

Reply to John Christman's Comments

Elizabeth Anderson, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

I would like to build on two points raised by Prof. Christman. First, he argues that the effectiveness and legitimacy of structural remedies to structural epistemic injustices may depend on the congruence of these remedies with the values and virtues of the people participating in those structures. Second, he argues that the practicing the virtue of hermeneutical justice may require *already recognizing* that hermeneutical injustice has been done. I think these two points are deeply linked.

In my original paper, I argued that group segregation along lines of identity is an important cause of structural epistemic injustice, and that integration is a remedy for this injustice. In many institutional settings, affirmative action — that is, *active, group-conscious* measures to include disadvantaged groups — is needed to produce integration. Prof. Christman worries that integration will be neither legitimate or effective in correcting structural epistemic injustice unless people accept affirmative action as an appropriate means for achieving justice.

At this point it is necessary to consider effectiveness and legitimacy separately. I argue in my book (Anderson 2010, ch. 7) that the means by which integration works to promote justice operate largely behind people's backs. For example, integration — that is, institutionally supported cooperation on terms of equality — often reduces identity prejudice not by direct persuasion but by promoting familiarity and friendliness across group lines, and by motivating people to individuate the targets of prejudice. On my account, integration reduces *epistemic* prejudice in particular by triggering the ethnocentric and shared reality biases in favor of disadvantaged groups. These mechanisms work independently of people's awareness and may even operate against their values. So I take exception to the argument that integration will not work if people think it is brought about illegitimately. Integration can and does work *despite* people's (initial) resentment of it.

Of course, given that integration entails not mere intergroup contact but cooperation on terms of equality, one may question how that can be achieved without willing participation. If people don't already accept the legitimacy of integration, wouldn't they resist? We can get a clue by focusing on the case of racial integration, and considering the sorts of cases where it has been found to be most effective: in the military, sports teams, and employment contexts. These settings feature hierarchical enforcement of intergroup cooperation by officers, coaches, and bosses (Estlund 2005, 126-34). To a substantial degree, deference to authority can substitute for direct endorsement of integration. As far as effectiveness goes, authority can get the mechanisms that promote epistemic justice rolling before people come around to endorsing its methods.

It is still desirable that people do come around. My point is that the legitimacy of active measures to promote integration may be achieved *ex post* — after these measures are implemented. One of the most consistent findings of research on integration is that people who have experienced integration in a significant domain of life (particularly if they were younger) tend to lead more integrated lives thereafter (Anderson 2010, ch. 6). The experience of integration is the major source of evidence in favor of the practice of integration. People come to appreciate its value from the inside, even if they initially resisted it. This is a kind of moral discovery, an instance of

epistemic growth that underwrites moral legitimacy. Upon reflection, people can come to understand their prior resistance as a kind of stubborn parochialism, grounded in ignorance of the perspectives of the disadvantaged.

To put the point another way, we need not read Prof. Christman's second point as a counsel of despair at the virtual impossibility of bootstrapping our way into epistemic justice. We can take it rather in a pragmatist spirit: we learn about the value of social institutions by living in accordance with them and seeing whether we appreciate the results. We don't already have to know that the experiment will work to have reason to try it out.

Contact details: eandersn@umich.edu

References

Anderson, Elizabeth. 2010. *The imperative of integration*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Estlund, Cynthia. 2005. *Working together: How workplace bonds strengthen a diverse democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Colin John. The Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force extends heartiest Christmas greetings to all Vincentians and visitors to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We also wish you a very safe and Christ-centered Christmas and an extremely prosperous New Year. The Christmas Season is a time for enjoyment, interaction and reflection. As an organization whose primary purpose is citizen's security, we are doing everything possible to ensure your safety. You the public have been unwavering in your support, encouragement and assistance to us, for that, we are grateful and appreciative. Duri Posts about John Christman written by SERRC.Â 2012.Reply to John Christman's comments. Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective 1 (7): 15-16 The PDF of the article gives specific page numbers. Shortlink: <http://wp.me/p1Bfg0-o1> Please refer to: Anderson, Elizabeth. Read More . John Christman. Comments on Elizabeth Anderson, "Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions". By SERRC on May 16, 2012 (1). Author Information: John ChristmanPenn State University, jchristman@psu.edu Allwood, Carl. 2012. "On the virtues of an empirically oriented culture concept and on the limitations of too general and abstract characterizati In John Boyne's The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas a concentration camp commander's son is mistakenly caught up with inmates rounded up for gassing. In Chris Van Allsburg's picture book, The Sweetest Fig, a cold-hearted dentist is cruel to his dog and ends up getting his comeuppance. Guess Who's Coming For Dinner is a picture book in which a wolf builds a contraption to catch his guests and eat them, but he ends up getting trapped in it himself.