

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF CAMPUS SPEECH AND INCLUSION: REPLACING THE
MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS WITH A MODEL OF SHARED INQUIRY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

The debate on campus regarding speech and inclusion has largely come to be framed as a two-sided issue: one side for free, open expression, clashing with the other side for diverse inclusion. All sides of the debate — the proponents of free expression, most inclusionists, and those who seek the co-existence of the two values — invoke the notion of inquiry in their arguments and trade in concepts like truth and knowledge. None of these, however, undertakes a full epistemological examination of those epistemological concepts. Like the handful of compatibility projects in the debate, this project too finds that the concept of inquiry plays a synthesizing role between free expression and inclusion. But unlike these existing projects, this dissertation examines the concept of inquiry itself in epistemological terms. A review of the epistemology currently operating in the debate shows a reliance on the marketplace of ideas metaphor, as well as assumptions about competition, debate, and cognitive reasoning. Tracing the implications of these assumptions reveals that they do not do the epistemological work adherents believe they do. Instead an alternate model of *shared inquiry* is suggested, with roots in social and feminist epistemological theory. A fictional case study helps illustrate the model's epistemological assumptions about the nature of knowledge (limited and socially situated) and about justification (a shared, collaborative process). Beyond the epistemological arguments, this project also discusses how the model of shared inquiry can be enacted in the context of a college classroom. Pedagogical commitments and classroom practices informed by the community of inquiry theoretical tradition serve as regulative ideals meant to help both inquiry groups and their instructors enact the model of shared inquiry. In the end, shared inquiry does not only offer a way to synthesize expression and inclusion — it ultimately grants a new understanding of inquiry itself and its place in the college classroom.

To Eliza & Frankie

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CHAPTER 1

CAMPUS SPEECH AND INCLUSION: RECASTING THE DEBATE IN TERMS OF INQUIRY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

In the fall of 2015, the impending Halloween season prompted Yale University's Intercultural Affairs Committee to email the university community with a reminder to be thoughtful about costume choices, celebration, behavior, and the like. One residential dean — Erika Christakis, associate master of Silliman College at the university — followed up with an email to the residents of Silliman to express her beliefs, which diverged from the committee's. Christakis explained that Halloween in particular offers children opportunities to experiment with expression and imagination and suggested that eighteen-year-olds, too, might be granted chances to transgress ordinary mores, “to be a little bit obnoxious ... a little bit inappropriate or provocative or, yes, offensive.”¹ She claimed universities were formerly safe spaces for “certain regressive, or even transgressive, experience,” and she encouraged students to censure and police each other's choices rather than rely on administrators to do so. Many Sillimanders responded to

¹ For the full text of the email, see “Email from Erika Christakis: ‘Dressing Yourself,’ Email to Silliman College (Yale) Students on Halloween Costumes,” Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) website, October 30, 2015, <https://www.thefire.org/email-from-erika-christakis-dressing-yourself-email-to-silliman-college-yale-students-on-halloween-costumes/>. For other news accounts of the Silliman email story, as well as a co-occurring story about a Yale fraternity's Halloween party, see Liam Stack, “Yale's Halloween Advice Stokes a Racially Charged Debate,” *New York Times*, November 9, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/09/nyregion/yale-culturally-insensitive-halloween-costumes-free-speech.html?_r=0; Joey Ye, “Silliman Associate Master's Halloween Email Draws Ire,” *Yale Daily News*, November 2, 2015, <http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2015/11/02/silliman-associate-masters-halloween-email-draws-ire/>; and Isaac Stanley-Becker, “A Confrontation over Race at Yale: Hundreds of Students Demand Answers From the School's First Black Dean,” *Washington Post*, November 5, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2015/11/05/a-confrontation-over-race-at-yale-hundreds-of-students-demand-answers-from-the-schools-first-black-dean/>.

Christakis's message. Email responses, op-eds, and blog posts flew around campus almost immediately, and small protests materialized in and around Silliman College.

A video clip of one in-person altercation, now widely viewable online, shows a group of students surrounding Christakis's husband Nicholas, master of Silliman College, as he attempts to defend his wife's position (which he seems to share). In the short clip Mr. Christakis talks about the necessities of intellectual rigor, debate, and free speech at the university, while students shout back at him about the responsibilities necessitated by his position, responsibilities of advocacy that they accuse him of ignoring. One particular student cries out that she expects Silliman to be a safe place for her to live. In the following days and weeks, some Yale faculty came to the defense of the Christakis and insisted that pushing students to confront uncomfortable and challenging ideas is at the heart of their charge as university educators; other faculty members, however, publicly supported students' expressions of grievance.

The following week in Columbia, Missouri a string of events that included student and faculty protests, a hunger strike, and a walkout threatened by the football team led to the resignation of University of Missouri president Tim Wolfe.² The activists were reacting to a string of recent racist acts on the Mizzou campus and forwarding demands for greater racial equity in the institution. In the midst of the action, it came to light that these student activists —

² Some news reports on the events at University of Missouri: "Latest on Missouri Turmoil: Protesters Pray, Set to Camp Out," *Associated Press*, November 9, 2015, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/13b4e5c62e02470285bcd094bddfe3c/latest-missouri-protests-coach-tweets-team-united>; Austin Huguelet and Daniel Victor, "I Need Some Muscle": Missouri Activists Block Journalists," *New York Times*, November 9, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/10/us/university-missouri-protesters-block-journalists-press-freedom.html>; Ryan Famuliner, "4 Things You Might Have Wrong About the Mizzou Story," *KBIA Mid-Missouri Public Radio* website, November 12, 2015, <http://kbia.org/post/4-things-you-might-have-wrong-about--story>; and John Eligon, "At University of Missouri, Black Students See a Campus Riven by Race," *New York Times*, November 11, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/12/us/university-of-missouri-protests.html?_r=0.

coalescing under the moniker Concerned Student 1950 — had erected a base camp on part of a main quad on campus, occupying the area and camping in tents in order to meet, share news, rest, and plan actions together in person. Again, in what are now well-known video accounts, the activists prevented journalists and photographers, both student/amateur and professional, from walking on that quad, from soliciting interviews, and from documenting the scene. Citing the area was for participating members only, a mix of Mizzou students and faculty verbally confronted and physically blocked the journalists, and communications professor Melissa Click, mid-exchange with a student reporter, dubbed the encampment a safe space for the activist group and called out for “muscle” to have the student reporter removed from the area. The following day an anonymous online commenter threatened to commit acts of violence upon Black Mizzou students; the campus was *de facto* shuttered for a day in the wake of the threats.

In the summer of 2016 the University of Chicago garnered waves of attention in the national media with a welcome letter sent from Dean of Students John Ellison to the incoming class of first-year undergraduates. In the brief message he explained that the students would soon enter an institution unconditionally committed to inquiry and free expression. The commitment to such values meant that at Chicago:

We do not support so-called “trigger warnings,” we do not cancel invited speakers because their topics might prove controversial, and we do not condone the creation of intellectual “safe spaces” where individuals can retreat from ideas and perspectives at odds with their own.³

³ Full text of the letter was tweeted by the campus paper: *The Chicago Maroon*, “In a welcome letter to freshmen, the College made clear that it does not condone safe spaces or trigger warnings,” Twitter post, August 24, 2016, <https://twitter.com/chicagomaroon/status/768561465183862785>.

While Ellison admitted that disagreement and discomfort might arise within such an environment, he also claimed that this free exchange of all ideas was precisely what allowed the institution to be welcoming to all people of all backgrounds. Everyone from administrators and faculty on other campuses to University of Chicago alumni weighed in with both support for and opposition to the statement.⁴

These examples offer entry into the wider current debate on campus regarding speech and inclusion. Calls for and declarations against fair inclusion abound, alongside other related issues like speech codes, visiting speakers, and trigger warnings. In general, advocates of inclusion hold that harmful expressions should not occur in educational spaces; students should be free from harm in order to be able to fully participate in institutions.⁵ Opponents argue that such interventions coddle students, thwart free expression, and diminish rigorous critical thinking in the name of emotional neediness; student comfort takes priority over debating the truth.⁶ Attempts to keep everyone feeling secure, their argument goes, thwart some participants from thinking and speaking freely. But the advocates point out that many of the ideas consequently

⁴ For a sampling of responses and commentaries, see Richard Perez-Pena, Mitch Smith, and Stephanie Saul, "University of Chicago Strikes Back Against Campus Political Correctness," *New York Times*, August 26, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/27/us/university-of-chicago-strikes-back-against-campus-political-correctness.html>; Scott Jaschik, "The Chicago Letter and Its Aftermath," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 29, 2016, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/29/u-chicago-letter-new-students-safe-spaces-sets-intense-debate>; and "Parsing the University of Chicago Letter," *The Atlantic*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/notes/all/2016/08/parsing-the-university-of-chicago-letter/498179/>.

⁵ Some samples of this position include: Kate Manne, "Why I Use Trigger Warnings," *New York Times*, Sept 19, 2015; Aaron Hanlon, "The Trigger Warning Myth," *The New Republic*, Aug 14, 2015; and Julie Winterich, "A Middle Ground on Trigger Warnings," *Inside Higher Ed*, Oct 9, 2015.

⁶ For example see Jennifer Medina, "Warning: Literary Canon Could Make Students Squirm," *New York Times*, May 17, 2014; and Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, "The Coddling of the American Mind," *The Atlantic*, September 2015.

expressed are harmful enough to thwart certain others from fully participating in the educational enterprise.

The debate thus far has largely come to be framed as a two-sided issue: one side for free expression, clashing with the other side for inclusive participation. Each priority is important. Freedom of speech is a deeply held and highly prized value. So is being included, equally and fairly. In the U.S. each has been hard won — socially, legally, electorally — over centuries, and our rights to enjoy free speech and equality serve as part of our society's bedrock. However, the way these values are applied within the campus debate makes them seem incompatible. One person's right to the free expression of belief conflicts with some other person's right to be included as an equal, each laying claim to a powerful and valid right. We come to an impasse. What are institutions of higher education to do in this debate? When the two values come into conflict, should one be chosen over the other? How can philosophical attention help clarify the issues and lead to new, effective responses?

Many in the debate certainly do perpetuate the set-up of inclusion *clashing against* free expression and assume that legal or rights-based approaches will yield an intervention that can resolve the stand-off. Between the two poles lies a handful of attempts to instead bridge the tension between free expression and diverse participation; surely, these projects suggest, campus expression and inclusion should be compatible. These works (in particular, books by John Palfrey, Michael Roth, and Sigal Ben-Porath) enrich the discourse around speech and inclusion, and they draw out the values, assumptions, and workings of higher education that make the ground so fraught.⁷ They make distinctions about different campus spaces and clarify what is

⁷ John Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017); Sigal Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017); Michael S. Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019); and Eamonn

claimed on each side of the debate, then try to resolve tensions and incompatibilities that persist between the two values of free expression and inclusion. Due to this aim, I call these compatibility projects, and while they take a range of approaches, Roth and Ben-Porath in particular make progress when they focus on the notion of inquiry.

In surveying this debate as it currently exists in the sphere of higher education, I notice that inquiry is in fact the core concern of each side's argument. Focusing on and framing the debate in terms of expression and inclusion obscures this fact. Thus, the first claim of this study is that issues of inclusion and free speech should not be the primary concern of the debate — what we face is an epistemological concern about inquiry. That is, in order to fully understand the campus debate, we must come to view it in epistemological terms. Epistemology offers a creative way into this thorny debate, and using the notion of inquiry becomes especially promising when we highlight its potential to play a synthesizing role between free expression and inclusion (the instinct of both Roth and Ben-Porath), rather than search for a trade-off or compromise between the two values. Roth and Ben-Porath's projects have value because of their identification of inquiry as a synthesizer and insofar as they hint at the epistemological work to be done. It is my view that their projects do not go far enough, because of their design and scope, but they point the way forward. This project begins where those projects end, extending philosophical study into the epistemological plane.

In this opening chapter, I introduce the current campus speech and inclusion debate and describe the conceptual landscape in which it exists, showing how key terms are discussed and how it has been framed as a contentious polemic. I review the subset of projects that resist the

Callan, "Education in Safe and Unsafe Spaces," *Philosophical Inquiry in Education* 24, no. 1 (2016).

polemic and work toward the compatibility of expression and inclusion. Then, with the participants of the debate all in view, I show that while each camp already trades in concepts like inquiry, truth, and knowledge, none fully assesses its underlying epistemological concepts, giving support to my claim that we need an epistemological analysis. In a brief overview of the coming chapters, their claims, and their design, I preview my claims that the unexamined epistemology currently operating in the debate has problems and that new epistemological underpinnings are needed in order to properly show inquiry's promise to reconcile the tensions of free expression and inclusion. Updated epistemological assumptions, drawn from social and feminist epistemology, lead to an updated model of inquiry that supports the synthesis of free expression and inclusion. Through its epistemological account, this project offers to higher education thinkers and practitioners not only new understanding about the campus debate, and about free expression and inclusion, but also new, needed understanding about inquiry itself and its place in the college classroom.

Finally, I have one quick comment to add on the ways I delimit the focus of this dissertation. The tension between liberties like free expression and rights like equal inclusion appears in so many areas of our society and life — even within our Constitution itself. This project does not take on the entirety of that tension. But higher education does offer one sphere of life in which the tension plays out in dramatic, concrete, and repeated ways. Any casual tracker of higher education news and events learns of new examples of the tension on a regular basis. Rather than attempt to cover arguments that span the spaces and practices of the entirety of the field of higher education, and the entirety of the speech and inclusion debate on campus, I focus this work on the level of the classroom. Other projects have shown that other important questions and theorizations emerge when speech and safety are examined in other spaces like the

quad, the dormitory, or the guest lecture.⁸ And even though these other campus spaces are arguably educational, classrooms have a distinct purpose regarding learning and inquiry. Because of my epistemological approach and my theorization of inquiry, focusing on the formal spaces of campus that expressly pursue inquiry is germane.

The Creation of the Current Polemic

In his book about campus speech debates, Michael Roth makes a waggish observation: when it comes to free speech, no one is against it.⁹ That is, no one positions themselves against the idea of self-expression; doing so would be anathema to most Americans, raised on the belief that the first of all rights is that of free speech. Free speech is described as not just good for democracy's function but as "*the* value on which all other democratic values depend,"¹⁰ values like independent thinking, the dissemination of information, and free assembly and association. Without such values society would impede liberty and fail to grow or innovate; instead we would find ourselves constantly battling against censorship or demands for conformity. Legal scholars Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman stage the issue of speech in just such terms, arguing that life as we know it would be at risk without the absolute protection of free expression. Everything we know and enjoy about scientific discovery and social progress is thanks to our

⁸ For discussions of other campus spaces see Joshua S. Press, "Teachers, Leave Those Kids Alone? On Free Speech and Shouting Fiery Epithets in a Crowded Dormitory," *Northwestern University Law Review* 102, no. 2 (2008); Morton Schapiro, "I'm Northwestern's President. Here's Why Safe Spaces for Students are Important," *Washington Post*, January 15, 2016; and Rebecca M. Taylor and Ashley F. Kuntz, "Navigating Campus Controversies: Seeking Truth, Respecting Speech, and Cultivating Intellectual Fairness in Higher Education," *Harvard Educational Review* 89, no. 1 (2019): 30–54.

⁹ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 86.

¹⁰ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 91.

predecessors' utterances and actions that challenged the status quo.¹¹ Starting in the fifteenth century with the invention of the printing press, Chemerinsky and Gillman trace powerful attempts to subsequently squelch thought, limit speech, and deter the distribution of ideas through edict, legislation, court opinion, and threat of violence. Only the insistence that expression be protected has warded off such attacks and let new ideas emerge. Totally free speech is fundamental to this progress, they claim, and "the alternative has always led to disaster."¹²

Supporters of this line of thinking about the power and importance of free expression apply it to the sphere of education by highlighting higher education's aim to conduct inquiry and seek truth. Chemerinsky and Gillman paint a picture of just such an endeavor, which is worth quoting at length:

...institutions of higher education might dedicate themselves to the creation of disciplined free thinkers who seek new knowledge and are willing to challenge received wisdom if that's where facts and reason take them. Such a community would value expert training and rigorous thinking, but it would also value curiosity, discovery, skepticism, and dissenting viewpoints. Ideas that seemed wrong would not be censored or shouted down but engaged and exposed through argumentation. People who advocated such ideas with rigor and expertise would not be ignored or denied a chance to be heard; rather, they would be permitted, and even encouraged, to challenge authorities with whom they disagreed.¹³

¹¹ Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), most of Chapter 2.

¹² Chemerinsky and Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus*, 23.

¹³ Chemerinsky and Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus*, 51.

In this ideal institution the greatest ideas can only come to light if anything — everything — is on the table. All ideas are heard, and they rise and fall based on how they fare in debate. The history and growth of the university (Chemerinsky and Gillman mainly trace U.S. higher education) show it to be an institution ever striving for “protection of the full range of beliefs” and a “culture of unfettered inquiry.”¹⁴

Chemerinsky and Gillman argue that key to ensuring this — that good ideas are confirmed and bad ideas are discredited — is plenty of ongoing debate, which means a glut of competitive expression. In this view, higher education operates as a “marketplace of ideas,” so just as “more competition in the economic marketplace makes it more likely that goods and services improve, so more competition in the ‘marketplace of ideas’ makes it more likely that better theories and practices are developed.”¹⁵ The cure for bad ideas, offensive beliefs, and untruths is good speech, and lots of it, to overtake the bad. Eventually the best and the true will emerge, stronger and having won support, so the best approach is *more* speech. Checks upon or the chilling of any speech in the market, then, is a form of regulation and diminishes this process. On campus, calls for inclusion are to be rejected because they diminish the university’s culture, the ability to dissent and debate, and the chance to argue or challenge. Rather than being engaged critically, views and expressions are limited in order to protect hearers from exclusion, and such regulation leads to clipped inquiry, anemic teaching, and weakened understanding. This is the logic operating in the case of the University of Chicago letter, leading Ellison to designate

¹⁴ Chemerinsky and Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus*, 57, 65.

¹⁵ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 92. Roth is describing a common argument of free speech supporters that goes back to poet John Milton (*Areopagitica*, 1644) and philosopher of liberty John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty*, 1859). The rationale was endorsed in U.S. free speech law after being invoked by Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes (1919) and William O. Douglas (1953). It is a common and oft-invoked rationale, and I am only summarizing it here oh so briefly.

commitments to free expression and free inquiry as part of the institution's "defining characteristics" and to categorically ban a set of practices (trigger warnings, disinviting speakers, creating safe spaces) that are accused of being stifling.

Critics of free speech absolutism often point to the slippery slope nature within this argument, noting that by its account, any questioning of an expression necessarily leads to censorship and the loss of liberty. That is, the argument that less than *total* commitment to free speech "indicates a dangerous slide toward authoritarian control of opinions or a retreat to comfort" is overstated.¹⁶ For their part, Chemerinsky and Gillman admit that they do "frame the fight for free thinking in higher education as a rather stark choice" between either total protection for all ideas or total orthodoxy. Yet they are firm in holding that "there is no middle ground."¹⁷ There seems to be no room for nuance, nothing valuable to consider within the calls for inclusion, and no reason to think twice about every expression receiving an audience.

Furthermore, other critics point out that absolute freedom of speech is not the reality within the academy. To insist that participants be able to say anything and everything in the absolute ways Chemerinsky and Gillman do is "at best insufficiently nuanced and at worst false," because academic work has inherent regulations and built-in checks.¹⁸ It is not free *expression* the university is after but free *inquiry*, which means that many limiting steps are put in place to ensure that values like relevance of speech, accuracy of speech, and merit of speech can rise. Roth shares this strain of criticism:

¹⁶ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 10.

¹⁷ Chemerinsky and Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus*, 62–63.

¹⁸ Stanley Fish, "Free Speech is Not an Academic Value," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 20, 2017.

Speech is never absolutely free; it always takes place for specific purposes and against a background of some expression that is limited or prohibited....And there are some things, after all, that a university typically refuses to legitimate or dignify by treating them as fit subjects for academic discussion.¹⁹

Specialized training and honorifics, peer review, conference program committees, tenure, competition for funding, and the like work to screen, vet, regulate — and ultimately support and promote — academic scholarship that meets the university’s purposes of inquiry and knowledge sharing. These processes, rules, means of legitimizing, and qualifications for entry exclude the possibility a rampant free-for-all. The university is not an open market that allows unfettered expression; it is actually one of the most exclusive and most regulated spaces *because of its* fidelity to inquiry.

So on campus, against the push to welcome all varieties of free speech is a demand that some lines be drawn against expression. Advocates of this camp worry that upholding absolute free expression — that “universities should be places for thinking the unthinkable and saying the unsayable”²⁰ — ultimately means allowing all of expression’s subsequent consequences as well. Insofar as some speech or expression is exclusionary, hostile, or untrue, it runs the risk of harming real members of the campus. And insofar as all participants on campus have the right to a non-hostile environment, these advocates argue, such expression should be disallowed. Calls for inclusion are about limiting these hostilities and harms. Concern about the harm that speech can do is not new, and it is not limited to the realm of higher education; legal and legislative debates to curtail hate speech have been common in most other Western democracies for

¹⁹ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 27.

²⁰ Tom Slater, “Introduction: Reinvigorating the Spirit of ’64,” in *Unsafe Spaces: The Crisis of Free Speech on Campus*, ed. Tom Slater (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

decades. The general stance is that harmful speech “defiles our public environment” and undermines the “sense of security in the space we all inhabit.”²¹

Essential to the campus regulation argument is this environmental claim: that the beliefs and expressions exhibited within an institution affect its climate and that the institution should play a role in ensuring these expressions are inclusive rather than exclusive.²² Inclusion has emerged as a clear aim in higher education. An initial, twentieth-century focus on diversity largely operated in terms of access, admissions, and numerical representation, and was often in reference to race and gender; increasing opportunities for, and increasing the amount of, racial minorities and women on campus was the goal. But “employing diversity simply to describe or change the composition of a community is inadequate ... close attention must be paid to the institutional context in which that diversity is enacted.”²³ The goal of a representational kind of diversity has evolved into the more substantive, functional goal of inclusion. Proponents of inclusion insist students should feel like they belong and should be able to express their authentic selves, participate fully, do their best work, and flourish within the institution.²⁴ For an institution there comes a point where:

²¹ Jeremy Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3–4.

²² Patricia Gurin, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin, “Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes,” *Harvard Educational Review* 72, no. 3 (2002): 330–366; Liliana M. Garces and Uma M. Jayakumar, “Dynamic Diversity: Toward a Contextual Understanding of Critical Mass,” *Educational Researcher* 43, No. 3 (2014); and Jose Marichal, “Diversity for What? The Paradox of University Diversity and the New Civic Rationale,” *Journal of Public Deliberation* 6, no. 2 (2010).

²³ Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony L. Antonio, “Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective,” (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2005).

²⁴ Susan Sturm, Timothy Eatman, John Saltmarch, and Adam Bush, “Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Community Engagement in Higher Education,” *Imagining America* Paper 17 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2011).

the educational values of creating a supportive, equitable learning environment are more powerful than the importance of supporting unfettered speech, even when one might do so in the public square. There is a point at which intolerance of the intolerant is not only acceptable but appropriate in a learning community.²⁵

For inclusionists, the educational ideals of the university as a place of learning outweigh its commitments to absolute speech.

Intentionally harmful expression like hate speech undercuts belonging and security, which seems to be precisely its point.²⁶ But inclusion advocates argue that equally problematic is expression that is unintentionally harmful, that demeans and thwarts others. Take for example a student who suggests that test scores would improve in low-income schools if the families therein cared about academics and their children more. Take a student who argues that healthcare workers should deny care to queer and trans* patients if their religious beliefs compel them. Or a student who points out that a victim of police brutality was, after all, suspected of illegal activity. These belief expressions put forth for debate the experience, identity, or worth of others — they question the dignity of others — yet they enjoy an audience, are given fair consideration, are debated, and are granted legitimacy. These students may not speak *in order to* harm others but their expressions nevertheless exclude and diminish, unsurprisingly along well-worn lines of social and historical dominance. Ensuring any and every expression has its moment is a burden that marginalized students by and large bear, for whom security, authenticity, participation, and flourishing seem beyond reach. Inclusionists insist that without regulation of the exclusionary

²⁵ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 18–19.

²⁶ Waldron, *The Harm in Hate Speech*, 3.

and harmful, certain students will not be — cannot be — safe enough to undertake the same, full educational experience.

To inclusionists' arguments expressionists counter: the freedoms of speech, expression, thought, and inquiry are all attacked by these calls for regulation. While some expressionists do support standing against overtly hateful, racist, or sexist remarks, they hold that “increased focus on microaggressions” and other subtler slights creates too much outrage “toward well-meaning speakers.”²⁷ They label any objections to their position as censorship, and reserve particular fury for campus guidelines and procedures known as “speech codes.” It is suggested that “codes dictating what may or may not be said, ‘free speech zones’ confining free speech to tiny areas of campus, and administrative attempts to punish or repress speech,” are not just common occurrences but a “continuous threat” to individuals on campus.²⁸ Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt suggest that the regulation movement

seeks to punish anyone who interferes with that aim, even accidentally. You might call this impulse “vindictive protectiveness.” It is creating a culture in which everyone must think twice before speaking up, lest they face charges of insensitivity, aggression, or worse.²⁹

This logic twists the call for regulation from being motivated by inclusiveness into perpetuating its own type of intolerance.

More commonly though, inclusion and the calls to regulate in its name are

²⁷ Lukianoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

²⁸ Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), “Mission,” *FIRE website*, <https://www.thefire.org/about-us/mission/>.

²⁹ Lukianoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

dismissed as fragile. Rather than concern over diversity of ideas and perspectives, the push for inclusion is painted as “largely about emotional well-being” and “protecting students from psychological harm.”³⁰ The entire inclusionist position is reduced to a belief that “classrooms should offer protection and comfort rather than an intellectually challenging education,” a belief that rests upon “the presumption that students need to be protected rather than challenged” and that students are “vulnerable victims rather than full participants in the intellectual process.”³¹ Inclusion, its opponents insist, amounts to an overprotectiveness that is “at once infantilizing and anti-intellectual.”³² In other words, critics frame regulation efforts as problematic in two ways: they stunt students’ character, and they diminish students’ intellect and learning. In the former, we see students labeled as weak, coddled, pathological; they cannot stomach unsafe or uncomfortable moments. In the latter we again hear whispers of that marketplace argument that less-than-fully-free expression weakens inquiry and undercuts competitive intellectual rigor. Coddling keeps the campus from being able to bear controversy or conduct tough debate.

The inclusion side contends there is nothing anti-intellectual about acknowledging emotionally driven or negative reactions to expression, and they see their pushes against the university’s status quo as ways to “meet the establishment defenders of ‘free speech’ with (their) own brand of ‘fearless speech.’”³³ Some of these “fearless” defenders get accused of “incivility.” And on and on it goes.

³⁰ Lukianoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

³¹ American Association of University Professors (AAUP), “On Trigger Warnings,” *AAUP Report*, August 2014.

³² AAUP, “On Trigger Warnings.”

³³ Hanlon, “The Trigger Warning Myth;” and Tav Nyong’o, “The Student Demand,” *Bully Bloggers*, November 17, 2015, <https://bullybloggers.wordpress.com/2015/11/17/the-student-demand/#comments>.

The heart of the issue — that “calls for inclusion (for feeling at home on a campus) are bumping up against calls for confronting the strangeness of texts, ideas, and practices very different from one’s own”³⁴ — has developed into a polemicized debate in which the values of expression and inclusion have become our only choices. The sides have become fixed and the choices have become stark. Free expressions entail rigor, honor, and strength — or, they are hateful and demeaning. Safety ensures dignity, belonging, and participation in inquiry — or, it enfeebles and infantilizes those who seek it. Both sides resort to quick generalizations. Name calling abounds. We are pressed into choosing one of these sides over the other rather than discovering a new, nuanced way to conceptualize the values and frame the terms of the debate.

Attempts at Compatibility

Between the two camps of the expressionists and the inclusionists lies plenty of middle ground that three thinkers — John Palfrey, Michael Roth, and Sigal Ben-Porath — all seek to make sense of. All three are pragmatists who address the debate in terms of its unfolding on campus, and all three rightfully identify the dichotomous set-up of inclusion against expression. Each makes an attempt to resolve the tension between the two sides. Palfrey’s project achieves a kind of parallel co-existence of expression and inclusion, but ultimately stops short of addressing the conceptual divide between the two values. Roth and Ben-Porath make more progress against the polemic by suggesting a mutuality or a synthesized relationship between expression and inclusion, and their use of the concept of inquiry to do this work proves to be especially effective. In reviewing these compatibility projects, I stake out the space in which this dissertation ultimately dwells.

³⁴ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 32–33.

John Palfrey declares from the outset of *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces* that “diversity and expression ought to co-exist ... (that) a false choice has been served up: you are either for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our communities or you are for free expression.”³⁵ Rather than support one choice over the other, he urges institutions to commit to both. In the final pages of his last chapter, Palfrey reveals that expression and inclusion are “not only compatible but interconnected,” but it is unclear what the nature of this interconnection is.³⁶ Both spring from and promote democratic principles, both lead to excellent educational outcomes, both cause individual students to flourish — these commonalities are enticingly described but nowhere is it explained why both must be simultaneously ensured.³⁷ Palfrey’s discussion offers a useful picture of each of these values but no argument about the conceptual relationship *between* them. Sometimes Palfrey commits to negotiating or titrating a balance between the two goals; other times he believes the two have overlapping commonalities that make them compatible. His treatment of these major terms of the issue is muddled and his claim about interconnection is not explained.

Palfrey’s vision of co-existence also includes distinctions about types of spaces on campus. Some spaces are dubbed safe spaces, which he distinguishes from other, brave spaces. Explaining safe spaces he states:

Most people benefit from some sort of safe space in their life.... This safe space is an environment in which one can “be oneself” in a manner different from the public-facing persona one assumes during the rest of the day ... in a manner that

³⁵ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 2–3.

³⁶ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 121.

³⁷ Palfrey discusses these similarities on and off through Chapter 7, p. 119–127.

feels materially different — safer — than in the classroom or in the town square.... Students need these environments to decompress and to explore ideas without fear or a sensation of risk.³⁸

It would seem that safe space is for retreat and respite, protection and shelter, and keeping the rest of the day/the rest of the world at bay. He also explains that within safe spaces, students can explore ideas and express themselves in a context with well-understood ground rules for the conversation...students find support, develop coping skills, and hone effective techniques for communicating with one another in a way that honors tolerance, avoids stereotypes, and cuts down on hate on campuses.³⁹

Alternately, campus can house various kinds of what Palfrey calls “brave space”:

By brave spaces, I refer to learning environments that approximate the world outside academic life....Brave spaces are those learning environments in which the primary purpose of the interaction is a search for the truth, rather than support for a particular group of students, even insofar as some of the discussions will be uncomfortable for certain students.⁴⁰

He continues:

The classroom is an obvious example; so, too, might be an amphitheater or a public quadrangle. Ideally, these brave spaces are environments where students are encouraged to engage in serious, respectful, and empathetic discourse as part of their education. Campuses at large need to remain places where students learn

³⁸ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 28–29.

³⁹ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 20–21.

⁴⁰ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 21.

to confront the uncomfortable and the unfamiliar and respond in ways that enable them to grow.⁴¹

Brave space is challenging, engaging — it is where the action of discourse and growth happens.

Palfrey explicitly labels classrooms as brave spaces, along with lecture halls, the public square, the campus quad. And while his description of safe space (students exploring ideas, expressing themselves, developing skills for communication) could fit any successful, supportive, and rigorous classroom, Palfrey instead means non-classroom space. The distinction between the two types is ultimately not clear.⁴² Exploration of ideas happens in both spaces, as does exchange and communication. Both spaces are marked with respect and tolerance. Something about truth-seeking makes it brave, whereas something about support-seeking is safe; discomfort obtains in brave space, but safe space allays fear and risk. Regardless of the specific lines Palfrey imagines between safe and brave spaces, key to his model is that institutions offer both experiences to students. He sees them as compatible, emphasizing that supporting safe space “is in no way to turn one’s back on brave spaces in academic communities”⁴³ and claiming it is educationally and developmentally necessary that students benefit from a combination of the two. Students end up with secure support and unfettered expression because they can toggle between safe spaces and brave spaces across campus; the spaces exist in parallel.

This set-up keeps Palfrey’s project from getting to the heart of the speech and inclusion debate. His suggestion that universities pursue free expression and inclusion “together” or “in

⁴¹ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 30.

⁴² At one point, Palfrey does suggest that “some spaces might also serve as a blend of the two ideas” and implores the creation of “environments in which students are at once challenged and supported in their learning” (p. 21–22). But he proceeds in the next chapter’s discussion to again delineate safe and brave, and to urge educators to provide students with both options in parallel.

⁴³ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 31.

concert”⁴⁴ fails to tell us about the relationship *between* the values, let alone explore how messy and conflicted that togetherness can get. And his central move, positing safe spaces and brave spaces, does not adequately bridge the conceptual expression-inclusion divide. As readers we are left with a picture of campus containing values that, just like the spaces Palfrey theorizes, technically co-exist alongside each other, in parallel, but are in no way synthesized or conceptualized as in relationship with each other across the impasse.

Roth’s Safe Enough Spaces

We get a different account from Michael Roth, whose model relies on notions of mutuality and what it means to engage in inquiry. After drawing on from-the-headlines campus events to describe the ways expression and inclusion seem to be at odds, he assures us how reasonable it is to expect that “for educational institutions, the desire for diversity and the desire for free speech would be compatible.” Having diverse students, he goes on, can be beneficial “only when those students express the import of (their) differences.”⁴⁵ Roth, quoting a Harvard inclusion task force’s report, clearly “reject(s) the notion that there is a necessary conflict between the value of this freedom (free inquiry and expression) and the desire to cultivate the value of inclusion — claiming instead that these values ‘provide each other with synergistic and mutual reinforcement.’”⁴⁶ Roth sees a relationship of mutual interest, especially in educational contexts.

In the first chapter Roth rehearses admissions arguments in favor of diversifying incoming classes and the benefits gleaned by students in diverse settings: creativity, opportunity,

⁴⁴ Palfrey, *Safe Spaces, Brave Spaces*, 61–62.

⁴⁵ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 86.

⁴⁶ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 40.

innovation, educational outcomes. But these benefits obtain for those “who are adept at creative participation” — those who can join in, who can express themselves.⁴⁷ As Roth sees it, diversity is only good to the degree that it is expressed, and expression becomes educationally valuable when it is varied. In other words, inclusion is not complete until those included are really participating; inquiry and expression are not really free until everyone is free to do inquire and express.

Roth describes his campus vision in terms of heterodoxy, citing it as a founding value for all educational communities. A campus needs “viewpoint diversity” to ensure that the inquiry therein avoids ideology, orthodoxy, and echo chamber myopia. Diversity is worth ensuring in and of itself, but even more so it is valuable to the extent that it serves an educational purpose. At work here, but not clearly articulated, is Roth’s assumption about the nature of learning: that difference and newness are what teach us and lead us toward growth. Some kind of other — other fact, other idea, other perspective, other testimony — must be offered for learning to be fully educational.

To stop here might have Roth sound like the marketplace of ideas advocates profiled above. Instead he declares that “the free market approach to speech is not the solution.” Roth challenges absolute speech in two ways.⁴⁸ First he reminds us of the objection that “regulated speech is part and parcel of the academic enterprise” and that academia places “a number of filters on free speech.”⁴⁹ Unfettered expression — including the expression of wrong ideas, championed by Chemerinsky and Gillman — is simply not the reality of university inquiry. If the

⁴⁷ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 17.

⁴⁸ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 113.

⁴⁹ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 98. Here Roth follows the arguments of Stanley Fish in “Free Speech is Not an Academic Value.”

academy is a market at all, it is an exclusive, vetted, and regulated one. Also, that only some ideas ultimately make it to the market leads Roth to highlight the problems of power and positionality that free speech suffers. In the argument for absolute expression, important details about who can speak, how easily and often, and in which modes, is lost or ignored in the name of “having one set of procedures for all people (or organizations) no matter what the context.”⁵⁰ Rather than a principled, neutral, procedural equalizer, unfetteredness operates as a cover for privilege and a protector of existing power. When all ideas receive audience and consideration — that is, when expression of all ideas is welcomed, no matter how repugnant or how poorly argued — the subsequent hearing of and the taking in of such ideas is unavoidable. Hearing those expressions follows along the lines of existing power as well; the burden of tolerating bad ideas and harmful, offensive expressions falls disproportionately on those groups that are socially, politically, and historically marginalized by them, again and again.

These reasons lead Roth to support a particular version of speech, one that warrants support because it is academic, carefully contextualized, inquiry-driven, and has intent or purpose that is educational. There are conditions on speech. And diverse participants are important to Roth’s vision, so long as they translate their sense of belonging and inclusion into material participation and expression. So in this formulation, inclusion has some conditions as well. Considering this, Roth’s compatibility looks less like a “both-and” relationship, that is, a straightforward call that universities simply ensure *both* total expression *and* total inclusion. The relationship is instead a “yes-but” situation: yes, free expression but in *this* form that includes, and yes, diverse inclusion but with *that* responsibility to express. Roth shows within each of

⁵⁰ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 91.

these reworked concepts a need for the other concept, an interdependency that emerges to bind the concepts together when learning and inquiry are on the line.

Roth's notion of heterodoxy helps him imagine a way that expression and inclusion can both exist in campus life. He offers a picture of a community:

in which members have to navigate difference — and racial and ethnic differences are certainly parts of the mix. All the students we admit have intellectual capacity, but we also want them to have different sorts of capacities. Their interests, modes of learning, and perspectives on the world should be sufficiently different from one another so as to promote active learning in and outside the classroom.⁵¹

This environment of intellectual diversity,

gives students opportunities for debate and not just sharing. Through engagement with difference — including intellectual difference — students will find their own views tested ... (and) learn that to be open to a way of thinking quite different from one's own is a challenge and a pleasure.⁵²

Elements of trust, curiosity, and humility are present. Learning from both faculty and peers, “listening seriously to others,” and working to understand the reasoning behind their beliefs mark Roth's heterodox learning spaces. He uses the final fourteen pages of the book to describe this scene, to share anecdotes from his own teaching and administration, and confess the ways he is still learning to enact in the very project he envisions.⁵³

⁵¹ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 18.

⁵² Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 110.

⁵³ The final sections are committed to Roth's discussion on participating in a heterodox academy. Of particular interest to him is ensuring that traditional and religious voices be included — he calls on universities to proactively undertake “affirmative action” for conservative thinkers and ideas. See p. 111–125.

Yet this picture of inquiry has challenges. Roth understands that undertaking such inquiry, even in a committed heterodox environment, will get difficult. He explains that he wants, “students to feel that they can bring their whole selves to class and be respected when they do so,” but recognizes, “when this happens, they will often have emotionally intense reactions.”⁵⁴ In another chapter he admits, “Clearly, there will be some points of tension between helping students stay true to their authentic selves, or their original communities, and teaching our best ideas about what is true.”⁵⁵ What Roth first identifies is a kind of tension that arises via the process, a tension within students and participants themselves, about the experience of this inquiry.

A second kind of tension will arise as well. Roth explains:

Learning from one another across differences is not just transactional — it also depends on building ongoing relationships that foster belonging and inclusion — relationships that sustain community. Supporting those ideas while pursuing the contentious, sometimes antagonistic path of free inquiry is the challenge facing many colleges and universities today. It is the challenge of recognizing and respecting different forms of diversity and using them for their educational benefits. We both want the benefits of antagonism and need the benefits of cooperation.⁵⁶

This is an environmental kind of tension, an issue having to do with the project itself. Roth identifies an issue internal to the concept of inquiry, especially the diverse, heterodox, challenging-yet-relating version he is advocating. Roth’s learners attempt to do two things at

⁵⁴ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 105.

⁵⁵ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 41.

⁵⁶ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 42.

once — two things that, as we know from above, need each other to function, but at the same time veer toward thwarting each other, too.

To deal with these tensions Roth invokes the idea of the “safe enough” space; classrooms and learning spaces need to be safe enough for inquiry and growth to take place. Students feel secure and respected enough to participate in the expressive ways outlined above, to express their beliefs, and to be unfrightened — again, key traits for Roth’s heterodox dream. But students also, simultaneously, feel secure enough to abandon their held beliefs and consider new, challenging, or difficult ideas. He imagines “students (and often the teacher) feel they can change their minds and experiment with ideas without having to betray who they are.”⁵⁷ Roth does not offer any further conceptual examination of safety itself other than a vague truism: “Clearly, for different people at different times, safety will mean different things.”⁵⁸ Roth leaves unmentioned and unqueried what sorts of pedagogical commitments instructors might make to help students feel safe enough, as well as what students themselves would have to commit to in a safe enough classroom.

The problems that can arise in heterodox and safe enough spaces get too little attention from Roth and warrant more careful attention. He admits that there will be tensions, and he recognizes that “some classroom situations are more tense than others, of course,”⁵⁹ but he otherwise skates through his responses to these tensions. For example, Roth never raises the possibility that feeling safe enough might lead some students to express offensive, harmful, or hateful ideas because they feel secure that they will suffer no reprisal. Elsewhere, he rightly mentions the ways in which students’ personal values and identities are enmeshed with their

⁵⁷ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 106.

⁵⁸ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 101.

⁵⁹ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 105.

thinking and wonders whether, in such cases, critique can feel like harm, or existential threat. No doubt existential threat makes full, expressive classroom participation and rich inquiry impossible. Besides a quick tip that we try to distinguish between ideas and the people who hold them, Roth does not engage this thick problem, which seems like a very real block to heterodox community.⁶⁰ Furthermore, he treats these tensions mainly as personal, individual difficulties that students must muscle through or learn to deal with rather than analyze the deeper epistemological structures that may lie beneath.

Ben-Porath's Free Speech on Campus

Sigal Ben-Porath's book *Free Speech on Campus* traces the same landscape as Roth and Palfrey and similarly concludes that the presumed tension between extreme versions of free expression and protecting vulnerable participants is not necessarily inevitable. What is needed, she claims, is less polarization, more accuracy, and more nuanced charitable readings of each side of the debate.⁶¹ Ben-Porath elaborates a framework best suited for promoting both speech and inclusion. To this end, institutions must adopt a commitment to what she calls "inclusive freedom," that is,

an approach to free speech on campus that takes into account the necessity of protecting free speech in order to protect democracy and the pursuit of knowledge while recognizing the equal necessity of making sure that all are included in the ensuing conversation.⁶²

⁶⁰ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 105–106.

⁶¹ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 12, 31, 42.

⁶² Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 12.

Here, speech and inclusion are tied together, playing interdependent roles in the process of inquiry. Later, Ben-Porath expands:

An inclusive freedom framework for speech on campus takes seriously the importance of a free and open exchange as a necessary condition for the pursuit of knowledge and as a contributing condition to the development of civic and democratic capacities. It lends similar weight to the related demand that all members of the campus community be able to participate in this free and open exchange if it is to accomplish the goals of free inquiry, open-minded research, and equal access to learning and civic development. A call for creating an inclusive environment in which all members are respected and where all voices can be heard should be framed and recognized as furthering rather than impeding the realization of a free and open campus.⁶³

Quite clearly expression and inclusion are of equal weight, and both must be ensured if the inquiry undertaken intends to claim any level of freedom or quality. Ben-Porath underscores the importance of inclusion. For her, neglecting the full participation of every member is a hindrance to inquiry and to the institution. She explains, “when many on campus are effectively silenced, inquiry is in fact neither free nor open-minded ... impoverishing the conversation and hindering the search for truth and knowledge.” If the conditions and practices of an institution effectively shut down and shut out participants, then the institution commits “a failure to consider new and important forms of experience and knowledge” and retains “a blind side in the search for

⁶³ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 37.

knowledge.”⁶⁴ A university that does not fully include is not fulfilling its mission of learning through inquiry.

Ben-Porath also discusses safe space. In a swift four pages, she manages to summarize the debate, discern valid ways to call for safety from one invalid way, and chasten those who dismiss safe spaces wholesale. It is not that advocates are demanding “intellectual and social apathy” when they call for safe space (the kind of call *not* garnering support from Ben-Porath). Instead what many are demanding is that,

students who belong to historically and currently marginalize groups — such as LGBT+ students, African Americans, women, immigrants, and religious minorities — be protected from structural, intentional and casual forms of oppression.⁶⁵

In other words, students are “looking for a space where their voices can be heard and their identities or visions properly represented, affirmed, and expressed.”⁶⁶ Overly sensitive requests for protection and retreat these are not — dismissing such calls as weak and narrow, as critics of inclusion often do, is in fact itself a weak and narrow response. Ben-Porath sees these demands instead as an embodiment of her inclusive freedom framework. Calls for safe space are “rightly demanding not just that free speech is extended as a matter of formality...but that it is provided effectively and practically as a matter of campus culture.”⁶⁷

The move here, halfway through the book, hints that Ben-Porath can shift the discussion of safe space beyond the usual legal and regulatory frameworks. As she puts it, at the end of

⁶⁴ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 45.

⁶⁵ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 52.

⁶⁶ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 52.

⁶⁷ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 56.

Chapter 1, she wishes to promote “a more nuanced, responsive, and relational approach (which) can often accomplish what a hundred regulations cannot”⁶⁸ and then hints at moving away from merely formal modes of inclusion. Excluded students should instead be *substantively and in practice* included in participation within the culture and in the very practice of the institution.

Unfortunately, Ben-Porath does not deliver much of this proposed shift to relational responses. She advocates for an expanded understanding of the harm students experience, drawing on Jeremy Waldron’s ideas about the impacts of speech on environments and communities. She argues that students’ dignity be protected from such harms, which is defended by Eamonn Callan elsewhere.⁶⁹ Ben-Porath also recognizes that institutions must draw lines about what is unacceptable and respond whenever those lines are crossed. But when it comes to what an institution’s responses might be, she writes that campuses should “(develop) ways to address them other than those (Waldron) suggests,” that campuses need “an expanded set of tools to respond to harms,” and that campuses base the principles of their responses on “democratic principles” and their “commitment to inclusive freedom.”⁷⁰ Clearly tools and principles are needed, but all Ben-Porath says about them is that they are rooted in commitments to democracy and to her framework of inclusive freedom. Even more than Roth, she describes the harms that students experience in complex and nuanced ways, arguing that institutions need to do the work to ensure each student enjoys full, substantive participation. But what might that substantive participation look like? And what is ultimately different (non-legal and non-regulatory), and responsive and relational, about Ben-Porath’s approach? I suggest that we can

⁶⁸ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 28.

⁶⁹ Callan, "Education in Safe and Unsafe Spaces."

⁷⁰ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 60, 68, 72, 76.

answer these open questions, and gain a better understanding of her suggestions and their import, if we further engage her emphasis on inquiry.

Recasting in Terms of Inquiry and Epistemology

The notion of inquiry and the appeal to truth-seeking (sometimes called inquiry by participants, sometimes called learning) appear everywhere in this debate. All participants and all sides cast this as their main concern — the stakes are high for us to get inquiry right because the very purpose of higher education is on the line. Expression and inclusion, as important as they might be as concepts or as values, are in the end secondary to the project of inquiry; they are central to this debate insofar as they will help deliver the ultimate goals: inquiry, knowledge, truth, understanding. Strikingly, none of the approaches thus far casts itself as being fundamentally epistemological, despite each trading in concepts like inquiry and relying on epistemological concepts like truth or knowledge.

Expressionists maintain that elevating freedom of expression over everything is the way to maintain free thought and conduct free inquiry. Any restriction, regulation, or chilling of speech lessens both the amount and the quality of ideas brought to bear; it is dubbed “repression of thought” and is cast as a foe to education itself.⁷¹ But speech, and even the liberty that propels that speech, are not the real priorities of this camp — it is thinking and ideas that in fact reign supreme. Expression matters because it is an act of inquiry. Inclusionists, while they are rivals who disagree about the means, share with expressionists central aims regarding inquiry, learning,

⁷¹ Here I have in mind a quote from Robert Maynard Hutchins in 1949, which is prominently displayed by the University of Chicago on their “Free Expression” web page. University of Chicago, *Free Expression website*, <https://freeexpression.uchicago.edu/foundational-principles/>. University President Robert Zimmer also penned an op-ed calling free speech the basis of true education. Robert J. Zimmer, “Free Speech is the Basis of a True Education,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 26, 2016.

and understanding. Their concern about the perpetuation of any and all expression is concern about bad ideas infiltrating inquiry; their calls to be not excluded and not diminished are calls to increase and to improve participation in it. Inquiry is better, they insist, when the participating *people* are not lessened in amount or quality.

Compatibility approaches maintain that both expression and inclusion must be developed in order to achieve inquiry goals. One value cannot be preferenced over the other; commitment to both is necessary. Some approach co-existence like Palfrey and search for ways to toggle between or find a balance between the two sides, making a case for their compatibility. Others rightfully push past mere compatibility and explore the mutuality of expression and inclusion. Roth's description of the mutual relationship between expression and inclusion is a clear contribution; that both values need to be enacted within the context of learning comes through clearly. But Roth goes no further to detail why and how the two (expression and inclusion) have a mutual purpose, and he does not use existing epistemological concepts to explain and support this relationship. Granted this is not what Roth's project is — his is a more popular overall survey of the campus debate and is intended for a broader general audience — but it does reveal the need for further philosophical work around these fundamental terms of the debate. Like Roth, Ben-Porath bases the relationship of expression and inclusion upon the undertaking of inquiry. The same kind of mutuality and dual commitment that Roth sketched in *Safe Enough Spaces* gets repeated by Ben-Porath in *Free Speech on Campus*. Again, however, there is not a clear examination of this relationship in epistemological terms. Ben-Porath asks us to acknowledge inquiry, open pursuit, and exchange as the purposes of the *democratic* university, and thus, to count expression and inclusion as crucial markers of an institution's *civic* identity. This is not to say Ben-Porath's is a bad approach; it is effective and compelling. But an epistemological

analysis would offer an explanation of how expression and inclusion are necessarily intertwined and synthesized via inquiry. In both of these projects, calling on the notion of inquiry goes directly toward the main concern of the debate and gets us thinking on the right track. But these projects have left epistemological analysis undone — the epistemological roots have not been drawn out, named, and explained well enough. It is not a question of error or neglect but rather the natural limits of the scope and design of their respective projects. My project picks up where they leave off, extending into epistemological examination.

There is precedent for taking an epistemological approach when facing questions of speech and expression. Regarding free speech generally, legal scholar Vincent Blasi proposes that three basic categories exist for engaging the issue: (1) in terms of liberty/autonomy, (2) in terms of seeking truth, and (3) in terms of civic education and participation. Blasi explains:

First, the liberty to express one's thoughts and to form them by unrestricted reading and listening is an essential attribute, it is said, of human autonomy — of what it means to be a self-directed person possessed of human dignity. Second, free speech is the foundational mechanism of the search for truth, at both the individual and the societal levels. In this regard, a free marketplace of ideas produces a better, more nuanced and richly textured understanding of life than can any prescribed orthodoxy. Third, for a society committed to the project of self-government, in which ultimate political responsibility rests with the mass of ordinary citizens, free speech is invaluable as a means of civic education and participation.⁷²

⁷² Vincent Blasi, “Free Speech and Good Character,” *UCLA Law Review* 46 (1999): 1569–1570. Blasi also goes on to introduce a fourth rationale in which expressive liberty leads to the development of good individual character, that is, traits that are socially and politically valuable.

Blasi notes that the three can blur at times, with some arguments melding multiple rationales. In the sphere of higher education though, truth-seeking emerges as the predominant rationale. Expressionists, like Chemerinsky and Gillman for example, seem to be tapping the first (1) when they use terms like “liberty” in their defense and frame the freedom they seek as a counter against autocracy, but notice that in their claims, liberty is always in service to truth and knowledge (2). Unfetteredness is not in itself important but “unfettered inquiry” is; agents are not merely free for freedom’s sake, they are “free thinkers.”⁷³ Palfrey’s muddled argument about various campus spaces and their various purposes and conditions has to do with learning, in the end, which puts him in the truth category (2). Roth, however, directly and repeatedly appeals to ideas like inquiry and the “active learning” of students in his project, putting him too in the truth-seeking camp (2).⁷⁴ In making her case, Ben-Porath could not be clearer; she advocates for her version of inclusive freedom “in order to protect democracy and the pursuit of knowledge” and to “accomplish the goals of free inquiry, open-minded research, and equal access to learning and civic development.”⁷⁵ Her appeals are to both truth-seeking (2) and civic participation (3).

The campus debate has developed among political philosophers, democratic theorists, legal scholars, even psychologists — but epistemologists have not fully entered. So the value of this project is its utilization of a distinct philosophical approach not yet applied to this issue, in particular that of social and feminist epistemologists. Again, the other approaches of the debate (political philosophical approaches, legal approaches) do offer insights and complex analysis of higher education, the social and political contexts of the issue, and the strategies available to institutions and practitioners, but they leave open the fundamental epistemological questions that

⁷³ Chemerinsky and Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus*, 51, 65.

⁷⁴ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 18.

⁷⁵ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 12, 37.

emerge along the way. Answering these epistemological questions ultimately leads us to better understanding of several things: the campus debate in general, the major terms of the debate, and our understanding of inquiry itself.

Organization of the Project

Many types of study would benefit our understanding of the debate over campus speech and inclusion. Ethnographic reports of college classrooms in action, surveys of students' beliefs, interviews about instructors' experiences, or tracing historical usage of the safe space moniker: these modes could do so much to describe elements of the current debate, its conditions, and its enactments. What philosophical examination adds is crucial foundation-laying for these other types of study; it offers terminology, concepts, and analytical tools to use in understanding their data and phenomena. Philosophy is a *process* that helps illuminate the problem with which we are concerned, helps reveal its questions, and helps orient us to possible paths of response, thus pointing toward ways to design research and to study the problem.⁷⁶ This dissertation attempts the philosophical process of reconsidering and reorienting us to the problems of, and the questions within, the campus debate about expression and inclusion. It finds another way to conceptualize the issue by examining the epistemological ideas that undergird it, concepts thus far under-engaged and in need of attention. Therefore, this project is normative in nature, insofar as it suggests we should engage *these* particular questions and terms to guide our thinking. And while it is a theoretical work — not a policy recommendation or an actionable recipe book for practitioners — my discussion offers concepts and ways of thinking that one could refer to when

⁷⁶ Excellent discussions of philosophy's place in educational research can be found in Amanda Fulford and Naomi Hodgson., Eds., *Philosophy and Theory in Educational Research: Writing in the Margin* (New York: Routledge, 2016), especially Chapters 1–3.

grappling with the debate on the ground, in real time. My hope is that the project is accessible and interesting to philosophers and practitioners alike, prompting them to reflect and to consider the practices they engage in their respective spheres.

Throughout this introductory chapter I have aimed to describe the polemical nature of the campus debate and to prove that no participant has yet taken an epistemological approach. In the coming chapters I aim to prove the progress we can make in resolving the debate through use of epistemological theorization. Chapter 2 undertakes the task of examining the lay of the land, epistemologically. It examines the current epistemology already operating in the debate, an epistemology that relies on particular epistemological assumptions and commitments. Specifically, each camp in the campus debate (expressionists, inclusionists, and compatibilists alike) shares a reliance on the marketplace of ideas framework. After describing this framework and its attendant assumptions about competition, debate, and reasoning, I argue that it proves to be ineffective at doing the epistemological work its adherents believe it does.

With these weaknesses on display, Chapter 3 then picks up the argumentative burden and proposes alternate epistemological commitments that can support an alternate model of inquiry. I turn primarily to social and feminist epistemology, and concepts of situated knowing and shared justification, to ground a more collaborative model of inquiry, a type of inquiry with the power to effectively synthesize free expression and inclusion. I aim to convince you, too, that this model's inclusion of multiple perspectives and a collaborative justificatory process leads to more demanding, more accurate, and more integrated inquiry, making it an appealing model of inquiry in the college classroom to boot. A fictional classroom case helps bring my discussion of theory to life, illustrating each of the epistemological concepts I invoke along the way. In Chapter 4, I take the epistemological commitments and model of shared inquiry just established and place

them in context in the college classroom. I theorize the commitments and the practices of such a class, using insights from the community of inquiry tradition. Work in intergroup dialogue, both its conceptual underpinnings and its pedagogical moves, is apt here too, as it illustrates many of the conditions and practices of shared inquiry. Chapter 5 offers summary of the intervening chapters and claims, and it tracks where the shared inquiry model ultimately lands us, back in the campus debate. I acknowledge the limitations of my approach, as well as the loose ends and open questions that remain. Some issues from the project prove to be complex and pernicious but do point the way toward future possibilities for fuller study.

CHAPTER 2

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE CURRENT DEBATE

The ways in which the debate about speech and inclusion on campus has come to be framed as a two-sided issue — one side for free open expression, clashing with the other side for equal inclusion — suggests that the two values harbor incompatibilities. The promotion of any and all expression seems to lead to harm, exclusion, and the thwarted participation of certain members; yet regulating in the name of inclusion seems to check, chill, and thwart others. No headway is made when the two values sit starkly opposed. In response we have seen, in Chapter 1's introduction, that some scholarship attempts to resolve this dichotomy and suggest that both values are compatible (in particular, work by Michael Roth and Sigal Ben-Porath). These attempts seek to reconcile the tension between free expression and including diverse participants; surely, they suggest, there can be a relationship of mutuality or uniting synthesis between the two.

As Chapter 1 claimed, epistemology offers a way into this thorny debate, but others' projects have not done epistemological analysis — the epistemological assumptions that serve as the foundation of their arguments are not named and explained well enough in the course of the current debate. All camps (the proponents of free expression, the compatibilists, and most inclusionists) invoke the notion of inquiry in their arguments and use concepts like truth and knowledge, but they stop short in undertaking a deep and nuanced examination of those epistemological concepts. In this chapter I begin by clarifying the epistemology that is currently operating in the debate, showing that the existing camps in fact all share an epistemology. Within each position lies a reliance on the marketplace of ideas metaphor and assumptions about

competition and how it relates to inquiry, truth, and knowing. This epistemology also leans on assumptions about the role of debate and the primacy of reasoning in the processes of inquiry and learning. I trace the epistemological implications of these assumptions and reveal that they ultimately do not do the epistemological work their adherents believe they do, especially in settling the expression and inclusion debate.

Within the debate about inclusion and speech, *epistemological* problems are playing out. We must understand the importance of the epistemological plane here, and the current epistemology that is operating, both its assertions and its limitations. And in light of the significant limitations we see, I suggest a different starting point entirely: a collaborative rather than competitive epistemology. This is a move signaled by a certain version of the inclusionist argument. Social and feminist epistemology are fruitful in their offers of alternate ways of getting to truth and knowledge, and thus alternate visions of how to conduct inquiry and how the two values of free expression and inclusion work in concert.⁷⁷ Perhaps what can break us out of the seeming incommensurability of the debate is a different framework, and a different operating epistemology.

Commitment to the Marketplace of Ideas

Free speech has a long history of thinkers making its case and ensuring its enactment. I do not plan a complete review of that history here but do aim to outline the heart of its argument: that free speech is the first of all rights and all other democratic goods (independent thought, assembly, activism) stem from it. Without protection of free expression, its advocates fear we

⁷⁷ The discussion in this chapter and in the next chapter will focus on theorizing the conceptual synthesis of the two values. I will not yet address enactment, or the *practical* synthesis of the two — that will be the work of Chapter 4.

would constantly face censorship and control. In the previous chapter, I showed the quick, stark terms in which legal scholars Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman rehearse this argument, as well as their threat that life as we know it will be at risk without the absolute protection of free expression.⁷⁸ All scientific discovery and social progress, they claim, has been achieved by speech and thought that challenged the status quo, despite the long history of violence and legislation meant to suppress just such expression.

This is the common argument of free speech supporters, which goes back to poet John Milton's *Areopagitica* in 1644 and political philosopher John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, from 1859, and its rationale is embedded in U.S. free speech law thanks to invocations by Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes (*Abrams v. United States*, 1919) and William O. Douglas (*United States v. Rumely*, 1953). Ensuring all opinions are aired, regardless of their value or error, ensures we do not mistakenly suppress even a wisp of truth within them and that we “give the truth a chance to reach us;” ensuring all positions are “vigorously and earnestly contested” allows our acceptance of them to be grounded and explainable rather than just dogmatically believed.⁷⁹ It is better, then, that our beliefs be reached through “free trade in ideas,” confirmed through competition, and accepted after bidding for “the minds of men in the market place of ideas.”⁸⁰ Key to ensuring this process — that good ideas are confirmed and bad ideas are discredited — is plenty of ongoing debate and inquiry, which means a glut of competitive expression and a commitment to a “marketplace of ideas.” Just as “more competition in the economic marketplace makes it more likely that goods and services improve, so more competition in the ‘marketplace

⁷⁸ Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman, *Free Speech on Campus* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), most of Chapter 2.

⁷⁹ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 118.

⁸⁰ Oliver Wendell Holmes, dissent in *Abrams v. United States*, (1919); and William O. Douglas, concurring opinion in *United States v. Rumely*, (1953).

of ideas’ makes it more likely that better theories and practices are developed.”⁸¹ The cure for bad ideas, offensive beliefs, and untruths is good speech, and lots of it, to overtake the bad. Principles of free trade are applied to thinking, so eventually the best and the true will emerge.

When it comes to the sphere of education, advocates tie free expression to higher education’s purposes of conducting inquiry and seeking truth. Expressing thoughts and beliefs becomes the central act of thinking. Remember the picture Chemerinsky and Gillman offer of the ideal higher education institution:

institutions of higher education might dedicate themselves to the creation of disciplined free thinkers who seek new knowledge and are willing to challenge received wisdom if that’s where facts and reason take them. Such a community would value expert training and rigorous thinking, but it would also value curiosity, discovery, skepticism, and dissenting viewpoints. Ideas that seemed wrong would not be censored or shouted down but engaged and exposed through argumentation. People who advocated such ideas with rigor and expertise would not be ignored or denied a chance to be heard; rather, they would be permitted, and even encouraged, to challenge authorities with whom they disagreed.⁸²

It is unfettered free inquiry that drives the university community and its endeavors, and ideas can only come to light when anything and everything is expressible. All ideas are heard, and they are tested, refined, and confirmed (or they are weakened, discredited, and tossed out) through the process of debate. More competition, more ideas, more speech — flooding the market with more is believed to accelerate the quality and the rigor of the thinking.

⁸¹ Michael Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 92.

⁸² Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 51.

Whole institutions cloak themselves in this ideal and proudly promote their adherence to operating as a market or a public square. For example, in addition to their letter to incoming students in 2016 proclaiming total commitment to freedom of expression, the University of Chicago runs a “Free Expression” initiative that includes programming and special events, a website, and proprietary videos and media to make clear that free expression is a “core value” of the university.⁸³ (No other core values are identified or listed anywhere by the university.) This sort of “free, robust, and uninhibited debate” is the “basis of a true education,” the home page exclaims. In another recent example, a call for applications for a postgraduate philosophy workshop introduces a central focus of the sessions: examining worries that campus operates limitedly “rather than (as) a lively marketplace of ideas.”⁸⁴ And during a recent episode of The New York Times’s *Sway* podcast, host Kara Swisher and guest Carmen Twillie Ambar, president of Oberlin College, discuss the Covid pandemic’s effects on the college, then veer into discussion of diversity, inclusion, and student expression. Ambar describes hopes that students can develop skills to communicate across radical differences, which Swisher probes.

Swisher: “I would love to know, as a college president ... how do you, because you want to encourage activism, you want to encourage disagreement, really, um...”

Ambar: “Discourse, right?”

Swisher: “Discourse, yeah.”

Ambar: “Public square!”

⁸³ The University of Chicago, *Free Expression* website, <https://freeexpression.uchicago.edu>.

⁸⁴ Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB), *PESGB Postgraduate Summer School (Online) Call for Applicants*, email news release, February 2, 2021.

Swisher: “Yes, public square!”⁸⁵

Through the crosstalk they reach a moment of shared elation. They find this term of agreement — in their eyes an obvious truth about campus in the midst of issues they admit are otherwise complex. These few, recent examples are far from anecdotal. The belief that campus is, or that higher education should serve as, an open-exchange marketplace of ideas is such a pervasive assumption it is hardly probed.

Marketplace rationale holds that checks upon *any* speech in the market are forms of regulation that diminish the process. Expressions and ideas that are meant to be engaged and tested are limited by these checks, and sometimes are even withheld, in order to protect certain participants. Marketplace proponents, turning this logic toward campus, thus insist that calls for inclusion do not actually include or support those certain participants, but rather they clip free inquiry. The calls should be rejected — they diminish the university’s culture, the ability to dissent and debate, and the chance to argue and challenge rigorously.

The marketplace of ideas seems like an appealing solution here. It seems to call for both expression *and* inclusion: expression is centrally important and frequent, while multiple perspectives help the process of competition to churn. Weight is given to each of the forces. This is the stance, advocates claim, that obviously honors and balances both of the key values.

This description sounds familiar because it is also that offered by the compatibilist camp and the likes of Michael Roth and Sigal Ben-Porath in particular. Recall that Roth relies on concepts like inquiry to describe a mutual compatibility. He “reject(s) the notion that there is a necessary conflict between the value of this freedom (free inquiry and expression) and the desire

⁸⁵ Kara Swisher, “No Parties. No Sports. How Oberlin College is Surviving the Pandemic,” *Sway* podcast, *The New York Times*, February 18, 2021, from 32:00 onward.

to cultivate the value of inclusion — claiming instead that these values ‘provide each other with synergistic and mutual reinforcement.’”⁸⁶ He explains:

After all, academic freedom would be an empty concept if everyone started with a similar set of ideas, if there was no diversity of viewpoints to protect. And inclusion would be meaningless at a university if it meant there were no attempts to cultivate excellence along with belonging.⁸⁷

That is for Roth, diversity is good insofar as it is expressed, and inclusion is incomplete unless those included are actually participating. And expression only becomes educationally valuable once it is varied. It is not really happening — is not really free — until *everyone* is free to express. Roth acknowledges that most institutions see it as a challenge to ensure inclusion “while pursuing the contentious, sometimes antagonistic path of free inquiry,”⁸⁸ even though there is this relationship of such obvious mutual interest and benefit between the two.

In *Free Speech on Campus*, Sigal Ben-Porath similarly dismisses tension between free expression and inclusion and argues for their mutual promotion. Right away she ties the two together on account of their roles in inquiry. Recall that her framework for campus is one that: takes seriously the importance of a free and open exchange as a necessary condition for the pursuit of knowledge and as a contributing condition to the development of civic and democratic capacities. It lends similar weight to the related demand that all members of the campus community be able to participate in this free and open exchange if it is to accomplish the goals of free inquiry,

⁸⁶ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 40, quoting a publication by the Harvard Presidential Task Force on Inclusion and Belonging, *Pursuing Excellence on a Foundation of Inclusion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2018).

⁸⁷ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 40.

⁸⁸ Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 42.

open-minded research, and equal access to learning and civic development. A call for creating an inclusive environment in which all members are respected and where all voices can be heard should be framed and recognized as furthering rather than impeding the realization of a free and open campus.⁸⁹

Expression and inclusion carry equal weight for Ben-Porath, and both are needed for the institution to undertake free inquiry and the search for truth and knowledge.

We see in these descriptions the claim that the two values do not simply co-exist but are necessary for the inquiry to operate. Ideas must be expressed and be put forth so that something exists to engage, to exchange, to contend with. Ben-Porath, above, cites expression as the “necessary condition for the pursuit of knowledge;” for Roth it is the way one travels the “path of free inquiry.” But the force of expression also needs something to counter it — some counter-tension like the challenge from Roth’s “diversity of viewpoints” or all of Ben-Porath’s campus members. Ensuring free expression ensures bringing every idea to bear, while ensuring inclusion increases plurality in the market, and in turn ensures competition. The compatibilists insist on inclusion, but it is inclusion for the sake of ensuring more quantity and more quality of exchange. More and more expression, more and more plurality: maximizing each creates the best possible agon and hurtles the process, and its participants, toward distilling the truth.

Both expressionists and compatibilists alike are hankering for open exchange and free inquiry to course through campus. I grant that they have differences in emphasis: expressionists aim to get there via expression over everything, while compatibilists actively and intentionally push for the equal weight of inclusion and plurality. Yet the running baseline throughout, for

⁸⁹ Sigal Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 37.

both camps, is a belief in and commitment to the operation of the market, its debate and competition, and its ability to reveal superior, true ideas.

The Trouble with the Marketplace Metaphor

The adoption of the marketplace of ideas metaphor is widespread and ingrained in our beliefs about inquiry, especially in regards to higher education. But is it the best framework for inquiry, for thought, for discovering truth? What should we make of the framework as an *epistemological* framework? What are its accounts of truth, justification, and objectivity? By claiming to be the ideal approach for free inquiry and discerning truth, its definitions and claims about knowing become centrally important. Taking a look at the marketplace along these lines reveals its assumptions, as well as a shaky effectiveness. It has problems on three fronts.⁹⁰ The first has to do with the marketplace's preferred currency of exchange, that is, with its treasuring of logical reasoning over emotional affect. The other two have to do with its thorough commitment to competition and its reliance on eliminative debate as justification. In light of these, the marketplace metaphor ultimately fails to yield its imagined, muscly distillations of truth; it does not do the epistemological work its adherents suggest it does.

⁹⁰ To proceed with this critique of the marketplace of ideas I realize that I must grant that it exists and operates as claimed. As we saw in Chapter 1, many have argued that the *laissez faire* marketplace of the university is a fiction in the first place, and that the university is a context actually chock full of checks and limits around expression. Consider things like peer review, tenure and credentialing, accepted vocabularies and methodologies, specialization, funding — all sorts of regulation and control already and always exist when it comes to the university, inquiry, and expression. There is no absolutely free expression in this sphere. I am putting this very good objection to the side for now, in order to assess the epistemology of the marketplace claim as-is. For more on this, again see Stanley Fish, *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech and It's a Good Thing, Too* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Stanley Fish, "Free Speech Is Not an Academic Value," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 20, 2017; Alvin I. Goldman and James C. Cox, "Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas," *Legal Theory* 2 (1996): 13; Michael Roth, *Safe Enough Spaces*, 98; and Sigal Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 20.

A Narrow Focus on Cognitive Reasoning

The first assumption to examine is the clear preference for cognitive reasoning as the first-choice activity of the marketplace. To participate in the market — to test and challenge ideas, to defend them, to evaluate and select — means to engage critically and in specific, approved ways. Proponents Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, in their call for better and tougher campus exchanges, refer to the kind of good thinking they seek as “critical thinking.” Their vision: that a “shared vocabulary about reasoning, common distortions, and the appropriate use of evidence to draw conclusions would facilitate critical thinking and real debate.”⁹¹ By “real debate” they mean, as they go on to say, “formal, public debate on campus.” This is a specific undertaking they have in mind, with proper vocabulary, prescribed rules, and soberly concluded answers. It is seen as the most neutral and most accurate of cognitive activities, and the evidence presented serves to warrant the ideas expressed. This critical thinking is *good* thinking.

Then there is bad thinking. For Lukianoff and Haidt, who believe there is a “tide of bad thinking on campus,” this amounts to thoughts and responses that are affected by our emotional responses and emotional states. Embracing views from everyone from the Stoics and the Buddha to cognitive behavioral therapists, Lukianoff and Haidt describe emotional thinking that is distorted and dangerous. What we see, they suggest, is “a version of life distorted by our hopes, fears, and other attachments;” we cannot make use of the way we feel about things because “of course, subjective feelings are not always trustworthy guides.” In order to see clearly (critically) we must reduce our attachments and minimize these false distortions, these interferences. Critical

⁹¹ Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind,” *The Atlantic*, September 2015.

thinking, again they argue, is the way out of this danger as it “requires grounding one’s beliefs in evidence rather than in emotion or desire.”⁹²

The first assumption operating in this case is one about compartmentalizing one’s subjectivity and affect away from one’s reasoning. Philosophers have long raised doubts that one even can even achieve such separation, and any generally social or material approach would suggest more than just minds are at work when it comes to thinking. Plenty have offered explanations of an inherent relationship between knowers’ embodiment, experiences, and cognition; phenomenologists, social epistemologists, constructivists — each in their own way — argue that our subjectivity imposes itself upon all that we perceive and interpret.⁹³ Before even determining whether we *should* parse away emotion lie claims that we *cannot* do so.

A significant raft of research in social psychology and cognitive science lends empirical support to such claims. The literature shows that our thinking is deeply connected to our social affiliations, self-interests, and emotional commitments rather than evidence sussed out by reasoning and debate. We ultimately select beliefs based on whatever confirms these motivations and expresses loyalty to our commitments. Political psychologist David Redlawsk explains, “It’s not the evidence that matters. Feelings come first, and evidence is used mostly in service of those feelings. Evidence that supports what is already believed is accepted, that which contradicts it is not.”⁹⁴ Affective value outweighs epistemic value. This *motivated reasoning* or *affective reasoning* is pre-cognitive and automatic for thinkers, and its power is so strong that even implorations to operate objectively — to be unbiased, rational, or open-minded — fail. We

⁹² Lukianoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

⁹³ This alternative, which makes subjectivity and affect central, is the approach I will outline in detail in the next chapter.

⁹⁴ David P. Redlawsk, “A Matter of Motivated Reasoning,” *The New York Times*, April 22, 2011.

actually, mistakenly, believe that we are rationalizing when undertaking motivated reasoning. That is, urging a more objective or distanced justification counterintuitively *increases* our commitment to self-motivated thinking.⁹⁵ Research also shows that none of us escapes its pull. Motivated reasoning prevails despite our particular identity affiliations, in all directions, from all camps, from all sides of the political aisle, and in regards to sundry issues and beliefs.⁹⁶ We all struggle to identify and accept that our groups' assumptions could be incorrect, and that our standing social and cultural commitments shape our very ability to perceive some facts as facts. The reality we perceive and the ideas we endorse seem inevitably set — already oriented and already so.⁹⁷ The research underscores that we are *always already* driven by our emotions and desires, and this power of our attachments turns out to be the thing that is truly universal to all. We just cannot skip over these powerful effects and will ourselves into reasoning objectively.

⁹⁵ Dan Kahan, "Motivated Reasoning and Its Cognates," blog entry for *The Cultural Cognition Project at Yale Law School* (May 2013). Now, there is evidence that certain pedagogical moves (like self-affirmation and reminders about accuracy goals) can break through the grip of motivated reasoning upon students/learners and jostle thinkers into *more objective* thinking, so perhaps with massive and continuous intervention participants could be helped to select marketplace expressions and beliefs based on some kind of truthfulness. See Geoffrey L. Cohen, Joshua Aronson, and Claude M. Steele, "When Beliefs Yield to Evidence: Reducing Biased Evaluation by Affirming the Self," *Society for Personality and Social Psychology* 26, no. 9 (2000); David Sherman and Geoffrey Cohen, "Accepting Threatening Information: Self-Affirmation and the Reduction of Defensive Biases," *American Psychological Society* 11, no. 4 (2002); Dan Kahan, "Fixing the Communications Failure," *Nature* vol. 463 (January 2010); and David Redlawsk, "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration?" *Journal of Politics* 64, no. 4 (2002).

⁹⁶ Dan Kahan, Hank Jenkins-Smith, and Donald Braman, "Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus," *Journal of Risk Research* vol. 14 (2011), referenced in Dan Kahan, "Misconceptions, Misinformation, and the Logic of Identity-Protective Cognition," Working Paper No. 164, *The Cultural Cognition Project at Yale* (June 2017).

⁹⁷ For even more on this field of research, see Dan Kahan, "What is Motivated Reasoning? How Does It Work? Dan Kahan Answers," *Discover*, May 5, 2011; and David P. Redlawsk, Andrew J.W. Civettini, and Karen M. Emmerson, "The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever 'Get It?'" *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (2010).

The second assumption about cognitive reasoning has to do with the power of evidence, or rather, what counts as evidence and how it warrants or grounds beliefs. The assumption suggests evidence reveals reality (is verified as reflective of what really is, is true), evidence is neutral and objective (not skewed by/toward a particular knower, not favorable/unfavorable toward any belief) and evidence is universal (knowable or accessible by any reasoning person). It is external evidence, in this view, that assures us an idea or expression is accurate, while emotional or personal response gets in the way and gums up the works of evidence's proper functioning. Yet plenty of epistemological traditions place affect and other subjective content right in the center of knowing and grant it epistemic importance. Epistemological work on testimony, for example, examines how social evidence and affective evidence from fellow epistemic agents helps justify claims and ideas.⁹⁸ Furthermore, contemporary theorists of emotion concede that it has a significant place in our thinking about thinking, right alongside reason.⁹⁹ Evaluative theories of emotion hold that emotions act as a kind of evaluation or judgment; we feel them *about* some object — they are a form of our perception of it.¹⁰⁰ Emotions help reflect and represent the world as it is, and as it is to us, making them a kind of extra-neural resource and quite epistemically valuable. Rather than interfere with or distort evidence, affective and subjective response can be *a form of evidence*.

⁹⁸ Alvin I. Goldman, "Why Social Epistemology is Real Epistemology," in *Social Epistemology*, ed. Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 6–7.

⁹⁹ Andrea Scarantino and Ronald de Sousa, "Emotion," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Zalta (2021), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2021/entries/emotion/>.

¹⁰⁰ Martha C. Nussbaum, "Emotions as Judgments of Value," in *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Robert C. Solomon, "Emotions and Choice," *The Review of Metaphysics* 27, no. 1 (1973): 20–41.

Even brief summaries of these challenges show that to hold onto the assumption to favor cognitive reasoning and jettison attachments and subjectivities does not seem to improve thinking but rather to diminish it. There is slim chance we can parse reason and affect, but even if we *could* do so, we should not. Emotional and subjective responses offer ways to access understanding; they have epistemic importance. Cutting out or compartmentalizing the evidence of emotion cuts off access to certain claims and limits what counts as thinking. If the aim of learning is to better know and understand the world, then cognitive reasoning and critical thinking cannot be exclusively preferred.

A Belief That Competitiveness Indicates Truthfulness

At the center of marketplace thinking lies another foundational belief: “the ideas that ultimately prevail in the marketplace must be the ‘best’ in some sense of that word.”¹⁰¹ That is, “when ideas compete with one another in the marketplace, the ‘best product’ will win out. By that, they (proponents) mean to imply some external, objective criterion — roughly, the ‘truth will win out.’”¹⁰² This heart of the market is competition: the jockeying, testing, and agonism that courses through it. An idea or belief is forwarded. It faces engagement, assessment, and comparison. If it survives and is taken up by participants then it is considered the best of the bunch. Subsequently, somehow, this justifies the idea as true as well. In his famous *Abrams* dissent, Holmes suggests that “the best test of truth” for a thought is to “get itself accepted.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Jill Gordon, "John Stuart Mill and the 'Marketplace of Ideas,'" *Social Theory and Practice* 23, no. 2 (1997): 236.

¹⁰² Robert Sparrow and Robert E. Goodin, "The Competition of Ideas: Market or Garden?," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 4, no. 2 (2001): 51.

¹⁰³ Holmes, *Abrams v. United States*, (1919).

Mill goes even further, claiming that enduring repeated, open challenge “is the sole way” of attaining certainty.¹⁰⁴

Yet in economic terms what the market in fact does is organize demand. Jill Gordon explains that within the framework the best idea (or product) is,

defined after the fact in the market as that product or idea demanded or adopted by the most powerful or most numerous.... In a marketplace of ideas, the ideas that would prevail would be popular ones, which are not necessarily the true ones. A market mechanism would not guarantee the truth, or even an approximation to the truth, of prevailing ideas. The market responds to forces of power, whether it be in terms of wealth, influence, or sheer numbers, and truth is not necessarily generated from any of these sources.¹⁰⁵

In other words, the “best goods” are those goods that are most competitive, those which ultimately triumph in the marketplace. Market mechanisms yield winning ideas, where winning has to do with garnering the most acceptance or the most dominance. There is nothing inherent to a market’s competitive logic or operation that guarantees truth. Mill himself warns that it is a “pleasant falsehood” that truth always triumphs or that “truth, merely as truth, has any inherent power.”¹⁰⁶ The presumed truth-full consequence of competition is not warranted.

This is where we must identify a crucial assumption at work: that superiority equals truth and that the market has some relationship to that truth. Alvin Goldman, philosopher, and economist James Cox wonder, “What is the theoretical argument for supposing that market mechanisms will maximize truth possession?,” then quickly admit that, to their knowledge, “no

¹⁰⁴ Mill, *On Liberty*, 91.

¹⁰⁵ Gordon, “John Stuart Mill and the ‘Marketplace of Ideas,’” 241.

¹⁰⁶ Mill, *On Liberty*, 97–98.

detailed general argument of this sort has actually been presented.”¹⁰⁷ Like Gordon, they suggest that economic theory only implies that “under competition, the levels of outputs for each type of good will reach efficient levels.... This makes no categorical prediction about *which* types of goods will be produced in relatively greater quantities.”¹⁰⁸ That part of the claim — about the type, the quality, the truthfulness or falsity of the products — has to do with “some pre-designated, market-independent character of the products.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, the internal logic of the market does not, cannot, guarantee that some outside quality or externality will be produced.

What does get produced, chosen, and promoted does so as a response to the market’s participants and consumers. The market efficiently delivers what consumers want. Other forces and other factors, beyond sheer truth, lead people to make their choices among ideas: comfort, validation, provocation, entertainment.¹¹⁰ The ideas that ultimately prevail are those that best deliver some combination of these. Goldman and Cox offer examples that show unregulated domains easily lead to false expression and error; they “have in mind domains in which rumor, gossip, old-wives’ tales, and superstition flourish.”¹¹¹ We can see this in contemporary concerns about unregulated social media, amplification algorithms, conspiracy theories, and viral stories — what rises to the top in consumption need not be true, only popular. It is just as likely that true ideas can emerge above others, strengthened by the fiery fight, as it is that they will be derided, outmaneuvered, or demoted in favor of other competitors.

¹⁰⁷ Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 16.

¹⁰⁸ Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 17.

¹⁰⁹ Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 17.

¹¹⁰ Sparrow and Goodin, “The Competition of Ideas: Market or Garden?,” 52; and Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 18.

¹¹¹ Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 12.

It is only if and when all participants have a shared, overriding preference for truth above all other qualities that the market might efficiently deliver what Goldman and Cox call “maximum truth.”¹¹² Perhaps institutions of higher education count as this sort of marketplace — perhaps their participants pledge a commitment to truth above all else — but there is still reason to suspect other non-truth factors flex their might. The great slate of social psychology and cognitive science research (described above) suggests that motivated reasoning remains ubiquitous, despite implorations for unbiased, evidenced objectivity.¹¹³ So even when participants *think* they are thinking with truth and accuracy at the fore, motivated reasoning continues to power their conclusions and choices.

If these challenges are right — about efficiency, about power and popularity, about socially motivated reasoning — then the marketplace of ideas does not, cannot, operate the way its proponents suggest it does. Many factors other than truth or accuracy explain which ideas and expressions are chosen and ultimately prevail in the market. Justification helps a thinker find reasons, hopefully good reasons, for holding an idea or belief; in Plato’s *Meno*, Socrates suggests that justification “tethers” true belief “with chains of reasons why.”¹¹⁴ The market’s brand of justification becomes clear. Its proponents, when they suggest that an idea’s exposure to and survival of competitive debate is what leads to its widespread adoption, and thus to the status of truth, are making a claim about how ideas can be justified. Accurate understanding of the world, in this case, is not the primary means of establishing truth. That an idea is *held* or *believed* is what warrants truth here — getting itself accepted over and above others is an expression’s best

¹¹² Goldman and Cox, “Speech, Truth, and the Free Market for Ideas,” 18.

¹¹³ Kahan, “Motivated Reasoning and Its Cognates.”

¹¹⁴ Plato, “Meno,” trans. by Benjamin Jowett, *Project Gutenberg EBook #1643*, 2013 [2008], 97c.

test. It bears repeating that while this might tell us something about belief adoption in the marketplace, or the winningness of an idea, it does not always or necessarily indicate the quality of an idea, as the proponents of the marketplace of ideas insist.

Debating in Order to Eliminate

Setting aside this discovery that an idea's being the most competitive does not necessarily make it the most true, we can look at what else the enactment of competitive debate means for the ideas themselves. What is clear by now about the marketplace is that each expression can expect to undergo testing, challenge, and pitting against and comparison with other expressions. Each is gauged by participants, then promoted or dismissed, with one expression ultimately ending up preferred and chosen. Even this basic sketch reveals another basic assumption of the framework: ideas exist as mutually exclusive to each other and are incapable of coexistence — they are meant to engage *against* each other in survival scenes. But surviving is not necessarily, as we have just seen, the way to reach truth. Competitive debate is just one way that ideas, participants, and their expressions can interact, and it has both merits and limitations. Other types of engagement also aim toward truth, with traits, outcomes, and limitations also worth exploring.

Nicholas Burbules offers up multiple takes on debate as he catalogues a full ten types of educational dialogue, all with differing purposes, traits, and effects.¹¹⁵ Marketplace debate, perhaps, could be categorized as the first type (dialogue toward contradiction and doubt), which aims to lend participants a better sense of what is false and to disabuse them of their weak, discardable ideas. It shares the marketplace belief in the survival of the truest. Then again, marketplace debate is also similar to elements of type two (dialogue as competitive argument),

¹¹⁵ Nicholas C. Burbules, "Varieties of Educational Dialogue," *Philosophy of Education* (1990): 120–131.

where participants are cast as opponents who attempt to show each other up and render the other's views insufficient. The aim here is not really to alter the opponent's thinking but rather that of the attendant audience, jockeying for leverage or advantage in their eyes. In this type of dialogue, winning seems to be the point. Or perhaps the marketplace is like the third type (dialogue as debate). While it does "take the form of a competitive struggle between positions," this debate stays aimed at a commonly consented-to purpose: to create tension, counter-argue, improve, and refine those positions.¹¹⁶ Its challenges sometimes generate "heat" among participants, but such criticism remains directed at the ideas themselves rather than the people participating. Disputation and challenge are not necessarily between people but between ideas or expressions; that is, the debate is vigorous but insofar as it is about the ideas. And while that description softens debate a bit and casts it as less brutal than survival, dialogue as debate remains agonistic in nature. It is grounded in the notion of competition *between* ideas and operates on an assumption that push-pull and refute-refine dynamics drive ideas further and further toward truth.

That underlying assumptions are operating is not the headline though, as Burbules points out that *every* mode of dialogue has some set of assumptions or values. What is significant is what those assumptions (and the corresponding modes of dialogue) thus claim about communication, about social relations, and about knowledge itself.

First, different kinds of dialogue exhibit different conceptions of knowledge. In some cases, knowledge is seen as a body of fact to be disseminated as effectively and efficiently as possible; in others knowledge is seen as a construction, a negotiated consensus between parties concerned with a topic;... in others

¹¹⁶ Burbules, "Varieties of Educational Dialogue," 124.

knowledge is personal, grounded in experience. ...Similarly, these dialogues reveal assumptions about persons and their relations to each other. Some approaches are more authoritarian than others;...some are highly sensitive to the emotional content in and behind what is said;...some are competitive, and others more cooperative.¹¹⁷

If Burbules is right, then competitive debate implies particular working conceptions of knowing and of people.

In later work, Burbules makes two distinctions that help organize these values, assumptions, and subsequent dialogical traits. The first distinction has to do with the meaning or the role of knowledge, that is, whether there is a *convergent* or *divergent* understanding of knowledge at work. *Convergent* dialogues are teleological in nature, are aimed in a particular direction, have a particular end point they are moving toward, and are "resolvable into a consensus around a correct answer."¹¹⁸ Dialogue like this converges upon one correct answer in the end. Knowledge like this is particular or specific; can be final or settled upon; and in turn can be understood as wrong, not-quite-right, or correct. *Divergent* dialogues are, however, irresolvably plural, put myriad meanings into play, welcome ambiguity, and ultimately result in multiple interpretations. Here knowledge is not fixed, centralized, or finalized; this dialogue opens and reveals *more* meanings instead of homing in on one.

The second distinction has to do with the meaning of other people and other participants in the dialogue — how they relate, what their roles are, and the relationship between them whilst in dialogue. *Critical* dialogues are inherently skeptical in nature. In them one questions other

¹¹⁷ Burbules, "Varieties of Educational Dialogue," 129.

¹¹⁸ Nicholas C. Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), 110.

participants' expressions, tests them for evidence, challenges their worth, or makes "a judgment about the objective accuracy of the partner's position."¹¹⁹ This is primarily a mode of *doubting* the other. But *inclusive* dialogues begin by granting a provisional plausibility to fellow participants and their expressions because the aim is to understand the others' positions and how and why they hold them. This is primarily a mode of *believing* the other.

Insofar as competitive marketplace debate operates in order to narrow and refine toward one prevailing idea, to asymptotically approach truth, it is surely a *convergent* type of dialogue. And insofar as it consists of the critical testing and evaluation of ideas and expressions, and the challenging of other participants along the way, it is a *critical* type of dialogue. For our purposes, convergence/divergence is the less interesting of the distinctions; it is the discussion of the inclusive/critical divide that really helps us think about debate's competitiveness, and the effects of that competitiveness. Competition certainly can yield desirable effects: needed challenges to expressions, clarified ideas, the strongest possible defense of beliefs. But Burbules also shows that too much competitiveness — in a debate "when the desire to 'win' the argument becomes exaggerated" — forecloses any chance of improving, refining, or strengthening ideas.¹²⁰ The competitive aim to win overtakes convergent truth aims. When backers of the marketplace of ideas elevate competition over all else, or insist that the way to *better* ideas is through *more* rigorous challenge, they mistake the effects that competitiveness has on convergence and on reaching understanding. Once again, competition is not quite doing the epistemological work they believe it is.

¹¹⁹ Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 111.

¹²⁰ Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 120.

In aiming for convergence, marketplace proponents would do well to consider *dialogue as inquiry*, Burbules's *inclusive-convergent* type. His description of inquiry is worth quoting at length:

An inclusive-convergent dialogue aims toward the answering of a specific question, the resolution of a specific problem, or the reconciliation of a specific dispute; it is convergent in its aim to produce an outcome agreeable to all....I label this a kind of "inquiry," since it typically involves the investigation of alternatives, the weighing and testing of different potential answers, within a dialogical structure that encourages a range of perspectives and approaches to the problem at hand. One phase of this process, in fact, may be divergent, "brainstorming" as many ideas as possible. But the point of doing so, in this sort of dialogue, is to provide substance for a further process that compares, evaluates, and builds upon these different views, in order to make choices among them.¹²¹

This type of inquiry seeks answers. This type of inquiry checks out possibilities. It compares views, refines them, then produces a selection. Ideas are weighed and tested, built upon each other, evaluated, and selected. Some ideas hang in through the inquiry and win, in a sense, but insofar as they have been built up and chosen by all participants. The difference may be subtle, but this inquiry requires a spirit of cooperation and the coordination of the plurality of perspectives, rather than their competition and subsequent survival or elimination. We are called to work with others to build toward the best idea rather than compete against them to whittle down to the strongest claim. Plurality is an accumulative, accruing resource that adds to ideas and thinking, not a consumable to burn through in the name of increasing competitive tests for

¹²¹ Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 116.

one's own view. Others, and their ideas, are used differently here, and it becomes easier to see what Burbules insists: that "dialogue is a *social relation* that needs to be created and maintained."¹²²

Whether we ultimately decide to pursue something like Burbules's dialogue as inquiry, his version of debate, or even Lukianoff and Haidt's "formal," "public" critical thinking, we understand that any of these approaches is but one of several types of engagement to undertake in the classroom. What transpires between participants, ideas, and expressions, especially in a learning space, can amount to so much more than competitive debate. And because debate has another epistemological limitation (increased competition has adverse effects upon converging on understanding), it cannot be the sole means when discovery, learning, answering, and understanding are indeed our aims.

Falling Short

Many are committed to the university's aims of truth and knowledge, and correspondingly they are committed to inquiry as the way to seek that truth and knowledge, but those commitments are not being properly served by the marketplace of ideas framework. A better account of inquiry is needed, and a different epistemological framework needs consideration. In the safe space debate, the expressionist camp *and* the compatibilist camp utilize the framework without ever fully assessing it. In fact, they are not explicit that there are epistemological issues unfolding in the debate — they couch it simply in terms of the university being a place for inquiry. Both Roth and Ben-Porath, for example, call on phrases like "open exchange," "pursuit of knowledge," and "free inquiry" to describe the rigorous process they

¹²² Burbules, "Varieties of Educational Dialogue," 128, emphasis in original.

endorse for arriving at the best ideas. But there is no digging further into the epistemological plane or exploring their conceptions of “inquiry,” “truth,” “knowing,” or “learning” in detailed epistemological terms. All of these proponents (perhaps unknowingly) rely on the assumptions about inquiry, competition, and reasoning of the marketplace model and perpetuate its operation.

Those who invoke the marketplace of ideas framework believe it to be the best way to conduct inquiry: express every idea, rigorously challenge each, promote those that are defensible, and win over acceptance along the way. Yet this open, competitive exchange does not do the epistemological work its proponents believe it does. Ideas that prevail in the marketplace are the most adopted or most believed, not necessarily the most true. And increases in competitive rigor, rather than hone ideas toward accuracy, actually thwart participants from converging upon a knowledge goal. Furthermore, the framework’s devotion to cognitive reasoning and disparagement of affect limit the knowing that is possible within the marketplace. It turns out that competitive marketplace debate is not a reliable way to get to truth or understanding.

Nor is it the only way. Claims about competitive marketplace debate — and its implied claims about ideas and people relating critically, and which cognitive activities count as thinking — are not just claims about what will be allowed out on the quad but also what is to be undertaken in the classroom. As a form of inquiry or learning, it is narrow and it is specific; higher education that amounts to *only* marketplaces of competitive exchange starts to look like a rather limited endeavor. We default to this kind of project when inquiry is framed as a test, as disputation, or as a means for ideas to survive over and above others. But if inquiry is framed as attaining understanding, interpreting a range of perspectives, and building answers together, then we need a kind of undertaking that coordinates, cooperates, and creates instead.

What About Inclusionists?

We see that the expressionist and compatibilist camps both run their arguments with the assumptions and the logic of the competitive marketplace framework — but inclusionists are not off the hook here either. A certain version of inclusion (the previous generation of this position) also defaults to the same terms. Inclusion, in a way, may be the wrong term in such a case.

An earlier version of the inclusion argument had to do with gaining access to higher education and being included in the institution. The initial, twentieth century focus on diversity by higher education researchers and advocates was largely in terms of access, recruitment, admissions, and representation, and in regard to race and gender. This type of *compositional diversity* “refers to the numerical and proportional representation of various racial and ethnic groups on a campus,”¹²³ under which increasing opportunities for, and increasing the amount of, racial minorities (and women) on campus was the goal. The heart of this approach had to do with becoming a member of the institution, part of the endeavor, a participant in the inquiry — here inclusion was about gaining a seat at the table. However, the table was still the kind of epistemological endeavor described in the sections above. It was still the undertaking of inquiry, expression, and competition offered by the marketplace of ideas framework. Being included was being admitted into the market, for sure, but being admitted was in order to add to plurality, for the sake of increased competition. The market itself did not change, nor did the ways of participating in it — all members continued to participate in competitive epistemological dynamics, driven by the epistemological assumptions we have been discussing. Inclusion in this case just meant access to participation, which was participation for competition’s sake.

¹²³ Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony L. Antonio, “Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective,” (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2005), 15.

There has been a tendency for institutions “to focus *only* on this dimension” of compositional diversity when signaling a commitment to diversity on campus; however, “employing diversity simply to describe or change the composition of a community is inadequate ... close attention must be paid to the institutional context in which that diversity is enacted.”¹²⁴ Despite apparent compositional diversity, significant problems can fester across a campus and community climate. The behaviors, expressions, and beliefs exhibited within an institution affect its climate and its members, therefore the institution should play a role in ensuring these elements are inclusive rather than exclusive.¹²⁵ A more thorough conceptualization has come forward — compositional diversity has evolved into the more substantive, functional goal of inclusion. Proponents of inclusion argue that students should feel like they belong and should be able to express their authentic selves, participate fully, do their best work, and flourish within the institution.¹²⁶ Regulating the conditions of the climate, the campus, or the classroom becomes crucial for inclusionists, then, because doing so can help ensure a sense of real belonging. Otherwise participants can be made to feel they must check parts of themselves at the door or withhold certain expressions, which amounts to clipped, partial participation.

¹²⁴ Milem, Chang, and Antonio, “Making Diversity Work on Campus,” 4.

¹²⁵ Patricia Gurin, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurn, “Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes,” *Harvard Educational Review* 72, no. 3 (2002): 330–366; Liliana M. Garces and Uma M. Jayakumar, “Dynamic Diversity: Toward a Contextual Understanding of Critical Mass,” *Educational Researcher* 43, No. 3 (2014); and Jose Marichal, “Diversity for What? The Paradox of University Diversity and the New Civic Rationale,” *Journal of Public Deliberation* 6, no. 2 (2010).

¹²⁶ Susan Sturm, Timothy Eatman, John Saltmarch, and Adam Bush, “Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Community Engagement in Higher Education,” *Imagining America* Paper 17 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 2011).

Not only is clipping or thwarting parts of themselves unfair for the participants in an ethical sense, but it diminishes what is possible, or available, epistemologically.¹²⁷ Certain subsequent expressions, ideas, and perspectives of these participants, which could or should be coursing through the space, are also clipped and thwarted. The argument for full inclusion or full participation includes the assumption that our self, our experiences, and our reactions/responses are all essential parts of our thinking and expressing, that it is our complete, rich standpoint from which our unique positions and unique expressions emerge. This is how full, differentiated, unique ideas come to contribute to the inquiry.

Now this move alone does not completely free inclusionists from the marketplace framework. It is certainly still possible to hold a similar, robust take on inclusion as truly full participation and then call for those fully rich perspectives to debate and compete for the widest acceptance. To ensure full, inclusive participation for the greatest number of diverse and differentiated members would truly be a maximally plural, maximally competitive market. But with nothing changed in the operation or the logic of the market, rather than expressions and ideas being exchanged, *whole persons* become contested, challenged, dismissed, and promoted. The consequences of this kind of contestation will not get the full examination they deserve here at the end of this chapter, but it is easy to see the potential danger to students' dignity. Nonetheless, we can see that one thing the inclusionists' argument signals is a turn away from expressions and ideas as central to inquiry and a turn toward *people* as central. In other words, there is a move here that pivots focus away from convergent/divergent questions about the nature

¹²⁷ This is the foundation of Miranda Fricker's notion of testimonial injustice. Failing to treat others as full and valuable epistemic agents is an injustice to them, but it is also epistemic in nature because it diminishes what they are capable of as knowers. I revisit this concept in the coming chapters as well. Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

of ideas and turns focus toward critical/inclusive concerns about the nature of others and about relating to others. It offers a key step in imagining other operating epistemologies — other alternatives to the competitive, debate-based, market ways of engaging inquiry.

Other Epistemological Starting Points

For each weakness or limitation of the marketplace framework, we can find alternatives. There are epistemological traditions that account for the whole participant/whole knower. There are traditions that view not only the products of logical, cognitive reasoning as justificatory evidence but also experience, emotion, and response. Traditions that run on cooperative rather than competitive relations. These traditions — just as committed to inquiry and full, good understanding as any other — simply see that what transpires between participants and their expressions can amount to more than eliminative debate. They call on a widened range of epistemic assumptions and criteria to warrant ideas and converge upon truth. What would it mean to have a different epistemological starting point? What could be the implications of these new assumptions, the changes in store regarding the meaning of knowing, the role of fellow participants, and the modes of dialogue to undertake?

Social epistemology and feminist epistemology offer alternate ways of getting to truth and understanding. For example, social epistemology is built around the premise that we know about the world because we engage *together* in interpreting it. There is subjectivity coursing throughout this picture, accounted for and deemed valuable. Other frameworks — large discussions in phenomenology, theory of emotions, even cognitive science — place affect right into the heart of the knowing process and grant it epistemic importance. Worries about the non-objectivity of our emotions, the weight of our attachments, the distortions we might commit — they are not the worries of some other frameworks, as they offer ways to respond to and make

use of affect. Even Lukianoff and Haidt admit — very briefly — that students should learn about themselves as knowers and come to soberly understand the role emotions play in their own, and in others’, thinking so that they can engage *with* each other bigheartedly.¹²⁸ All of this starts to suggest models of inquiry that are collaborative and shared rather than competitive and brutal.

I suggest that these alternate epistemological models will also lead to alternate ways of understanding the debate about campus speech and diverse inclusion; in other words, they will offer other ways to relate and synthesize the two values of free expression and inclusion. Inquiry will remain at the heart of this relationship, but it will not be inquiry as it has been described (typically and so far) by the marketplace of ideas. With that inherently competitive, and ultimately flawed, framework dropped out of the picture and a collaborative inquiry in its place, a different type of classroom project — and thus a different, attendant type of learning space — can emerge. More exploration of these epistemological alternatives is the work of the next chapter.

¹²⁸ Lukianoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

CHAPTER 3

EPISTEMOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR A MODEL OF SHARED INQUIRY

Introduction

The marketplace of ideas model, typically thought to be the ideal model for inquiry in higher education, has significant flaws that stem from its epistemological underpinnings. Reliant on reasoning, fueled by competitiveness, designed for the elimination of beliefs — we have seen that this model fails to produce truth in the ways it claims it does. We cannot rely on competitive eliminative debate when aims like discovery, learning, and understanding are on the line. Instead an alternate model of shared inquiry shows promise, with roots in social and feminist epistemological theory. Essential to this model are the concepts of situatedness and of interdependent knowers, as well as each concept's subsequent implications for the nature of knowledge claims (as situated and limited) and for justification (as a shared, collaborative process). Further assumptions about knowing and truth emerge as well. One such assumption is that subjectivity is what is valuable to agents' knowing, rather than their neutrality and universality. Another establishes subjective experience as evidence that can justify belief, rather than cognitive reason alone. Reflection of reality, rather than competitiveness or believability, serves as the mark for justifying a claim. And shared scrutiny is the means of determining just such a reflection of reality, rather than competitive eliminative debate.

In this chapter, my task is to clarify these key concepts and to show how they support the above claims and assumptions, then outline the ways these epistemological starting points all lead to a model of shared inquiry. Shared inquiry is inquiry that is *inclusive* and *convergent*, to use Burbules's categories from the previous chapter. It is also, as I will show along the way, more rigorous and more accurate than the marketplace of ideas. As such, it is especially suited

for the college classroom. After this chapter's discussion of the model itself, I will use the next chapter to explore how it might operate in the classroom context. Most marketplace proponents, I suspect, would support this type of undertaking, as it mirrors their quest to seek out the strongest, truest verified ideas. But a move toward this type of inquiry requires a flip from *critically* relating with other participants and other knowledge claims to relating *inclusively*. The epistemological concepts outlined here support just such a flip.

Shared inquiry is also the theorization of inquiry that, I argue, can achieve a synthesis of free expression and inclusion. It offers a way to move forward in the campus debate. The relationship of free expression and inclusion is outlined along the way in this chapter, but later on, in the final chapter, I will return to fully show inquiry's synthesizing potential, and to review, once we have this model of inquiry in hand, where we end up back in the ongoing campus debate.

As I go, considering an example case will help illustrate many of the claims and the epistemological concepts operating in this model. Consider the following fictional vignette. It takes place in the weekly discussion section of an undergraduate course, "Education, Difference, and Community."¹²⁹

¹²⁹ This is a fictional case I crafted from several sources: Jeannie Ludlow, "From Safe Space to Contested Space in the Feminist Classroom," *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy* 15, no. 1 (2004): 40-56; Zoë Brigley Thompson, "From Safe Spaces to Precarious Moments: Teaching Sexuality and Violence in the American Higher Education Classroom," *Gender and Education* 32, no. 3 (2020): 395-341; Rachel Treisman, Vanessa Romo, and Barbara Campbell, "Chicago Releases Video Showing Fatal Police Shooting Of 13-Year-Old Adam Toledo," *NPR website*, April 15, 2021; Frank Main, Tom Schuba, and Sam Kelly, "Bodycam Video of Fatal Police Shooting of Adam Toledo Details Final Minutes of Boy's Life," *Chicago Sun Times*, April 15, 2021; Neil Vigdor, "What to Know About the Police Shooting of Adam Toledo," *The New York Times*, April 16, 2021; Civilian Office of Police Accountability, "Log #2021-1112," *COPA Case Portal website*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.chicagocopa.org/case/2021-1112/>; and my own professional experiences of workshop facilitation. A hat tip for the inspiration to make use of a case to Samantha Ha and her

This small section of about twenty students is a breakout group from the large weekly lecture students attend, and it is meant to be interactive in nature and to go deeper into the course material presented in lecture. The week's syllabus topic and texts have to do with violence in communities, in particular police violence in Black and Latino neighborhoods. On this day, the group's activity includes imagining they are all members of a neighborhood-police partnership board, a committee of citizens that works with local police to strengthen community relations and public safety, which is charged with drafting a list of policy suggestions/improvements for the police department to enact. To begin discussion, one student raises the example of the Chicago killing of Adam Toledo, a 13-year-old middle schooler who was shot by the white police officer pursuing him down a dark alley in Pilsen, the city's predominantly Mexican neighborhood. This student, Harris, is a young Black male who has also grown up in Chicago. He talks about what transpired in the incident and its aftermath, expressing frustration that the officer ultimately faced no repercussions. "These are our neighborhoods and our homes and cops make them not safe," he says, "because all they can do is just kill us." A white student, Erin, responds to Harris first, describing her childhood with parents in law enforcement and her own current campus ROTC membership and military training. Erin believes the shooting was truly tragic but explains that the officer's training kicked in during the situation. It is a difficult and stressful job, she argues, full of personal risk and mere

excellent paper, "Safe Space and Free Speech," *Philosophy of Education Society Annual Meeting* (virtual plenary session, March 4, 2021). Thanks to Samantha Ha for recommending the Ludlow source as well.

moments to decipher the danger in encounters. Under his breath, Harris replies that Black and Brown men always know the danger of cop encounters. A few other students in the class shake their heads at hearing this, and Erin follows up, insisting there wasn't racism inherent in his action, just a split-second judgment. The rest of the group grows tense, with some seeming to want a way to jump into the discussion and others seeming to want a way to end it.

Who has the right take on the Adam Toledo case? What importance do the students' personal experiences and anecdotes hold? Can shared understanding be reached in this discussion? As we return to this case throughout the chapter, the epistemological concepts of situatedness and interdependent knowers will jump into action. Harris, Erin, and the rest of the class provide an opportunity to illustrate the epistemological claims I make, the utility of the theorizations I draw, and the limitations this model may face. The case helps to ground what lies ahead in this chapter — a mostly conceptual discussion — and helps prepare our move into the next chapter as well, pulling us back down in the level of the classroom, the decided focus of this study.

The Concept of Situatedness

The tradition of social epistemology has challenged conventional analytic epistemological models in a number of ways. Admittedly, social epistemology has never referred to one unified theory, and even the term 'social' can be used in several senses (that which is shared, that which is interactive, that which has to do with society),¹³⁰ but generally speaking, social epistemology begins with the claim that knowledge and knowing are social in nature. That

¹³⁰ Feminist philosopher Helen Longino points out a similar distinction about the meanings of the term 'social' in Helen Longino, "Essential Tensions — Phase Two: Feminist, Philosophical, and Social Studies of Science," in *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, ed. Louise M. Antony and Charlotte E. Witt (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001), 109, FN21.

is, knowledge is derived from and affected by our interactions with society and with others. This seminal claim raises huge implications for traditional epistemology and its assumptions of objective reality, rationality, and the truth.

Epistemological tradition holds that distanced criticality leads to the justification and verification of claims; individual knowers find real evidence and reasons out in the world that any reasonable fellow agent would agree are sufficiently supportive of their claims. What sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann suggest, however, is that while “everyday life presents itself as a reality,” it is in fact a world that is “interpreted by men and (is) subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world.”¹³¹ In other words, the world may present itself as an objective reality, full of evidence and reasons, but it is a world perceived and made meaningful qua world through interpretations by people. The challenge emerges: in light of this, epistemology must expand to include considerations of perception and interpretation, of social and cultural factors, and of people.

Knowers themselves become of interest and epistemologically relevant. Take, for example, something like Quine’s naturalized epistemology, which fellow philosopher Louise Antony describes as “the view that the study of knowledge should be treated as the empirical investigation of knowers.”¹³² Of concern is the real nature of knowing and the actual processes that lead knowers to achieve knowledge. One of its main insights is that any claim or statement is unavoidably affected by a bundle of background assumptions; bias and prejudgment are ubiquitous in the process of knowing. Yet there is no need, Antony assures us, to “presuppose

¹³¹ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 19.

¹³² Louise M. Antony, “Quine as Feminist: The Radical Import of Naturalized Epistemology,” in *A Mind of One's Own: Feminist Essays on Reason and Objectivity*, ed. Antony and Witt, 113.

the badness of bias in general,” as some bias turns out to be good, helpful, advantageous. This challenge to detached objectivity indicates we should let go of neutrality as an ideal and embrace the fact that bias occurs naturally. The position turns away from orthodox *objectivity* and instead makes use of the *subjectivity* inherently involved in knowing.

Out of the ground laid by other social epistemology, feminist philosophers developed a mode of epistemological critique focused on the role of sex and gender in knowing. Again, of course, ‘feminist epistemology’ is a broad and quick label applied to a smattering of projects and approaches that do not share one, monolithic, comprehensive position. I use the term to refer to any thinkers who conduct feminist analysis. And while many valuable theorizations and moves emerge from under the umbrella of feminist epistemology, it is the concept of *situatedness* that I suggest is indispensable for this project of thinking about inquiry.¹³³ The importance of this concept cannot be overstated. It triggers a seismic shift in how to describe knowers, and it serves as the grounding assumption underwriting my epistemological framework here. It takes many of the roots of the epistemological alternatives mentioned above and both marshals and develops them. Feminist epistemologists were not the first to discover or suggest the central importance of subjectivity, but their refinement of prior ideas into the notion of situatedness is a particularly effective and usable move for thinking about the nature of knowers and knowledge. There is

¹³³ I draw this summary from a cohort of early proponents of standpoint theory and situated knowledge: Sandra Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is ‘Strong Objectivity?’” in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 49–82; Lorraine Code, *Epistemic Responsibility* (Hanover, NH: Brown University Press, 1987); Lorraine Code, “Taking Subjectivity Into Account,” in *Feminist Epistemologies*, ed. Alcoff and Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993); Donna J. Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988); and Nancy C.M. Hartsock, “The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism,” in *Discovering Reality*, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (New York: Springer, 1983).

plenty to critique about early feminist philosophy as well, and the initial iterations of thinking about situatedness and standpoint were called to task for essentializing tendencies and a lack of direct consideration of racial, cultural, political, and other intersectional power asymmetries. In this chapter and in the coming discussions of Chapters 4 and 5, I highlight some of these limitations of the epistemology. But I choose to engage with and utilize *situatedness* within my argument because it offers a rich bundle of claims (about knowers' subjectivity, about particularity, about materiality, about social evidence, and about multiplicity) in one distilled concept.

What the notion of situatedness first does is puncture the faulty traditional picture of knowers as generic, interchangeable, and self-sufficient individuals. Again, the operating belief has been that any given knower could come to know whatever can be known via critical thinking: on their own, using tools like perception and deduction to justify claims and soberly confirm truths for themselves. Anyone could replicate this cognitive process; the knower themselves mattered little. The feminist move, however, is to insist that this is the wrong start to conceptualizing knowers — to claim that everyone could know the world from a single, common epistemic position is a myth. Donna Haraway explains the trouble: “that view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god trick.... There is no unmediated photograph or passive camera obscura ... there are only highly specific visual possibilities, each with a wonderfully detailed, active, partial way of organizing worlds.”¹³⁴ This first move denies there being some kind of epistemic position that is neutral, a non-issue, accessible to any knower anywhere, and occupied similarly by every knower everywhere. There is not one, uniform, perch-point view from which we all can see everything and see it the same.

¹³⁴ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 582–583.

Instead, all knowers are perched *somewhere* and laden with the human activity, experience, and knowledge that comes from being there. Knowers are cast as *particular* agents, with identities and a purchase on the world that is all their own. This claim is deeply material in nature. Every one of us is embodied, with direct access to what we see, perceive, and experience in and around our literal selves. And every one of us occupies some social, historical, lived position in the world — enmeshed in, perceiving, and experiencing what ensues in that particular location.¹³⁵ In other words, “social location shapes one’s perspective on the world (through differential experiences), and we can only interact with the world and know it through that perspective.”¹³⁶ This is the condition of situatedness, and it serves as the basis for our perspective on and perspective in the world. Our epistemic perspective is borne out of our particular material realities.

The Subjectivity and Particularity of Knowing

The particularities of the knower (individual experiences, contexts, attachments, circumstances) have been seen as subjective factors, as dangerous threats to the purported objectivity, neutrality, and unbiasedness of knowing. Because they inherently have to do with the knower, such particularities are often meant to be purified out through the justification process, ensuring they do not bias or distort. Epistemologist Lorraine Code summarizes this stance:

Separation of the contexts of discovery and justification produces the conclusion that even though information gathering (discovery) may sometimes be contaminated by the circumstantial peculiarities of everyday life, justificatory

¹³⁵ I want to note that here, in regards to the concept of situatedness, the term ‘social’ is being used in the sense of having to do with society.

¹³⁶ Heidi Grasswick, “Feminist Social Epistemology,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/feminist-social-epistemology>.

procedures can effectively purify the final cognitive product—knowledge—from any such taint. ...To grant justificatory or explanatory significance to social- or personal-historical situations, (or claim that) epistemological insight can be gained from understanding the psychology of knowers or their socio-cultural locations, invites dismissal.¹³⁷

That is, typically, situated locations have been seen as acceptable for the context of discovery of knowledge, but justification has been rendered a separate process that can then clear away these particularities and ensure objectivity. The concern about materiality and particularities of the knower is actually a concern about the provenance of knowledge claims — a belief that the origins of claims can and must be sheared away to reveal those claims’ real, core content. Yet the notion of situatedness suggests particularities are inseparable from both the knower and what is known. The particularities and contexts in which things are perceived, experienced, and understood *are a part of* those things and what they mean. To verify and secure claims as knowledge, we do not jettison these away but rather deeply and fully secure them to our final understanding. Situatedness and particularities are present and remain relevant throughout the course of justification; there is not a clear firewall between discovery and justification.¹³⁸

Some blurring of lines is noticeable too, conceptually, between situated *knowers* and situated *knowledge*. This stems directly from, in this framework I am sketching, how closely *who the knower is* is related to *what the knower knows*. As Nancy Hartsock explains, “What this

¹³⁷ Code, “Taking Subjectivity Into Account,” 17–18.

¹³⁸ In this discussion, however, notice I still write about discovery and justification, in turn. The construction of discovery and justification as two separate and divided processes is strong and familiar in epistemology. Rather than work to undo that scheme at its root, for now I accept and use its basic division and work to show the ways one concept bleeds into the other in the framework I sketch. The discovery of knowledge, the perspectives of knowers, the contexts of claims — these parts reach their way into the process of achieving knowledge.

means in bald epistemological terms is that human productive activity will structure human knowledge.”¹³⁹ In even simpler terms, our material life directly sources our knowing and understanding. Code dubs this kind of knowledge “experientially significant knowledge.”¹⁴⁰ What we perceive, experience, and ultimately know stems from our situated perspectives, meaning all the knowledge we hold or produce, because it comes from situated knowers, is situated knowledge. And just as situated knowers have partial and particular perspectives, so too is situated knowledge partial and particular.

Situatedness comes through as an important aspect of our example classroom case above. That the perspectives of the participants are generated by their personally-lived social positions seems immediately clear. Harris, a young Black man, grounds his comments in the example of Adam Toledo, a fellow young Chicagoan, and Harris makes the clear, direct claim that Black and Brown men know that police encounters are dangerous to them. What he claims — what he knows about the topic — emanates directly from having a young, Black-skinned, male body and from what that material fact means for experiences and interactions with law enforcement. By contrast, Erin, the white female ROTC cadet, grounds her comments in ideas about training and conditioning, and she makes the claim it was split-second, self-preserving judgment that led the officer to shoot Toledo. What she claims — what she knows about the topic — emanates directly out of examples relayed from her parents’ police work and her own experiences being trained to respond to the risk arising in unknown, unexpected encounters.

Harris knows about and understands the issue of police violence and people of color first and foremost as a young Black man. Erin knows about and understands the issue first and

¹³⁹ Hartsock, “The Feminist Standpoint,” 287.

¹⁴⁰ Code, “Taking Subjectivity Into Account,” 40.

foremost as an officer-in-training. Each student's claims come out of their own material particularities, but these particularities do not contaminate or taint the knowledge they are forwarding. Their perspectival claims constitute the knowledge. In this instance, and the many others that deal with complexities of social issues, people, institutions, politics, power, and the like, seeking ideals like objectivity and detached neutrality is defective. Code explains: "I want to suggest that these ideals are inadequate to guide epistemological debates about contentious issues and hence that it is deceptive and dangerous to ignore questions about subjectivity in the name of objectivity and value-neutrality."¹⁴¹ People and their experiences are part of these issues and inquiries, are part of the phenomenon or the concept in question. Stripping away the important details of their contexts from consideration flattens the whole scene down to whatever is observable by any and all. The knowers' personal contexts cannot — *should not* — be separated from the content of their claims; to truly know and understand, the contexts must also be included as significant.

In other words, parsing away Harris's Blackness, or maleness, or his experiences living in city neighborhoods parses away content from his claim; dismissing or processing out what he has seen, has done, and has felt does not remove the provenance or the origin of his claim, but rather removes the heart of his claim itself. To not consider or understand what it means for Black people to experience police violence (or the threat of it) is to not really, not fully, consider or understand the issue at all. A large area is left unexamined, unarticulated, unrecorded. And without Erin's particular context we leave unexamined and unrecorded the feelings of fear and automaticity that might lead officers to draw weapons and shoot. To not consider or understand the socially contextualized personal or psychological factors driving officers' decisions is to once

¹⁴¹ Code, "Taking Subjectivity Into Account," 25.

again not really analyze the issue of police violence in full. Separating or purifying out personal, subjective factors diminishes knowledge claims, diminishes their content and their power. We learn and understand things *less well* when this is the case.

Epistemological literature discusses this form of knowledge in terms of social evidence, subjective evidence, or testimony, with testimony being the telling, by a knower, of what they see, what they hear, what they experience — in short, telling how they understand something to be. Regardless of it being named ‘testimony’ or some related term, I suggest this act of telling is key. Code identifies this as well, explaining, “Social epistemology claims its title, in large measure, from the centrality it accords to testimony and to knowledge-conveying exchanges in the real world. It is striking for the attention many social epistemologists give to extended, situated examples of epistemic negotiation.”¹⁴² What seems to be so powerful about the testimonial act is that it “generates precise local hypotheses” and “confirms or contests interim findings;” that is, it generates a kind of highly valuable empirical data.¹⁴³ Evidence stemming from a particular standpoint, when it is especially relevant to that standpoint, can produce knowledge unparalleled by other knowers in other situated locations. Think again about our case and Harris’s comments. While his referencing of Adam Toledo is likely linked to or prompted by his own similar social situatedness, his follow-up comments about “our neighborhoods and our homes,” about what cops do to “us,” and that Black and Brown men always know the danger of cops — this is explicit testimony. He bears witness, relaying social evidence that he has access to. Harris ferries out relevant, detailed, lived evidence about the very neighborhoods and

¹⁴² Code, “Taking Subjectivity Into Account,” 30.

¹⁴³ Code, “Taking Subjectivity Into Account,” 39.

communities the course and the assignment ask questions about. Harris's testimonial claims have unique value here.

But it is not just the situated nature of knowledge claims, or the concrete specificity of testimony, that lends them epistemic advantage. We should be wary of using testimony in such an elementary way, as experience is not just simple, directly-given raw data to report. "Experience is not innocent," Haraway reminds us, meaning experience is always constructed and explained by other forces and other people as well. To report out experience and accept it as-is is to ignore the social, historical, political, and power dynamics implied in it. Rather, the epistemic advantage of situated knowledge claims stems from occupying a non-centered non-privileged standpoint, specifically from the understanding of power relations available in a non-centered position. Uma Narayan's description of this advantage is worth quoting at length:

I think (the oppressed) have epistemic privilege when it comes to immediate knowledge of everyday life under oppression — all the details of the ways in which their oppression is experienced, seen to be inflicted, and of the ways in which the oppression affects the major and minor details of their social and psychic lives. They know first-hand the detailed and concrete ways in which oppression defines the spaces in which they live and how it affects their lives.¹⁴⁴

Harris conveys just such first-hand, concrete knowledge.

Importantly, epistemic advantage has to do with where to begin inquiry, not necessarily what the answers to that inquiry are. For example Nancy Hartsock, an originator of feminist standpoint theory, follows Marxist claims about how the working class holds understanding of

¹⁴⁴ Uma Narayan, "Working Together across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice," *Hypatia* 3, no. 2 (1988): 36.

both the working and capitalist classes when she suggests that, for women, the material details and the very activities that subjugate them to their societal position in fact form the basis of their superior understanding of patriarchy.¹⁴⁵ Relatedly, during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, the activist group ACT UP positioned the AIDS community itself as the experts in the fight. Real-time testimony from patients and revelations about the insufficiency of status quo treatments led to members earning spots on FDA drug, research, and policy committees.¹⁴⁶ There is a fullness and accuracy that comes from non-centered situatedness, because non-centeredness enjoys an angle that better reveals the full picture or the whole picture of what is in question. The backsides and underbellies of things are clear to those who are placed behind or down below, looking up.

Donna Haraway's take on the power of these perspectives is similar. "'Subjugated' standpoints are preferred," she suggests, "because they seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world.... There is a premium on establishing the capacity to see from the peripheries and the depths."¹⁴⁷ However, she also urges caution against the "serious danger of romanticizing and/or appropriating the vision of the less powerful while claiming to see from their positions."¹⁴⁸ The tendency to essentialize perspectives must be called out, and in using this framework I suggest, we must commit to neither homogenizing nor making assumptions about knowers, their social positions and lived experiences, or the testimony they report. Real, material differences — sometimes invisible — exist between perspectives and within groups and categories, and they must be recognized and accounted for epistemologically.

¹⁴⁵ Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint."

¹⁴⁶ *How to Survive a Plague*, directed by David France (New York: Public Square Films, 2012); and Peter Staley, personal conversation, March 2004.

¹⁴⁷ Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.

¹⁴⁸ Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 583.

So rather than some universal, communal alternative perspective, our commitment must be to the interplay of a motet of multiple perspectives, or what Hartsock dubs “concrete multiplicity.”¹⁴⁹ With this approach, a non-centered perspective, while it holds important epistemic advantage, is not automatically the full-stop final word and cannot become romanticized as a producer of total or incontrovertible truth. It does not simply replace the dominant perspective and its claims. The dominant perspective must also be engaged in the interplay; it cannot simply be ignored and dismissed, “even if it can be shown to be partial and perverse.”¹⁵⁰

Additionally, when considering the consequences that comes from a knower’s situatedness, we must also consider an inversely related problem that can emerge: epistemic injustice. In addition to wielding epistemic advantage, non-centered and non-privileged perspectives are more susceptible to this kind of injustice, which philosopher Miranda Fricker has described as experiencing “a deflated level of credibility.”¹⁵¹ In short, hearers of testimony grant credibility based on their perceptions of speakers, and when factors of social identity like race, gender, and culture lead hearers to determine a speaker is less likely to be knowledgeable or less likely to be telling the truth, they are treating that speaker as a less-than epistemic agent. The problem can stem from individual prejudiced hearers for sure, but Fricker contends much of the problem emanates from the root cause of widespread structures and systems of unequal social power. Unsurprisingly knowers who already bear the brunt of social asymmetries (people of color, women, the poor, queer people) more often face epistemic and testimonial injustice.

¹⁴⁹ Katherine Welton, “Nancy Hartsock’s Standpoint Theory: From Content to ‘Concrete Multiplicity,’” *Women & Politics* 18, no. 3 (1998): 7–24.

¹⁵⁰ Welton, “Nancy Hartsock’s Standpoint Theory,” 11.

¹⁵¹ Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1. A great, related discussion of *epistemic oppression* comes from Kristie Dotson, “A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33, no. 1 (2012): 24–47.

In the classroom vignette, Harris is a holder of epistemic advantage. Many factors already outlined above, like his race, age, and gender, make his situated position *socially* non-centered and non-privileged but also generate the particular means he has to gather social evidence. The conditions of, the workings of, the results of the policing of Black neighborhoods — there is a way these can be seen only by Black people living there; by those made to experience the issue materially; by those the power, bureaucracy, and violence work upon. Harris’s standpoint gives him direct access to this evidence, and his testimony reflects it. When wondering about the rest of the vignette, we can imagine a version in which the group recognizes Harris’s epistemic advantage and deems his account insightful, rigorous, and fruitful. But they do not go on to assume that his would be the same testimony given by any or every Black person, every young man, or every resident Chicagoan. There is no perspective for which Harris acts as sole representative. If there are fellow students of color, or young men, or city dwellers also in the class, they will then offer their own testimonies, which might overlap in ways with Harris’s, underscore the account, and heap evidence onto the claims. But more likely these others will diverge in their experiences and their testimony, and offer conflicting evidence, and thus force the group to face the complexity of epistemic advantage and to navigate a smattering of claims. Of course all of this depends on whether Harris is the only Black student in the class, or city kid, or the only speaker offering up testimony from a non-centered standpoint. Without concrete multiplicity *in the room*, large swaths of testimony and knowledge claims go missing.¹⁵² The

¹⁵² The compositional make-up of the group is crucial here, as is the full participation of members. Even when folks are present but are not participating, are not testifying, or are silenced, the power and the effects of the multiplicity are missing. More on these considerations will come in Chapter 4. For more on *compositional diversity* in higher education see: Lorenzo DuBois Baber, “Considering the Interest-Convergence Dilemma in STEM Education,” *The Review of Higher Education* 38, no. 2 (2015): 251–270; Liliana M. Garces and Uma M. Jayakumar, “Dynamic Diversity: Toward a Contextual Understanding of Critical Mass,”

other possibility is that Harris could experience epistemic injustice at the hands of the group. His testimony could be disregarded, doubted, or dismissed outright, and he could be treated as, and thought of as, a subpar and nonequal knower among them.

The other perspective in this case, in the portion of the action we can see, is Erin's. Erin is white and she considers herself part of the law enforcement community, so on both accounts her perspective is socially centered, and in regards to being a law officer, it is materially advantaged as well. (The law enforcement position is one with access to concrete physical power, violent tools, financial resources, and state-granted authority.) Erin's claims are steeped in her own particular context, so their situated nature is very clear, and we can see how she likely came to her claims. She shares social evidence from her parents' reports and from anecdotes she remembers, and she makes a connection between her current training experiences and the experience of Adam Toledo's shooter. Erin's perspective is important insofar as it adds to or adds toward a multiplicity of perspectives, and its expression counters Harris's and starts the process of interplay between perspectives. But it does not hold epistemic advantage in the way that Harris's perspective does in this case.

Harris and Erin's example shows how knowledge claims, under this framework, are specific, concrete, and bounded. How neither can offer a transcendent, universal claim about what happened in the case of Adam Toledo or about police violence generally, but how both can offer particular, detailed claims tied to their situated perspective and limited by that perspective (at least at their telling). It also shows how knowledge claims are not simply there and available to any knower, not perpetually accessible by all knowers. Claims are *first* the knowledge claims

Educational Researcher 43, no. 3 (2014): 115–124; and Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony L. Antonio, "Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective," (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2005).

of *this* knower. What Harris claims cannot initially be known by Erin, nor can he know hers. Great swaths of experience and social evidence fall outside of a perspective, outside of the view available to a knower.

It is easy to see how opponents seize on the partial and limited nature of situated knowledge as a weakness by drawing its partialness as partiality. Situated knowledge claims cannot be objectively true, the argument goes, if they are not uniformly accessible and are biased toward a particular agent. Situated knowledge claims are too subjective to serve as proper knowledge claims or as appropriate supporting evidence. Admittedly, situated knowledge claims are not neutral in the sense that they are un-skewed toward one agent or another — they are deeply tied to their particular knower *on purpose*. Nor are situated knowledge claims universally or uniformly accessible either — knowers cannot initially know or attain that which originates outside of their own situatedness. But within the feminist epistemological approach, these traits are not problems because they actually *lend* objectivity. Philosopher Donna Haraway reminds us that, “Objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence. ... Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge.”¹⁵³ The initial, crucial claim about being specifically grounded and embodied in the world means knowledge is more reflective of reality when it emanates from the lived reality of a location, not separated from it.

A related critique worries that this thinking about situated, socialized knowledge is actually *sociology* of knowledge. Looking to subjective elements tells us about judgments, values, and social factors of people but not about the “material truth” of claims. That is, within this approach there is no way for us to learn or judge the “intrinsic truth, worth, beauty, or

¹⁵³ Haraway, “Situated Knowledges,” 582.

comparative value or validity” of claims because the focus is on the “subjective meaning for the human agents involved” and how those agents came to hold those meanings rather than on the relationship between the claims and reality.¹⁵⁴ Epistemologist Gerard De Gré, in an early defense of social epistemology, clarifies that the approach is simply an “epistemological position which attempts to infer from the findings of gnosis-sociology certain hypotheses concerning the relationship between propositions and *that which* the propositions are about.”¹⁵⁵ Like De Gré I hold that we can of course infer from social factors some sort of material truth because social factors, social evidence, and the subjective particularities of an agent’s context are all grounded in the real world. The social evidence illuminated out of socially situated positions helps reveal material truths about the things in question: how things are experienced, how they are enacted, their eventual effects, how they are understood in real time. What claims about things *mean to* the epistemic agents involved *is a part of* those things.

What these challenges express is concern about objectivity and truth. Challengers believe that a situated, contextual approach makes the subsequent knowledge claims unverifiable or unjustifiable. Striving for truth actually finds no quarrel here; the previous chapter’s critique of the marketplace shared the same motivation, while this chapter offers its own account of achieving objectivity and converging upon answers. But ensuring objectivity seems like a problem to these challengers only because they hold tight to the view that knowers are individual agents, expected to undertake the epistemic process independently on their own. With a shift in assumption — that knowers are instead inherently and interdependently connected with other knowers — the ground is set for a justificatory process that is shared among agents and makes

¹⁵⁴ Gerard De Gré, “The Sociology of Knowledge and the Problem of Truth,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2, no. 1 (1941): 111.

¹⁵⁵ De Gré, “The Sociology of Knowledge and the Problem of Truth,” 115.

use of their multiplicity. I turn now to explore the basics of this assumption and of socialized justification.

The Concept of Interdependent Knowers

The other crucial concept to take from social and feminist epistemological traditions is the connectedness of knowers and perspectives. Miranda Fricker nicely summarizes the shift in thinking that lies at its heart:

We tend to think of the socialness of social epistemology largely in terms of a lateral expansion across social space. The expansion shifts the philosophical focus from the lone individual of so much traditional epistemology — the individual who wonders whether he really knows this is his hand before him, and so on — to his relations with his fellow subjects, his epistemic interactions with them, even his epistemic interdependence with them.... This kind of socialization of epistemology, then, brings with it a new, less individualistic conception of epistemic subjects. No longer conceived as lone individuals whose interactions with other individuals are epistemically incidental, we think of them as fundamentally, naturally, placed in relations of epistemic interdependence.... It marks the anti-individualist moment in epistemology.¹⁵⁶

Dissolved is the notion of knowers as atomistic individuals. Questions about knowers and knowing are reoriented away from each striving, isolated agent and toward the experiences and interactions shared by knowers. We have seen how a knower can be understood to be an

¹⁵⁶ Miranda Fricker, "Scepticism and the Genealogy of Knowledge: Situating Epistemology in Time," in *Social Epistemology*, ed. Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 51.

individual, a point in space. The particularity of that point itself (its situatedness) has been the focus of the discussion so far, and we have seen how the knower's particularities lead to multiple, specific, and rich — but nevertheless bounded — knowledge claims. However, the concept of connected or interdependent knowers indicates that those multiple points (multiple knowers) do not exist as a heap of scattershot, siloed singletons; instead they exist and operate collaboratively, in relation to each other as connected nodes in a network.¹⁵⁷

Their relations and interactions are not merely incidental or curious to consider but are a necessary element within this framework of epistemic interdependence. Because of situatedness — because situated knowers and situated knowledge are already understood to be partial and limited — connecting them becomes necessary. Perspectives both need and are needed by other perspectives. Perspectives and claims are conveyed forth, as parts making up a collective. As partial pieces among many partial pieces. Knowers communicate with and convey to each other across perspectives with the purpose of connecting their knowledge claims, of drawing them closer together.

Back in the classroom case, Harris and Erin show what effect the relation to others has on inquiry. Left on their own with no relation in place, languishing as lone agents, there does not seem to be much for Harris and Erin to do to forward their inquiry. He makes claims, from his own experience, about the dangerous results of policing; in his claims we hear the implication that racial bias motivates officers. She directly rejects his claim about racism and instead claims

¹⁵⁷ In this project, when I refer to knowers I largely mean epistemic agents working as individual agents but who are situated socially, are interactive with fellow knowers, and are engaged intersubjectively. The relationship with, meaning of, and necessity of others makes up my critique of the view of isolated, self-sufficient, individual knowers. But there are thinkers that go further and suggest collective knowing and/or community knowing (that a group or community is the entity that holds knowledge). My claim is not quite that. Instead, it is that individual knowers inherently work in concert.

that it is fear and self-defense that induces violence by officers. And while it does seem that they agree about the injustice — the utter wrongness — of Adam Toledo’s killing, they are at odds about its cause and its meaning. It is not clear whether, or how, to continue forward from the impasse. The case reveals that even with a variety of perspectives and claims, the enterprise has pitfalls; chasms can open between knowers who are different, and their knowledge claims can appear incommensurable. Particularities and contexts source the knowers’ claims in valuable ways, but we are left stuck, unable to converge upon and produce knowledge, when the relationship of participants is unaccounted for.

Marketplace proponents would cite this as the exact moment for Harris and Erin’s claims to start to compete and contend for acceptance and ascendancy. Admittedly, participants and claims in the marketplace *do* have relationships and *are* interactive — but the relationships are based on competition and elimination, in spirit and in structure. Recall Burbules’s description of this type of relation to fellow knowers as *critical*, meaning one is inherently skeptical of others and primarily doubts them. One assumes this stance in order to drive questioning and judgment of others’ knowledge claims. But the previous chapter highlighted the problems for converging upon truth that critical relations can bring, largely because they mistake competitiveness for accuracy.

Recall too that Burbules borrows the term “separate knowing” for this critical type of relation, with “connected knowing” standing as its foil.¹⁵⁸ The latter exhibits an *inclusive* relation among knowers, meaning one primarily believes others and grants initial, provisional plausibility to their knowledge claims. In this stance, knowers attempt to clarify and build understanding

¹⁵⁸ Burbules borrows these terms from Mary Belenky et al, *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (1986) in his Chapter 6 discussion of dialogue types. Nicholas C. Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (New York, Teachers College Press, 1993), 111.

together. Inclusivity, with its believing and beckoning of each knower, is what draws knowers together into an interdependent network and tips the action in a different direction than marketplace debate. With all participants there to collectively contribute, a more collaborative process begins so that, as Longino describes, “Knowledge is produced not by individuals as individuals but by communities — that is, by individuals in interaction with each other.”¹⁵⁹ Because their interaction builds toward shared understanding, each participant becomes an important part of the shared effort, and the relation between them reflects how valuable and how needed each participant is.

The Process of Shared Scrutiny

Just as our orientation toward other people matters in inquiry, so does our orientation to knowledge, which Burbules illustrates with his *convergent/divergent* distinction. *Convergent* types are teleological in nature, are aimed in a particular direction, and have a particular end point they are moving toward. Convergent means “resolvable into a consensus around a correct answer.”¹⁶⁰ *Divergent* types, however, are irresolvably plural and have plural meanings, ambiguity, and multiple interpretations at play. While shared inquiry may appear divergent because it begins with the generation of multiple situated knowledge claims, it turns out to be a model of inquiry that is convergent. This is thanks to its justificatory process of shared scrutiny.

Within the project of shared scrutiny, each knower has responsibility to critically examine claims together. Challenges, questions, analysis, and tests of demonstrability — what Longino alternately calls “critical interchange” and “intersubjective criticism” — serve to secure adequacy for the claim. To be fair, the marketplace model also calls for challenging and testing

¹⁵⁹ Longino, “Essential Tensions,” 96.

¹⁶⁰ Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 110.

claims. But rather than scrutinize in order to make decisions about retention or elimination, this model evaluates in order to co-build or co-construct toward an understanding that participants all share. Shared scrutiny generates knowledge that Longino describes as, “constituted from the interaction of opposed styles and/or points of view.”¹⁶¹ I add that this knowledge is what emerges when knowers, together, mine the perspectives and knowledge of the network and shake out from all nodes what is usable, what sticks, and what works for the inquiry at hand. They collectively identify evidence or detail to be shuttled out of a perspective and across to all others. They consider all aspects of claims, compare and reconcile what they can, and move toward solutions or understandings that answer — somehow address — the line of inquiry. Knowers and their perspectives work together, cooperatively, rather than face off competitively, and their collaborative criticism reflects a spirit of accumulation and accrual, rather than a spirit of exposing, whittling, or prevailing. Knowers participate in and contribute to the justification process rather than survive it.

Burbules describes a similar mode of questioning claims that does not uphold the “critical purpose of rejecting alternatives, but (is) directed toward determining the reasons, evidence, and experiences that underlie them, as a way of understanding and assessing them more accurately.”¹⁶² In such a mode, the different claims made by knowers “can become synergistic, generating new understandings through the process of building ideas upon one another.”¹⁶³ That is, the interchange process *grows* the claims in question, refines or adjusts them, makes them more complex and valuable. This is collaborative criticism that aims for transformation and change, for mutually furthering or structuring the claim(s). Knowledge claims are not fixed in

¹⁶¹ Longino, “Essential Tensions,” 94.

¹⁶² Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 116.

¹⁶³ Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching*, 116.

this model; they can adapt and shift. And relatedly, knowers shift as well — one changes one's mind in light of shared scrutiny and the articulation and building of new understandings.

A look back into the classroom vignette helps illustrate this part of the model. The class has a second act in store, which begins when the knowers resist the move to pit themselves in competitive debate and instead show signs of connected interdependence and a knack for collaborative, shared scrutiny.

After Harris and Erin's brief exchange ends, one student on the far side of the room, Liana, pipes up. "It seems like the idea of racism is a big part of this." Several students nod along to her comments. "Like, whether it's really what's going on with the cops, or whether you think that's unfair to say, I believe it is still the main idea in all of this." "Or, it's violence," suggests Scott, "because that is being assumed all around. The officer thinks the kid is going to be armed and violent toward him, but the kid also believes the officers are violent so he runs away. Everyone is threatened by it and everyone acts on that." Harris eyes Scott and sighs loudly; he is ready to re-engage. "Yeah," he says, "I think that violence is always in the air. Guess that's what I was trying to say about my neighborhood. It's like already assumed to be violent." For the first time since pitching the assignment to the class, the instructor stands up; she writes just two terms on the board: 'Racism' and 'Violence.'

Another student, Jasmine, leans forward to add, "I know what Harris means, because in Milwaukee where I'm from, it's similar. Police roll up already ready to start something, without anything even happening yet. For example, my aunt's birthday party last year was a block party just in front of the house. They

got balloons and some guy was DJing from a tent, and grown-ups were hanging around, clowning around, and yes, drinking some. But then two cruisers just sped up to come check things out, and got into my uncle's and my grandpa's faces, saying they didn't want any trouble. One cop was like lingering his hand over his gun the whole time. The whole party was soured. Assuming that a family party equals trouble or violence is a racist assumption, I think. How else would you explain that?"

Erin sees it is time to speak up. "Ok, so, there is a lot of assumption flying around for sure. The Chicago officer, I don't know his personal motivations but perhaps he did make the assumption that he was facing violence. The stress of that would lead to his action." "Right," Liana repeats, "but what was behind his assumption? About a child?" The whole group sits with this comment for a few beats and to the board the instructor adds 'Assumptions.'

*Daniel, in the front row, raises his hand instead of jumping right in to speak. "I'd just bring in another example," he says, "that's also somewhat recent. In Minnesota there was that driver, Duante Wright, who got pulled over and was being apprehended for something, and while the officers tried to cuff him he struggled away. One cop yelled out 'Taser!' but then pulled her firearm and shot him. It was like she thought she was doing the low-risk thing she was trained to do but then made the worst error. All the training in the world went out the window when she was in the middle of it."*¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Matt Sepic, Nina Moini, Peter Cox, and Tim Nelson, "Brooklyn Center Chief: Cop Meant to Use Taser on Wright; Curfew in Effect in Metro Area," *Minnesota Public Radio website*, April

“So, you agree with Erin then?” Liana presses. Daniel shakes his head.

“No, it’s not really sides, right? I guess I think training’s not a good way to think about it. More training, better training — Duante Wright shows that’s obviously not the solution. After that happened in Minnesota, I researched the police incidents in my hometown for a class project, a suburb outside of Milwaukee. In the last 20 years during my lifetime, no shootings. And excessive force complaints filed against officers are like half of the amount as Milwaukee PD.” Jasmine nods and confirms, “It happens a lot there.”

“Happens a lot,” Harris repeats slowly. “I am also saying what Daniel is, like the flip side of the coin. My neighborhood is all Black, is assumed to be violent, and is treated as such. Whereas Daniel, from what I know — am I right? — grew up in a White pretty wealthy neighborhood. I don’t think it’s because they hired all the perfect, patient cops in the world! Those neighbors are assumed to be safe or compliant or whatever and get treated as such. Aren’t all officers trained to just literally talk it out, de-escalate, help solve the problem? And not hover their hand over their holster all the time? Why can’t we get cops like that?” Erin has more to say about training again: “Yes, the best is to use de-escalation tactics and never use force. Good officers are good at doing that and at really knowing who they work with.” She admits that these examples are making her think and show how officers are unattuned to the neighborhoods they are serving,

12, 2021; and “What to Know About the Death of Duante Wright,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2021.

if they are leaping straight to violence, danger, and quick reactions. Liana asks to confirm that the class is like a hypothetical community relations board, and the instructor nods yes. “Well then,” she says “it seems like we might have at least a first step for our solution — have a relationship with the community.”

The students offer detailed examples of shared scrutiny in action, the first of which is Liana’s mining of valuable, usable parts out of the claims put in play by Harris and Erin. She extracts from their earlier exchange a commonality, a running undercurrent on both sides, about the role of racism. Similarly, Scott extracts a theme of violence. Neither forwards, yet, additional claims on top of Harris or Erin’s but rather tags and reports what they notice. Harris then eyes Scott and sighs — the slightest moment of hesitation — making us wonder whether he wants to change course and debate back *against* Scott on this idea of violence. Harris, however, engages the point in a different way. He confirms Scott, in part, but also pulls Scott’s point back toward his own claims, highlighting the idea of assumptions as the helpful addition to his own perspective. Suddenly Jasmine finds a way in, thanks to this synthesis of concepts, and offers a rich, detailed example that seems to underscore Harris’s perspective on assumptions of violence. It also makes the first connection from the theme of violent assumptions back to the theme of racism. As this interchange proceeds, we see the original claims grow and become more complex.

Erin doubles down and sticks to her claims about the Chicago officer’s fear for his own safety, but this addition is not purely obstinate or antagonistic. She confirms something valuable for the group: that officers get overwhelmed by their assumptions about violence. In her way, Erin is trying to find the thread from her perspective to the group’s unfolding conceptual themes.

Liana of course sees the connection right away and pushes Erin to go further, to connect that point to the theme of racism as well, just as Jasmine has done.

Then Daniel's contributions introduce more complexity to the inquiry. Sharing the example of Duante Wright's killing is a way for Daniel to reach *toward* Erin's perspective, take up her claims about officer training, then pull them back into the interchange to adjust them. He acknowledges that the officer was fully stressed in that situation *and* suggests Erin's conclusions do not follow from that fact. But Daniel explicitly rejects the trope of taking sides in some kind of argument. He sees his perspective both aligns with and opposes parts of others' perspectives, and he pushes toward interaction with them regardless. The data about his hometown police versus Milwaukee police creates a confirming connection between his perspective and Jasmine's, a connection that is forgeable despite all of the other differences in their situations. From this, Harris is again able to find ideas — vocabulary and evidence from Daniel's project — that he can make use of and shuttle back toward his own perspective. His original claim has grown and has been built out into a more complicated (and more buttressed) response. In fact, something about the claim Harris comes to regarding de-escalation training makes its way through to Erin, and she recognizes some agreement with him about officers' connections to the neighborhoods they serve. It marks the start of a significant, achieved convergence within the inquiry.

The participants of this shared scrutiny engage in critical interchange but do so without veering into competition. Their perspectives and claims may be opposed (begin opposed), but the knowers are not *opponents*. Neither do they seek to strike a kumbaya tone, that is, a frictionless feel-good unity throughout the group. In such a mode, the relation among knowers, and its preservation and positivity, would be the goal above all else, even above the goal of converging upon truth. In the mode of shared scrutiny, however, the relation among knowers is a means to

the goal of convergence; specifically, their interaction and interchange provides the crucial force to further claims and to draw knowers and their perspectives toward shared understanding. Their interdependence, discussed above, is clearly key as well. Without the networking or connectedness of each knower to others, Jasmine's detailed testimony would lose some of its weight, would remain untethered and unconsolidated with Harris's, and both would be poorer for it. A moment like Daniel's differentiation-yet-alignment with Jasmine would not be possible either. The important differences in their situatedness would wash out without the other as contrast nearby, and the powerful similarity at the heart of their respective claims would not get confirmed. Neither support for nor the adjustment of others' claims could get off the ground in a context of siloed individual knowers. Even more striking, a knower would lack the tension and interchange needed to grow their own claims.

Benefits and Limitations of Shared Inquiry

Shared inquiry turns out to be a good model of inquiry. Firstly, it alleviates the need for an individual epistemic agent to achieve objectivity by compartmentalizing away their subjectivity and experience. Being interdependent among others, maintaining a particular and situated perspective, and sharing in the process of justification lightens the load and dispels the impossible, mythical standard of the self-reliant, neutral knower. Additionally, knowers' knowing improves. Situatedness runs a risk of keeping agents bound within their perspectives, with what they can see, experience, and claim dictated by their particularities, if those particularities go unquestioned. For such agents, thinking or knowing can easily be scripted by who and where they are. But thanks to the interdependence of the knower network and critical interchange of shared scrutiny, agents have the ability to cultivate and grow their own claims. For example, I suggest that Harris does not fully know all that he claims until *after* the critical

interchange with the others begins. That is, he sees the depth and complexity of his ideas about police assumptions once the categories and vocabulary start to emerge from the group. He can find and convey the full force of his example of his Chicago neighborhood once Daniel provides the foil of his own Wisconsin hometown. In a way, Harris and the others do not fully know what they know *until* they engage in interchange with each other. The process of shared scrutiny makes their claims, concrete and valuable at the start, all that much richer and more complex.

Shared inquiry is also a good model because it offers good reasons for the inquiry group to assert that its socially and intersubjectively scrutinized claims are true. Their multiplicity ensures a stronger process. Consider what Katherine Phillips, researcher of management and business ethics, found with colleagues in a 2016 experiment in which political opposition led participants to communicate better with each other about their differing perspectives: “When disagreement comes from a socially different person, we are prompted to work harder. Diversity jolts us into cognitive action in ways that homogeneity simply does not.” Phillips goes on to explain, “when members of a group notice that they are socially different from one another, they change their expectations. They anticipate differences of opinion and perspective. They assume they will need to work harder to come to a consensus.”¹⁶⁵ What Phillips names is that in some ways we already, automatically prime ourselves to work toward convergence when faced with multiplicity, and we do *better* at it when diverse and multiple participation obtains. This improved process yields improved, more rigorous objectivity. Scrutiny and justification are also multiplied across the diversity of participants sharing the process. That is, the more multiple and inclusive the inquiry group, the greater the chance of more biases revealed, more errors caught,

¹⁶⁵ Katherine W. Phillips, “How Diversity Makes Us Smarter,” *Greater Good Science Center UC–Berkeley website*, September 18, 2017, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_diversity_makes_us_smarter.

more assumptions troubled, and more testimony and social evidence to support claims. A better, more accurate account of the world emerges. Rather than an adjective describing a static trait of inquiry, or of a knowledge product itself, objectivity is active and is produced, developed out of the shared process of critical interchange. The objectivity of this model is thus something that is *achieved*.

Of course this model has limitations to consider as well. We cannot underestimate or forget about the social, political, and power dynamics that flow through any enactment of intersubjective scrutiny. Lorraine Code describes the trouble:

Giving and receiving testimony, privately (in one-on-one exchanges) or publicly, is complicated by differences in privilege, credibility, and understanding. Giving and receiving testimony is rarely a discrete event: it requires negotiating differences in privilege and complexities, in the participants' ability to communicate across differences of power, privilege, and articulateness.¹⁶⁶

Some perspectives will be prone to dismissal or have a harder time with clarity or communication, while others carry excess privilege or trust at particular times. As work in epistemic injustice shows, these testimonial problems will follow the contours of broader social and political power asymmetries, which will always already be a part of our multiplicitous inquiry groups.¹⁶⁷ Attempting to successfully bridge across perspectives, accept and take seriously others' testimony, and also critique certain stances requires that we attend to these

¹⁶⁶ Lorraine Code, "Testimony, Advocacy, Ignorance: Thinking Ecologically about Social Knowledge," in *Social Epistemology*, ed. Adrian Haddock, Alan Millar, and Duncan Pritchard (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48.

¹⁶⁷ Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*; Dotson, "A Cautionary Tale;" and especially Narayan, "Working Together across Difference."

social and power dynamics and notice how they are affecting and altering the shared inquiry under way.

We must also acknowledge that because of the way it is designed and pursued, “intersubjective criticism has the consequence that knowledge is constituted by the interaction of opposed styles and/or points of view.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, the dialectical power of scrupulous interchange comes from the difference or opposition between claims. But at times, divergent perspectives may be unable to synthesize and move toward convergence — moments of impasse or incommensurability can be expected, causing inquiry to stall out. If the opposition is too sharp, hostile, or eliminative, we can expect these moments that have the potential to halt inquiry.

In the final chapter of this dissertation I undertake a fuller discussion of these challenges regarding power, asymmetries, incommensurability, and epistemic injustice. But first, in the coming chapter, I look at what makes shared inquiry possible and keeps it going. I examine what pedagogical conditions and practices of the college classroom support knowers and foster their shared scrutiny and inclusive, convergent inquiry. In her tracing of the legacy of feminist epistemology, Katherine Welton worries that notions of justification, scrutiny, and communities of inquirers are undertheorized; she laments there is no sufficient account of how exactly we are to *do* communal knowledge production.¹⁶⁹ With some help from the community of inquiry tradition, as well as from intergroup dialogue facilitation, I intend to show that there is plenty of thinking and discussion about how to enact in a classroom the shared inquiry model I have been advocating.

¹⁶⁸ Longino, “Essential Tensions,” 107.

¹⁶⁹ Welton, “Nancy Hartsock's Standpoint Theory,” 19.

CHAPTER 4

ENACTING SHARED INQUIRY IN THE COLLEGE CLASSROOM

Introduction

What we now have in hand is a picture of shared inquiry as inquiry that is both inclusive and convergent. Participants' particular, situated perspectives; partial, grounded knowledge claims; interdependently connected knowers; critical interchange; shared scrutinous justification — the previous chapter drew together these epistemological elements to form the model of shared inquiry. And while Chapter 3's vignettes allowed us to briefly peek at shared inquiry in action, that action served to support and illustrate the epistemological concepts at work. A move beyond epistemology now seems needed. In this chapter I shift the discussion squarely into the classroom space and explore how shared inquiry might be enacted in the context of a college course. I suggest an instructional model that is based upon the theoretical epistemological framework of the last chapter. To illustrate this instructional model I outline certain instructional practices, pedagogical commitments, and classroom conditions that foster inclusiveness, convergence, and ultimately, shared inquiry.

While these practices all tie back to the epistemological concepts of shared inquiry, some may also support or tie back to other, different instructional models. In other words, I acknowledge that a host of thinkers and a range of traditions could serve as worthy interlocutors in this discussion of enactment. For example, insights from critical pedagogy are valuable and aligned to the shared inquiry model. Freire understood that “one cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity”¹⁷⁰ and identified agents' realities, experiences, and interests as the

¹⁷⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 50.

generative origins of learning. The “starting point” of any educational program is the “present, existential, concrete situation” that lies before participants, that is, “their *situation* in the world.”¹⁷¹ These social realities then birth the relevant problems and thematic investigations that participants undertake together. Critical pedagogy, like shared inquiry, centers the particularities and social situatedness of participants.

Similarly, a driving tenet of student-centered instructional models is that participants have autonomy and power over their own learning. In one form or another, these approaches advocate that participants are proficient educational agents who guide their own educational processes; they also center lived experience as educationally valuable. Consider Maria Montessori’s vision of very young participants: “we must respect religiously, reverently, (their) first indications of individuality.”¹⁷² She warns that education cannot impose any “arbitrary acts” upon the natural, spontaneous, “complete unfolding” of their individual lives. Dewey may eschew such an extreme stance where the child “is the starting point, the center, and the end”¹⁷³ of learning, but his calls for school to be like a little world for children, thick with the spirit of social interests, and for students to undertake activities driven by their natural inclinations and experiences, all also rely on students discovering and constructing knowledge. Insofar as they shift focus, responsibility, and power onto participants themselves and their experience, student-centered approaches like these enjoy a likeness with shared inquiry. And of course beyond this point about being participant-centric, Dewey aligns fundamentally with the models of shared

¹⁷¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 95–96.

¹⁷² Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method: Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in the Children's Houses* (New York: Stokes, 1912), 87–88.

¹⁷³ John Dewey, *The School and Society and The Child and the Curriculum* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 187.

inquiry and community of inquiry. His lifetime of philosophical work could be said to make up the foundations of our understanding of social inquiry and inquiry as process.

Then there are works that center dialogue, discussion, and deliberation, all of which concern themselves with the ways participants use each others' perspectives for learning, interpreting, and understanding together. Recall Burbules's work on dialogue, first mentioned in Chapter 2. He makes clear that dialogue can take a variety of forms, that instructors can make various pedagogical choices, and that participants can switch into, out of, and between modes of dialogue depending on their learning aims. Ultimately Burbules maintains that "dialogue is a kind of *social relation* that needs to be actively created and maintained."¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Paulo Freire, in dialogue with Ira Shor about what they call the dialogical method, calls dialogue an "epistemological relation;" even more than a means of securing knowledge about a thing or an idea, "dialogue *seals* the relationship between the cognitive subjects, the subjects who know, and who try to know."¹⁷⁵ Instructional models of dialogue or discussion share with shared inquiry this conceptual reliance on the intersubjectivity of participants.

Yet these endorsements of the importance of knowers, their social situatedness, and their relationality do not fully amount to or equal what I have highlighted as epistemologically significant in shared inquiry. Significance comes from knowers' networked interdependence and collaboration, from the epistemological action that takes place between and among them. That is, the full set of knowers — the inquiry group — is the significant entity in shared inquiry and means we must explore what the inquiry group itself does to ensure its own inclusive,

¹⁷⁴ Nicholas C. Burbules, "Varieties of Educational Dialogue," *Philosophy of Education Society* (1990): 130.

¹⁷⁵ Ira Shor and Paulo Freire, "What is the 'Dialogical Method' of Teaching?" *Journal of Education* 169, no. 3 (1987): 13, emphasis in original.

convergent, shared inquiry. So while many of my questions here are familiar in many pedagogical traditions, when it comes to fully enacting the shared inquiry I propose, consideration of the group itself is crucial. For this reason I have found the most relevant insights come from the community of inquiry tradition because of its clear, square framing of knowers *as a group*. Community of inquiry thinking acknowledges and accounts for the collective and its shared epistemological action.¹⁷⁶ I will primarily draw on elements of this tradition — and related practical fields like intergroup dialogue facilitation — to help support and illustrate my claims about the enactment of the shared inquiry model in the classroom.

Throughout this chapter I explore how certain commitments, responsibilities, and practices on the part of the inquiry group affect the success of shared inquiry. Beyond the practices that have to do with conducting shared inquiry, inquiry groups also practice a kind of self-regulation, or, maintenance of the functioning and the relations of the group itself. I also focus on instructors and the particular part they play in inquiry and with the group; theirs is a delicate and always-developing role that requires deep expertise, intuition, and experience partaking in shared inquiry themselves. Along the way I will also track the limitations of inquiry-in-action and those conditions that make it hard to *do* shared inquiry. Some of the instructional model may be practically difficult or unlikely to enact, but there may nevertheless be ways to

¹⁷⁶ Again, this is not to say that the notion of knowers in groups is absent in other traditions/approaches. Discussion approaches, for example, see knowers acting in and among others; Freirean critical pedagogy in particular acknowledges the necessity and the power of knowers identifying themselves as part of broader social and political groups. The community of inquiry tradition takes the notion of the group further, though, positing that the group itself has epistemic power and responsibility in the inquiry. So here I explore what happens, pedagogically, when we treat the group itself in such a way. Engaging the other traditions as interlocutors would yield great, and likely different, pedagogical insights — a terrific seed for a future project.

promote and pursue shared inquiry as a regulative ideal even in the midst of institutional and logistical limitations.

The Inquiry Group

The Process of Inquiry

Because the inquiry group holds such primary importance in the shared inquiry model I have been forwarding, it is only natural to start our look inside the classroom with the group itself. We have covered the epistemological elements that shared inquiry entails, and to some extent what shared inquiry looks like as it unfolds, thanks to the vignettes of the last chapter. Scholar of education David Kennedy explores what and how groups learn to undertake inquiry, and it is worth quoting at length how he describes the action of an inquiry group.

On the most visible level, (inquiry) is made up of the skills of group dialogue, and includes simple but necessary discursive behavior — not always easily learned — like restating the positions of others, summarizing, calling for clarification, asking for or offering examples and definitions, pointing out contradictions, connecting and distinguishing ideas, building on another's idea, attempting to delineate the steps of the argument so far, disciplining oneself and others in the interests of full and balanced participation, suggesting new or related directions, calling for a slowing down or a speeding up of the dialogue, and so forth.¹⁷⁷

Kennedy alludes to the fact that this basic level of enactment can be difficult for groups to learn to do. While a skilled instructor can facilitate their initiation into the inquiry process, a

¹⁷⁷ David Kennedy, "The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry," *Metaphilosophy* 35, no. 4 (2004): 15.

discussion of which we will turn to shortly, what is key here is that the process itself is the group's focus. It aims to practice and become good at *doing* inquiry, that is, commits to shared procedural principles and the attendant skills and practices that will carry the process through.

As these skills and moves are attempted, and as the process catches on, the group becomes more effective and confident in their use. Also, the group itself begins to change; as the community of inquiry approach suggests, putting the inquiry process into practice starts to constitute the shared identity of the group, to build a sense of solidarity. In their review of the theoretical underpinnings of community of inquiry, Michael Pardales and Mark Girod cite this created solidarity — “group solidarity through dialogical inquiry” — as the top element in group formation. Also key: “the primacy of activity and reflection,” “learning to employ cognitive tools,” “fostering cognitive skills through dialogical practice,” “joining together in cooperative reasoning,” and “internalization of the overt cognitive behavior of the community.”¹⁷⁸ The group forms and becomes itself *through* its shared action — enacting inquiry behaviors, skills, and practices together is what makes a group an *inquiry* group.

Beyond the effects on the group itself, the second result stemming from the activity of inquiry is the eventual emergence of what we might call inquiry products. “The community of inquiry,” philosopher Matthew Lipman assures, “is not aimless.” He goes on: “It is a process that aims at producing a product — at some kind of settlement or judgment, however partial and tentative this may be.”¹⁷⁹ Recall that shared inquiry, after all, is a convergent endeavor, and what is converged upon is not necessarily a full and final answer or truth, but rather the eventual

¹⁷⁸ Michael J. Pardales and Mark Girod, “Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future,” *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38, no. 3 (2006): 305.

¹⁷⁹ Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 83.

understanding built by the group, which grows out of intervening themes, clarifications, examples and counterexamples, related concepts, and provisional agreements that emerge along the way. In the action of Chapter 3's vignette, the group achieves many of these marks: identifying a trio of conceptual themes (violence, racism, making assumptions about others); highlighting the inter-relationships of those themes; offering real examples/counterexamples to illustrate claims; coming to a new, usable concept (community relationships) that may stitch together divergent perspectives. Again, nowhere do they solve police violence or provide a definitive solution for the community board assignment, but they do create shared understandings, clarifying insights, and moments of agreement.

The aim of convergence and the eventual reaching of understanding are of course also held by the marketplace of ideas model, and it is fair to acknowledge that the marketplace model shares some of the inquiry moves I describe here — critical tests of claims, interchange between participants, teleological movement toward a conclusion. But what sets shared inquiry apart as different is its collaboration and its building *toward* an eventual convergence, rather than acceptance of what remains after a process of whittling and elimination. Again, the competitive, critical logic of the market is replaced with the inclusive, community logic of the inquiry group. Ann Margaret Sharp describes a community of inquiry as having “a stance in which they (the group) consider the inquiry a collaborative process. When they truly collaborate it's a matter of we, not just personal success. It's a matter of *our* ideas, *our* achievements, and *our* progress.”¹⁸⁰ The shared identity of the group, emanating out of its shared action, again lies at the heart of understanding this difference. Let's turn back to the vignette. The understanding that the group

¹⁸⁰ Ann Margaret Sharp, “What is a ‘Community of Inquiry’?” *Analytic Teaching* 8, no. 1 (1987): 17, emphasis added.

ultimately approaches is a *shared* understanding, an understanding or product only achievable via the group process. It is not simply that the group, together, decides to adopt Harris's perspective, or Erin's perspective, or anyone else's. It is that a new, constructed idea was made along the way, constituted by elements of each of these perspectives, then altered and verified by the collective criticality of their interchange. The group's inquiry is marked by this conjoint, shared action to reach shared meaning.¹⁸¹

Maintaining the Group

Now we have some picture of the skills and group practices that constitute inquiry, the formation of the group as an entity, the group's emphasis on process first, and then its eventual convergence on answers and understandings. Yet in the real course of inquiry, things do not come about so linearly or one-dimensionally; these parts of inquiry unfold, stall, and remix themselves as the process proceeds. Kennedy offers a helpful framework for accounting for the various vectors that are active in inquiry, all at once. He dubs it a "three-way attentional split" that one develops between:

- 1) his or her personal felt sense of the argument — of what is important and what is not, of the significance of an example which has come to mind, or the sense of some missing element, or even the sense that the way in which the concept under discussion is being framed is either limited or misguided; 2) the state of the argument as a whole, apart from his or her personal appropriation of it — its emergent structure, its shape and direction, its various pieces and their relations,

¹⁸¹ D. Randy Garrison, "Theoretical Foundations and Epistemological Insights of the Community of Inquiry," in *Educational Communities of Inquiry: Theoretical Framework, Research and Practice*, ed. Zehra Akyol and D. Randy Garrison (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2013), 12.

its current contradictions, the assumptions which are not being acknowledged or explored. This is an “objective,” abstract form of attention — of watching the whole — which resists and warns against the urge for personal intervention; 3) the psychosocial state of the “collective self” as a whole — the participatory distribution of the members of the group, the sense of group attention, the affective sense of both the whole and of individuals, the awareness of subgroups, the sense of real or potential domination by one or more individuals (including herself) or subgroups, an ongoing awareness of those who are silent.¹⁸²

Kennedy maintains that facilitators will internalize this framework in their role, but additionally, a skilled or high functioning inquiry group will understand that all three of these are concurrently unfolding throughout the course of their own interchanges. The participants of the group are, on one level, engaged with their thinking about the content of the inquiry (the claims and concepts, their own questions about and reactions to it, what move they might next formulate); on another level, they are tracking the state of the inquiry itself (its structure, its various threads, its provisional conclusions). Then there is the third level Kennedy cites, which is attention toward the group’s engagement.

Within this third way of paying attention — to the state of the collective and to the tides of the group — the group is taking stock of itself (its makeup, its participation levels, its intragroup relations). In the previous section’s examination of the inquiry process, this layer of action is not directly discussed, even though it is a vital part of what a group ultimately does. As part of the group’s intentional and explicit attention to the process of inquiry, it concerns itself with itself. To ensure that the inquiry process is effective and successful, the group gauges its

¹⁸² Kennedy, “The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry,” 25.

own operations and relations, then calibrates accordingly. This practice of self-maintenance or self-regulation should not be surprising, argues philosopher Maughn Gregory, when we consider the group already holds a commitment to what he calls self-correction; throughout the process of critical interchange and scrutiny, they conduct all sorts of corrections, such as “noticing one another’s fallacies, building on one another’s examples and interpretations, evaluating one another’s arguments, and replicating one another’s experiments.”¹⁸³ Self-correction is merely another way to talk about shared inquiry’s epistemological commitment to shared scrutiny and justification. And self-regulation by the group just takes the commitment to correction-through-scrutiny and reflexively turns it right back upon the group itself.

The life of the group, its status, its dynamics — all of these factors can affect elements such as participation, which claims and testimonies get expressed, the group’s capacity for criticality and scrutiny, and its capacity for collaboration. Diminishment of any of these elements diminishes the inquiry process, and it is the group that is ultimately responsible for the inquiry process. Part of ensuring an effective inquiry process is ensuring the group is an effective inquiry group.

Responsibility for the inquiry develops over time as the group continues its inquiry practice and deepens its formation into a community of inquiry. They must be skilled enough to recognize within their own inquiry what content, concepts, pieces, and moves are effective, and alternately, what is hampering their process. They must be able to clearly and honestly reflect on the group’s relations and dynamics, the levels of both participation and silence, the affective state of things, and any other factors with the potential to diminish the inquiry process. And they must

¹⁸³ Maughn R. Gregory, “Constructivism, Standards, and The Classroom Community of Inquiry,” *Educational Theory* 52, no. 4 (2002): 408.

be able to articulate and then implement changes to the course, that is, attempt other inquiry moves that can keep the inquiry going. As Kennedy notes, the community of inquiry approach “trains us to make judgments which are system positive, to become enablers and facilitators of the system.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, through doing the process of inquiry the group becomes ever more committed to the process of inquiry, and to itself as the doer of inquiry, which leads the group to increasingly notice, judge, and act in whatever ways promote and support its inquiry.

Of course the inquiry group’s responsibility and self-regulation do not spontaneously appear. Growth into self-regulating inquiry takes time and guidance. “The teacher,” Gregory explains, “is the initial guardian of inquiry maxims and the monitor of the community’s practice, though it is her purpose to distribute that guardianship and responsibility for monitoring as quickly as possible, so that eventually this function is distributed equally.”¹⁸⁵ The intergroup dialogue literature offers helpful examples of how an instructor might train a group into this capacity. In group sessions, for example, the literature calls for a reflection period immediately after the group has finished a round of critical interchange and activity. Nagda and Gurin describe this practice:

Inquiry at this level may involve asking students about observations at the personal or group level: “In what ways did we engage our learning edges today? In what ways did we support each other working at our learning edges? How can we all work together to take the dialogue deeper in the upcoming sessions? Are

¹⁸⁴ Kennedy, “The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry,” 9.

¹⁸⁵ Gregory, “Constructivism, Standards, and The Classroom Community of Inquiry,” 408.

there any particular dynamics or tensions that affected our ability to dialogue fully?¹⁸⁶

The authors dub this dedicated section of a group's session the "dialogue about the dialogue." The facilitator's role is to guide the group toward habits of collective reflection and assessment of its own inquiry process and itself.

When we look to Chapter 3's vignette for illustration of the self-regulation of the group, we find that perhaps the vignette's action cuts off too early. While Harris, Erin, and the others do demonstrate a great ability to manage their own activity in the inquiry process, we do not see the group go on to assess itself reflexively, to adjust its inquiry practices, or to display pro-community commitment. The reflection period may occur once the critical interchange, which is underway during the vignette, comes to a conclusion. Nevertheless the group's ability to move itself through inquiry and toward a provisional convergence without much intervention from the instructor indicates that the group is not novice and has at least some self-regulating capacity.

The Instructor

It is time to turn to the ways instructors are crucial in supporting effective shared inquiry, in particular the curious role in which the shared inquiry and community of inquiry traditions cast them. On one hand, the role can be understood as requiring specific skills and deep experience from which to pull so that participants can absorb expert modeling of the process of inquiry. On the other hand, instructors must also disentangle from their participants and the inquiry group. Community of inquiry instructors understand that every action on their part will

¹⁸⁶ Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda and Patricia Gurin, "Chapter 2: The Practice of Intergroup Dialogue," in *Dialogue Across Difference: Practice, Theory, and Research on Intergroup Dialogue*, ed. Ximena Zúñiga, Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda, and Patricia Gurin (Russell Sage Foundation, 2013), 59.

affect the inquiry group — but so will their non-action and silence. They are responsible for the group, but never fully part of the group. The role may seem nebulous and amorphous, but this is not on account of me avoiding a clear call or ducking a firm commitment to a set of responsibilities and practices. It is that the role itself is designed to develop and is always shifting, is always in the process of becoming.

There are two reasons that this is so, and the exploration of each will be the focus of this section. First, there is the need, within the shared inquiry framework, for instructors to facilitate rather than teach. Instructors recognize that the epistemological power of shared inquiry comes from the group rather than from themselves, and they resist pressing the group toward pre-determined outcomes or final inquiry products. Facilitation is about adopting a corresponding stance, and a suite of practices and skills, that support the inquiry process rather than directly ensure outcomes of learning. The second reason for facilitators' mutable nature is related; it also stems from an understanding of inquiry groups themselves. That groups can eventually achieve self-regulation means facilitators can eventually become unnecessary. Their goal to no longer facilitate is paradoxical and hints at why it can be difficult to get a handle on what facilitators are doing — they are always in the process of passing it out of their own hands and onto the group.

Planned obsolescence is a strange and self-detrimental goal for any role, but this is of course the ideal and final state that an instructor might reach with an inquiry group. No instructor will *begin* in such a state — it is the getting to and moving toward it that is both true-to-life and interesting to explore. The following discussion of facilitators' enactments and practices bears this in mind.

Shifting to Facilitation

Think back to the fictional classroom vignette from Chapter 3. As Harris, Erin, and the rest of the group work through both halves of that session, recall that the instructor does not have a large presence in the group. The framing of the vignette perhaps implies an instructor at work behind the scenes — after all, the course itself exists, class is convened, and the police violence activity is designed and assigned — but we do not see or hear much from the instructor during the action of the group’s shared inquiry. An instructor operating within the models of shared inquiry and community of inquiry will look and sound much like our fictional friend, with little direct instruction to give. It is not the conventional view of teaching as didactic instruction. What the work is, however, is facilitating the experience that participants have, that is, guiding them as they learn to undertake the process of shared inquiry. We have seen how, within the process of shared inquiry, epistemic power is held by the participants themselves and that the epistemic work happens when they engage intersubjectively and share scrutinous, critical interchange. In other words, the action is between and among the collective of participants. The aim for the instructor of such a group, then, is to help it get this action going: introducing participants to their role as inquirers, kickstarting and modeling the process of inquiry, and supporting the group’s burgeoning self-regulation.

This process aim means that, aside from helping the group learn to undertake inquiry, instructors do not work to ensure particular fixed products or results. It is the inquiry group that bears responsibility for the inquiry it conducts, for its convergence upon answers or understandings, and for the content, arguments, steps, and exchanges along the way. Whatever inquiry products emerge come from the group’s process. Furthermore the knowledge claims, the situated perspectives, the testimony that is shared and reviewed during inquiry — all emanate

from and originate in the situatedness of participating knowers. If an instructor were to inject or steer toward particular outcomes, external and predetermined, this would misalign with the basic epistemological foundations of the model of shared inquiry. What the instructor is most expert at, and has the most experience with, is the inquiry process itself. They are an expert shared inquirer, whose role is to model inquiry and foster it within the group.

Similarly, the instructor does not perform a fixed set of practices, skills, or pedagogical moves to *make* inquiry happen. All sorts of actions, interventions, and stances are available for affecting the group and ushering them toward effective inquiry, yet two main categories of facilitation emerge. They are categories of intensity, or rather emphasis. The first has to do with the aforementioned modeling of inquiry and is comprised of essentially mild interventions. David Kennedy, in writing about the role of the facilitator in a community of philosophical inquiry, describes “relatively simple” and “visible” examples from this first category:

These are moves such as identifying an underlying assumption, restating a point as a logical proposition or as a syllogism, pointing out the necessary implications of a statement (showing what follows), identifying a contradiction, stringing a series of points together in a logical sequence.¹⁸⁷

These moves are considered light touches or mild interventions because they are equivalent to listening actively and clarifying what is already afoot in the inquiry. Claims and content are largely unaltered by the facilitator. The gathering move that the vignette instructor makes in Chapter 3 — summarizing and then naming the broad conceptual themes emerging from the group — falls into this category.

¹⁸⁷ Kennedy, “The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry,” 17.

The second category consists of facilitation moves that are more active or heavy-handed interventions, moves that will inevitably affect the group and the inquiry that is evolving. These moves are different insofar as they make facilitators much more active participants in or shapers of the inquiry. In the intergroup dialogue literature and social justice facilitation literature, these moves are framed as monitoring and redistributing moves, which aim to assess and refine the group's progression through the inquiry process. Adams, Bell, and Griffin begin their description of the category by explaining that facilitators learn, within every inquiry group, to track:

body posture, side conversations, the number of participants actively participating in a conversation, the attention given to whoever is speaking, and the animation with which participants talk to each other. Another important cue is whether participants listen to each other's comments and build on them versus 'leap-frogging' over each other's comments to make their own points.¹⁸⁸

Based on these cues and observations, facilitators can suss out how the inquiry itself is going, then act, if they see a need to get the inquiry onto better or more effective ground. Kennedy again offers a nice roundup of these stronger moves:

They include things like suggesting returning to a previous topic or moving on to another one, or the move of consciously doing nothing — for example of allowing the conversation to continue even though it seems to all but those participating at the moment to be leading nowhere — or of initiating a focusing exercise of some kind, or calling on someone who has not spoken.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, Eds., *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 2nd Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 102.

¹⁸⁹ Kennedy, "The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry," 18.

Facilitators can tip and nudge the group's exchanges and responses, can trigger engagement, can draw the group's attention, name what is happening, or question the meaning of a silence — these moves have to do with the direction and the state of the inquiry process itself. And because the relations and the operations of the group say something about the inquiry too, facilitators may sometimes act in regards to the state of the group and to its subsets and vicissitudes, in order to divert and redistribute back to the group responsibility for its own dynamics.

Of course the aim is to intervene in ways that cultivate and foster effects but do not directly dictate them to participants, as the goal of self-regulating inquiry is always in view. The facilitator's difficult work is to develop practical judgment and discernment around deploying these moves and interventions effectively. Any action — or non-action — might help the group. But the facilitator can never know for certain how effective a move will be because of the unique nature of each inquiry and each group, despite his or her tracking the group's and the inquiry's progress, forecasting their trajectories, and studying the intersubjective moments unfolding among the participants. Ultimately, skilled facilitation is not about “choosing these moves as a result of any conscious strategic calculus” but about feeling them intuitively.¹⁹⁰ Adams, Bell, and Griffin admit that much of facilitation comes down to “thinking on one's feet.”¹⁹¹ No formula or ready-made set of instructions will be of use. Instead, facilitators must internalize vast swaths of background knowledge — about the topic of inquiry, about the process of critical interchange, about the dynamics of inquiry groups — then accumulate abundant reserves of experience undertaking shared inquiry and engaging with inquiry groups. This is the way toward deeply developed, expert facilitation.

¹⁹⁰ Kennedy, “The Role of a Facilitator in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry,” 18.

¹⁹¹ Adams, Bell, and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, 90.

Yet one note should be added about the role and the responsibilities of the facilitator. While the ideal facilitator works to cultivate and indirectly engender the process, one clear and concrete responsibility is called for in the community of inquiry and intergroup dialogue literatures, largely at the outset of an inquiry and formation of the group. It is up to the facilitator to initiate and direct the creation of ground rules and standards for the inquiry and for the group; these ground rules suggest the initial operations of the inquiry process, as well as the relations of the group. Adams, Bell, and Griffin explain the purpose of these guidelines: “Identifying a set of interaction guidelines at the beginning of the course is one way to meet this responsibility (of establishing a safe environment).”¹⁹² “Safety,” in this case, is the term the authors use for the conditions that lead to full participation by all members of the inquiry group. And to “identify” these ground rules does not mean the facilitator dictates them to the group but rather asks group members themselves to identify what they need to be able to participate fully. The facilitator also asks them to describe the signs or indications that the guidelines they set are in fact working. The facilitator calls for the generation of the guidelines; their discussion, clarification, and adjustment; and then provisional agreement to them across the group. So while it is crucial that the guidelines be sketched at the outset, that the group understand and enact them earlier rather than later, and that the facilitator be transparent about them from the beginning, they do not amount to a pronouncement or decree *from* the facilitator. Even in this necessary act, the facilitator works to pass much of the power of and responsibility to the group.

This becomes clear when we see that the guidelines only fully come into being through the *doing* of the inquiry process. Listing or naming norms in the abstract, at the outset, is not what makes the group internalize them and take responsibility for their enactment; acting them

¹⁹² Adams, Bell, and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, 95.

into being via the inquiry is the way for these ground rules to become true to the group. As the action of the inquiry unfolds, revisions to the rules become apparent too. The facilitator should model for the group ways to reflect on whether it has been successful in upholding its own guidelines and ask whether they require any additions, modifications, or clarifications.¹⁹³ Ensuring a process through which these norms can be audited and revised by the group itself is another effective way to facilitate the group into becoming self-regulating.

The Paradox of Good Facilitation

What is becoming clearer about the facilitator's role is that it is tied up with that of the inquiry group. The call to track the action, judge the state of things, and choose to act according to what unfolds, puts the facilitator in perpetual response to the group and its enactments. In particular, the group's growth toward self-regulation drives significant parts of the facilitator's role. A group that becomes able to function and take responsibility for its own inquiry processes, as well as the maintenance of its relations, becomes able to meet its own needs and no longer requires a facilitator to regularly address it or to provide interventions. Many of the moves described above — especially those that get the group to take stock of the success of the inquiry under way, or to assess its own effectiveness and participation — show the facilitator acting with this goal already in mind and working to redistribute the thinking and understanding that is unfolding via the inquiry back out to the collective group. That is, the group is being trained to build its own capacities. Ultimately the role is paradoxical — doing facilitation well can lead to not doing it at all.

¹⁹³ Adams, Bell, and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, 54.

At the heart of facilitators' practice is an ongoing, continual shift of awareness, of power, and even of pedagogical responsibility, out of their own hands and back onto the group as a whole. Good facilitators are comfortable with letting go and with releasing responsibility for the inquiry and for the group, which means they can also release many of the ways in which instructors and teachers are typically expected to operate. Shifted away is the notion of instructors primarily holding power in a class, as well as the idea that instructors hold expertise (content expertise) that will be relevant and valuable to the inquiry at hand and needed by the group members. Becoming unnecessary (or less powerful, less relevant, less valuable) might be a bitter pill to swallow for facilitators who themselves have not remembered or internalized the way this model of inquiry indicates that the group stands as the source of power and expertise — that epistemologically, both emanate from the group and its shared action.

Facilitators who understand the ongoing shift back onto the group also understand two other things at once: they must let go of the group, and also, they cannot make the group go. Even great facilitation cannot *create or cause* the group to become self-regulating. Cultivation, modeling, asking, and nudging still may not be enough for certain inquiry groups to internalize and take responsibility, so plenty of facilitators remain integral and active in their support of the group, just to greater and lesser degrees. Self-regulation is a regulative ideal that plenty of groups may not reach in their practice. The many reasons for this, and for the ways shared inquiry can falter, is worth exploring next.

Barriers to Shared Inquiry

This discussion has been normative in nature, suggesting regulative ideals meant to help both instructors and students enact the model of shared inquiry. Even if we have never encountered these ideals in the world, there is value in thinking about, reflecting on, and

understanding them in order to develop our stances and reasons for acting. Naturally there are barriers and limitations when it comes to enacting shared inquiry in any classroom, which must be acknowledged. In this final section I discuss some of these barriers, both external and internal to the inquiry group itself, and suggest there are ways inquiry groups might account for them when they arise. In fact, in some cases these barriers can ultimately aid the group in its process of shared inquiry.

External Logistical and Institutional Limitations

Some of the limitations and barriers to shared inquiry come from outside the group, that is, they originate externally. In particular, the context of a classroom and the context of higher education brings forth many elements, dynamics, and practicalities that threaten to hinder it. I call these institutional limitations. They *seem* to just come along with or seem to be standard when operating within institutions of higher education. Though again, while these are currently existing or frequently existing constraints, they are not necessarily so. They are not the whole of what is possible or what we could imagine a shared inquiry classroom to be, or for that matter, what a college classroom could be. As Pardales and Girod warn at the outset of their overview, an inquiry approach “alters the structure of the classroom in fundamental ways.”¹⁹⁴

To start, consider the ways in which classes typically convene. A course that spans a quarter or semester will meet for anything from ten to sixteen weeks, although depending on the credits the course is assigned, the actual amount of time that the class meets can vary widely. For the formation and then enactment of shared inquiry, time is an important variable. Participants new to shared inquiry must be afforded time to observe, internalize, and practice inquiry skills.

¹⁹⁴ Pardales and Girod, “Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future,” 299.

And even in groups comprised of more seasoned inquirers (students who have elsewhere learned some of the skills and moves of inquiry's critical interchange), there is still time required for establishment of the current group's identity and the growth of intragroup relations.¹⁹⁵ "A community that works together, has mutual respect and concern, and a recognizable and agreed upon set of assumptions and procedures," remind Pardales and Girod, "is something that takes a long time to develop."¹⁹⁶ Because these relations rely on sustained activity to develop, sustained stretches of contact are needed. Even courses with what seems like a maximum amount of meeting time (long class periods, several sessions a week) may still not offer enough to sufficiently sustain shared inquiry and become an effective, developed inquiry group. But looking to the typical design of intergroup dialogue programs offers an alternative. These IGD programs are often co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, operating independently from the academic calendar and spanning across multiple, consecutive terms; instead of a handful of weeks, groups enjoy a full academic year — sometimes even more — of sustained engagement time.¹⁹⁷ It would not be an easy or seamless fit into typical institutional scheduling, but if an

¹⁹⁵ There is not discussion in the community of inquiry literature about groups made up of students with various levels of inquiry experience; most of the work assumes that groups start from scratch in regards to both doing inquiry and functioning as a group. I suspect, however, that a group that includes members already familiar with the inquiry process might develop faster. One study of children in reading discussions showed that certain rhetorical stratagems, when used by one participant in the group, could get picked up and employed by fellow participants increasingly quickly. In other words, once a stratagem or move was modeled, its use snowballed throughout the group and the discussion. Success was more pronounced with peer-centric open participation formats than with teacher-controlled discussion formats, indicating that this learning of inquiry skills is socially driven. Anderson et al., "The Snowball Phenomenon: Spread of Ways of Talking and Ways of Thinking Across Groups of Children," *Cognition and Instruction* 19, no. 1 (2001): 1–46.

¹⁹⁶ Pardales and Girod, "Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future," 308.

¹⁹⁷ Ximena Zúñiga, Gretchen E. Lopez, and Kristie A. Ford, "Intergroup Dialogue: Critical Conversations about Difference and Social Justice," in *Intergroup Dialogue; Engaging Difference, Social Identities, and Social Justice*, ed. Zúñiga, Lopez, and Ford (New York: Routledge, 2014), 10.

inquiry group could similarly extend itself beyond the typical restrictions, by scheduling more session time and/or by continuing across multiple terms like a cohort, more time would be available for sustained shared inquiry.

Other limitations spring from the size and the composition of the inquiry group. Too large a group with too many participants strains the effectiveness and the power of the group's socialness; it takes more work and more time to build connections among participants, to marshal testimony and knowledge claims, and to faithfully scrutinize and justify the unfolding inquiry. A sprawling group also poses challenges for achieving self-regulation, as tracking the state of the group, distributing participation, and correcting dynamics becomes unruly. The IGD literature recommends that groups "typically include twelve to eighteen dialogue participants,"¹⁹⁸ a limited size meant to maximize participation and cultivate trust but a very far cry from a typical class enrollment. To structure classes in the small, intimate ways called for by the model would mean, for one, a significant increase in and shift of institutional resources (for more space and instructors in particular). Yet, to set groups to too small a size would complicate the second factor, that of group composition. The intergroup dialogue and facilitation literature repeatedly underscores the need for diverse representation in groups, to fairly equally balance the social identities of participants so that the resulting dialogues can include multiple perspectives.¹⁹⁹ When it comes to shared inquiry, diverse composition is important beyond the eventual outcomes — the very heart of shared inquiry, epistemologically, requires knower multiplicity. As

¹⁹⁸ Zúñiga, Lopez, and Ford, "Intergroup Dialogue," 10.

¹⁹⁹ Zúñiga, Lopez, and Ford, "Intergroup Dialogue;" Adams, Bell, and Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*; Nagda and Gurin, "Chapter 2: The Practice of Intergroup Dialogue;" and Patricia Gurin, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin, "Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes," *Harvard Educational Review* 72, no. 3 (2002): 330–366.

we learned in the previous chapter, if concrete multiplicity or plurality is absent from the group, large swaths of testimony and particular knowledge claims go missing; if perspectives go unaccounted for, and testimony and claims go unentered into the inquiry, that inquiry does not operate at its fullest. In other words an inquiry group made up of too few participants, or made up of participants with fairly similar situatedness, will offer reduced knowledge claims in their work together, then go on to narrowly test and justify those claims. There will not be as many resources and perspectives within the group to mount robust challenges or generate alternatives, leading to weaker objectivity.

So many institutional factors affect the makeup of a group or a class. At the very broadest levels, recruitment and admissions determine which participants can even become eligible members of the institution, processes which, even when reviewed hastily, reveal generations of underly diverse students. Without admissions that are dedicated and intentional regarding multiplicity and students-as-knowers, inquiry groups have no chance at the epistemic multiplicity and power they need for good shared inquiry. Yet pursuing diversity only in terms of increasing admissions access and recalibrating a student population's numerical makeup is not enough; diverse plurality must carry all the way into the enactments of the classroom.²⁰⁰ Students must be able to get into the inquiry classroom and to fully participate once they are there. Barriers to being in a class and part of an inquiry group, for example processes like course registration and scheduling, could be reformed. And campus climate and classroom culture could be enriched and supportive, so as to foster the full participation of all group members. For even when participants

²⁰⁰ Jeffrey F. Milem, Mitchell J. Chang, and Anthony L. Antonio, "Making Diversity Work on Campus: A Research-Based Perspective," (Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2005).

are present in the inquiry group but are not testifying, critically engaging, or sharing in justificatory scrutiny — or are silenced — the power and the effects of multiplicity are absent.

It is also necessary to note the barriers to shared inquiry that emanate from typical classroom operations and from instructors. I briefly introduced these elements above when discussing the paradox of facilitation. Certain parts of running a class, even one committed to shared inquiry, can work against shared inquiry's crucial tenets of prioritizing the process of inquiry and allowing the group to self-manage or self-regulate that inquiry. Typically, a curriculum and syllabus must be set, student growth must be evaluated, grades and credits must be conferred. If these elements of class are required, full stop, can a class's community of inquiry ever really develop the autonomy and self-responsibility to regulate its own inquiry and own relations? Pardales and Girod maintain that "A community of inquirers must have some freedom to dictate how it will operate and what it will operate on."²⁰¹ Insisting on and retaining these instructional and institutional tools (assignments or exams, grades, credits) undercuts the capacities of the group and the effectiveness of its inquiry, meaning they require reconceptualization under the model of shared inquiry. Relatedly, an instructor that struggles to embrace the disentangled stance of facilitation, and its attendant release of power and responsibility over the group and over the action of the class, will hamper the effectiveness of shared inquiry. This could look like committing to, and facilitating the group toward, particular learning outcomes rather than committing to the inquiry process itself. And while I may call for instructors to fully embrace facilitation and the earnest enactment of shared inquiry in every class, I also recognize that doing so implies — and requires — fundamental changes to all of the academic infrastructure that undergirds them. Instructors cannot unilaterally declare their

²⁰¹ Pardales and Girod, "Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future," 307.

classrooms committed to the enactment of shared inquiry and jettison both the requirements and the supports they glean from the institution. Much more reconceptualization and reimagination is needed, on the parts of programs and departments, even entire disciplines, to be able to fully align with the shared inquiry model.

Barriers Within the Inquiry Group

Other issues can arise from within the inquiry, having to do with either the inquiry process or with the group itself. Recall the first half of the classroom vignette in Chapter 3. Toward its end, a moment arises that seems to signal a stop in the inquiry. That is, Erin and Harris work themselves toward a point that seems to be impassable; their perspectives and claims about police shootings seem incommensurable, and at least some of the group seems unhelpful about the way forward, thinking the inquiry should just end. This kind of stagnation can be a common barrier to the inquiry process. If shared inquiry is marked by the twin traits of being inclusive and convergent, then the worry about these kinds of stoppages and stagnations is that they represent the anti-inquiry traits of *ex*-clusion and *di*-vergence. The claims and the moves of the inquiry remain individual and isolated, not yet reaching toward or conveying toward one another to generate new understanding together. They do not yet grant other perspectives and claims the initial, provisional plausibility needed to draw the group together inclusively and begin its process of scrutinizing and consolidating. The inverse of stagnation in the inquiry process is chaos. Instead of an impasse, there is disorganization of the inquiry process — it seems to be going off the rails. A flurry of perspectives and claims vie for attention, there is little attempt to use the skills and moves of inquiry, and the group itself struggles to relate and grow. Again there are clear signs of exclusion and divergence in chaotic inquiry moments — the inquiry is not connected or directed toward the aim of building shared understanding, and the

group does not understand itself to be collaborative. The worry is that such moments may damage the inquiry process or damage the inquiry group itself.

But these moments, of both stagnation and chaos, are bound to occur in an inquiry. Sharp, who laid much of the groundwork in the community of inquiry tradition, worried that these moments signaled something was wrong with the inquiry's function, but they are natural. When we keep in mind even the basics of the concept of dialectics, we know that new understanding cannot emerge without preceding tension. Moments of either stagnant or chaotic tension are in fact indicators that the group is on the precipice of a breakthrough in growth or in the progress of the inquiry. What is interesting about these moments is not what they mean as barriers — it is not a question of whether, how, and when a moment occurs. What matters is whatever comes after that moment, that is, what the inquiry group does with the fact of the moment and what sort of response the moment yields. The inquiry group must learn to recognize moments as or after they arise: *Why are we at a standstill? After that smattering of responses, I have no sense of where we are in the argument. We seem stuck in this silence. Is there some potential connection between these wildly different claims?* Turning attention to the state of the inquiry or the state of the group, as we see above, is a crucial part of the corrective power of shared inquiry. The group that takes responsibility for stagnant and chaotic moments can then use them to further their inquiry. However, as with everything else related to the group's ability to maintain itself, some direct intervention and guidance by the instructor might be needed for groups that are still building self-regulation capacities.

A related inquiry-blocking issue is that of the “recalcitrant classroom.” In some cases, individual participants or whole inquiry groups might be reluctant or hostile to the shared inquiry model or the notion of a community of inquiry. While the above moments of stagnation and

chaos have more to do with the proceeding of the inquiry process, recalcitrance is an issue about and within the inquiry group. Philosophers of education Gilbert Burgh and Mor Yorshansky explain that recalcitrance can stem from the suspicion that one's voice will not be heard and respected or from worry about the way challenges will alter one's claims and ideas. In order to believe the inquiry process can work and can be meaningful, relational foundations in the group are needed first.²⁰² Connection of, trust in, and commitment to community can lead the recalcitrant to open up to engagement with inquiry.

Yet there are pernicious dynamics within the inquiry group that must also be faced. Issues of identity, politics, and power naturally manifest in the group and impact not only its work at the inquiry process but its relations as well; social asymmetries that exist in the wider world show up as asymmetries within the inquiry group. Race, gender, religion, economic class — any part of one's social reality affects one's ability to speak, to be heard, and to be believed, and the relationships one forges, including educationally, reflect the relative power therein. We must acknowledge from the start the fact of the matter: these asymmetries are always already present in any inquiry group. This is especially true due to the epistemological foundations of shared inquiry. The situated particularities of participants — their material, lived social positions; their experience; their perspectives — source the very claims that constitute inquiry, so cannot be removed or ignored during the process. As Chapter 3 made clear, the strongest inquiries and the richest inquiry groups are those that start with a thick multiplicity of socially situated agents, but along with this necessary multiplicity comes attendant power differences and their threats of epistemic injustice. Social power asymmetries, diminishment of credibility, testimonial

²⁰² Gilbert Burgh and Mor Yorshansky, "Community of Inquiry: Politics, Power, and Group Dynamics," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 43, no. 5 (2011): 443–444.

dismissal, exploitation of fellow agents — all forms of epistemic injustice affect not only the inquiry itself but the epistemic relations among the group as well. Pain and frustration stem from their existence in the group and raise stark moments that feel damaging, dire, and derailing.

Is any response sufficient when it comes to these asymmetries of the wider social-political world? If these dynamics are unavoidable, and if they strain the collaboration and interchange that is possible, can we try anyway to challenge or overcome them? I suggest that once again the group self-reflexively turning to itself can be of help, even when it comes to this issue. With advanced self-regulation skills and high levels of maturity, trust, and awareness, an inquiry group can work to identify power differentials in its relations and assess how they affect key factors like participation, silencing, unexpressed claims, or dismissed testimony. Though this barrier poses an immense challenge, it can often be faced by the inquiry group and lead to stunning growth of both the group and its understanding of inquiry.

Internal barriers that originate in the group lead to a general concern about whether shared inquiry can be pursued without having an *ideal community* of inquirers. Practically, what are we to do? On one hand is the position of Pardales and Girod, who suggest that promoting inquiry is the more important aim when forming a true community of inquiry is not possible.²⁰³ Though imperfect or nonideal, it is nevertheless an attempt at inquiry; the instructor can also play a heavier role, at least temporarily, until the group better forms and self-regulates. What this approach takes seriously is the power of the *process* of inquiry to constitute the group. That is, it will only truly become a community of inquiry by *doing* and *enacting* inquiry together over time, so it is crucial to get the inquiry action going. But another approach, that of Burgh and Yorshansky that we saw above, puts community-building first. They suggest the relational

²⁰³ Pardales and Girod, “Community of Inquiry: Its Past and Present Future,” 308.

foundations of the inquiry group must be secure before members will engage in the inquiry process together.²⁰⁴ Without the basics of respect in the group, mutual trust, and care for the process itself, true inquiry will be blocked. While it is not necessary to have a *fully* formed community in order to undertake inquiry, this approach takes seriously paying attention to and developing the social and relational nature of the group. Of course both approaches have merit because both the process and the group are vital in the enactment of shared inquiry, and are mutually connected. Barriers or limitations to either will affect the overall inquiry.

²⁰⁴ Burgh and Yorshansky, “Communities of Inquiry,” 444.

CHAPTER 5

REVIEWING SHARED INQUIRY'S PROMISE

The debate about expression and inclusion on campus seems to be a debate about which priority is primary in the context of higher education, and about which right (that of the freedom to express or that of equal inclusion) will be upheld over the other. In exploring the debate at the outset of this project, we saw that the values of free expression and inclusion only seem to be in conflict — more exactly, that they have come to be framed as incompatible. Many of the contributors to the debate would have us believe that efforts of inclusion represent dangerous undercuts of freedom. Other contributors maintain that unchecked expression thwarts participation.

As Chapter 1 revealed, however, the debate also includes a small subset of contributors who insist there is no incompatibility; although expression and inclusion are fundamentally in tension, they argue, there is a possibility for both to be realized. While John Palfrey's compatibility project relies on a kind parallel co-existence to realize both free expression and inclusion, two other compatibility approaches (from Michael Roth and Sigal Ben-Porath) rely on the concept of inquiry to bring the two values together. Enacting inquiry, claims this camp, is the means by which we can enact both expression and inclusion at the same time. This synthesis is the stronger approach and the approach I adopt here in this project as well. And while inquiry does offer a way to address the polemic of the current debate, the other inquiry-based projects to date have not been designed to fully engage epistemological concepts in order to show how and why inquiry can achieve this synthesis goal.

In this chapter I summarize the epistemological arguments I have made in the intervening chapters and review the work that is done by the theorization of shared inquiry. Not only do the

interventions I have presented support the synthesis of expression and inclusion, which I will highlight, they offer a new way to conceive of inquiry in the context of the college classroom. I also acknowledge the limitations of the shared inquiry model and the criticisms of some of its underpinnings (dialogue, communicative relations), as well as the open questions in the argument that remain at the end of this dissertation. These loose ends ultimately point toward further questions to ask about shared inquiry, related work, and future extension projects.

Expression and Inclusion, Revisited

My central claim has been that the issue of campus speech and inclusion is in fact an epistemological issue; concerns about freedom of expression and concerns about fair inclusion are in fact concerns about inquiry. I have also shown that within the debate a real gap exists regarding work that examines the issue in thorough epistemological terms. So in Chapter 2 I undertook just such an examination, which showed that three main assumptions drive the epistemology of the debate: that cognitive reasoning supplies the best evidence, that an idea's competitiveness indicates its truth, and that eliminative debate is the ideal mode for ideas' interaction. It was notable to show that all sides in the campus debate (expressionists, inclusionists, and compatibilists) share commitment to these tenets and subscribe to the marketplace of ideas epistemological framework. But the more significant discovery turned out to be that these epistemological commitments do not do the justificatory work or have the epistemological power they are purported to. The model of inquiry invoked by all sides is not the unassailable gold standard it is billed to be, nor is it the only model of inquiry that is possible. Rather than the competitive eliminative debate of the marketplace, I have suggested a model of shared inquiry, which is grounded by epistemological assumptions about situatedness, valuable subjectivity, and collaborative justification.

In other words, out of the contested, polemical debate over campus speech and inclusion, an additional and more fundamental issue has come to light. Working epistemologically reveals that while responding to the tensions of expression and inclusion is important, what should first be clarified is the way we conceive of inquiry itself. An alternate form of inquiry is needed — one that avoids the pitfalls of the marketplace model and leads to effective accounts of the world. Shared inquiry makes use of one's particularity and subjective experience in the justification of claims rather than strictly limiting evidence to cognitive reason alone. Shared inquiry fosters collaboration and co-construction instead of debate and elimination. Shared inquiry's process of critical interchange justifies by collectively refining claims rather than rewarding claims' winningness, acceptance, or widespread adoption. Shared inquiry works well, epistemologically, in the places that the marketplace model and its competitive eliminative debate falter, and the objectivity that it achieves is sturdy and rigorous. Its scrutiny and justification are multiplied across the entire inquiry group, and the more multiple and inclusive that group, the more that biases, errors, and assumptions are rectified and rich real testimony is certified as social evidence. In its own right, shared inquiry proves to be a valuable and effective form of inquiry.

Once the shared inquiry model is clear, we can see how it gets us somewhere in the original debate — that it is the form of inquiry that is able to synthesize the key values of expression and inclusion. I illustrate this capacity through the example case and vignettes of Chapter 3, showing a classroom scene in which shared inquiry is operating. As a result, the synthesis is enacted. A multiplicity of students engage in full, free, expressive — substantive — participation.

Each of the model's epistemological aspects, too, show how it brings to bear what is essential to both expression and inclusion. Take for example shared inquiry's concepts regarding

the justification process (interdependence, critical interchange, shared scrutiny, collaboration) and what I have shown these concepts do, epistemologically. Interconnected knowers need and are needed by each other, as they all share the epistemological burden of clarifying and securing the adequacy of claims. This critical interchange leads the inquiry group to justify claims based on its shared scrutiny of their value (rather than on competitiveness or believability). The interchange also mutually furthers the claims, building toward creation of shared understanding and coming to a kind of consensus around the best answer (at least a provisional answer) that can be constituted out of the group's interaction.

All of these aspects align with Burbules's notion of inquiry being *convergent*. In the end it is these convergent aspects that lead shared inquiry to yield knowledge, create understanding, and achieve more accurate, rigorous objectivity, all of which I have suggested are the real bids of those advocating for free expression. As I suggested in the first chapter, arguments for free expression are driven by teleological goals about knowledge and truth; expression matters to expressionists insofar as they have identified it as a main act of inquiry, as the way to ensure free thought. Shared inquiry delivers on these goals.

Shared inquiry simultaneously delivers what is at the heart of calls for the inclusion. What inclusionists really want is not just inclusiveness for its own sake. While inclusionists might disagree with expressionists about which priorities to emphasize in inquiry, they share the central aims of pursuing learning and understanding. Their demands are about the people and participation involved in inquiry; they emphasize that *all* participants to be able to *be* inquirers — equally and fairly — and to bring their full and differentiated perspectives to bear, a necessity for effective inquiry.

Consider what is achieved epistemologically by shared inquiry's fundamental assumptions about subjectivity, situatedness, multiplicity, and interdependence. Knowers are understood as whole selves, and aspects of their situatedness (attachments, experiences, contexts) are taken to have explanatory significance. Rather than dangerous and biased, these material particularities serve as social evidence — they are grounding and lend objectivity to knowers' claims. As a result, the interconnectedness of particular perspectives becomes essential to the model, as does the need for multiplicity. In order to build thorough, cross-scrutinized, and collaborative understanding, multiple perspectives need to be not only present but need to be in relation with each other, too. This epistemic interdependence is a major tool for increasing objectivity. Because of its epistemological commitments, shared inquiry achieves these inclusionist goals.

Of course other thinkers like Palfrey, Roth, and Ben-Porath have suggested compatibility approaches, to varying levels of success. Palfrey patches together a co-existence of expression and inclusion by positing parallel, co-existing brave and safe spaces. But his is not a solution that gets to the heart of the polemical nature of the campus debate; it theorizes the pursuit of the two values but does not do work to theorize or explain the relationship between them. More fruitful is Roth's focus on the mutual relationship between free expression and inclusion, as well as his insistence that in educational contexts we can enact both values at once. However, achieving his model requires that we find a just-right kind of expression and just-right kind of inclusion, which will yield a just-right or *safe enough* space for inquiry. Ultimately Roth's solution is more of a titration than a synthesis. Ben-Porath also suggests that inquiry offers a way to enact expression and inclusion in concert, and her description reveals that she has mutual, high levels of both values in mind. Each is needed for the other to obtain, and the dichotomous gap between the two

concepts begins to close. Unfortunately, her project is not designed to go further into epistemological detail to show how and why this synthesis succeeds. The epistemological tenets of shared inquiry I have laid out here have served to fill this gap.

Recall too that Ben-Porath, in challenging institutions to move beyond regulatory and policy responses to the debate, proposes we find a way for all students to be substantively included as participants within the practice of the institution.²⁰⁵ While she does not deliver much of this proposed shift, my claim in this project has been that shared inquiry *is that* practice. Inquiry is a powerful concept in the ongoing debate, but as I have shown, both values of expression and inclusion come to life and are synthesized into practice when it is shared inquiry specifically that is enacted.

Limitations and Challenges

As I have moved through the intervening chapters, I have attempted to acknowledge and address challenges to each chapter's arguments. For example, in Chapter 3 I met concerns about the partialness and subjectivity of situated knowledge by emphasizing the explanatory power and material objectivity that comes from particular, limited perspectives. In Chapter 4 I discussed the barriers to shared inquiry that emanate from the institution and from the inquiry group itself, and while I suggested some barriers could be addressed with significant shifts to institutional logistics and academic infrastructure, others are deep-seated. The model of shared inquiry, on the whole, does have limitations, and further critiques of and challenges to it exist. Those thorny challenges deserve consideration here.

²⁰⁵ Ben-Porath, *Free Speech on Campus*, 44–45.

One kind of challenge emerges from critics who highlight the limits of dialogue-based educational activities. In part, this challenge claims that such approaches are not as inclusive as they claim to be, as the invitation to participate can ring hollow when the modes of participation have communicative rules that perpetuate relations of domination. The ground rules and guidelines of inquiry endorse certain types of participation while certain other types are prohibited, both directly and tacitly. In her seminal analysis of dialogue-based instruction, Elizabeth Ellsworth sums up that the basic dialogical stance, “implies that students and teachers can and should engage each other in the classroom as fully rational subjects....In schools, rational deliberation, reflection, and consideration of all viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and the power to speak, for transforming ‘conflict into rational argument by means of universalized capacities for language and reason.’”²⁰⁶ Reason and rationalist debate are the default, preferred communicative forms. But these forms, the challenge claims, are carried out within contexts of asymmetry and power, nullifying any belief that they are neutral, universal, and ideal forms. Not all members may be able to participate in these forms, access their vocabulary, speak their language, or perform their rituals.²⁰⁷ These forms may also be insufficiently able to capture the fullness of some members’ experiences and claims.

When it comes to the action of shared inquiry, I have described how giving testimony and offering perspectival claims are crucial acts. However, differences across participants’ perspectives, and the social and power dynamics coursing through the inquiry group, can make these standard communicative acts come across as uncivil, defiant, resistant. While this is largely

²⁰⁶ Elizabeth Ellsworth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy,” *Harvard Educational Review* 59, no. 3 (1989): 301.

²⁰⁷ Nicholas Burbules and Suzanne Rice, “Dialogue Across Differences: Continuing the Conversation,” *Harvard Educational Review* 61, no. 4 (1991): 393–416.

attributable to certain participants interpreting these expressions of difference as rule-breaking, some of the resistance is also intentional. Ellsworth explains that for inquirers coming from marginalized positions, “What they/we say, to whom, in what context, depending on the energy they/we have for the struggle on a particular day, is the result of conscious and unconscious assessments of the power relations and safety of the situation.”²⁰⁸ Many participants perform “highly complex strategizing” in order to alter and modify their communicative participation; they work either to contort and fit into the modes of expected expression or to purposefully reject those prescribed modes. I will say more on the purposeful rejection of the rationalist mode in a moment. But regardless of whether other communicative modes are perceived as out of line or are indeed purposefully so, their fact exposes a problem for a model of knowing like shared inquiry, which hinges upon the power it ascribes to the knowing that is shared out from all differentiated perspectives. If the knowledge claims therefrom are not full and rich, inquiry cannot reach its needed multiplicity, and the explanatory power it can conjure will come up short. This challenge is, at its heart, a challenge of shared inquiry’s notion of itself as inclusive.

This type of challenge also asks questions about how much dialogue-based models really value and make use of difference. Are the multiple perspectives of shared inquiry ultimately meant to assimilate into or toward an ascendant, dominant perspective, or does the process lead dominant perspectives to also undergo significant revisions and shifts? Social asymmetries and power differentials in an inquiry will lead to asymmetries in which perspectives and claims end up being challenged, modified, assimilated, or erased. This problem is tied to the problem above about communicative rules and acceptable forms of expression, but it is additionally about how much understanding we can expect to achieve across different perspectives. How does the model

²⁰⁸ Ellsworth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering?,” 313.

account for the relations between different or opposed perspectives? What is the possibility of knowing and of being known in light of radically different perspectives?

Quite a bit of *mis*-understanding can emerge as a group tries to work and communicate across difference, shows philosopher Uma Narayan. Especially in cases where participants are situated asymmetrically and are inquiring about those very asymmetries, things like invalidation, insensitivity, generalization, and defensiveness can manifest within the group, and communication and understanding tend to go wrong.²⁰⁹ Challengers like Ellsworth conclude there are some claims that simply *cannot* be understood by other participants — at various points she makes arguments like she as a professor “could *never know* about the experiences, oppressions, and understandings of other participants in the class” and that there are “partial narratives that some social groups or cultures have and others can never know.”²¹⁰ The asymmetry of participants’ positions makes the span between them unbridgeable, and it is not possible to meet the goal of shared understanding. I see this type of argument as a challenge about shared inquiry’s notion of convergence; at its most extreme, this challenge questions the value of justification itself and instead promotes incommensurability.²¹¹ To be clear, the argument of most challengers is not that convergent understanding of others will fail in *all* cases but that there are occasional, real cases of utter disagreement.²¹² Some issues arise that prove to

²⁰⁹ Uma Narayan, “Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice,” *Hypatia* 3, no. 2 (1988): 31–47.

²¹⁰ Ellsworth, “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering?” 310, 319, emphasis in original. While Ellsworth commits to her claim that sometimes others *cannot* know, Narayan does not go as far. Through a great deal of the right type of grounded, humble effort, Narayan insists that we can come to a better understanding of others’ experiences and perspectives. (For what it’s worth, Ellsworth elsewhere claims that actually sometimes we *can* understand, partially and imperfectly.) Narayan, “Working Together Across Difference,” 36–37.

²¹¹ Burbules and Rice, “Dialogue Across Differences: Continuing the Conversation.”

²¹² For example, participants who hold that trans* people do not or should not exist can never come to understand the perspectives of fellow trans* students expressing claims about their

be pernicious and irresolvable, and the perspectives therein seem unable find common ground, cannot grant even a shred of plausibility to others to begin building a connected knowing relation. Because there is no movement toward building shared understanding — no convergence — the project of shared inquiry seems to fail in these cases.

Another sort of incommensurability comes from the refusal to submit certain claims or ideas to inquiry's scrutiny. Some of the claims that emanate from radically different perspectives are expressed, but not as official entries into the ongoing process of discernment; they are straight pronouncements of non-negotiable belief. Ellsworth describes such expressions as matters of survival, rather than matters of inquiry. That is, some words are spoken by marginalized or oppressed participants in order to confirm the reality of who they are, what they feel, what they know, and what they have experienced, so therefore, "it is inappropriate to respond to such words by subjecting them to rationalist debates about their identity. Words spoken for survival come already validated in a radically different arena of proof and carry no option or luxury of choice."²¹³ Some ideas and expressions are testimony about one's experience but are not to be subject to rationalist debate, are not up for question.

As mentioned above, this is resistance to the expected norms of expressive action. It may seem like a defiant, non-compliant kind of rule-breaking, and the refusal to submit to scrutiny could be cast as a rejection of inquiry itself, of collaboration, of attempting to share understanding. In her discussion of deliberative versus activist speech, Iris Marion Young notes that taking such a stance often gets labeled as "unreasonable" or "irrational."²¹⁴ But while this

experiences as trans* people. Or in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, those claiming land as historically theirs cannot come to understand others' claims of sovereignty over it as well.

²¹³ Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?," 302.

²¹⁴ Iris Marion Young, "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy," *Philosophy of Education* (2001): 41–55.

stance does eschew the deliberative, dialogical mode — it is *not* aiming for engagement — it nonetheless does have a place in the shared inquiry model. When we consider Young’s framing of activist speech, we can see that this mode of expression still aims to communicate *something*. “One of the activist’s goals,” Young suggests, “is to make us *wonder* about what we are doing, to rupture a stream of thought, rather than to weave an argument.”²¹⁵ Insofar as it disrupts and defies, activist speech serves as a refusal of the terms of inquiry. It is expression that does not exist within the process of the inquiry but is *outside* of the inquiry, is *about* the inquiry — it is not about speaking *with* but rather “speaking *out*, speaking *to*, or speaking *against*.”²¹⁶ For example, Ellsworth’s students conclude that the structures, the relations, and the process and its guidelines fail them; their survival words cannot be understood within the context of their class’s inquiry. When they proceed to express themselves anyway, in their mode, the undercuts to participation and testimony that exist in the inquiry are brought to light. It is only then that Ellsworth, as the instructor, can begin to see the ways the inquiry is falling short and failing participants. This mode — activist speech, survival words, the resistance of standard dialogical participation — creates a renegotiation of the terms of inquiry and an improvement of its conditions.²¹⁷ Activist expression can be, in the end, a regulating act. It pushes improvement of the inquiry itself, meaning it is not unfortunate, adversarial, or something to fear and quash. Its surfacing is in fact a good sign.

At this point I must acknowledge how much emphasis I have placed on the self-regulation that is achievable by an inquiry group. The model of shared inquiry does lean on

²¹⁵ Young, “Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy,” 53, emphasis in original.

²¹⁶ Nicholas C. Burbules, C.K. Gunsalus, Brian C. Martinson, and BrandE Faupell, “What the Debate Over Civility is Really About,” *Inside Higher Ed*, April 14, 2022.

²¹⁷ Burbules et al., “What the Debate Over Civility is Really About.”

notions of reflexivity and self-correction, which are themselves also challenged by questions about how possible self-correction may actually be. In his review of the limits of dialogue, Burbules summarizes the challenge: some dialogical models, when faced with recalcitrant differences or incommensurability, push through and call for using *further* dialogue to try to reach understanding. That is, when versions of dialogue come up against their own limits (this limit), “the solution to the problem is more of the same.”²¹⁸ I take this point seriously and admit I am not naïve that shared inquiry will always, automatically, or seamlessly achieve productive self-regulation. Limits do exist — an inquiry group cannot process itself out of every challenge and block.²¹⁹ But perhaps the model need not be completely abandoned. Perhaps it is enough that the process of shared inquiry has an effective way to reveal incommensurability. Burbules explains:

There are instances in which the very encounter with a radically different, unreconciled, and unreconcilable point of view, value, voice, or belief can serve important educational purposes: to cause us to question the horizons of our own assumptions, to explore within ourselves (and not only within the other) the causes of why dialogue “fails,” and to consider the possibility of a radically different way of approaching the world.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Nicholas C. Burbules, “The Limits of Dialogue as a Critical Pedagogy,” in *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Cultural Politics, Instituting Education, and the Discourse of Theory*, ed. Peter Pericles Trifonas (New York: Routledge, 2001), 252.

²¹⁹ There is the possibility that the moment of incommensurability, rather than signal that an inquiry group has come to an impasse, instead offers the group something around which to coalesce. Participants, in their states of misunderstanding and being misunderstood, feel singular, but to all be singular in the moment is a shared experience.

²²⁰ Burbules, “The Limits of Dialogue as Critical Pedagogy,” 260.

When understanding is unreachable, appreciation for difference and its power may still emerge out of the so-called failure. Unreconcilable dialogue may also yield better understanding of our own perspective, its origins, and its limits. All of these constitute types of partial understanding, and the realization of incommensurability itself can be educational.

Loose Ends and Further Considerations

At the end of this dissertation, some loose ends do remain. As is true of any project, I have opted to delimit the size and scope of this work even though so many other tacks may have also produced valuable insights; I decided which lines of discussion to explore and which to refrain from pursuing, which sources and interlocutors to engage and which to set to the side. As I conclude, I would like to highlight some areas that have gone unaddressed here but could be attended to in further, future work.

When it comes to thinking about one of this project's most central concepts, inclusion, I think work on the public sphere, publics, and counterpublics would offer fruitful approaches to the questions about multiplicity and participation that we have faced. The concept of the public has a long and complex history in political philosophy, but I see overlap with the epistemological concerns here. Consider that John Dewey describes a public as an associated group (people with common interests, issues, and affairs), which comes together to undertake shared conjoint action on those issues²²¹ — he could just as well be describing a community of inquiry. Both Michael Warner and Kathleen Knight Abowitz help further a picture of publics. For Warner, publics are self-organized, they are discursive, they require minimum participation from members, and they

²²¹ John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems: An Essay in Political Inquiry* (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 1954 [1927]).

are sociable to strangers or others.²²² For Knight Abowitz a public is small, diverse, and episodic; one such public might come into being as a “mobilization” around an issue, occasionally forming when a common problem or question emerges.²²³ Reflection and deliberation within such a group is necessary, and a mature public must demonstrate habits of communication, create common solutions, develop leadership among its ranks, and hold itself accountable.²²⁴ From Nancy Fraser we get challenges about who is excluded from membership in publics and the modes of domination that circulate throughout their conjoint action; for her, a more effective model would be one of “contestation among a plurality of competing publics.”²²⁵ These multiple subaltern counterpublics could engage with each other in discursive space to build assent. Members of subordinated groups could gain an advantage regarding participation in this model — they could participate “in their own voice(s),”²²⁶ free from the dominant dynamics of the wider culture. Reams and reams of arguments unfold as this tradition grapples with questions of plurality, “interpublic” and intersubjective relations, accessibility, participation, and understanding. Of course these are familiar questions to this dissertation. I suspect that in a different project, deep and mutually helpful connections could be made between theories of the public and the model of shared inquiry.

I have also signaled that serious insight into questions about belief and the justification of knowledge claims can be found in the cognitive sciences and in social psychology. Philosophy does not have a steady habit of relying on such empirically driven experimentation, but I think

²²² Michael Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics,” *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 50ff.

²²³ Kathleen Knight Abowitz, “Achieving Public Schools,” *Educational Theory* 61, no. 4 (2011): 468, 474.

²²⁴ Knight Abowitz, “Achieving Public Schools,” 474.

²²⁵ Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* (1990): 66.

²²⁶ Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere,” 69.

that when it comes to our epistemological interest in what leads agents to grant plausibility to others' claims, or to move toward accepting and understanding claims, this type of work can show us a lot about how agents operate. Recall that part of Chapter 2's challenge of the marketplace model argues that our subjectivity imposes itself on our perceptions, our interpretations, and our thinking, and that we should not seek to parse it away. Significant research from cognitive science and social psychology implies that we *cannot* do so. The research shows that rather than assessing all evidence available and neutrally rationalizing the viability of claims, we confirm claims based on whatever serves and supports our own social affiliations, self-interests, and emotional commitments.²²⁷ We mistakenly believe we are reasoning and justifying objectively when in fact we are conducting affect-driven, *motivated reasoning*.

A full project could develop around the implications for shared inquiry that emerge in light of motivated reasoning. I suspect an argument could be made that shared inquiry is the form of inquiry that serves us best, considering what we learn from this work about how agents actually engage with claims. If motivated reasoning is inherently a part of knowing, then shared inquiry has a way to make use of and grant epistemological value to the subjectivity thus infused.

²²⁷ Dan Kahan, "Fixing the Communications Failure," *Nature* vol. 463 (January 2010); Dan Kahan, Hank Jenkins-Smith, and Donald Braman, "Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus," *Journal of Risk Research* vol. 14 (2011), referenced in Dan Kahan, "Misconceptions, Misinformation, and the Logic of Identity-Protective Cognition," Working Paper No. 164, *The Cultural Cognition Project at Yale* (June 2017); Dan Kahan, "What is Motivated Reasoning? How Does It Work? Dan Kahan Answers," *Discover*, May 5, 2011; Dan Kahan, "Motivated Reasoning and Its Cognates," blog entry for *The Cultural Cognition Project at Yale Law School* (May 2013); David Redlawsk, "Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration?" *Journal of Politics* 64, no. 4 (2002); David P. Redlawsk, "A Matter of 'Motivated Reasoning,'" *The New York Times*, April 22, 2011; and David P. Redlawsk, Andrew J.W. Civettini, and Karen M. Emmerson, "The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever 'Get It?'" *Political Psychology* 31, no. 4 (2010).

However, some tensions would need to be worked through. The goal of co-constructing understanding calls on agents to act synergistically and build a new idea out of aspects of their own perspectives, meaning other aspects may fall away and cannot be attached to permanently. Some kind of breaking up or loosening of motivated reasoning seems needed. And while no one escapes the power of motivated reasoning — it is proven to affect knowers from every camp, side, and affiliation²²⁸ — some modest gains have been shown to come from exposure to certain pedagogical moves. Self-affirmation and constant reminders about aiming for accuracy in understanding can break through motivated reasoning and nudge students into more objective thinking.²²⁹ That participants might better know what they claim and why, as well as what fellow participants claim and why, would be appealing for any inquiry group working together to mine the very best from their network of knowledge claims. These pedagogical interventions could have implications for the ways in which shared inquiry is enacted in the classroom and the ways in which facilitators support groups in becoming sufficient. Inquirers would also have to understand and learn to navigate the ongoing tension between valuing the objectivity that comes from their subjective particularities and simultaneously wrangling their potent personal attachments.

Our motivating self-interests could really become a threat to inquiry if they include, for example, explicit or implicit prejudice. Prejudice about the content of a claim can keep us from realizing what aspects of the claim may be valuable and mining them for use in co-building.

²²⁸ Kahan, Jenkins-Smith, and Braman, “Cultural Cognition of Scientific Consensus.”

²²⁹ Geoffrey L. Cohen, Joshua Aronson, and Claude M. Steele, “When Beliefs Yield to Evidence: Reducing Biased Evaluation by Affirming the Self,” *Society for Personality and Social Psychology* 26, no. 9 (2000); David Sherman and Geoffrey Cohen, “Accepting Threatening Information: Self-Affirmation and the Reduction of Defensive Biases,” *American Psychological Society* 11, no. 4 (2002); Kahan, “Fixing the Communications Failure;” and Redlawsk, “Hot Cognition or Cool Consideration?”.

Prejudice about other inquiry participants leads to what Miranda Fricker has dubbed *testimonial injustice*, in which we undermine or outright dismiss others as capable knowers.²³⁰ Having their credibility undercut can push participants into “staying quiet in situations where they shouldn’t, for fear of further marginalization.”²³¹ On one hand, testimonial injustice is a harm insofar as it is degrading to knowers themselves, an intrinsically unethical condition in its own right. On the other hand, testimonial injustice is also a harm to inquiry itself. Participants with suppressed or dismissed testimony leads to fewer claims, less supporting social evidence, diminished multiplicity, and thus, diminished objectivity — as we have already seen, all of these are markers of diminishment in the quality of the inquiry. Plus, testimonial injustice tends to unfold along familiar lines of social and historical marginalization, meaning the divergent and non-centered perspectives that are crucial to shared inquiry’s success go uncontributed.

Many of the issues raised in the epistemic injustice literature connect to issues raised in the discussion of shared inquiry’s effectiveness. For example, Ellsworth’s challenges about how one expresses and is subsequently heard and understood seem to share a core concern with epistemic injustice about exclusion and its effects. Think of Chapter 3’s vignettes and the ways in which that inquiry group engaged. How might things have gone differently if anyone had exhibited tendencies of testimonial injustice? What if Jasmine’s family example was deemed too personal or her informal style of speaking had led others to take her claims less seriously? What if others granted Daniel *excessive* credibility and trust because he is from a wealthy White town,

²³⁰ Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

²³¹ Gerry Dunne, “Epistemic Injustice,” *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2020).

or because he referred to quantitative data in his claims?²³² In the design of Chapter 3 I chose not to pursue such examples in action, but a critical analysis could surely be done of shared inquiry, inquiry groups, and of many of this project's arguments through the lens of epistemic injustice.²³³ Is it possible to frame the entire debate about free expression and inclusion as a debate over who has credibility, authority, and epistemic justice in the classroom?

Work in epistemic justice and injustice could also serve as the cornerstone in a future project that focuses on corrections to epistemic harms and responses to the challenges and limits of shared inquiry. Many thinkers have offered virtue epistemological approaches for correcting epistemic injustices. Fricker discusses a kind of critical awareness that agents need in order to notice their own prejudice in ascribing credibility to fellow knowers.²³⁴ Through self-reflection, Fricker claims agents can condition themselves to properly value others' testimony. Burbules and Rice, while not explicitly in the epistemic justice sphere, describe how undertaking dialogue will develop what they call communicative virtues, which in turn support further successful dialogue.²³⁵ Tolerance, patience, humility, honesty — these dispositions expand knowers' inquiry capacities, improving both how they express their perspectives and how they listen to others' perspectives. How to cultivate epistemic virtues (and eliminate epistemic vices that can

²³² José Medina has argued that when it comes to understanding epistemic injustice, the notion of *credibility excess* is just as important as Fricker's focus on the loss of credibility. Medina, "The Relevance of Credibility Excess in a Proportional View of Epistemic Injustice," *Social Epistemology* 25, no. 1 (2011).

²³³ Other closely related areas come to mind as well. It seems like work on the epistemology of disagreement could be helpful in refining the model of shared inquiry, in particular when it comes to the above questions about incommensurability. Also, work on ignorance would make for an interesting future interlocutor. Our epistemological work here on constructing shared knowing and understanding would gain an interesting complement from work on the epistemology of constructing *not*-knowing and *mis*-understanding.

²³⁴ Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, mainly in Chapter 4.

²³⁵ Burbules and Rice, "Dialogue Across Differences: Continuing the Conversation," 411.

foreclose inquiry, like closed-mindedness, indifference, or dishonesty) could become an interesting question within the model of shared inquiry. It would be valuable to explore the pedagogical implications of a virtue-based approach. Might developing these dispositions become a prerequisite for entering into an inquiry group? Is developing and fine-tuning them an additional responsibility for inquiry groups to attend to?

Others have suggested that corrections to epistemic injustice lie beyond the individual level and instead operate at the institutional level or within epistemic communities. Political philosopher Elizabeth Anderson has shown how the structures of the university contribute to epistemic injustice because they confer and distribute authority in knowing, and she suggests a broader approach — correcting “our *systems* of testimonial gathering and assessment.” Relying on individual knowers, as Fricker does, to develop their own epistemic justice can fail in a myriad of ways, but institutions can cover much more ground and “have powers to correct or prevent problems that virtuous individuals cannot solve or avoid on their own.”²³⁶ We come to develop epistemic skills and practices through interaction with those around us, so what really matters is the justice or injustice permeating our epistemic communities. It is communities who hold epistemic resources, and thus, share the responsibility to ensure good inquiry.²³⁷ We might ask, what could work on epistemically just communities add to the conceptions outlined here of communities of inquiry and inquiry groups? And conversely, how could concepts from shared inquiry help build better epistemic communities and more epistemically just universities?

²³⁶ Elizabeth S. Anderson, “Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions,” *Social Epistemology* 26, no. 2 (2012): 163–173; and Elizabeth S. Anderson, “The Democratic University: Justice in the Production of Knowledge,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 12, no. 2 (1995): 186–219.

²³⁷ José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Imagine a project in which the elements of shared inquiry that I have suggested here are applied *outside* of classrooms and learning spaces. What might the shared inquiry university look like? The development of commitments to collectiveness and collaboration (and a corresponding de-emphasis of individualism and competition) would require that not only new practices but new fundamental values and priorities pervade the campus climate. The concrete social particularities of all participants would need to be not just recognized but substantively centered in all of the institution's activities. Students would come to view themselves as interdependently-related, networked participants in all sorts of contexts, and their capacities for co-correction and co-regulation in all sorts of practices would need to be fostered. In addition to enactment in the classroom, shared inquiry could come to be enacted residually, socially, extracurricularly. I foresee that a project like this would have to build a case for the pursuit of inquiry in myriad forms and in myriad places, essentially reconstituting what we think of as the university into a place of relation and altering the very real existing structures, assumptions, and barriers presented by its current form.

When it comes to imagining further insights about institutions' responses to the expression-inclusion debate, this type of move toward epistemic communities and a reorientation of the institution around shared inquiry could be especially fruitful, and it aligns with one of the key moves of this project — to think in terms of the social and collective. What has become clear is that doing so — reframing our epistemological assumptions in terms of the social, shared, and situated — reveals a host of epistemological advantages. Being mutually interdependent with fellow knowers and sharing the process of scrutiny and justification makes for better accounts of the world; instead of expecting knowers to battle back their attachments and assiduously motivated reasoning, knowers can remain grounded in their own particularities and use them to support

knowledge claims. And collaborating and co-constructing toward a shared understanding means the very best of perspectives can accrue and grow together into something more complex and complete, rather than face off competitively. Shared inquiry, as we have seen, is an effective and valuable mode of inquiry. This alone makes it a worthy model for the college classroom, but of course, shared inquiry also has the capacity to synthesize the two values of expression and inclusion. In exploring how we might try to respond to the ongoing stand-off between the two, recall that Ben-Porath indicated that a “nuanced, responsive, and relational approach can often accomplish what a hundred regulations cannot.” Shared inquiry is just such an approach, making it a worthy resolution in the campus debate as well.

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