

INTRODUCTION

What should we do to combat epistemic injustice (EI)?

- **Cultivation of Epistemic Virtue (CEV):** individuals ought to cultivate epistemic (testimonial and hermeneutic) virtues (Fricker (F) 2007, 2010).

We defend this claim against two leading criticisms:

(1) Situationist Objection:

F's account of CEV is empirically implausible:

a) general situationist challenge: all ethical and epistemological virtue theory is bankrupt because situations, not stable personality traits (like vices and virtues), determine behavior;

b) specific EI challenge: pitfalls for individuals who try to overcome "bias blind spots"

- individuals' intuitive credibility judgments will seem accurate upon reflection; e.g., evidence suggests we tend to think our judgments are more objective than they really are (Sherman 2015, citing Pronin et al. 2002).

(2) Structuralist Objection:

F's prescriptions for CEV are excessively individualistic, failing to appreciate the underlying structural factors driving epistemic injustice and oppression.

INEVITABILITY OF AIMING FOR VIRTUE

Re: (1a) Situationism is false: it's well-established in personality and prejudice literature that behavior is best predicted by person-situation interactions.

Re: (1b) Pursuing CEV roughly as F describes is inevitable for anyone who takes seriously the systemic EIs she and others have identified.

- F1: pivot away from EI depends in part on moments of self-critical awareness, states of cognitive dissonance in which an individual realizes that she may, e.g., be underestimating an interlocutor's credibility due to stereotypes or prejudices. (Cf. Medina (2012), "epistemic friction.")
- "initial step towards improved, less prejudiced forms of social perception can only be a step of critical reflection... the initial moves towards finding ways to neutralize the impact of prejudice in our judgements have to be self-reflective in the first instance" (2010, 166)
- F2: individual CEV should aim to consistently neutralize the effects of such prejudices on credibility estimates.

We agree that F1 & F2 are integral parts of fight against EI.

Re: (2) With F and many commentators, we argue that CEV is necessary but not sufficient for combating EI: "virtuous individuals working within an institutional body are obviously only part of the story" (F 2012).

- CEV is a socially and institutionally embedded process. We must construct virtuous institutions to promote CEV. Nevertheless, one component of CEV must be suitable responsiveness to just (and unjust) social environments; embedding stubbornly vicious individuals in otherwise virtuous institutions is clearly insufficient to elicit individually just action.
- NB re: F1, talk of critical reflection coming "first" is misleading: various social and structural conditions are at least conducive (and perhaps necessary) for enabling critical self-reflection; individual and structural virtues are interdependent; neither "comes first" (cf. Corcoran et al. 2011)

- CEV must have a poly-directional orientation:

Interactional (Int): becoming a better epistemic agent in local epistemic interactions
→ conceptual and empirical questions: what is the cognitive architecture of a debiased mind, and which strategies promote it?

Structural (Str): working toward structural changes that promote the just production, transmission, and reception of knowledge and interpretive resources
→ conceptual and empirical questions: what is the cognitive architecture of a revolutionary mind, and which strategies promote it?

CEV is ongoing: many individuals can (and therefore should try to) get much closer to moral-epistemic ideals than they already are.

STRUCTURING VIRTUE CULTIVATION

Our project: build on F's account to sketch a fuller picture of CEV. This sketch must be thoroughly empirically informed.

CEV has **two** broad, interrelated dimensions:

Automatic: direct retraining of more spontaneous, unreflective patterns of (A) feeling (Affect), (B) reacting (Behavior), and (C) thinking (Cognition) about epistemic social reality

Metacognitive: cultivating more reflective, "corrective" virtues, such as the ability to swiftly identify contexts in which our 1st-order epistemic intuitions are likely astray

Caveat: virtues are contextual and open-textured! Tailor CEV to specific minds, social locations, political conditions (e.g., privileged practice humility; oppressed practice confidence). NB: indexing to social locations complicates Medina (2012) taxonomy. So can we say anything systematic? Yes, as long as we "move toward open conceptual structures that signify without absolute foreclosure so as to reduce the continued propagation of epistemic oppression" (Dotson 2012, 25).

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Automatic-Int (C): Situational Attribution Training: developing automatic associations between negative outgroup behavior and situational explanations, not traits (Stewart et al. 2010a; cf. Levontin et al. 2013; Glaser & Knowles 2008)

Metacognitive-Int (A, C): "Self-Regulation of Prejudice" model: notice our own prejudiced thoughts, feel guilty, be internally motivated to be unprejudiced: "making people aware of their biased responses that stand in conflict with their personal beliefs... awareness of one's biases can create negative self-directed affect particularly among people who are personally motivated to respond without bias, which is essential to instigating processes that will facilitate less stereotypic and prejudiced responding in the future" (Burns et al. 2017) → Automatic stereotype activation, but not application

Metacognitive-Int (A,C): Perspective-taking: "Unless one has placed oneself on the side of the oppressed, to feel with them, one cannot understand" (Simone Weil, cited in F 2012) → Structures support perspective-taking! E.g., diverse juries

Automatic-Str (A,B,C): default-question the status quo; see structural change as possible and desirable – not inevitable; believe in self- and group-efficacy; get angry at injustice! (Stewart et al. 2010b; Johnson & Fujita 2012; Zomeran et al. 2013; Jost 2015) → Structures can support these dispositions! (Corcoran et al. 2011)

Metacognitive-Str (A,B,C): dispositions to: question 1st-order epistemic and political intuitions; practice and take pleasure in difficult cognitive activity; be OK seeing world differently from others; in short, resist "certainty, security, and conformity" (Jost 2015)

Can Int-virtues conflict with Str-virtues? Maybe, but indexing virtues to context and social location reduces conflict. E.g., privileged → defer to and take perspective of disadvantaged; oppressed → resist internalizing perspective of advantaged, etc. Evidence suggests that Int- and Str-virtues (& vices!) tend to be mutually supporting (Jost and Banaji 1994).

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