

# Against Suspending Judgement in the Virtue of Testimonial Justice

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**Abstract:** Consider the case wherein a person refuses to listen to a woman's testimony of leadership, due to the belief that women are incompetent. This is testimonial injustice. It involves the hearer's prejudicial belief over the speaker's socially imagined identity. This injustice creates lasting kinds of harms to one's epistemic self-respect and freedom, as the hearer gives a decreased credibility level to the speaker. In *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Miranda Fricker proposes the virtue of testimonial justice, which aims to restrain identity prejudice from harming speakers. With this, the hearer reflexively identifies her prejudice and corrects or suspends it. In this essay, I argue that employing the cognitive attitude of suspension is counter-effective to the purpose of the virtue. I explain my argument through the following: 1) the relationship of inquiring attitudes (IAs) with the attitude of suspension; and 2) the argumentative function of reason. Through the suspension of prejudice an IA over the prejudice is acquired by the hearer. Consider, "Is my belief that all women are weak, true?" From this, the argumentative function of reason, and confirmation bias, a metacognitive desire to reaffirm and reestablish the prejudice arises. Thus, defeating the purpose of the virtue. As such, I suggest the attitude of acceptance instead, which serves as settled

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judgement over the prejudice's truth and need not involve belief. Through it, the hearer does not inquire over the status of the prejudice's truth, removing the problems presented by suspension of judgement.

**Keywords:** testimonial justice, suspension, confirmation bias, acceptance

## INTRODUCTION: THE GRAVITY OF TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE

While we often hear people talk about how women's voices are silenced, many of us forget the gravity of its reality. To remind us of the nature of the problem discussed in my essay, consider the case of Natalie.<sup>1</sup> Natalie is one of the eight rape survivors who partook in Courtney Ahrens' research study titled "Being Silenced: The Impact of Negative Social Reactions on the Disclosure of Rape."<sup>2</sup> In the said study, Ahrens looked closely at the impact of the hearers' responses to the speaker, which would be the rape victims sharing their testimonies. Natalie was raped by three men and was almost killed at the end.<sup>3</sup> After explaining to the police what happened, they did not seem to care.<sup>4</sup> As Natalie notes, "I remember one of the police officers laughed."<sup>5</sup> This incident led Natalie to question her own pain and fault, even as a victim. Eventually, Natalie became convinced that she should not communicate her truth to anyone else for it seemed not to be believable—

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<sup>1</sup> Courtney E. Ahrens, "Being Silenced: The Impact of Negative Social Reactions on the Disclosure of Rape," in *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 38:3-4 (December 2006), 263-274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

her testimonies seemed unreliable.<sup>6</sup> Such a pattern could be found as well amongst the seven other women who were part of the research study.

However, women need not be in a “vulnerable” situation to be presented with such wrongfulness. In 2017, Tonja Jacobi and Dylan Schweers published a study on how female court Justices are unlawfully and unorderedly interrupted during oral arguments by their male colleagues and advocates much more so than male justices are.<sup>7</sup> Despite being individuals of high authority and recognizably reliable judgement, female justices continue to experience a pattern of disrespect as they speak. On what grounds were their testimonies, and a thousand that we have already heard before, unheard? By virtue of the prejudice of them being women.

This is testimonial injustice. Before I explicate on its definition, I believe that two things must first be said regarding its nature: 1) that testimonial injustice is an *injustice*; and 2) that it is an injustice of the epistemic kind—regarding a person’s capacity as a knower. First, testimonial injustice is not simply a lack of solid form of justice.<sup>8</sup> It is not the case that justice is primordial to it. In fact, it is the other way around. While not all injustices are considered as grave as Natalie’s, the ability of injustices to wrong people to a terrifying degree should be taken with utmost concern. The same goes for testimonial injustice. Second, testimonial injustice is epistemic in nature. It is a wrong done in regard of a person’s ability to know, which is an integral portion of human dignity.<sup>9</sup> To have a person’s ability to know be wronged by another can create lasting negative effects on the victim. It may be the case that they will not believe in their ability to learn complicated things anymore or believe that they will

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Tonja Jacobi and Dylan Schweers, “Justice, Interrupted: The Effect of Gender, Ideology and Seniority at Supreme Court Oral Arguments,” in *Virginia Law Review*, 103:7 (2017), 1379-1496.

<sup>8</sup> Miranda Fricker, “Testimonial Injustice,” in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007), 9-29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

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never be reliable in the epistemic sense. Such effects can greatly hinder a person's ability to live life well, aside from the detrimental harms caused on one's dignity.

Originally discussed and introduced by Miranda Fricker in her book *Epistemic Injustice: The Power and Ethics of Knowing*, testimonial injustice serves as the primary form of epistemic injustice, followed by hermeneutical.<sup>10</sup> Fricker defines testimonial injustice as the injustice that “occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word” or a case of identity-prejudicial credibility deficit.<sup>11</sup> Focusing on the four-word phrase “identity-prejudicial credibility deficit”, let us break down the meaning behind testimonial injustice.

First, testimonial injustice revolves around ***cases resulting from credibility deficit***. In hearing testimonies, a hearer must assign a credibility level to the speaker.<sup>12</sup> For example, if I ask my mother what it means to be an assertive leader, as a hearer, I assign a credibility level to her depending on how reliable and believable I think she is to give her testimony of being a leader. When we deal with testimonial injustice, we primarily deal with cases that involve a hearer giving deflated credibility level to the speaker.<sup>13</sup> Natalie's case is a primary example of this, as her hearers, say the police she reported to, did not consider Natalie's words as credible—not even fit to be seriously thought of or considered. Compare Natalie's case to over-believing and seeking a man's words of what it means to be strong. For Natalie, she received a deflated level of credibility from her hearers. For the latter example, people place an increased level of trust over the man and his testimony.

From this we can see how in testimonial injustice, ***prejudice is a necessary element***. The credibility deficit arises from prejudice, which are judgements that may either give positive or negative valence, with

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-8.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

resistance to counter evidence.<sup>14</sup> In cases involved in testimonial injustice, we are primarily dealing with prejudices that are negative. Consider the prejudice that, “All women are bad at math” compared to “All women are good at cooking and smiling.”

What kind of prejudice are we dealing with? It is what Fricker calls as **identity prejudice**. This stems from identity power, wherein an agent uses the socially imagined identity of a speaker to influence the latter's freedom.<sup>15</sup> Looking back at the previous examples given, they were all cases which deal with prejudice involving the stereotype or socially imagined identity of the speaker. Furthermore, we can observe from these considerations that testimonial injustice is gendered, as much as it is racial and discriminatory in various aspects of a person's identity.

## THE FALLING SHORT OF SUSPENSION

As a response to testimonial injustice, or to epistemic injustices in general, Fricker suggests a virtue that is aimed to restrain identity-prejudice from harming speakers in cases of testimonies: **the virtue of testimonial justice**. There are several important things to know about the nature of this virtue: 1) its corrective and anti-prejudicial nature; 2) its reflexive structure; and 3) its implementation. While other details were elucidated by Fricker in her book, I believe that three concepts are most crucial to our discussion.

First, the virtue of testimonial justice is corrective and anti-prejudicial in the sense that the virtue holds the hearer to correct and prevent oneself from allowing prejudice to hinder her ability in justly assessing the speaker's testimonies.<sup>16</sup> The virtue is meant to be employed as hearers in cases of testimonies. Second, the structure of the virtue is reflexive. It is reflexive in the sense that having such a virtue would render

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-59.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-17.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-108.

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an individual reflexively critically aware with one's possible prejudice against a speaker.<sup>17</sup> In relation to the corrective nature of the virtue, when a hearer senses that she has prejudice over a speaker, the former must reflexively correct herself. Lastly, Fricker suggests that we can do this through either correcting or suspending the prejudice or the credibility judgement.<sup>18</sup>

I believe that if we are to truly attempt to counter testimonial injustice with the virtue of testimonial justice, we ought to carefully delineate its parts—particularly its implementation. In this essay, I would like to specifically focus on the option to suspend prejudice or the credibility judgement. While Fricker did not expound on its nature, we can see that it is a cognitive attitude towards a belief or a judgement. Fricker defines prejudice as follows: “Prejudices are 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.”<sup>19</sup> As judgements, prejudices can either be a person's belief that x, or a person's residual commitment that x, even if she does not believe that x.<sup>20</sup>

Like the latter, it is important to note that there are cases wherein prejudices are not simply a belief. It can be the case that even if people have wholeheartedly grown out their previous prejudices, they have residual commitment to doing things in accordance with such prejudice.<sup>21</sup> Say, Christian—a person who *used to have* the prejudice against the LGBTQ+ community and held the belief that transwomen are not real women. When Christian became a father to a transwoman, he genuinely did not believe his prejudice anymore and would like to support his daughter fully. However, it can be the case that because of the prejudice that Christian

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

held, he tends to disregard his daughter's opinion on what it is to be a woman—not because he believes in his prejudice but because he was conditioned to habitually do the things in accordance with it. As a strongly held commitment akin to that of a belief or a quasi-belief, I will be calling both kinds of prejudices as judgements or beliefs interchangeably for the virtue addresses them the same. The same goes for the suspension of giving the credibility judgement over the speaker. Recognizing the prejudice, it is inevitable that the credibility judgement that the hearer will give to the speaker is one that is prejudicial in nature, if the virtue will not be properly employed. As such, I will be referring to the two as suspended prejudice in this essay.

There are several theories as to the structure of the suspension of judgement. One of these is the metacognitive view of suspended beliefs, wherein suspending judgements is believing that one cannot yet determine whether  $x$  or not  $x$ .<sup>22</sup> Another view is to equate the suspension of judgement to doxastic neutrality wherein a person would neither accept that  $x$  or accept that not  $x$ .<sup>23</sup> Regardless of which theory of suspensive attitude we would be abiding to, the essence is that the hearer is not disbelieving her prejudices but rather tranquilizes it for the time being until she can finally correct it or decides to reaffirm it.

With these in mind, I argue that employing the cognitive attitude of suspension of prejudice is counter-effective to the purpose of the virtue of testimonial justice. My aim for this paper is to contribute to the expansion of the virtue by refuting suspension as a cognitive attitude fit for it. In the succeeding sections of this paper, I will explore on how that the option to suspend one's judgement is counter-effective to the goal of mitigating testimonial injustices as it urges the hearer to reinstate and reestablish the suspended prejudice, which is against the goal of the virtue.

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Raleigh, "Suspending Is Believing," in *Synthese*, (2019), 1-26.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

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To demonstrate this, I used the following framework: 1) the relationship of inquiring or interrogative attitudes (IAs) with the attitude of suspension; and 2) the argumentative function of reason. First, I explained how when a hearer arrives at the suspended prejudice, she arrives with an IA, such as inquiry, curiosity, and deliberation, towards that prejudice. I made use of Jane Friedman's analysis in her essay "Why Suspend Judgement?", supported by her latter work "Inquiry and Belief".<sup>24</sup> In the former work, Friedman discussed her biconditional argument that inquiry entails suspension of judgement, and suspension of judgement entails inquiry. On the latter, she dived deeper into the relationship of inquiry, its nature, and that of belief's. I integrated these into explaining how the points of events that a hearer goes through in suspending one's judgement meets the necessary elements in having IAs over the suspended prejudice. Second, I discussed why having IAs over the prejudice, in cases of hearing testimonies, is dangerous to the goals of the virtue. I believe that this can be accounted for by the argumentative function of reasoning in conjunction with confirmation bias. Using Lehner et al.'s research study on the impact and prevalence of confirmation bias in complex analyses and Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber's analysis on argumentation as the main function of reasoning, we can observe that humans tend to reason, evaluate, and interpret beliefs favorably towards those which are not against their own.<sup>25</sup> Because of these, hearers who have suspended their prejudice will lean towards reinstating and further reestablishing their prejudices. This may come through succumbing to the straw man fallacy in listening to the speaker's testimonies, and other probable forms. Thus, defeating the point of the virtue of testimonial justice.

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<sup>24</sup> Jane Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?," in *Noûs*, 51:2 (December 24, 2015), 302-326; Jane Friedman, "Inquiry and Belief," in *Noûs*, 53:2 (August 26, 2017), 296-315.

<sup>25</sup> Paul E. Lehner et al., "Confirmation Bias in Complex Analyses," in *IEEE Transactions on Systems, Man, and Cybernetics - Part A: Systems and Humans*, 38:3 (2008), 584-592; Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber, "Why Do Humans Reason? Arguments for an Argumentative Theory," in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 34:2 (2011), 57-74.



With this, I offer the attitude of acceptance instead. I believe that it would benefit the virtue's goals if the hearers are to accept the direct opposite of their prejudice. Following Jesús Mosterin's model of acceptance without belief, I highlighted three elements of acceptance that shows how such an attitude does not succumb to the same problems that suspension face.<sup>26</sup> These would be will, rationality, and context-dependence. Afterwards, I discuss some of the probable criticisms that my argument faces, as well as recommendations for future studies regarding the virtue of testimonial justice.

## THE BIRTH OF INQUIRING ATTITUDES

Explicated by Friedman, IAs are a class of attitudes which are goal-directed and questioning by nature<sup>27</sup>. It comes with the desire for epistemic satisfaction.<sup>28</sup> These are attitudes such as curiosity, wonder, and deliberation. To illustrate how IAs come about from the suspended prejudice, let us consider the following chronological points that intuitively happen at the beginning of hearing out testimonies, with suspended prejudice:

*Point A: When the hearer enters a situation wherein a speaker begins to give testimony, and in turn assign a credibility level to the latter.*

*Point B: When the hearer realizes that she has prejudice over the speaker.*

*Point C: When the hearer decides to suspend the prejudice.*

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<sup>26</sup> Jesús Mosterín, "Acceptance without Belief," in *Manuscrito: Revista Internacional De Filosofía*, 25:2 (2002), 313-335.

<sup>27</sup> Friedman, "Inquiry and Belief," 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

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By point A, the hearer is placed in a situation wherein she naturally has to assign a credibility level to the speaker. As such, an inquiry or a metacognitive desire directed at the question of judgment involving the speaker's reliability and identity will stand. The cognitive goal to judge or assess the reliability of the speaker is present. For example, the police, or any hearer, will start to be curious about *Q*: the credibility of the rape survivor, or any speaker, in giving out her testimony regarding the crime. At this point of having inquiry over *Q*, it is entailed that the hearer also suspended her judgement over *Q*.<sup>29</sup> This may come in the form of, "I cannot determine whether the rape survivor is credible or not" and other various forms. The inquiry over *Q* is governed by what Friedman calls as the ignorance norm wherein when a person ought not have an IA over *Q* at time *t* if the person knows *Q* at period *t*.<sup>30</sup> This means that when an individual has an IA over *Q*, that individual does not know the answer to *Q*.<sup>31</sup> In other words, when one develops an IA towards *Q*, that person "treats *Q* as open" and thus, suspends her judgement over it.<sup>32</sup>

When one genuinely inquires over a question, one wants to figure it out or resolve it.<sup>33</sup> This may either be through active or passive inquiry – the effort or will to seek out evidence to address the question may either be passive or active.<sup>34</sup> However, being in point A, the hearer has to search for evidence and signs that will help enable her to determine the credibility level of the speaker. The hearer has to do this before having to evaluate the testimony given by the speaker. With this, I believe that in cases of hearing testimonies, the hearer is on an active inquiry regarding *Q*. In looking for proofs regarding the reliability of the speaker, the hearer will eventually reach point B, wherein she realizes the existence of prejudice over the

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<sup>29</sup> Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?," 14-20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Friedman, "Inquiry and Belief?," 4.

<sup>34</sup> Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?," 12.

speaker's identity is directly tied to how we perceive a person's reliability. Let us consider prejudice *P*: that rape survivors, or any speaker, were asking for it, or any relevant negative judgement.

Once the hearer decides to suspend the *P*, she moves to point C. At this point, the second half of Friedman's biconditional argument comes into play, wherein suspension would entail inquiry.<sup>35</sup> Friedman argues that, "anyone who is suspended is oriented in this sort of way [inquiring state of mind] with respect to the focal question—she aims to close that question."<sup>36</sup> This implies that by suspending *P*, the hearer develops an IA towards it. It is important to note that this inquiry may or may not be active or eager. Nonetheless, by suspending *P*, there exists even a "minimal sensitivity to information that bears on the question" over *P*'s settlement.<sup>37</sup> Consider being sensitive to verbal and nonverbal cues from the speaker that would affirm to the hearer if *P*.

## THE DANGERS OF IAS AND ACCEPTANCE AS KEY

Why should we then be concerned if during such cases, the hearer has an IA towards the suspended prejudice? This can be accounted for by: 1) confirmation bias, and 2) the argumentative function of reason. Confirmation bias pertains to the near-universal tendency to accept and lean towards new evidence that affirm our existing beliefs.<sup>38</sup> It is a form of cognitive bias and heuristics that help bring about belief and its propagation.<sup>39</sup> Through this tendency, we seek and interpret evidence in a manner that favors our existing beliefs, expectations, and the like.<sup>40</sup> This is suggested by the results of Lehner et al.'s research regarding the effects and

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Axel Gelfert, "Fake News: A Definition," in *Informal Logic*, 38:1 (2018), 84–117.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>40</sup> Mercier and Sperber, "Why Humans Reason," 63–65.

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manifestation of confirmation bias in complex analyses even amongst professionals with intelligence analysis experience.<sup>41</sup> Their participants were experts in research and development and enthusiasts of intelligence analyses, some with actual experience over it.<sup>42</sup> Their results showed that confirmation bias significantly impacted how the participants assessed new evidence based on their beliefs.<sup>43</sup> While the participants tended to agree on the interpretation of the evidence all together, for example if it confirmed or disconfirmed their hypothesis, they tended to disagree on the importance of the evidence.<sup>44</sup> They gave more weight to the evidence that supported their preferred hypothesis and less weight to evidence that disconfirmed it.<sup>45</sup>

This can be linked to the main function of reasoning as argued by Mercier, wherein reasoning has evolved to enable humans to communicate advantageously—through argumentation.<sup>46</sup> Because of this function of reasoning, humans tend to reason, evaluate, and interpret beliefs towards those which are not against their own.<sup>47</sup> Because of these, hearers who have suspended their prejudice will lean towards reinstating and further reestablishing their prejudices, in which they are also inquiring over or trying to resolve. Thus, defeating the point of the virtue of testimonial justice.

If suspending one's prejudices in listening to testimonies is insufficient to uphold the goal of testimonial justice, what attitude then does the hearer have as an option aside from disbelieving the prejudice? I argue that it should be acceptance. I believe that accepting the direct opposite of *P* will enable the hearer to not succumb over the dangers that

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<sup>41</sup> Lehner et al., "Confirmation Bias," 584-592.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Mercier, "Why Humans Reason," 57-111.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66.

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suspending *P* presented. To understand this, let us recall the root of suspension's harms: from the birth of IAs. If the attitude of acceptance removes the possibility of an IA over *P* to arise, it will not face the same harms that suspension does.

The ignorance norm discussed in the previous section suggests that one cannot inquire over a question that one already knows the answer to.<sup>48</sup> In other words, one cannot have an IA over a question if she has a settled belief or judgement over it.<sup>49</sup> It may be too difficult and idealistic for a person with prejudice over the speaker to completely and quickly disbelieve or disregard *P* after point B. As such, I wanted to propose an alternative attitude *that has a settled judgement over P but does not require complete belief against it*. The attitude of acceptance meets these requirements.

Following Mosterín's model of acceptance, I would like to highlight three elements of acceptance that differentiate it from belief.<sup>50</sup> These are will, rationality, and context dependence. Starting with will, belief is often not subjected to direct voluntary control.<sup>51</sup> Usually, if not always, we do not have an active say or cognitive choice on what we believe in. As highlighted by Mosterín, we can only attempt to convince ourselves to believe something by looking for evidence or considerations.<sup>52</sup> We only find ourselves believing and not actively choosing to do so. On the contrary, acceptance involves our will.<sup>53</sup> Consider listening to a friend who has a dilemma over choosing. In helping her evaluate which choice is best, you both accept the choices one at a time to move forward in your assessment. You do not believe yet that either of the choices is right or wrong, but you accept it as basis for evaluation. This active epistemic decision is often

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<sup>48</sup> Friedman, "Why Suspend Judging?," 18.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> Mosterín, "Acceptance Without Belief," 313-335.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

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found in the sciences or in the field of law.<sup>54</sup> For example, you used your scientific calculator to answer a math problem and you kept on getting unexpectedly big numbers as a result. You do not believe it, but in your desire to finish the problem, you accept it.

The second defining factor of acceptance against belief is their relationship to rationality. Rationality helps us determine not what to believe, rather what to accept.<sup>55</sup> Rationality is directly linked with decision making and as acceptance involves making a certain decision, the two are intertwined. The last factor that I would like to highlight is context dependence. When it comes to beliefs, no matter how risky they may be, we believe them—especially the strongly held ones. On the contrary, we tend to accept things in certain contexts or circumstances.<sup>56</sup> We tend to be more mindful of what we accept when risks are involved.<sup>57</sup> With these, we can observe that acceptance need not the belief that not *P*, and also served as a settled response to the status of *P* for the context of the hearing of the testimony. Going back to our example of Natalie’s case, if the police were to accept that not *P*, moving through the investigation or interview of her account of the crime, the hearers would not need to inquire further, at least for that context and period of time, regarding *P*. This is because they will be accepting not *P* throughout the hearing—leaving its status “closed”.

## CRITICISMS

One possible response to my argument is that it need not matter what kind of cognitive attitude we employ with the virtue. Perhaps a more preemptive question we ought to answer is how we can encourage people to employ the virtue in the first place. With this, I agree that discussing how we can allow more people to employ the virtue regularly is a matter of concern for

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

anyone who is interested in epistemic justice. However, I believe that it is still a necessity to clarify and sort out the intricacies of such a virtue that revolves around justice—or an injustice. This is because to employ a problematic virtue may render our efforts of advocating for it as useless. Furthermore, while the process of specifying the various aspects of the virtue puts it at risk of becoming overcomplicated, I believe that in our pursuit of bettering the human condition, such risks should not hinder us from identifying the possible ways to improve the virtue—or any philosophical concept for that matter.

Another possible criticism is that suspending judgement can be a settled belief in and of itself, thus IAs cannot rise. One might say that there are cases of suspended judgements that function as settled beliefs. This means that the judgment is not open for inquiry, deliberation or any IA. Take for example, *J*: that I cannot know whether God exists or not. Some may consider this as a form of suspension. In the literature, we can either interpret this as a complete belief that one cannot know about God's existence, or a maximally high credence over the status of the question over God's existence. Either way, as Friedman notes, it makes sense to say "I cannot know whether God exists or not, but I still wonder whether He truly exists or not".<sup>58</sup> This demonstrates how IAs are compatible with such forms of suspensions as well.

Lastly, one can argue that the attitude of acceptance is akin to suspension and succumbs to the same dangers of the latter. Acceptance can be argued as a certain form of suspension wherein one temporarily plasters over assessing a belief or judgment status. Consider accepting COVID-19 number projections. With this, one is putting on hold the inquiry over how long the pandemic will last and how many more people will be affected. It is evident that the acceptance in this case led to a suspension of judgement—on how much longer the pandemic will last. I believe that in this case, it is important to note that while acceptance can retroactively

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<sup>58</sup> Friedman, "Inquiry and Belief," 12.

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create a suspended judgement; at the point wherein the hearer currently accepts the judgement, inquiry is ceased. This serves as the key difference between actual suspension and acceptance. With suspension, inquiry comes hand in hand at the same point of time towards the same question. However, it seems that acceptance cannot give rise to inquiry over the same question at the same period of time. This is because acceptance functions as a pseudo-knowledge, albeit temporarily, that closes and settles one's mindset over a judgement.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have discussed the importance of addressing testimonial injustices through the virtue of testimonial justice. From this, I have highlighted where the option to suspend one's judgement in the employment of the virtue can be proven counter-effective to the latter's goals. Suspension or agnosticism towards one's prejudices gives rise to inquiring attitudes, which encourages the originally suspended prejudices to reaffirm and reestablish itself. As such, I proposed using the attitude of acceptance instead, which ideally removes the harms that suspension face. Acceptance does this through serving as a settled judgement over the prejudice's status, despite not being a complete belief. This provides more certainty in the removal of the discrimination caused by the prejudice and does not succumb to the issues that suspension of judgement faces.

I believe that there is more to be said about testimonial justice, and even more so for testimonial injustice. Perhaps in further studies we may be able to consider more complex cases of testimonies that may require other cognitive attitudes as options in applying the virtue, such as faith. Furthermore, we may also look closer into hermeneutical injustice and the manner of mitigating such and if suspension of judgement also functions the same way through it. As for the other theories I have applied in my study, I believe that their debates (i.e., Inquiring Attitudes against Suspension of Judgement, and Acceptance against Belief) can also be a



source for further analysis. Overall, I hope to have contributed to the goal of the virtue through this study.

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