do so for different religious or nonreligious folks. How does granting credibility to the religious person work in these cases? Again, granting credibility to the religious person need not amount to agreeing with their entire set of beliefs. This is too great an expectation to put onto the hearer and goes beyond merely recognizing or neutralizing the impact of prejudice on one's judgments of the speaker as a knower. Rather, to grant credibility means to see that the speaker *is in a position* to have—is perhaps justified in having or has good reasons to have—the worldview that they do. It recognizes how their social roles and experiences give rise to a perspective that *rightly* has a bearing on what their religious beliefs are. What is more, recognizing the intersectional nature of their testimony amounts to recognizing the oddity of granting credibility to only certain parts of another's experience. Knowers can, of course, get things wrong. We are not always right about all aspects of our experiences. At the same time, it's unclear why we shouldn't extend credibility when social experiences that intimately inform one another, such as oppression and related theologies that make sense of that oppression, collide.

In turn, when one attributes credibility to a religious speaker, one can help the religious speaker live with integrity. Recall that this is one important way in which religious identity as a worldview can be lived out. For instance, by accepting how religious testimony is relevant to the speaker's sense of injustice, we give the speaker room to more easily testify to their faith, and in the process understand and even revise their worldview. Allowing this, in turn, has the likely effect that the hearer will also gain an enriched understanding of the seriousness of that faith in the lives of those around them, perhaps even seeing this as evidence in its favor.[18]

It is also important to understanding credibility in the context of a religious testimony to recognize the hermeneutical resources that make testimony intelligible, at least to the internal workings of a group. Recall that Medina adjusts Fricker's view of hermeneutical injustice to claim that members of some oppressed groups indeed have an intelligible, even privileged, understanding of their own experience (Pohlhaus, 2012, 177; Medina 2013, 43–44). Concepts that capture these experiences may not be widespread or common knowledge, especially in an increasingly secular society or one dominated by white Christianity, but may still be internally coherent to a group. As noted, a womanist theology, and related religious language, concepts, and experiences, are some of these salient hermeneutical resources.[19]

In light of this, epistemic justice for religious speakers may consist in nonreligious people simply being willing to *recognize* the rich and deep theological resources and concepts that are already available for religious people to make sense of their experience internal to their communities, for instance, recognizing the importance of womanist or liberation theologies. At the same time, it is also important to recognize that these resources will not always generate or correspond with the secular-liberal ideas of some feminists. That is, they may not aid directly in resistance to patriarchal norms in the way that secular-liberal feminism has come to define these norms; to be epistemically just, I take it that nonreligious people must be open to seeing, as Mahmood writes for instance, that "what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency—but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment" (Mahmood 2005, 15).[20] So, epistemic justice for religious subjects may mean acknowledging perspectives that in fact challenge secular-liberal feminist ideas of oppression and agency.

Finally, it is worth stating that though individual virtue has been the assumed route to epistemic justice explored in this article, it is equally important to point out, if for further research, that structural remedies are essential. As noted, secular bias may exist structurally, with no obvious individual culprit(s) (Lee 2021). So, it may not be obvious that individual virtue is always the best approach to epistemic justice for religious people. In light of this, we would be remiss not to acknowledge that our public institutions, especially our academic ones, can increase the opportunities that religious testimonies need to gain credibility and intelligibility. Part of being treated as serious contributions to our collective knowledge-building projects is to be given institutional space, but what this space looks like will inevitably be determined by context. For instance, as I noted at the outset, if secularism is not the only threat to religious subjects' ways of knowing, but dominant political worldviews are too, then political contexts may differ from academic ones; political contexts may need institutional structures to ensure credibility and intelligibility for religiously informed political worldviews that challenge others, like white Christian nationalism.

IV. Concluding Thoughts and Future Research

In this article, I have shown that better understanding religion and epistemic injustice requires, in part, a better understanding of religious identity. I have argued that a focus on the social-identity and worldview perspectives of religious identity illuminates specifically epistemic harms negatively affecting religious knowers. I demarcated two specific ways in which this harm occurs. The social-identity perspective makes sense of religious minorities and testimonial harms that occur to them primarily by way of racialization and the bearing this has on the meaning of religious dress as itself a

kind of testimony. The worldview perspective, on the other hand, has the benefit of making sense of a variety of religious adherents, especially those who are not strictly speaking oppressed according to their religion, but who can nevertheless have theologies that are marginalized and epistemically obscured.

It is worth highlighting that the epistemic harms I've been discussing are not fully distinct; they are likely to occur in tandem, since both the social and internally reflective aspects of identity are often inseparable. For instance, insofar as knowledge of the diverse demographics that compose a religion are obscured in the homogenizing of social-identity markers, knowledge of the hermeneutical resources that develop a diversified understanding of religious beliefs and practices will also tend to be obscured.

Ultimately, epistemic *justice* for religious people hinges on neutralizing prejudice and affording credibility where it is due. For the social-identity perspective, this primarily involves *breaking down* our negative and false judgments about how religious identities relate to other identities. In the worldview perspective, it involves neutralizing prejudice by better recognizing how religious identities and other identities *are related* and can produce testimonies that are credible while utilizing unique hermeneutical resources that a secular society is not broadly familiar with. However, as I noted briefly, our institutions will inevitably play an important role in facilitating these individual opportunities for decreasing prejudice toward religious people.

Finally, because religion and epistemic injustice is a relatively young area of inquiry, and deserves more space than I have here, many questions remain unanswered in my account. We could (and should) consider in more detail how epistemic excess and privileged religious identities might intersect to harm religious knowers. This worry was implied in my remarks on the impact of white Christian nationalism, but a fuller treatment of how different identities, such as gender, sexual orientation, and class can intersect with whiteness need to be fleshed out. We could also consider how other intersections, low socioeconomic status in particular, may ground some religious testimonies and challenge the beliefs of economically privileged others, or challenge associations between capitalism and Protestantism. Finally, we could ask how religious disagreement, something I have not explicitly taken up here, plays out in secular environments, or consider how secular environments may increase disagreement among different religious individuals. Future answers to these questions will, I hope, only reinforce the importance of thinking more about religious identity intersectionally within an account of epistemic injustice and religion.

Notes

1 Put similarly by Gaile Pohlhaus, "the situations resulting from one's social positioning create 'common challenges' that constitute part of the knower's lived experience and so contribute to the context from which she approaches the world," and the knowledge she has of it (Pohlhaus 2012, 717).

2 It is also worth highlighting that Medina criticizes Fricker for paying insufficient attention to credibility *excess* as composing important cases of epistemic injustice (Medina 2013, 57–60). Medina argues that such excess can be epistemically harmful in a comparative sense for both speaker and hearer insofar as it can,

among other things, detract credibility from others in certain contexts. I see the potential for credibility excess to be a part of the picture here when we think of some religious people being attributed *too much* credibility, and thus overshadowing or dismissing what others might know with respect to religious matters. This is a particularly useful way of looking at those who adhere to white-Christian-leaning views that remain unchallenged because of credibility excess attributed to them. Although clearly relevant and deeply important, I put the idea of the epistemic harms that can occur to those who have an excess of credibility aside to focus on the epistemic harms that occur to those who are intersectionally marginalized.

3 Lougheed draws on the work of Phillip Wiebe, who says that intuitive knowledge is "[t]he power of the intellect to grasp concepts and truths intuitively that are neither derivable from sense perception, such as the concept of infinity, nor justifiable by empirical evidence, such as inviolable principles of ethics" and "has been widely considered a characteristic that sets humans apart from all other earthly creatures" (in Lougheed 2019, 83; Wiebe 2015, 1).

4 To be sure, the ideas of preemptive or anticipatory testimonial injustice are similar to Kristie Dotson's work on testimonial smothering (as Lee recognizes and discusses in Lee 2021, 568). Testimonial smothering, for Dotson, is characterized by truncating one's own testimony when one perceives one's audience as either unwilling or unable to understand that testimony (Dotson 2011, 244). But though Dotson understands smothering to be caused by a kind of pernicious ignorance, and the harm an "epistemic violence," what Lee highlights is that religious subjects may be silenced because of a lack of *platforms* for such testimony to be delivered, rather than a pernicious ignorance in a specific audience (Lee 2021, 568). This may be right. However, I think we can also imagine that when would-be hearers are white or otherwise not marginalized, and indeed are unwilling or ill-equipped to understand the testimony of marginalized religious subjects, there indeed exist forms of pernicious ignorance toward religious speakers.

5 Kidd does also highlight the ways that those who are minorities *within* a religious community are epistemically harmed (Kidd 2017). However, apart from one passing remark, Kidd does not give serious treatment to the development of intersectional forms of religious epistemic in/justice, or those theologies that emerge from intersectional ways of knowing, like womanist theologies developed by Black women (Kidd 2017, 388).

6 For instance, religious students and educators are a minority in the sciences (Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Ecklund et al. 2016). As a recent study by Paula Soneral, Sara E. Brownell, and M. Elizabeth Barnes shows, "a majority (61 percent) of the scientific community hold no religious affiliation compared to the general public (34 percent)" (Soneral, Brownell, and Barnes 2023). We also know that among academic philosophers, the majority are atheists and agnostics; one survey shows that only 18.93% accept or lean toward theism, whereas 66.95 accept or lean toward atheism, and 7.18% are agnostic or undecided (Bourget and Chalmers 2020), and the majority of those who reject theism also "lean toward" naturalism (Bourget and Chalmers 2020). For an interrogation of the decline of religious orientations in the university, see Wolterstorff 2019. For accounts of the impact of secularism in Western feminist theory, see Hawthorne 2014.

7 There is some evidence that in universities at large, where the religious majority is mirrored in the student population, for example, Christian students in America, students still report feeling ostracized and marginalized compared to students who are not religious (Bryant 2005; Moran 2007, 430; Moran, Lang, and Oliver 2007; Gross and Magolda 2009). Such feelings of marginalization even flood into religious studies. As religious studies professor at James Madison University Alan Levinovitz anecdotally argues, even though one-third of his students "believe in the exclusive salvific truth of Christianity . . . rarely do these students defend their beliefs in class" (Levinovitz 2016). Levinovitz reports that students worry that defending their beliefs would seem "hateful, hostile, intolerant, and disrespectful". This ostracization may be a matter of perception, perhaps owing to a sensed threat to such students' privilege given the increased religious diversity of campus life and decline of Christianity in America. However, matters are unlikely this simple. As Christy Moran notes, it may be that for such Christians, their behavior is perceived to be watched more closely (Moran 2007). Or such students are indeed responding to the negative impacts of secularism. It is not clear. However, I think what this information suggests is that it is wise to at least keep open the possibility that both secularism and the dominance of certain religious worldviews can together have a unique shaping force on the space that college students have with respect to expressing their religious worldviews.

8 For a thorough account of the nuances of how the experience of minority students in college differs from that of majority religious students, especially Christians in America, see Bowman and Small 2013. Nicholas Bowman and Jenny Small write that "marginalized religious affiliations have been on the negative, receiving end of Christian privilege" which affords Christian students certain advantages (Bowman and Small 2013, 20).

9 In their excellent book on the subject, Philip Gorski and Samuel Perry argue that "White Christian nationalism's 'deep story' goes something like this: America was founded as a Christian nation by (white) men who were 'traditional' Christians, who based the nation's founding documents on 'Christian principles.' The United States is blessed by God, which is why it has been so successful; and the nation has a special role to play in God's plan for humanity. But these blessings are threatened by cultural degradation from 'un-American' influences both inside and outside our borders" (Gorski and Perry 2022, 4).

10 One upshot of the dominance of these views is that they contribute to the perception that Christianity is inherently tied to specific political views, like conservatism, and religious and political affiliation become inextricably linked. As Gorski and Perry observe, "[t]o be a Christian was to be a member of a church and/or to affirm certain beliefs (for example, in God or the Bible). But today, calling oneself a 'Christian' or even an 'evangelical' is sometimes just a way of claiming membership in an ideological or political tribe or defending a certain 'way of life'" (Gorski and Perry 2022, 107).

11 For an opposing view, see Blum 2004.

12 Certainly, one hindrance to this diversified knowledge is the assumption that it is only Muslims, or even Muslim women, who engage in religious dress, which, of course, is false. Most religions contain religious dress of some kind. What explains the existence of such an assumption is not just secularism alone, but a backdrop of Christianity in the West, wherein a lack of religious dress is more common, or more common forms of religious dress (for example, cross necklaces) are more discreet and perceived as nonthreatening.

13 For an argument for why we should call religions themselves "worldviews," and differentiate them from secular worldviews, see Stenmark 2022.

14 As Nicolas Wolterstorff has pointed out in a debate concerning the role of religious reasoning in debates on public reason, religious citizens may strive to keep their public and private selves integrated and whole, reflecting the idea that there is in fact no obvious distinction between them (Wolterstorff 1997). This no doubt applies to those who wear religious dress and thus testify to their faith in public through their dress. However, religious folks may also testify to their beliefs more directly, through argument and bearing witness to their faith in processes like conscientious objection. But they might be compromised in their ability to testify to their religiously informed political view when either they or their audience are deprived of the conceptual resources, like basic religious literacy, required to successfully do this. When the collective resources for religious views are diminished, and citizens increasingly lack a more nuanced understanding of religious citizens' beliefs and practices, religious citizens risk appearing fanatical, stubborn, or unintelligent in their being "unable" to separate their religious and political beliefs and selves. For more on epistemic injustice and public reason, see Morgan-Olsen 2009. For a view that includes religion, see Epstein 2014.

15 King himself saw his fight against racial injustice as a call from God motivating and leading him in the Civil Rights Movement. In his biography, King is quoted stating: "I could hear an inner voice saying to me, 'Martin Luther, stand up for righteousness. Stand up for justice. Stand up for truth. And lo I will be with you, even until the end of the world.' . . . I heard the voice of Jesus saying still to fight on" (King, quoted in Garrow 1986, 241–42). Certainly, it was because of King's overarching religious worldview that he was able to situate his experiences as an oppressed Black man in America within a particular theology, a "personalist" theology, and vice versa, wherein the Christian God is portrayed as a personal God who stands with King and God's beloved community. King defines his personalist philosophy as: "the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality. This personal idealism remains today my basic philosophical position. Personalism's insistence that only personality—finite and infinite—is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality" (King, 1958, p.100).

16 For more on the theology underlying Truth's testimony, see Fiorenza 1997; 2015.

17 To be sure, "[m]ore than a century and a half after Isabella Baumfree changed her name to Sojourner Truth, a small cadre of Black female scholars of religion claimed a similar power of naming and called themselves womanists" (Floyd-Thomas 2006, 3). Particular to womanism is an epistemology that challenges "certain ideological formulations, certain cultural complexities, and certain languages of existence that have kept white supremacist heteropatriarchy intact and omnipresent"; womanist theologies in turn emphasize Black women's ways of knowing (3).

18 Again, granting credibility in no way implies that one needs to adopt a specific doctrine themselves to *see* the religious speaker's testimony as credible here. One need not *believe* the doctrine in full to see that the

speaker has an epistemic position that justifiably informs and is informed by a doctrine that guides their actions—one can simply see the doctrine and actions as interwoven based on the subject's experience, as a reflection of who the speakers *is,* and still disagree with or challenge that doctrine.

19 For various accounts of womanist theology, and other African American theologies, see Pinn and Cannon 2014. For other accounts, see Coleman 2008; Hayes 2010.

20 For a perspective that criticizes Western feminist assumptions that some religions are not only regressive or are outright oppressive, but are "unchanging," see Narayan 1997. As Uma Narayan explains, "Religion appears in such analysis as a relatively unchanging body of beliefs and practices shared by all its adherents, rather than as a cluster of beliefs, practices, and institutions, historically constituted, traversed by change, and affected by interpretative and political conflicts about its values and commitments [· · · ·] What results is not merely an intellectually inadequate picture of religion as an evolving social institution, but a picture of religion that plays an important role in a 'colonialist stance' toward Third-World contexts" (Narayan 1997, 52).

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