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Truth, Trust and Testimony

– Integrating Epistemic Injustice and Virtue Ethics in Journalistic Practice

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Abstract

This thesis explores how journalism needs improvement in terms of truthful, accurate reporting and how to build reader trust. Through Aaron Quinn, a proponent for virtue ethical journalism, it asserts that good, ethical journalism is essential to maintain a healthy democracy, where the thesis later challenges whether this is possible to perfect. The thesis also explores the field of epistemic injustice through Miranda Fricker, where we learn how combating said injustice can be done by epistemically powerful groups, such as journalists. The thesis then develops a case where it synthesises the different ideas explained by both authors to provide a theoretical foundation and practical toolset that journalists may use in order to work towards the goal of both fields. To visualise the synergism, the thesis constructs the hypothetical case of Trevor, who, despite a relatively guarded and isolated upbringing, can later learn to become an advocate for justice. It argues that the ideas put forth are not merely compatible but can work in tandem to improve each other's ambition: Fricker's ideas can help to deepen an understanding of why certain things are harmful, while Quinn's may provide a framework through which journalists can actualise the work against injustice.

Keywords: Journalism, Virtue Ethics, Epistemic Injustice, Media Ethics.

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Introduction

For centuries, journalists have dedicated their lives to covering and reporting on world events, taking the form of articles in various newspapers and other forms of media. It is through these sources that many people are able to build their conception and understanding of the world. Journalists must make decisions on what seems to be of public interest, how they wish to frame the event, consider their target audience and how the piece will be received, et cetera. Moreover, all of these decisions are, of course, influenced and affected by the journalists' individual bias, be it unconscious or not, which may be a complicating factor that journalists will have to deal with in their various professional decisions.

On a broader scope, informing society can be seen as an intrinsic good in a liberal society. A society that is informed about these kinds of matters is necessary to maintain a healthy democracy, which in itself can be seen as an intrinsic good, and here, journalists tend to be in the best position to provide the information that keeps a society informed. Recently, however, the type of journalism that would promote informed citizens has gotten less limelight in favour of other types of "infotainment" or, more alarmingly, a growing presence of "fake news". As seen with the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the type of news presented there can seriously undermine democratic principles. In light of this, it is an alarming moral problem within journalism as a whole, where rather than aiming to keep their target audience as accurately informed as possible, other motives take precedence.[1]

The well-intentioned journalist might not have an easy time either. As information and sources are more readily available than ever before, thanks to technological advancement, the journalist may find themselves spending more time sorting out information rather than obtaining data.[2] This adds an extra layer of complexity as the journalist will have to navigate through a sea of misinformation. They may then, for instance, rely on familiar PR sources that they consider trustworthy. But this may

[1] Aaron Quinn, *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism*, *Springer eBooks* (Springer Cham, 2018), 1–2, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-01428-5.
[2] Aviv Barnoy, "An Island of Reliability in a Sea of Misinformation? Understanding PR-Journalists Relations in Times of Epistemic Crisis," *Journal of Public Relations Research* 34, no. 3–4 (June 15, 2022): 89, https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2022.2077347.

lead to an unjustified exclusion of non-familiar sources, which could strengthen established actors.[3] This phenomenon may risk acting against the investigative purpose of journalism.

Trust is also key in journalism. Journalists need to be able to trust their sources, and the readers must be able to trust their journalists, or the entire system risks breaking down. Of course, it is not possible to be able to be trusted by everyone, nor is that demanded. However, journalists seeking to maintain and build trust must grapple with different segments of their audience and consider the various trade-offs that they will have to make. On the other hand, there is no shortage of people who find themselves misrepresented by the news media. In one study, Ross Arguedas et. al. found that problems of misrepresentation include: "1) emphasising negative news; 2) treating groups unfairly; 3) perpetuating stereotypes; 4) failing to cover them altogether; and 5) promoting divisiveness between groups."[4] The participants in the study described how the negative emphasis had a real personal toll on them, leading them to avoid news altogether. One participant described how the Brazilian municipality of Salvador has an amazing culture, but the media shows only tourists and violence, which is not the reality. Another said, "They never mention our accomplishments, our victories; it's only what Black people do wrong." The tendency to prioritise negative news meant that positive stories were overlooked, which may result in the view others develop concerning the depicted communities might become distorted.[5]

What the participants describe here can be understood in the area of epistemic injustice, in particular, a form of testimonial injustice. Miranda Fricker summarises this as a basic idea where "a speaker suffers testimonial injustice if prejudice on the hearer's part causes him to give the speaker less credibility than he would otherwise have given".[6] In the example above, then, the journalist as a hearer seemingly has

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[3] Barnoy, "An Island of Reliability in a Sea of Misinformation? Understanding PR-Journalists Relations in Times of Epistemic Crisis," 93–94.
[4]Amy Ross Arguedas et al., "News for the Powerful and Privileged: How Misrepresentation and Underrepresentation of Disadvantaged Communities Undermines Their Trust in News.," *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2023, 10, https://dx.doi.org/10.60625/risj-jqny-t942.
[5] Ross Arguedas et al., "News for the Powerful and Privileged: How Misrepresentation and Underrepresentation of Disadvantaged Communities Undermines Their Trust in News.," 12.
[6] Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.

some form of prejudice against Black people in the sense that only the negative news is considered newsworthy. Of course, this could have to do with how the news generally focuses on negative events. Participants in the previous study mentioned told Arguedas et. al. how they sensed that the negative connotations of stealing, robbery, murder, etc. are typically associated to a disproportionate degree.[7] While news may cover more negative events than positive, it becomes problematic if a certain community is covered disproportionately and unfairly in respect to other communities. If the purpose of journalism in a liberal society is to keep citizens informed, which in turn is supposed to provide fuel for a healthy democracy, accurate reporting about said citizens seems at first glance to be important.

Of course, far from every journalist misrepresents certain groups of people. While some may certainly do it intentionally with an agenda, others may do it subconsciously based on circumstantial prejudice. Yet others try to consciously rectify this and actively pursue fair representation. Take, for example, news presenter Wojciech Szeląg, who on February 11 2024, appeared on Polish television with two LGBT+ activists, offering a public apology to the entire LGBT+ community. For several years, the TV agency had propagated shameful words, as he put it, towards the LGBT+ community. Further, he clarified that "LGBT+ people are not an ideology but people; specific names, faces, relatives and friends". In this case, one of the activists present describes how he at first was scared to enter the studio, as it had been used against him for so long, but that he later was relieved at the words of recognition.[8] The feeling of being seen is particularly notable here, as the presenter tries to rectify earlier prejudice against the community through apology.

With these examples in mind, we can begin to explore what values and skills a just and virtuous journalist ought to pursue, especially in the context of epistemic injustice. As writers of matters of public interest, the work journalists provide is read by many, whose worldview may be influenced by them. To this end, we will use the framework of epistemic injustice as described by Miranda Fricker to explore the

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[7] Ross Arguedas et al., "News for the Powerful and Privileged: How Misrepresentation and Underrepresentation of Disadvantaged Communities Undermines Their Trust in News.," 11.
[8] Ashifa Kassam, "'This Is Where I Apologise': Polish State TV Presenter Says Sorry to LGBT+ Viewers," *The Guardian*, February 13, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/13/polish-tv-presenter-apologises-lgbt-people-bart-staszewski.

relationship between journalists as hearers and those they interview as speakers. Here, we will explore the difficulties that hearers may face – stereotypes and prejudice are not intrinsically bad, for instance, and far more complex matters. We will then apply the framework to the area of journalism as such, where we will make heavy use of Aaron Quinn's ideas shown in his *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism*. Here, we will gain a good understanding of the journalistic field in regards to various journalistic principles, traditions and ideals. Having developed a thorough understanding of both the fields of both authors, we will continue to discuss how both fields can integrate into one another. Through combining the principles of virtue ethics, as understood within the field of journalism, with the field of epistemic injustice, we will explore how compatible these are with each other, and how they may be integrated into professional journalism in such a way as to complement each other's strengths. The combined theoretical foundation will then be applied to a hypothetical scenario where we illustrate how a virtuous journalist might navigate a particular complex journalistic challenge, where he will incorporate ideas and values from both fields. With all of this in mind, this thesis will, therefore, aim to combine the works of Miranda Fricker and Aaron Quinn with the ultimate goal to create a foundational framework and practical toolset for journalists to use in their profession, which in turn will hope to foster more truthful, trustworthy, just and virtuous journalistic practice.

Literary review

While there are numerous authors that may be relevant to this area, we will for the purpose of this study focus on the work of Miranda Fricker and Aaron Quinn. This particular selection is motivated by our attempt to merge epistemology with journalism ethics.

Miranda Fricker is credited with having coined the term epistemic injustice, which has, in essence, created an entirely new field within philosophical inquiry.[9] In this essay, her work provides the fundamental framework through which we will discuss areas of justice. Journalistic ethics, however, is a broad field with many diverging ideas. For the sake of brevity, we will here restrict ourselves to the smaller field of virtue ethics in journalism since, as we will discover, it may be compatible with virtues discussed by Miranda Fricker. In this field, too, there are several different authors with many different perspectives. Aaron Quinn is one such author whose work contextualises journalistic virtue ethics within the field of journalism as a profession and as an industry. Since this study will aim to give a concise account of how the area of epistemic injustice might be included in journalism, having more works, though likely highly relevant, in order to provide a more diverse account of virtue ethics in journalism, would work against this aim.

[9] A C Nikolaidis, Winston C Thompson, and Miranda Fricker, "Education, Epistemic Justice, and Truthfulness: Miranda Fricker Interviewed by a. C. Nikolaidis and Winston C. Thompson," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 57, no. 4–5 (August 1, 2023): 791, https://doi.org/10.1093/jopedu/qhad075.

Miranda Fricker

Through the seven chapters of her book *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Miranda Fricker aims to explore the idea of there being a distinct form of epistemic injustice, to which end she describes two types – *testimonial* and *hermeneutical* injustice, respectively. At their core, both concern a form of wrongdoing to a person indicative of their capacity as a knower, specifically. Briefly put, a speaker is subject to testimonial injustice when their credibility is deflated due to prejudice with the hearer. Hermeneutical injustice occurs earlier, outside of the relationship of hearer and speaker – a gap in collective knowledge between the two, which causes someone an unfair disadvantage in making sense of their experiences.[10]

The latter type is only truly explored in the culminating chapter of the book, whereas the former takes up the vast majority of the book. Each of the respective chapters deepens our understanding of epistemic injustice, where Fricker illustrates the various forms in which epistemic injustice can materialise. As each can be discussed separately, let us therefore summarise each part in brief.

Testimonial Injustice

In chapter one, Fricker introduces the concept of identity power, which exists in a larger context of social power. In this context, social power is a socially situated capacity to control others' actions. The capacity may operate both actively and passively, by individual social agents or purely structurally. When acting in a certain role, the power rests and is operated by an agent – an instance that Fricker exemplifies through the example of a traffic warden, where exercising their power actively could be to fine drivers for traffic violations. The mere existence of that capacity is, then, a passive form of power, as drivers' behaviour might change in an effort not to get fined by the traffic warden. In other cases, particular social groups can be described as being controlled even though no particular agent is exercising this form of power, in which case the power is said to be purely structural.[11]

[10] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 1.
[11] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 9–12.

Both regarding individuals and, especially, structurally, operations of power in both senses may depend on a shared social understanding of certain concepts, such as what it means to be a woman, man, gay, straight, old, young, and so forth. It is here that the identity power comes into play – by assuming the identity of one such role, one may exercise their power and influence other actors who may hold different roles. Fricker exemplifies this through analysing the gender identity power at play in *The Talented Mr Ripley*, where male characters exercise their identity power as men to influence the women characters. Exercising this type of identity power does not necessarily mean that the male characters actively choose to influence the women in certain ways – rather, their identity may hold structural forms of power that are socially construed. The novel, for instance, is set in the fifties, and when Greenleaf tries to persuade Marge to take a more objective view of the situation, he may unintentionally silence Marge's worries. Even though his actions are well-intentioned, he uses gender – his authority figure as a man in a male-dominated society – to silence her. This is what Fricker explains is a form of active identity power, as Greenleaf actively tells Marge that her worries are irrational in his view. In another societal context where women would be expected to never argue against anything a man said, Greenleaf could have exercised his power by his mere presence. It must be stressed here that neither of the individuals at play needs to accept the societal stereotypes. Both could theoretically be against such notions, but the structural, societal imagination and values still exist in their context. The identity power, then, exists despite their belief, as the power exists beyond the single individual.[12]

Whether structural or agential, we can understand power as a means to preserve a form of social order. Here, Fricker speaks of a *credibility excess* and *deficit*, respectively, which may enhance or restrict epistemic access to the situation; a speaker's background, for instance, may influence how the hearer will interpret their words. The key takeaway is that while some may suffer injustice due to being given a disproportionate amount of credibility per their position. Usually, speakers would suffer injustice from being given deficient credibility, commonly due to prejudice held by the hearer. Further, as testimonial injustice is cumulative, the proper understanding of the term concerns those who suffer on multiple levels over the long

[12] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 14–15.

term, which means that isolated instances are not sufficient to prove systemic harm. As human judgment is fallible, a simple innocent error might result in a moment of credibility deficit. Fricker suggests that this could be seen as a weak form of testimonial injustice, as some form of injustice is still done, but for all other purposes the term ought to be reserved for instances where the hearer's misjudgement implies an ethical failing on their part.[13]

As systemic stereotypes are formed, agential prejudice follows. In this context, prejudice is often connected to historically powerless groups such as working-class people, people of colour, or women, where they are associated with traits that may fuel their credibility deficiency in society. However, as people are formed by their surroundings, one may not necessarily blame a person for holding prejudiced thoughts concerning others – a man who grows up believing that women are not suitable for abstract thinking, and never meets a woman who goes in for that, is obviously due to keeping that line of thought. Fricker argues that a person holding negative prejudiced thought only commits a moral failing if he does not change his beliefs when challenged with evidence to the contrary, as his beliefs are then irrational, rather than a product of his environment.[14] Prejudice, then, Fricker defines as "judgements, which may have a positive or a negative valence, and which display some (typically, epistemically culpable) resistance to counter-evidence owing to some affective investment on the part of the subject"[15]. This form of prejudice may distort the hearer's perception of the speaker, which can have negative influences on the social interaction between hearer and speaker. There are the more obvious examples where the speaker cannot be perceived as anything but lying, but there are also the more subtle forms.[16] A person may at times hold conflicting ideas, even subconsciously, as prejudice may operate beneath our conscious beliefs.[17] To counteract this form of prejudice, however, a hearer must practice something Fricker calls "reflexive critical social awareness" in order to more accurately determine the identity power at play in any situation, between speaker and hearer. While fallible, the virtue entails a capacity for self-scrutiny concerning their own prejudices when

[13] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 17–22.
[14] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 32–35.
[15] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 35.
[16] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 36.
[17] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 40.

hearers assess speakers, and may therefore act as a tool against unconscious reproduction of testimonial injustice.[18]

Thus far, we have gotten an understanding of what testimonial injustice includes, but what is the wrong at its core? Fricker writes that it provides an obstacle to *truth*. Strictly epistemically, it prevents hearers from receiving knowledge they ought to receive, which displays a dysfunction in the social epistemic system. The actual injustice is, of course, done towards the speakers, as they are hindered from outputting their knowledge to the hearers, including not only individuals but also the public domain, which also situates the entire topic as a harm towards our collective freedom of speech. While this grander perspective on harm could be discussed more, Fricker specifically focuses on the immediate harm wrought upon the speaker due to the hearer.[19] To this end, there exists a primary and a secondary facet of the harm. The former is broader and includes all instances where an agent is wronged in their capacity as a knower. Being wronged in this sense is also being wronged as a human, since being a knower is an intrinsic human value. Fricker goes so far as to claim that if the prejudice in question involves the idea that the social type is somehow humanly lesser, the wrongdoing here is not simply symbolic but a core epistemic insult towards the human being. The secondary attribute concerns a range of possible disadvantages that come with the primary injustice. First, these include the more practical everyday occurrences that occur, which could, for instance, be the everyday testimonial injustice women in an international male-dominated corporation may suffer. A second dimension to the secondary harm done in epistemic injustice concerns the recipient themselves, more specifically. Having suffered a one-off testimonial injustice, they may lose confidence in their own abilities, sometimes to such an extent that they are hindered in their abilities – a roadblock in their individual development is formed, which can take great struggle to get past.[20] As such, the subject may be excluded from a trustworthy conversation. This may have psychological consequences, where she may doubt her own affiliations and abilities, hindering the formation of their identity.[21]

[18] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 91.
[19] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 43–44.
[20] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 44–46.
[21] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 53–55.

Hermeneutical Injustice

Compared to testimonial injustice, Fricker spends considerably less time exploring hermeneutical injustice – yet it is no less important. This form of injustice surrounds significant gaps in collective social understanding. Previously, we discovered how systemic stereotyping may lead to agential prejudice, which in turn may influence testimonial injustice. Importantly, the injustice does not lie within certain persons, but rather on a systematic level, on a much broader scope. As Fricker defines it: "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalisation".[22] From the viewpoint of social justice, this is highly relevant.[23] Again, Fricker utilises a story to exemplify what she implies. In Brownmiller's memoir, there is a story of a woman who was repeatedly harassed by a distinguished man. After years of harassment, she left her work, but was then denied unemployment benefits when she could not explain her experiences, both from a lack of terminology but also due to her shame and embarrassment. Later, in discussion with other women, where they shared their experiences and collectively came up with the term 'sexual harassment' – for neither of the women had ever been able to put words to their experiences prior to this in a succinct manner.[24] In other words, the women had their social experience – that of being sexually harassed – obscured from collective understanding. Not only did the women not have the words to describe their experiences – the men who had harassed the women likely lacked a decently comprehensive understanding of what their actions constituted. While they probably had the capabilities to understand that they did some amount of harm on an individual level, the lack of a collective hermeneutical understanding prevented them from seeing the much greater systemic harm their actions embodied.

Collective social understandings as such are, of course, formed by different social groups. These groups may, then, have unequal power relations in society, which can skew the shared hermeneutical resources to the benefit of the more powerful and to the detriment of the powerless. If an early suffragist can only supply scantily understood and half-formed understandings with barely articulate experiences, it is

[22] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 158.
[23] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 155–156.
[24] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 150.

no wonder that they would struggle to communicate.[25] While the powerful would have ready-made hermeneutical resources to explain their experiences, the powerless would not. In other words, the powerless are hermeneutically marginalised. It is not through some epistemic bad luck where the hearer is plagued by prejudice – the speaker, or powerless, simply does not have the ability to convey their experience. This form of marginalisation is, however, always socially coerced by the socially powerful, as it is they who form the collective hermeneutical social understanding.[26]

Those in power tend to form their own hermeneutical hotspots, as Fricker puts it, where they form their own system of understanding. Indeed, sustaining the status quo, misinterpreting or excluding less powerful and marginalised groups from the hegemonic hermeneutical system may prove fruitful for powerful groups. In the earlier example, claiming that what is now accurately described as sexual harassment as mere 'flirting' would count as such a case, as the men in power could not be accountable for their actions.[27] Importantly, the hermeneutical injustice in this case is different from any other form of injustice wrought on sexually harassed women; there may be a similarity to testimonial injustice due to how one member of society acts towards another due to prejudice.[28] Id est, a sexually harassed individual not being believed in her telling of the fact due to prejudice might be testimonial injustice, while not necessarily being a consequence of hermeneutical injustice, depending on context. Specifically, hermeneutical injustice is how these women do not have the means to utter and understand their experiences. The vocabulary does not exist in this example, due to the fact that those more powerful in society constructed the collective social understanding to begin with. Fricker explains how the fault does not lie with any person specifically – it is collectively and structurally construed. Some cases of hermeneutical injustice are, however, not systematic but rather incidental – similar to how it can be in certain cases of testimonial injustice. For instance, Fricker tells a story of Joe, who, while being a white man, is not believed in his report of being stalked – perhaps because of his otherwise hermeneutically powerful group. Whether one is subject to systematic or incidental hermeneutical injustice is, by and large, decided by whether or not one is part of a

[25] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 148
[26] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 154
[27] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 152–153
[28] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 155

social group that is more susceptible to systematic hermeneutical injustice, but it can be contextual. Regardless, it typically takes shape when a speaker struggles to make themselves understood. Further, a double injustice might be wrought if the speaker is also subject to testimonial injustice, which may often be the case.[29]

So far, we have briefly summarised hermeneutical injustice as written by Miranda Fricker. To encapsulate what a gap in the collective hermeneutical resource entails more succinctly, we can summarise the key features of the injustice happening. Firstly, individuals may lack the vocabulary or concepts, or only have limited, ill-fitting meanings, to accurately describe their social experience – such as with the women's suffrage movement.[30] Secondly, the collective hermeneutical resource may be falsifying one's ideas concerning oneself, such as the case of when homosexuality used to be categorised as a sickness, which led individuals with homosexual experiences to construct ideas of themselves in order to fit the external expectations.[31] Thirdly, individuals may be restricted in their available means of communication due to their social group being marginalised in the sense that even though they might have the vocabulary, they will not be listened to due to their social group. This, in particular, may be compounded by testimonial injustice wrought due to individual prejudice. However, it is important to distinguish that this is a hermeneutical injustice due to it being a collectively manufactured social resource, not only individual prejudice.[32] Hermeneutical injustice is further identified when there is an asymmetrical disadvantage between different social groups. Even though the groups may be formally equal, it is an injustice when one group is deprived of the collective pool of knowledge that constitutes their means of communicating social experiences.[33] Fricker identifies professions such as law, academia, politics and journalism as fields where powerful social groups centre and generate collective social meanings.[34] For it is in these professions that the marginalised social groups are prevented from participating, thereby leading to a situation in which they cannot contribute to the collective pool of social knowledge and resources.[35] Hence, these ideas, as mentioned earlier, are highly relevant to this discussion on journalism.

[29] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 157–159.
[30] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 148–151.
[31] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 163–165.
[32] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 159–161.
[33] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 161–162.
[34] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 152.
[35] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing,* 2007, 155–156.

Aaron Quinn

At the very core of good journalism is to inform society of matters of public interest in a manner that contributes to society being a healthy democracy. This is achieved, Quinn argues, through mainly investigative journalism whereby journalists diligently collect material and evidence to accurately report on important things – such as the cases where journalists have thoroughly scrutinised public figures.[36] It can be argued so far as to say that without journalism's watchdog role in society, it fails to uphold its fundamental purpose, resulting in not being journalism at all. This failure can be exemplified by the rather recent increase of fake news or infotainment that fills journalistic space.[37] Indeed, Quinn's main point in this book is how investigative journalism is on the decline. Corruption within journalism as a field and industry is listed as the main perpetrator; since journalism's main duty, according to Quinn, is intended to be a watchdog against corruption, it is necessary that it itself can maintain and uphold a higher standard of morals and ethics.

Corruption within Journalism

Writing primarily on contemporary journalism in the West, and in particular the United States, Quinn argues that the entire line of work has become susceptible to corruption. The resulting effect is that journalism as a whole, in its role of maintaining a healthy democracy, is often failing to uphold its most basic social obligations.[38] Corruption is here understood as a much broader concept than, for instance, political bribery; it is an extensive form of immorality seeping through all kinds of social institutions.[39] Moreover, when discussing corruption, it is aimed much more towards legacy media rather than other forms of independent journalism that can free themselves from corrupting factors.[40]

It is in this context that Quinn lists a number of elements that contribute to developing corruption, where he identifies them in three different categories: the general conditions, the general characteristics, and specific sub-conditions. Power, opportunity and disposition constitute the first category. Journalism as such

[36] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 1–2.
[37] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 1–4.
[38] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 167.
[39] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 17–19.
[40] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 20.

possesses an enormous amount of power, where it can influence the public in all sorts of ways, which naturally can be misused. A journalist might therefore use a given opportunity to misuse said power. Some journalists, Quinn argues, are simply disposed to corrupt and immoral behaviour, and so, if all three conditions here are fulfilled, corruption may flourish. The second category explains the various common hallmarks through which corruption can be identified. Typically, corrupt actions are undertaken with self-regarding gain in mind, be it direct or indirect, personal or for one's associates. To this end, there is an attempt to conceal corruption by individuals and larger entities, both to avoid possible repercussions. The result, then, is an abuse of fiduciary duty of trust. If the public trusts journalism to be ethical, the trust itself can cloak corruption even though that same trust is, in actuality, being betrayed. Lastly, the third category Quinn identifies covers various environmental, structural or situational factors that may make journalism particularly conducive to corruption. Overall, he identifies a moral confusion between the core of journalists. While there are ethical guidelines for journalists, these may be inaccurate, crude or outright ignored because of industry pressure. Further, journalists and their employers might find themselves in a situation with conflicting goals and loyalties. For instance, a well-meaning newspaper intent on delivering the best possible news might find itself in financial turmoil, where its original goal comes into conflict with that of financial gain in order to keep the news agency afloat. In addition, there exists a gross imbalance of power in the industry, Quinn argues. Over the last 40 years, the media in the United States have become increasingly concentrated. The result is a situation where what qualifies as news might be easily influenced by political and economic interests. In other words, the lack of diversity might lead to less accurate news through the actions of corrupt agents. Further, in the case of the U.S, the freedom of speech is used in such a way that it prevents effective institutional oversight within journalism, thereby increasing the likelihood of corruption.[41]

Positing that a social responsibility of journalism is to investigate and uncover corruption in social institutions, this presents a problem if journalism itself becomes corrupt. Its relationship with corruption is positive in that it may uncover corruption. However, Quinn continues, corruption has come to seep through journalism as an institution through the increasing influence of politically aligned corporate media.

[41] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 20–23.

Corruption can in this context be understood to exist on at least three different levels: individually, institutionally and across the entire industry.[42]

On the individual level, corruption can occur when a journalist impairs the institutional purpose or process in ways for personal gain. Accepting a single gift from a corporation in exchange for a positive article does not in itself constitute corruption, but a pattern of this form of behaviour would present a potentially corrupt disposition with the journalist. A less straightforward example could be a photojournalist who consistently favours aesthetic appeal over accuracy – supposing that the institutional goal is accurate imagery.[43] Quinn raises the example of Jayson Blair to explain how individual corruption can undermine an entire institution. Blair consistently lied, fabricated news stories and misused his sources' words over the course of three years before being discovered. His actions were entirely self-serving, as he later confessed, but came at the cost of not only his news agency's reputation but also to all those affected by his writings, resulting in some people losing trust in journalism generally.[44]

The institutional, or organisational, level also includes individuals, but is a more collective effort that compromises the general journalistic goals in favour of illegitimate goals. A news organisation in which partisan political support is expected of the employees is one such instance, where they are committed to a corrupt organisational policy. Corrupt, because it contradicts the legitimate role of journalism, which is to be committed to objective journalism. Here, Quinn uses the U.S news agency Fox News as an example, where it has been discovered that the CEO frequently gives tacit and explicit orders as to how the reporters ought to present news. Organisational corruption shares features of individual corruption insofar as it is individuals that constitute and make up the corrupt policies and decisions made, but differentiates since one person in singular cannot be the source of it; it requires a collective of persons to create the culture that allows for corruption to take root within the organisation.[45]

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[42] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 18.
[43] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 24.
[44] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 24–25.
[45] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 25–27.

Lastly, Quinn writes on industrial professional corruption. On this level, the corrupt practice is supported across the entire industry of a certain field, such as journalism, which serves to undermine foundational purposes. Differently from the previous two levels, it is difficult to define certain evidence that directly causes corruption here, but we can see general trends that seem to allow for more corruption to happen. The increased media concentration and media conglomeration over the years is one such indication. Between the early 80s and the late 90s, the number of corporations dominating Western media shrank from around 50 to only 10, indicating a clear trend of media concentration. This, Quinn argues, at the very least decreases news organisation diversity, which itself is claimed to have degraded Western journalism. Providing impartial and objective information is not necessarily restricted to a high media concentration, but the risk of owners indirectly or directly imposing certain company views is certainly increased. As previously mentioned, there is also some evidence to show that concentrated and conglomerated media are more vulnerable to corruption than their counterparts. To this end, Quinn is in favour of more media ownership regulations that counteract this concentration and promote a diversity of views reported.[46]

Journalistic Integrity

For journalists to be in their best position to practice their craft, they require the freedom to do so. External autonomy, as Quinn calls it, implies that one has the positive and negative rights that are required to fulfil one's objective – in this case, writing journalistic works. Freedom of the press, the right to keep sources confidential or the right to not have others interfere in your work are examples of such. Lesser known, however, is the internal autonomy required. That is, individuals with internal autonomy possess the capacity to pursue their craft to begin with, not being limited in their rationale, knowledge, moral values or skills, et cetera.[47] These internal features of professionals are often not included in discussions of what is required of journalists, which is why Quinn wishes to rectify this. Other professions, such as policing, are probably more familiar with the doctrine of original authority, which means that a police officer does not need to follow orders if the order itself is obviously in contrast to the general goals of policing. By introducing this into

[46] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 28–30.
[47] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 47–50.

journalism, a good sense of both external and internal autonomy is needed since the journalists themselves need to have both enough internal knowledge and moral values to know what the goals of journalism are, as well as external autonomy in the sense that they actually can go against directives. Another instance of where this doctrine may be helpful is in morally complicated areas such as lying. Usually, lying and deceiving would be considered wrong. However, on occasion, this is the only means of discovering injustices – something several journalists have done in the past. Knowing where to draw the line can be quite difficult, however, which is why use of the doctrine of original authority prerequisites internal autonomy – including a deep foundation of moral values.[48]

Typifying moral guidance through codes of ethics and thereby imposing them upon agents rather than fostering an internalised psychological moral rarely have sufficient consequences. Indeed, many journalists are left confused concerning how they should apply rules, and many media owners may appear ethical due to following the code to the letter, rather than the spirit, resulting in a less-than-ideal approach to journalistic ethics. Through applying Aristotelian virtue ethics in a character-based manner, a far deeper inner sense of moral good can be cultivated, Quinn argues. The central concepts of *arête* (excellence or virtue), *phronesis* (practical wisdom), and *eudaimonia* (human flourishing) are here used as a foundation upon which further character traits can be developed – in particular, the virtues of justice and integrity.[49]

Aristotelian Virtues

In virtue ethics, the correct course of action can only be derived from a proper understanding of what values contribute to goodness. Virtues such as truthfulness are, while usually ideal to pursue and uphold, not absolute – a truthful person may still know that lying is sometimes preferable in this sense. Humans are generally not ideal virtuous agents either, and so all that is required of a person is to seriously try to act in such a way that it contributes to goodness. *Arête* is the Greek word for virtue and so encapsulates all of the various virtues, all of which primarily pursue goodness as an end goal. Quinn makes particular note of the virtue of justice when speaking about journalists, where he argues it ought to be a dominant agent-neutral virtue for

[48] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 62–64.
[49] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 69–71.

journalists. Different from agent-relative virtues in how it can apply in the same manner across all individuals, rather than being tied to whichever person has a virtue, such as how my own sense of integrity may differ from others'. Justice, it is argued, might permeate all layers of morality – from the distribution of social goods and the core structure of society itself, to how individuals deserve to be treated and how one ought to treat others. While much can be said on the definition of justice, Quinn chooses John Rawls' veil of ignorance as a good guiding principle journalists can use to navigate moral choices. Journalists may place themselves behind a veil of ignorance when wondering how they ought to treat a source or subject, and so choose the course that treats all equally with respect to their situation. *Arête*, therefore, is achieved first through a comprehensive sense of justice.[50]

Equally, if not more, important is *phronesis*, which translates to practical wisdom. A comprehensive sense of justice is worth little without knowledge concerning your field of practice. Similar to how good doctors require knowledge in order to heal the sick, journalists require knowledge in order to know what to report, when to lie and how to discern truth. A journalist may encounter situations in which they need to simultaneously instil trust in a source, judge their trustworthiness and also remain an impartial observer in a situation. Moreover, many times it is not necessarily clear as to what the truth of things is. In certain circumstances, one can argue that a justified belief would be enough when the truth cannot be ascertained. Indeed, sometimes journalists cannot help but report on testimonies put out by certain people simply due to their social position of power in society; they have to report on what important people in a democracy say in order to keep the public informed. Other times, people might be considered newsworthy through sheer luck and not through a comprehensive belief in their trustworthiness. Journalists also may lack the toolset to evaluate individuals' trustworthiness, and so good sources might be overlooked. One technique to help journalists in determining the veracity of sources is for journalists to collectively verify and reflectively criticise the information – something that may be difficult in a fast–paced newsroom. Regardless, the most important element of *phronesis* is to constantly pursue more knowledge, something that can be achieved through extensive education and training. [51]

[50] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 71–74.
[51] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 74–79.

Eudaimonia, the third and last core concept in virtue ethics as explained by Quinn, centres on a final common goal of human flourishing. Further, it is through one's lived experience that one truly learns what is right, rather than learning what is right in principle, and so it is tantamount to continually pursue that which leads to the ultimate good in the end.[52] In consequence, through establishing a solid sense of all of Aristotle's three concepts, one may nourish a robust sense of integrity. When one knows what reasons and considerations they have for their actions, one can act in accordance with these beliefs, which means they act with integrity. This means that they remain resolved to act in the face of counteracting forces. In this manner, one develops a strong sense of moral character, which will help when faced with difficult situations. No two journalists will approach an issue in the exact same manner – the important thing is that they act with integrity in the forever pursuit of what is right and good. Therefore, they will be stronger persons and not trapped in rules and regulations; they will be able to act independently and be resistant to corrupting factors. The virtuous journalist, having a strong sense of morality and integrity to uphold those beliefs, will be better equipped to deliver the main goal of journalism – that of informing the public on matters of public interest.[53]

Practising Journalism

Western journalistic practice suggests that maintaining a psychological distance from much of what journalism entails better equips journalists to avoid bias. The idea is to promote unbiased, neutral, truthful reporting by eliminating one's own bias as much as possible. However, attempts to remain, or at least appear, unbiased may ultimately fail in reality. If a news agency intends to strictly adhere to principles of justice, yet in consequence consistently supports a particular political candidate, it may fail to uphold the appearances of unbiased reporting despite its best attempts.[54] Contrarily, other scholars of journalism advocate that journalists should use their position of power to advocate for their beliefs, further entangling themselves in the public debate and thereby actively forming the public discussion. Consequently, a separation of groups has formed with old-fashioned views of objective asceticism on

[52] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 79.
[53] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 86–89.
[54] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 91–92.

one hand, and communitarian advocates on the other. Quinn leans more into the former, wherein journalism's fundamental goal depends on objective reporting, yet not to the extreme of asceticism – rather, journalists should find an appropriate balance of detachment and attachment, which should ultimately contribute to objective journalism.[55]

Detachment in this context may be further divided into interpersonal and intrapersonal elements. The former requires journalists to keep their distance from persons and subjects around them, whereas the latter involves separating one's own biases and values from one's professional duties. Further, intrapersonal detachment does not only involve keeping one's own biases outside of reporting, but also maintaining a psychological distance in cases where one deals with traumatic and difficult reporting - such as that of violent crime, or war reporting, similar to how a doctor will have to detach themselves somewhat from their patients in order to protect their psyche. However, a doctor would also require some level of attachment to their patients in order to build trust, and so is the case for a journalist. Hence, a balance must be attained.[56] Moreover, Quinn argues, journalists cannot be truly detached, for that would be to be a journalist without values. A journalist without values could never make the necessary judgements about what to publish, what is of public interest and what is newsworthy. A journalist is not a conveyor of facts, distributing them in a random order – they are a storyteller and a moral agent. Considering that it is reasonable to assume that no moral agent can be truly valueless and objective, it necessitates a re-evaluation of what might be considered subjective and biased information – it might very well be objectively justified.[57]

Ultimately, what Quinn calls for is the spirit of detachment to remain, while reconsidering what this means regarding objective reporting. Further, he acknowledges that the line between detached, objective reporting and good, engaging journalism is murky. It might be detrimental for a journalist's psychological health to adhere to a strict ascetic objective reporting when reporting about the environment, when this is something he truly cares about. Alternatively, it can lead to corrupt and immoral behaviour when one applies detachment and objectivity as an overriding

[55] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 92.
[56] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 92–93.
[57] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 95–96.

factor to other actions. Therefore, we need to enforce the importance of a harmonious psyche according to virtue ethical concepts, as living a good life necessitates that we care about what we do and our values.[58] The virtues of justice and integrity are essential in order to achieve balanced detachment, whereby journalists may find an intimate knowledge of where detachment is suitable and where attachment is better. Through thorough development of Aristotelian virtue ethics into one's moral psychology, they may find justified balance regarding biases, fairness and social wellbeing. When accurately applied and developed, Quinn argues, the virtue ethical guidelines argued for here will allow journalists the autonomy to effectively self-govern and apply their knowledge, skills and values to their work on a deeper, intimate level with a deeper integration of moral emotion.[59]

Quinn does not claim to put a descriptor on what should be called proper journalism, but rather intends to call attention to its issues with corruption. Externally, Quinn calls for increased regulation within and between news organisations, including methods of evaluating behaviour regarding ethical ideals and rules. Internally, within journalism, Quinn calls for a reformed education and professionalisation of journalism. Most centrally, he calls for prospective journalists to be thoroughly educated in matters of ethics and their field of reporting. Only through a comprehensive study can they learn the required knowledge and skills necessary. Coupled with a deep understanding of virtue ethics, they may develop a decent defence against corruption, ultimately resulting in being properly equipped to inform the public.[60]

[58] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 96–98.
[59] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 170–172.
[60] Quinn. *Virtue Ethics and Professional Journalism,* 2018, 172–173.

Envisioning the Virtuous Journalist

Having explored the principles behind Aaron Quinn's work on virtue ethics in professional journalism, we are now equipped to discuss how a virtuous journalist might navigate themselves in a complex and corrupt profession. Moreover, we may incorporate Miranda Fricker's work on testimonial injustice as an addition to our hypothetical journalist's navigational toolset. Through this exercise, we will strive to construct a fictional journalist who will have the knowledge, virtues and general skillset to be an inspiration for other journalists who seek to broaden their capacities. Inevitably, certain restrictions follow an exercise such as this. Most importantly, we cannot imagine every feasible factor that could be relevant for a journalist in the real world, and so we are restricted to a certain amount of fiction. To this end, we will establish a particular scenario through which the ideas and examples put forward can be extrapolated into reality.

Our fictional journalist is Trevor – a white, cisgender, heterosexual English man who grew up in an upper-middle-class family in an urban city. For all intents and purposes, Trevor comes from a position of privilege and wealth, with little contact with people from other contexts in his formative years. His parents come from an educated background themselves and manage to instil a basic sense of social justice in Trevor. Throughout the years, he has had a reasonably normal childhood and early adulthood, with a stable, loving family, and he has been spared any serious trauma. Since he has a reasonably safe background, it is mainly through education and study that he finds himself wanting to improve and better the world, and he decides to become a journalist. Luckily for him, authors like Quinn are readily available for him to learn how to become a better journalist. Furthermore, Trevor is lucky enough to find employment with a newspaper that allows him reasonably free rein to investigate things of public importance. This is, as we have previously discussed, extremely important in order to allow journalists like Trevor external autonomy, particularly due to the relatively low effect of the inevitable industrial and organisational corruption Trevor may face. Nevertheless, he will have to navigate in such a manner so as not to abuse this trust, and still to report on reasonably relevant

things – he may face challenges if wanting to report on minor injustices that are deemed too small or unimportant for the general society.

In this scenario, Trevor will have received a thorough education based on the principles Quinn has put forward. He has a deep, settled commitment to informing the public on matters of public interest, and has developed a level of integrity that can reasonably resist the powers of corruption he may encounter. He appreciates a balance between detachment and attachment, and prioritises justice in his various decisions. As a principled professional, he has a well-developed capacity for self-governance and may rely on his learned knowledge to weigh the various factors that influence his decisions against each other. He also knows that he must constantly develop his source of knowledge if he is to accurately report on the various social injustices that he encounters, and so has internalised phronesis as a core virtue. Anthropological studies of various societies and cultures could be one source Trevor leans on in order to develop his knowledge, but first-hand accounts are, of course, highly valuable – if not the most valuable source of knowledge.

Suppose, then, that Trevor travels to the municipality of Salvador in Brazil, which we briefly covered in the introduction. He seeks to report on the discrepancy in the general reporting, which covers tourism and violence, disregarding the blossoming local culture, leading to a distorted view of the local Black community by news readers. Following the framework provided by Quinn, Trevor will utilise all tools available at his disposal to rigorously investigate the situation. Mainly, he will commit to a thorough background research: partly into the blossoming local culture, but also into the reasons behind the focus on violence and tourism. When he interviews the local population, he will attempt to find a balanced professional detachment as he has to find some attachment to the welfare of his sources, yet remain in contact with a grander perspective and his own role as an outsider. Truth and justice are his guiding principles, committing to speaking out on a perceived injustice wrought on the population through inaccurate reporting. Throughout the process, he maintains the doctrine of original authority in order to commit to journalism's primary goals, should he face political pressure from other newsrooms and journalists. Again, he is privileged to have relatively free rein on his own, though it is reasonable to assume that his writing would be influenced by peer pressure. A

likely scenario would be that he, in his writing, would include mentions of other journalists' works – those that disproportionately focus on the local violence –, whereby he would have to navigate it reasonably diplomatically so as not to be ostracised from journalistic society.

However, despite his best intentions, Trevor may risk perpetuating certain injustices merely through his position of privilege. Try as he might, a commitment to study and research may not be enough to accurately portray the plight of the local population. It is not unreasonable to assume that he would contribute to certain preconceptions and power differences, even though he is committed to writing the truth and only the truth. Certain ways in which he asks questions, the material he uses for study and, perhaps most importantly, the simple fact that he is a white British man may skew and bias his research to the detriment of the local Black population. It is here that Miranda Fricker's framework may provide tools that can mitigate the epistemic injustice that might otherwise be perpetuated. Having already internalised the importance of Aristotelian virtues and working within a virtue ethical framework, incorporating further virtue ethical ideas into his toolbox would likely meet little resistance or difficulty.

Simultaneously, when Trevor strives for a balanced professional detachment in his interviews and discussions with the local population, he may engage in reflexive critical awareness in order to mitigate the testimonial injustice the Black community faces. Inevitably, Trevor brings certain prejudices and biases with him due to his background; it is impossible for him to become completely unbiased. While Trevor may seek to combat social injustice, he may simultaneously hold certain stereotypical images that he, through no fault of his own, has internalised in his earlier surroundings. In addition to facing his own biases, he can employ, as Quinn recommends journalists who navigate through moral choices to do, John Rawls' Veil of Ignorance as a mental discipline. Consequently, Trevor may, on one hand, actively face his own biases, while on the other hand, attempt to disregard biases, mentally placing himself in the position of others. The exercise, after all, aims to treat all equally with respect to their situation. By practising both exercises, he is more likely to find a way in which he can manoeuvre his job more elegantly, ultimately making

the odds likely for him to achieve a good connection with the local community that can lead to him receiving more accurate information.

Consequently, he will further develop his core virtues of justice and integrity, as he acknowledges his imperfections. Moreover, the core wrong in testimonial injustice may also be mitigated, in that it is an obstacle to the truth. As discussed, testimonial injustice concerns injustices wrought on speakers as they are hindered from conveying their experiences, but it is also an injustice wrought on hearers as they are hindered from receiving the full truth. By taking these mitigating actions, Trevor is better equipped to provide a more comprehensive, nuanced and accurate reporting than he might otherwise achieve. Of course, it cannot be certain that he would not achieve a sufficiently accurate portrayal of the truth without incorporating Fricker's ideas, but we can reasonably assume that it would be easier for him to do so with it than without.

More challenging, perhaps, might be to curb the impact of hermeneutical injustice. The systemic nature of it may prove strenuous for Trevor to overcome. For one, the Black community itself may lack the hermeneutical resources to accurately convey their experiences, while Trevor, who has a different set of hermeneutical resources, may struggle to justly comprehend their experiences. For another, as a journalist, Trevor may find himself in between different hermeneutical collective social understandings, with the hermeneutically marginalised Black community on one end and more hermeneutically powerful readers on the other. Indeed, in order to rectify hermeneutical injustice, Trevor must place himself in this position, for it is through his position of power as a journalist that he may inform the masses of a given injustice, thereby inspiring collective exercise of the virtue of hermeneutical justice.

Journalists are in an excellent position to give a far-reaching voice to people who do not have this opportunity. As hermeneutical injustice is deeply systemic and not the consequence of epistemic bad luck, it is only through reforming the system itself that actual change can be achieved. Hence, Trevor must use all tools available to him to do his best at rectifying this injustice. He must make an introspective journey considering his own social impact on how he interprets things, which biases he has, how he may or may not understand other communities he has little practical

knowledge – phronesis – of, et cetera. To complicate things further, his position as a white cis-man from England will guarantee that his readers have a certain bias towards him already. His newspaper surely has a reputation, too, that he will have to take into account. Depending on his readers, he can have both credibility excess and credibility deficit simultaneously – a truly difficult situation to manoeuvre. Some of these factors he can, naturally, do little about. That is not to say he should ignore them – he can only attempt to find a good, balanced reporting. However, combating epistemic injustice is ultimately a collective effort, and so his own individual contributions can only amount to so much. Consequently, his only recourse is to actively build upon his existing knowledge while reserving judgment towards his sources – yet still remain detached enough so as not to be coloured by (too much) emotion. This, too, is a difficult line to walk, and demanding perfection would overburden Trevor. Rather, acknowledging his limitations and imperfections concerning his biases would be part of the progress in his fight against epistemic injustice.

The constant introspection necessitated here can, of course, happen simultaneously with good investigative journalism. For it is through thorough investigative journalism that all necessary facts can be brought to light. The goal for Trevor is then double: he must perform his best to gather truth in order to inform the public, and through this effort, work against epistemic injustice. We can therefore conclude that Quinn's and Fricker's ideas are not only compatible – they work in tandem to improve the ambition of the other. By incorporating efforts against epistemic injustice as a part of the information-gathering efforts of investigative journalism, Trevor can come much closer to the truth than through conventional means of interviewing. As Fricker already identifies, journalism is a field where collective social meaning is generated, which makes it a perfect platform for countering epistemic injustice. In short, the synergetic relationship between what the two authors' ideas each bring can be summarised into how Fricker's ideas of epistemic injustice provide a deeper understanding of why certain things are harmful, while Quinn provides a framework through which journalists can actualise the work against said injustice.

Curiously, it can be argued that Trevor's position is converted into that of a speaker once it is time to write and publish his article. In this position, it is Trevor's turn to tell a story – this time to a large collection of individual hearers. It would be presumptuous to assume that each reader of Trevor's article would have developed their self-reflective and anti-bias virtues, which calls for Trevor to write his article with this in mind. Assuming that he has done his very best at collecting facts, gathering stories while keeping a balanced detachment towards the Black community in Salvador, his work has only really just begun. His position has now become that of simultaneously speaker and hearer – a sort of interlocutor, or interpreter, of stories. While Fricker's work mostly focuses on how the burden is upon the hearer to alleviate biases from the transfer of information, we can infer that Trevor, due to his background and position of power, would know how regular hearers, without his training, would interpret the stories he has heard. In other words, he has experience of ignorance, of being under-informed of the situation he has researched, and he has had to face his own biases and, through that, likely biases that people he grew up around had or still have. Thus, he can weaponise his prior ignorance into a skill of interpretation, whereby he can anticipate which information his readers may lack and need extra explanation concerning. All things turning out well, he is well-positioned to bridge the hermeneutical gap between differing social groups, furthering collective social understanding.

Trevor has now gained an entire, comprehensive journalistic toolset through incorporating Virtue Ethics and knowledge on Epistemic Injustice into his training. Translating the skills he used when reporting on the Black community in Brazil into other contexts should be fairly uncomplicated – granted that he naturally will have to commit himself to thorough research into this new context. Should he wish to report on the LGBT situation in Poland, which we briefly touched upon in the introduction, he will have to dive right into this new, complex situation. However, he can base many of the questions and work procedures on his prior work in Salvador. Each time he faces a new situation, he might have less work cut out for him as he gains more and more knowledge – though he will always have to critically reflect on whether his confidence is supported by actual facts, and not unconscious biases. Further, he will have to carefully nurture his texts so that his readers do not fall victim to credibility excess. While he may more often than not be correct, he will inevitably be wrong on

occasion. If he succeeds at nurturing his readers so that they can catch inconsistencies, this would be ideal – though this is, of course, a fairly difficult task, since he also seeks to be trusted. A truly difficult balance to achieve.

By embodying the framework outlined here, Trevor might eventually be ready to become a role model for future journalists. Through teaching, training or apprenticeship, he may help create more virtuous journalists who are properly equipped to combat injustice. Reasonably, with real-life journalists practising Virtue Ethics as outlined in this paper, the subsequent journalists will have an easier time incorporating and internalising values – much of Virtue Ethics does, after all, rely on role models. For while it is possible to learn and educate oneself to virtue ethical principles, having role models can streamline the process.

In this example, Trevor can be seen as a representative from a more powerful social group. Journalists from powerless social groups can, however, also use the toolkit utilised in this example – though they will naturally have different things they will need to learn, study and educate themselves about. Due to social stigma and general prejudice, they might face additional hurdles that someone from Trevor's background would not, but this does not stop them from working against injustice. Indeed, their background as someone from a powerless social group would also grant them knowledge and perspective that someone like Trevor would struggle to achieve – a situation that they could use to their advantage.

Conclusion

This paper set out to explore what a just and virtuous journalist ought to pursue within the context of virtue ethics and epistemic injustice. Respectively, Quinn and Fricker have comprehensive theories concerning journalistic virtue ethics and epistemic injustice. We can reasonably conclude that a person who has studied either of their theories is probably better equipped to combat injustice than they might have been prior to that. However, as we have explored through our hypothetical journalist, Trevor, combining the two may result in great consequences in the fight against injustice. We have seen how Quinn can provide an elaborate toolset of how a journalist can navigate themselves towards greater justice, but that combining said toolset with Fricker's ideas, the journalist can find a deeper understanding as to why certain things are unjust. Through both authors, we can also draw the conclusion that a perfect virtuous journalist is, in all likelihood, an impossibility, as each person comes with different backgrounds and biases. Both authors highlight the need to continuously educate oneself, and so we can draw the conclusion that a virtuous journalist must never stop learning. Here, Fricker particularly draws attention to testimonial responsibility with a hearer. Her idea of reflexive critical social awareness can be seen as particularly useful for a journalist to engage in, as the journalist throughout their profession most likely navigates through many different social contexts, wherein their own social role and affect can vary considerably. Ultimately, however, we can reasonably conclude that a journalist equipped with this combined framework would be highly equipped to combat social injustices.

While the thesis's main focus lies on developing a virtue ethical structure for individual journalists, it also highlights some of the various complications and challenges that these journalists may face. Through Quinn, we discover how the current media structure can act as a breeding ground for corporate greed and corruption, which not only can hinder well-meaning journalists from voicing their stories but also can corrupt them should their integrity fail. Through Fricker, we discover how deeply entrenched power relations in society may make the work far more difficult for the journalists. Biases, unequal power and unjust social relations require a collective effort, and one single journalist can only do so much – but we

must also start somewhere. Hence, we can conclude that journalists who wish to combat injustice find themselves in a difficult and complicated situation. Sometimes they might have to change stories, focus on the wrong things or report things in a particular manner only to get the word out at all, or face the risk of their employer not publishing the story, or removing it later. Conceivably, independent reporters might have an easier time as they fall outside the corporate ladder. Indeed, journalism via various social media such as YouTube and TikTok does happen. Yet these may also face difficulties concerning their own finances, platform censorship, and the necessity of sponsors, on top of the power inequality that Fricker explores. Whether independent journalism is better equipped to combat injustice than traditional journalism is, however, something outside the scope of this essay.

Nevertheless, we can conclude that all journalists seeking to combat injustice can find numerous positive consequences to their work if they use the framework found here. Developing a comprehensive sense of integrity through virtue ethics and incorporating an understanding of epistemic injustice will most assuredly help these journalists. Other types of journalists, like sports reporters, may have less concrete use of this form of education, but more knowledge can always have unexpected benefits.

Due to the limited space in this thesis, we only discussed one perspective of journalistic virtue ethics. Other authors may have drawn different conclusions or highlighted different problems that we did not have the time to cover. Moreover, many of the injustices outlined deal with minorities and cultures that have become disadvantaged by history, and so anthropological perspectives could be highly useful in further study as to how to better combat injustice in these contexts. This thesis has, however, provided a starting point through which such studies can continue.

Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates that by incorporating the concept of epistemic injustice into a virtue-ethical framework, journalism can be well equipped to act according to its role as a guardian of a healthy democracy. This synergetic approach may foster journalists who have a well-grounded sense of integrity, equipped with phronesis and may become a catalyst for eudaimonia by cultivating an informed and just society.

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