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BEING WRONGED AND UNDERSTANDING MORAL WRONGNESS

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THE AIM of this article is to articulate and defend the intuition that the experience of being morally wronged affords one a distinctive understanding of the moral wrongness of what one experiences. In section 1, I clarify and motivate this claim. In section 2, I argue that the relevant epistemic good is the understanding of what it is like to endure the emotional pain of someone who must make sense of one's autobiography and thus sense of self as a person who has been wronged in the relevant way. In section 3, I argue that the epistemic ability that is exercised in the generation of this understanding is the ability to reflect on one's personal experiences and articulate a generalizable understanding of the relevant moral wrongness. In section 4, I argue that this epistemic good and related epistemic ability allow one to make claims about the objective wrong-making features of the experienced event and is not confined to merely making claims about features of the experience. In section 5, I argue that this epistemic ability should not be conflated with the epistemic abilities of the sort that can be successfully exercised independently of having undergone the relevant experiences. This then allows me to spell out the relationship between the epistemic ability exercised by those who experience the relevant wrong and the various epistemic abilities that can be possessed by those who do not undergo the relevant experiences. I conclude with section 6, where I argue that the account of this article strengthens the view that those who do not undergo experiences of being wronged in the relevant way have the responsibility to seek out and acquire knowledge of these wrongs in order not to perpetuate them.

1. MOTIVATING THE CLAIM

Consider the following statements made by feminist philosophers in the standpoint epistemological tradition. Uma Narayan writes, "A very important component of what constitutes the epistemic privilege of the oppressed has to do with knowledge that is at least partly constituted by and conferred by the emotional responses of the oppressed to their oppression." Elizabeth Anderson writes, "The

epistemic privilege of the oppressed resides in their privileged access to certain experiences, which give them information especially revelatory of fundamental truths about society." Alison Wylie writes that "the experience of exclusion or marginalization may itself be a source of insight" into what oppression is. Manon Garcia relies on the work of Simone de Beauvoir to make an analogous claim about submission. The reason she relies on de Beauvoir's work is that de Beauvoir, in virtue of "her privileged social position," "has access to the experience of submission without being silenced like many submissive women."[1]

How should we understand these statements? Recent philosophical engagements with the notion of epistemic privilege focus on arguing that in fact, most of the epistemic goods and epistemic abilities acquired in virtue of experiencing being socially marginalized and oppressed are equally accessible by those who do not undergo such experiences. Briana Toole, a recent example, distinguishes between two notions of epistemic privilege.[2] First, there is the epistemic privilege afforded by the experiences of those who occupy a given marginalized social location. The kind of epistemic privilege afforded to those who undergo the kind of experiences characterizing the occupation of socially marginalized locations include the possibility of "noticing aspects of the world that are unlikely to be attended to by those who are not marginalized," the development of "certain habits of attention," and "motivations to see more clearly."[3] Second, there is the epistemic privilege of an achieved standpoint. Achieving a standpoint, according to Toole, should be understood as a form of *consciousness raising* whereby a group of people with similar experiences get together to conceptualize the wrongs they experience and thus generate knowledge of those wrongs. Toole argues that we should think of the experiences had in virtue of occupying a socially marginalized location as grounding the generation of knowledge found at the standpoint level but without the experiences being sufficient for this knowledge.[4] In other words, just having the kind of experiences had in virtue of occupying a socially marginalized location does not guarantee that one also acquires knowledge of the wrongs one suffers. For that, one needs to partake in consciousness raising. Moreover, Toole asks us to conceive consciousness raising as a form of training led by experts that can initiate both those who have undergone the kind of experiences had by socially marginalized people and those who have not into knowledge of the wrongs suffered by them. According to Toole, this account

1 Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 38; Anderson, "Situated Knowledge and the Interplay of Value Judgments and Evidence in Scientific Inquiry," 502; Wylie, "Feminist Philosophy of Science," 63; and Garcia, *We Are Not Born Submissive*, 87.

2 Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and Epistemic Peerhood," 2.

3 Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and Epistemic Peerhood," 3.

4 Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and Epistemic Peerhood," 8.

has a number of advantages. First, it avoids the implausible claim that simply having the kind of experiences had in virtue of occupying a socially marginalized location automatically guarantees knowledge of the wrongs suffered. Second, it opens up the possibility that those who have not had the relevant kind of experiences of being wronged because of not occupying a socially marginalized location can nevertheless partake in consciousness raising and acquire the same kind of knowledge of the wrongs suffered by those who do undergo the relevant kind of experiences.

Like Toole, Lidal Dror also stresses that the experience of being socially marginalized is often not necessary to acquire an understanding of the moral wrong of social marginalization and oppression. As he puts it in his article "Is There an Epistemic Advantage to Being Oppressed?":

> The wrong-making features of various forms of oppression consist largely in objective features about the ways in which people are treated (e.g., unequally or with their freedoms constrained)…. Accordingly, claims about oppression and social marginalization are generally objectively analyzable claims about certain structural relations, and are not claims with truth values that are determined by how one person feels about them.[5]

As I argue in section 2 below, Dror's position is more nuanced than this quote makes it seem. Still, a fair characterization of his view is that since the wrong-making features of oppression are objective and do not depend on the experiences had by those who are wronged, epistemic access to them is independent of whether one has the kind of experiences that characterize the occupation of socially marginalized locations. It is instructive that both Toole and Dror focus on the same kind of epistemic abilities. Like Toole, Dror discusses the ability to epistemically justify one's beliefs about oppression (632), "to identify subtler manifestations of oppression" (630), "seeing oppression in new contexts" (631), and the knowledge-how of making good inferences (635). Both Toole and Dror argue that the acquisition of these epistemic abilities in relation to moral wrongs is, at least in principle, independent of whether one experiences being wronged in the relevant way.

Both accounts are partly motivated by the concern to hold accountable those who perpetuate wrongs such as social marginalization and oppression due to their lack of knowledge of how these wrongs work. The thought is that if experience does not play a central role in acquiring knowledge of the relevant

5 Dror, "Is There an Epistemic Advantage to Being Oppressed?" 632. Hereafter, this article is cited parenthetically.

moral wrongs, then those who do not undergo the relevant experiences should be held accountable for their ignorance. As Dror puts it, "precisely because the non-oppressed aren't in principle significantly epistemically disadvantaged, *they are culpable for the ignorance and lack of care they show towards the existence and functioning of systems of oppression*" (620–21).[6] Although I agree with both Toole and Dror on this point, this concern can divert attention from a crucial epistemic good and related epistemic ability that can be afforded only to those who experience being wronged in the relevant way, for example, by occupying a socially marginalized location.

It is important to clarify from the start that I do not argue that having the experience of being wronged by, say, being socially marginalized and oppressed puts one in an epistemic privilege vis-à-vis those who do not undergo the same type of experiences. Rather, the aim is to focus attention on an epistemic good and related epistemic ability that have been ignored in the debate. There are two reasons why this is important. First, a corollary of this claim is that a constitutive part of the moral wrongness of, say, oppression is its infliction of the kind of emotional pain mentioned above on those who are wronged. Thus, by articulating the kind of understanding of moral wrongness afforded to those who undergo the relevant experiences of being wronged, we can at the same time shed light on a key aspect of the moral wrongness of the relevant deed. Second, we value people who have undergone experiences of severe moral wrongs and who then commit to teach others about these moral wrongs. We value them, at least in part, as epistemic agents. The argument of this article explains why.

To drive these points home, let me illustrate them by considering Holocaust survivors. Holocaust survivors have played a crucial part in shaping the moral sensitivity of European society since World War II by recounting their experiences of the Holocaust. For example, their testimonies have been part of trials, their books have been taught in schools, and their stories told in interviews and documentaries. What these testimonies bring out is the evil committed during the Holocaust. Now compare the attitudes of those who have not experienced the Holocaust towards, on the one hand, Holocaust survivors and, on the other hand, historians whose expertise is the Holocaust but who were not alive during the Holocaust. Although it is undeniable that the kind of information that historians possess plays an essential role in understanding the kind of moral wrong done in the Holocaust—for example, by making us understand that the Holocaust was, at least in part, the culmination of the widespread antisemitism that characterized European society before the Holocaust—it

6 See also Toole, "Standpoint Epistemology and Epistemic Peerhood," 4–5.

is not plausible to simply swap the testimony of a Holocaust survivor with the information provided to us by a historian of the Holocaust. How so?

This article argues that the reason is that those who have experienced being wronged in the relevant way are afforded an understanding of the moral wrongness of what they experienced that others cannot give voice to because it appeals to what it means to be someone who has had to lead a life characterized if not defined by the emotional and physical pain caused by the relevant experienced events. Applied to Holocaust survivors, this means that we listen to their testimonies at least in part because they give voice to what it means to endure the emotional and physical pain caused by having experienced being imprisoned in concentration camps and what it means to be someone who survived them and whose life is defined by that survival. The corollary of this is that the evil of the Holocaust at least in part consists in having caused this kind of emotional pain to the people it wronged. This is also why their testimonies provide a unique contribution to our understanding of the Holocaust: they were the ones who were wronged, and they can tell us what that evil means for someone who needs to lead a life partly defined by it. If this is on the right lines, then something similar should be generalized to those who are wronged in virtue of occupying a socially marginalized and oppressed location.

2. Epistemological and Personal Transformations in the Experience of Being Wronged

In this section, I articulate the kind of epistemic good that can be possessed only by those who experience being wronged in the relevant way—for example, by occupying a socially oppressed and marginalized location. I do so by appealing to the notion of *transformative experience* as popularized by Laurie Paul.[7] For Paul, transformative experiences involve both an epistemological transformation and a personal transformation. On an epistemological level, Paul argues that the subject of experience, in having the experience of, say, being the target of a horrific physical attack, acquires an understanding of what it is like to have the experience.[8] In virtue of this acquisition, experiences have what Paul calls *subjective values*.[9] According to Paul, the subjective value of the experience refers to the revelation of what it is like to have the relevant experience, a revelation that can be enjoyed only by having the relevant experience. Importantly,

7 Paul, *Transformative Experience*.

8 Paul, *Transformative Experience*, 16. Paul talks about knowledge rather than understanding. I assume that I can reinterpret Paul's claims for my own purposes by substituting 'understanding' for 'knowledge'.

9 Paul, *Transformative Experience*, 12.

Paul is careful in articulating her claim in terms of types of experiences, not merely token experiences. Paul is not merely arguing that each token experience is different, and therefore, in having a new token experience, one acquires an understanding of what it is like to have that token experience. Rather, Paul argues that in having a new type of experience, one acquires an understanding of what it is like to have that type of experience. In having a transformative experience, then, one is revealed with the nature of the type of experience one is having, and in virtue of this, one acquires an understanding of what it is like to have that type of experience.[10]

For the purposes of this article, it is important to avoid an "internalist" interpretation of Paul's concept of transformative experience.[11] The reason why this is important becomes apparent in section 3. To anticipate, I argue that by avoiding such interpretation, one can appeal to an inextricable normative relation between the experience of being wronged and objective wrong-making features of the experienced event. In turn, this is crucial when arguing that the kind of understanding that is afforded by the experience of being wronged is an understanding not merely of features of the experience but also of the object of experience. So let me explain what an internalist interpretation is and how to avoid it. In a number of places, Paul seems to suggest that the subjective value of an experience comes down to being revealed with properties of experience conceived independently of properties of the object of experience. That is what philosophers of perception would refer to as *qualia*—that is, intrinsic, nonintentional properties of experience that constitute its phenomenal character. For example, when Paul discusses Frank Jackson's thought experiment of Mary the color scientist, Paul follows Jackson in arguing that the understanding that Mary acquires once she sees a red rose for the first time is what red looks like in experience.[12] This is easily interpreted, as Jackson does, as Mary acquiring an understanding of a nonintentional, intrinsic property of the experience—that is, the qualia associated with redness. A stronger interpretation that is accepted by contemporary philosophers of perception that distance themselves from notions of qualia is that Mary, in seeing a red rose for the first time, does not merely acquire an understanding of a property of the experience. Rather, she also acquires an understanding of a property of the object of experience—that is, what it means for an object to look red. Importantly, the idea is that these two

10 Paul, *Transformative Experience*, 10–14.

11 See the exchange between Campbell (review of *Transformative Experience*) and Paul ("Transformative Choice"), where the former imputes an internalist interpretation to the latter. I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that Paul in fact does not make the mistake Campbell imputes to her.

12 Paul, *Transformative Experience*, 8–12.

acquisitions are connected: one acquires an understanding of a property of the object of experience—for instance, what it means for an object to look red—in virtue of acquiring an understanding of what it is like to experience redness.[13]

Now, according to an internalist interpretation of the subjective value of an experience, an epistemological transformation involves acquiring an understanding of what it is like to have an experience, where this is understood in terms acquiring an understanding of a given qualia—that is, an intrinsic, nonintentional property of experience. The problem, as anticipated above, is that the internalist interpretation fails to reach out to properties of the objects of experience. This problem becomes even more pressing when we move from examples of experiencing color to paradigmatic examples given by Paul of transformative experiences. For example, according to an internalist interpretation, in having a child for the first time, one acquires an understanding of what it is like to have a child, where this is restricted to the qualia of the experience. The internalist interpretation is problematic because by interpreting the epistemic role of what it is like to have a new type of experience in terms of the revelation of properties of the experience, conceived independently of properties of the object of experience, it forgoes the right to appeal to properties of the object of experience to make intelligible what it is like to have the new type of experience. For instance, the internalist interpretation foregoes the right to appeal to, say, the preciousness of a newborn to make intelligible what it is like to have a child for the first time. It then becomes mysterious how one ought to go about making intelligible, for example, what it is like to have a child for the first time. Surely, in attempting to make intelligible what it is like to experience having a child for the first time to those who do not have this experience, one would naturally appeal to properties of the objects of experience—for example, the preciousness of the newborn.

Paul is clear that she does not take an internalist line.[14] For this reason, we should interpret the subjective value of an experience in noninternalist terms. By conceiving the epistemological transformation as such, we are in the position of capturing the idea that in virtue of having the relevant transformative experience, one acquires an understanding not merely of properties of the type

13 This stronger interpretation is accepted by both intentionalists and relationalists. The debate between these two sides is how best to capture this interpretation, either in terms of representational properties of the experience or in terms of a nonrepresentational psychological relation between the subject and the object in which mind-independent objects and their sensory properties partly constituting the experience. For a clear exposition of the debate, see Soteriou, *The Mind's Construction*, ch. 2; and Campbell and Cassam, *Berkeley's Puzzle*.

14 Paul, "Transformative Choice."

of experience one has but also of properties of the object that is experienced. In other words, experience provides us with epistemic access to the properties of the object of experience, not just to properties of the experience itself.

Transformative experiences transform one also on a personal level. How should we think of personal transformation? Paul writes about changes in "what it is like for you to be you," in the kind of person you "take yourself to be," and in "revising how you experience yourself."[15] A fruitful way of thinking about these changes is by appealing to what I call *autobiographical reflection*. This is the ability we exercise when reflecting on our experiences and organizing them into personal histories and thus senses of self.[16] Autobiographical reflection is responsible for what one might term one's self-image or how one thinks of oneself. I go into more detail in what is involved in autobiographical reflection in section 3. For now, I want to suggest that by appealing to autobiographical reflection, we can understand a transformative experience as involving a personal transformation when the exercise of reflecting on the relevant transformative experience leads to a disruption in the otherwise coherent construction of one's sense of self. This conception of personal transformation gains strength precisely when considering experiences of being morally wronged as one is when occupying a socially marginalized and oppressed location. When the experience one must make sense of as part of one's autobiography is the experience of being morally wronged in this way, it involves emotional pain. Emotional pain is caused not only while the wrong is being suffered. It is caused also in the act of recollecting the experience of being wronged. Within the act of recollection, emotional pain is partly caused by the act of trying to accept and make sense of the experience of being wronged as part of one's autobiography. It hurts to have to reconstruct one's sense of self as someone who has been wronged in the relevant way. Since this interpretation of personal transformation in experiences of being morally wronged becomes crucial in articulating the distinctive kind of understanding of moral wrongness afforded to those who experience being wronged in the relevant way, I want to substantiate it via the following example of sexual harassment.[17]

In her book *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker quotes from Susan Brownmiller the story of Carmita Wood, an administrator at Cornell University who was sexually harassed, indeed assaulted, by an academic member of staff:

15 Paul, *Transformative Experience*, 16.

16 Autobiographical reflection is exercised in what both philosophers and developmental psychologists refer to as autobiographical memory. See, e.g., Schechtman, *Staying Alive*; and Fivush, *Family Narratives and the Development of an Autobiographical Self*.

17 I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out another powerful example—namely, Susan Brison's memoir of surviving an extremely violent sexual assault (*Aftermath*).

> As Wood told the story, the eminent man would jiggle his crotch when he stood near her desk and looked at his mail, or he'd deliberately brush against her breasts while reaching for some papers. One night as the lab workers were leaving their annual Christmas party, he cornered her in the elevator and planted some unwanted kisses on her mouth. After the Christmas party incident, Carmita Wood went out of her way to use the stairs in the lab building in order to avoid a repeat encounter, but the stress of the furtive molestations and her efforts to keep the scientist at a distance while maintaining cordial relations with his wife, whom she liked, brought on a host of physical symptoms. Wood developed chronic back and neck pains. Her right thumb tingled and grew numb. She requested a transfer to another department, and when it didn't come through, she quit. She walked out the door and went to Florida for some rest and recuperation. Upon her return she applied for unemployment insurance. When the claims investigator asked why she had left her job after eight years, Wood was at a loss to describe the hateful episodes. She was ashamed and embarrassed. Under prodding—the blank on the form needed to be filled in—she answered that her reasons had been personal. Her claim for unemployment benefits was denied.[18]

This quote describes both the kind of experience that Wood underwent during sexual harassment and the kind of experiences Wood underwent in the aftermath of being sexually harassed. For example, Brownmiller reports that Wood, among other things, developed physical pain, took time off work, wanted to quit her job, and felt stress at the thought of encountering her harasser. These are all experiences involving both emotional and physical pain. Although it is less explicit in the passage, it is not far-fetched to assume that Wood also continued to undergo emotional pain in attempting to make sense of the experience of being sexually harassed as an event that is part of her autobiography. Before being sexually harassed, Wood did not have to make sense of this experience as part of her autobiography or sense of self. After the experience, she did. This in turn involves a disruption of the sense of self that Wood constructed preceding the experience of being sexually harassed. I surmise that Wood underwent emotional pain not only in recollecting what it was like to undergo being sexual harassed at the time of being sexually harassed but also in the act of having to reconstruct her sense of self as someone who has undergone that experience—that is, as someone who has been sexually harassed.

What I want to suggest is that the emotional pain one has to endure in making sense of the given experience of being morally wronged as part of one's

18 Brownmiller, *In Our Time* (quoted in Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 150–51).

autobiography is itself part of the moral wrongness of the act that one experiences. For example, part of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment is that the person who is sexually harassed has to endure the emotional pain of reconstructing their autobiography and thus sense of self as someone who has been sexually harassed. To put it the other way, the aspect of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment that is epistemically accessed by those like Wood who experienced being wronged in the way she did in being sexually harassed is the emotional pain that is endured in her attempt to make sense of the experience as part of her autobiography.[19]

Notice how personal and epistemological transformations are inextricably linked in these kinds of transformative experiences. Recall that an epistemological transformation involves acquiring an understanding not only of properties of experience but also of properties of the object of experience. What I am suggesting is that in the experience of being wronged as one is when sexually harassed, one's undergoing a personal transformation—that is, undergoing the emotional pain of having to reconstruct one's autobiography and sense of self as someone who has been sexually harassed—is partly constitutive of the epistemological transformation one undergoes—that is, the epistemic access to a property of the object of experience, in this case, an aspect of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment. Although I develop further this claim in section 3, we are now in a position to articulate the distinctive kind of understanding afforded to those who experience being wronged in the relevant ways. This distinctive kind of understanding is constituted by an understanding of what it is like to endure the emotional pain of making sense of the given experience of being morally wronged as part of one's autobiography and thus sense of self. One key point here is that the relevant emotional pain is not present simply in making sense of a single experience. Rather, it emerges from the attempt to reconstruct one's sense of self by making sense of how that single experience fits in the whole. In the real-life example of Carmita Wood, she attempted to reconstruct her sense of self by makings sense of how the experience of sexual harassment fit in her image of herself. She then could appeal to her understanding of what it is like to be someone who must reconstruct her autobiography and thus sense of self as someone who has been sexually harassed. This

19 I qualify my claim by referring to *an aspect* of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment in order to avoid the claim that undergoing a personal transformation is a form of "acquaintance" with "the essence" of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment in an analogous way that some philosophers of perception argue that seeing what red looks like in experience involves becoming acquainted with the essence of redness. See, e.g., Johnston, "How to Speak of the Colors"; and Lord, "How to Learn About Aesthetics and Morality Through Acquaintance and Deference."

is an understanding of an aspect of the moral wrongness of sexual harassment because having to endure that kind of emotional pain is itself part of why sexual harassment is morally wrong. We are now also in a position to explain why those who do not undergo the experience of being wronged in the relevant way cannot access in the same way the distinctive kind of understanding that is afforded to those who do undergo the relevant type of experience. The reason is that the distinctive kind of understanding afforded to those who undergo the relevant type of experience is an understanding of what it is like to endure the emotional pain of someone who must make sense of one's autobiography and thus sense of self as a person who has been wronged in the relevant way.

To be sure, this does not mean that those who do not undergo the relevant type of experience cannot acquire any kind of understanding of what that sort of emotional pain is like. For example, people who do not undergo the relevant type of experience can listen to people who did. But as Yuri Cath argues, we should think of the understanding of what it is like to have an experience possessed by those who do not undergo the relevant experience in terms of "gradability" that stops short of coinciding with the understanding possessed by those who do undergo the relevant experience.[20] How far one thinks one can acquire this kind of understanding depends, at least in part, one how far one thinks that imaginative understanding and empathy can go.[21] In section 5, I describe in more detail the relationship between the kind of understanding possessed by those who experience being wronged in the relevant ways and the epistemic abilities possessed by those who do not undergo the relevant type of experiences.

3. The Role of Autobiographical Reflection in Generating Moral Concepts

In this section, I spell out the distinctive epistemic ability that is both acquired and exercised in generating the distinctive kind of understanding of moral wrongness articulated in section 2. I do so by focusing on the role of autobiographical reflection in generating moral concepts. I begin by distinguishing between generating, acquiring, possessing, and deploying a moral concept.

20 Cath, "Knowing What It Is Like and Testimony."

21 For a recent and strong defense of empathic, imaginative perspective-taking abilities in the acquisition of moral understanding, see Bailey, "Empathy and the Value of Humane Understanding." For a relevant discussion of imaginative understanding versus scientific understanding, see Campbell, *Causation in Psychology*. For a position closer to mine that argues that experience influences and limits in important ways our imaginative perspective taking in moral matters, see Toole, "Demarginalizing Standpoint Epistemology."

Once again, I appeal to Fricker's discussion of sexual harassment, more specifically *hermeneutical injustice*.[22] Hermeneutical injustice is the wrong done to people who experience, say, sexual harassment but who do not have the epistemic means to label and conceptualize the wrong they experience. Fricker argues this was the case for many women before the advent of second-wave feminism. Because of this, Fricker argues, women who experienced sexual harassment were at a "cognitive disadvantage" that prevented them from understanding the experiences they underwent. For example, according to Fricker, Wood did not have the conceptual resources to articulate her experience. This meant that when she reflected on her experiences, although she endured the relevant type of emotional pain, she was not in a position to say that what she experienced was sexual harassment, and she might not have been in a position even to say that she had been morally wronged. One way in which we can read Fricker is as saying that before second-wave feminism, the concept of sexual harassment had not been generated—that is, although women experienced events that fall under the description of sexual harassment, there was no labeled concept of sexual harassment that they could appeal to in order to describe their experiences. Since the concept of sexual harassment had not been generated, women who experienced sexual harassment could not acquire the concept of sexual harassment to describe their experience. In turn, they could not possess the concept of sexual harassment, and therefore they could not deploy it to describe their experiences. Thus, the generation of a moral concept is foundational for its acquisition, possession, and deployment.

How is a moral concept like sexual harassment generated in the first place? According to a genealogical account shared by David Wiggins, Philip Pettit, and Fricker, the generation of moral concepts begins with the fact that some people undergo certain experiences in response to certain events.[23] These experiences are typically affective, and they involve an event that becomes of concern to the subject of experience. Individually, these people do not have the conceptual resources to make sense of the experience or to generate concepts that can help them do so. It is only once people who have similar experiences get together to constitute a social process with the aim of making sense of their experiences that the generation of the relevant moral concepts begins. The central aim of this social process is the shared effort to make sense of the normative relation between the relevant experiences and what the experiences respond to.

22 Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 150–52.

23 See Wiggins, *A Sensible Subjectivism?*; Pettit, "Realism and Response-Dependence"; and Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*. See also Fricker, "Epistemic Oppression and Epistemic Privilege"; Pohlhaus, "Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice"; and Toole, "From Standpoint Epistemology to Epistemic Oppression."

Eventually, by focusing on this normative relation, the participants start noticing similar features to each other's experiences and to what the experiences are responding. In turn, the process of identifying these similarities leads to a generalization of the type of experience had by the participants and what the type of experience is a response to. The generalization leads to the generation of the relevant moral concept—for example, sexual harassment. The concept of sexual harassment was generated to refer to objective features of experienced events that have a normative relation to the relevant experiences. Once the concept of sexual harassment was generated, the concept became available for acquisition both by those who had experienced sexual harassment and by those who did not. Women who experience sexual harassment can now use it to describe and understand their experiences. Those who have not experienced sexual harassment can also acquire the concept of sexual harassment and use it to explain its moral wrong or to identify manifestations of it.

There are two aspects of what it is to elaborate the normative relation between one's experience of, say, being sexually harassed and the objective features of the experienced event that need spelling out. First, as a number of philosophers of emotion have argued, emotional experiences involve evaluations of events they respond to.[24] Using a simplified example, feeling angry at a remark involves an evaluation of the remark as, say, offensive. The evaluation at play in an emotional experience can be either justified or not. For example, if the remark turns out not to have been offensive after all, then one typically changes one's emotional response. In virtue of involving evaluations, then, emotional experiences are open to rational assessment—that is, we give reasons to justify our emotional responses, and doing so involves picking on objective features of the event we emotionally respond to, for example, the words used in the remark. But—and this is crucial—the objective features of the experienced event provide reasons in the justification of an emotional response only because they fall under an evaluative description. The words used in a remark provide one with a reason to justify one's anger only if the words fall under an evaluative description, such as "offensive." Whether the words do indeed fall under the relevant evaluative description is open to debate. This is to be expected since emotional experiences are open to rational assessment. Applying this to the case at hand, the point is that unpacking the normative relation between an emotional experience and the event it is a response to involves deliberating

24 For accounts exploring the normative relation between experiences of an emotional kind and descriptive features of the objects of experience, see D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy"; Deonna and Teroni, *The Emotions* and "Emotions and Their Correctness Conditions"; and Tappolet, *Emotions, Value, and Agency*. These accounts are inspired by Wiggins, "Sensible Subjectivism?"

on how one's experience fits with objective features of the experienced event, where what is debated is whether the objective features fall under the relevant evaluative description. The social process leading to the generation of a moral concept can then be seen as a social deliberative attempt to generate new conceptual resources to spell out the evaluative description under which objective features of an experienced event can be seen as providing reasons for the justification of the relevant emotional experience. It is of vital importance to appreciate that spelling out this normative relation involves thinking of the relevant experience and what the experience responds to—namely, the objective features of the experienced events—as inextricably connected.

Take the example of Carmita Wood. Suppose she was trying to make sense of her experiences in a collaborative effort with other women who had similar experiences. They might have described their experiences and then attempted to explain why they felt as they did, where this would have involved appealing to objective features of the situation they experienced. Their making sense of their experiences would have been inextricably connected to appealing to objective features of the experienced event. In Wood's example, she described the strength used by the harasser to corner her when forcing kisses on her. Wood also described the new behaviors she adopted as a reaction to the sexual harassment, such as leaving her job. Descriptions of this sort are descriptions of objective features of situations. At the same time, they are descriptions emerging from evaluations of the relevant situations. For instance, Wood's descriptions of how she left her job in the aftermath of what happened to her emerged from the evaluation of the wrongness of what happened to her. Leaving her job is an aspect of the wrongness that she suffered. Descriptions of objective features of situations of the sort given by Wood are the result of evaluations. In turn, these evaluations are part of the experiences had by Wood. The upshot is that neither side can be made intelligible without the other. Leaving her job is made intelligible as a wrong done to her in light of the experiences she underwent. And the descriptions of her experiences are made intelligible by appealing to the objective features of the situations that her experiences were responses to.

The second aspect of what it means to elaborate the normative relation between the relevant experience of being wronged and the experienced event is specific to those who undergo the relevant experience. This can be appreciated by spelling out why autobiographical reflection is an important component of the process of generating moral concepts like sexual harassment. Women who were sexually harassed in the past had to endure the emotional pain of reflecting back on their experiences in the social process described above. That distinguished them from those who also elaborated the normative relation between

the experience of being sexually harassed and the experienced event, thus being part of the social process, but who had not been sexually harassed. Those like Wood who had been sexually harassed exercised an evaluation of the experienced event that differed in at least one important respect from the evaluation exercised by those who did not experience sexual harassment. That is, for those like Wood who were sexually harassed, the attempt to spell out what was being evaluated in the experience of being sexually harassed—i.e., the relevant moral wrong—was inextricably connected to the fact that they were attempting to make sense of the experience as part of their personal history.[25] In other words, their evaluation of the wrong suffered in the experienced event was informed by what it means to be someone who needs to lead a life as someone who has been sexually harassed. This involves emotional pain. So, unlike those who had not been sexually harassed, Wood's attempt at spelling out the experienced wrong was not of a detached sort, the kind that a bystander might attempt while listening to Wood's experiences. Moreover, for those like Wood, there is a close relationship between the two aspects just elaborated of what it means to spell out the normative relation between an emotional experience and what it is responding to. For people like Wood, evaluating objective features of experienced events is informed by their attempt at making sense of the experiences as part of their autobiography. That is because they try to conceptualize evaluatively the objective features of the experienced events in a way that justifies the way they feel, which, in turn, involves attempting to make sense of themselves as someone who needs to lead a life characterized by the relevant experience.

What emerges from the above, then, is a distinctive epistemic ability acquired and exercised by those like Wood. That is, the ability to extrapolate a generalizable understanding of the moral wrongness of an experienced event from the personal experiences one has undergone. Within the context of generating moral concepts, this epistemic ability is distinctive to those who undergo the relevant experiences because the understanding of the relevant moral wrong emerges from the effort of piecing together emotionally painful experiences into a sense of self. Unless one has gone through the relevant experiences, one is not in a position to attempt to piece them together into a coherent sense of self. One has to undergo the relevant experiences to be in the position of attempting to make sense of them within one's autobiography. Moreover, and importantly, spelling out this distinctive epistemic ability shows why not everyone who has had the relevant experience automatically acquires the epistemic good articulated in section 2. This is because not everyone is able

25 For an insightful account of the relationship between what it means to evaluate and what it means to lead a life, see Calhoun, *Doing Valuable Time*.

to exercise the epistemic ability articulated in this section. As Avishai Margalit says in relation to Holocaust survivors, "although all sufferers of evil are equal in being qualified to attest to their suffering, they are far from equal in their ability to elucidate their experience of evil to us who were not there. This is a great achievement that should not be scorned because it may offend an alleged democratic instinct about witnesses."[26] The achievement consists in the ability to face one's emotional pain and spell out the objective features of the experienced event in light of the evaluation exercised in the very act of recollection of the relevant experience.

4. BEING WRONGED AND EPISTEMIC ABILITIES

In this section, I defend the claim made in sections 2 and 3 by replying to the objection that articulating what it is like to be, say, oppressed or sexually harassed does not entail making claims that go beyond the experience itself and onto objective features of these wrongs.[27] I do so by replying to a number of claims made in Dror's argument. To be sure, Dror's overall target is the "strong inversion thesis," according to which "socially marginalized people, by virtue of their social location *qua* social location, have a superior epistemic position than non-oppressed people when it comes to knowing things about the workings of social marginalization that concern them" (628). As stated in section 1, my aim is not to defend the strong inversion thesis. Rather, my aim in this section is to defend the view that the epistemic good and ability articulated in sections 2 and 3, respectively, allow one to make claims that go beyond the experience itself to objective features of the given moral wrong.

Dror's argument is divided into three parts. I consider each in turn. The first part devises an alternative version of Jackson's thought experiment about Mary the color scientist. In Dror's version, Jane is a white woman who is an expert in the Black civil rights movement. In virtue of her expertise, Jane possesses all descriptive and normative facts about the oppression of Black people in the United States. At the same time, Jane has never experienced being a Black woman subjected to racial discrimination. Dror concedes that Jane cannot possess an understanding of what it feels like to have the kind of emotions that a Black woman experiences as a response to being oppressed. That is out of Jane's reach. At the same time, Dror argues that it is implausible to think that therefore Jane cannot possess the same kind of "understanding [of] the operations of racism within the United States" (629). In Dror's words, "the qualia of being

26 Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, 181–82.

27 I thank an anonymous reviewer for putting it this way.

oppressed does not generally give better epistemic support to claims about the workings of social marginalization" (629).

I do not deny that there are many ways in which one can acquire knowledge of the workings of moral wrongs such as oppression that do not rely on experiencing these moral wrongs. Nevertheless, the problem with the first part of Dror's argument is that Dror conceives the phenomenology of experience in terms of qualia. As we have seen in section 2, qualia is a theoretical construct appealed to by some views in the philosophy of perception to capture the phenomenal character of experience. According to these views, the phenomenal character of experience is constituted by nonintentional properties of experience, i.e., qualia. Since qualia are nonintentional properties, appealing to them brings with it the assumption that there is a contingent relation between the phenomenology of experience and the properties of the mind-independent object of experience. In other words, appealing to qualia brings with it the assumption that specifying the phenomenology of experience is independent from specifying the properties of the mind-independent objects the experience is an experience of. This leads one to the "internalist" conception of the phenomenology of experience discussed in section 2. It should not be surprising, then, that Dror appeals to qualia when driving a wedge between knowledge of what it is like to have the experience and knowledge of objective features of events that one experiences.

It might be argued that I assume too much of what is involved in Dror's appeal to qualia. But we find a similar problem in the second part of Dror's argument, where he focuses specifically on emotions. Dror takes issue with Narayan's claim, quoted above, that it is in virtue of the emotional experiences had by oppressed people in response to oppression that they acquire knowledge of oppression that is out of reach to those who are not oppressed. Dror argues that having the relevant emotional experiences does not provide one with the epistemic ability to make claims about the objective features of, say, oppression that are in principle out of reach to those who did not have the relevant experiences. What kind of epistemic abilities does Dror have in mind? As we saw in section 2, Dror lists the ability to epistemically justify one's beliefs about oppression (629), "the ability to identify subtler manifestations of oppression" (630), the ability to "[see] oppression in new contexts" (631), and the knowledge-how of making good inferences (635).

I concede that the above listed epistemic abilities can be accessed by those who do not have the relevant emotional experiences. The problem is that the list is not exhaustive. As argued in section 3, there is an epistemic ability that is available only to those who have undergone the relevant experiences. That is, the ability to extrapolate a generalizable understanding of the moral

wrongness of an experienced event from the personal experiences one underwent. To reiterate, this epistemic ability is available only to those who have undergone the relevant experiences because it involves an evaluation of the experienced events that is inextricably connected to the attempt to restructure one's sense of self as someone who has undergone the relevant experience. In other words, the understanding of the relevant moral wrong emerges from the effort of making sense of emotionally painful experiences as part of one's sense of self. This is itself part of the evaluation of the objective features of the experienced event. Crucially, then, this is not reducible to mere knowledge of what it is like to be oppressed, understood independently of making claims about objective features of oppression. This is because, as we have seen, elaborating the normative status of one's experiences is inextricably connected with appealing to the objective features of the experienced event. One appeals to certain specific objective features of the experienced event in virtue of evaluating them—that is, insofar as one sees those objective features under a given evaluative description. But in turn, the evaluation is part of the experience, of "what it's like" to be oppressed. Of course, this is not to say that one cannot make claims about objective features of oppression without having the relevant experiences. Rather, it is to say that the epistemic ability articulated in section 3 is not confined to making claims about experience conceived independently of the objective features of the experienced event.

Third, one might argue that in fact, Dror concedes that there is an epistemic ability available only to those who undergo experiences of being oppressed (633). Moreover, he even seems to suggest that this epistemic ability is connected to making claims about the normative status of social marginalization. If so, where is the disagreement? This objection arises from Dror's distinction between two types of claims that the socially oppressed can make about social marginalization: those that are made true by how one feels about them and those that are not. According to Dror, "the vast majority of normative and descriptive claims about the workings of social marginalization" are of the latter type—that is, they are not made true by how one feels about them (632). By contrast, Dror argues, claims about social marginalization made by oppressed people that are made true by how they feel about them fall under the *negative affect advantage* of oppressed people (633). The negative affect advantage consists in having epistemic access to "knowing *whether* a particular experience is hurtful" and "to normative and descriptive claims about the workings of social marginalization" (633).

The problem is that Dror is unclear how we are to think of the relationship between "knowing *whether* a particular experience is hurtful" and "normative and descriptive claims about the workings of social marginalization." For

example, one might think of that relationship in causal terms. For instance, assuming one's emotional experiences are appropriately attuned, then whenever one feels hurt, one knows that the experienced event is morally wrong. This option is compatible with Dror's subsequent claim that "what really matters for the negative affect advantage is that (and perhaps how much) someone was hurt, rather than what exactly the hurt feels like" (633). It is not hard to see why only those who undergo these kinds of experiences have this kind of advantage. All it consists in is the ability to say that an experience is hurtful. I believe this option to be unappealing. It reduces epistemic agents to mere reliable detectors of moral wrongs, like a smoke alarm.[28] Moreover, interpreting the relation in causal terms precludes appealing to a normative relation between the experience and the experienced event. If instead Dror does opt for a normative relation, i.e., a relation that allows for justification, then it becomes unclear whether Dror can hold onto his earlier claims made in relation to the analogy between Jane and Mary, where he severs our understanding of features of the experience from our understanding of objective features of the experienced event. This is because, as argued in section 3, postulating a normative relation between the experience of being wronged and the objective wrong-making features of the experienced event commits one to the view that there is an inextricable relation between the two. The upshot is that we find the answer to Dror's objection in the normative relation between the experience of being wronged and the objective wrong-making features of the experienced event that Dror appeals to.

5. The Educational Role of the Experience of Being Wronged

The discussion in section 4 above raises the question of the relationship between the distinctive kind of epistemic ability I argue is afforded to those who experience being morally wronged in the relevant way and the epistemic abilities that can be acquired and exercised without undergoing experiences of this kind. In this section, I do two things. First, I show why the distinctive kind of epistemic ability afforded to those who experience being wronged in the relevant way is not reducible to and thus must be distinguished from the epistemic abilities that can be acquired by those who do not undergo the relevant experience. Second, I articulate the educational role of the experience of being wronged in relation to the epistemic abilities that can be acquired by those who do not undergo the relevant experience.

28 Johnston, M. "The Authority of Affect."

Recall that Dror mentions the following epistemic abilities that can be acquired by those who do not undergo the experience of being morally wronged in the relevant way: the ability to epistemically justify one's beliefs about oppression, "the ability to identify subtler manifestations of oppression," the ability to "[see] oppression in new contexts," and the knowledge-how of making good inferences. These are reminiscent of the epistemic abilities debated in current moral epistemology. The first and last epistemic abilities mentioned by Dror are reminiscent of the epistemic ability at play in the account of moral understanding made notorious by Alison Hills.[29] In a number of papers, Hills argues that we should conceive the epistemic ability that is partly constitutive of moral understanding strictly in terms of a deliberative ability that she calls "understanding why."[30] Hills conceives "understanding why" as a deliberative ability in that it involves a facility with connecting propositions in such a way as to enable one to demonstrate why a given proposition is true. If one is able to do so, according to Hills, then one "grasps" the relation between the relevant proposition and the reasons that make it true: "Moral understanding involves a grasp of the relation between a moral proposition and the reasons why it is true."[31] In turn, in virtue of such "grasping," the epistemic agent possesses *cognitive control* over them. Hills fleshes out the notion cognitive control through the notion of "manipulation": "if you understand why p (and q is why p) then you have cognitive control over p and q, and thus you can (in the right circumstances) manipulate the relationship between p and q."[32] Hills closely links the deliberative ability that characterizes "understanding why" with explanation. If one understands why a given moral proposition is true, then one is able to explain why a given proposition is related in the appropriate way to other propositions and how together they ground the truth of the relevant proposition.

The second and third epistemic abilities mentioned by Dror are reminiscent of epistemic abilities appealed to by philosophers who argue that our moral sensibility should be conceived in terms of perception-like experiences.

29 See Hills, "Moral Testimony and Moral Epistemology" and "Understanding Why." See also Simion, "The Explanation Proffering Norm of Moral Assertion"; Lewis, "The Norm of Moral Assertion"; Kelp, "Moral Assertion"; Croce, "Moral Understanding, Testimony, and Moral Exemplarity"; Boyd, "Moral Understanding and Cooperative Testimony"; Hills, "Moral Testimony"; and Malfatti, "Can Testimony Transmit Understanding?" and "On Understanding and Testimony."

30 Hills, "Moral Testimony and Moral Epistemology" and "Understanding Why."

31 Hills, "Moral Testimony and Moral Epistemology," 101.

32 Hills, "Understanding Why," 663.

Paulina Sliwa is a recent example.[33] Sliwa explicit reacts against Hills, complaining that Hills's account of moral understanding entails that we can arrive at moral conclusions only if deliberation is involved. By contrast, for Sliwa, perception-like experiences in which one exercises one's knowing right from wrong are instances in which we can exercise our moral understanding without deliberation. Since Hills conceives moral understanding as constituted by deliberation, Sliwa argues, it cannot capture the special relationship between, on the one hand, perception-like experience and, on the other hand, the acquisition and exercise of moral understanding. Sliwa illustrates her argument by quoting from George Orwell's "A Hanging," where Orwell describes witnessing a public execution.[34] Sliwa argues, "It is natural to say that witnessing the execution led Orwell to understand that capital punishment is morally wrong and why it's wrong. . . . Orwell's moral insight is not based on moral deliberation. He didn't reason his way to the conclusion that the death penalty is morally wrong. Rather, it is based on something more like a perceptual experience. He saw 'the unspeakable wrongness' of killing another human being."[35]

The understanding of moral wrongness that I argue is afforded by the experience of being wronged is not reducible either to the deliberative ability to explain the truth of a moral proposition or the perception-like ability to identify morally relevant features of the object of experience. In the case of deliberation, this is most apparent at the level of acquisition. Hills is clear that experiencing a given moral wrong, either as a moral wrong being done to someone or of being wronged oneself, is not necessary to acquire the deliberative ability to explain the truth of a moral proposition.[36] All that is needed to acquire the ability to explain the truth of a moral proposition is the acquisition of the relevant propo-

33 See Sliwa, "Moral Understanding as Knowing Right from Wrong." The notion of perceptual-like experience of moral features of our environment has been popularized by John McDowell's work on virtue ethics. See in particular McDowell, "Virtue and Reason." McNaughton (*Moral Vision*) and Dancy (*Moral Reasons*) defend a version of McDowell's account. For a recent collection of papers on the topic, see Bergqvist and Cowan, *Evaluative Perception*. A number of philosophers suggest that the kind of perception-like experiences that detect moral properties of objects and events should be conceived as affective in kind. The account below applies to them too. See, for example, Johnston, "The Authority of Affect"; Zagzbeski, "Emotion and Moral Judgement"; Doering, "Seeing What to Do"; and more recently, Cowan, "Epistemic Perceptualism and Neo-Sentimentalist Objections"; Montague, *The Given*; Tappolet, *Emotions, Value, and Agency*; Lord, "How to Learn About Aesthetics and Morality Through Acquaintance and Deference"; and Poellner, *Value in Modernity*.

34 Orwell, "A Hanging," 69.

35 Sliwa, "Moral Understanding as Knowing Right from Wrong," 544–45.

36 Hills, "Moral Testimony," 411.

sitions and the ability to reason with the relevant propositions. This applies also at the level of exercising the given understanding. At the level of exercise, Hills argues that moral understanding is exercised strictly in the ability to reason to the truth of a given moral proposition. Experience does not feature in any way at the level of exercise of moral understanding. Sticking to the level of acquisition, the kind of understanding of moral wrongness articulated in sections 2 and 3 necessitates the experience of being wronged to be acquired. To reiterate, the claim is that the experience of being wronged affords an understanding of what it is like to endure the emotional pain of having to make sense of the given experience as part of one's autobiography and thus sense of self. The assumption here is that part of the moral wrongness of, say, sexual harassment is that it inflicts on the person who is sexually harassed, among other things, the emotional pain of having to make sense of the experience of having been sexually harassed as part of their autobiography and thus sense of self. This kind of understanding is not reducible to the kind focused on by Hills because of its constitutive relationship to the experience of being wronged.

The understanding of moral wrongness that I argue is afforded by the experience of being wronged is also not reducible to the perception-like ability to identify the moral wrongness of a given situation. The reason is that it is not necessary to have the kind of perception-like experience focused on by Sliwa that the moral wrong is suffered by the one having the experience. That is, one need not be morally wronged to perceptually identify the moral wrongness of a situation. For example, suppose that someone who has never been sexually harassed is on the bus when they suddenly see a man rubbing himself against a woman. Suppose also that they immediately call out the act and take appropriate action. In this case, Sliwa would be right to say that they did not reason their way to the conclusion that what the man did was morally wrong (to put it mildly). Rather, they saw, or quasi-perceptually identified, the moral wrongness of what the man did—more specifically, that the man was sexually harassing the woman. What this example makes clear is that the perception-like experience of moral wrongness had by those who have never experienced being wronged in the relevant way can be had by bystanders who witness the moral wrong being done to someone else. Having this perception-like experience does not necessitate that the moral wrong is done to them. This is the defining difference with the kind of experience had by someone when they are sexually harassed. They are not a mere bystander. The moral wrong is done to them, and this is reflected in the kind of understanding that I argue is afforded by the experience of being wronged.

I now turn to the educational role of the experience of being wronged. The key point of contact between the distinctive kind of understanding that I argue

is afforded to those who experience being wronged and the notion of moral understanding defended by Hills is the following. One key ability upon which deliberation of this sort relies is one's understanding of the relevant moral concept—that is, what the relevant moral concept refers to. For example, one's ability to explain why sexual harassment is morally wrong depends on one possessing an understanding of what the concept of sexual harassment refers to. This is perhaps most evident when we consider, as Hills rightly argues, that the ability to explain the truth of moral propositions involves the ability to appeal to reasons and to manipulate reasons in a way that it builds the explanation. In other words, the ability to explain why sexual harassment is morally wrong involves appealing to reasons why this is so. Now, there are a variety of reasons that people who have not experienced sexual harassment appeal to in order to explain why it is morally wrong. Among these are reasons that emerge from the descriptions of the experience of being sexual harassed. This happens in two ways. First and more directly, in their description of what it means to be sexually harassed, one might articulate reasons why sexual harassment is morally wrong. People who have never experienced being sexually harassed can then appeal to these reasons in explaining why sexual harassment is morally wrong. Second and indirectly, those who never had the relevant kind of experience can exercise imaginative perspective taking when listening to those who have when they recount what it is like to be sexually harassed and, in so doing, come up with new reasons why sexual harassment is morally wrong.[37] To be sure, there are important limits to how far one's imaginative perspective taking can go and thus how far one's ability to come up with new reasons justifying beliefs can stretch. Nevertheless, listening to people recount their experiences of being morally wronged in the relevant way can facilitate one's ability to explain the truth of moral propositions, such as that sexual harassment is morally wrong.[38]

37 I owe this observation to Toole, "Demarginalizing Standpoint Epistemology." Toole appeals to Paul's account of "cognitive empathy" to argue that imaginative perspective taking can lead to the acquisition of *de se* knowledge, defined as "personal knowledge that one expresses or grasps using first-personal concepts, e.g. 'I,' 'me,' 'mine,' and so on" (13). See also Paul, "First Personal Modes of Presentation and the Structure of Empathy." Toole argues that *de se* knowledge can grant epistemic access to evidence justifying beliefs that would otherwise not be accessible.

38 The above applies also to accounts of moral understanding that demand a stronger place for our affective and motivational dispositions because these accounts agree with Hills that the cognitive component of moral understanding is the ability to appeal to reasons in explaining the truth of a moral proposition. See Enoch, "A Defense of Moral Deference"; Howell, "Google Morals, Virtue, and the Asymmetry of Difference"; Fletcher, "Moral Testimony"; and Callahan, "Moral Testimony."

Just like in the case of moral deliberation, people who experience being morally wronged in the relevant way can help those who have not had the relevant experiences develop the perception-like ability to identify features of the relevant moral wrong. This becomes apparent when we consider accounts that draw an analogy between ethical virtue and practical skills.[39] Assuming that ethical virtue involves a perception-like sensibility to features of situations that are relevant to the moral rightness or wrongness of what one experiences, the idea is that one can acquire this kind of perception-like sensibility in an analogous way as one can learn a practical skill.[40]

I want to suggest that people who not only have been wronged in the relevant ways but also have reflected on their experiences in ways that can contribute to shaping the relevant moral concepts should be considered as eligible moral trainers for those who want to learn how to perceptually identify morally relevant features of situations. The reason is that their testimonies are in effect giving voice to their evaluation of objective features of the events they experienced. In turn, those who have not experienced the relevant wrongs can avail themselves of these evaluations to detect manifestations of the same wrong in new situations. Within this context, it helps to think of perception-like sensibility as a faculty that, as Mark Johnston puts it, can be "refined."[41] As Johnston argues, perception-like sensibility is refined through acts of imagination and affective responses. Here, the testimonies of those who have undergone the relevant experiences provide the platform for these refinements for those who have not undergone the relevant experiences.

Recall the example of Holocaust survivors from section 2. It is often the case that Holocaust survivors recount their experiences to identify objective features of contemporary societies that are reminiscent of oncoming authoritarianism. The most recent example is a group of Holocaust survivors who urged voters before the June 2024 European elections to vote against what they recognized as rising right-wing political parties.[42] The same eligibility to be moral trainers should be generalized to those who are able to articulate

39 See Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*; Dougherty, "The Importance of Roles in the Skill Analogy"; Fridland, "Motor Skill and Moral Virtue"; Fridland and Stichter, "It Just Feels Right"; Jacobson, "Seeing by Feeling"; Stichter, "Virtues as Skills, and the Virtues of Self-Regulation"; and Swartwood, "Wisdom as an Expert Skill."

40 See McDowell, "Virtue and Reason"; Jacobsen, "Seeing by Feeling"; and Fridland, "Motor Skill and Moral Virtue."

41 Johnston, "The Authority of Affect," 206.

42 Connolly, "Holocaust Survivors Urge Young Europeans to Vote Against Far Right." *Guardian*, June 5, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jun/05/holocaust-survivors-young-europeans-vote-against-far-right-eu-election.

their evaluations of objective features of, for example, oppression and sexual harassment in virtue of understanding what it is like to lead a life characterized by having experienced these wrongs. By reflecting on their experience of being sexually harassed, people who have been wronged in the relevant way can identify features of the actions of the perpetrator they endured that justify how they felt at the time of the experience and how they feel at the time of the recollection of the experience. That is, they articulate their evaluation of the experienced event. In turn, this puts them in the position to teach others how to identify the relevant descriptive features of a situation that fall under the concept of sexual harassment.

Two points of clarification. First, I am not denying that people who have not undergone the relevant experiences can be eligible moral trainers. Rather, I am arguing that those who have experienced the relevant moral wrongs can offer unique lessons to those who have not experienced the relevant wrongs. That is because they give voice to a specific kind of evaluation of the experienced events, and this can be the basis for developing the epistemic abilities focused on by Toole and Dror. Second, it is important to distinguish moral trainers as described here from some conceptions of moral experts. Specifically, Julia Driver argues that moral experts make consistently better moral judgements, and they possess a better understanding of morality as a whole.[43] This does not necessarily apply to those whose moral teaching is based on their experience of being morally wronged. Those who generate the distinctive kind of understanding articulated in section 2 have a unique understanding of the relevant moral wrong in virtue of understanding what it is like to lead a life characterized by the relevant experiences. This means that their understanding is, at least at first, limited to specific moral wrongs—for example, sexual harassment. Nothing I say in this article suggests that this kind of understanding overreaches to other moral wrongs, let alone morality as a whole. More is needed in terms of argumentation to show that this kind of understanding overreaches in these ways.

6. Conclusion

I conclude by spelling out one upshot of my argument. That is, what the above shows is that the account of this article does not corrode the moral accountability of those who have not experienced being morally wronged in the relevant way and who are therefore not afforded the same kind of understanding. Not having experienced the relevant moral wrong and thus not being afforded the distinctive kind of understanding that is afforded to those who have

43 Driver, "Moral Expertise."

experienced being morally wronged do not exculpate one for relevant moral failures. On the contrary, the account of this article emphasizes that there are a number of valuable epistemic abilities that those who have not experienced being morally wronged in the relevant way can nevertheless acquire and that therefore they are morally accountable for their actions. Not only that, but the account here goes a step further by arguing that an important way in which people who have not experienced being morally wronged in the relevant way can acquire the epistemic abilities that make them morally accountable is by being taught by those who have been morally wronged in the relevant way. In these cases, people who have not experienced being morally wronged in the relevant way owe their ability to understand the moral wrongness of, say, sexual harassment to those who have. For this reason, people who have been morally wronged in the relevant way and who have exerted conceptual effort in generating an understanding of the moral wrongness of what they experienced should be seen as potential moral educators.

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