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Social-Epistemic Agency

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Social-Epistemic Agency

Hanna Gunn, PhD

University of Connecticut, **2018**

Abstract: In this dissertation, I argue for a unifying account of epistemic and communicative injustice. I do this by showing how these are both ultimately threats to our agency. More specifically, I argue that they are threats to our *social-epistemic agency*, a distinct kind of agency concerned with the ability to be self-determining in the social-epistemic domain. This agency is fundamentally valuable given the importance of being treated as someone worthy of inclusion in communicative and epistemic life. I argue that agency should be conceived of as a measure of our ability to actually bring about changes in the social-epistemic domain: our ability to alter the epistemic environment by contributing to enquiry, changing someone's mind, learning from one's teachers, occupying a desired social-epistemic role. Social-epistemic agency is dependent both on developing a tripartite set of agential competencies and on our treatment by others. These two components of social-epistemic agency come together to enable us to perform particular actions at particular times (e.g., testifying), and to occupy roles within the social-epistemic domain (e.g., as a union representative). I argue that social-epistemic agency is relational in two different ways. First, it is causally dependent on our relationships with others because our ability to develop agential competencies depends on our personal history of socialisation. Second, it is partly constituted by our relationships with other persons because our ability to actually exercise our agential competencies to bring about desired changes–i.e. to be agential–depends on the ways that others respond to us. I also argue that a notion of social-epistemic respect is necessary for understanding this kind of agency and the ways that we can be harmed through exclusion from social-epistemic life. Finally, using this relational account of social-epistemic agency, I address issues of silencing, epistemic objectification, online discourse, and intellectual humility.

Social-Epistemic Agency

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A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the

University of Connecticut

2018

2018

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Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

Social-Epistemic Agency

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Michael has always trusted me to get things done and to find my way in this work, and this confidence has been a powerful force for me. Suzy Killmister and Daniel Silvermint tolerated my at times distant work, I'd like them both to know I still have all my notes from our early meetings and refer to them often. Suzy has encouraged this project from my first musings on communicative agency in her graduate seminar, and her expertise has been a prime resource for me. Mitch Green also deserves a special acknowledgement here. It was with Mitch's guidance that I learned about illocutionary silencing and pragmatics, and an early summer research project with him was instrumental in the development of this dissertation. Thank you all for the comments and for working with me on this project. To Paul Bloomfield, Bill Lycan, Tom Bontly, Lionel Shapiro, Donald Baxter, Dorit Bar-On, Jc Beall, Sam Wheeler, and Crawford Elder, who were graduate instructors of mine at one point or other, I have learned much from you all. Thank you for all your work and encouragement.

Of my graduate peers, I'd like to thank Nathan Kellen above all. Nathan literally kept me from getting lost in this country from the first day I arrived in Connecticut. I am very fortunate to have had such a friend and intellectual peer over these tumultuous five years. Casey Johnson has been a mentor, a friend, and a running partner, she's seen me at my worst and kept pushing me on as I've needed. To Emma Bjorngaard, we made it! Thank you for all the moral support both in classes and out over the years. Junyeol Kim has read, listened, and critiqued my philosophical theorising since the first day I arrived and I'm much better for it. Junyeol has been a great friend and fearless driving instructor. Nathan Sheff and Andrew Parisi may not realise how much I got from our early discussions. Both of them seeking me out to talk about all things philosophy was a sharp antidote to the daunting feelings of imposter syndrome in my first years. María Sánchez-Reyes, Tom Meagher, Madiha Hamdi, Kensuke Ito, Jared Henderson, Michael Robillard, Dana Miranda, Jordan Ochs, Andrew Tedder, Teresa Allen, Rasa Davidaviciute, and Darian Spearman have all shared tea and time with me over the

years. Thank you all for your support. As is clear, I need a second dissertation simply for the acknowledgements and I apologise to everyone whose names I have no explicitly mentioned. You are all in my thoughts, and I thank you all for the reading groups, the presentations, the drinks, the movies, and the conversation. I've learned to be a philosopher from you all.

Toby Napoletano has been a rock and a muse over the past three years, and I would not have reached this point without him. Toby has read every sentence of this work several times, providing me with uncountable hours of feedback. All remaining mistakes are wholly my own, and probably the result of my sneaking in sentences late at night. Thank you for all you have done for me both academically and in life. I am blessed to have you as a partner. I'm sorry for still not knowing what a preposition is. I'm working on it.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the John Templeton Foundation for their support for the Humility and Conviction and Public Life project (HCPL). I've been truly fortunate to be on this fantastic research project and benefited greatly from my time working with the HCPL and the Humanities Institute teams. My thanks to all of the students I have had while working with HCPL, I've learned much from you all about discourse and humility and you inspired me to write chapter five.

Thanks are owed to a variety of audiences who have heard this work over the years in various stages of development. These include the UConn philosophy community and the Brown Bag and Grue Bag series. The Social Epistemology Working group and the audiences at both the 2016 Social Epistemology workshop and 2017 Political Epistemology workshop in Copenhagen provided invaluable feedback on what has developed into chapters three and four of this work.

Finally, my deepest thanks to my family and friends back in Aotearoa New Zealand who sent me off on this journey and have been there for me from the very beginning. André Geldenhuis and Pubudu Senanyake never questioned the need for me to go abroad,

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a striking shift in the focus of epistemologists towards the *social* aspects of epistemology. This, I think, has been a good thing. If we are primarily interested in giving a general account of knowledge and justification, it can be useful to abstract away from the social dimensions of our epistemic lives. But in so doing, we close ourselves off to a range of epistemic phenomena that are both interesting in their own right and highly salient. We overlook, for instance, the fact that the production of knowledge is a fundamentally social phenomenon. Familiar epistemic activities like testimony, giving and taking reasons, participating in research teams, taking part in conferences and workshops, and so many more aspects of epistemic life are all social practices. Social life, as we all know, is messy and complicated, and involves all the unpleasantness of bullying, name-calling, and power-seeking. It is tempting to want to leave these phenomenon out of our epistemic work, but the development of theories of epistemic injustice has shown us that these social problems are also epistemic problems.

This project was initially intended to be about the epistemic topic of rational persuasion: our ability to convince one another on the basis of reasons. But when I tried to square this abstract problem about reasons with the situated experience of being a knower, it wasn't long before I felt that we could talk about 'reasons', 'justification', and 'knowledge' till the cows come home and we'll still have missed out on some crucial part of the story about what it takes to persuade someone else on the basis of a reason. When we talk about the *reasons* in isolation, we aren't talking about the *people* providing those

reasons, or about those who are failing to be persuaded by them. So, I shifted focus from the reasons themselves, to the persons offering those reasons, and to what it takes to actually get into a conversation where one will be listened to by someone else. I decided to look at rational persuasion as one kind of social-epistemic action, a communicative act geared at bringing about epistemic change.

By some stroke of fate, I was also working separately on the problem of illocutionary silencing and taking a graduate seminar on action theory. I came to see striking similarities in problems of epistemic injustice and communicative injustice when viewed as problems persons face when trying to perform their desired actions in the world. Consider a case where a female board member of a large automotive company attempts to offer advice at a meeting where she is the only woman present, and her contribution is met with scepticism and ultimately ignored. As a problem of epistemic injustice, we might analyse her treatment as the result of prejudicial credibility deficit — women just don't know much about cars! This credibility deficit causes her to be incapable of taking part in the deliberative work at her company. She finds herself excluded from this epistemic activity and incapable of performing this epistemic act of testimony. As a problem of communicative injustice, we might analyse her treatment as a failure to successfully perform an illocutionary act. When she attempts to illocute by providing advice, her speech act receives no uptake from her co-workers — women just don't know much about cars! Consequently, she is excluded from this communicative activity and from performing this communicative act.

When we are concerned to explain why some people continuously fail to get recognised as deserving experts or why some people are routinely spoken over or ignored, we need to look for structural causes, and in my opinion, our socialisation needs to be centre stage here. Our socialisation describes our particular developmental history in a particular socio-cultural environment. This process furnishes us with our values, our education, skills, and importantly, our many assumptions and expectations about other people. In

the boardroom case above, whether we are analysing the case from the epistemic or the communicative perspective, I have suggested that the female boardmember's male co-worker's response is fueled by their assumptions about women's knowledge of cars. I think that this point generalises and is often overlooked: our ability to successfully perform epistemic and communicative actions is in part constrained by the assumptions and expectations that other people have about us. This is especially true when there are assumptions and expectations about what particular people know or can know, and about what they are likely to do with their words.

In making my comparison between the epistemic and communicative analyses, I've intentionally described the problem as a barrier to performing an action and consequently as a matter of exclusion from epistemic and communicative life. This is a product of bringing the tools of action theory to bear on these problems of injustice, and I think they provide a particularly valuable perspective on the harms and mechanisms of communicative and epistemic injustice. For one, we can recognise that there is a particular value to be had in being self-determining over what speech acts we perform. A common theme in discussions of communicative injustice is the ways that certain persons are consistently reinterpreted so that their speech acts fit with, e.g., gendered expectations about how one ought to speak. Thus, women can routinely find their assertions treated as questions. Of course, we can also understand this illicit conversion as a kind of epistemic injustice, as women may find their contributions to debates undermined, and their status as experts rendered into that of enquiring novices. The value of this self-determination is instrumental, because it concerns our ability to bring about desired changes in the world through engaging in communicative and epistemic activities. But I think it has an intrinsic value too. We are invested in developing our own unique epistemic and communicative "voice" and being included in these important domains of life as our unique selves.

This dissertation provides a unifying account of communicative and epistemic in-

justice by providing a relational theory of domain-specific agency. The domain that I am concerned with is what I call the 'social-epistemic' — an intersection of communicative and epistemic life. Being agential in this domain, I argue, is to be capable of bringing about our desired epistemic changes through communicative and epistemic actions. These changes may simply be a matter of engaging in self-expression to be better understood by others, but they also encompass the more complicated tasks of participating in an interdisciplinary research team, for example. As stated above, beyond the instrumental goals of social-epistemic agency, I also argue that there is a distinctive, intrinsic value in developing one's social-epistemic agency and in receiving respect for one's unique epistemic perspective.

My account of social-epistemic agency appeals to relational theories of autonomy for inspiration. Relational theories of autonomy form a feminist branch of the action theory literature, and share a basic commitment to the idea that some amount of socialisation is required for one to develop into an autonomous person, though certain sorts can lead to (or constitute) oppression. The tools developed by those studying autonomy have not been used to explore communicative and epistemic injustices, despite the growing concern in feminist philosophy of language and social epistemology on issues concerning differential treatment experienced by persons on the basis of their (perceived) social identity. As I've gestured at above, once we see the barriers to epistemic and communicative action as matters of our ability to be self-determining in the social-epistemic domain, we draw out new understandings of the harm of being silenced or undermined. Our particular processes of socialisation are crucial components for explanations of social-epistemic agential development — what biases and stereotypes we form, who gets to develop which skills, who we afford prima facie epistemic trust to, what social-epistemic careers and roles are open to us.

Our social-epistemic agency is a measure of two different things: our ability to perform communicative and epistemic actions (what I call 'episodic social-epistemic

agency'), and our ability to occupy communicative and epistemic roles ('programmatic social-epistemic agency')[1]. To lead a value filled social-epistemic life, in my view, involves having a high degree of both. Episodic and programmatic social-epistemic agency requires *developing* a set of agential competencies, and in *exercising* those agential competencies through engaging in social-epistemic life. Thus the theory is relational in two ways. First, social-epistemic agency is causally dependent on our relationships with others because our ability to develop agential competencies depends on our personal history of socialisation. Second, it is partly *constituted* by our relationships with other persons because our ability to actually exercise our agential competencies to bring about desired changes–i.e. to be agential–depends on the ways that others respond to us. As we've seen above, our assumptions and expectations about others, acquired through processes of socialisation, heavily influence our ability to exercise our agency.

In chapter 1, I begin by introducing the general notion of the social-epistemic and give a general account of 'agency' as "being an agent of desired changes". I draw attention to the importance of being able to engage in communicative and epistemic life for being able to lead a good life generally. As mentioned above, I argue that there is a distinctive value to be found in being able to take part in social-epistemic life in self-determined ways. The relational nature of social-epistemic agency complicates this, but I argue that there is sense to be made of the idea that we "relationally self-author" our social-epistemic actions. I then give a review of work on both communicative and epistemic injustices, and show how we can understand the problems of communicative and epistemic injustice as a loss of social-epistemic agency. Thus, my account of social-epistemic agency can be used to reveal a distinctive kind of harm in being excluded from participating in social-epistemic life in self-determining ways, and so can provide a unified account of the harms of communicative and epistemic injustice.

In chapter 2, I present the structure of social-epistemic agency in greater detail and

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[1] This language and two part structure is adapted from Diana Meyers (2002) account of autonomy competency.

explore one way in which we can distinguish permissible from impermissible agential undermining. My account of social-epistemic agency is inspired by accounts of autonomy, and in particular by accounts that propose that being autonomous depends on developing specific competencies. My proposal is that one's social-epistemic agency is developed by gaining a tripartite set of agential competencies. These enable our episodic agency (ability to perform particular actions in a context) and our programmatic agency (ability to occupy social-epistemic roles). The first set of competencies is a set of doxastic, motivational, and affective cognitive attitudes. Taken together, these three kinds of cognitive attitudes play a role in the process of determining what actions we attempt to perform and the ease with which we come to attempt the performance. Possessing beliefs that lead to stereotype threat, for example, can make it very difficult for one to attempt to perform particular kinds of social-epistemic actions (our success in actually performing an act will depend on how other people respond to us). The second set of competencies concerns the conditions for genuine self-determination over our episodic and programmatic social-epistemic agency. The third set of competencies concerns how we are supported in developing the general skills that we need for occupying particular communicative or epistemic roles. For instance, a woman's ability to develop mathematical skills in a patriarchal society might be severely impeded, thus preventing her from being able to pursue a desired role as a physics professor. However, merely developing agential competencies does not ensure that one possesses a high degree of social-epistemic agency. As I argue, our ability to exercise these competencies also depends on how others respond to our attempts to do so.

The last three chapters of the dissertation put the theory to work. In chapter 3, I discuss Miranda Fricker's (2007) account of epistemic objectification in order to motivate a general category of epistemic disrespect. I then provide a social-epistemic explanation of epistemic disrespect and epistemic objectification, by introducing an account of social-epistemic recognition respect and appraisal respect. In this chapter, I show that social-

epistemic recognition respect is a further condition for social-epistemic agency because being shown this kind of respect is a pre-condition for being included in social-epistemic life.

In chapter 4, I propose that communities that are good at producing knowledge are communities that are structured to support the social-epistemic agency of their members. I argue that this depends on the mutual affordance of social-epistemic recognition respect. Given our basic commitment to knowledge seeking we are also committed, then, to building epistemic communities that are good for social-epistemic agency. I then raise a concern that our very low standards for online discourse are threatening our ability to create the kinds of epistemic communities that we desire. Our expectations of and tacit acceptance of very low standards of online discourse are making it increasingly permissible to deny social-epistemic recognition respect, threatening the possibility of an online community that contributes positively to our epistemic ends. I propose that these effects are not limited to our online lives, and that offline discourse and dialogue is threatened by these low online standards for debate.

Lastly, in chapter 5, I engage in a reflective discussion on my experiences teaching a first year experience course about intellectual humility. Intellectual humility is widely regarded as a component of the solution to problems facing public discourse. Specifically, it is commonly seen as a way to bring about productive debate and dialogue on controversial or divisive topics. Consequently, many have taken to developing robust accounts of open-mindedness and humility with the long-term goal of – I take it – engaging in education and awareness campaigns to promote the development of these traits The proposed cumulative result of this work is to improve the standards of public discourse through the development of intellectual character in individuals. I critically consider this approach in this chapter, arguing that there are a number of ways in which taking an approach geared towards developing and supporting social-epistemic agency is a more effective plan for these same ends. I draw on my experiences in designing

and implementing different pedagogical strategies for teaching for and about intellectual humility. Ultimately, I argue that intellectual humility is useful when understood as a particular skill for engaging in a particular kind of conversation. But I argue that there is social-epistemic work that needs to be done prior to engaging in these conversations. In addition, I provide an argument that in certain conversational contexts asking for intellectually humble engagement is unreasonable from the perspective of supporting the social-epistemic agency of all conversational participants.

Contents

Chapter 1

Agency and injustice

In the World State city of London, in Huxley's fictional universe of *Brave New World*, society is peaceful, people are fulfilled, their lives go well and according to plan, and the drug soma dispels any remaining dissatisfaction. Despite these impressive feats (perhaps leaving off the soma), most of us are deeply disturbed by the reality in Brave New World. As philosophers are liable to point out, of course, given that everyone is so satisfied and happy here, what's the real harm? Surely this world is better in many ways than our own? I – along with most of us, I assume – would prefer to stay in our world and try to fix its many shortcomings rather than live in a world made bearable by soma and a programme of all pervasive social indoctrination. Of course, it would be wrong to equate our world and Huxley's — but we are all *socialised* if not indoctrinated. We are raised in societies and families that place expectations on us, previous generations have structured our public life to shape the options available to us, social stereotypes affect our interactions with and perceptions of one another.

In this chapter I will focus on two broad social-philosophical areas of work: feminist philosophy of language and social epistemology. Feminist philosophers of language, as I will discuss, have been interested in the ways that our (perceived) identities can limit the speech acts available to individuals and amplify the voices of others. Social epistemolo-

gists have similarly been concerned with how our access to knowledge and to recognition as being knowledgeable can be influenced because of socially significant markers like race, gender, and class. Throughout the chapter, I will focus on debates concerning epistemic and communicative injustice. From this discussion, I will argue that the harm in many of these cases can be explained by an appeal to a loss of *agency*. Our brief reflection on Huxley has already helped us to feel our commitment to self-authorship: to be able to enact our lives as we see fit. Most of us, I presume, would like to keep our options open and have a range of communicative and epistemic acts and roles available. Increasingly, though, we are coming to understand just how much our socialisation and lived, social context has a role to play in this process of authoring our agency — some agency is amplified, some silenced.

An often-overlooked fact about having a wide range of choices available to us in life is that it depends on the greatest support from others. Too often we are inclined to think that the basis of self-direction is a matter of being left alone as much as possible. The account of agency I motivate here instead proposes that self-authorship and having a wide array of options available in our epistemic and communicative lives really comes from a mutually relational foundation and mutually supportive day-to-day environment. So, if we each desire to live our own lives according to our own scripts, we need those around us to make that possible.

To re-state the point, and as I will discuss below, the freedom to develop and exercise our agency depends on others recognising and supporting our agency. While I would be willing to defend the general thesis, I will just be focusing on a domain-specific kind of agency: social-epistemic agency. I will propose that we can understand a number of pre-existing debates around epistemic and communicative injustice as fundamentally matters of someone's social-epistemic agency being undermined. I will be building the case for some of the arguments in the next chapter that aspects of socialisation and interdependence are causally necessary for and partly constitutive of social-epistemic

agency.

In §1.1, I introduce the domain of the 'social-epistemic' and explain the sense of 'agency' I will use in the dissertation. The task of §1.1.1 is to further explain the unique character of 'agency' in social-epistemic agency as 'relational' agency. I then shift to a literature review of work on communicative injustice and epistemic injustice and argue that throughout the literature we can find a unique harm to social-epistemic agency in each of the phenomena surveyed, namely, as a loss of self-authorship over social-epistemic agency. The survey of communicative injustice in §1.2 includes work on illocutionary silencing (§1.2.1), perlocutionary frustration (§1.2.2), communicative disablement (§1.2.3), and discursive injustice (§1.2.4). The survey of epistemic injustice in §1.3 includes work on testimonial injustice (§1.3.1), hermeneutical injustice (§1.3.2), testimonial injustice in healthcare (§1.3.3), a brief introduction to major themes in feminist epistemology (§1.3.4), epistemic ignorance (§1.3.5), and epistemic violence (§1.3.6). I conclude the chapter in §1.4 by drawing out the main characteristics for an account of social-epistemic agency given the discussion of the existing accounts of communicative and epistemic injustices.

1.1   Agency in the social-epistemic domain

One of the main goals of this first chapter is to scribe out a particular domain or realm that I will call the 'social-epistemic'. The range of phenomena discussed in 'social epistemology' is not equivalent with the social-epistemic. While there is much overlap, the social-epistemic is a broader category and of theoretical interest for different reasons. The purpose of carving out this new space is primarily to direct our attention to our interpersonal dependency at the root of communicative and epistemic life. From this, we will build an account of agency in the social-epistemic domain understood as our ability to be self-authoring within our social-epistemic lives. I will call this 'social-epistemic

agency'. In this first section, I begin by explaining my use of 'agent', and then explain what makes social-epistemic agency both 'social' and 'epistemic', and thus what makes it distinctive from other kinds of agency.

An 'agent' is traditionally thought to be someone capable of taking responsibility for their actions. A moral agent, for example, is responsible for the moral consequences of, for instance, biting a guest, while the pet cat is not. But more fundamentally, an agent is something that brings about changes. So, a person understood as an agent is someone who can bring about changes that they intend or desire, and it is this more basic sense that I will be drawing on in this account of social-epistemic agency. We can metaphorically think of agency in this way as a chemical reaction, like when combining baking soda and vinegar. To be agential on this understanding is to perform actions and to bring about desired changes in the environment by bringing together our metaphorical reagents. More particularly, the goal is to bring about social-epistemic changes: to alter the epistemic environment by contributing to enquiry, change someone's mind, bring about collective understanding, learn from one's teachers. One of the consequences of this understanding of agency is that we talk of someone's being agential to some degree or other, and not about being a social-epistemic agent or not. Social-epistemic agency is something that comes in degrees relative to our ability to bring about changes in the social-epistemic domain of our lives.

In keeping with the chemical reaction metaphor a moment longer, we need to understand what the figurative "reagents" are. The first is a suite of competencies that enable us to perform particular actions and occupy our desired roles in the social-epistemic domain. These competencies include cognitive attitudes, self-authored choices over actions and roles, and specific skills for the social-epistemic roles we desire[1]. The second is our relationships with other people both past and present, that enable and constrain the development and the exercise of the agential competencies. The interplay of agential

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[1]These competencies are developed in detail in chapter 2.

competencies and our relationships with other people is our "reaction", with social-epistemic changes as the outcome (or not, as the case may be). These two components come together in an effort to bring about self-authored changes in the social-epistemic domain through performing actions and through occupying social roles. While we have some degree of direct control over the actions we will try to perform in seeking to self-author changes, we must do so through our interactions with other persons.

The ability to perform actions and occupy roles in the social-epistemic domain is dependent on how we are treated by others—whether we are listened to or silenced, whether we are recognised as knowers or dismissed as novices. I argue below that the social-epistemic domain falls in overlapping areas of epistemic and communicative life. Being included in communicative and epistemic life is distinctively valuable for us and, I propose, necessary for a life to go well. If my ability to be a speaker depends on your being able to listen to what I am really saying, then I need to you to have the appropriate competencies to do so. Thus, we need to pay attention not only to those agential skills that are required for speaking and informing, but also those of listening in order to fully understand social-epistemic agency.

'Epistemic agency' is used as a technical term by others, usually to describe some way in which we are responsible for knowledge or belief[2]. For example, "*epistemic agency* might be broadly construed as anything that is *responsible* for the assessments, acquisition, dissemination, and retention of knowledge" (Reider, 2016, x). Some take epistemic agency to be a matter of whether or not one can be responsible for the beliefs one forms (McHugh, 2013; Olson, 2015), and thus whether epistemic agency is a real possibility (Engel, 2013; Setiya, 2013). It has also been proposed that we should understand epistemic agency in terms of our commitments to basic epistemic principles, which gives rise to a similar question of whether we can defend our basic epistemic commitments, i.e., our epistemic agency (Lynch, 2013). There are also debates around the possibility

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[2]There is crossover with this understanding of epistemic agency and the literature on doxastic voluntarism (Alston, 1988; Steup, 2017).

of collective responsibility for knowledge or belief, i.e., whether we can make sense of collective epistemic agents and collectively irrational epistemic agents (Szigeti, 2015). Epistemic agency is primarily concerned about whether some belief is justified or counts as knowledge.

As I commented above, the social-epistemic is an area of overlap between communicative and epistemic actions. Communicative actions enable us to engage in special kinds of collaborative epistemic activity including testimony, deliberation, dialogue more generally, and giving reasons and taking reasons. These actions are clearly directed to the goals of justification and knowledge, but we can choose instead to focus on the conditions that have to be met for someone to be included in these activities. That is, instead of focusing on a question about how epistemic agents beliefs are justified or not, we ask questions about the processes that support or undermine someone's attempt to perform a social-epistemic act of testifying about some belief or other. When we ask questions of this latter sort, we ask about their social-epistemic agency and whether they were able to bring about, e.g., the desired change in their research team's data processing by asserting that there is a flaw in the design.

We would typically describe these as epistemic actions in the sense that they are aimed at gaining knowledge, but they depend upon our ability to communicate with one another and so they are also communicative actions. We see that our ability to participate in collaborative epistemic life relies significantly on our inclusion in communicative life. My use of 'epistemic' should be taken to refer to those aspects of epistemic life that are shared: contributing to an enquiry, engaging in a debate, working in a research team, advising novices, teaching, sharing know-how, providing justification etc.[3]

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[3]See Tirrell (1993) on the project of taking semantic authority in order to participate in processes of meaning making and self-authorship (specifically as a feminist project). Tirrell desribes this process a socially embedded one that depends on the ways that we are treated by others, thus the picture I develop here is amenable with some core themes in her discussion, "We articulate our experiences because we must, but we seek authority for our articulations because we want to contribute to shaping the social reality in which we participate. To settle for anything less is to settle for less than a fully human life." (1993, 28-29).

Thus, responsible social-epistemic agency will not concern responsibly forming beliefs in the head, but fulfilling one's social-epistemic responsibilities to other persons that will include, e.g., listening sincerely and charitably to them[4].

In these ways, the social-epistemic domain overlaps with topics in social epistemology. Broadly speaking, social epistemologists theorise about how our interactions with and dependency on one another impacts our ability to seek truth. There are, speaking broadly once again, two further delineations to be made in social epistemology regarding the sense of 'social'[5]. On the one hand, there are social epistemologists engaging in familiar traditional epistemic problems but now looking at whether our concepts of knowledge, say, can apply to plural or group subjects, or in analysing problems of peer disagreement, and conditions for testimonial knowledge. The central social insight here is that our ability to both attain epistemic goods like knowledge and justification depends significantly on others, or may in fact be possessed by them, leading to, e.g., theorising about extended minds. On the other hand are social epistemologists concerned with issues of power, social privilege, and political injustice, and how these complicate and influence our ability to take part in epistemic life (e.g., Miranda Fricker, José Medina). The central social insight here is that traditional projects in epistemology have focused on idealised, individualistic conceptions of the self and so have ignored the ways that our lived social experience (e.g., our political life) constrains and influences our ability to engage in epistemic life[6]. Whether we are concerned with either "branch" of social epistemology, at base the debates are around the interpersonal nature of epistemic activity. Our use of 'social' in 'social-epistemic', then, will have a complex sense that ranges over 'communicative', 'interpersonal', and 'interdependent'. This limits – or broadens –

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[4]The topic of social-epistemic responsibility is taken up in chapter 3 in discussions of caring for the social-epistemic agency of others, §3.3 and §3.3.1.

[5]See Goldman and Blanchard (2018) for a tripartite delineation, my two categories here merge their Social Epistemology I and II.

[6]For example, "...epistemology as it has traditionally been pursued has been impoverished by the lack of any theoretical framework conducive to revealing the ethical and political aspects of our epistemic conduct" (Fricker, 2007, 2).

our focus on the 'epistemic' to those social aspects of epistemic life through which our ability to perform communicative and epistemic actions takes place.

There is a distinctive value at the base of social-epistemic agency that is not borne out by these instrumental ends aimed at bringing about change, and that is the more basic value we place in having *self-authorship* over the development and exercise of social-epistemic agency. In this way, 'agency' shares some of its sense with 'autonomy', as I will explain in the next section, §1.1.1. The importance of this specific area of self-authorship is, I think, often neglected. We typically focus our attention on the ways that our ability to be self-determining plays out in our moral and political lives without thinking of the specific ways that being capable of communicating and engaging in epistemic activity is similarly important to us. In fact, communicative and epistemic inclusion underlies our ability to participate in political activity at all. In thinking about this connection between the political, communicative, and epistemic, it is intuitive that we desire self-authorship or determination over our engagement in social-epistemic life. Our own voice and our own epistemic perspective are significant facts about us, and are surely things that we have a basic desire to shape ourselves rather than ceding the formation of these basic parts of self to others (i.e., in the ways the inhabitants of Huxley's World State City have surely undergone). As I will argue for throughout the dissertation, this process of self-authorship relies on the support of others both in "real time" and over processes of historical development.

In 2013, Rikke Schmidt Kjærgaard, a Danish molecular biologist, was admitted to hospital suffering from a potentially terminal bacterial infection (Kjærgaard, 2018)[7]. Kjærgaard ended up in a coma, then progressed slowly back to consciousness through a period of being "locked in" and incapable of communicating with those around her. In her book, she re-tells numerous episodes of being only able to listen to people around her speaking about her, while being incapable of reaching out to them. In an interview

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[7]My thanks to Toby Napoletano for introducing me to this case.

about her experience, she describes the underlying pain of this isolation, "The worst thing was the loneliness: I had nurses with me around the clock, but knowing you can't communicate what you are feeling is devastating. Human beings love to be social — we love interaction. Not being able to reach outside of yourself ruins you as a human being. If you can't engage, if you can't get through to other people, you suffer terribly." (Moorhead and Kjærgaard, 2018).

Kjærgaard's story brings vividly into view something that we generally take for granted: our ability to communicate with one another. Being incapable of expressing oneself is deeply disturbing, an incredibly mild form of which we might recognise from shouting at characters in films who can't hear us. Kjærgaard's comments draw our attention to the deep connection between communication and self-expression. There are many kinds of social activities, but communication is necessarily social and, it seems, necessary for a life well lived. Other social activities, like playing rugby, spending morning tea with co-workers, or spending Christmas on the beach are in some sense optional, and while they are nice to do it is unlikely for the majority of people that a life without these things will undermine their ability to live well[8]. When we say "humans are social" there is a sense in which engaging in communication is just what we mean, and just what Kjærgaard describes: humans are creatures who depend on connecting with others through communicating with one another. This may not be news to us, that as social creatures we have a basic value in connection with others through communication, but it is something easily overlooked given our tendency to think about communication primarily instrumentally.

When we think of communication as an *activity*, it is intuitive that it is something that we can be more or less good at, something we can be excluded from, and something that can be mediated by norms and rules. There is an important dynamic that takes place in communication, that of a speaker *expressing* and of a hearer *understanding*.

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[8]Though, of course, a life can only be improved with these additions.

These two aspects of the dynamic can be influenced by all of the items on our list: interlocutors can be more or less good at expressing and understanding one another; some persons find themselves excluded from the activity of expressing (altogether or in some areas), some are incapable of understanding certain speakers (because of how they express or what they are expressing); rules and norms of communication are differently applied to potential speakers (they may only be allowed to express certain things, or in certain ways), and hearers' abilities to understand may be mediated by norms and rules about how particular speakers can express. Of course, all of this should sound familiar to us by having run through much of the same features from the epistemic perspective in the above. What we are drawing out, though, is that independent of engaging in collaborative epistemic activity that depends on communication between participants, our status as communicators is subject to similar interpersonal constraints. Given the basic importance of being able to participate in communicative action, this deserves distinct attention.

None of these influences on communication are necessarily bad, and I suspect they are unavoidable much as in the case of collaborative epistemic work. Intuitively, though, if any particular influence prevents or routinely inhibits expression or understanding, then someone is experiencing a harm to their ability to engage in the basically valuable human activity of communication. I don't think this turns on the content of what is being expressed but merely in the exclusion from the activity of communication. That is, independent of what is being expressed in a given instance of communication, there is value for speakers and hearers in being able to take part in the activity of communicative connection. For speakers, this value may take on a simple epistemic flavour in the desire to engage in self-expression and be taken seriously by others[9].

At base, then, social-epistemic agency concerns the degree to which we are able to bring about changes in our social-epistemic environment through performing com-

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[9]I develop this further in chapter 3 through the idea of an 'epistemic perspective', specifically in §3.3 and §3.3.1, on the topic of social-epistemic recognition respect.

municative and epistemic actions. The value in engaging in social-epistemic action is instrumental for epistemic ends (including that of self-expression), but also intrinsically valuable because it concerns a significant form of self-authorship or self-determination in our lives. The actions within this domain are interpersonal and interdependent: they take place in the relationships between people, and they depend on the dynamics between those involved for their success. In order to develop and exercise social-epistemic agency, we need to be included in communicative and epistemic life.

In the next section, I develop this idea of social-epistemic agency as an ability to bring about change. Specifically, I will compare my usage of 'agency' to that of 'autonomy' and proceed to argue for social-epistemic agency as a domain specific form of relational autonomy.

1.1.1 Relational agency

It is tempting to hear 'agency' also as a kind of 'autonomy'. This is not helped by the fact that discussions of autonomy and agency often occur simultaneously, but the two concepts can be used distinctly and I will do so throughout. I use the term 'autonomy' to mean 'global autonomy'. 'Autonomy' used in this way applies to theorising about the whole person and their ability to be, loosely speaking, self-governing over their own lives. For example, we might talk of a woman's autonomy over her own life in a patriarchal society. 'Agency', as I will use the term, is applied domain specifically, such that we can speak of our social-epistemic agency, our physical agency, our moral agency, etc. For example, if a woman was unable to get recognition as an expert as a computer scientist we could describe her as less social-epistemically agential than male counter-parts who do. I take it that our ability to be successfully agential in these various domains is a significant factor for how globally autonomous we are in our lives. Thus, on balance, someone who is not at all social-epistemically agential will not be as autonomous as someone who is.

Within these agential domains it is important that we have local self-government, though my preferred concept here will be 'self-authorship'. Being self-authoring means that one is in charge of directing one's actions according to one's desired narrative. I intentionally choose language that invokes ideas of story-telling given that in mediating how we are heard and seen by others we are often dealing with how we are perceived and interpreted, not unlike the way in which an author tries to have some control over how their stories are received. Furthermore, what audiences bring with them can weigh heavily on their perception of the author's story; likewise, the attitudes and beliefs of others influence how they respond (or not) to us as interlocutors and knowers. As Lynne Tirrell writes, "Writing one's life is a metaphor, which can also be taken literally ...Whether her re-articulation [of herself] gets uptake, whether she can make it stick, depends on her community. We all articulate ourselves within and against the definitions we are handed, through the actions we do, through the stories we tell, fundamentally through the choices we make" (1993, 28). I will argue that this interplay between the author and her audience is part of what develops and fixes her domain-specific agency — she does not have complete discretion over how this narrative plays out. I choose to use 'author' and 'audience' because these terms are – to my ear at least – neutral across communicative and epistemic cases (unlike, say, 'interlocutor', 'speaker', 'hearer', and 'knower').

I will be borrowing from the autonomy literature in building my account, in particular from Diana Meyers' (2002) theory of autonomy competency[10]. Motivation for a relational account of autonomy can come from a variety of different concerns, each challenging the non-relationality of traditional theories of autonomy along different lines. Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000) present five types of critiques levied against non-relational

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[10]Meyers' theory itself is relational insofar as the capacities required for autonomy are developed through our relationships with others. It is not relational in the sense that autonomy itself is constituted by our relationships with others. A theory of autonomy that is relational in the second sense is presented by Oshana (1998). The picture of social-epistemic agency I develop is relational in both senses, our ability to both develop and exercise agency depends on our relationships with others.

theories of autonomy: symbolic critiques, i.e., the image of the autonomous man (e.g., Code (1991)); metaphysical critiques challenging atomism and individualism about persons; care critiques re-asserting the value of dependency and interconnection and other traditionally feminine values; postmodernist critiques challenging (at least) the transparency of the self; and diversity critiques similarly concerned with the idea of a singular unified, cohesive, and transparent self.

My claim that agency is relational is a metaphysical one about the cause and the constitution of agency. By 'causally' determined I mean 'causally-historically' determined, and I refer to the process of developing one's social-epistemic agency (this is developed in detail in chapter 2). My claim is that our ability to be self-authoring partially depends on our prior history of socialisation, our past relationships and social learning. Thus, our agency is relative to this causal history. But our agency is also *constituted* by participating in social life with others. That is, in order to perform particular communicative and epistemic acts we need the support and/or cooperation of our audience. We need in the moment not to be inhibited by them. Sometimes we will need more and we will depend on them supporting us. In these ways, social-epistemic agency is also constituted by our relationships and interactions with others. The degree to which we have social-epistemic agency is not a static property of individuals, it is something that we learn and develop through social life and then attempt to enact in our socially embedded lives. Our agency is in flux, through both our development of it and through our exercise of it in interacting with each another.

My account here is partially inspired by Lorraine Code's development of Annette Baier's proposal that we are 'second persons' (Code, 1991)[11]. Code begins her paper with the astute observations that implicit in many ethical and epistemic theories are assumptions about human nature: that we are capable of getting knowledge independently without aid, that it is possible to engage in moral reflection by reason alone, without

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[11]See Baier (1981). See also Caroline Whitbeck (1984).

emotion. Implicit in much work on autonomy to that point had been an idealisation of persons as 'autonomous man', "Autonomous man is – and, it is commonly believed, should be – self-sufficient, independent, and self-reliant, a self-realizing individual whose efforts are directed toward maximizing his personal gains" (1991, 358). The ideal of autonomy, she critiques, has gradually aligned with an ideal of individualism as being wholly self-sufficient. Implicit in such an alignment is a picture of human nature that assumes humans can and should develop in these ways. Contrary to this picture, the second persons account proposes instead that we who owe our personal development to a history of relationships with others, and from the fact of our developmental interdependence. As Code notes, there is no "renunciation of individuality" in an account of second persons, unless we conflate 'individual' and 'individualism': it is coherent that individuals develop their unique perspective, their creative impulses, their expressiveness, and their sense of self through their interactions with others. We do not dissolve any meaningful sense of our existence as individuals by making clear the ways that our ability to become the person we are has depended significantly on our relationships with other persons.

I propose to call this heavily socially-dependent kind of self-authorship, 'relational self-authorship' in order to reflect the balancing act of self-determination with mutual interdependence on others. We value the ability to self-author, to direct our own lives, but a proper understanding of what the self-authorship of communicative and epistemic acts requires reveals to us a basic dependency on other persons. Recall that the aim of social-epistemic agency is to actually bring about changes, e.g., to actually contribute advice to a deliberating group, and we cannot do this if the other members of the group do not take on board our suggestion because they don't see us as a credible adviser. Advice that falls on deaf ears does not bring about changes.

Socialisation is an essential premise of existing relational theories of autonomy[12].

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[12]The general definition of a relational theory offered by Mackenzie and Stoljar describes relational

Taking this premise, that people's preferences, desires, beliefs, etc., arise in part from external socialisation as a fact about persons requires making a proposal about how to balance "good" and "bad" socialisation[13]. While we can see how socialisation is necessary for social development, we also recognise socialisation that inhibits individuals from living their lives autonomously — again, as the inhabitants of Huxley's World State helpfully show. As I approach this problem, good socialisation is that which enables social-epistemic agents to develop their agential competencies—those skills and abilities that enable them to self-author their actions in these domains. In turn, bad socialisation is that which inhibits the development of agential competencies. I develop this in more detail in the chapter 2, and in particular in §2.3 on the topic of the genuine authorship of our beliefs and desires.

In taking inspiration from Meyers' theory of autonomy competency, I argue that social-epistemic agency has two main parts. The first is our ability to be self-authoring over particular communicative and epistemic actions. In following Meyers' terminology, I will call this 'episodic social-epistemic agency'. This is the extent to which we are able to self-author, for example, a particular speech act at a particular time and place. The second is our ability to be self-authoring over the varied domains of our lives, again following Meyers' terminology, I will call this 'programmatic social-epistemic agency'. On her picture, programmatic autonomy describes our ability to make significant choices over how our life goes. I will be using a narrower definition here, and focus instead on our ability to be self-authoring in the roles that we can occupy within the social-epistemic domain of our lives, e.g., to become teachers, protesters, board-members, and the degree to which we can be effective in these roles. What successful self-authorship requires is the ability to actively participate in and make changes to this domain of our lives.

theories as those that "are premised on a shared conviction, the conviction that persons are socially embedded and that agents' identities are formed within the context of social relationships and shaped by a complex of intersecting social determinants, such as race, class, gender, and ethnicity" (2000, 4).

[13]As Killmister (2013) discusses, the 'socialisation problem' is one that faces autonomy theorists generally because they seek to explain what makes our actions "our own", i.e., free from external manipulation or coercion.

Social-epistemic agency will depend, then, on our ability to actually bring about the changes in the world we desire. As I will detail in the next chapter, this plausibly requires a range of internal (psychological) and external (social) aspects to come together. For the rest of this chapter, I will review work on both communicative and epistemic injustice. In so doing, I aim to show that an important part of an explanation of the harm in these cases is a loss or undermining of our agency, i.e., our desire to bring about communicative and epistemic change. In the next section, I motivate re-thinking the harms of communicative injustice as a kind of undermining of our ability to perform communicative acts.

1.2 Being silenced and losing communicative control

The following example describes a scenario that I take to be a paradigmatic case of both communicative and epistemic injustice:

Boardroom Alice is a member of a board at a large company. In a board meeting, where Alice is the only woman present, she attempts to offer advice about a policy under debate. Alice's contribution is met with scepticism by the male boardmembers. At a later time in the meeting, a male boardmember offers the same advice, and it is accepted by the group.

This example is hypothetical but recent research has shown that women's contributions are commonly ignored or challenged by other members of meetings, while their male counterparts experience no such difficulties[14]. As feminist philosophers have argued, certain individuals can have trouble performing speech acts, which others do not, purely as a consequence of who they are and how others expect them to behave *communicatively* (e.g., Langton (1993), Kukla (2014) as will be discussed below). Similarly, certain individuals experience difficulties being respected or getting recognition as experts (or

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[14]See Brescoll (2011).

informants) as a consequence of who they are and what others expect of them *epistemically* (e.g., Fricker (2007)). Alice's advice, a form of directive, even if she issues it in full confidence and with very good justification, can still fail to have the desired consequence because her audience does not take on board *her* advice. This is one way in which the attitudes of others can present barriers that inhibit our communicative and epistemic acts.

In some cases, the salient cause of the undermining of our communicative actions is not external. Amongst other things, internalising harmful stereotypes or other social attitudes can cause one to self-police one's communicative actions in certain domains. This is a form of bad socialisation. Consider, for example, a case where a members of a certain social group feels as though they do not have the requisite authority to make an assertion:

Maths Jane is a female university student taking a mathematics class. Jane is on a par ability-wise with her peers in the class, and is capable of completing the work on her own (as demonstrated by her homework record). As a consequence of internalising gender stereotypes, she finds it difficult to make assertions and conjectures about mathematical problems because she doubts her own expertise in the area. She rarely makes such assertions, and tends to defer to her male counterparts instead.

I take the above case to be another paradigmatic case of both communicative and epistemic injustice[15]. As stipulated in the case, Jane *is capable* of completing the mathematical problems on her own, but severely doubts her ability to do so due to internalising negative stereotypes about women and their ability to do mathematical work. Consequently, Jane rarely makes assertions in the context of her class. Internalisation of

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[15]Despite the two paradigm examples I provide here having sex or gender as the primary cause of injustice, this choice is in some sense arbitrary. Individuals experience injustice of these sorts as a consequence of racial, economic, or other social markers of identity or group membership (be these markers accurate or not). In addition, my proposal is that there can be social-epistemic agential undermining without injustices. In such cases, the identity of the speaker may have little to do with why they have been undermined.

biases, stereotypes, and other similar attitudes can cause individuals to take on board negative beliefs about their ability to perform types of actions (e.g., to cook, to drive, to earn a tertiary degree). The *communicative* injustice in this case is apparent — Jane feels unqualified to make assertions about mathematics. Importantly, though, no-one need misunderstand Jane or fail to take her seriously, no person directly caused her to feel incapable of making these assertions. The internalisation of these societal attitudes – products of socialisation – have caused her to limit herself.

A primary goal of the literature concerned with silencing is to explain how some individuals systematically lose the ability to do with their words what they desire[16]. In the original and paradigm cases in the literature, silencing occurs as a consequence of oppression in the wider social environment that affects individuals perceived as members of social identity groups, i.e., members of different sex, gender, racial, or other socially significant groups. For some theorists, silencing constitutes a form of oppression itself (it is not merely caused by existing oppressive structures and attitudes in one's wider society). A considerable amount of the early work in this literature takes a speech theoretic approach to the problem of silencing — when one is silenced it is because someone or something has caused one's speech act to be infelicitous in one way or another (e.g., by changing the force) (Maitra, 2009), causing uptake failures (Langton, 1993), (Langton and Hornsby, 1998), inhibiting perlocutionary consequences (Bird, 2002), and alternatively to the speech act theoretic accounts, preventing hearers from identifying communicative intentions (Kukla, 2014)).

While these approaches have been fruitful, I take it that they are too limited in scope both in terms of their ability to recognise morally significant instances of inhibiting individuals' abilities to communicate and in their ability to explain the harm of such inhibition. The silencing literature itself is a discussion primarily focused on explanations

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[16]Where this includes – as a small sample of the literature – the theories of illocutionary silencing (Langton, 1993), (Langton and Hornsby, 1998), communicative disablement (Maitra, 2009), discursive injustice (Kukla, 2014).

of how communication breaks down, and the explanation of the harms of silencing are largely left explained by accounts of the structural prejudice or oppression that they are linked up to. It is difficult, for instance, to understand Jane's case as a kind of communicative harm according to existing accounts. That is, the harm is to be explained by supplementary moral accounts of the badness of oppression or prejudice as silencing is taken to be a form of, e.g., oppression, or alternatively, a special instance of prejudiced action. I argue here that there is a distinctive kind of harm taking place in cases of silencing that can be explained by an appeal to a loss of social-epistemic agency. This means silencing causes harm of a different sort, one that is best explained by an appeal to the value we place on communicative and epistemic action. My arguments here are not to deny that there are distinctive moral harms importantly linked to oppressive circumstances and histories or prejudiced attitudes, but instead to propose a distinctive kind of harm present in these cases.

In addition, and as the metaphor of silencing suggests, much of the existing literature has been primarily concerned with cases where an individual has failed to speak, their speech act is caused to misfire, or their audience has failed to listen accurately. I propose that these cases fall at one end of a spectrum of 'communicative underminings'. The metaphor of undermining is intended to instead offer an image of one having one's ability to speak and be heard taken from them to a greater or lesser degree; one can be partially or fully undermined. This places instances of silencing of the familiar sort in the literature on a spectrum with non-oppressive, non-prejudiced cases of silencing. This is a spectrum of communicative undermining, and so non-oppressive and non-prejudiced cases will still count as instances of communicative undermining. The harm of silencing is understood partly, then, in terms of the significant or systematic occurrence of communicative undermining.

In the next section, I provide a review of the cornerstone pieces in the illocutionary silencing literature, and some more recent accounts of communicative injustice. In each

case, I will provide reasons to support my thesis that there is a distinctive social-epistemic agential harm in the examples. The goal is not to supplant these accounts as explanations of the communicative failures in the examples, or to side with any particular account of communicative failure. Rather, my intent is to show how we can interpret the harm caused to those silenced as a matter of social-epistemic agency. I take it that my account of social-epistemic agency largely remains neutral across these competing accounts of communicative failure, such that the account of harm that I provide is compatible with one's preferred, e.g., speech act theoretic account of communicative failure in these cases.

1.2.1 Illocutionary silencing

Rae Langton (1993) introduced to the literature the idea of 'illocutionary silencing'. Langton's motivation for introducing the concept of illocutionary silencing was to further develop the suggestion by Catherine MacKinnon that pornography has the ability to subordinate and silence women (MacKinnon, 1987). Mackinnon argues that the consumption of pornography that depicts violence against women or depicts women giving in to violent actions constitutes the subordination of women. Langton substantiates these arguments by taking the notion of silencing used by MacKinnon and locating it in the context of speech act theory. She argues that the consumption of violent pornography causes further subordination of women by causing some men to fail to recognise women's acts of refusal to their sexual advances. The Langton account of illocutionary silencing treats pornography itself as a speech act that can also constitute the subordination of women[17].

In Langton's cases, the man fails to correctly interpret a woman's refusal for sex, instead interpreting her as being shy or coy about consenting. In Austinian language, he does not consider her speech act of refusal to be sincere and consequently he does

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[17]Langton's account is further developed in Hornsby and Langton (1998), and by Jennifer Hornsby herself in Hornsby (2000). Hornsby also uses the title 'illocutionary disablement' to describe the same phenomenon.

not meet Austin's 'uptake condition' for her attempted speech act to be felicitously performed[18]. Let us refer to this scenario as the 'consent case'. Langton makes use of the distinctions provided by Austin (1975) to explain how the silencing of speech can lead to oppression through forced misfires of locutions, illocutions, and perlocutions. Langton argues that the form of silencing which results from the consumption of pornography is *illocutionary*, which is importantly distinct from the ways that our locutionary and perlocutionary acts can be silenced[19]. Illocutionary silencing occurs because the audience fails to provide uptake for the attempted speech act, causing it to misfire. As the failure of uptake is part of a pattern of women's subordination, it is an instance of illocutionary silencing rather than just a case of misinterpretation. The harm of illocutionary silencing is thus a form of subordination, either because it contributes to the subordination of women or because it constitutes their subordination.

The necessity of the uptake condition has been one of the main points of contention concerning the theory of illocutionary silencing. The criticism, broadly speaking, is that this account puts too much weight on interpretation by the audience of the speaker's intention to perform a particular speech act, and consequently removes an important element of self-determination over which speech acts we perform. When a parent, e.g., tells their child to do the dishes and the child refuses to uptake the directive, we would not say that the parent failed to issue a directive to the child. By contrast, if the child tries to name their newborn sibling "Noisy", their act of naming is unlikely to be work because others are unlikely to uptake the act. Intuitions divide on these cases, but I am inclined to agree that not all illocutionary acts require uptake in order to be felicitous. However, settling this debate is not a part of our task here[20]. That being said, that

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[18] "Unless a certain effect is achieved, the illocutionary act will not have been happily, successfully performed . . . I cannot be said to have warned an audience unless it hears what I say and takes what I say in a certain sense . . . the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake." (Austin, 1975, 116)

[19] Locutionary silencing occurs when one is prevented from speaking, either physically or through intimidation, etc. Perlocutionary silencing, which Langton terms 'perlocutionary frustration', occurs when one's speech cannot bring about the desired or conventional consequences it otherwise would.

[20] As we will see below one can argue that in the consent case the woman's attempt at a refusal

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not all cases of communicative injustice are a consequence of failures of uptake does not mean that none are.

Of course, it is perhaps unsurprising to learn that communication is an interpersonal process that depends on more than the intention of the speaker. The more substantive conclusion that I want to draw here is that our ability to be social-epistemically agential depends on successful communicative actions. By 'successful' I mean that the speaker is able to bring about the desired change through their performing the communicative action. In order to successfully exercise the communicative aspects of our social-epistemic agency, then, depends partially on others peoples' perceptions of our communicative intentions and their willingness to uptake (if required). If people systematically refuse to uptake our speech acts – as in consent case style scenarios – then our ability to successfully bring about changes through communicative action is severely undermined. In this way, our social-epistemic agency is undermined because we are incapable of bringing about changes through our communicative actions. In reinterpreting the consent case, I propose that the woman has had her social-epistemic agency undermined by the man's apparent inability to uptake her refusal.

As I will discuss in chapter 2, I don't take it to be essential that undermining of agency happens intentionally. Reflecting on the Maths Case above should show us this, it would be bizarre to describe Jane's behaviour as intentional self-sabotage. In the next subsections, I discuss some competing theories for explaining communicative injustices like the consent case. I take it that all of the accounts identify different instances of communicative injustice and thus no one account is sufficient alone. Nonetheless, each case presents a kind of communicative injustice and one that can be understood in terms of social-epistemic agency.

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(illocutionary act) has not failed, but instead has been perlocutionarily frustrated (§1.2.2)

1.2.2 Perlocutionary frustration

Daniel Jacobson (1995) and Alexander Bird (2002) both provide arguments that challenge the uptake criterion for illocutionary speech acts. They instead propose that what occurs in the consent case described by Langton and Hornsby is perlocutionary frustration[21]. This means that the speaker does perform the speech act of refusal, but they are unable to bring about the characteristic or intended consequences by it.

Jacobson (1995) challenges the idea that uptake is always required for illocutions to be performed because idiosyncratic features of the audience can sometimes cause uptake failures. Jacobson's case describes a wedding invitation being sent by a woman called Sally to a man called Bill. Bill, however, is affected by a paranoid fantasy when he receives the invitation. He comes to believe that Sally has not actually invited him to her wedding, but has sent the invitation to gloat (1995, 73). If we interpret this case by using the Langton and Hornsby account of silencing, we must say that Sally has failed to invite Bill, but this isn't intuitively correct. It seems more plausible that Sally has invited Bill but her invitation fails to have the intended effect, namely having Bill consider whether he should come to her wedding. Thus, Jacobson argues that failures of uptake need not cause illocutionary failures and may instead be better described as instances of perlocutionary frustration.

Bird (2002) also argues that uptake is not required for the performance of speech acts. Bird presents a challenge to the requirement by using a number of examples of what he calls 'non-institutionalised' speech acts. In one example, a burglar arrives at a property and sees a sign warning of guard dogs. The burglar takes this sign to be insincere, enters the property, and is attacked by the dogs patrolling it (2002, 10). Similar to the case of Bill and Sally, there is a failure of uptake in this case on behalf of the burglar. In spite of this, it doesn't seem as though the property owner's attempt to warn has been

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[21]As discussed by Maitra (2009), one of the reasons that Langton and Hornsby are opposed to understanding the refusal cases as instances of perlocutionary frustration is that they are also concerned about free speech debates that go beyond the philosophical debate.

silenced.

Bird emphasises an important distinction between insincerity and silencing to enable us to recognise when speech acts have been successfully attempted but just fail to yield their desired consequences[22]. If we look at Austin's criteria for a felicitous speech act, the sincerity condition only requires that the *speaker* perform the act with the sincerity required for the speech act. Uptake requires that the hearer recognise the intention of the speaker to perform that particular speech act. Both of these conditions are met in this case. Sincerity would only fail if the owner had actually put up a false sign, not that the burglar interprets them as having done so. In this example we have another case where uptake has not been secured but we find ourselves reluctant to say that the illocution has failed.

As a form of oppression, the perlocutionary failure account would suggest that as a consequence of oppressive narratives in society (like that of certain kinds of pornography) people can become incapable of bringing about the effects that others can by using communicative actions. Perlocutionary frustration of this sort would seem to be as debilitating as illocutionary silencing: in both cases the speaker is unable to effect some change in the world by using their words. It seems that in some cases our speech acts can fail to meet the uptake criteria, and in others that our communicative intentions can be correctly recognised but not responded to by our audience. A common theme also begins to emerge in both explanations: the speaker has lost control over what she intended to do with her communicative act.

1.2.3 Communicative disablement

Ishani Maitra (2009) uses Paul Grice's (1957) notion of speaker meaning to offer another interpretation of what goes wrong in candidate silencing cases. Speaker meaning provides an explanation of the meaning of an utterance by appealing to the reflexive intentions

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[22]McGowan (2014) discusses a similar distinction with her notion of "sincerity silencing".

of the speaker. In re-evaluating the consent case, Maitra provides the following list of communicative intentions behind the woman's attempted act of refusal:

> "(i) her audience come[s] to believe that (all things considered) she does not want to have sex with him;
>
> (ii) her audience come[s] to think (recognize) that she has the informative intention mentioned in (i); and,
>
> (iii) her audience's fulfilment of (ii) give him a reason to fulfil (i)." (2009, 326)

In order for speaker meaning to occur, a speaker must make overt their intention behind producing the utterance to convey their meaning to their audience. In the consent case, the man fails to meet (ii) and (iii) and thereby fails to meet the uptake condition.

Maitra argues that we should term the phenomenon observed in cases like the consent case as 'communicative disablement' instead of 'illocutionary disablement' (i.e., illocutionary silencing). The shift to communicative disablement is motivated by recognition that the class of illocutionary acts that Langton and Hornsby are concerned with are a subset of all illocutionary acts, and as such are not representative of all illocutionary acts with respect to their felicity conditions. Importantly, acts like refusals differ from other illocutionary acts like marrying in that attaining uptake from the audience, i.e., recognition of the intended act to be performed, *can* be sufficient for the performance of the speech act. In the case of marrying, one can say the right words, be sincere, and meet the uptake condition but if further conventional conditions are not met then this illocutionary act will not succeed (if one was already married, or if one was under-age).

Consequently, Maitra argues that 'illocutionary silencing' as a label is too broad in scope. If we instead re-describe the problem as one of communicative disablement, we can explain the infelicities in Gricean terms. In the consent case the woman has lost the ability to have the intention behind her speech act recognised. Consequently, her speech

act cannot meet the uptake condition because her audience is incapable of hearing what she says and taking it in the right sense[23].

Of the accounts surveyed thus far, I think we should prefer the speaker meaning account of communicative disablement to the more narrow speech act theoretic accounts on offer. An appeal to speaker meaning enables us to explain a wider range of cases including those where performing a speech act can be made difficult but is not prevented. It can do this because we can appeal to interpretive difficulties that hearers can have when trying to identify the communicative intention of a speaker. As a consequence, we can describe different speech act performances on a spectrum of more-or-less-successful with silencing cases at one end.

A major appeal of the Gricean picture is that it helps us to see the significance of both (or all, as the case may be) interlocutors' actions in a given communicative exchange. The uptake condition itself goes some way towards capturing the importance of intersubjectivity in communication, but it is insufficient to explain all relevant cases of communicative injustice we are interested in. Making an utterance with a particular speaker meaning requires not only that the audience recognises the speaker's intention to perform a certain action, but that they recognise the speaker's intention to have *them* respond in a certain way in virtue of recognising this intention. From this discussion, we see the importance of communicative intentions and the role that these play in our ability to express and to interpret one another. For social-epistemic agents, then, having one's audience be willing and able to interpret one's communicative intentions is a necessary condition for one's ability to successfully perform communicative actions. If one is surrounded by uncharitable audiences (for whatever reason) then one's ability to exercise one's social-epistemic agency is severely limited.

In the next section, I consider a further account of communicative injustice that does

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[23] "On my view, a speaker is communicatively disabled iff she is unable to fully successfully perform her intended communicative act, because her intended audience fails to satisfy either the second or the third of her (Gricean) intentions." (2009, 238)

not use silencing cases as the primary motivation.

1.2.4   Non-silencing communicative injustices: Discursive injustice

Communicative injustice can occur in some cases where performing a speech act is made difficult for the speaker though not impossible. Consider, for example, a variation of the Maths case where Jane is intimidated by her male peers but manages to assert her answers to an in-class problem. In this instance, it is intuitive that she is suffering as a consequence of stereotypes about women and mathematics, and that it is affecting her ability to perform communicative acts. It is not, however, silencing her, thus illocutionary silencing cannot account for these cases as silencing is an all-or-nothing affair. The main distinction between silencing and non-silencing cases of communicative injustice is that the former are scenarios where the purported speech act misfires or fails completely. Non-silencing communicative injustice cases may be those where the speaker has difficulty in forming the intention to perform the communicative act (e.g., maybe it is not an act that she believes *she* can perform), or in actually carrying out the act (e.g., she experiences anxiety in attempting to do so).

Let us consider a third variation on the Maths case, where Jane asks a question about the problem instead of asserting her answer to it even though she is pretty sure she has the answer. In this case, I think we ought to say that communicative injustice has caused Jane to perform this speech act in place of this assertion. This subversion of one's communicative intentions is a further kind of non-silenced speech act[24].

Rebecca Kukla (2014) discusses how gender can influence the performative force of speech acts by affecting speakers' abilities to use discursive conventions[25]. She argues

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[24]These are non-silenced because the speaker does not attempt to perform them, indeed in many cases it may not occur to the undermined person that they are performing one speech act in place of another. Communicative injustice can change the range of actions that individuals take themselves to be capable of performing. This is not silencing their attempted communicative acts but rather something more like limiting or fixing the range of actions they will attempt to perform.

[25]Discursive conventions are either explicit or implicit conventions that govern such things as conversational context, social arrangements, speaker tone, gestures, etiquette, conversational flow, turn-taking

that women can find themselves in situations where they attempt to use standard discursive conventions in order to perform a speech act but due to their gender find their speech act without performative force or find it turned into a different speech act altogether. Kukla calls this 'discursive injustice' by analogy with Miranda Fricker's (2007) discussion of 'epistemic injustice' (which I discuss in the next section, §1.3).

Kukla's account of discursive injustice does not appeal to speaker intentions like Maitra's, or Austin's uptake condition as in Langton and Horsby's account. Instead, she argues that discursive conventions play a constitutive role in determining which speech act is performed, and that these conventions extend beyond the actions of the speaker alone to the typical responses of her interlocutors[26]. Kukla's explanation for scenarios like the consent case is that discursive injustice can result in individuals performing different speech acts than they intended because of how their interlocutors respond to their use of discursive conventions. She provides the following example where a woman tries to make an assertion in a male dominated environment and is interpreted by the audience as making a request or an entreaty:

> Celia is a floor manager at a heavy machinery factory where 95% of the workers are male. It is part of her job description that she has the authority to give orders to the workers on her floor, and that she should use this authority. She uses straightforward, polite locutions to tell her workers what to do: "Please put that pile over here," "Your break will be at 1:00 today," and so on. Her workers, however, think she is a "bitch," and compliance is low. (2014, 445)

Kukla considers two different explanations for the low compliance of the workers in

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practices, etc.

[26] "[O]n my account ... uptake is not a separable moment of passive recognition of something that already finished happening (the speaker having an intention in speaking); instead it is a *part of* the set of events setting the conventional context for the speech act. Neither words nor intentions have *intrinsic* constitutive force; rather, force is constituted through the deployment of conventions and rituals that typically outlast the speech act itself" (2014, 444).

Celia's factory. The first is that there is a strong sexist culture in the workplace and they are being deliberately insubordinate. Her second, and preferred, is that because of her gender, she is not taken to be producing orders but rather making requests as this is a more "feminine" speech act to make.

Kukla argues, similarly to Fricker, that members of socially disadvantaged groups suffer from discursive injustice because their membership in these groups causes social identity prejudice. This, in turn, causes these individuals to be systematically incapable of using standard discursive conventions to perform speech acts. Kukla takes this communicative injustice to be part of the wider disadvantages that these groups experience, such that it is parasitic on existing social or material disadvantages: "women and other relatively disempowered speakers are sometimes subject to a distinctive distortion of the path from speaking to uptake, which undercuts their social agency in ways that track and enhance existing social disadvantages" (2014, 440). Women can thus carry out all of the standard discursive conventions to perform directives but find the act distorted by her interlocutors because of her gender, i.e., a man performing all of the same discursive conventions would easily successfully perform the directive.

There is much that is appealing about Kukla's model of discursive injustice and the way in which she draws on identity prejudice to elucidate her cases of discursive injustice. Kukla's model of these cases provides an explanation of how wider societal attitudes and material disadvantages can result in non-silencing cases of communicative injustice. Thus it has shown how social attitudes can limit people's abilities to perform communicative acts without silencing them. In spite of this, it is not obvious how the model would account for Jane in the Maths case as an instance of discursive injustice for she never attempts to speak.

I think that the range of phenomena captured by illocutionary silencing, perlocutionary frustration, communicative disablement, and discursive injustices can all be conceptualised as instances of social-epistemic agential undermining. The uniting theme across

the accounts is that someone has lost the ability to perform communicative actions and bring about desired changes in their environment. What we learn from these varieties of cases of communicative injustice are a range of features that can be used to build an account of social-epistemic agency.

Our ability to perform the communicative acts that we desire depends in part on our audience's ability or willingness to recognise the particular act we want to perform or change we wish to bring about, and it also depends on their willingness to go along with our attempt. Our own ability to self-author communicative acts is also dependent on the range of actions that we see open to us (whether we are introspectively aware of this or not). Further, it depends on our audiences' beliefs about what communicative actions are open to us. An overarching commonality across the theories here surveyed is the way that a speaker can be undermined because of what her audience believes or assumes about her because of her perceived membership in some socially salient group.

In the next section, I introduce Miranda Fricker's account of epistemic injustice. I will show that harm of epistemic injustice – both of testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice – can be understood as undermining of social-epistemic agency. Epistemic injustice is about epistemic exclusion, and exclusion from epistemic life is incompatible with exercising one's social-epistemic agency.

1.3 Epistemic injustice as agential undermining

In this section I begin with a discussion of work on epistemic injustice with a primary focus on the work of Miranda Fricker (2007). Broadly speaking, I take Fricker's identification of the relevant cases of epistemic injustice to be accurate, and also largely agree with many of the undermining features that she recognises. That being said, I will ultimately offer an alternative understanding of epistemic injustice as a result of either the stunted development or undermined exercise of social-epistemic agency. This presents

an alternative to her virtue-theoretic explanation of the phenomenon.

The concept of epistemic injustice is introduced by way of paradigm cases, and essentially involves the harm of wronging someone in their "capacity as a subject of knowledge". Our capacity as subjects of knowledge is not described in great details by Fricker beyond the familiar concept of human rationality used in discussions of what makes humans distinctively valuable. It is described as an intrinsically valuable capacity and as something assumed to be an essential feature of our humanity[27], such that undermining someone in this capacity also undermines them in their humanity (2007, 44, 103, 135, 137)[28]. Fricker outlines two key forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. In their own ways, each kind of epistemic injustice ultimately involves undermining someone in their capacity as a subject of knowledge. I discuss each type below.

Important to Fricker's account of epistemic injustice – testimonial injustice in particular – is the concept of 'social power', this is a "socially situated capacity to control others' actions" (2007, 4). A subset of social power is 'identity power'. Identity power refers to the ways that our (perceived) social identities, e.g., as a woman of a particular ethnicity, directly influences one's ability to control the actions of others. Fricker's example here is of Greenleaf from *The Talented Mr Ripley.* Greenleaf exercises identity power over Marge in taking her concerns as merely the emotional over-reaction of a woman. In this case, stereotypes about women give Greenleaf the ability to silence Marge by describing her reaction as merely an overly-emotional, feminine response. Identity power only works when the salient features of the identity in question are a part of the collective social-imaginary[29]. Thus, Greenleaf's ability to silence Marge in this particular way

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[27] "Not only does [testimonial injustice] undermine him in a capacity (the capacity for knowledge) that is essential to his value as a human being, it does so on grounds that discriminate against him in respect of some essential feature of him as a social being" (2007, 54).

[28] I discuss these aspects of Fricker's account in some detail in chapter 3 on epistemic objectification where I propose an account of social-epistemic respect.

[29] "The identity power itself . . . is something non-material — something wholly discursive or imaginative, for it operates at the level of shared conceptions of what it is to be a gentleman and what it is to

requires their being embedded in a society with the relevant stereotypes about gender.

Identity power is crucial for Fricker's explanation of testimonial injustice as a consequence of identity-prejudiced credibility assessments (as discussed in the following section). Identity power is directly implicated in hearer's abilities to quickly assess the credibility of those offering testimony. This can result in both credibility excesses, as we can imagine Greenleaf is likely to experience as a male shipping magnate, and credibility deficits, as Marge experiences from Greenleaf in the above case. Identity power can function at the level of individuals (what Fricker terms 'agential identity power'[30]) or purely structurally. Structural identity power describes the ways that we are all to some degree "under the control of a gender or racial ideology" (2007, 90). Structural identity power can cause epistemic injustice without any particular agent being responsible for marginalising someone. For example, structural identity power may widely discredit the testimony of children causing them to be generally treated with low levels of credibility.

The social-epistemic lens offers us a way to focus in on social power as it operates between persons to shape communicative and epistemic interaction. Identity power is an important influence on social-epistemic agency, e.g., the ways that gender shapes who can hold the floor, who can interrupt without penalty, whose opinions are most often solicited, who is afforded high degrees of prima facie credibility, whose directives are taken as intended and not reinterpreted as requests. But identity power is not the whole story. If social power is a socially-situated capacity to control the actions that others can perform, then social-epistemic power is this capacity within the social-epistemic domain. Social-epistemic power manifests in credibility judgements, as Fricker argues, but also in recognition of epistemic authority, as will be discussed in §1.3.3.

In accordance with my proposal, then, social-epistemic power refers to the relational power we have over one another's ability to perform communicative and epistemic actions

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be a commoner, the level of imagined social identity" (2007, 16).

[30]Fricker does comment that institutions can serve as agents who are subject to the dynamics of identity power (2007, 154).

and occupy roles in the social-epistemic domain. Social-epistemic power is implicated both the ways that our performance of actions depends on others, and the goal of exercising agency to bring about changes — a goal of exercising social-epistemic power. Even in the absence of identity prejudiced stereotypes, limiting or inhibiting someone's ability to perform communicative and epistemic actions undermines their ability to self-author in this domain.

At base epistemic injustice is about a kind of disrespect: we deserve to be treated in ways that respect our capacity as a subject of knowledge. Plausibly, to be treated as someone with this capacity would be to be treated as someone who possesses knowledge. When we consider how Greenleaf treats Marge, it is apparent just how his response renders her as someone without something worth contributing to the enquiry into his son's disappearance. This seems right. There is something dehumanising about being treated as someone with nothing to contribute to epistemic activity. Living in a society that interprets women as largely emotional and irrational is one way in which this might occur. As a consequence, Fricker develops the primary epistemic harm of epistemic injustice as a kind of objectification, I return to this aspect of her account in chapter 3.

One of the possible consequences and primary harms of epistemic injustice (in both forms) is that it can psychologically stunt individuals and inhibit the development of personal identity. Fricker's preferred phrase for this is that epistemic injustice can prevent people from "becoming who they are"[31]. I find the tense here puzzling – though admittedly this may be merely an idiosyncratic interpretation – for it suggests that people are prevented from developing into the people they already are. I take it that reading this instead as "being prevented from acting in ways that are true to one's character" is appropriate for cases of agential cases of testimonial injustice, and "being prevented from developing a genuine self-understanding" is appropriate for cases of hermeneutical injustice. Structural operations of epistemic injustice, though, may result in individu-

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[31]For key uses see (2007, 5, 55, 168).

als being blocked from developing into people they may have otherwise become if the relevant prejudices did not exist. For example, Jane may not become a professor of mathematics because of the presence of gender based stereotypes about women and mathematics, though she may well have if those stereotypes did not exist. That is, people's expectations of and assumptions about us can shape the actions that we are able to perform and shape the narratives available to us we use in making sense of ourselves. In each case, then, stereotypes can inhibit the self-authorship of a genuine sense of self and risk the development of a genuine self.

All of this, I agree, is plausible. But Fricker's understanding of identity here is of personal identity, and so this harm is only a possible one when either testimonial or hermeneutical injustice is sufficiently persistent and pervasive that it results in deep psychological damage. This overlooks the ways in which even not so thorough epistemic injustice undermines our ability for self-authorship over our social-epistemic lives. When we are not treated as a subject of knowledge, we are excluded from participating in epistemic (and communicative) life and thus we are prevented from these performances. We can imagine Greenleaf's failure to take Marge seriously to be a relatively rare instance of being treated similarly by men, and in which case it may not contribute to a deep harm that undermines her sense of self. Nonetheless, the action excludes her from participating in an epistemic activity by undermining her as someone capable of taking part. This exclusion for prejudiced reasons is surely still a harm because of the way that it undermines her ability to *exercise* her social-epistemic agency. There is, then, a harm to agency in "becoming" ourselves if this is understood as acting in self-authored ways even if there is no harm to the development of one's identity. The idea of *being* one's self gets at this better than *becoming* ourselves.

As Fricker develops her account of testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, she presents some instrumentally valuable features of being treated as someone with the capacity as a giver of knowledge too — namely, because of the ways this contributes to

acquiring truth. I take up these topics below. In the next sections, I introduce both Fricker's notions of testimonial injustice (1.3.1) and hermeneutical injustice (1.3.2). In each case, I will describe the core features of Fricker's account in each case and how they pose a threat to our capacity as a subject of knowledge. In so doing, I show how the central features of Fricker's cases and of the harms are suggestive of an account of social-epistemic agency that can provide an alternative explanation of the harms of epistemic injustice.

1.3.1 Testimonial Injustice

Testimonial injustice is one form of epistemic injustice, and occurs when individuals lack the virtue of 'testimonial justice'. I begin with a description of testimonial injustice, and then proceed to the harm of testimonial injustice before explaining the virtue of testimonial justice. Throughout, I present the ways that a social-epistemic agency account of testimonial injustice would diverge from, and the ways it accords with Fricker's proposal.

The paradigm cases of testimonial injustice are a result of 'identity prejudiced credibility deficits' in a hearer's judgement of the credibility of a speaker offering testimony. In such cases, a hearer fails to afford a speaker the credibility their testimony deserves because they (the hearer) have prejudiced attitudes about the speaker because of their perceived identity in a socially salient group, e.g., women or working class people, and where these stereotypes undermine their credibility. These attitudes are paradigmatically identity-based stereotypes, e.g., that women are highly emotional and irrational people as shown in the case with Greenleaf and Marge. These judgements are not deliberate inferences from stereotypes to the testimony of the speaker and the speaker herself, but are rather the deliverances of a proposed 'testimonial sensibility' (2007, 71). Alice's experience in the boardroom case of §1.2 can also be understood as a paradigm case of testimonial injustice. Alice's co-workers have identity prejudices that undermine Alice's

ability to offer advice, and we know her advice is of quality because it is later accepted when presented by a male colleague.

Testimonial injustice can also inhibit people from having the opportunity to testify when it occurs as 'pre-emptive testimonial injustice'. In such cases, members of relevant identity groups are never included in certain testimonial practices or exchanges, so testifying in such scenarios doesn't present as a possibility for them (2007, 130). This is a structural operation of identity power. Background assumptions about members of a particular group effectively exclude them from testimonial exchanges. Women's exclusion from political life in Western countries before suffrage movements are a candidate case of pre-emptive testimonial injustice; the idea of women contributing to political practices was just not a viable option for women. In such cases, there is no particular individual who judges someone's testimony as not credible, but rather they are never "invited" to testify in the first place. The topic of structural testimonial injustice is not taken up in great detail by Fricker, but I think it is of central importance for an agency-based account of epistemic injustice.

Considered at an abstract level, testimonial injustice concerns the ways that identity prejudice can result in individuals losing the ability to contribute to epistemic activity through testimony. Importantly, for speakers, the harm lies in their being afforded little to no credibility, and consequently their testimonial acts are rendered inert in respect to their prejudiced audience. An agency based explanation of cases of testimonial justice locates the harm for the speaker in an inability to self-author communicative and epistemic acts: in a loss of social-epistemic control. This kind of exclusion harms the speaker because it excludes them from participating in collaborative social-epistemic activity, undermines their ability to exercise their agency, and threatens their ability to obtain traditional epistemic goods like knowledge. It also undermines our ability to create a social-epistemic community in which all persons are best able to develop and

exercise their agency, a topic that I take up in chapter 4^{32}.

The notion of pre-emptive testimonial injustice hints at deeper ways the structural conditions of our societies can shape the social-epistemic possibilities that are open to us. In reflecting on our examples so far, we can see that the same prejudiced attitude differently affects the social-epistemic agency of different persons. Gender stereotypes about mathematics, for instance, may limit Jane's career opportunities and undermine her testimonial acts in the classroom while simultaneously opening up these opportunities for her male peers and lending them (potentially undeserved) credibility in the classroom. I take this as evidence that social-epistemic agency depends in important ways on the doxastic states that we have about ourselves (e.g., Jane) and others (e.g., Greenleaf and Alice's co-workers). Fricker's account of testimonial injustice doesn't countenance this as a harm, for it is focused on the ways that speakers can suffer credibility deficits as a consequence (primarily) of agential testimonial exchanges.

These structural points should cause us to reflect on the consequence for prejudiced hearers' social-epistemic agency. Clearly, they have not suffered a testimonial injustice, but this doesn't mean that their social-epistemic agency isn't in some way negatively affected. I think it is fair to say at the least that their prejudice against the speaker inhibits their ability to achieve a desired epistemic outcome, e.g., finding out what happened to Greenleaf's missing son, or deciding on the best policy choice for Alice's company. Thus, we can see that there is a way in which their own social-epistemic agency is undermined by their own prejudiced attitudes of others because it causes them to be incapable of understanding those others. That is, their prejudicial beliefs are inhibiting their ability to bring about their intended social-epistemic outcome, thus undermining their ability to bring about their desired social-epistemic changes.

I take it that we are personally invested in preventing others from experiencing

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[32]I propose that we are already invested in building communities with this goal, as shown by current debates around new media and online public discourse. I propose that healthy dialogue and deliberation are key hallmarks of healthy social-epistemic communities, and so the presence of testimonial injustice of both the agential and structural sort will undermine our ability to create such a community.

harms, especially in cases where we are the cause. So, if failing to support someone's social-epistemic agency undermines their agency and thus can constitute a harm – as I believe it can – then we have further reasons for hearers to be invested in ensuring that they are competent to support the social-epistemic agency of speakers. Kristie Dotson (2011) discusses these systematic and prejudicial harms of hearers inability to listen as a form of epistemic violence as I will discuss in §1.3.6. I propose to understand the means by which they are so encumbered as a deficiency in their own social-epistemic agency, namely by the possession of attitudes that undermine their ability to be effective listeners. Audiences who posses prejudiced attitudes that undermine credible testifiers have lost the ability to appropriately trust other persons. In this way, we might say they are not as social-epistemically competent as those who do not have the same prejudiced attitudes as they do[33].

For both speakers and hearers, then, we cannot ignore the role of the collective imaginary or background culture in shaping social-epistemic agency. Indeed, it becomes hard to see a clean line between structural conditions that furnish stereotypical doxastic attitudes and the agential level at which these attitudes manifest. Testimonial injustice reveals to us some basic ways in which our ability to support the social-epistemic agency can be undermined by living in a society structured with prejudiced attitudes. Further, it reveals how individuals can suffer in their communicative and epistemic lives as a consequence of living in these same societies. As Fricker's agential/structural distinction makes clear, the burdens on social-epistemic agency can exist for speakers and hearers even when no-one is clearly to blame for the testimonial injustice that results. In such cases, work to rectify the imbalance of social-epistemic power needs to be taken on

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[33]In chapter 2 I will develop this further and suggest that social-epistemic agential competence depends on a range of cognitive attitudes including the doxastic, motivational, and affective. The attitudes shape the kinds of social-epistemic actions that individuals will attempt to perform, and the roles that they will attempt to occupy. Similarly, these attitudes shape the kinds of responses we offer to others when they attempt to exercise their social-epistemic agency through actions or by taking on roles. One of the lessons I draw from this way of framing social-epistemic agency is that we cannot easily divorce the agential and structural levels from each other.

beyond the agential level and to the structural or background culture.

Why does testimonial injustice occur on Fricker's account? Testimonial injustice results from a lack of a well-trained 'testimonial sensibility' of those living in societies with prejudiced attitudes. Fricker develops this notion by analogy with the idea of an 'ethical sensibility' as described in virtue ethics. The ethical sensibility is a perceptual capacity that is sensitive to the morally salient aspects of a situation (2007, 72). By analogy, a testimonial sensibility is a non-inferential, partly affective, intrinsically motivating and reason-giving, perceptual capacity that makes us sensitive to features of a speaker's testimony relevant for quickly making a credibility judgement about them. This capacity is developed historically over our lives and embedded in particular real societies, thus the existence of identity prejudice in our collective beliefs about identities (i.e., stereotypes) and their relative identity powers will shape one's testimonial sensibility.

The virtue of 'testimonial justice', then, is the capacity to neutralise the effects of prejudiced credibility judgements by one's testimonial sensibility (2007, 92). The virtue is corrective, and can be developed through active reflection on one's prejudices, through personal familiarity with members of the relevant identity group, or through fully attaining the virtue such that one has "internalized the reflexive requirements of judging credibility . . . so that the the requisite social reflexivity of [one's] stance as hearer has become second nature" (2007, 97). For most people, Fricker notes, the ideal of full virtue is unlikely and an attitude of critical reflection – partial possession of the virtue – is the likely outcome. The motivation for testimonial justice is to be found ultimately in the aim of attaining truth, but proximally through attaining something conducive to truth: neutralising prejudiced credibility judgements of actually credible testifiers [34] (2007, 99).

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[34]Testimonial justice is a hybrid moral-intellectual virtue, and it is these ends that support its status as an intellectual virtue. The two aspects are individuated by appeal to their ultimate ends. Intellectually, the ultimate end is truth as noted. Morally, the ultimate end is justice. The proximal end for both is the same: neutralising the prejudice in one's credibility judgements. Thus, they are the same virtue being united by their proximal end.

On our rough account of social-epistemic agency so far, the ideas of active critical reflection and personal familiarity are a plausible means of correcting for the presence of prejudiced attitudes. That being said, I think we find differences in how we describe the changes that hearers have to make, and in their motivations for change. The issue for hearers is that they possess prejudicial doxastic attitudes about certain identity groups. As noted above we can think of them as lacking social-epistemic agential competence. Their agential skills for listening are diminished by the presence of these attitudes. Our story of the correction for testimonial injustice, then, will involve an account of the ways that we can promote the agential competency of hearers by appeal to the role of cognitive attitudes in achieving competence.

What is the motivation for social-epistemic agents? Partially, it is for traditional reasons like acquiring truths and understanding. But in addition, it enables both the hearers' and speakers' abilities for relational self-authorship in the social-epistemic domain — something I have argued is an epistemic end in its own right and intrinsically valuable. Through the lens of social-epistemic agency, we can understand testimonial injustice by appealing to the action promoting and inhibiting features of the actual doxastic attitudes of hearers. In pre-emptive cases, we appeal to similar action promoting and inhibiting features of the doxastic attitudes of would-be speakers and those within their wider society. We need not posit over and above this a lack of intellectual virtue – though it would not be inconsistent to do so – for the explanatory work of the cause of and solution for testimonial injustice can be found in looking to the ways that our doxastic attitudes influence our communicative and epistemic practice[35]. The primary harm of testimonial injustice can be understood as the ways that it undermines the social-epistemic agency of speakers either by inhibiting their ability to perform actions, or the deeper harm of undermining their self-authored development of social-epistemic

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[35]The virtue of testimonial justice contributes to wider goals for Fricker, namely setting the stage for a virtue theoretic account of testimony. This clearly goes beyond the scope of my task here which is to instead set the stage for a social-epistemic agency based understanding of epistemic injustice.

agency.

1.3.2 Hermeneutical injustice

In our discussion of structural testimonial injustices of the previous section, we noted some of the important ways that our socialisation shapes our ability to perform testimonial acts. Fricker's notion of hermeneutical injustice presents another way that individuals can be excluded from social-epistemic life by being prevented them from engaging in important meaning-making processes. Her final formulation is as follows, "[hermeneutical injustice is] the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalization" (2007, 158).

Hermeneutical injustice describes a situation of "unequal hermeneutical participation", a situation where some groups have the dominant power over the collective generation of social meaning (2007, 152-153). This is what it is to be hermeneutically marginalised, to be excluded from the collective explanatory processes that would further one's understanding of one's experience.

One case that Fricker uses to develop and explain hermeneutical injustice is that of Wendy Sanford (2007, 148). Sanford had developed postpartum depression after giving birth to her son. Sanford, however, had no knowledge of postpartum depression and consequently failed to understand what she was experiencing. After attending a university workshop at MIT on women's wellbeing and healthcare, Sanford came to identify her own experience with postpartum depression as described in the workshop. Sanford had been denied understanding of a *significant part* of her social experience – her feelings of depression – because of a lack of general collective awareness of specifically female mental health issues. Her experience was *obscured* insofar as her and her husband failed to accurately understand what she was experiencing and thus did not "see" her as depressed, "In that forty-five minute period I realized that what I'd been blaming

myself for, and what my husband had blamed me for, wasn't my personal deficiency. It was a combination of physiological things and a real societal thing, isolation" (2007, 149). To be hermeneutically marginalised is to be part of the subordinated group in the unequal distribution of hermeneutical resources. In this case, it may be that both men and women lack the conceptual resources to understand postpartum depression. Despite this, it is women who suffer the injustice because it is they who are harmed by the collective failure to understand postpartum depression.

In a recent article, Katharine Jenkins (2016) identifies three kinds of hermeneutical injustice that helpfully elucidates the ways in which conceptual resources can be unfairly distributed.

> "Suppose it is in A's interest for an experience to be intelligible both to herself and to B, another person to whom she seeks to communicate it. ...
>
> - A and B both lack one or more of the relevant concepts.
>
> - A has all the relevant concepts, but B lacks one or more of them.
>
> - A lacks one or more of the relevant concepts, though B has all of them."
>   (2016, 10)

Sanford's relationship with her husband is an instance of (1) on Jenkin's list, they both lacked the concept of postpartum depression. Jenkin's distinctions here are significant, they allow us to clearly recognise differences in the nature of the epistemic and moral wrongs present in different cases of hermeneutical injustice. Asymmetries in conceptual resources (i.e., (2) and (3)) typically arise in cases where the powerful or dominant social group benefits from the lack of collective awareness of the relevant concept(s) in question. In Sanford's case it is not clear that anyone benefits from a general lack of awareness about postpartum depression, but it is just not a topic of interest to the dominant group (i.e., men).

The primary harm of hermeneutical marginalisation is a "situated hermeneutical inequality": a situation where an individual cannot communicate something to another that it is in their interest to communicate (2007, 162). In Sanford's case, it is in her interest to be able to communicate with her husband about her depression but she lacks the conceptual resources to make her experience intelligible to him. Fricker proposes another virtue as the solution to hermeneutical injustice, that of hermeneutical justice. The virtue aims to correct in hearers an inability to detect when a speaker is unable to communicate their experience intelligibly because of a lack in conceptual resources that results from their relative social identities (2007, 169). As a guiding rule, Fricker suggests that those who are in a dominant social identity position ought to assume that *they* are failing to understand, not that the speaker is not rational.

Similarly as in the case of testimonial injustice, an agency based account of hermeneutical injustice will appeal primarily to the actual doxastic attitudes of speakers and of those present in the community they have been socialised within. By looking at the doxastic attitudes that fuel our assumptions, expectations, and interpretive resources for understanding one another we can provide an explanation of the ways in which social-epistemic agency can be impaired by asymmetrical conceptual resources. When the tools for rendering mental illness expressible are swayed in favour of some social identities over others, then the communicative actions available to those of the marginalised group are negatively affected. The power wielded by those in a position to shape and alter the collective conceptual resources have more social-epistemic agency to create hermeneutical changes – epistemic changes – and thus control over the social-epistemic agency of marginalised persons. We can develop a structural explanation of the way that hermeneutical resources can be unfairly distributed by appealing to the ways that social-epistemic identity power – and social power more generally – gives some individuals more social-epistemic agency than others.

1.3.3 The importance of social-epistemic agency for patient autonomy

One of the four widely recognised principles of biomedical ethics is that of 'patient autonomy'. Autonomy in this context requires that a patient has the ability to make choices about their own care and that these choices are intentional, based on sufficient understanding of the options, free from burdonsome external constraints, and free from burdensome internal constraints (Mappes and DeGrazia, 2006, 41). Patient autonomy is in part important because it concerns decision making about a very important area of one's life. The focus of patient autonomy is typically on the ability of persons to be involved in making decisions about the care that they will receive. What this doesn't include, though, is the ways that patients might be involved in the diagnostic processes of their own care. This exclusion has been identified as an area of testimonial injustice.

My discussion here will focus on the work of Havi Carel and Ian Kidd (2017). Ill persons can experience testimonial injustice in both agential and structural forms (2017, 338). In agential cases, a patient may be directly communicatively undermined by a physician who will not take their complaints about, e.g., the different phenomenal features of their pain, as serious contributions to an investigation of the underlying cause. Often this arises because the experiential vocabulary that healthcare professionals recognise is far more limited and restricted than what ill persons offer, thus the testimony of the patient is not given weight. One example provided by Carel and Kidd comes from a healthcare practitioner who noted that "patients 'say lots of irrelevant things, like, "When I eat lettuce, my elbow hurts", [so] I have to listen carefully for the important stuff and ignore the rest'" (2017, 338). This partially illuminates the structural mechanism for testimonial injustice as a consequence of high (or complete) epistemic authority being placed on professional medical knowledge. Furthermore, stereotypes among healthcare professionals that patients are generally ignorant about what is important and tend to only offer unhelpful details of their subjective (i.e., unquantifiable, non-objective) experience further discredit their testimony. Overall the net result is that professional

medical ideas are worth taking seriously, while experiential reports from patients may be discredited. We could, instead, recognise the differences in understanding presented by professionals and patients, and the distinctive ways that each are epistemically privileged with respect to the patient's illness (2014).

What I think this work reveals to us is the importance of social-epistemic agency in the medical context. When we are silenced or forced to use an unfamiliar language to express our experiences as ill persons we lose communicative control in a very significant part of life. Carel and Kidd (2017) report on the telling statistic that complaints about *communication* are one the most common forms of complaint received by the UK Patients Association. This suggests the importance of being able to speak and be heard on one's own terms, what I suggest is an important case of being able to exercise one's social-epistemic agency. Patient autonomy, as I opened with, focuses too much on the decision making process at a late stage of treatment. Taking seriously the complaints of patients as Carel and Kidd do draws our attention to a distinctive area of self-determination, through our ability to actively participate in inquiry about our illnesses and be heard on our own terms.

1.3.4   Feminist Epistemology

One of the results of the social-epistemic agency account is that we can provide an alternative theory of the distinctive harm of epistemic injustice that can also account for harms to hearers, and do so without being wedded to the virtue theoretic foundation. Consequently, it is a simpler and explains more phenomena. The sense in which social-epistemic agency "flourishes" is by appeal to the nature of the relationships between persons, i.e., relationships that mutually support the development and exercise of social-epistemic agency. Here I will briefly introduce some positions in feminist epistemology which provide us with further theoretical support in understanding how our ability to be a knower is dependent on our social interdependence. These proposals are far stronger

than the account of social-epistemic agency, for they argue that the very field of epistemic enquiry is dependent on contingent facts about our society (e.g., the present relationships between genders).

Fricker herself is motivated by feminist epistemology and so it is not surprising that her account of epistemic injustice is motivated by the idea that who we are influences our standing as a knower. As discussed by Alessandra Tanesini (2011), gender has traditionally been left out of epistemology, because it is seen as irrelevant to understanding traditionally recognised epistemic goods like justification, and in explanations of the acquisition of these epistemic goods. Feminist theorists have challenged these assumptions, proposing instead that gender biases are present throughout epistemology as a field.

In a similar vein as the socialisation problem introduced briefly in §1.1.1, we find a parallel problem raised by Louise Antony's 1993 'bias paradox'. 'Bias' here does not mean 'cognitive bias', e.g., implicit bias, but rather 'value-laden'. Antony proposes that epistemology with a feminist bent – one that draws on feminist values and norms – is epistemically worthwhile. In thinking that a feminist epistemology has a positive account to offer, not merely a critique of traditional epistemology, the feminist epistemologist commits herself to the view that a feminist bias in epistemic work might be valuable. Of course, the critique from feminist epistemology of mainstream epistemology is just that it exhibits a 'bad' bias as a result of patriarchy. The 'bias paradox' is then just explaining why it is that some biases (say, of a feminist epistemology) are good while others (say, of a patriarchal epistemology) are bad. These biases can shape what is recognised as knowledge or justification, what behaviours of knowers are treated as virtues, or what projects we pursue.

In keeping with Tanesini (2011), I will discuss two positions in feminist epistemology here: feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint epistemology. Feminist empiricism maintains that justification, warrant, or other epistemic standards of a similar sort are impartial across different knowers. Put slightly differently, our epistemic methods them-

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selves are value-neutral in that they are not guided by the particular values of one group, or by a particular group's interests. In spite of this, our actual practices of enquiry may be shaped by our values which are heavily influenced by who we happen to be. Antony is a feminist empiricist of this sort. Antony's own solution is that biases which are truth-conducive are good, while ones which are not truth-conducive are bad. At work in this picture is a commitment to reliabilism: biases which make our belief-forming processes more reliable are good ones to have. How does this influence an account of social-epistemic agency? Implicit in the account is a picture of social-epistemic agency of our kind. Our ability to engage in enquiry, proposes Antony, is significantly shaped by the identity of the knower in question. Thus the projects that we pursue, for example, may depend on our personal identity — the kinds of social-epistemic actions and roles that we seek are shaped by our identity.

In contrast to this, feminist standpoint theory argues that there is an unequal distribution of epistemic resources due to social power structures which perpetuate these inequalities (Wylie, 2003). One of the consequences of this operation of social power structures is that it privileges some groups' access to particular kinds of knowledge, paradigmatically that of marginalised groups' knowledge of the privileged. Tanesini neatly summarises one such view, "Feminists have a privileged understanding of patriarchy because they have experience of the mechanisms of reproduction in the patriarchal system without having a vested interested in its continuation" (Tanesini, 2011, 892). What standpoint theorists propose entails plausibly that social-epistemic competencies will also be unequally distributed in a population. Depending on the operations of social power, certain groups will have need of different skills, e.g., in order to bring about social-epistemic changes. As I will discuss in the next section, feminist standpoint theory has many similarities to work in epistemologies of ignorance.

Feminist epistemologies place our social embeddedness centre stage, and question the value- and agent-neutrality of our epistemic practices. Furthermore, they draw our

attention to the ways that social power can influence not only what get recognised as knowledge and what is seen as worth learning about, but who gets recognition as knowledgeable. This work dovetails with the epistemic injustice literature, and together they help to illuminate the social aspects of our epistemic lives that had previously been neglected. The social perspective we take on epistemic life when using the feminist lens here makes clear ways in which our ability to contribute to epistemic life is beholden to a range of contingent social facts.

1.3.5 Epistemic Ignorance

Epistemologies of ignorance also appeal to an uneven distribution of epistemic resources in order to explain epistemic injustices. These inequalities typically result in cognitive biases which generate ignorance about social experiences, and this in turn results in epistemic injustices of various types. Here I very briefly outline three accounts of ignorance as causes of epistemic injustice before turning to Kristie Dotson's account of epistemic violence for a more in depth discussion.

Lorraine Code (1995) argues that epistemic ignorance results from differences in the social situatedness of knowers. To be socially situated is to have a social position in society that creates differences in our access knowledge. Code's critique is that in mainstream epistemology there is an assumption that in cases where two individuals have the same evidence and are being epistemically responsible, they will come to the same conclusions. In essence, her critique is that not all knowers are epistemically interchangeable — differences in our social positions and personal histories change the ways that we carry out epistemic judgements. Ignorance is a contextual phenomenon, relative to particular individuals in particular contexts and dependent on their relative histories and experiences.

José Medina (2012) also argues that our access to epistemic resources is skewed by our social situatedness. In addition, Medina argues that Fricker's category of hermeneutical

injustice can be broadened so as to explain cases of white ignorance specifically. Medina's proposal is to expand hermeneutical injustice to account for 'polyphonic contextualism', a metaphor intended to get at the idea that there are many different dynamics operating in communicative exchanges that result in different degrees of understanding and intelligibility between individuals. This allows for a more graded understanding of hermeneutical injustice as it crops up in different local interactions between particular authors and audiences and the levels at which their experiences are intelligible to each other. Social power dynamics in the wider society cause these more fine-grained distinctions between individuals' understandings of one another and their own experiences.

Charles Mills' (2007) theory of white ignorance provides a structural account of how oppressive social systems and institutions bring about epistemic injustice through causing individuals to be ignorant of marginalised groups' experiences. White ignorance occurs because of differences in social locations as discussed above, and the epistemic resources that are available to individuals who occupy these different social positions. The structural character of white ignorance is brought about by existing differences in social power relations that result in the subordination and marginalisation of non-dominant groups and their interpretive resources.

As a consequence, marginalised groups have their hermeneutical resources left out of the dominant collective pool of knowledge and are obscured in a similar fashion as is discussed by Fricker in the context of hermeneutical injustice. Thus, ignorance of marginalised groups' unique hermeneutical resources prevents their experiences and knowledge from becoming widespread and understood by others. White ignorance operates in this way to reinforce the dominant groups' epistemic perspectives, methodologies, and experiences as the norm, and consequently further obscures and excludes those experiences of members of marginalised groups.

Feminist epistemologies and epistemologies of ignorance share a common commitment to the idea that being a knower is not merely a matter of individual's getting

access to evidence and forming judgements responsibly. Rather, being a knower is a matter of being embedded in social contexts that are often unequal in access to epistemic resources and biased in favour of some conceptual schemes over others, to the detriment of those who belong to marginalised social groups. Importantly for my purposes, these theories all appeal to the nature of intersubjective relationships, wider social conditions, and personal experiences and knowledge (or a lack thereof), to explain how it is that we can come to experience (or perpetuate) epistemic injustices.

1.3.6 Epistemic violence

Kristie Dotson (2011) introduces an account of 'epistemic violence' to locate a specific testimonial harm that results from hearers inabilities to uptake testimony from speakers. Dotson's account bridges the discussions between communicative injustice and epistemic injustice above, by drawing attention the role that knowledge plays in our ability to effectively communicate with one another. The account of social-epistemic agency finds much common-ground with the dynamics that Dotson focuses on. In this section, I present Dotson's account and discuss the ways that social-epistemic agency can complement the picture and places of divergence.

Epistemic violence occurs in testimonial exchanges when a hearer refuses (either intentionally or unintentionally) to uptake a communicative act as a consequence of 'pernicious ignorance' (2011, 238). Pernicious ignorance describes a gap in an individual's cognitive resources that results in harm to another individual or group in a particular context (ibid.). Pernicious ignorance is a form of 'reliable ignorance', "ignorance that is *consistent* or follows from a predictable gap in cognitive resources" (ibid.). Identifying pernicious ignorance is a context-dependent task that depends on finding that an audience would routinely or consistently fail in their ability to uptake a communicative act, and the identification of other contextual factors that make the ignorance harmful. Epistemic violence takes place only within 'practices of silencing' and not 'instances of

silencing', practices of silencing describe the reliable, consistent nature of an audience's (harmful) failure to uptake a speaker (2011, 241).

There is an important conjunction of conditions that need to be met for epistemic violence to obtain that is contained in the definition of pernicious ignorance. The ignorance that leads to epistemic violence must be both consistent/reliable and that ignorance must cause or contribute to a harmful practice (2011, 239). Reliable ignorance is not necessarily harmful, though the potential for harm will always be present. Reliable ignorance that contributes to the practice of silencing the voices of members of oppressed groups will be pernicious ignorance, and will constitute epistemic violence. This allows for cases where the same reliable ignorance is benign with respect to certain individuals or in certain contexts, but would be pernicious and thus harmful with respect to other individuals or other contexts. It also allows for cases where the harm of epistemic violence is not a harm to the speaker qua informant.

Take the following case provided by Dotson: a 3 year old child is reliably ignorant about the effects of fire, and so fails to communicatively reciprocate in an exchange with an adult attempting to warn them about fire (2011, 240). If the child goes on to set the curtains on fire, then their reliable ignorance becomes pernicious ignorance as it is the cause of property damage. The harm of epistemic violence in this case is located in the damage to the curtains, and can be traced to a failure on the child's behalf to not heed the warning of the adult owing to their reliable (now pernicious) ignorance of fire. Social-epistemic agential undermining in the form of communicative undermining will be present in all cases where a speaker fails to gain uptake for their testimony, so social-epistemic undermining is a broader category than epistemic violence. However it is also a narrower category in that social-epistemic agential undermining is only located in someone's losing the ability to perform their desired social-epistemic actions (thereby losing agential control). This does confront us with the need to demarcate between harmful cases of agential undermining and non-harmful cases, I take this topic up in

chapter 2, §2.5.

The "bridge" I mentioned at the outset of this section lies in Dotson's drawing attention to our communicative interdependence on one another. She terms this "reciprocity" in following Hornsby (1995) on the conditions required for successful illocutionary acts. For Hornsby, reciprocity requires not only correctly understanding the speaker's utterance but also "taking the words as they are meant to be taken" so the speaker can "[do] the communicative thing she intended" (1995, 134). Here we see an explicit statement of the core value in social-epistemic agency of self-authorship of our communicative acts. For Dotson's purposes, the significance of reciprocity is that it shows how we are communicatively dependent on one another, something we have discussed at length in earlier sections.

Part of the harm of epistemic violence, it seems, is that it robs individuals of the ability to communicate with one another though Dotson does not make this explicit claim in her paper. Dotson's account of epistemic violence allows her to identify two types of silencing: testimonial quieting and testimonial smothering. Each of these two kinds of silencing locates the epistemic violence in a different place.

Testimonial quieting occurs when an audience doesn't recognise a speaker as a knower owing to the presence of stereotypes or "controlling images" of that person. Dotson's main examples of testimonial quieting focus on the experience of black women who are unable to get recognition as knowers, and are thereby excluded from practices of testimony[36]. Several different types of harm can result from not being recognised as a knower according to Dotson. These include the harms described by Fricker to one's intellectual courage (Fricker, 2007, 49), and harms to the intellectual traditions of groups (Collins, 2000, 3-8). In each case, the harm of a particular instance of testimonial quieting is the epistemic violence that occurs where "an audience fails to accurately identify the speaker as a knower, thereby failing to communicatively reciprocate in a linguistic

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[36]Dotson relies here on the work of Patricia Hill Collins who discusses how being a black women in the US means she will be systematically undervalued as a knower (2000, 69).

exchange due to the pernicious ignorance in the form of false, negative stereotyping" (2011, 243). In each case, though, we will need to look to the details of the quieting in order to determine exactly where the harm of epistemic violence lies. The proposed account of social-epistemic agency would locate at least one consistent harm across these cases of testimonial quieting: the failure to be included in social-epistemic life thus disabling one's social-epistemic agency.

Testimonial smothering bears similarity to previously discussed cases of self-policing one's social-epistemic acts, e.g., in the case of Jane the mathematics student. Unlike Jane's case, testimonial smothering requires that the speaker perceive their audience as either incapable or unwilling to uptake their communicative act (2011, 244). The metaphor of smothering represents the way that a speaker can truncate their own testimony because they perceive pernicious ignorance in their audience. Three typical conditions for cases of testimonial smothering are introduced: "1) the content of the testimony must be unsafe and risky; 2) the audience must demonstrate testimonial incompetence with respect to the content of the testimony to the speaker; and 3) testimonial incompetence must follow from, or appear to follow from, pernicious ignorance" (ibid.). Dotson's first example is taken from Kimberlé Crenshaw's work on the historical risk for non-white communities in making known occurrences of domestic-violence (Crenshaw, 1991). Speaking out about these episodes is unsafe and risky because it can fuel already negative stereotypes about, e.g., African American men.

The harm of epistemic violence in these cases is located in the audience's lack of testimonial competence. Testimonial competence is described as the speaker's assessment of their audience's ability to understand their testimony, "an audience's ability to find potential testimony accurately intelligible". If an audience is (perceived to be) ignorant of some domain of knowledge that would be required for comprehending the testimony, then they will be judged testimonially incompetent. When a speaker's testimony would disclose content that is unsafe and risky for her, reciprocation of her

testimony is required in order to mitigate the harm she opens herself to in speaking. "To begin a successful "dialogue" or testimonial exchange on unsafe, potentially damaging testimonial content, speakers may have added demands, and audiences need to meet those demands" (2011, 250). We find here, too, room for agreement with the account of social-epistemic agency developed over the chapter. As social-epistemic agency must be self-authored relationally, we should expect that ignorance of this sort can effectively disable the agency of the speaker. In such a case, the solution to her ability to speak must be found in her audience's acquisition of knowledge that would enable them to respond to her appropriately.

Overall, then, I take it the account of social-epistemic agency can supplement an account of epistemic violence like Dotson's. In each kind of silencing, we note that there is a specific harm to social-epistemic agency that occurs alongside the harms that are located as a result of pernicious ignorance, i.e., epistemic violence. Where the theories diverge is in the cases where reliable ignorance is not pernicious, thus may silence a speaker without causing epistemic violence. In such cases, a speaker may still be undermined.

1.4 Undermining agency through silencing and epistemic injustices

The accounts of communicative injustice surveyed above in §1.2 recognise the importance of both the author and audience in a communicative exchange for the success of said exchange. That being said, the accounts focus specifically on what we might term the 'procedural conditions' for the performance of a communicative act. Explanations appealing to uptake, perlocutionary consequences, and speaker meaning, all target a particular attempt to perform a communicative act and thus what is missing from the procedure in the particular case for a successful performance on that occasion. Present

in the illocutionary silencing and communicative disablement accounts, however, is a recognition that wider social or cultural attitudes towards members (or perceived members) of socially recognisable groups can be systematically present that can cause routine failures of communicative acts. This is telling, as I have argued, because it shows us that our ability to be effective communicators is subject to wider social attitudes towards us, not just the attitudes of the interlocutor we find ourselves face-to-face with in an exchange.

Similarly, testimonial injustice reveals the importance of common social knowledge for epistemic recognition — who is seen as a knower, who is treated as a knower. Identity-prejudiced deficits originate from our collective social imaginary and the assumptions and expectations that we learn to place on one another. Moreover, hermeneutical injustice shows that the very social knowledge that we share can be subject to identity-based constraints — namely, whose experiences are best catered for by our collective resources, and who is able to contribute to and direct the development of our collective conceptual resources. Surely, the ability to make sense of one's own experience and to be able to make intelligible that experience to others is a social-epistemic good. Testimonial smothering presents a particular way in which this harm can present, through a speaker's recognising that her audience is not positioned to understand her thus truncating her ability to communicate.

The accounts surveyed from feminist epistemology and epistemologies of ignorance make transparent the value-laden nature of the processes of shaping our collective knowledge and our epistemic expectations of one another. What is recognised as knowledge and who is recognised as knowlegeable is incredibly important for shaping the possible epistemic roles that individuals can occupy in a society. For instance, if women are not seen as being capable of analytical reasoning, then their community is unlikely to be structured in such a way that that they are supported in their pursuit of roles that require these skills.

I opened this chapter with a comment about what allows us to have a wide range of options open to us in life. My suggestion is that we actually need significant support from others in order to have the widest array of options available to us. Here we see a narrow exemplar of this thesis: in order to have a wide range of epistemic (and communicative) life options available to us, we need our communities to be such that they allow us the greatest chance to develop and succeed.

The proposed account of social-epistemic agency places these wider societal attitudes centre stage. I argue that underminings are manifestations of these wider social attitudes in our communicative and epistemic development and day-to-day interactions. The systematicity of the cases of injustice in this chapter can then be understood as a product of the systematicity of these wider societal attitudes and how they inhibit individuals' self-authorship within this significant agential domain. In short, what is present but not as yet centre stage in all of the cases surveyed is that someone has lost the ability (in one way or another) to be self-authoring in relation to their social-epistemic life. Communicative injustices and epistemic injustices are *agential harms.* In extreme cases of communicative and epistemic injustice, individuals may never have this capacity for self-authorship in the first place, as they are never able to develop the relevant agential competencies.

From this survey, I think we can largely categorise agency-enabling requirements into two camps: the internal psychological and external social.

The internal psychological constraints pertain to our cognitive attitudes. Agency is dependent on our beliefs about what *we* are able to do communicatively and epistemically. Jane from the Maths case is undermined in this way, she holds beliefs about women's mathematical abilities that inhibit her ability to perform assertions in her class. Wendy Sanford did not possess a concept of postpartum depression, and so was unable to make sense of her own experience. As I will develop in the next chapter, belief is only one kind of cognitive attitude that is relevant for agency. Our desires and emotions

are equally critical in enabling us to perform the actions and occupy the roles we desire. My account of social-epistemic agency provides an explanation of communicative and epistemic undermining resulting from the acquisition of cognitive attitudes that undermine our agential capacities. This is part of the developmental story of agency. Our specific history of socialisation within a particular society will do much to furnish us with cognitive attitudes about the kinds of acts we can perform and the kinds of roles we can occupy.

I think it is also very clear from the cases surveyed here that our agency can be undermined in the moment when we are trying to exercise it. Thus, our agency is also partly constituted by the social interactions that we have in our day-to-day lives. We first need to develop the agential competencies that will enable us to live our lives as we desire, but we then need to be in an environment that is supportive. For example, Alice in the Boardroom case does not lack any cognitive attitudes that undermine her ability to provide advice. She is physically in the room and capable of issuing locutions, but her role as an advisee to the board is, for all intents and purposes, ineffectual. Thus, there is a strong sense in which she is prevented from fulfilling the role that she desires. Significantly, for social-epistemic agency to be fully realised, *all* interlocutors need to display agential competence; cases where hearers lack specifically communicative competencies are just as likely to result in communicative undermining as ones where speakers lack communicative competence. In fact, I take it that many cases of communicative and epistemic undermining are brought about by deficiencies in the competencies of audiences.

From these observations, we can see the beginnings of an account of domain-specific agency. The range of actions and roles in a domain available to us will be partly determined by a combination of causal-historical socialisation and day-to-day interaction. These determine the possibilities we see for ourselves, and thus the actions we will attempt to perform, and the expectations that others have of us that guide their responses

to our attempted exercise of agency.

Chapter 2

Social-epistemic agency competency

In this chapter, I lay out in more detail the structure of and conditions for social-epistemic agency. The goal is to merge some of our insights from the previous chapter about how social-epistemic action depends on significant interpersonal support with some "internal" aspects of our own personal, psychological development. Instead of understanding the harms of communicative injustice as procedural problems in the performance of speech acts, e.g., we understood these as roughly action theoretic problems of undermining someone's ability to perform, e.g., refusals or directives. I continue here to develop the action theoretic part of the picture by developing a competencies based account of social-epistemic agency.

In chapter 1, I explained that social-epistemic agency contributes to our global autonomy because it matters that we are locally self-authoring over our communicative or epistemic lives, but there is more to domain-specific agency than merely being "in charge". Whether or not we are agents in a domain – I will now argue – requires attaining a set of competencies. More specifically, it requires three of sets of competencies that each contribute to forming one's domain-specific agency.

These three sets of competencies incorporate the value of self-authorship in a few ways, but also the need for appropriate cognitive attitudes and domain-specific skills to lead one's life as one sees fit. As I will discuss later, our ability to develop these three types of competencies is very much dependent on our interactions with others — that is, I will be ultimately understanding agency relationally as outlined in the previous chapter in §1.1.1. In order to engage in relational self-authorship of our episodic and programmatic agency, we need an environment where the competencies that enable our domain-specific agency can be developed, maintained, and exercised.

I begin this chapter in §2.1 with an introduction to the general internal structure of social-epistemic agency understood as three sets of competencies. Together, these competencies provide the foundation for two sites of social-epistemic agency: agency exercised through specific actions at a time (episodic agency) and agency exercised over directing one's social-epistemic life more generally (programmatic agency). I proceed then to discuss each set of competencies in more detail. The first, A1 (§2.2), describes cognitive attitudes that support forming the intention to and performance of social-epistemic actions. These include doxastic (§2.2.1), motivational (§2.2.2), and affective (§2.2.3) attitudes. The second, A2 (§2.3), describes the competency to make authentic choices in exercising one's episodic agency (§2.3.1) and programmatic agency (§2.3.2). The third, A3 (§2.4), connects the development of more general skills to one's ability to effectively occupy social-epistemic roles. In this section, I consider ways that structural features of one's society can inhibit one's opportunities to develop, e.g., critical thinking skills, that then have an impact on one's ability to exercise programmatic agency. In the final section (§2.5) I propose one way we may draw a distinction between undermining social-epistemic agency without thereby wronging someone, and undermining social-epistemic agency that does constitute a wrong. What is important is that we come to see our interest in promoting self-authorship over our social-epistemic lives as a distinctive interest to be taken into account.

2.1 The structure of social-epistemic agency

Social-epistemic agency has two main constituents: episodic agency and programmatic agency. I take this broad structure from Diana Meyers' (2002) theory of autonomy competency. These concern, respectively, our ability to perform particular social-epistemic acts at particular times, and our ability to authentically occupy the social-epistemic roles we desire. Each of these two constituents depends on two parts coming together: the development of agential competencies, and our relationships with other persons that can enable or frustrate our attempts to perform actions or occupy roles. In this chapter, I predominantly focus on the "internal" or psychological or developmental aspect of social-epistemic agency. In the first chapter, and in later applied chapters, my discussion focuses on the ways that our attempts to exercise social-epistemic agency can be undermined by others.

The two parts of social-epistemic agency are episodic agency and programmatic agency:

Episodic Agency: the capacity to form the intention to act in a particular situation, and to carry it out as intended (e.g., to assert, advise, object).

Programmatic Agency: the capacity to self-direct one's life, in particular the ability to authentically occupy the social-epistemic roles one desires (e.g., an advisee, an expert, a counsellor, a peer, or a protester).

The degree to which one is episodically and programmatically agential is partially dependent on one's development of three main sets of competencies. It is also partially dependent on how others' respond to our attempts to act on these competencies. These competencies may be held in varying degrees, and our ability to develop and maintain them is dependent on our wider social environment. There are two ways, then, that our social-epistemic agency is dependent on others: in the development and maintenance of our competencies, and in supporting our acting on these competencies. "Exercising"

one's social-epistemic agency should, strictly speaking, be understood in a given case as a success or failure of episodic or programmatic social-epistemic agency; owing either to an issue of social-epistemic agential competence, or because of something to do with one's relationships or interactions with others.

The agential competencies of social-epistemic agency are as follows:

A1 The formation or development of cognitive attitudes (doxastic, motivational, affective) relevant for performing the social-epistemic actions one desires to perform.

A2 Ability to make authentic choices to perform particular actions or authentically occupy particular roles.

A3 Development, exercise, and maintenance of the domain-relative skills for the roles one wants to occupy.

The "acting on" or putting each competency to use occurs slightly differently. The role of A1 competence is to provide us with cognitive attitudes that make us psychologically well equipped for performing social-epistemic actions that we desire, e.g., one's beliefs that one can contribute advice to this panel discussion (doxastic), the desire to contribute advice (motivational), and to feel secure in so speaking (affective). As we will see below, there are many ways in which one might fail to acquire these supportive cognitive attitudes, thus undermining one's ability to perform desired social-epistemic acts. The ability to make authentic choices, A2, refers to one's proficiency to engage in second order reflection on the cognitive attitudes one has that help guide action. This ability can be subverted by socialisation that undermines one's reflective capacities or overridden by the coercive influence of others. The final set, A3, is about possessing a broader competence in the specific skills one needs to be able to acquire to perform social-epistemic roles like the skills of argumentation, dialogue, critical thinking, and listening.

We can discuss the development and acquisition of competencies in isolation from our ability to exercise social-epistemic agency allowing us to understand how individuals are differently situated with respect to their agential competencies. This can be particularly illuminating about the ways that individuals' social-epistemic agency can be undermined through a failure of developmental support. This is a distinct kind of agential undermining from cases where an individual attempts to perform a social-epistemic action they have the competency for but find themselves ignored, discredited, or otherwise undermined by the reaction of their audience (causing a failure to exercise episodic or programmatic social-epistemic agency).

To illustrate, imagine for a moment that the competencies component of social-epistemic agency was the sort of thing one could assign a numerical value to between the range of 0-100[1]. Each of the three sets of competencies contributes to where on this range one falls, so that if one held each set maximally one's social-epistemic agential competencies would register as "100" on the range.

More likely, though, each individual will vary in attainment of these sets of competencies, and so we will expect great variation between individuals depending on their personal histories and present social contexts. This allows a situation where we have two people with the same overall numerical value of social-epistemic agential competencies, say "75", but where what has gone into this determination is a very different combination of the three sets of competencies. For example, person A, who is very anxious and so attempts to perform few social-epistemic actions but is otherwise social-epistemically competent, compared to person B, who appears very competent but whose social-epistemic preferences have been indoctrinated in them by irrational processes. Person A has a lower level of A1 competency, while person B has a lower level of A2 competence. Thus, individuals may display similarly high (or low) levels of social-epistemic

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[1]This is only a component of social-epistemic agency because we also need to actually be able to act on our agential competencies to bring about changes in the world and this will depend on factors outside of our individual control (i.e., the actions of others). Thus, the actual degree of agency someone has will need to be considered with respect to their actual ability to bring about desired changes.

agential competence but they "look" very different to us because of differences in their competencies. Talk of numerical values is merely illustrative, but useful for seeing how our social-epistemic agency is underscored by the degree of possession of these three sets of competencies.

As communicative acts typically take place between one or more persons, it is fairly intuitive that they are constrained interpersonally. It is not surprising to hear that the efficacy of our warnings, for example, depends on others taking us seriously, and not as joking or playing a part in a play[2]. Even communicative acts that we perform for ourselves require a producer and a consumer of a sort, and so in some way these are also subject to similar kinds of credibility and sincerity constraints (to name a few plausible interpersonal constraints).

What about epistemic acts? Often enough, when we are thinking about our epistemic lives, we are thinking about developing or revising particular beliefs, assessing justification for beliefs, or conditions on knowledge. Insofar as we are thinking about these as properties of individual belief states, internal to the head, these do not sound like the kind of acts that are going to be as subject to interpersonal constraints. As I discussed in chapter 1, §1.1, that this comports with familiar existing work on 'epistemic agency'. However, as I will argue in §2.2, the acquisition of doxastic, motivational, and affective attitudes can seriously affect social-epistemic agential competence.

Social-epistemic agency, as I have shown, is wider than these "narrow scope" or internal epistemic concerns lead us to believe. This has already been demonstrated to some degree by the fact that epistemic injustice – an inherently social phenomenon – has served as a litmus test for some of the interdependent features of social-epistemic agency. Social-epistemic agency in this "wide scope" sense includes our epistemic acts that influence the epistemic environment we find ourselves in, and this is an environment

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[2]Note here that my claim is about the efficacy of a warning, i.e., whether or not people act as we would expect them to after being warned, and not about the status of the speech act as a warning or not.

subject to social authority and power dynamics.

Here are some of the ways that epistemic action is interpersonally dependent. While the acquisition of particular beliefs is likely involuntary, the public assertion of belief is not. One's publicly expressed and endorsed beliefs (be they sincere or not) are (typically) voluntary epistemic acts that affect one's wider epistemic community. Publicly assenting to the truth of a particular proposition can drastically change the epistemic landscape, as reflecting on admitted evidence in court trials and the public tweetings of influential public figures can helpfully demonstrate. Communicative acts that have epistemic goals or ends fall within this scope too: hypothesising, persuading, propagandising, testifying, etc. This crossover between communicative and epistemic acts in an interesting one in its own right, and an intersection that I take to be at the heart of political epistemology.

Let us turn now to considering each of A1-A3 in greater detail.

2.2 A1: The formation or development of cognitive attitudes (doxastic, motivational, affective) relevant for the social-epistemic actions one desires to perform.

It is tempting to read A1 as though the competencies that it is about are psychological facts that allow us to be *communicators* or *knowers*. While there are certainly a number of psychological or cognitive states and mechanisms that we require in order to engage in communication and for engaging in the exchange of reasons, these are not the target cognitive competencies I have in mind which underlie social-epistemic agency[3]. The

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[3]To focus on the communicative aspects of social-epistemic agency for a moment, an effective way to undermine someone's social-epistemic agency is to prevent them from learning a natural language, perhaps by depriving them of linguistic stimuli. If we intentionally prevented an individual from becoming a communicator then we have also prevented them from being able to develop social-epistemic agency, and thus to exercise social-epistemic agency. This is certainly possible and would be harmful to the individual, but these are not the target cases of communicative injustice that we ultimately seek to explain. I mention them here to acknowledge them as a possibility but to put them aside for the rest of our discussion.

cognitive attitudes that I am concerned with are *higher* (psychologically speaking) than the level at which facts about language processing, selective attention, or theory of mind, belief acquisition, for example, may be seen to lie.

My focus, rather, is largely with those cognitive attitudes that we possess (or lack) that bear on what communicative or epistemic acts we take to be achievable for us — instead of the psychological capacities that determine which we are capable of performing. So, while there are potentially cognitive attitudes that are psychologically necessary for us to be able to engage in communication or learning at all, these are not the kind of cognitive attitudes that I take to factor into judgements about one's social-epistemic agency[4]. At their core, each of the three kinds of cognitive attitudes I discuss here are epistemically evaluable for truth aptness, justification, or reasonableness.

The kind of competencies that fall under A1 require cognitive attitudes that allow us to form the intentions and act on those intentions to perform our desired act(s). In order to specify the type of cognitive attitudes required for A1, I offer a general functional description of three types of cognitive attitudes that I take to be important for the performance of communicative and epistemic acts for both performers and audiences: doxastic, motivational, and affective attitudes. The goal of specifying these types is to provide a picture of what it means to develop the competencies relevant for A1 that in turn feed into the episodic and programmatic aspects of social-epistemic agency, not to provide a descriptive account of communication. Each of the three types plays an important role in the process of performing a particular act: what we end up performing, the ease with which we perform it, the reasons that lead us to perform it, etc.

A brief note on terminology. Some philosophers of mind posit a plurality of belief-states and desire-states, etc., while others take there to be only one proper category

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[4]For example, human beings and bees are both communicators, but I would contend that bees do not have the ability to be social-epistemic agents despite their performing, in some sense, communicative actions. This result is because bees plausibly lack the kinds of attitudes that do fall under A1, but also because they plausibly lack the competencies of A2 and A3. Furthermore, while they exhibit 'sociality' in the biological sense, they are not 'social' in the relevant way required for social-epistemic agency that is developed later in this discussion.

each of 'belief' and 'desire'. I do not intend to weigh on this debate, so my terminology is intended to prevent one from taking 'doxastic' to mean "belief-only (and this is the proper definition of belief)". I choose here to use 'doxastic', 'motivational', and 'affective' state because I will be providing functional definitions of these states. As a result, these functions do not give a definition for 'belief', for example, but describe a set of cognitive attitudes of which the commonsense category of 'belief' will be part. For example, there are debates around whether tacit beliefs are really beliefs or something else that is similar to beliefs. Using my terminology, both will count as 'doxastic states'. Moreover, not all beliefs are relevant for social-epistemic agency and so the definitions I provide also select out only a subset of all our our beliefs (and other doxastic attitudes) that are relevant for that domain.

2.2.1 Doxastic attitudes

When we talk of 'beliefs' there is a tendency to think of cognitive attitudes that are introspectable. If I need to find out what I believe I can reflect on various propositions and see if I do or do not take them to be true. But it is also possible to identify our beliefs by observing our actions. Our beliefs guide action, the thought goes, and so we can look to how we behave to find out what we believe. These two different positions can seem in tension with one another because I can behave in ways that might surprise me, but according to the second position this is revealing to me some facts about my beliefs even though I didn't know that I had them. Without defending the position here, I adopt the latter position that our behaviour can be indicative of our beliefs regardless of what we would avow or can introspect. Consequently, the doxastic attitudes that we will discuss need not be introspectable. Rather, as hopefully will be intuitive given the examples I provide, it is plausible that many of the doxastic states are unconscious or non-introspectable — for example our implicit biases or tacit knowledge of stereotypes.

The doxastic attitudes that matter for social-epistemic agency are those that concern

our (and our interlocutor's) communicative and epistemic abilities, albeit indirectly in (potentially many) cases. They function to set the range of communicative or epistemic acts that are available for participants at a given time, either enlarging or narrowing the scope of acts that agents can perform. For listeners, doxastic attitudes influence their ability to interpret their interlocutor, and bear on their credibility judgements of their interlocutor[5]. Some important doxastic attitudes for social-epistemic agency consist of *assumptions* and *expectations* about the communicative styles and typical communicative actions of particular individuals (episodic). Similarly, assumptions about which types of people are experts in certain areas of enquiry (programmatic), and who is prima facie trustworthy are also important for constraining social-epistemic agency (or amplifying it, as the case may be).

Some doxastic attitudes are relevant for specific social-epistemic roles and thus help to enable the social-epistemic agency of those in those roles — and can be a matter of episodic or programmatic social-epistemic agency. Consider a classroom teacher, for example. The teacher occupies a particular social-epistemic role in the classroom and has doxastic attitudes about what, e.g., communicative acts she can perform in that role[6]. Likewise, her students hold doxastic attitudes about what communicative acts they can expect from her and what is expected of them in return. She might hold the

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[5]As we have seen in chapter 1, credibility judgements are very important for communicative action and not only epistemic action. This is because whether or not we find someone else credible is plausibly part of the causal explanation for whether or not we 'uptake' someone's speech acts (enabling or undermining their episodic social-epistemic agency). Put non-speech-act-theoretically, non-credible speakers have a much harder time performing their desired communicative actions because their interlocutor is less likely to respond to their attempts in the typical way. For example, a female expert witness in a trial may have much more difficulty getting the jury to accept her expert testimony (i.e., her justified assertions) if they have sexist doxastic attitudes that include that women are not capable of being experts in her actual field of expertise (e.g., engineering). Her ability to be effective in he role as an expert witness can be severely hindered as her ability to have the jury take up her assertions is undermined (and in these cases may be an issue of programmatic social-epistemic agency).

[6]As I will discuss later in this chapter, a social-epistemic role is a role we can occupy in life that depends in an important ways on our being able to effectively perform particular social-epistemic actions. The role of the teacher is plausibly also a moral role, but in order for a teacher to achieve moral outcomes, the teacher must be able to carry out social-epistemic actions. Her ability to perform these actions underlies her ability to provide knowledge and train her students to be effective epistemic (or moral) agents.

belief that she can issue commands to her students to take out their exercise books to work on their creative writing and have the expectation that they will follow her command, thus exercising her social-epistemic agency through the episodic dimension of her social-epistemic agency. If we wished to put this speech act theoretically, we might describe this as the teacher having doxastic attitudes about the illocutionary acts she can perform and the expected perlocutionary consequences of doing so. In this example–and assuming that her students follow her command–the teacher exercises her social-epistemic agency through exercising the communicative dimensions of her agential competencies.

Just as there are doxastic states that support our social-epistemic agency, there are doxastic states that undermine agency too. 'Undermining attitudes' as I will call them, can belong to any of our three doxastic, motivational, or affective attitude categories, and can inhibit or altogether prevent the development or exercise of A1. For example, beliefs that women ought not be assertive and dominant in conversation will lead individuals to have expectations about women's communicative performances—including women themselves[7]. For instance, beliefs that women will be meek or shy in conversation and be unlikely to make confident assertions can undermine their social-epistemic agency. When such expectations are held in a community we should expect to see women self-policing their own conversational contributions in accordance with these beliefs, and see women who break these expectations as being marked out for doing so in some way. In this example, these specific doxastic attitudes are most likely harmful to many women's social-epistemic agency because they can limit the range of communicative acts women can perform, and the way in which they can non-problematically conduct themselves in their communicative lives.

Doxastic attitudes of A1 are those that establish the norms of social-epistemic practice for particular individuals and in particular contexts. That is, beliefs about who can

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[7]The complementary doxastic attitudes that men will be assertive and dominant in conversation can also be harmful for those who do not conform to these expectations.

do what, when, and in the company of whom. These doxastic attitudes may be 'global' like the previous example, i.e., one's that apply to all members of socially identifiable groups. They may also apply more generally to a society and not particular groups within it, but nonetheless they function to provide norms of communicative or epistemic behaviour for members. For example, the use of profanity in public is widely disapproved of in many societies and so speakers are restricted in the range of communicative acts they should use in public places. Various areas of enquiry have been coded as feminine – fashion for example – and men who have an interest in these areas may be shunned or ridiculed, thus maintaining a gendered division of knowledge and expertise.

The relevant doxastic attitudes may also be highly local and instead pertain to a particular conversation or exchange at a time and consequently institute local norms for that context or person(s) within it. For instance, if we are in a public lecture certain local norms about turn-taking and asking questions can be put in place by a moderator that do not apply in normal conversations. The local attitudes are sensitive to what has already been said in the conversation or communicative exchange, facts about "conversational score", or relevant facts about the conversational dynamics of the group (Lewis, 1979).

An individual's ability to exercise their social-epistemic agency relies on the doxastic attitudes of those they interact with. If we return to the example of a society that expects women to be conversationally meek, we can imagine that a woman who desires (or would desire in the absence of these expectations about women) to be a politician in this society will be disadvantaged (or even prevented) from occupying this role — she is programmatically undermined. She may be undermined by her potential supporters because of their expectations about women's communicative or epistemic behaviours. In this way, she is blocked from self-authoring her social-epistemic agency because of the doxastic beliefs of others.

We can also imagine a case where she internalises these expectations about women and so takes being a politician to be inappropriate for herself because of how politicians

behave in public spaces. In both cases, the doxastic attitude that women ought to be meek and un-assertive runs the risk of inhibiting some women in their communicative and epistemic lives. In the counterfactual case where she would want to be a politician if not for the doxastic attitudes she possesses, we have a slightly different case of undermining — her motivational attitudes are coming into play and are needed for the explanation. The ways that doxastic and motivational attitudes interact is our next topic of discussion.

2.2.2 Motivational attitudes

In the case of doxastic attitudes and social-epistemic agency, we are concerned with the attitudes of actors because of the ways that the development and subsequent possession of particular doxastic attitudes affects one's ability to participate in social-epistemic life. In addition, the doxastic attitudes of our audience are important for social-epistemic agency because of the role they play in allowing actors to exercise their social-epistemic agency (e.g., their ability to interpret well can be required for successful action, and sexist beliefs can undermine this). For the motivational attitudes, I primarily discuss the role of desires of the actor alone[8]. The motivational attitudes that enable agency are also about the acts we take ourselves to be capable of performing. Motivational attitudes as I will define them are first-order motivational states to perform – or attempt to perform – social-epistemic actions or pursue social-epistemic roles. As "motivational" suggests, we are concerned here with a broad category of motivations (sometimes called "pro-attitudes") that includes our intentions, plans, preferences, wishes, and goals.

Many of our motivational states are going to depend (causally) in some way on our doxastic states[9]. This is because how we believe the world is – and our expectations and assumptions about that world – feed into what we take ourselves to be capable of doing, or of the changes we think can possibly bring about. Our doxastic attitudes play a

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[8]Of course, very strong desires in audiences can seriously impact their ability to engage with authors. I take this up only briefly here as I don't take this point to warrant too much explanation.

[9]The reverse is possible too, it may be that one's desires to bring about some outcome cause one to adopt particular beliefs.

serious role in determining what motivational attitudes we are able to have, but pushing ourselves and others beyond the bounds we presently take to be constrained by is a central site of self-authorship. Our motivational attitudes are important for our taking control of our agency and shaping it how we want it to be. Ideally, our social contexts are structured to allow us the greatest freedom to self-author in these significant areas of our lives[10].

The functional role of the relevant motivational attitudes for social-epistemic agency is to provide the motivations that see us act out our agency, continue develop it (e.g., revise some doxastic or affective attitudes), and maintain it. Let us return briefly to our earlier example of the teacher but instead take the perspective of one of her students, Jane.

The teacher exercises social-epistemic agency to the extent that she has developed A1-A3, but depends also on her students possessing supportive doxastic attitudes. The same is true for Jane. She needs the relevant doxastic attitudes to be in place as a student in order to ask questions or make assertions and conjectures during the class, and her peers and teacher need the appropriate reciprocating attitudes. Let us imagine that Jane is in a maths class and lacks the first-order desire to perform assertions due to stereotype threat resulting from her implicit or tacit beliefs that women are bad at mathematics. Jane instead asks questions in her classes, despite being competent with the material and capable of making true assertions in response to the mathematical problems they work on. In place of desires like "I want to give the solution to problem three", Jane instead has desires like, "I want to ask for the solution to problem three". In this case, Jane's agency is undermined because she lacks the motivational attitudes for making assertions she would otherwise make in the absence of some of her doxastic attitudes about women and mathematical ability. In this case, there is a complicated relationship between her episodic and programmatic social-epistemic agency where the

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[10]I take up the topic of constraints on self-authorship over social-epistemic agency in the last section of this chapter.

problems lie.

Motivational attitudes are first-order attitudes — the actual desires, wishes, plans, etc., that we possess. It is natural here, then, to wonder about whether one needs to identify with these first-order motivational attitudes. Let us return to Jane. Imagine she not only lacks the first-order desire to perform assertions in her mathematics class but in addition she reflectively endorses that she ought not desire to perform these assertions[11]. Jane believes not only that women are bad at mathematics, but that it is inappropriate for women to do that kind of abstract, analytical work. If asked, she would endorse her lack of first-order motivation to assert, then, because she endorses the patriarchal system she inhabits that furnished her with them. In this case, it would seem strange to say that Jane's social-epistemic agency is in anyway harmed by her lack of a desire to perform mathematical assertions.

Two immediate options come to mind: either Jane experiences no harm to her social-epistemic agency in this case because her first-order and higher-order states are aligned or Jane experiences a harm to her agency because there is something wrong with her ability to critically reflect on the first-order desires she finds herself with. The relationship between our first-order motivational attitudes and higher-order ones is the topic of A2: the competencies that give us the ability to make authentic choices in significant domains of our life.

Our ability to form the motivational attitudes we require for our agency is – much like our doxastic attitudes – dependent on those who we interact with. The communities that surround us are a dominant source of the doxastic attitudes we acquire, the values we acquire, and the life-plans we set for ourselves. Thus, the goals, desires, wishes,

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[11]'Reflective endorsement' is a proposed condition for autonomous action, notably developed in John Christman's work (Christman, 1991). See also his (2001; 2007; 2009) for further developments on the account. The basic idea is that autonomous action requires endorsing the process of desire-formation itself, and not merely identifying with the desires one has. In Jane's case, then, she would need to endorse the process by which she acquired her beliefs about women and mathematics. If this was as a process of taking on sexist stereotypes borne out of a patriarchal society, the intuitive thought is that she will not endorse the process by which she acquired the desires. Thus, these are not autonomous desires.

plans, the motivational attitudes we acquire, are heavily biased by those communities that imprint on us. The things that we desire in our social-epistemic lives, then, are constrained to some significant degree by our developmental story and those narratives that are made available for us.

As I mentioned as the beginning of this discussion, the ability to push the boundaries of these constraints is a central site of agency and self-direction. That is, having the ability to take control of or re-direct our first-order motivation attitudes by making changes to our higher-order motivational structure is an important site of self-authorship. Once again, this is the purview of A2 and the competencies described there.

Overall, A1 describes those cognitive attitudes that need to be in place for us to be able to (attempt to) perform the actions that we desire. This depends on, for example, our having the requisite doxastic attitudes about local moves and global norms of conversation that inform what communicative actions we can perform. They also include motivational attitudes that motivate us to engage in communication in a variety of contexts and with a range of different people. Our individual values also play a role in carving out those communicative and epistemic acts that we take ourselves to be capable of performing, something I will discuss later in this chapter (i.e., the discussion of A2). One last piece remains for A1: our emotional lives.

2.2.3 Affective attitudes

Often when we think of our emotions, we think only of the sensational or phenomenal experience associated with them. These affective attitudes in our day-to-day lives do have a bearing on our agency; the strength of negative affective attitudes can, for example, prevent one from attempting to perform the action that is associated with those negative attitudes. I will refer to these affective attitudes as our "occurrent affective attitudes" to signify that they are actively felt phenomenal states[12]. For example, a surge of anxiety

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[12]It might be contested that these are "attitudes" at all, and thus that they do not belong in the same set as motivational and doxastic attitudes. The thought might be that emotions are mere happenings-

one might experience when standing in front of one's first class as a trainee teacher, or the endorphine rush at winning a debate.

Many philosophers also recognise that emotions and moods have other roles in our cognitive lives, they not only "colour" them but they also play an important role in critical reflection. The affective attitudes we find ourselves with when remembering the past, considering the present, or imagining possible futures help to inform us about our own values — namely what we identify with and what we want to disassociate from. I take it that these are distinctive from the kinds of occurrent affective attitudes that arise during day-to-day experiences[13]. Let us call these affective attitudes our "recurrent affective attitudes". One might experience strong recurrent affective attitudes of joy in recalling a surprise birthday party, or embarrassment in recalling falling down a flight of stairs in a public place.

Our affective attitudes have a bearing on the doxastic attitudes and motivational attitudes we have, acquire, or want to dispense with because of their potential role in critical reflection. Recurrent affective attitudes that are stable through reflection can give us reason to take action. Similarly, occurrent affective attitudes can provide information about our values when they arise — we can be surprised by how we find ourselves responding to an unfolding situation.

When we find ourselves with negative affective attitudes this can be a cause for change; it may help us realise that we dislike something or are made anxious by something, and this can be a motivator for future plans and actions. However, it is also possible that what we want to change is not the content that the affective attitude is associated with but that affective association itself. In both cases, the affective attitude plays a role in critical reflection and self-authorship, in a general sense. Affective

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to-us, sensations that we experience. However, I take it that this is not only not a received view in the philosophy of emotion, but not true of all the kinds of affective attitudes that are relevant for agency, i.e., recurrent affective attitudes that I define next.

[13]One notable distinction is that they can be brought on through memory and reflection. The "stimulus" that brings about the attitude could be an embarrassing incident 10 years past.

attitudes have this effect generally across our internal lives, and consequently our communicative and epistemic lives. Therefore, the affective attitudes we have factor significantly into the actions and roles we will happily pursue, and those that we resist or avoid.

The occurrent affective attitudes that help agency to flourish are, intuitively, those that do not inhibit us from pursuing those acts or roles we desire. The same is true of the recurrent affective attitudes. Those that help social-epistemic agency to flourish are supportive of the processes of critical reflection that shape the actions and roles that we act on and pursue.

For example, imagine Jane in the case where she does not attempt to perform assertions in her class because of stereotype threat. It is plausible that Jane experiences some anxiety or affliction when she considers making assertions in class. Perhaps she experiences apprehension or fear when she considers making a contribution. Or maybe these stereotypes bring about denial within her of her own mathematical abilities. In each option, the occurrent affective attitudes that she experiences are plausibly a part of the explanation for why she does not attempt to make assertions in this particular class[14]. In contrast, imagine Hermione, one of Jane's classmates. When Hermione realises the answer to a problem they are working on, she experiences excitement and thrusts her hand into the air to have the chance to share her discovery with the rest of the class. Hermione's occurrent affective attitudes do not inhibit her from expressing herself and asserting confidently her answer in the class.

As I have defined it, affective attitudes (both occurrent and recurrent) have the function of indicating to us facts about ourselves, our values, our preferences, and they also have the power to influence or guide our actions. Thus, they are important for the self-authorship of social-epistemic agency and also play a role in determining which acts we pursue and attempt to perform. If we can determine the source of our affective

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[14] And Jane may not experience any of these affective attitudes in any of her other classes.

attitudes, then we are in a position to use them in processes of critical reflection. We may choose to work on changing the affective response itself, as Jane might try to alleviate her anxiety. Or, we might instead seek out or avoid the source of the affective attitude.

How do we acquire these attitudes? There are plausibly multiple types of occurrent and recurrent affective attitudes, and I will not attempt a full taxonomy here. That being said, there are a few kinds worth mentioning that can help make sense of how their acquisition is relevant for understanding their role in agency.

Many occurrent affective attitudes appear to us as phenomenological reflexes to stimuli in our environment, for example, sensations of fear when someone suddenly appears in front of us or – for many people – fear when standing on the edge of a cliff[15]. These reflex-like affective sensations are presumably "hard-wired" in some sense. Many other affective responses may be acquired through repeated encounters and personal experience, for example excitement in anticipation of the start of a sports match (we can imagine that one may have experienced fear the first time on the field, but over time this has changed). Among this latter set of learned responses we can find affective attitudes that support or inhibit agency; consider the anxiety of Jane's experience, or the excitement of Hermione's.

There is an important distinction to draw here, though, between these two purported cases of "learned" affective responses. As I see it, Hermione's case is most similar to the sports player at the game — over time Hermione has realised that she is good at mathematics and that taking part in the class brings her pleasure. Thus, when in the class she experiences a range of happy emotions from taking part. Jane's anxiety seems importantly different.

From what has been said about Jane's experience, it is her doxastic attitudes about women and mathematics that are the main driver of her response in the classroom. For some people, their identity shapes the kinds of affective attitudes that they have and

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[15]See Bjorngard-Basayne (2018) and Hufendiek (2015) for recent work on embodied accounts of emotions that support the stronger claim that our environment can constitute part of the emotion.

those that they are able to understand in others because of wider socio-cultural beliefs about certain identities (Mackenzie, 2002)[16]. It is not that Jane has gone through a series of traumatic in-class experiences that have led to her developing anxiety in the class, rather her anxious reaction comes with her stereotype threat. So, in some cases, our doxastic attitudes can cause affective responses in us – regardless of the facts of our actual situation – and this can inhibit our social-epistemic agency. In contrast, it is not so hard to imagine how one's doxastic attitudes could embolden someone to make use of their agency.

All of these affective attitudes have a bearing on our agency, but those that arise from repeated experience and from our existing knowledge are of particular importance. This is because in specifying A1 we are concerned with the formation and development of attitudes relevant for the actions we desire to perform. We can learn about our values and preferences through affective experiences, and reflect on what their origin is. In some cases, we might realise that, like Jane, our affective responses are inhibiting our agency. We are then in a position to revise our doxastic attitudes and reconfigure our motivational structure so we can exercise our agency as we desire. What this requires, though, is the ability to make authentic choices in directing the development of our agency.

2.3 A2: Ability to make authentic choices in one's communicative and epistemic episodes & life.

It is a common enough thought that actions we perform when manipulated or when we have no other choice are not really "our own". I take it to be true that our communicative and epistemic lives are subject to similar problems of ownership, though I will describe them as issues of self-authorship. I provide here an understanding of authentic agential

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[16]See also Bartky (1990) on the topic of "de-colonising" our imagination so that we can re-figure our desires.

action as a degreed notion that depends on reflective endorsement and processes of self-definition[17].

Sometimes we may perform communicative acts, for example, making promises or assertions, simply because of pressure from others to do so. In these cases, the actions we perform are not authentically our own in the sense that they did not arise from a genuine desire in us to issue them. Here are two scenarios to demonstrate the kinds of problems I will consider for authentic A2 choices. First, someone performs an action for reasons that are not their own: someone forced to issue a promise with a gun to their head is not authentically making the promise. The promise is not made in accordance with their own desires but rather those of someone else. Second, someone may, upon reflection on the reasons for why they performed an action, come to realise that they do not endorse the reasons that led to the utterance. Determining whether this second kind of authenticity obtains will be more complicated than reflective endorsement alone, but this is sufficient for an introduction to the type I will discuss below. We can see some of these complications by considering a case where someone takes on a role to spread information about the dangers of flu vaccines causing autism only to realise that they had been manipulated into doing so by corporate propagandists.

The two main categories in A2 – "social-epistemic acts" (or "episodes") and " epistemic life" – correspond to the two constituents of agency, these being our episodic and programmatic exercise of agency. Our episodic agency, as a quick reminder, concerns our ability to carry out particular actions that we desire, it is our ability in the moment to exercise social-epistemic agency to bring about some desired epistemic change. Our programmatic agency is instead our ability to authentically occupy the social-epistemic roles that we want. In this section, I begin by explaining what it means to make authentic choices in the moment, and then proceed to discuss what it means to authentically occupy a social-epistemic role.

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[17]My account here is strongly inspired by the work of Killmister (2013), and the work of John Christman on reflective endorsement as noted above.

2.3.1 Authentic social-epistemic actions

The importance of self-authorship of social-epistemic actions may not be immediately apparent. In chapter 1, I drew a connection between our ability to engage in communicative actions and our ability for self-expression and connection with others. The connection between social-epistemic agency and autonomy does not merely come from the fact that both involve assessing actions for self-determination, but because of a deeper relationship between autonomy and communicative and epistemic life. When we are prevented from self-authoring our social-epistemic actions, we are not living as ourselves, "the alternative to articulating your own experiences and your own goals in your own way is to live someone else's version of you — to inhabit their definition of what you are like and their construal of what you think, feel, and want and consequently to find yourself enacting their story of how your life should go" (Meyers, 2002, 17).

To explore what authentic communicative and epistemic actions are, we will make use of the following two examples,

Ila the astrophysicist Ila is in a meeting with her aerospace team discussing the number of parachutes they need for their small test rocket. Brad, a fellow team member, has made an error in calculating the weight of the rocket because he has forgotten to include the weight of the on-board cameras. As a result, he is pushing for just one parachute. Realising his error, Ila asserts that they need two parachutes and explains her reasons why. The group accepts her argument and settles on two parachutes.

Molly the engineer Molly is at a 3D printer meet-and-greet in a conversation with Brad, Ila, and Jack about her delta style 3D printer. Molly is explaining to the group the advantages for printing speed of delta style printers over Cartesian style printers. Jack thinks Molly is asking a question about printing speeds on the two models of printer. Jack proceeds to explain to Molly why her 3D printer can print

faster. Molly lets it slide, neither Brad nor Ila notice Jack's mistake.

In the first example it is intuitive that Ila successfully performs an authentic social-epistemic act. In Molly's case, however, the verdict is not so clear. We can imagine that from Molly's perspective, when she started telling the group of the advantages of delta style printers she was issuing assertions that she desired to assert, and she endorsed her own actions to do so. From Jack's perspective (and potentially that of the rest of the group), though, Molly has asked a question. I will first explain what has intuitively gone right in Ila's case, and then return to the difficulties of Molly's.

For Ila, we have an almost ideal situation. She realises her team-member has made an error, she speaks up about it, and her team accepts her arguments. There is more to this success than first meets the eye. As we have seen through the discussion of A1 competence, Ila first needed to have the requisite cognitive attitudes to enable her to attempt to correct her team-mate. Her doxastic attitudes about the present conversation gave her reason to believe she could speak up. Furthermore, her doxastic attitudes gave her reason to think that *she* could speak up in this situation, as someone with the knowledge to challenge Brad's proposal. In addition, she was able to form the first-order intention to call out her team-mate and present her own arguments — she took herself to be capable of succeeding with such an attempt. Finally, her affective attitudes emboldened and supported her to speak up. In order for this social-epistemic action to be sufficiently authentic as to count as self-authored, Ila needs further to (i) endorse the desires she has, and, (ii) endorse the reasons for why she has those desires.

The first condition – that we identify with our first-order desires – is taken from Frankfurt's suggestion that our first-order desires and second-order desires (or 'volitions') need to be 'aligned' in order for an action to be freely willed (Frankfurt, 1971). If in our case Ila desires to assert that they need two parachutes, then she also needs not to have a second-order desire to reject this first-order desire[18]. For a contrast case, imagine that

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[18]One could make this a requirement to *have* a second-order desire that is something like "I want to

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Ila knows she has a reputation as a know-it-all who always points out others' flaws and mistakes and that this causes friction in her team. It is possible in this case that Ila may have a first-order desire to call out Brad's mistake, but have a second-order desire to not want her first-order desire because it is a symptom of this more general pattern that causes her social problems. In the contrast case, Ila doesn't want to want the things she does, so her action if she carries it out is not as authentic, i.e., does not exhibit a strong case of self-authorship, as it would be if she did have an alignment between her first and second order desires.

The second condition – that she endorse the reasons why she has the above first order desire – arises in response to a well-recognised deficiency in Frankfurt's picture of what it takes to say an action is freely willed. In one variation of Jane the mathematics student, we considered the possibility that Jane not only doesn't desire to make assertions in her mathematics class but she also thinks that she ought not have a desire to perform these assertions. The reason given was that Jane agrees with a wider system of beliefs about men's and women's mathematical abilities — she endorses the sexist system. We imagine, then, that Jane has no first-order desire to perform assertions but has instead a first-order desire to ask questions. Jane also lacks any second-order desire that disavows or rejects this first-order desire. We know from the outside looking in that Jane's desire is a product of these wider sexist beliefs she has. We can then ask, if Jane was made aware that her desires were the product of sexist beliefs, whether she would want to continue having them. The possibility of situations like this shows that sometimes a lack of discord between our first and second order desires is insufficient for making one's actions and desires authentic.

At this point we introduce the 'reflective endorsement' condition of Christman (1991). We need to know that if Jane was made aware of the ways in which she came to acquire

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want to assert that we need two parachutes". This strikes me as too demanding, this would then require that we must have a second-order desire to endorse any first-order desire for the first-order desire to be our own. It seems plausible to me that we can have authentic first-order desires without an explicit second-order desire endorsing it.

these beliefs, she would continue to endorse them. What reflective endorsement does it allows for the ownership of attitudes and values that one has acquired over normal processes of socialisation, such that they are incorporated into one's sense of self and not merely the product of a kind of cultural osmosis. Throughout we have been drawing attention to the ways that our cognitive attitudes depend on relational facts about our development, and this, in the abstract, threatens to strip away meaningful self-authorship of the sort I propose we value in social-epistemic life. Thus, so long as an individual can theoretically engage in a process of reflective endorsement to some greater or lesser degree, we propose that persons can reflect on the motivational states they have, and the reasons for why they have them, and should they endorse them in the end, we can say that they are made her own.

I follow Killmister (2013) here in making a stronger requirement that reflective endorsement requires both a positive endorsement of the process of acquisition and the ability to critically reflect on these processes with full knowledge of the relevant facts about the world that pertain to the process. The knowledge requirement here is a safeguard against kinds of socialisation that might undermine an individual's ability to engage in critical reflection of the process because the process of socialisation incorporates a positive attitude towards itself. For instance, patriarchal socialisation may incorporate positive attitudes towards patriarchal methods of domination thus undermining an individual's ability to critique those processes. If we leave this causal history out of the picture, we run the risk of missing out on the important story of how socialisation in a particular culture shapes our beliefs, desires, values, and emotions. And if we neglect this, then we lose a powerful explanation of how it is that individuals can internalise harmful stereotypes about themselves and undermine their autonomy.

Does this second condition require, then, that we are always in a position to evaluate the full causal history of our desires and volitions in order for them to be authentic? I do not think so. Rather, the competency requires that we have the critical reflection

skills to engage in this kind of reflection. Our actions will be more-or-less authentic – self-authored – to the degree to which we are able to engage in this process[19]. For Ila, this means thinking about the reasons that have lead her to want to call out false information and assert her own arguments concerning the parachutes. That she might not engage in this critical reflection just prior to her utterance is not crucial, just that at some time (and if this information is available to her) she is able to engage in critical reflection on those reasons and whether she endorses them (and the resulting volitions and desires) or not. I will return to more details about the view in the next subsection on occupying roles authentically.

Let us now move to considering Molly's case. Molly's audience of Brad, Jack, and Ila take her to have asked a question about the differences between 3D printer model speeds when Molly intended to make an assertion that her delta style printer was faster than a Cartesian one. As Molly does not contest the interpretation and the conversation proceeds as though she had, Molly's choice about the change she wanted to bring about in her social-epistemic environment has been effectively taken from her[20].

From a perspective concerned with social-epistemic agency (i.e., our ability to relationally self-author social-epistemic changes), it seems most appropriate to privilege the perceived speech act that ends up bringing about change in the world. To evaluate authenticity of the action that best explains that changes that result, we then need to reflect on the change and the cognitive attitudes of the speaker. There are many ways

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[19]Of course, it is entirely possible that we get full marks on this process and are still incapable of performing the self-authored action because our audience does not permit it, Molly's case may be an instance of this — hence my description of social-epistemic agency as *relationally* self-authored agency. On my account, our agency is undermined when someone actually prevents us from exercising our competencies, or when our wider social-context actually undermines the development or exercise of social-epistemic agency.

[20]I do not intend to weigh in on the debates in the speech act literature about determining which speech act "in fact" occurred, and instead will just proceed on the observation that we could take the perspective of any of the participants in the conversation. If we want to know how Molly experienced the episode, we will discover that she uttered assertions and was falsely taken to have asked a question. If we ask Jack, Brad, or Ila, we will learn that Molly asked a question. I am here influenced by Casey Johnson's work on illocutionary monism, and her critiques of the idea that an utterance must have at most one illocutionary force (Johnson, 2017).

that there may fail to be a tight relationship between the author's act and its effect, some of which will result in authentic action and others that will not. For example, the consequences might not be those exact results that the speaker initially intended to bring about in their audience. It is possible that they may not have had anything particularly specific in mind, they may not have known what the consequences would be, or they may have a range of acceptable responses that they will find worthwhile. Conversations can be unpredictable, and we may not know where we will end up once we begin. This doesn't mean that participation is not authentic if we understand authenticity as a matter of degree and as a matter, as discussed above, of being able to engage in processes of reflective endorsement rather than a very tight connection between an intention to bring about a change through an utterance and the result of our attempted performance.

That being said, conversations in which everything we put forward is misinterpreted or where our interlocutor is defiantly contrarian in response to anything we say are not what we would describe as "successful" nor are they intuitively encounters with a great deal of self-authored contributions. Conversations – and communication more generally – can be unpredictable, and false interpretations (relative to our intended utterance) are not always bad. Indeed, we do not issue all utterances with clear intentions in mind, sometimes we intend to be vague to see how the conversation progresses.

To return to Molly, the question she is perceived as asking is not an authentic communicative action. Molly may meet all of the internal conditions for critical reflection and reflexive endorsement, but this action is still not an authentic one. What we also need is for our audience to follow through with our attempted performance (or that we endorse the alternative interpretation or reception that occurs). We cannot say of someone who issues orders that are never taken up that they are an effective boss or manager. They are silenced by those who ignore them and their actions are never complete.

Authentic social-epistemic action, then, will depend in part on having the ability to make one's communicative or epistemic intentions clearly known so that one's audience

can respond appropriately. It is also just as important to develop our communicative skills as listeners so that we can interpret or discern our interlocutor's communicative intentions to the best of our ability. It is possible that Jack merely misunderstood, perhaps Molly is from Australia and speaks with high rising terminals. In the high-rising terminal case, he does undermine her ability to perform the action she desires but it doesn't strike us as a particularly harmful episode. In part, because it is likely to be one off and because it isn't for any morally problematic reason. In some cases, though, these kinds of underminings will result from significant deficiencies in the competencies of one's audience that make one misunderstood and those deficiencies are morally problematic in one way or another. Consider a case where the best explanation for Jack's uptake failure is that he belongs to a sexist community that believes women cannot be experts in areas of science and engineering. Jack's expectations interfere with his interpretation of Molly, and so he "mansplains" her own statements back to her because of an expectation that *she* must be asking a question. If Molly leaves him unchallenged then she has been social-epistemically undermined by him, despite the fault lying with his attitudes.

To summarise, for our domain-specific agentic actions to be (sufficiently) authentically our own we need the following: a) to have an alignment between our first-order desires to perform certain actions and our second-order desires to perform those actions, b) to be able to reflectively endorse the causal history behind the acquisition of our higher-order desires and the reasons that therefore support them with relevant knowledge of our worldly situation. To make action that ends up bringing about the change authentic, it also matters that, our audience uptakes the act we intended and responds in accordance with the acts that we attempt to perform. It is possible to meet (a) and (b), but nonetheless to end up being the cause of an unintended change because something has gone awry with our audience's interpretation of or reponse to us. With these three conditions in place, we have the competency to authentically exercise our social-epistemic agency in the moment. What this doesn't guarantee, though, is that we

will be able to occupy more stable social-epistemic roles that we desire. It is possible that we find ourselves capable of performing all of the acts that we want within only some roles and that other roles remain closed to us.

2.3.2 Authentic roles

Our programmatic agency is our ability to take control over how our social-epistemic lives are going in a "domain-global" sense. This is in contrast with the local focus we have with our episodic agency on the particular actions we perform. Considered globally, our social-epistemic lives play out through the roles that we occupy, and our ability to have self-authorship over the direction of these roles. "Social-epistemic roles" are roles or positions that we occupy that depend essentially on our ability to perform communicative actions, that depend on our ability to be recognised as knowers or experts, or as someone with epistemic authority. Some examples of these social-epistemic roles are being a activist, a student, an employee on a public radio station, a politician, or a manager.

As a litmus test for whether something is or is not a social-epistemic role, then, we can ask "What happens if someone who occupies that role is prevented from successfully performing communicative acts?"; if the role ceases to function once someone is silenced, then we have a social-epistemic role that is heavily communicatively focused. Imagine an activist who is never listened to, a teacher whose class has no respect for her and ignores her instruction, or a manager whose employees systematically take her commands to be suggestions[21]. We are not so much defining a new class of roles, rather we are focusing on the essentially communicative nature of roles that we already recognise.

Social-epistemic roles that are more heavily weighted to the epistemic can be similarly identified, but by paying closer attention to someone's need of recognition as a knower or an expert. Imagine the engineering professor whose students believe that she couldn't

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[21]This final example is taken from Kukla (2014) as discussed in chapter 1.

possibly know anything in depth about physics and mathematics, the female sports afficiando who can't get a job in sports analysis, or the people of colour assumed to be the help instead of the attendees at academic functions[22]. Our programmatic epistemic agency depends on our ability to get recognition from others that we are the kind of person who can competently function as experts and informants. Social expectations and assumptions – particularly those fueled by stereotypes – are well-established as a means by which people find themselves excluded from epistemic roles.

As in the case of the particular communicative and epistemic actions we perform, it is important that we are able to authentically occupy social-epistemic roles. If we lose this ability, then we are, to quote Meyers once again, "[living] someone's else version of [us]" (2002, 12). In order to authentically occupy social-epistemic roles I think we need the following two conditions to obtain: first, we need to have available to us a reasonable range of alternatives to choose from, and, second, we need to be able to critically reflect on and reflexively endorse the values and preferences that lead us to select the roles we desire (the same process we have discussed above for authentically authoring actions). In short, we need choice and the freedom to make those choices for ourselves. It is intuitive that someone who has a limited range of life options therefore has a limited ability to direct their own life as they desire.

A "reasonable range" can be taken to be a genuine variety of choices, that are not unfairly or unjustly limited. An unfair or unjust range may include situations where the choices available are selected on the basis of an arbitrary feature or trait of the individual (e.g., gender or social class); the range is the product of wider structural injustices; when the individual (or people "like them" in the relevant sense) is excluded from the decision-making process that decides which range is open to them. This is not an exhaustive list, but should provide us with a useful guide for whether or not limitations on the roles an individual has to choose from are reasonable or not.

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[22]See Gendler (2011) for a discussion of this last case, "On the epistemic costs of implicit bias".

I take it that the reasonable grounds for excluding or preventing someone from occupying a communicative or epistemic role is the same general rule of thumb used in most other areas: merit. If someone has a history of shady business dealings and nepotism, then we might reasonably exclude them from political positions. If someone has not obtained a teaching license, then we might reasonably exclude them from being a teacher. In the former case, it is a history of bad actions that allows us to reasonably exclude them from becoming a politician. In the latter case, it is because they have failed to meet the reasonable precautionary standards we have assigned to teaching. In both cases, there is lack of professional merit that makes it reasonable to exclude them. So far as I can see, there are no reasonable grounds for excluding someone from communicative or epistemic roles based on their perceived group membership in one or another socially significant category, e.g., "woman", "person of colour", "working class". Nonetheless, it is often on these grounds that we see many restrictions placed over individuals' programmatic agency. We can count these exclusions as immoral in the usual ways but we can now also recognise the distinctive social-epistemic harm in being blocked from authentically self-authoring one's social-epistemic life.

2.4 A3: Development, exercise, and maintenance of skills relevant for the social-epistemic roles one wants to occupy

Our A3 competency describes the actual skills that one needs to occupy a social-epistemic role. Our A3 competencies can be frustrated by others when we attempt to exercise them, providing another "place" where our social-epistemic agency can be undermined. If the social-epistemic action one desires to perform depends on a coordination between oneself and others, then that coordinating relationship can be taken to just be part of the action. If the action is an expression of her competency, it is not so strange to include

that coordination as meaningfully a part of her exercise of her agential competencies. A great many communicative and epistemic actions depend on skills that are in this sense distributed between us.

The communicative skills that we each require for our differing social-epistemic roles are not identical. For example, the skills one needs to be an activist are not the same as those needed for a teacher. There is also a great contrast between those skills we need to exercise our agency as speakers and as listeners. This variation resists a robust codification of conditions for our A3 competency. What it takes for someone to be successful in their social-epistemic role will depend on the role itself and the persons that they interact with. That being said, we can make some generalisations about the kinds of skills that will likely be shared across social-epistemic roles.

Social-epistemic roles are going to be those that require the exercise of social-epistemic agency, and they will be directed at bringing about social-epistemic, communicative, and epistemic changes in their environment. This includes their impact on other persons. As social-epistemic actions are collaborative, or at least minimally interpersonally dependent, the author not only depends on the response of the audience but will be trying to engage in actions that influence the social-epistemic agency of their audience. Thus, we can imagine that authors who act in such a way that they disregard the social-epistemic needs of their audience – primarily their own desires for relational self-authorship – will not engage well.

Let us imagine that Molly, Jack, Ila, and Brad are members of a research lab, where Jack is the principal investigator. Jack's role is a social-epistemic one: Jack's success in it depends not only on his scientific research skills and the production of quality papers, but his ability to communicate well with his team to delegate tasks, engage in debate on the results they produce, teach them new research techniques or methods, and to participate in collaborative projects in the lab itself. As a group they plausibly need to be able to develop a strong level of epistemic trust, that is they need to feel confident that

each member of the team is both competent and truthful. The principal investigator has a special role on this front. As the person with the highest epistemic authority given his position, the way that he treats the rest of the team and mediates any epistemic disputes that arise, and the ways he promotes the members of his team will directly impact how trust will develop and be maintained within the group[23]. Unfortunately for the team, Jack is selfish and arrogant. He does not trust his team to produce high-quality work, he does not consider them intelligent. When he does see them produce good work he takes it for himself and publishes it, and he regularly downplays their contributions to the lab reports, etc. On top of this, he is lazy and in fact does very little work on his own.

Now, there is a lot to complain about in Jack's work ethic. I want to focus in just on the lack of social-epistemic competence that he shows with regard to occupying this role as a principal investigator. Someone in this position has a significant responsibility to ensure that all members of the team are treated in ways that mutually promote their social-epistemic agency. When Jack takes Molly's good ideas and publishes them for himself, he is going to successfully bring about some of the kinds of social-epistemic actions that he desires. Provided his plagiarism goes unnoticed, he will successfully contribute new knowledge to their field. But he undermines Molly's social-epistemic agency in the process. When Jack fails to listen to his team's contributions at meetings, he undermines their ability to give advice and to participate in collective decision making. Given his status in the team, this can be sufficient to undermine the ability of his team-members to guide their aspects of the research, and to produce the work they would otherwise be able to pursue.

As the principal investigator and leader of his research lab he achieves very little of the plausible laundry list of items that I proposed fall into the job description. Jack lacks

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[23]In chapter 5, §5.2 I outline a notion of social-epistemic trust that further develops these comments on trust here by noting some unique kinds of social-epistemic vulnerability. I propose that social-epistemic trust establishes a relationship where one feels supported in sharing their epistemic perspective, and that they will receive support in their attempts to exercise their social-epistemic agency.

communicative skills, including the ability to communicate with his team honestly and sincerely, and to listen to them charitably. This demonstrates a lack of social-epistemic skill on his behalf, and it has the further consequence of undermining Molly, Ila, and Brad's social-epistemic agency too. This important connection between Jack's level of social-epistemic skill for a role and the ability to support others' social-epistemic agency is, I think, a feature of all social-epistemic roles. Ila and Brad may have their own epistemic goals that they are pursuing by being a part of the research lab, and their ability to achieve these depends on Jack's ability to do his work well. One of the results here, then, is that it is not possible for Jack to do well as a principal investigator in his lab without promoting and supporting the social-epistemic agency of Molly, Ila, and Brad.

I won't spend time considering reasons for why Jack is this way, but I do want to draw attention to a way that a lack of A3 skills can constitute a form of structural social-epistemic injustice[24]. Some groups of marginalised persons are excluded from whole areas of activity, including, e.g., from participation in political life[25]. One of the consequences of this kind of marginalisation is that it can prevent or at minimum undermine the ability of those persons from developing certain kinds of communicative and epistemic skills. It can also undermine the acquisition of skills more generally that would be required for taking on a social-epistemic role, for example a background in mathematical skills that would be required for taking on a job as a policy analyst for a government ministry. In effect, it can rob them of the ability to develop the skills that they would need in order to occupy those social-epistemic roles they might desire. In more localised ways, some individuals may find themselves disadvantaged because they have not had the developmental support that would enable them to have acquired

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[24]I draw here on the distinction between agential and structural epistemic injustice described in chapter 1, §1.3.

[25]It is for these reasons that Meyers provides the episodic and programmatic distinction, in order to bring to our attention the ways individuals can be severely programmatically limited while retaining high amounts of episodic self-determination (Meyers, 2002).

the agential skills they require. For example, if public schools cannot afford to provide children with the kinds of literacy and numeracy skills that would enable them to go to college in pursuit of becoming teachers themselves.

Ian James Kidd's (forthcoming, a) notion of 'epistemic corruption' is of use here. In the abstract, 'epistemic corruption' describes a process that tends to encourage the development and exercise of intellectual vices[26]. Epistemic traits like intellectual arrogance, dogmatism, and epistemic indulgence are all proposed epistemic vices of the mind[27]. The topic of Kidd (forthcoming, a) is specifically an account of ways that certain forms of education can result in the cultivation of epistemic vices in students. In some cases, the epistemic vices identified can be alternatively conceived of as deficiencies in the development of skills that are required for particular social-epistemic roles. An education system that doesn't teach women to critically engage in debate, for example, would undermine women's epistemic skills and by extension undermine their ability to take on desired social-epistemic roles — an example provided Wollstonecraft (1995) and discussed by Kidd. The "diagnosis", then, is that women are deprived of skills that would enable them to occupy desirable social-epistemic roles, while also being "encouraged" (unintentionally, as a product of expectations about women's proper conduct) to develop epistemic vices of, e.g., docility.

The main difference between the accounts, then, concern how we conceptualise the epistemic problems for the individual: as the possession of intellectual character vices, or as the failed development of A3 agential skills[28]. A further option is to recognise both – the development of vice and a lack of skill – and acknowledge that the development of epistemic vice can cause the distinctive harm of undermining social-epistemic agency

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[26]See also Biddle et al. (2017) on how practices of manufacturing doubt (e.g., about climate change and the risks of tobacco) can promote the development of epistemic vice.

[27]See Cassam (2016) for an introduction to vice epistemology, see Battaly (2010) for an account of epistemic self-indulgence.

[28]It is worth noting here that some virtue theorists accept an alternative conceptualisation of virtues not as stable character traits, but rather as skills. For a discussion of intellectual virtues as skills see Bloomfield (2000). Some may wish, then, to identify and develop an understanding of A3 agential skills as virtues, but I will not do so here.

alongside the harm of instilling bad epistemic character traits. This is how I have described the Wollstonecraft example above.

Duncan Pritchard (2015) provides a criticism of the epistemically corrupting effects of technology in education. For students to develop epistemic virtues like attentiveness and diligence, they need to undertake certain tasks by using their own cognitive faculties, but they are increasingly "off-loading" this work onto technology. The consequence is a lack of development of intellectual virtue, and the creating of conditions that are likely to result in the development of epistemic vices like intellectual laziness. Kidd takes this to be a "generalist corruption criticism" against certain highly technology-reliant forms of education, meaning that the corrupting mechanism identified doesn't lead to the promotion of a specific set of vices (there are many possible vices that could result). Educational systems can be intentionally or unintentionally corrupting, and they can be judged as corrupting systems even when they fail to corrupt all members.

My account would propose that the "technomanic" (Pritchard's terminology) tendencies of this educational system can fail to support the development of epistemic skills that are necessary for the social-epistemic agency of students insofar as it undermines their ability to engage in particular social-epistemic roles. Unlike Kidd's distinction between epistemically corrupting systems that are criticisable for the 'generalist' promotion of epistemic vices and those that promote particular epistemic vices, we can only locate the harm of A3 agential skill development in systems that inhibit or fail to support the development of *specific skills* that a person requires relative to some *specific action or role*. Overall, I take the accounts to be largely complementary. As noted above, we can diagnose both an undermining of social-epistemic agential skill and the presence of intellectual vice in cases if we desire. What we gain from the social-epistemic perspective is an ability to identify ways that systems can undermine social-epistemic agency by failing to support the develop of skills that are required for particular roles.

In the next section, I discuss how we can distinguish between permissible social-

epistemic undermining and impermissible undermining. This clarifies the nature of the harm of social-epistemic undermining and its relationship to moral harm more generally.

2.5   Permissible and problematic agential undermining

One of the main contributions of the account of social-epistemic agency is that it allows us to identify a specific interest (and value) that we have to self-author our social-epistemic lives. Thus, we can identify specifically communicative and epistemic kinds of harm resulting from someone's losing the ability to engage in self-authorship over the exercise of their agency. One way we might differentiate permissible from impermissible social-epistemic underminings, then, is to consider whether the individual is harmed by being undermined.

If we are to take this route then I think we should understand the harm as prima facie and pro tanto as a harm that can be outweighed by other considerations. In some cases, even though someone's ability to speak is silenced, their desire to exercise their social-epistemic agency is outweighed by, e.g., wider political needs. The competencies and relational components of social-epistemic agency allows us a number of places to locate harms, and further to evaluate the strength of a given undermining of agency. The relational dependency of social-epistemic agency also grounds strong responsibilities of care for others, least we neglect and undermine their social-epistemic agency.

The following example is intuitively not a problematic case of social-epistemic undermining,

Casey's Ice-Cream Casey, a six year old child, attempts to issue a command to her
mother for ice-cream. Her mother ignores her command.

Despite her mother's failing to respond to the Casey's command at all, presumably we do not take this to be a problematic case of communicative undermining. Why not? It is true that Casey's mother refuses to uptake her command, and thus disables her

attempt to perform her desired communicative act. In this case, undermining her desire to perform the communicative act (and thus bring about ice-cream) has less weight than the objective of teaching her who she can and can't make commands of, and also in teaching her to delay gratification. We can recognise both social-epistemic reasons and non-social-epistemic reasons, then, in favour of failing to uptake her command. We can describe Casey's social-epistemic agency as episodically damaged, without thereby saying that she incurs a harm such that a wrong has been committed.

How should we understand this? A central distinction in thinking about harm is between comparative and non-comparative harms. I do not intend here to settle the matter of the nature of harm, but to show that on two plausible accounts of harm we can make sense of having our social-epistemic agency undermined without a wrong taking place. I will take each briefly in turn, showing how we might understand Casey's experience according to them.

Comparative models of harm typically come in one of two forms: historical (temporal) or counterfactual (Shiffrin, 1999). A historical and comparative account of harm would propose that someone is harmed when they were in a better state, all-thing-considered, before the performance of some action, x, than after it. A counterfactual and comparative account of harm would propose that someone is harmed when they could be in a better state, all-things-considered, if some action, x, had never occurred. A harm is understood as the "setback of one's interests along a sliding scale of promotion and decline" (Shiffrin, 1999, 121). I have proposed social-epistemic agency to be an interest of persons. Casey's experience of communicative undermining, considered in isolation, would register as a decline on her sliding scale of interests. That being said, I have proposed two other interests of hers that are promoted by her mother (whether Casey realises them or not), so the "net" result is that her interests overall are not harmed, and so she is not wronged. If we take a comparative model of harm, then, we can justify our intuition that Casey's interest in her social-epistemic agency is damaged, but she is not wronged,

all-things-considered.

We could, alternatively, take a non-comparative approach to understanding cases of undermining. On a non-comparative account, harms are understood by reference to lists of conditions (i.e., evils) that constitute harms, and benefits with reference to an independently identified set of goods. I consider here just the Kantian account presented by Shiffrin (1999) (and (2012)). In order to solve various deficiencies in comparative accounts of harm, Shiffrin proposes a non-comparative approach that would understand harm fundamentally as a matter of frustration or impediment to one's will. As a result, harms will involve conditions that cleave a significant gap between one's will and either one's experience, or life more generally (Shiffrin, 1999, 123)[29]. Shiffrin's account of harm is similarly concerned with the value of self-authorship to create changes in the world, making it an appealing option for the account of social-epistemic agency, "A broader account of autonomy's value would locate it in the sheer exercise of agency — in an agent's efforts to exert her will to influence, adapt, manipulate, and conform her experience and environment to fit her will." (Shiffrin, 2012, 382). Whether Casey's experience counts as a harm, then, will depend on whether the failure of uptake constitutes merely a frustrated desire if it serves to create a significant chasm between her will and experience. Intuitively, it is the former — as upset as Casey may be, this is merely a case of preference frustration. It is open to us to register Casey's experience as a harm, and also to register the lessons she is being taught as benefits. If we go this way, then we end up with a mixed result. Casey is harmed, and perhaps deserves an apology or at least an explanation for why she has been imposed on. If we gave such an apology, we might point out to her the benefits that we intended to bring about, and explain the harm was incidental.

Permissible cases of undermining, then, will be those that either do not amount to an

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[29] "Typically, harm involves the imposition of a state or condition that directly or indirectly obstructs, prevents, frustrates, or undoes an agent's cognizant interaction with her circumstances and her efforts to fashion a life within them that is distinctively and authentically her—as more than merely that which must be watched, marked, endured, or undergone" (Shiffrin, 1999, 124). See also (Shiffrin, 2012, 388).

all-things-considered harm when we have taken stock of the consequences for a person's interests, or when it fails to rise to the level of creating a significant chasm between one's will and one's experience. In all cases, though, we can say that someone's social-epistemic agency has been undermined when they are unable to develop or exercise their agential competencies to being about their desired changes in the world. One of the consequences is that there are a variety of cases of ignoring or refusing to listen to others that we will have to recognise as harmful.

In some particularly pervasive and systematic cases of undermining, persons may experience a denial of their social-epistemic agency. That is, it is possible that someone's ability to develop or exercise (or both) their social-epistemic agency is so widely impeded that they are rendered incapable of bring about social-epistemic change. Such cases will always be harmful. I develop this thought further in chapter 3, where I argue for an account of social-epistemic respect. Social-epistemic *recognition* respect is there argued to be a basic condition for social-epistemic agency, and requires being treated as someone worthy of inclusion in epistemic life. On both the comparative and the non-comparative account, the extent to which one is disabled agentially from a denial of social-epistemic recognition respect will surely almost always count as an all-things-considered harm.

To be undermined by others when we attempt to exercise our agency constitutes an undermining of social-epistemic agency. Sometimes this will constitute a wrong, and in this section I have described how we might go about demarcating permissible and impermissible underminings. In addition, we can find cases of undermining where someone has been inhibited from developing their social-epistemic competencies. Wider structural factors can alter the opportunities for agential development that are open to us.

In this chapter, I have argued for the structure of social-epistemic agency as a tripartite set of agential competencies. The first set, A1, concerns the development and acquisition of supporting cognitive attitudes that enable one to form desires to perform

social-epistemic actions and occupy social-epistemic roles, which thus allow one to participate in social-epistemic life. The second set, A2, describes the conditions that need to be met for one to self-author or authentically form desires to carry out particular social-epistemic actions or pursue particular social-epistemic roles. The third set, A3, describes a connection between skills more generally, and one's ability to do well in one's desired social-epistemic roles. Together, these three sets of competencies lay out basic requirements for flourishing social-epistemic agency. However, one must also be in supportive external conditions – relationships – with other persons that allow one to exercise and develop one's agency.

Chapter 3

Epistemic objectification and social-epistemic respect: Setting the stage for social-epistemic care

Why not use a stranger as a human shield, make a friend as a means to get an invitation to an event, or pay meagre wages to sweatshops labourers for cheap products? It's fairly transparent that we would be engaging in morally questionable behaviour in any of these actions, and I think we need not be Kantians to see that treating someone as a means in these ways is bad behaviour. Why? Intuitively, because across the cases, people are not treated as people but instead as *objects* that we might avail ourselves of to get something: physical protection, a party, more profit.

The subject of this chapter is objectification, but of a special sort: epistemic objectification. The three cases we opened with are instances of moral objectification, but our goal here is to work out what it would mean to *use someone epistemically*. How would one use someone for one's own ends while failing to respect them in some epistemically appropriate way? What would it mean to say that someone is being treated as a mere

epistemic object?

Miranda Fricker proposes that epistemic objectification is possible by failing to respect someone in their "capacity as a knower" and rendering them into merely a potential source of information. I begin with a discussion of Mirander Fricker's concept of epistemic objectification, and the role it plays for her in explaining the harm of epistemic injustice. I argue that Fricker's concept of objectification tries to capture too diverse a range of cases, and should be limited to those where someone is treated as a mere means for another's epistemic ends and where this treatment results from unjust attitudes. These are cases of epistemic objectification, properly understood.

I will argue that cases of epistemic objectification are a sub-species of what I will call 'social-epistemic disrespect', where someone is denied the social-epistemic respect that they deserve as a person with an epistemic perspective. The denial of social-epistemic respect has the further consequence of undermining either the development or the exercise of one's social-epistemic agency. Thus, social-epistemic respect is a precondition for the development and exercise of social-epistemic agency — a predictable consequence given the interpersonal nature of this account of agency. I will be primarily concerned in this chapter with the ways that being afforded social-epistemic respect is required for developing and exercising social-epistemic agency. The exploration of epistemic objectification is used to motivate the account of social-epistemic respect.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, social-epistemic agency doesn't merely require possessing or producing a stock of traditional epistemic goods, but also that we are treated as a someone worth including in epistemic life. The concept of social-epistemic respect is a fleshing out of what it means to be treated in this way, and I will propose a distinction between social-epistemic appraisal and social-epistemic recognition respect. Respect and duties go hand-in-hand, and I conclude the chapter by introducing social-epistemic duties of care. These duties follow from the nature of social-epistemic agency. This is both because we possess an epistemic perspective that is deserving of

respect, and because our social-epistemic agency is dependent on social-epistemic respect for agential development and in our ability to take social-epistemic action.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In §3.1, I explain Miranda Fricker's account of epistemic objectification. I raise two criticisms of her account in §3.1.1, that either it is applied inconsistently (the criticism I side with) or makes epistemic objectification a very widespread phenomenon that does not require objectification. Nora Berenstain's account of epistemic exploitation is introduced in §3.1.2 as a "cousin" of epistemic objectification, this helps build my case for a broad category of epistemic disrespect that both epistemic objectification and exploitation fall under. In §3.2 I draw a connection between social-epistemic agency and epistemic objectification, arguing that we can explain epistemic objectification as failing to recognise someone's social-epistemic value. I argue in §3.3 for an account of social-epistemic respect, including both an appraisal and recognition respect forms. The task of §3.3.1 is to further explain social-epistemic recognition respect as grounded in a duty to care for one another's social-epistemic agency. Finally, in §3.4 I illustrate showing social-epistemic recognition respect and include a discussion of how this applies to groups and individuals.

3.1 Epistemic Objectification

Miranda Fricker uses the term 'epistemic agent' only twice in her book, and both uses are in the chapter introducing 'epistemic objectification'[1]. She introduces the term to explicate Edward Craig's concept of an 'informant'[2]. As Fricker notes, the relationship between informants and enquirers in Craig's analysis adds an ethical dimension to their otherwise epistemic interaction. This ethical dimension adds a new quality to the informant-enquirer relationship that goes beyond simply exchanging information with one another, "What I have in mind is the special flavour of situations in which human

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[1] Chapter 6: "Original Significances: The Wrong Revisited".
[2] From his *Knowledge and the State of Nature: An Essay in Conceptual Synthesis*.

beings treat each other as subjects with a common purpose, rather than as objects from which services, in this case true belief, can be extracted" (Craig, 1990, 36). It is this "special flavour" that is the basis for Fricker's discussion of epistemic objectification. Epistemic objectification is developed as the primary harm of epistemic injustice in both the testimonial and hermeneutical forms (as discussed in chapter 1, §1.3). For this chapter, I focus only on testimonial injustice and on the primary harm of testimonial injustice as epistemic objectification.

By drawing on Kant's notion of a categorical imperative, Fricker invites us to understand this special flavour of the informant-enquirer relationship as a way of affording one another a kind of respect because of our capacity as subjects of knowledge. For an enquirer to treat an epistemic agent in the right way in cases of testimony is to treat them as someone with capacity to give knowledge. Thus, for understanding cases of epistemic objectification as they arise in testimonial exchanges, we need to assess the ways in which someone is or isn't treated as a person with the capacity to give knowledge. Central to Fricker's discussion of epistemic objectification is a distinction between agents (those who can convey information) from passive objects (that information can be gleaned from) (2007, 132).

Imagine Riley, a wealthy, upper class business owner and investor who regularly makes poor purchases and investments due to many false beliefs and bad hypotheses about how markets work. Riley also has very strong classist attitudes, and perceives their working class domestic helper, Harley, as uneducated, ignorant, and irrational. Riley is aware Harley often reads the newspapers laying about the house, and has noticed that Harley is good for parroting back stock market information and related topics. Fortunately for Riley, Harley in fact has a good nose for business and investment. Harley is present around half the time that Riley hatches a new money making scheme. Riley will pontificate about the idea in front of Harley, and have Harley contribute various bits and pieces of information. In this way Harley is able to influence Riley's decisions,

never through engaging in discussion with Riley about the scheme in question, but by supplying answers to specific questions, and as a result Riley remains wealthy. Harley is never brought into the decision making process. They merely serve as a source of information that Riley uses in their deliberation.

In this case, Riley epistemically objectifies Harley by failing to treat them as an informant — a source of information much like a search engine or an encyclopedia, sure, but not as an informant. By believing that Harley is irrational and ignorant, Riley denies Harley the respect they deserve in virtue of their capacity as a giver of knowledge and so treats them epistemically very poorly.

The following extended quote from Fricker provides a detailed description of the relationship between testimonial injustice and epistemic objectification:

> "But testimonial injustice – especially when it is systematic – also wrongfully deprives the subject of a certain fundamental sort of respect, and the distinction between a source of information and an informant helps reveal this deprivation as also a form of objectification. The subject is wrongfully excluded from the community of trusted informants, and this means that he is unable to be a participant in the sharing of knowledge (except in so far as a source of information). He is thus demoted from subject to object, relegated from the role of active epistemic agent, and confined to the role of passive state of affairs from which knowledge might be gleaned. He is ousted from the role of participant in the co-operative exercise of the capacity for knowledge and recast in the role of passive bystander—a role in which, like objects, he is able to exercise no greater epistemic capacity than that of featuring in potentially informative states of affairs." (2007, 132)

Let us consider how this plays out for Harley. First, Harley is excluded from fully participating in enquiry with Riley about business and investments — something that Harley is clearly qualified for and willing to participate in. Riley's class-based prejudice

means that they do not see Harley as an epistemic peer, so to speak, and the resulting identity prejudice prevents Harley from being seen as an informant. So, while Harley's advice and information is taken on board it is not through being seen as an active participant in enquiry with a high degree of trustworthiness on these topics. Instead, Harley is a reliable indicator of information like the rings of a tree or the presence of smoke[3]. Epistemic objectification causes them to be excluded from the enquiry in virtue of not being seen or treated as an epistemic agent but instead merely a source of information.

Now, it is true that we do often treat one another as sources of information: your damp clothes may indicate it is raining, my taking out a bus pass can tell you I'm heading for the bus, the expression on a loved one's face can indicate their mood. In each of these cases, we glean information from another person without engaging them in conversation with the mutual end goal of settling what is going on. But in none of these cases, Fricker argues, is the acquisition of information badly objectifying. When you glean information from my actions, like taking out the bus pass, you don't treat me *merely* as a source of information, i.e., in a way that denies that I am also an informant.

Fricker here draws on work in the literature on sexual objectification, primarily that of Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 1999). Nussbaum highlights the importance of the

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[3]Gaile Polhaus Jr 2014 provides a similar critique of Fricker's account of epistemic objectification in taking issue with the subject-object relationship that Fricker uses to build her case. Polhaus Jr proposes that the problem is not one of a subject-object relationship but one of a subject-other relationship, motivated in part by the work of Ann Cahill on sexual assault and mistreatment (2011). The subject-other relationship proposes that the harm in testimonial injustice is not that the victim is treated as an object, but rather as less than a full subject. I agree with this conclusion, albeit for different reasons as shown in my arguments below. Polhaus Jr also finds that the harm of epistemic objectification lies in the territory of harming individuals abilities to create epistemic change ("...pursue epistemic projects" (2014, 110)) and self-authorship ("...epistemic autonomy, one's ability to pursue epistemic projects that stem specifically from one's distinct lived experience" (ibid.)). In drawing from Simone de Beauvoir's work, *The Second Sex*, Polhaus Jr draws our attention to the need for recognition and support from others in order to pursue our own epistemic projects . In both our proposed accounts of epistemic objectification, we share the intuition borne out in much feminist literature about the unique value of individual persons epistemic perspectives and of the need for substantial support from other persons in order to develop and exercise our social-epistemic agency (or our "epistemic projects" and our "epistemic autonomy"). The arguments and alternative picture provided by Polhaus Jr lend credence to my account here that draws heavily on other feminist motivations I take from feminist ethics of care.

wider context in judging whether or not a given instance of sexual objectification is ethically problematic or not (2007, 133). The harm of objectification is not merely being objectified, it is being objectified in such a way that denies one's subjectivity more generally speaking, i.e., being treated *merely* as an object and not also as a subject. What is essential for distinguishing ethically bad instances of epistemic objectification from acceptably using someone as a source of information is whether, in the act, we are denying their capacity as a subject of knowledge. As Fricker elaborates, "Making use of someone as a source of information is ethically perfectly all right ...provided there is nothing about the context which means that you are doing so in a way that denies their epistemic subjectivity more generally — provided, that is, that there is nothing about your treatment of them, and nothing about your broader relationship and attitude to them, that undermines their general status as a subject of knowledge" (2007, 134). The presence of the classist, identity prejudicial attitudes of Riley makes this case an instance of bad epistemic objectification. As we see in the previous quote, any scenario that involves systematic, negative identity prejudice will undermine the target's epistemic subjectivity.

The bar seems to be set somewhat high for epistemic objectification because what we need is an attitude held by the enquirer that undermines the informant *as a subject of knowledge*, not merely *as a trustworthy testifier on this issue*. In her paradigm cases, identity prejudicial deficits undermine individual's credibility and undermines their capacity for rationality in the eyes of their objectifier[4]. This high bar would appear to rule out the possibility of one-off cases of epistemic objectification which we might call "local" epistemic objectification, where someone is excluded from only a particular kind or instance of enquiry — provided that the reason for exclusion doesn't undermine them generally as a subject of knowledge.

For example, ruling out an apparent tourist as a source of information about local

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[4]A capacity that Fricker reminds us several times is a capacity "essential to human value" (2007, 5, 44, 136, 145).

politics would not appear to epistemically objectify them because their status as a subject of knowledge is not threatened. What we want to know in more detail is what it takes to undermine someone in their capacity as a subject of knowledge, and whether it is right that there cannot be one-off or more restricted (localised to a topic or a particular enquiry) forms of bad epistemic objectification.

In the next section, I will further argue that there cannot be one-off or local kinds of epistemic objectification on Fricker's conception, but that this doesn't mean that these are not cases of epistemic disrespect. Fricker herself does not discuss the possibility of other kinds of epistemic disrespect, her discussion concerns only the harms of epistemic objectification. My proposal will be that epistemic objectification is one type of epistemic disrespect, but that there are other kinds of epistemic disrespect that do not involve objectification.

3.1.1 The scope of epistemic objectification

Fricker's most explicit formulation of epistemic objectification is the following, "In short, testimonial injustice demotes the speaker from informant to source of information, from subject to object. This reveals the intrinsic harm of testimonial injustice as *epistemic objectification*: when a hearer undermines a speaker in her capacity as a giver of knowledge, the speaker is epistemically objectified" (2007, 133). Thus, it is always a harm to an individual when they have their status as an informant undermined, and epistemic objectification does this by rendering individuals into mere states of affairs that information can be gathered from.

One of the key components of epistemic objectification is that someone is excluded from enquiry, so, we might generalise from this and ask, "Is being excluded from enquiry always kind of epistemic objectification?". Fricker's response to this question is the following,

"But what about cases where the hearer is right to judge her interlocutor

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as epistemically untrustworthy on the matter in hand, so that there is no injustice? Even if, in such cases, there is nothing about the overall relationship between speaker and hearer to impugn the humanity of the speaker, is it not still the case that in judging one's interlocutor to be untrustworthy, one epistemically excludes him and thereby, in some sense at least, denies his epistemic subjectivity? Well, Yes; but this cannot be epistemic objectification of the bad kind, for there is neither epistemic nor ethical fault in judging someone, without prejudice, to be untrustworthy if they are indeed untrustworthy—on the contrary, there is epistemic merit in it."(2007, 135)

What arises from this answer is a distinction between epistemic objectification of the "bad kind" and the permissible kind (that may even be meritorious). Permissible epistemic objectification would seem to be a matter of correctly evaluating whether someone doesn't have knowledge on some matter. We fairly epistemically objectify someone when they in fact do not know about the topic in question and thus are judged to be untrustworthy. This is somewhat surprising, given that being treated as untrustworthy on an issue one knows nothing about wouldn't seem to be *objectifying* at all. At least, if being objectified is meant to be understood as being treated as a passive object from which information might be gleaned from, then it is hard to see how being excluded from enquiry and being treated *as not having any relevant information to provide* can be objectifying in the relevant sense. Indeed, when we earlier judged that the tourist is not a credible source on local politics there seems to be no undermining of the tourist as a *knower*, but just as an informant with relevant information about local politics. Moreover, with the judgement that someone has no information that we might get from them, how can we meaningfully "use" them for our own ends in the relevant epistemic sense?

In the tourist case, there is a distinct sense of 'informant' on which we do fail to treat them as an informant: we assume that they can't inform us of anything useful. We do so, however, because we assume that tourists lack knowledge of the local political scene

and thus cannot participate in our enquiry. If we took the opening quote of this section from Fricker as definitive, perhaps we should understand "undermines a speaker in her capacity as a giver of knowledge" not in the high-stakes way I have been suggesting (undermining one's very status as a knower, i.e., with the capacity as a subject of knowledge) but instead just as any action that challenges one's ability to take part in enquiry. So, if one is not included because one doesn't know the relevant information then one is not being treated as an epistemic agent. But surely not being treated as a source of information on a topic is not equivalent to not being treated as an informant. I propose that this is all that takes place in tourist like cases. This would make epistemic objectification a rather widespread and unobjectionable phenomenon.

Fricker and Craig mean more by their use of 'informant' than "has the relevant information", the special flavour of the informant-enquirer relationship is much more than just an assessment of whether someone is locally knowledgeable. For Craig, an informant is importantly distinct from a mere source of information: "an informant is a co-operating member of our species. That means that he can often empathise with the inquirer, and react not just to the question but to the presumed purpose of asking it ... Mere sources of information, on the other hand, though they may often be extremely useful, are never actively helpful. How could they be? They don't know what the inquirer is up to " (Craig, 1990, 36). Being an informant would then be merely a localised property with respect to some body of information, or even one indexed to information, context, and current state of mind. The richer sense of informant that Fricker and Craig both suggest entails that being an informant is a capacity that rational, social creatures have and thus find fundamentally valuable[5]. "When someone suffers a testimonial injustice, they are degraded *qua* knower, and they are symbolically degraded *qua* human" (2007, 44). Thus, the harm of being undermined as an informant is really one of being undermined ultimately as a knower. The harm of being epistemically

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[5]As noted in the earlier, Fricker describes being treated as someone with the capacity for knowledge as essential to human value.

objectified is failing to be treated in ways that show respect to this capacity (whether one exercises it at the present moment or not).

The primary harm of epistemic objectification is described importantly differently depending on whether we are elucidating the harm of epistemic injustice or the harm of testimonial injustice. In the case of epistemic injustice, epistemic objectification is described as undermining someone in their *capacity as a subject of knowledge*, i.e., as a knower. In the case of testimonial injustice, epistemic objectification undermines someone in their *capacity as a giver of knowledge*, i.e., as an informant. Now, the latter is meant to be a way of achieving the former: when we undermine someone in their capacity as a giver of knowledge, we thereby undermine them in their capacity as a subject of knowledge. But, and as I will continue to argue below, a problem arises because it just doesn't seem plausible that in every case of testimonial injustice we find someone being undermined in the deeper sense of having their status as a knower undermined. Namely, because one can be undermined as a giver of knowledge locally without being undermined as a subject of knowledge — i.e., being undermined as a giver of knowledge (whether one in fact knows or not) need not undermine one more generally as a knower.

The richer interpretation of what it is to be a subject of knowledge is in line with the close attention that Fricker pays to Kant throughout the discussion of epistemic objectification, and her comments that being treated as someone with rational capacities is essential to human value. On these grounds, then, I think we ought to take the harm of undermining someone as a knower to be the real harm of epistemic objectification. Consequently, undermining someone as a giver of knowledge will have to be pervasive and systematic in order to achieve this kind of harm. So, it's doubtful that the tourist case is an instance of undermining someone in their capacity as a subject of knowledge. In spite of the fact that you assume that they do not know the relevant information (because they present as a tourist) and this has the result that they do not get the chance to act on

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their ability to share their knowledge. By the same token, then, undermining someone as a giver of knowledge when they do not know (our proposed instance of permissible epistemic objectification) should not be taken to be a case of epistemic objectification.

To be clear, then, it seems we are faced with one of two possible criticisms. Our first criticism is that Fricker has misjudged by her own account the tourist style cases and they are not epistemically objectifying. If we take this option, we must disregard her explicit comment that cases of this kind are instances of epistemic objectification (just not of the bad kind). Our second option is to agree with Fricker that they are epistemically objectifying, and change the conditions so that epistemic objectification does not require undermining someone, richly speaking, in their capacity as a subject of knowledge. Further, we also have to drop the condition that epistemic objectification requires someone being objectified in our familiar sense, i.e., that someone is made into a passive object to be used by someone else. I take the first criticism to be correct, that Fricker is at risk of inconsistency in her application of the concept of epistemic objectification.

Consider a variation of the tourist case, where the tourist is instead a local woman. Imagine that the society she lives in is deeply sexist, and women are considered to be incapable of taking part in political life. As a result, you do not ask for her opinion on local politics because you believe her to be ignorant. In this case we have an oppressive context more similar to the Riley-Harley case, and we have an unjust dismissal of the woman as a potential informant. Now, whether or not she in fact knows anything about politics, we can still ask, is this a case of objectification? It does not seem to be objectifying in the sense that she has become a passive object that information might be gleaned from — the very judgement made is that she does not have relevant information to give. Notice, too, that when we judge her to be ignorant, there is no way in which our dismissal of her as an informant constitutes using her merely as a means for our own epistemic ends. We just refuse to pay her any mind in our enquiry at all.

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Let us contrast the following: i) treating someone as a mere source of information because you take them to be incapable of participating in enquiry at all for some reason or other, and ii) treating someone as ignorant of the relevant information for a local enquiry. These are not equivalent statements, instances of (ii) could be a subset of instances of (i), but (i) may have nothing to do with a judgement about whether someone has the relevant knowledge. Fricker's paradigm cases of testimonial injustice can be either: someone is treated as ignorant because of identity prejudice (e.g., women don't know anything about cars), or someone is excluded from enquiry or otherwise epistemic collaboration because they are seen as being incapable of taking part in enquiry at all (e.g., women are not rational agents).

It seems that Fricker's definition of epistemic objectification rules out cases of (ii) as instances of epistemic objectification because in those cases we don't treat them as a passive state of affairs from which information can be gleaned. Even in cases where someone is treated as ignorant because of an identity prejudice, provided that this judgement is local, we seem hard-pressed to stretch the definition of objectification to cover the case. It can still fail to show someone the appropriate epistemic respect they deserve, but it is not harmful in virtue of epistemically objectifying the target. There is no sense in which we continue to treat them as a potential source of information, and we don't seem to be engaging in any other use of them epistemically merely for our own benefit.

In fact, a judgement that someone is ignorant seems consistent with continuing to treat them as a subject of knowledge. Imagine you are engaged in a team project to design a new garden for a local cafe. You find yourself in a disagreement with a teammate about the best species of shrub to place under a large tree in a corner of the garden. The teammate wants to use a species of flowering shrub that you know does not tolerate low light conditions, exactly the sort available under the tree. You challenge your teammate's knowledge of shrubs, including accusing them of having no knowledge of shrub species

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and their respective needs. You then explain to them how leaf types and colourings can indicate the needs of the plants, and you then continue to work together on the layout for the corner of the garden. Despite accusing your teammate of not knowing anything about shrubs, your actual treatment of them did not undermine them as a subject of knowledge by excluding them from the process of enquiry. In fact, in explaining to them your reasoning and continuing to work with them you would seem to uphold and respect their status as a knower.

Now, in much the same way as we re-considered our interpretation of 'informant' in the above, there is a sense in which we might render someone 'passive' in making a judgement that they are ignorant because we do prevent them from engaging in our enquiry and so they are excluded. This is not, however, the same sense of 'passive' as in "passive object from which information can be gleaned". Again, our judgement of them just is that they do not have information to give (whether we are right or wrong in our judgement is besides the point). Even if we widen the scope of 'passive' to mean "passive with respect to this enquiry because unhelpful or because incapable", there still isn't any clear sense in which we are treating the person as a means for our epistemic ends. This isn't to suggest that there can't ever be something disrespectful in judging someone ignorant, but that this disrespect can't be understood as a kind of objectification.

Epistemic objectification, then, needs to be an instance of (i) and needs to objectify them in the same instance. This means to be epistemically objectified, one needs to be treated as a mere source of information and as someone who is incapable of participating in enquiry for some unjust reason or other. This allows us to rule out the tourist cases as objectifying, and explain why Riley epistemically objectifies Harley. From the previous section, we can see that the " some reason or other" in cases of testimonial injustice on Fricker's view will always be "because of identity prejudice" and these cases will all be intrinsically harmful. This leaves open debate around other contexts that can result in epistemic objectification beyond those that include identity prejudice.

To sum up, we can say that epistemic objectification is fundamentally a matter of judging someone to be incapable of engaging in collaborative epistemic activity while also judging them to be something that can potentially be used as a source of information, and where these judgements are the result of unjust reasons. In the next section, I want to briefly introduce Nora Berenstain's concept of *epistemic exploitation* into the discussion. Epistemic exploitation involves a particular method of using minorities as an epistemic resource, that does not necessarily involve denying their status as subjects of knowledge. I will then return to cases of sort (ii) – where someone is treated as ignorant on some particular issue – and argue that these can constitute cases of epistemic disrespect, but not because they are objectifying.

3.1.2 Epistemic exploitation

Nora Berenstain describes epistemic exploitation as the practice of "privileged persons [compelling] marginalized persons to educate them about the nature of their oppression" (2016, 569). The harm in these cases, Berenstain argues, is that the marginalised are exploited and unfairly burdened with the task of educating the privileged about their oppression. Furthermore, their efforts in educating the privileged are often ineffective due to excessive skepticism and doubt when they present examples of oppression. It is clear that epistemic exploitation shares some key features with epistemic objectification insofar as marginalised persons are treated merely as sources of information. It is not completely clear, however, that marginalised persons are also undermined in their capacities as subjects of knowledge when they are epistemically exploited.

One of Berenstain's extended examples is the role of diversity training and education in tertiary institutions. Berenstain notes that marginalised persons often take on a disproportionate amount of the work in diversity initiatives, and see little actual institutional change as a result of their labour (2016, 573-574). This has the dual negative consequences of demanding unpaid labour from marginalised persons, while also limiting

their opportunities for personal development in the workplace. When one's additional time and energy is spent educating others, it takes away resources that one could spend furthering one's own projects. Rather than being excluded, per se, from epistemic work, epistemic exploitation forces members of marginalised groups to take on very particular epistemic work that is likely to be largely ineffective in combating oppressive circumstances, and is actively burdensome on them. This dynamic is the first of three features of epistemic exploitation: unpaid labour with high opportunity costs to those doing the work.

The second exploitative feature of epistemic exploitation takes the form of a double-bind. The first half of the bind makes the project of educating privileged persons a duty that marginalised persons must carry out. Berenstain quotes activist Manissa McCleave Maharawal on this issue,

> Let me tell you what it feels like to stand in front of a white man and explain privilege to him. It hurts. It makes you tired. Sometimes it makes you want to cry. Sometimes it is exhilarating. Every single time it is hard. Every single time I get angry that I have to do this, that this is my job, that this shouldn't be my job. Every single time I am proud of myself that I've been able to say these things because I used to not be able to and because some days I just don't want to. (2016, 575)

This quote is taken from Maharawal's experience at an Occupy Wall Street rally in 2011. Maharawal was one of a group of five South Asian activists who blocked the passing of a draft of the "Declaration of the Occupation" document because of a clause denying racial diversity[6]. The white man Maharawal found herself having to educate was the author

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[6] "When we got there they were passing around and reading a sheet of paper that had the Declaration of the Occupation of Wall Street on it. I had heard the "Declaration of the Occupation" read at the General Assembly the night before but I didn't realize that it was going to be finalized as THE declaration of the movement right then and there. When I heard it the night before with Sonny we had looked at each other and noted that the line about "being one race, the human race, formerly divided by race, class..." was a weird line, one that hit me in the stomach with its naivety and the way it made me feel alienated." (Maharawal, 2011).

of the Declaration after he challenged their revision, "But it's "scientifically true," he told us. He thought that maybe we were advocating for there being different races? No we needed to tell him about privilege and racism and oppression and how these things still existed, both in the world and someplace like Occupy Wall Street".

The first bind, then, is the expectation of doing this epistemic work — work that Maharawal evocatively expresses is difficult and demanding. The second bind is the fear of what were to happen if one didn't engage in this work of educating about privilege and oppression. Thus, marginalised persons are bound to taking on this work as it is too costly to left undone. A different approach to the problem would see privileged people educate one another, and then work *with* the marginalised to change the status quo instead of placing the expectation on the marginalised to educate and teach them how to act.

The third exploitative feature Berenstain describes is the 'default skeptical response' that marginalised persons receive when they try to take on this educating work[7]. These skeptical responses undermine the marginalised persons experiences or descriptions of behaviours or events as truly oppressive. In some cases, a marginalised person may attempt to recount an oppressive or discriminatory experience only to have the memory of the experience be challenged as not having actually occurred, or having occurred in the manner that they describe. A second type of skeptical response is that the privileged person challenges some act or event as a symptom of a structural pattern of oppression, and instead proposes that it was more likely a one-off occurrence.

A familiar series of example of default skeptical responses can be found in one strain of response given to women breaking silence around sexual assault and harassment as part of the "Me Too" movement. The Me Too movement began in 2007 by Tarana Burke,

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[7]A related phenomenon is the "microinvalidation", "characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color(Sue et al., 2001, 274)" . Kristie Dotson (2011) discusses microinvalidations as a kind of testimonial incompetence capable of resulting in testimonial smothering, a form of epistemic oppression (see chapter 1, §1.3.6. See also Pohlhaus (2012) on the topic of "preemptive dismissal" and "willful hermenutical ignorance" (722).

an African American woman and survivor of sexual violence herself. Burke's Me Too outreach programme was initially targeted at young women of colour she was working with in the South of the US. The default skeptical response given to women sharing their stories of sexual assault and harassment is to deny that their experience is *really* sexual assault or harassment and not instead just flirting. In an interview with Tarana Burke and DemocracyNow!, Soraya Chemaly, speaking as a member of the Women's Media Center Speech Project, made the following comments, "We know that it takes a tremendous outpouring of, really, trauma from women, working together in a campaign like "Me Too," to make people sit up and pay attention. But what we're really talking about is making people believe what women are talking about, because we have a very deep-seated distrust of what women say. And when women say it, it's very easy to dismiss and trivialize" (Democracy Now! democracynow.org, 17 b). In this example, women are, to use Burke's language, trying to effect change by "empowerment through empathy", which in Me Too has involved women engaging in educating through recounting their experiences, but they are no-uncommonly met with responses that question (and thus render un-credible) their testimony.

These skeptical responses are epistemically exploitative because they prevent the epistemic labour from ever being completed while still demanding that the work be pursued. When marginalised persons are challenged in this way, they must continue to work to convince the privileged that they are credible. To use Berenstain's explanation, a default skeptical response, "...requires the marginalized person to produce further cognitive and emotional labor. Default skepticism is both a response to labor produced under epistemic exploitation and a demand for even more labor. It thus enacts epistemic exploitation through a process of recursion" (2016, 580). This is a very targeted way of failing to treat someone as credible and thereby undermining them as a giver of specific knowledge (and knowledge that is particular important for them to be able to share).

While Berenstain does explore the ways that epistemic exploitation interacts with

Fricker's theories of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice, she does not identify it as a kind of epistemic objectification. She argues that both forms of epistemic injustice Fricker explores can exacerbate and contribute to epistemic exploitation, including functioning as kinds of feed-back loops on each other.

Given the narrower definition of epistemic objectification I concluded with, epistemic exploitation is at best a cousin of epistemic objectification. While they both involve using someone else as a source of information, epistemic exploitation need not involve denying someone's status as a subject of knowledge. What it may do, however, is prevent epistemic subjects from being able to effect any real or substantive epistemic change (and moral, political, economic, and other kinds of meaningful change). If we think of epistemic exploitation along these lines, then we can interpret it as undermining the social-epistemic agency of marginalised persons by undermining their ability to bring about changes in their epistemic environment. Epistemic exploitation involves demanding that marginalised persons be a source of information about their experience of oppression, it demands that they participate in enquiry apparently directed at alleviating their oppression, but that doesn't actually result in sincere attempts by the privileged to engage with them in ways that would support their work in succeeding.

That marginalised persons endure default skeptical responses is a sign that their status as informants is undermined. But it looks more like the kind of undermining of the tourist case in that their knowledge is called into question. They are challenged with having false memories or for making a bad inference about whether some particular experience fits into a structural pattern. They are disabled at the point of bringing about epistemic changes in their environment, either through convincing the privileged or in bringing about institutional changes. They are passive in yet another sense, they are made causally inert despite their efforts to educate and engage privileged persons in over-turning oppressive systems. I take epistemic exploitation to be another kind of social-epistemic disrespect, as I will argue in the next sections. In chapter 5 I will return

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to the discussion of epistemic disrespect, and discuss its relationship with other problems of public discourse like epistemic arrogance and dogmatism (which are clearly related to some key features of Berenstain's epistemic exploitation).

In the next sections, I will argue that the similarity between epistemic objectification and epistemic exploitation is that someone is epistemically disrespected. Whether the disrespect is objectifying or exploitative, in both cases we are debating way in which people are able to meaningfully participating in a significant area of human life as agents.

3.2 Epistemic objectification and social-epistemic agency

In our exploration of epistemic objectification we picked up on two things that might have been at issue: first, whether or not someone was being included in collaborative epistemic activity by being treated as a subject of knowledge, and second, whether or not someone was being treated ignorant on some topic at hand. I have suggested that epistemic objectification, in order to be objectifying, should be used to describe cases where, for unjust reasons, someone is treated as a mere source of information without also being treated as someone to be included in collaborative epistemic activity.

I want to take seriously the suggestion that epistemic objectification is disrespectful, and propose that this really is an issue of a special kind of respect: *social-epistemic* respect. When we are epistemically objectified, our social-epistemic agency is undermined by denying us recognition as (potential) givers of knowledge. This, however, is only one way in which our social-epistemic agency can be disrespected. In order to lay the groundwork for my presentation of social-epistemic respect, it is helpful to revisit some of the important features of social-epistemic agency.

When we usually encounter discussions of 'epistemic agency', we find people debating various aspects of our ability to take control or responsibility over our belief forming practices[8]. I will refer to this as 'narrow scope' epistemic agency. Narrow scope epis-

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[8]See, for instance, the special issue of *Philosophical Issues*, 23, "Epistemic Agency", 2013 for a range

temic agency is primarily concerned with how we get traditionally-recognised epistemic goods such as knowledge or justification for belief. Topics of discussion for narrow scope epistemic agency include debates about epistemic virtues and vices of the mind, work on cognitive biases and heuristics, and debates about reliable belief forming methods and processes[9].

All of these things are essential for having control and responsibility over our epistemic lives. That being said, some of the major lessons of the epistemology of ignorance literature and work in social-epistemology have been to make us aware of just how much our success in epistemic life depends on other people[10]. Our epistemic dependency is sufficiently strong that I think we cannot theorise about narrow scope concerns without paying attention to the social conditions on epistemic agency. Let us use 'wide scope' epistemic agency to name depictions of epistemic agents that go beyond what is inside an individual's head and into their *epistemic environment*.

Our epistemic environment is also something that we need to at least be able to influence in a meaningful way in order to have self-governance over how our epistemic lives go. The epistemic environment of wide scope epistemic agency includes a number of interpersonal factors: being able to contribute to shared knowledge, to participate in shared epistemic activities, to change or influence social epistemic norms/practices, to help develop new epistemic methods, to occupy epistemic roles that one desires. It also includes getting social recognition from others as credible, rational, and as a trustworthy testifier, as these are the key currencies in social-epistemic interactions.

As I have argued in previous chapters, social-epistemic agency is the combination of these two aspects of our epistemic life and describes the degree to which we are able to relationally self-author our life episodically (through particular communicative

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of articles with this kind of approach.

[9]Of course, this is not an individualistic endeavour. Our ability to acquire knowledge, form beliefs and opinions, engage in reason giving, etc., are all social processes as social epistemology has worked hard to show. See Goldman (2009) for example, and Code (1987) as I will soon discuss.

[10]See chapter 1 for a discussion of epistemic ignorance, including e.g., Mills (2007) and Medina (2012). And as above, see Goldman (2009) for an introduction to many of these themes in social-epistemology.

and epistemic actions) and programmatically (through particular communicative and epistemic roles). The relational constraint on self-authorship highlights how any attempt to perform these actions or occupy a given role depends in part on how others respond to us. Narrow scope agency and wide scope agency have to be taken together for a full account of how we can gain and exchange knowledge with one another. That others see us as credible, for example, is essential to many epistemic acts we might want to perform. In Fricker's discussion of epistemic objectification, I think we see a conflation of narrow and wide scope epistemic agency. When we are concerned with someone's ability to be treated as an informant in the rich sense previously discussed, we are concerned with wide scope agency — whether or not someone is being treated as credible and rational. When we ask whether correctly identifying someone as ignorant objectifies them, we are really asking about their narrow scope epistemic agency: does this person actually possess the relevant knowledge or not?

To epistemically objectify someone is to treat them merely as a source of information, to reduce them to a source of narrow scope epistemic goods. In this way, we neglect their social-epistemic agency because we fail to pay attention to the ways that they need us to support ways that promote their wide-scope agency like affording them appropriate credibility.

Berenstain's cases of epistemic exploitation can be understood similarly, as cases where someone's social-epistemic agency is undermined. The attempts of the marginalised to educate and enlighten the privileged are ineffective: they are being undermined in the wide scope sense through their encumbered ability to bring about changes in their epistemic environment. These cases of *undermining* are importantly different from those of epistemic objectification, where someone's agency is *neglected*. To undermine someone's agency is to prevent it from being effective in bringing about change, thus to inhibit their ability to exercise their agency. Cases of epistemic objectification – while they can bring about undermining – are also capable of failing to support the *development*

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of social-epistemic agency. In these cases, the problem is not to be located in the ways people are inhibited from acting, but in the pre-emptive harm of neglect that prevents them from developing their agential competencies. We can, then, find in some cases an interaction between the inhibited ability to exercise agency of some persons, with the stunted development of agency in others. For example, in a case where a marginalised person is communicatively undermined because of the stunted development of listening skills and recognition of genuine expertise (prejudiced credibility assessments) of their audience[11].

The relational character of social-epistemic agency is very important here. A full explanation of exploitation will reveal the burden on the marginalised's ability to exercise their agency, and it will reveal the stunted competencies of the privileged's social-epistemic agency that inhibits their ability to interpret and understand the marginalised. One of the harms the privileged may be suffering from in these cases is that they have an impaired ability to listen. Their expectations and assumptions about maginalised persons prevent them from responding well to marginalised persons. Maharawal's frustration with the naivety of the white male writer is partly a recognition that it is his social-epistemic agency that is impaired — it is his beliefs about race that are preventing him from providing a fair and supportive epistemic environment. I will return to this case in the discussion of social-epistemic duties of care at the end of this chapter.

A social-epistemic agency based explanation of the garden planning example of section 3.1 can also explain how it fails to be an instance of epistemic objectification. While you do deny that your teammate has knowledge of shrubs, you don't do so in a way that excludes them from learning and participating in your planning activity. That is, you help to provide an epistemic environment in which they are still able to take part even if they do not know the relevant facts about shrubs. You are not wrong that they lack the relevant knowledge, and so there is no fault in correctly judging this. Epistemically,

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[11]As we discussed in chapter 1, §1.3, this all can take place ultimately for structural reasons and without any particular individual being to blame.

neither along narrow or wide scope lines is their social-epistemic agency undermined. As a result, there is no epistemic disrespect in this case[12]. In the next section, I propose an account of epistemic disrespect by introducing both the concept of social-epistemic recognition and social-epistemic appraisal respect.

3.3   Social-epistemic respect

In this section I lay out some basic features for an account of social-epistemic respect, motivated by this social premise that one of the primary goals of social-epistemic respect is to facilitate inclusion in epistemic life. I will largely keep to the two kinds of respect of Darwall (1977), but will argue that recognition social-epistemic respect is best understood using Robin Dillon's (1992) model of care respect. Care respect is a type of recognition respect that has a distinctive character in the way it is afforded; it requires that we make sincere efforts to understand the object of our respect, and that we take seriously our responsibility for their well-being.

Let us begin with the idea of an epistemic appraisal respect. I think we need not go much further than the intuitive idea that we are deserving of inclusion in shared epistemic activities to the degree that we have the relevant intellectual merit or excellence, possess knowledge, or have intellectual humility and open-mindedness[13]. This would entail that if you have no relevant knowledge or skills then you can be excluded from a particular enquiry or epistemic activity. The idea of intellectual merit is a familiar one, and adapting this familiar notion to the broader realm of social-epistemic life is in part just to put a name to something we already practice. Where we are introducing something new is that we recognise moral weight in the failure to accurately appraise

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[12]Depending on your tone in telling them they know nothing, there may be some moral disrespect

[13]I do not spend too much time developing the idea of social-epistemic appraisal respect here. My position here is intuitive, that we deserve to be recognised for the intellectual merit and skills that we possess. David Coady (2017) provides an analysis of epistemic injustice as a form of distributive injustice, where 'credibility' is the 'commodity'. I remain neutral on whether this is the most appropriate analysis for understanding the ways that appraisal respect is afforded, but would clearly be a contender.

someone for their social-epistemic qualities.

Within a framework of appraisal respect, to fail to afford someone the treatment they deserve on the basis of their social-epistemic merits is to harm them. For example, consider a group of five students at a technical college earning their qualifications as electricians. One of the group is female, and she is regularly seen by her peers as less capable and knowledgeable about their work. In fact, she surpasses them all in terms of technical knowledge and skill. Now, in this case, her peers fail to appreciate her actual degree of knowledge because of their expectations and assumptions about women and this technical area of expertise. As an issue of social-epistemic appraisal respect, they fail to treat her as her knowledge warrants by not listening to her in team tasks, not asking for her advice on their own work, i.e., by failing to learn from her.

Taken in combination with the theory of social-epistemic agency, we would say that they undermine her social-epistemic agency by preventing her from being able to act on her agential competencies. They do this, in part, by failing to let her occupy the role of expert among her peers and share her knowledge with them. Of course, they also harm themselves by failing to recognise someone who can help them to learn and pass the course[14]. Whether or not they are blameworthy for having brought about this harm will depend, as is often the case, on the details that lead to their inability to correctly appraise her knowledge. Without delving into issues of blame, I think we can make the general claim that failures to afford the appropriate social-epistemic appraisal respect to persons undermines their social-epistemic agency and thus harms them. This harm might be relatively minor, e.g., failing to appraise an acquaintance's comments about your car as the expertise of a vehicle collector in a passing conversation. In some cases it may be major, e.g., systematically failing to appraise the knowledge of midwives as

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[14]In previous chapters we considered the case of Alice the boardmember. In this case, Alice was a competent and knowledgeable advisor on the board at a large company. She was regularly undermined and ignored by her male colleagues who perceived her as ignorant because she was a woman. In this case, Alice is denied social-epistemic appraisal respect by her colleagues, making her ineffective as an advisor on the board. Her colleagues, however, have diminished agential competencies due to their sexist beliefs that inhibit their ability to listen well to others.

genuine knowledge and only listening to newly appointed male obstetricians.

Our ability to correctly appraise the epistemic merits of social-epistemic agents in necessary for consistently being able to support one another in exercising our agency. Berenstain's cases of epistemic exploitation fit well within this notion of appraisal social-epistemic respect. The attitude of default skepticism fails to show marginalised persons the respect that they are due, and as a consequence prevents them from achieving their epistemic ends. Our ability to occupy epistemic roles and be successful in those roles often depends on others correctly appraising our skills and acting appropriately in response (e.g., by taking our advice). Consider a climate scientist who has been maligned by propaganda alleging that their qualifications are fake, and that their results are all paid-for nonsense by some corporation with an interest in selling solar panels. This effective discrediting leads to their being incapable of fulfilling the publicly facing role of their position. They are incapable of providing advice and educating the public who have been turned against them.

This reveals to us one of the core products of social-epistemic appraisal respect: epistemic trust. Part of the social power of knowledge and intellectual merit is that it affords us the trust and credibility of others, and this can be very serious business. It is widely recognised that we are largely epistemically dependent on one another, and this trust-system, if we can call it that, relies on our ability to appraise one another as reliable informants. As it is so important for us to get this right, there is an intuitive pull to the idea that genuine knowledge and intellectual merit demands from us the kind of attention represented in talk of respect. Social-epistemic appraisal respect is a way of labelling the normative force of the accumulation of epistemic skills, habits, and knowledge.

We concluded the last section, though, by noting that we might have need of two kinds of epistemic respect. What work is left over for an epistemic recognition respect? Well, one task we have already identified in the earlier sections is as part of the ex-

planation of the harm of epistemic objectification. Our inspiration here was the idea that we find it valuable to be recognised – in a rich sense – as a knower, as someone capable of contributing and participating in epistemic life. Part of this, in keeping with the standard Kantian model, is to be treated as someone with an interest in pursuing our own epistemic projects. How we do this varies considerably between persons. The uniqueness of our epistemic projects is helpfully demonstrated by taking a moment to consider some of the emphases of feminist epistemology.

Contra the apparent assumption in mainstream epistemology that gender is an arbitrary difference between knowers, feminist epistemologists take gender and other sociocultural features of identity to be epistemically relevant[15]. Typically, this claim is not merely a descriptive one, but also a normative one, that these features of our identity ought not be considered irrelevant. That is, things like our gender and religious affiliation will influence our epistemic lives, and it is not necessarily inappropriate for them to do so[16]. This presents us with a kind of epistemic pluralism that challenges the idea that there is one path for epistemic exploration, one type of appropriate content for evaluation, method for learning, or single hierarchy of epistemic projects. This normative claim can be read more or less strongly. On a strong reading, the claim may be that we ought not engage in agent-neutral epistemic theorising because it is implausible or harmful to do so. On a weaker interpretation, we ought to recognise that there are facts about our identities that bear on our ability to engage in epistemic projects and that this can be valuable. I will adopt the weaker reading for the notion of social-epistemic recognition respect.

Feminist standpoint theorists are one particular sub-group of feminist epistemologists and they claim that there are two core ways in which identity can bear on epistemic

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[15]There are a number of different approaches in feminist epistemology. Three of note are feminist standpoint theory (e.g., Harding (1995); Wylie (2003), as discussed below), feminist empiricism (e.g., Longino (1990)), and situated knowledge (e.g., Haraway (1991). See Witt (1993) for a defence of the idea that gender is relevant for metaphysics.

[16]For an epistemic discussion see Tanesini (2011). For moral discussions along the same lines see Gilligan (1982); Code (1987); Almond (1988).

resources (Tanesini, 2011; Wylie, 2003; Harding, 1995)[17]. First, being a member of a particular social group enhances or inhibits your access to certain reasons, knowledge, or epistemic methods that are relevant to your way of life. For example, being a mother may give one insight into the kinds of issues that arise during pregnancy that non-mothers may not be aware of. These issues may be significant for reasons of public policy, including such things as health care and maternity leave (or drafting declarations for activist movements). Second, the topics of enquiry that you prioritise can be influenced by your identity[18]. For example, a society that places higher concern for male health issues may invest disproportionate quantities of research dollars into treatments for erectile dysfunction at the disadvantage of more common and debilitating women's health issues. From these two aspects we get the notion of a 'standpoint', an epistemic perspective that is value-laden in accordance with one's socio-cultural identity[19].

The descriptive claim – that we are differently epistemically situated – is undeniable. Is there merit in the normative claim? I think there is, and it would seem to be entailed by the idea that we value our ability to self-author our social-epistemic lives. It is not only valuable to us that others see us as a fellow knower, but that they see us as our particular selves as a knower. It is in the diversity of epistemic perspectives that I think we should ground a recognition type of social-epistemic respect.

There is a commonly recognised instrumental value in having a diversity of opinions because it is seen as conducive to truth. When there is disagreement, we have space

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[17]See Pohlhaus (2012) on the sociality of epistemic activity, due to both our social *situatedness* and our epistemic *interdependence*. See Blickenstaff (2005) for a discussion of the under-representation of women in industrialised countries in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions and university majors. Blickenstaff considers nine explanations for under-representation, including that the nature of science itself may be responsible.

[18]See also Pohlhaus Jr (2014) for a discussion on the ability of marginalised persons to contribute to epistemic practices.

[19]As Tanesini (2011) also discusses, in addition to these varied epistemic projects and methods, there is an unequal distribution of epistemic resources across socio-cultural identity groups due to wider social power structures. These power structures perpetuate social and material inequalities present in society generally, the contribution of the concept of the standpoint is not merely epistemic but also importantly political. These power structures function to keep the dominant groups in society, e.g., men, in control, while subordinating women.

for reflection and creativity in dialogue. This isn't, I don't think, the central reason for why we value being listened to and included in epistemic life by others. The value of our epistemic perspective goes beyond the ways in which it might make us valuable for getting to the truth. As we are concerned with the domain of the social-epistemic, our epistemic perspective also encompasses our communicative voice in interactions that are not necessarily truth-directed. In these cases, there is just value in being someone who's perspective is brought into and made a sincere part of conversation for conversation's sake.

Our epistemic perspective is a significant part of our individuality as persons, it is constitutive of the ways that we make sense of the world, influences how we participate in the "knowledge economy" (including interpersonally), and shapes our responsiveness to reasons more broadly. In order to succeed in acting out our social-epistemic individuality, we need others to respect us as we are by, for example, letting us earn qualifications in areas we value or letting us express our interpretation of a novel. In order to genuinely develop our own epistemic perspective we need others to support us in developing our agential competencies, e.g., by treating us in open-minded ways as we explore the range of political perspectives on offer. In sum, we individually value self-authorship, but our very ability to act in self-authoring ways depends on others valuing it too and responding to us in ways that promote our social-epistemic agency.

On the picture of social-epistemic recognition respect I have sketched here, the core harm in being epistemically objectified is that it disrespects our unique epistemic perspective. The disrespect we suffer by being epistemically objectified is more personal on this picture than simply having our status as a rational agent undermined, being objectified denies the value in our particular epistemic perspective. To render someone a mere state of affairs from which information can be gleaned not only undermines their rational capacities, it is a way of neglecting them.

3.3.1 Social-epistemic recognition respect as a caring respect

It is common to feminist work in the ethics of care that there is intrinsic value in our particular individuality, as Diana Meyers remarks "'it is left to ethic of care (or some other ethical theory) to tell us how we must act to respect people's individuality" (1987)[20]. Robin Dillon (1992) draws on this literature to present a form of recognition respect she calls "care respect". Dillon begins by noting that it might seem an odd match, she quotes Kant's comments that love requires us to be closer to one another but respect requires us to keep our distance (1992, 106). Further, the Kantian notion of respect is grounded in a our capacity for rationally autonomous moral agency, a capacity all humans share. It is this attitude of respect that recognition respect is drawn from: we each are deserving of respectful treatment as persons, understood as rationally autonomous moral agents. The traditional notion of recognition respect functions to guarantee persons a basic level of moral consideration and treatment by others.

Dillon notes that over time this Kantian understanding of persons has evolved, so that we now understand recognition respect as a duty to respect one anothers' human rights: "These are the rights that protect that defining capacity of persons' rational autonomy, and include the fundamental right of each person to live her own life as she [sees] fit (so far as she doesn't interfere with others' right to do likewise)" (1992, 113). Recognition respect for persons, then, is afforded by making sure we fulfill our duty to not interfere with those things we have a human right to, e.g., physical safety. It is at this point that Dillon brings care into the picture. As recognition respect is grounded in our concept of the person (understood as rationally autonomous moral persons) and because the concept of the person is contestable, both are negotiable. That is, if we have a fundamentally different understanding of personhood, we can ground a different kind of recognition respect. By drawing from feminist ethics of care and the picture of persons used there, Dillon develops her care respect.

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[20]Relevant collections include Hanen and Nielsen (1987) and Griffiths and Whitford (1988).

Themes of our individual particularity and interdependence are not uncommon in discussions of persons and respect despite not being captured in the traditional philosophical conceptions of the grounds of recognition respect for persons (1992, 114). This is intriguing, because it means that we ground respect for individuals in the abstract feature of their humanity, while discussing the respect we owe to particular individuals. As these themes are already present in discussions of respect the proposal is not necessarily a radical one. By taking these themes of particularity and interdependence, Dillon argues we get a pattern that reveals that caring for particular individuals is plausibly a way to show them recognition respect.

In order to pay appropriate recognition respect to others requires two things: that we sincerely attempt to understand the other persons in their unique particularity, and that we take responsibility for the ways that our actions have the power to "make or unmake each other" Dillon (1992). Understanding one another is crucial for respecting the person as they are, and not instead paternalistically taking control of them. Taking responsibility for others involves both an attitude of positive duty to help and to recognise the power that we exercise over them in our ability to afford and withhold respect.

Dillon's discussion, though explicitly a moral one, has strong social-epistemic themes in a number of places. In discussing the ways that we can afford caring respect through understanding one another, she lists the following tasks, "a responsibility to develop skills of communication, imagination, sensitivity, and emotional responsiveness" (1992, 127). Each of these fall under the essential competencies of social-epistemic agency: our ability to develop the doxastic, motivational, and affective cognitive attitudes that enable us to genuinely self-author our communicative and epistemic lives (See Chapter 2). In order to flourish as social-epistemic agents, we need an environment that lets us develop these competencies. These competencies can only be developed in the context of an environment that supports our growth, and this kind of caring recognition respect is a precondition for the development of our social-epistemic agency. That is, we need

to be recognised by others as having the capacity of so developing in order to have the supportive environment that will allow us to do so. Further, this caring respect needs to be continually given in order to support our ability to exercise our social-epistemic competencies; we need others to value our particular social-epistemic agency and epistemic subjectivity so that we are included in epistemic life. Social-recognition respect is an essential element of social-epistemic agency, since we need to be treat as worthy of inclusion in epistemic life to flourish.

In the introduction to *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks describes the importance of this kind of individual recognition for learning in genuinely inclusive classrooms, "As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognising one another's presence" (1994, 8). The passage this quote is drawn from is discussing the teacher's ability in the classroom to create a successful learning community. Excitement is central to this process because it engages students and teachers in a collaborative learning process. For excitement to occur, though, the professor "must genuinely *value* everyone's presence. There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes" (ibid.). She argues that this depends on all members of the classroom taking responsibility for the dynamics of the room. The professor must value and engage with each particular individual in order to create and sustain engagement with students. Importantly, hooks here makes no mention of the degree of knowledge of members of the classroom — the task is one of valuing and engaging with all members as collaborators irrespective of their knowledge.

Consider the ways that we listen and engage with young children in their story telling. It is not the child's expertise as a novelist that has us engage with their stories, rather our motivation is to make sure the child knows that *they* are worth listening to. It is important for children that they feel included in conversations and enquiry, even though they may not have the expertise to offer. Why? On the suggested account, they deserve

to be listened to because their unique epistemic perspective is worthy of our attention. Their imagination is an expression of their perspective, of what is going on in their unique world — regardless of how accurate it is, it is valuable to understand the child by listening. Take a case where we listen to the stories of one child, but not another. In what way will the ignored child take this? There is a good chance that the ignored child will take away from this that *they* are not worth listening to, i.e., that there is something about *their* stories that is not worth attending to. I think there is something prima facie right about taking this away from being ignored, and from a feeling of being disrespected by being ignored.

There is an instrumental benefit gained by listening to the child because play of this kind is educational and helps the child in developing their social-epistemic agency. In these ways, affording the child social-epistemic recognition respect helps us to ensure that we do not harm their agential development or prevent them from exercising their agential skills. Disrespecting children by treating them as not worthy of listening to can harm their social-epistemic agency by failing to encourage and support the development of their competencies, and in some cases will just cause their attempted acts to misfire. This instrumental benefit gets at the second part of Dillon's caring respect, that we take seriously our responsibility for one another as persons. Her point is not merely that we have a duty to refrain from harming others, but a positive duty to take care of one another, "we are responsible for the well-being of others, responsible not simply to not degrade another's situation but responsible to make a positive contribution to others' existence" (1992, 128). A similar sense of social-epistemic responsibility is found in hooks' description of the truly inclusive classroom.

As noted earlier, the "taking responsibility" aspect of care respect involves more than just positive duties to help others. It also involves an attitude of recognising the ways that our ability to afford and withhold respect gives us a particular kind of

power over others [21]. This same feature is at the heart of our theory of social-epistemic agency, and is why we describe as something we have in degrees rather than a fixed or static property of persons. Social-epistemic agency is the degree to which we can actually engage in relational self-authorship in the episodic and programmatic aspects of our communicative and epistemic lives. Thus, denying someone the social-epistemic recognition respect – that would enable them to participate in social-epistemic life – cuts them off from social-epistemic agency.

The nature of recognition respect turns on the object of that respect, as Dillon makes clear in bringing our attention to the fact that personhood is a variable in our understanding of recognition respect. By grounding social-epistemic recognition respect in our unique epistemic perspectives, we are able to ground the need not only for allowing others to exercise self-authorship in their social-epistemic lives but also make basic our role and power in supporting them in this process of self-authorship. Consequently, it is a form of respect that demands of us positive duties of care and support.

In the next and final section, I discuss the ways that we can show one another social-epistemic recognition respect. In so doing, I will discuss the relationship between valuing an individual's epistemic perspective and that of a group she belongs to, that is distinctive in part because of its unique epistemic commitments. I will argue, for example, that failing to sincerely engage with the epistemic perspectives of indigenous groups can constitute a denial of social-epistemic recognition respect.

3.4 Showing social-epistemic respect

It is intuitive that a discussion of respect would lead to a discussion of the rights and duties that arise. Instead of proposing an account of this sort, I am going to take a

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[21]The full passage from Dillon is the following, "Because respect is something we can refuse to give, even while recognizing that it is called for, there is with regard to respect always a question of power: the power to recognize or not and hence the power to make or unmake others as persons, and the power to foster or subvert self-respect" (1992, 128)

similar line to that of Nel Noddings' argument, from her introduction to her account of ethics of care, that we focus our ethical attention on, "the maintenance of conditions that will permit caring to flourish" (Noddings, 1984). My approach here, then, is to discuss the ways that we can show respect to someone's epistemic perspective through care by understanding, receptivity, and responsibility for our relational contingency.

As a brief side-note, Lani Watson (2018) presents an account of epistemic rights and uses it to explain the ways that the UK media has failed to meet its duties to the voting UK public with respect to the Brexit campaign. Watson's epistemic rights apply to narrow-scope agential concerns regarding our rights to epistemic goods from the media including knowledge, information, understanding, and truth[22]. The account of social-epistemic respect that I have been presenting could complement Watson's account (or alternative accounts of epistemic rights of this same domain). Strictly speaking, this account of social-epistemic respect concerns the interpersonal constraints on our ability to develop and exercise our social-epistemic agential competencies. Namely, that in order for us to be able to develop and exercise these competencies, we need to be recognised and responded to by others in ways that includes us in epistemic life. Watson's discussion of particular epistemic rights to, for example, blood sugar information that might make one revise one's dietary choices applies to a separate area of epistemic concern.

While social-epistemic appraisal respect is not our primary concern here, I will just take a moment to present some intuitive examples that demonstrate how it can be appropriately afforded. As already discussed in §3.3, social-epistemic appraisal respect is warranted to the degree that one possesses some epistemically valuable goods or skills. We show social-epistemic appraisal respect, for example, to our students when we give them A's on their excellent papers, when we award Nobel Prizes to scientists who make outstanding contributions in their area of research, by inviting experts to our conferences

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[22]Watson argues that epistemic rights of her sort are highly context dependent, "Epistemic rights arise within and are bound by epistemic communities, comprised on individuals with different epistemic abilities, opportunities, and obligations" (2018, 91).

as keynotes, by following the advice our counsel of a knowledgeable informant. Beyond intellectual merit, social-epistemic appraisal respect can also be sensitive to someone's excellences as a communicator, e.g., through their teaching prowess or their ability to write in ways that transforms our understanding of someone or some thing (literary prizes can be recognised as being of this kind).

Someone is inappropriately denied the social-epistemic appraisal respect they deserve when they experience a prejudiced credibility deficit (Fricker, 2007). In such cases, the prejudiced beliefs that paint certain people as less credible than they are undermine those persons' abilities to treatment that actually reflects their expertise. In this way, social-epistemic appraisal respect is importantly tied to intellectual merit and desert.

The disrespect shown in denials of social-epistemic recognition respect, by contract, target the basic value of our epistemic perspective, rather than our merit or excellence in the social-epistemic domain. The value I described above in listening to children telling stories is that it shows the child that *they* are worth listening to, that their stories are worthwhile. This example brings out a number of the key features of social-epistemic recognition respect that can ground what the caring relation requires of us.

First, and importantly, note that we are not required to actually believe what the child tells us. It is not necessary that we believe the contents of someone's epistemic perspective in order to show them appropriate respect. What we should strive for is sincere engagement with and and understanding of their epistemic perspective. We can draw again here from Dillon, care respect grounds respect for persons in something we all share, "the characteristic of being an individual human 'me' — a characteristic which each of us values . . . which pulls our attention to the concrete particularities of each human individual" (1992, 118). Social-epistemic recognition respect pays special attention to the unique epistemic perspective within the "me-ness" that Dillon describes.

In their introductory book to argumentation, Aikin and Talisse (2013) describe ways that argumentation of the right sort (i.e., the sincere and charitable sort) can demon-

strate both respect for one's interlocutor and a way of caring for them epistemically. One respects another by arguing with her because in doing so one shows her that she is "a fellow rational agent, a person both capable of following and being moved by reasons, and one who can be a source of reasons that can move you" (Aikin and Talisse, 2013). Thus, Aiken and Talisse outline the way that sincerely engaging in deliberation and debate with someone in a way of showing them social-epistemic recognition respect by including them in social-epistemic activity. One cares for another, they conclude, because through arguing with them we provide a way for them to check-in on their "cognitive health" by evaluating their beliefs and their reasons. We can understand this as a way of caring for someone by promoting the development and maintenance of their cognitive attitudes (see §2.2 of chapter 2). This second aspect relates to the instrumental value I described in §3.3.1 when we listen to the child's story telling.

When we don't perceive people as deserving of our social-epistemic respect then we don't behave in ways that foster and support the development and exercise of their epistemic agential competencies. This undermines their ability to exercise their epistemic agency and devalues their epistemic perspective. Listening is one of the basic ways of showing social-epistemic recognition respect, for it is through listening to one another that we have the chance to engage with and understand the epistemic perspective of someone else. 'Deliberate listening' I propose as a catch-all for listening well in epistemic activities. Deliberate listening is *intentional* listening by being *considerate* and *active* (more below), it is *sincere* by taking seriously what the other is saying, it aims for *understanding*. Deliberate listening – and social-epistemic recognition respect more generally – does not require that one adopt the beliefs (or epistemic perspective) of one's interlocutor. Rational, reasonable disagreement amongst peers is compatible with showing social-epistemic recognition respect, one only needs to show that the others' epistemic perspective is a reasonable one to take.

I'm inclined to a kind of situationist picture of what good listening is, but I think we

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can borrow heavily from Dewey's work in *The School and Society* for thinking specifically about what deliberate listening looks like in education[23]. The goal here is to provide a sketch of what it might look like to fulfil our obligation to show social-epistemic respect to someone else and in ways that helps to promote their social-epistemic agency.

Dewey is concerned with the structure and activity in classrooms, and how they meet the needs of students. He makes a distinction between 'straight-line', 'one-way' or 'passive' listening, and 'active' listening or 'transactional listening-in-conversation' (Waks, 2011). Passive listening is the kind of listening that takes place in classrooms that are designed for lectures without discussion, where students are rendered into docile sponges for information. The structure of the classroom factors into the nature of the epistemic environment, and some structures are more conducive to social-epistemic agency than others. Here is a quote from Dewey that illustrates the interplay he sees between active listening and epistemic activity and the physical structure of the room,

> "Some few years ago I was looking about the school supply stores in the city, trying to find desks and chairs which seemed thoroughly suitable from all points of view – artistic, hygienic, and educational – to the needs of the children. We had a great deal of difficulty in finding what we needed, and finally one dealer, more intelligent than the rest, made this remark: "I am afraid we have not what you want. You want something at which the children may work; these are all for listening."" (1900, 47).

What are the harms of passive listening? When we passively listen to someone else we fail to treat the speaker with social-epistemic respect, we instead treat them merely as a source of information — so, we are potentially epistemically objectifying them. To encourage in students that they engage in passive listening is to fail to teach them how to engage actively with others to learn, it fails to show them how to effectively engage

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[23]For an overview of philosophical theories of listening including Plato, Aristotle, Jean-Jaques Rousseau, Johann Herbard, John Dewey, and Martin Buber see Haroutunian-Gordon and Laverty (2011).

in collaborative epistemic (and communicative) activity[24].

Active listening, by contrast, is an ongoing collaborative process. There are explicit educational outcomes, as Dewey discusses, students engage in their own epistemic development as they are not merely passively receiving information but engaging in epistemic action like dialogue and deliberation. Active classrooms engage students in activities, they let the students help to direct and create enquiry by making them places not for passive listening but for active epistemic collaboration. The teacher and the student treat one another as mutual cooperators engaged in a joint learning project, recognising that they are perhaps differently knowledgeable but equal participants. Dewey notes that classrooms that enable children to act and work help children to be seen as the unique individuals they really are[25]. Through actively listening to and engaging with each student, we can support their education in ways that will help them most.

Active listening, then, is a way to show appropriate social-epistemic recognition respect for persons. In classrooms, it can help to ensure that both students and teachers are listened to in ways that mutually respects their epistemic perspective. We can do worse than passive listening, which itself can constitute a denial of social-epistemic respect, by outright refusing to engage with someone's epistemic perspective. I describe two cases below that demonstrate a refusal to show care for the epistemic perspective of indigenous groups[26].

The first case is a recent example from Aotearoa/New Zealand and the comments

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[24]For Dewey, the consequences of passive listening can be very harmful, "The consequences of the one-way pattern of listening are severe. As one-way, straight-line communications do not invite – and, indeed, leave no room for – response, listeners habituated to them remain passive and lax, irresponsible, thoughtless, fickle, emotionally susceptible, shortsighted, amusement-seeking, and shiftless, imbued neither with the courage or energy to speak nor the intellectual power to say anything worth listening to" (Waks, 2011, 193).

[25]"Another thing that is suggested by these school-rooms, with their set desks, is that everything is arranged for handling as large numbers of children as possible; for dealing with children *en masse*, as an aggregate of units; involving, again, that they be treated passively. The moment children act they individualize themselves; they cease to be a mass, and become the intensely distinctive beings that we are acquainted with out of school"(1900, 49).

[26]See Tsosie (2017) for a discussion of the relationship between anthropological practice and epistemic injustice, and the ways in which early framing of indigenous peoples continues to harm them legally and politically.

of Don Brash (the former leader of the National Party) in an interview with Kim Hill on RadioNZ (2017). In the interview, Brash expressed his frustrations at having to hear te reo Māori (the Māori language, Te Reo) more frequently on a number of public platforms and in particular on RadioNZ. During the annual Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week) in 2017, a number of pākehā men (New Zealanders of European descent) spoke out against national efforts to increase the use of Te Reo — one of the official languages of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the language of the indigenous Māori. A number of Brash's complaints can be summarised in the idea that Te Reo is less expressive than te reo Ingarihi (the English language), and can only have value for those who identify with Māori culture. Despite denying several times that he is a separatist, Brash makes several statements to the effect that Te Reo can be publicly expressed on "their" radio and television stations and schools, and be kept out of other public space.

The combination of Brash's conceptual complaints and separatist proposals comes together to make a clear case of social-epistemic recognition disrespect. The conceptual complaint devalues Te Reo as a language by arguing that it is conceptually deficient rather than conceptually different. Brash argues on these instrumental grounds that Te Reo ought not be a part of the national curriculum both because it is less useful and because it is only culturally valuable to Māori[27]. Aotearoa is a country with a history of colonialism that almost destroyed the language and culture of Māori, and this historical context helps to highlight the social-epistemic harms of a pākeha politician arguing that Te Reo ought be kept out of public broadcasts. Brash presumably thinks it is better to express oneself in English than in Te Reo, de-valuing Te Reo as a mode of self-expression. We do not need to endorse a strong form of linguistic relativity here, a weak form will do. If a language can shape the epistemic perspective of those who use it, by influencing their modes of self-expression and the ways that they understand the

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[27] "You cannot go to a kindergarten or play centre anywhere in the country now without learning te reo, even if there is not a brown face in 50 miles ... For brown faces it is presumably useful because it is their culture. For me it is not of value." Don Brash on RadioNZ (2017).

world, then Brash's comments suggest that he takes this language and its hermeneutical resources to be un-choiceworthy.

Te Wiki of Te Reo Māori and other national efforts are attempts to promote the survival of Te Reo and Te Ao Māori (the Māori world, including Te Reo, traditional practices and communities, sacred sites). To argue that Te Reo should be isolated to targeted Māori platforms, is (partly) to undermine the project to promote Te Ao Māori and Te Reo as legitimate ways of life, and importantly to deny the communicative value of Te Reo. Brash is inconsistent on this point, as he notes that 'whānau' has a sense that is different and preferable to the English, 'family'[28]. Nonetheless, Brash's general position would put an end to many national efforts motivated by a desire to support the development and maintenance of a culture and its associated language, worldview, and belief systems.

A case from Aotearoa that demonstrates respect for Māori epistemic perspectives can be found in the recognition of the Whanganui River as a legal person(Haunui-Thompson, 2017)[29]. The saying, "Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au" ("I am the river, the river is me"), is cited as one of the reasons for why the river was afforded this legal status. Māori recognise local awa (rivers) maunga (mountains) as a part of their tribal genealogy, respect for these natural environments is deeply important. In this act, we see the recognition of the reasons unique to the Māori perspective being actively included in a decision making process. Not merely are Māori reasons (eventually) heard and understood, but they are being acted upon as well — we should not overlook the fact that it took the local iwi (tribe) 160 years to achieve this legislative recognition with the government (ibid.). A local Member of Parliament, Adrian Rurawhe, made the following illuminating comment at the time, "The river as a whole is absolutely important to the people who are from the river and live on the river...I'll repeat something that [Member of Parliament] Chester

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[28] "I think there are some words in te reo which I use, and which frankly are better than the English equivalent. Take the word whānau, I use it frequently because family doesn't quite cut it, it doesn't quite mean the same as whānau, I think whānau is a useful addition to the vocabulary" (RadioNZ, 2017).

[29] Te Urewera national park was given the same legal status in 2014 (Haunui-Thompson, 2017).

Burrows said in [Parliament] today – it's not that we've changed our world view but people are catching up to seeing things how we see it" (ibid.). This legal action helps to afford social-epistemic recognition respect to Māori by legally recognising their beliefs and values as rational candidates, as reasons that can guide public laws.

A second recent example of a denial of social-epistemic recognition respect can be found in the fight over the Dakota Access oil Pipeline constructed by Energy Transfer Partners. The pipeline was built partially underneath Lake Oahe in Missouri, USA. A local tribe, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, contested the building of the pipeline both as a risk to local water and as an instance of disregarding their treaty rights to preserve sacred burial lands and water (Hawkins and Evans, 2017). In an interview in February 2017, after the Army Corps of Engineers announced it would allow the final stage of the pipeline to be built, Dave Achambault II, former chairman of the Tribe said, "I had a meeting set up with Intergovernmental Affairs, William Kirkland. As soon as I landed, I got notice [that the Corps had greenlighted the project]. And it was just disheartening. I just canceled my meeting with the White House, because, obviously, they're not willing to listen. They don't want to hear from the tribe, which is unfortunate. And this is something that we were so thankful that the previous [Obama] administration at least took time and looked at all angles and all perspectives of this argument"(Democracy Now! democracynow.org, 17 a). Later in the same interview he states, "And I don't think any leader of a nation should make decisions without hearing all perspectives".

This is clearly a complex case, one that involves both legal rights and human rights alongside issues concerning the proper respect to those rights guaranteed in the Treaties with Native American tribes. I have chosen two quotes here that bring out ways that the reasons of the members of the Tribe were ignored. The phrase, "Mni Waconi" ("Water is Life"), was frequently used by those opposed to the pipeline and expresses an epistemic perspective that sees Lake Oahe and water more generally as having a sacred status, beyond that of a potential resource. It was clear in following the legal and – at times –

physical fight over the construction of the pipeline that the beliefs, values, and practices of the local tribes were not taken seriously (Wong and Levin, 2016). There are many cases that we could discuss similar to this one, that describe ways that the epistemic perspectives of marginalised groups are dismissed and ignored. These are paradigm cases of a denial of social-epistemic recognition respect as they deem the reasons, beliefs, values, and practices of particular groups of persons as something that can be excluded from consideration.

If we are to be invested in securing the appropriate social-epistemic respect for ourselves and others, we have to widen our circle of epistemic care. To modify Noddings advice from the beginning of this section, what we need is to work to establish the conditions that will permit social-epistemic agency to flourish. In the next chapter, I introduce the idea of the 'epistemic community' as a community that is structured to meet and invested in meeting the basic conditions for social-epistemic agency, including their basic need for social-epistemic respect.

Chapter 4

Epistemic community building and online discourse

We're in a bit of a double-bind with the Internet. From high to low risk queries, it's a dominant source of knowledge for most of us. At the same time, we recognise that there are many risks and trade-offs with looking for information online. Fake news, lies, trolls, and viral information seem to demand paternalistic oversight, but many of our ideals of a free Internet oppose this. I argue that we should think of this mixed relationship with the Internet as part of a complicated epistemic community building process.

The argument that motivates the discussion of this chapter is the following. I assume that sincere and productive communication is necessary for creating communities that are good at producing knowledge and at helping individuals develop and exercise their social-epistemic agency. In order to have sincere and productive communication, though, participants in these exchanges need to be treated with social-epistemic respect. My concern is the following, that our expectations for online discourse are so low that we are making it permissible to deny others social-epistemic respect online. Furthermore, we are neglecting the ways that low online standards are harming discourse more generally. Taken together, these undermine our ability to create the kinds of epistemic communi-

ties that we desire (i.e., ones that can produce knowledge and support social-epistemic agency).

I begin in §4.1 by introducing the idea of an epistemic community as a place where we have the ability to develop our social-epistemic agency and live well with respect to our epistemic and communicative ends. By drawing on the two forms of social-epistemic respect – appraisal and recognition – introduced in the chapter 3, I show how healthy epistemic communities are places that protect and promote the unique epistemic perspectives of their members and enable them to meet their epistemic and communicative ends in §4.1.1.

With these ideas in mind, I turn to critiquing our expectations of online discourse and testimony in §4.2. I argue that we are ignoring our duties to one another as social-epistemic agents in tacitly accepting such low standards for discourse and testimony. I consider and reject two theses in §4.2.1 that try to distinguish online and offline discourse in such a way that online discourse would not undermine our efforts to build desirable epistemic communities. Thus, a solution to the low standards of discourse online will require finding ways that we can start to see our online peers as social-epistemic agents with epistemic perspectives deserving of (at least) basic recognition respect. I propose two possible consequences of continuing to neglect standards of online discourse in §4.2.2: epistemic estrangement and debate chilling.

What makes the process of epistemic community building online particularly difficult, I argue in §4.3, is that attempts to put in place paternalistic measures to promote communicative and epistemic ends will almost always conflict with widely recognised values that we commonly associate with the Internet as a public space. These values include freedom of speech, freedom of enquiry, freedom of association, privacy (of a puzzling sort), and inclusiveness and pluralism (e.g., moral, political, etc.). These same values describe features we find epistemically valuable about liberal democratic deliberation, and in a way the Internet can be thought of as a highly concentrated realisation

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of these values. Recent controversies about the role of social media in political elections are one salient example of this messy kind of phenomenon. It is in our interest, then, never to approach the Internet as an epistemic environment in isolation, but always as a political-epistemic environment. Consequently, the values and reasons that we use to shape the epistemic community online cannot be those of a merely epistemic perspective, but instead always at least those of a political-epistemic perspective.

4.1   The Internet as an epistemic community

A quick moment's reflection on some words-of-Internet-wisdom can give an indication of what we expect from one another on the Internet: "never read the comments", "don't feed the trolls", "don't trust what you read online". What does this kind of advice suggest about the quality of information in our online epistemic environment? What does it suggest about the other members of this environment? Let's consider some slightly modified versions of these three pieces of advice. Consider how we might evaluate a university that offered the following to its incoming class: "never read the feedback", "never respond to your peers", "don't trust what you read for class". This rough comparison should make us weary of our expectations for online epistemic interaction, our hypothetical university clearly has some serious problems with (at minimum) the interpersonal aspects of its learning community.

What about the Internet wisdom? This is generally taken as good advice, and it seems true that we would be doing someone a disservice by failing to provide it to them, but this should be concerning to those who have hopes for the Internet as a prime epistemic resource. Taken together, we get a general picture that suggests that quality dialogue and deliberation online is a sub par: people are unlikely to respond seriously or sincerely, they are likely to be overly critical or overtly hostile, and we should assume they are generally untrustworthy. These conditions speak to an environment where

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people do not expect to be afforded social-epistemic respect: they do not expect that others will include them with care in epistemic or communicative life online. Of course, this also entails that some of us do not take it to be a place where we need to show this respect to others (we're defending ourselves against someone after all!). This is a pessimistic take on the Internet as an epistemic environment and of our online epistemic community. Let me take a moment to clarify what I mean by "epistemic environment" and "epistemic community"[1].

Our epistemic environment is our epistemic life as it takes place outside of our own heads (our wide scope sense of epistemic agency of 3.2) and in our interpersonal epistemic interactions, e.g., our contributions to shared knowledge or roles as an advisor or teacher. Our epistemic environment is a place where we can try to exert our social-epistemic agency to bring about changes – by being an *agent* in this domain – and in so doing participate in epistemic life. As we've used the phrase so far, "epistemic environment" picks out an area (metaphorically speaking) of epistemic action (potential and actual) that we can attempt to change through the use of our social-epistemic agential competencies.

Our epistemic community just is our epistemic environment, but named in a normatively loaded way that brings to focus the interpersonal features of our shared epistemic life. By calling an epistemic environment a community, we change the perspective that we take in when look at our collective epistemic resources, methods, and practices. The language of "community" evokes our common interest in the development and maintenance of our epistemic environment. As Lorraine Code observes, as participants in the epistemic community we are much like participants in a society. We are not "merely participants" in a society, we are at the same time "conservers and modifiers of practices" (Code, 1987, 193).

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[1]Goldberg (2016) uses both the terms "epistemic environment" and "epistemic community", but appears to define them synonymously as the norms, practices and institutions that govern how individuals engage in knowledge-seeking activities.

In the next section, I focus on epistemic dependence as a feature of epistemic communities, and one that needs to be mediated in order to promote both the wellbeing of members of the epistemic community and to support epistemic goals. I ultimately propose three hallmarks that can indicate the health of an epistemic community.

4.1.1 Identifying and evaluating epistemic communities

One way of stating the concerns raised in this chapter is a worry that online discourse will gradually erode the epistemic norms of conduct that keep epistemic communities in "good health". In particular, by gradually wearing away at the epistemic norms that help to ensure that our social-epistemic agency is recognised and respected by others. I understand 'epistemic norms' here as a type of social norm, that helps to promote collaborative epistemic and communicative activity by minimising conflict (Kidd, forthcoming, b). In this section, I want to explore the ways that we are united with one another in epistemic communities through epistemic dependence. I then want to consider what makes an epistemic community a good one, and I will argue that the features we should look at are those that support maintain a healthy structure of epistemic dependence. This will be important in the next section for reflecting on the state of our epistemic community with respect to online discourse.

We so regularly depend on one another for epistemic goods we don't often think about how they are created, mediated, and shared, and the degree to which we depend on others to learn about the world around us. This is clearly true for humans developmentally in the ways our parents, family members, and other people teach us about the world: why the cat won't join us in the bath but the dog will, when to add the milk to the scone dough, where the sun goes at night, how to read and write, and what counts as a reason and what is a mere excuse. But is also true of us throughout adulthood — most of our knowledge or purported knowledge is not acquired through first-person experience but via other people. In this very broad sense, then, we are an epistemic community

because of our shared interest in these epistemic goods that we rely on one another for throughout our lives.

As novices, we are familiarly dependent on the knowledge of members of scientific communities. Goldman (2001) raises important questions concerning our ability as novices to evaluate the credibility of experts, and including the specific problem of novices faced with disagreeing experts. This is clearly essential for us in many facets of our lives: is it safe to continue eating slightly burnt toast? Should I vote for or against the public transport tax bill? Should I take a probiotic, fish oil pill, and a vitamin everyday? Should I abstain from having children to limit my climate footprint? If epistemic dependence is a cornerstone of an epistemic community, then even in our state as novices it would seem we are members of the same epistemic community as the scientists we regularly depend on.

I propose that this is true, but that scientists themselves are also members of narrower epistemic communities because of their commitment to certain kinds of collaborative work. The first place to try to draw a line between the broad epistemic community and the narrower scientific community is that scientists in a particular field will share a knowledge base that novices lack. I don't think this is a good line to use for who is a member and non-member of a scientific community, though, because we will find ourselves in a puzzle about how to evaluate new students. They lack the knowledge, but there is an intuitive sense in which students are members of the relevant scientific community. Clearly, novices are not members of the scientific community understood as those individuals carrying out the research, engaging actively in deliberation, critique, and peer review processes, etc. But it is exactly an interest and investment in this kind of work that students share with scientists. As students progress in their studies they begin to contribute to these collaborative epistemic activities.

The purpose of identifying epistemic communities is in part to recognise that our epistemic obligations to other members and to non-members vary. Similarly, we can

recognise that the nature of epistemic dependence varies between members and non-members, and this has important consequences for how we might evaluate knowledge claims (e.g., if I, a novice, claim I know climate change is occurring because of my trust in the relevant scientists). Understanding the nature of the epistemic communities online, then, will be important for a variety of reasons. Within a scientific community there is an obvious need to regulate the relationships of epistemic dependence so that the knowledge that is shared is of a high quality. This ensures that the individuals, and the community as a whole, can progress on their mutual interests found in their collaborative work. The practices, norms, and rules that may be in place for a scientific community are designed to, e.g., secure trust between members that helps to promote desirable outcomes for epistemic dependence. Thus, we should see epistemic dependence as an important structural feature of scientific communities — and of epistemic communities broadly speaking as well.

Looking for mutually epistemically dependent individuals, engaged in collaborative activity for some similar set of epistemic ends, is also intuitively a functional yardstick for recognising epistemic communities more generally[2]. For any potential epistemic community in question, then, we want to determine who is engaged in collaborative epistemic activity, how they are so engaged, the nature of their epistemic dependence, and what the ends are they are invested in bringing about[3]. When we take *social-epistemic agency itself* as the subject of mutual interest, we get a very broad epistemic community. In so doing, we can think about, for example, the ways that novices' and scientists' social-epistemic agency is dependent on one another, and of how it may be an

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[2]See Goldberg (2010). Goldberg (2016) suggests that we might describe subjects who share knowledge as members of an epistemic community, "...they are members of a group whose knowledge environment is structured by various social practices regarding the acquisition, storage, processing, transmission, and assessment of information" (2016, 4). The epistemic community itself is structured, according to Goldberg, by the norms, practices, and particular institutions that regulate the actions of epistemic agents.

[3]This is a rough-and-ready treatment of considering how communities might be delineated. My primary goal here is not to settle matters of group metaphysics, but to bring attention to an under-appreciated area of epistemic dependence as motivation for recognising a particular epistemic community. For relevant work on group metaphysics see Gilbert (1989, 2013); Sheff (2017).

object of collaborative work.

Here are some examples. For non-experts, the results of scientific research are important for a variety of epistemic and communicative reasons. Most basically, the results of scientific enquiry help non-experts decide what to believe. This can then inform or direct other epistemic or communicative action that they make take. For example, non-experts depend on scientific communities to provide them with accessible explanations of, e.g., the causes and consequences of climate change in order to vote (or protest) in an informed way. Second, scientists are epistemically dependent on a wider set of individuals for the development of their social-epistemic agency. This dependence bears on their epistemic activities as scientists, including their episodic agential actions and their programmatic goals.

As discussed in §3.3, the scientist's personal identity, e.g., their gender, can affect how they engage in research[4]. In part, this is because of the ways that our own identities can bear on the kinds of projects individuals consider worthwhile (or, alternatively, of highest importance). The discipline that one enters into and the positions one occupies within it can also be influenced by one's identity[5]. Overall, this suggests that the more narrow engagement of a scientist in a scientific community, and the structure and goals of that community itself, are subject to wider social-epistemic constraints. This is because of the relational features of social-epistemic agency, itself a kind of epistemic dependence insofar as our epistemic actions and aspirations are dependent on facts about our history and our being embedded in particular, wider social contexts.

What makes an epistemic community a good one? It might be helpful to focus, first,

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[4]Bear and Woolley (2011) report on recent evidence that suggests that the presence of women in research teams greatly improves team collaboration. See also Williams Woolley et al. (2010) for earlier work on the ways that the apparent social sensitivity of women to others impacts collaborative work (e.g., their ability to read non-verbal cues).

[5]See Kern, Christel C., Kenefic, Laura S., and Stout, Susan L. (2015) for a discussion of gender diversity in the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service Research and Development (FSR&D). One result of their analysis is that fewer women currently occupy senior position in academic and (FSR&D) positions but that this is beginning to shift. They attribute this change to structural features of these workplaces, namely those that tackle sex based discrimination in hiring and promotion practices.

on a particular kind of epistemic community, and again I will use scientific communities[6]. If we do so, then we have one answer to this question from Philip Kitcher (1993). By following scientific norms, rules, and practices, individuals in the community can align their behaviours to "generate a progressive sequence of consensus practices" (1993, 303). Kitcher takes on two sets of questions with respect to how scientific communities should be organised to best meet their epistemic ends. The first series of questions look at the responsibilities of individual scientists, the second set of questions concerns how the community structures itself to best achieve their goals[7].

A lot of Kitcher's discussion is more technical than we have need of here, but we can still utilise the questions he raises in thinking about what makes scientific communities better or worse[8]. There are a number of issues for individual members of the community raised in his first set of questions. These include topics like: how can I assess the competence of someone in my field? How about someone in a nearby field whose work bears on mine? When should I rely on someone else's results more than my own? Of his second group of questions, Kitcher focuses on the scientific community itself rather than the individuals within it. The kinds of questions he raises for the community concern how it can best structure itself and its members to meet its goals. These include how and to what degree research projects should be divided up amongst members of the community, how much cognitive diversity is desirable, and methods for achieving consensus among group members.

Trust is one feature identified as essential for scientific communities. By "trust" Kitcher means our ability to trust in the competence of other members, rather than their honesty as informants. I see no reason for us not to take on both senses as important for scientific communities. Thus, the degree to which members of a community are

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[6]As a point of interest, see Wuchty et al. (2007) for evidence that research teams are more effective at producing knowledge than individual researchers.

[7]The title of the chapter itself captures this nicely, "The organization of cognitive labour".

[8]Indeed, he warns that we ought be wary of taking his idealised results to confidently suggest practical strategies for scientific communities (1993, 305).

able to trust one another – in both senses – is a useful measure of the well-being of a scientific community. A hallmark of healthy scientific communities, then, is the ways that trusting is or isn't possible within that community. Judging when authority is a marker of competence, rather than that of social privilege or unearned advantages, is also something members of scientific (and academic) communities will be invested in (Kitcher, 1993, §4).

There is a stronger sense of epistemic dependence described by Sandy Goldberg (2011), who argues that knowledge itself may be distributed across individuals. Goldberg argues that we may be dependent on others' cognitive states for the justification of our own beliefs. For example, my belief in global warming may be a justified belief because the relevant experts have the justification (that I, as a novice, would be incapable of having). The character of epistemic dependence for Goldberg captured in the ways that the cognitive effort of others – their holding the justification, evidence, etc. – makes it possible for us to have knowledge. This can take either a direct or a diffuse form, each respectively describing the dependence relationship between a subject's doxastic attitude and the other person (direct) or wider community (diffuse) (2011, 113). Golberg's proposal is far more radical than Kitcher's, but it is hard to deny given, e.g., the distributed nature of the research of interdisciplinary projects. Once again, trust is intuitively an essential need for mediating this much stronger sense of epistemic dependence, and in both our "honesty" sense and the "competence" sense.

It would be surprising to find that dialogue and deliberation are unnecessary for creating epistemic communities that are good at, e.g., producing knowledge. Scientific communities invest in a range of dialogic and deliberative practices for the explicit purpose of helping to produce new knowledge. Conferences, journals, and peer review are all examples of communicative processes that are aimed at producing new knowledge. As producing knowledge is something we all value epistemically – perhaps one of our most basic epistemic values – we should generally value the creation of epistemic communi-

ties that are conducive to dialogue and deliberation. How well a community supports dialogue and deliberation, then, is also a plausible hallmark of the good health of an epistemic community. This is a test we can apply to online platforms, do they support dialogue and deliberation in productive ways?

It would also be surprising to find that dialogue and deliberation can take place without interlocutors treating one another with social-epistemic recognition respect. That is, it would be surprising to find that dialogue and deliberation can take place between people who treat one another as not worthy of listening to or including in epistemic activity. So, again, we should be invested in creating communities that are conducive to the affordance of social-epistemic recognition respect for these reasons[9]. Epistemic communities that are structured or mediated in ways that help to afford social-epistemic recognition respect is a further sign of good health of an epistemic community — a second test we can apply to online platforms.

Kristina Rolin discusses the idea of well-designed scientific communities as communities where members are "united by mutual epistemic responsibilities" (2017, 468). These responsibilities keep members involved in scientific dialogue and deliberation in ways that maintain high standards of discourse, and ensure members are treated with social-epistemic recognition respect.

Epistemic responsibility is understood by Rolin as giving reasons to one's particular audience that meet their evidential standards. That members of an epistemic community could rely on one another to be epistemically responsible in this sense is intuitively something that Goldberg's account would identify as a hallmark. The focus of Rolin's discussion is narrow scientific communities, as she is looking to explain why an individual scientist would behave in an epistemically responsible way when doing so doesn't serve any personal epistemic (e.g., advancing one's project) or non-epistemic (e.g., promotion) goals. When a researcher presents her results or criticism of another member of the

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[9]As argued in chapter 3, social-epistemic respect is something of independent epistemic and communicative value so we are invested in communities that foster it in its own right.

community in a journal, or she presents at a conference recognised by her main audience, she performs actions that fulfil her epistemic responsibilities (2017, 470-471).

The duty of epistemic responsibility, Rolin argues, helps to maintain social cohesiveness despite routine practices of public disagreement, which could otherwise quickly lead to conflict or to people abandoning the work (receiving criticism well is a skill!). One of the main ways that epistemically responsible behaviour supports social cohesiveness of scientific communities is that it facilitates *epistemic trust* among members and in turn this helps the community meet epistemic goals through collaborative enquiry (2017, 472). Of course, the epistemic goals of a community may or may not be personally motivating for an individual scientist who is likely also to have personal goals active too (and these need not be epistemic).

On the one hand, then, we have impersonal-epistemic goals of the community, and on the other, the personal epistemic- and non-epistemic goals of the individual researcher. Rolin's ultimate conclusion is that the individual researcher continues to act in epistemically responsible ways (i.e., continues to present work that meets the evidential standards her community demands) when their personal goals won't be served because they believe that they have a *moral* duty to do so. This moral duty is not out of respect for their well-being per se, but out of a respect for her audience in their capacity as knowers[10]. The moral dimension of Rolin's account, I think, points us again toward this wider conception of the epistemic community and towards our idea of social-epistemic recognition respect. To explain the good behaviour of researchers within this narrow epistemic community, we turn to what they fundamentally deserve as knowers. I agree with Rolin's assessment here: we do something wrong in failing to conduct ourselves in enquiry in ways that respect the status of others as social-epistemic agents. I take this as support for recognising an epistemic community invested in social-epistemic recognition

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[10]This is an important point in the account because it would be problematic if an individual researcher withheld results because they had reason to think the results might make her audience very upset or unhappy. If her moral sense of duty arises from their capacity as knowers, rather than their happiness, she can deliver the bad news in order to meet her moral obligation (2017, 475)

respect.

The hallmarks that I want to pull out from this discussion include some lessons from our reflection on scientific communities, and on thinking about what social-epistemic agency requires. The interpersonal aspects of epistemic communities involve epistemic dependence of a variety of sorts: members may depend on one another for epistemic goods like knowledge and justification, or on others members for their ability to exercise and develop social-epistemic agency. Members of epistemic communities engage in collaborative work to reach epistemic ends, e.g., furthering research programmes, supporting everyone's abilities to occupy epistemic roles. Epistemic dependence and collaborative work relies on trust, which is the first key hallmark of epistemic communities. This is trust in both senses described above: we need to be able to trust members of our epistemic community as informants, and in their epistemic and communicative competence. The second hallmark is the degree to which members of epistemic communities are invested in ensuring that members of the community are treated with social-epistemic recognition respect. This will entail behavioural markers of the sort discussed in chapter 3 including sincere and charitable listening. The third hallmark is the degree to which the epistemic community fosters dialogue and deliberation between members that is productive (i.e., helps to produce knowledge). As I have suggested above, this third hallmark depends on our second: productive dialogue and deliberation requires a mutual relationship of social-epistemic recognition respect.

In the next section, I discuss some of the ways that the Internet has made salient the extent of our epistemic dependence on one another. The argument is not that we have never recognised this before, but just that the Internet, and social media in particular, have highlighted these facts. I argue that our response to potentially epistemically harmful consequences of the Internet as an epistemic environment indicates that we do take ourselves to be members of an epistemic community, and that we are currently engaged in debating what mediation we may or may not need given how the Internet

has changed our epistemic environment.

4.1.2 Social media and epistemic dependence

Social media platforms have simultaneously made our epistemic dependence on one another salient, while revealing just how vulnerable we can be because of our dependence. Trust, of course, always makes us vulnerable to those we place our faith in, and several aspects of social media have shown how true this can be. Social media has let us learn about ourselves, and in particular about the cognitive biases and heuristics that can make us poor mediators of our epistemic environment. Terry Pratchett's Lord Vetinari states the problem quite astutely in *The Truth*, "People like to be told what they already know. Remember that. They get uncomfortable when you tell them new things. New things well, new things aren't what they expect. They like to know that, say, a dog will bite a man. That is what dogs do. They don't want to know that a man bites a dog, because the world is not supposed to happen like that. In short, what people *think* they want is news, but what they really crave is *olds*" (2000).

Lord Vetinari's words are advice to the creator of the first newspaper in the city of Ankh Morpork, William de Worde—advice that would not be inappropriate for us to remember with the advent of new forms of media. In a variety of ways, it is this penchant that social media has made so clear to us: we like to hear what we already know, and we like to feel that we are generally right about how things will work out. Consider the "filter bubble": as a result of personalised search engines, media feeds, and social media circles we can become informationally isolated into a "bubble" of information that reflects our pre-existing beliefs (Pariser, 2011). The consequences of this include the amplification of cognitive biases like the well documented confirmation bias: our tendency to seek out information that affirms what we already take to be true and dismiss or rationalise away disconfirming evidence (Nickerson, 1998).

As many take pains to point out, filter bubbles are not *new*, at least, it is not new

that we are selective in particular ways about the media we consume and the testimony of particular others we seek out. What is new is the speed and degree to which we can informationally isolate ourselves, and that personalisation is not merely a matter of our selection but the "black-boxes" that deliver information to us[11]. That social media algorithms personalise the information we see presents us with a new kind of epistemic dependence: one that turns on the good intentions and algorithmic design of corporations[12]. One striking example can be found in the Wall Street Journal's "Blue Feed, Red Feed" interactive graphic that shows how one's political preferences can change the information that appears through one's Facebook feed (WallStreetJournal, 2015). Facebook's response to these kinds of stories was for an extended period to deny that they had a responsibility to ensure that their algorithms presented a range of quality information to users (Manjoo, 2017).

We are at a point in time where we've been suddenly faced with a new medium in our epistemic environment that may pose serious threats to the well-being of our epistemic community (and our political community as well). Filter bubbles are one example, and the concern goes beyond merely limiting our access to a diversity of information to intellectual arrogance (Tanesini, 2016; Lynch, 2018), ideological extremism, and "cybercascades" of viral information (Sunstein, 2017)[13]. In reflecting and assessing social media platforms, we are forced also to reckon with the ways that *we* informationally isolate ourselves through choosing newspapers, television, and radio stations. We need to better understand that we are epistemically dependent, and that if we aren't attentive to the networks we form we can be epistemically and communicatively at risk.

A recent study by Vosoughi, Roy, and Aral presents the worrying conclusion that

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[11]See Cass Sunstein's "The Daily Me" in *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (2017) for a discussion of personalisation and the ways in which this poses threats to democratic societies (for epistemic reasons).

[12]Of course, the algorithms that personalise our news feeds, for example, may not be designed with epistemic goals in mind at all but economic ones. This is the difference between designing a personalised feed that selects for high quality reputable sources, and one that selects for content that will get the most clicks.

[13]See also Sunstein (2009), and the discussion of information cascades in chapter 2 of Lynch (2016).

Twitter is a conduit for the viral spread of false information (2018). False information appears to spread faster through the social network by the re-tweeting actions of humans, rather than the automated tweeting of bots. In addition, it appears that the re-tweets of humans are more memorable for consumers too. Insofar as users of Twitter are interested in getting quality news and information from others over the network, this presents, at minimum, a trust problem for using the network as a source of information[14]. A former executive of Facebook, Chamath Palihapitiya, declared in an interview for the Stanford Graduate School of Business that the platform, "The short-term, dopamine-driven feedback loops we've created are destroying how society works," and this was leading to "No civil discourse, no cooperation; misinformation, mistruth" (2017).

The response has been a mixture of recommendations for taking personal responsibility (e.g., reading lists by The Guardian US edition online newspaper, a politically left leaning publication, directing their readers to politically conservative news), and demands for the companies themselves to moderate their algorithms and content ((Manjoo, 2017)). Discussions of epistemic norms, practices, and methods are all signs of a community invested in its well-being. We care about the education of others, in collective learning as a society, in the development of methods and tools for reliable and easy access to information. We also value intellectual virtues like open-mindedness and intellectual humility (as I discuss in chapter 5), and the rights of individuals to form their own beliefs and express their opinions. These are telling of the ways that we value our own ability and the ability of others to develop their own epistemic perspective. A healthy epistemic environment and community is necessary for these, so the breakdowns and threats online to, e.g., trust, should worry us.

In the next section, I begin by discussing some ways that the Internet does support social-epistemic agency. I then transition to the topic of online discourse, dialogue, and deliberation which will be the focus of the rest of the chapter. This begins with a

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[14]Oxford and Ottawa study on breaking echo-chambers by reading a diverse set of sources.

discussion of Internet trolls. I consider two arguments that would, if convincing, draw a distinction between online and offline discourse and make it the case that we need not be concerned about the quality of online discourse. I conclude, however, that neither are convincing in the case of online discourse.

4.2   Online discourse & threats to social-epistemic agency

There are several ways that the Internet has the potential to enhance or expand the epistemic aspects of our social-epistemic agency, Gunn and Lynch (Forthcoming) provide a discussion of three examples. First, the Internet has simply made it easier to access knowledge than ever before. The speed and size of the Internet easily surpasses any library in its ability to provide us information. Furthermore, our ability to quickly fact check this information is greatly enhanced by the Internet assuming one has the know-how to evaluate sources online. In these ways, the Internet is (to use the familiar phrase) the "great democratiser of knowledge". Second, the Internet makes the production of knowledge much more inclusive, for example through volunteering communities that contribute to open-source software and open access research websites. These remove the institutional barriers that can prevent experts from participating in traditional methods of knowledge production like research laboratories at universities and in private companies. Third, as an extension of the inclusivity point, the Internet facilitates non-experts inclusion in knowledge production through online competitions and research groups through firms like InnoCentive (See Lynch, 2016, chapter 7). These firms use crowdsourcing methods to solve problems, a strategy that can be more effective at reaching a solution than having experts work on it (Brabham, 2013; Jeppesen and Lakhani, 2010).

These examples represent ways that individuals' social-epistemic agency is enhanced by expanding the range of shared epistemic activities that are open to them. In addition,

we see some ways that our collective interest in advancing knowledge as a community is benefited through several online platforms. Nonetheless, our Internet-wisdom that I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter still stands as good advice. What are the threats we face online?

While it might be the case that the Internet is an epistemic environment that anyone can contribute to and thus supports inclusivity of particular sorts, very high degrees of information pollution (false or otherwise misleading information, intentionally so or not) do make it hostile for enquiry[15]. Information pollution online can be seen as a kind of careless littering of our epistemic community, where the rubbish runs the full gambit of unwitting falsehoods, Frankfurtian bullshit, and outright lies (Frankfurt, 1971). In general, the Internet gives rise to a range of problems akin to the central issues in the literature on testimonial knowledge (Gunn and Lynch, 2018). It is obviously possible for us to find out a lot of useful information online, but navigating some websites requires knowledge of site specific norms and credibility markers.

One problem taken up by Gunn and Lynch (2018) is that of online trolls. The term "troll" applies to individuals who take part in online messaging platforms with the intention of angering, fooling, or otherwise making insincere contributions to an online thread. Online threads can include particular forum discussions, comment sections on media platforms, social media websites, restaurant review websites, comment sections for online shops etc. Quite clearly, trolls pose a barrier to dialogue and deliberation because they intentionally thwart sincere conversation. Trolling may not technically be a new form of communicative undermining, but it is one that is treated by some as a past-time—in sufficient numbers that we expect to encounter it. It is possible that in an in depth analysis of trolling behaviours, we would decide that it is really a form of lying and deception (or even bald faced lying) and existing analyses of these kinds of behaviours can help explain a range of the philosophical problems that arise (For example

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[15]For an introduction to the idea of information pollution, see Orman (1984)

Bok, 1978; Carson, 2010; Saul, 2012). In none of these kinds of analyses, though, will we find a discussion of the communicatively disruptive features of trolling and thus the ways in which it can function to undermine social-epistemic agency.

Of course, trolling is not an all-encompassing category and there are other kinds of online behaviour that function similarly to shutdown dialogue and deliberation but are not trolling. Alternatively, they may not *shutdown* dialogue and deliberation – which implies that an exchange of some sort was sought – but actually just serve as a way of refusing to engage sincerely with someone. Variations of online shaming and digital analogues of verbal abuse are prime examples. All of these behaviours – trolling, shaming, abuse – are expected behaviours in online discourse. In the next section, I question why we continue to let this be the case when it seems like we are without good reason not to take these seriously as bad behaviours that pose genuine threats to social-epistemic agency.

I do not intend here to delve into a conceptual analysis of "trolling" and what behaviours might appropriately be called trolling, and the category is surely more widespread now than just the kinds of interactions sketched above online. What I hope to use trolling for here is to give us a sense of online interactions that are expected, and in particular the kinds of online interactions we expect from strangers online. Of course, trolling itself may happen among friends, family, and acquaintances, and take place offline too. The kinds of online discourse that the ensuing discussion will focus on is seemingly common between those who do not perceive one another as members of the same epistemic community online. I will suggest below that this may be linked importantly to ways that we may not see others as members of our moral community as well, but I do not think this link is necessary (i.e., it is possible for someone to recognise another as worth moral respect while not taking them to be worth social-epistemic re-spect). What I want to draw attention to here is the harms of taking this non-communal attitude towards others online, by arguing that we put ourselves at risk of being inca-

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pable of creating the epistemic community that we desire. Some key values, I take it, that we have for our epistemic community is that we are capable of engaging in dialogue and deliberation with one another, and it is exactly these values that are at risk when we maintain low standards of online discourse.

In general, my concern is with disrespectful online discourse and the ways in which we don't treat those we encounter online as persons deserving of social-epistemic respect. One of the reasons for this, it strikes me, at least, is because we do not treat online speech as "real" in some fashion. That is, a "just locker room talk"-style defence can often be given to justify abusive, insincere, or otherwise negative online speech. Interesting exceptions have arisen recently in the ways that the online speech of celebrities and politicians are treated as real speech, in spite of most people not actually having a personal relationship with these individuals. A satisfying answer to this observation would depend on psychological and behavioural research studies. My inclination is to think that the professional obligations and the status of politicians as our representatives may be partly explanatory[16], and the asymmetrical relationship we have with celebrities (i.e., we "know" them in some sense, while we remain anonymous to them) may be partly explanatory[17]. Cases of online shaming of non-politicians and non-celebrities will be discussed below, in these cases the speech of the "pilloried" is unacceptable while those "throwing fruit", as it were, is merely expected and tacitly accepted. Of course, part of the thesis of this chapter just is that epistemic community building is an ongoing process and that the Internet is a site where a lot a change is taking place. So, the contested status of online speech is in many ways just one of our ingredients, my hope is that we can take this moment to think broadly about everyone's speech online to create

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[16]A recent declaratory relief from United States district judge Naomi Reice Buchwald declared President Donald J. Trump's Twitter account a presidential account and not a personal account (Wolfson, 2018). Consequently, President Trump is not allowed to block other Twitter users from viewing and commenting on his Twitter feed as this would constitute a violation of their first-amendment rights to participate in a public forum.

[17]For example, Roseanne Barr's recent racist posts on Twitter have resulted in the cancellation of her series, *Roseanne*, re-runs of older series to be pulled from air, and the loss of representation by her talent agency, and the promise to delete her Twitter account (Richwine and Kelsey, 2018).

an epistemic community that is beneficial for social-epistemic agency.

With these points of focus in place, let us consider a case. Imagine the following situation. You are a philosophy professor teaching an undergraduate ethics course. You have just finished presenting Peter Singer's argument that we have a moral obligation to give to charity from his "Famine, Affluence, Morality" (1972). It is common for students to oppose the thesis that we have a moral obligation to give to charity, but their objections typically contest the strength of the conclusion, oppose the effectiveness and the sincerity of particular charities, etc. In this thought experiment, however, the students respond in the following ways. Student A asserts to the class, "Ranting of a delusional, self-righteous, liberal"; Student B challenges you with, "Hypocrite. I see your take-away coffee. Go Hang with Gore on his private jet"; Student C lets out a loud, "LOLOLOLOL"[18].

This would be incredibly inappropriate in a lecture, but this is typical of many online encounters on a range of social platforms. The point of this contrast is not to suggest that we work to adopt classroom norms online, but rather brings to focus the difference in our expectations about what kind of behaviour is expected online and is, at least tacitly, acceptable. This also isn't to suggest that *all* online platforms necessarily result in this kind of response, and I discuss supportive online epistemic communities below. For now, again, I want to focus our attention on these kinds of interactions that are common in a number of popular online platforms including YouTube, Twitter, and Reddit. Even if there are spaces on these platforms – and there are – that are exemplary places for sincere dialogue and deliberation, it is worth still considering why it is acceptable anywhere for this negative kind of online behaviour to be the norm. The charity example focuses on the responses to online media, but of course these same platforms also facilitate the posting of content that would likely be prohibited on traditional media platforms.

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[18]Student A's response is adapted from a quote from a Twitter user by Ronson (2015), "Rantings of a Delusional, Unrepentant Narcissist". The Twitter user was responding to a live broadcast, public apology by Jonah Lehrer who had engaged in professional misconduct including plagiarism, Ronson had been one of the people to uncover these.

Before giving my account of the badness of certain kinds of online discourse, I will take a moment to address the possible objection that we need not be concerned about what happens online. It's a common sentiment that the online world is something separate from the offline world. This often goes along with a *Westworld* style picture of the Internet: a place where because it is digital, it isn't really real. In this case, a place where everyone creates an artificial online alias that isn't really *them*. Thus, the actions and behaviours that happen aren't really *their* actions, but just part of some extended period of make-believe. I will conclude that we don't have good reason to think this, indeed it's not clear how many people would assent to this, but nonetheless endorse the idea that the Internet is a "Wild West" of bad behaviour. I will argue, then, that online discourse should be treated, prima facie, in the same ways as offline speech.

4.2.1 The Isolation and Distinctness Theses

Do we have good reason to think that online behaviour of this sort doesn't really matter? We might try to defend our expectations for online discourse in one of the following two ways. First, we might try to defend what I will call the "Isolation thesis": if online discourse doesn't inhibit or undermine our work to create the kind of epistemic community we want, then we need not be concerned with online discourse. If we have good reasons, then, to think that online discourse of this sort is harmful to a degree that warrants action then we will need to take this kind of discourse seriously. Second, we might instead propose the "Distinctness thesis": if the Internet is a distinct epistemic environment from our offline one, it may have its own norms and standards expectations that are different from our offline ones and these are acceptable.

We want to determine the plausibility of the isolation thesis and the distinctness thesis with respect to our online discourse. If either one is plausible, then our epistemic environment is not threatened by the quality and standards of online discourse. The particular kind of discourse we are concerned with is the sort the abusive, insincere,

trolling, or otherwise negative online discourse and the possibility that this might generally undermine our goals for a supportive epistemic community. The comparison to video games is relevant because there is an attitude towards the Internet that the actions, presumably including the acts of speech, that take place there are not really real.

Here is one case that provides a recent explicit endorsement of the the idea that online life is not real and that received a fair amount of media attention. In the first chapter of his book, Ronson (2015) describes a meeting he had with a trio of researchers, Luke Robert Mason, David Bausola, and Dan O'Hara, who made a Twitter bot that used Ronson's name and photograph for its profile. Ronson was upset at what he believed to be a spam bot taking his identity, he contacted the researchers with his concern and asked that they delete the account. The response that Ronson received is that the account was not a "spambot", but an "infomorprh", and that it wasn't stealing his identity, but instead "repurposing social media data into an informorphic esthetic"[19]. At the meeting, Ronson challenged the creators again, only to be confronted with the defence that, 1) the Twitter bot with his name and photograph couldn't be identity theft because lots of people have the same names, 2) online aliases are always "artificial" in some sense so Ronson can only be trying to protect his "brand", and 3) "The Internet is not the real world" (Dan O'Hara). Ronson's response to (3) was "I write my tweets . . . And I press send. So it's me on Twitter". The researchers were surprised by Ronson's response, with O'Hara stating that Ronson must be in the minority of users who use their real name. The implication of O'Hara's response is that the Twitter handle indicates the intention of the person who uses the account, if their handle is not their real name then they must be using an artificial online alias.

The first response here is out of the scope of this discussion, but I will note that it is a bizarre point to make when you are also using someone's photograph and not merely

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[19]The concept of an infomorph was introduced by Charles Platt in his novel *The Silicon Man* (1991). In the novel, a biological mind is transferred into a computer. An infomorphic aesthetic, then, would seem to be an attempt to create a Twitter bot that is mind-like in its appearance.

a name identical to theirs. Without spending time on an in depth analysis of the case, I take it that (3) is illustrative of a general attitude about the Internet[20]. What makes this complicated is that it's not clear that (2) is as widely held. That is, it often seems that people think of the Internet as not the "real world" but treat their online accounts as extensions of themselves (even if they use a handle online distinct from their real name). Personal identity is a tricky issue at the best of times, fortunately all we need here is that people behave in online discourse differently than they do offline and that people generally have different expectations for offline discourse than online discourse. I am sceptical of the idea that people treat their online activities in the way that (2) suggests, as the actions of some character one plays online.

Of course, if everyone was playing online characters then we would have an explanation of why people behave differently online. We would plausibly also have a justification for the distinctness thesis because online discourse would be plausibly very much like the video game situation. Whether or not the isolation thesis would or would not hold would depend on whether or not extensive online role-playing leads to changes in offline interaction. Of course (2) is a very strong thesis, and one that seems implausible. It is also not required in an explanation of why online and offline behaviour may differ. People could behave very different online without needing to take on an artificial alias just because they take the Internet to have different norms. If people generally think that the Internet "isn't the real world" then, as the distinctness thesis suggests, they may take it simply to have different norms. This is only part of the distinctness thesis though, what we also require are reasons to think that these alternative norms are acceptable ones to have. This is something I don't think we have good reason to adopt.

Some combination of these two theses are often used in another area of (public) debate: violent video games[21].

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[20]Ronson was able to generate an online shaming episode that resulted in the removal of the bot, for details see Ronson (2015).

[21]I focus here just on a laypersons take on the debate, there is a distinct literature in philosophy

To use an example, the very popular *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* (PUBG) is a multiplayer online battle royale game. Each match involves up to one hundred human players on an island competing to be the last alive. Players must search for different kinds of weapons, but primarily guns, and then search out other players to kill in order to win. Between March 23 2017 and July 19 2017 during the game's early access release, PUBG players racked up approximately a total 703 million deaths by guns in a somewhat staggering 25,815 years of combined gameplay (Rad, 2017). Should we be concerned about these simulated killings? In what ways? In reflecting on arguments against violent video games, I think we can draw out the following three kinds of concerns. First, and most familiar, are *causal concerns* that the violence of a game can make people de-sensitised to real world violence, make them more likely to engage in real world violence, have less empathy for others, lose the ability to tell fantasy from reality, etc. Second are *character concerns* that what people do in these games reflects their true or genuine moral character or moral beliefs. Third, the *reality concern* that violence in video games is real violence even if it exists in the virtual world. The general question underlying reality concerns is whether or not the actions taken in the game are morally evaluable by our normal standards in non-game life.

I take it that the isolation thesis and the distinctness thesis are both plausible in the case of violent video games because we have not substantiated any of these three kinds of concerns. Causally, the actions taken in the game do not appear to make people more violent or aggressive outside of the game. In reflecting on the character concerns, it is highly implausible that the throwing of simulated grenades, for example, is an indication of someone's real moral character. Given that many players of violent video games also play very benign games like *Stardew Valley*, that involve tending simulated gardens and patting simulated farm animals, it is difficult to see why only the violent games

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that takes up these issues in a rigorous way. My discussion here is merely motivational for the two theses proposed, I do intend to contribute in any significant way to the existing debates on the nature of violence in video games. For those interested in these debates, see Schulzke (2010), Patridge (2011), and Goerger (2017) for a sample.

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would indicate someone's moral character. More likely, players draw a basic distinction between actions in game and actions in the real world that make them both bearable to watch and to carry-out. Insofar as players may get very angry or frustrated while playing the game (even "rage-quitting"), it is difficult to see why this should be treated any differently than anger or frustration at playing ball-sports like rugby or tennis. This entails an answer to the reality concerns, the violence of a PUBG match strikes most of us to be about as morally concerning as treating one's simulated pigs well is morally praiseworthy.

The distinctness thesis requires a little more than just the above, and that is that we take the simulated behaviour and content to be acceptable within the distinct environment of the game. The standards applied in a PUBG match are plausibly the rules and objectives of the game itself and these lay out the foundations for acceptable behaviour, goals, and norms of play. In this sense, the distinct game world has its own acceptable standards of behaviour, however, the depiction of particular events and the representation of particular objects have been contested in much the same way that artworks of particular symbols and imagery are contested as inappropriate[22]. I will not take up this issue here, but point the reader toward the Patridge (2011) and her discussion of social meaning in video game imagery.

Online shaming provides us with a good example of behaviour where we are in the process of deciding what online behaviours "count". While online shaming is widely practised we are far from comfortable with this. Take the case of Jonah Lehrer mentioned earlier (Ronson, 2015). Lehrer had engaged in a wide array of plagiarism across his work, and sought to make a public apology for this. While he made his public speech, a Twitter live-feed was displayed behind him, here is a selection of tweets that were sent from Ronson (2015):

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[22]Patridge describes one such case involving the depiction of rape of a naked Native American woman in the game *Custer's Revenge* (2011).

"Jonah Lehrer is a friggin' sociopath."

"Rantings of a Delusional, Unrepentant Narcissist"

"Jonah Lehrer's speech should be titled "Recognizing self-deluded assholes and how to avoid them in the future.""

Are all of the people making these publicly readable comments doing so under the guise of an alter-alias? It's of course impossible to say definitively, but it is highly plausible that a number of people posted similar comments through known personal accounts[23]. It is also likely that there are, among the personally identifiable accounts, a number of people who speak differently on online forums than they would offline. This can allow people to accept (3) without giving up on their identity in the process, it's just that the Internet has different norms in place that allow for freer self-expression. I've already set aside the idea that everyone making comments online is adopting an artificial alias. So, we are working on the idea that people simply take there to be different norms in place for online forums like Twitter than there are, say, for those people sitting in the audience in front of Lehrer when he spoke[24]. Ronson makes no mention of this kind of response from people in the room.

There is an interesting second kind of comment that came through the Twitter feed while Lehrer was making his apology. These people were made uncomfortable by the kinds of comments above. Here are a selection as provided by Ronson,

"Ugh, Jonah Lehrer is apologizing next to a live Twitter feed of people mocking him. It's basically a 21st century town square flogging."

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[23]They may or may not use their real name, but identify the account as a publicly facing personal account.

[24]Another option has been suggested to me by Michael Lynch, that people are not asserting abusive content online but rather *emoting* or *expressing* themselves. Thus, their "utterances" should not be viewed as anything more than, e.g., "Boo, plagiarists!". If so, we may need to re-evaluate how we understand the content of a great deal of utterances. This may well be the case, but even people are emoting instead of asserting, it can still result in the debate chilling effects and epistemic estrangement that I discuss below (§4.2.2). It is not clear to me that, even if the emoter takes themselves to be merely emoting, their audience perceives them this way, certainly those on the receiving end of online abuse do not take the threats lightly. This asymmetry can, I think, be sufficient to undermine our ability to build the kind of epistemic community we desire.

> "Jonah Lehrer is a real person. Twitter is making me so uncomfortable right now."
>
> "Jonah Lehrer's crimes are significant, but apologizing in front of a giant-screen Twitter feed seems cruel and unusual punishment."

For these viewers, the image of a real person in front of what one might take to be a fairly standard instance of online shaming has a significant impact on their experience of the tweets. The reality of the shaming is made transparent by the visibility of Lehrer, the target, in front of the camera. Norlock (2017) raises the disparity between the light harm the shamers believe the target is deserving of, and the target's experience of being publicly shamed online (and the impact on their offline life as a result). Of course, if (2) were true, we would have no reason to be concerned with online shaming because targets should all just know that the target is really their online alias that they are role-playing. That we would not endorse this is further evidence of the implausibility of (2).

Reflecting on online shaming is useful for our task in assessing online discourse as it reflects on our epistemic community because it is a common and expected behaviour online. It is also importantly a communicative behaviour, often taking the form of abusive and threatening speech. We can apply the isolation and distinctness theses to cases of online shaming in much the same way as we do for violent video games, as a test for whether they matter for our creation of moral communities. If the isolation thesis is true, then we ought to expect that online shaming has no offline effects. This is obviously implausible for the targets of online shaming[25]. If the distinctness thesis is true, then we need to know not only that people do act in accordance with (possibly implicit or tacit) norms that differ from normal interpersonal exchanges, but that these are also

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[25]In video games like PUBG that was our example above, it is worth pointing out that the other characters in the game are actual other human players. Thus the potentially risky consequences of game play could be considered from the vantage of the killer or the player killed. In both cases, the isolation and distinctness theses are plausible: neither players are harmed offline in participating in the gameplay in the kinds of ways discussed earlier. In the case of online shaming, it might be the case that the shamer's experience of the event is isolated online, but the target's experience plausibly isn't.

acceptable. Our second set of tweets to the Lehrer apology show that not everyone is convinced that these kinds of Twitter barrages are in fact acceptable. Despite the fact that they take place online, being confronted with the reality of the person who is the target makes people take seriously the idea that this is real abuse.

The case of Justine Sacco is a well-known and particularly dramatic case in point. After posting an arguably racist joke in a tweet, Sacco boarded an international flight home. Over the course of the flight, her tweet went viral. This lead not only to the online shaming experience, but to Sacco losing her job and many friends while in the air. As Ronson notes, many online shamers appear to believe that the target of their shaming will be fine, presumably due to their endorsement of something like the idea that what takes place online isn't really real. To many targets of online shaming who receive not only abuse in the form of tweets including threats of death and abuse, denying the reality of these messages is surely a much harder task. The distinctness thesis becomes increasingly implausible in the face of such cases. It is hard to see how someone who endorses the moral concept of dessert can justify the shaming and extended consequences that Sacco experienced as a result of her tweet.

Even if we decide that the space of online interaction is a distinct environment, could we justify the kind of behaviours seen in the first set of tweets? It strikes me that in order for the kind of messages that were targeted at Sacco to be acceptable, we would need to endorse something like (2) and believe that her online post was the product of an artificial online alias and not a real person. It seems similar in the case of Lehrer, if we was playing a character then that kind of abuse in response to him may be acceptable. In both cases, of course, we have a bleeding over into the real world. In Sacco's case, this is shown in the response of her employer, e.g., in firing her because of her tweet. In Lehrer's cases, just in his being a real, solid person delivering the apology. If we really endorsed the isolation and the distinctness thesis in regards to online speech then we ought not be upset by Sacco's tweet and we ought not be upset by the response to

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Lehrer's apology.

Much like Norlock (2017), I think the response to the Lehrer apology of the second set of tweets is telling of part of the problem facing online discourse. When we are responding to text-based messages or static images of other people we do not know, it is easier to forget that they are real people. Norlock presents a compelling analogy between online shaming and the familiar psychological phenomenon of moral distance that can explain why we discount the consequences of online shaming[26]. An appeal to moral distance could mean that we take our actions to have little direct causal impact on some distant other, or it can mean that we do not think we have moral responsibilities to distant others. In the online shaming cases, the former sense is in use[27]. What's important to take away from this psychological explanation is that it doesn't do anything to change our actual moral obligations to those who are the target of shaming. It merely provides an explanation for why we don't feel compelled to fulfill, e.g., our negative obligations not to harm people by publicly verbally attacking them (or in these cases, participating in text-based attacks).

Cases of online shaming are surely partly harmful because they fail to treat the victim as a person deserving of basic respect. I will go out on a limb here and suggest that generally speaking, we are in agreement that our moral community has improved with the abolition of the stockade and public pillory. So, if online shaming really is, as one of the tweeters comments, the 21st century version of public shaming then we ought to think very seriously about the morality of this practice because we would be failing to live up to the standards of our own moral community. Norlock (2017) proposes that online shamers disregard the target of their shaming in order to get social recognition

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[26]See also Unger (1996) for a book length treatment of the issue of moral distance. Unger considers, e.g., cases of sweatshop labour in distant countries. Part of the explanation for why we don't feel morally compelled to prevent these harms is that we don't feel individually responsible for the harms that people experience when the causal chain of events between us is long, or because the target of the suffering is indefinite.

[27]As I understand it, "distance" here is somewhat metaphorical and can mean physical distance, or cultural or ideological distance.

from fellow shamers: "In other words, [online shamers] seem remarkably disinterested both in the well-being *and* even in the presumably deserved suffering of the targets of online shaming . . . In many cases, the intent of shame justice seems to be to enjoy the company one has in cyberspace with so many approving others". The harms of online shaming are in most cases best understood as moral harms. Though, depending on the case, it could be that certain instances of online shaming are really attempts to silence certain voices, in which case they may also be communicative and epistemic harms.

In the next section, I consider two possible outcomes in our offline lives as a result of low expectations and standards for online discourse. I then discuss whether removing anonymity online is a plausible solution to the problems facing online discourse. I conclude that it is not, and we ought not ban anonymity on the Internet for wider moral and political reasons, and draw the further conclusion that paternalistic interventions online will seemingly always run up against our values for a free Internet.

4.2.2 Epistemic Estrangement and Debate chilling

Let us finally consider the isolation and distinctness theses with reference to a more transparently epistemic interaction online. Imagine that you come across an online lecture on cryptozoology from a sceptical perspective. In fact, imagine that the lecture is actually part of an introductory philosophy course on critical thinking. As we might expect, the video concludes that the evidence for Bigfoot is unconvincing and a rational sceptic would not endorse the existence of the species. You take a look at the comments and see the following:

> Samsquamptchs'cousin: "Don't you know they found DNA evidence for Bigfoot? Idiot."
>
> Enlightened-Banana: "GOVERNMENT SHILL. ALL YOUR FUNDING IS HUSH MONEY"

The responses of Samsquamptchs'cousin and Enlightened-Banana reveal to us that they

are both believers in Bigfoot. What do the isolation and distinctness theses amount to in an epistemic case like this? In general, and as we considered for video games, the question amounts to asking whether or not participating in these activities will impact on individuals' abilities to participate in the epistemic community. Given that our epistemic community structurally relies on epistemic dependence, the ways that individuals participate and interact with others is of great significance.

The isolation thesis would suggest that people's epistemic activities online won't inhibit or undermine our ability to create the kind of epistemic community that we want. So, in scenarios like the Bigfoot case, we need to be confident that the admittedly one-sided communicative interactions here do not have a bearing on the commenter's epistemic abilities offline. In more detail, that their responding to videos of lectures in these ways will not negatively impact their ability to engage in listening and critical commentary with others offline. The disctinctness thesis would suggest that Samsquamptchs'cousin and Enlightened-Banana are engaging in epistemic activity as it is expected and accepted online. There are merely different standards at play when we are online, these are distinct from offline interactions and so we shouldn't expect any conflict between their behaviour online and off.

Let us take the isolation thesis first. It certainly possible that Samsquamptchs'cousin has formed their beliefs about Bigfoot by reading and watching material on the Internet. As there is little scientific evidence to support the content of those websites and videos, etc., that support it, the existence of such content online is – epistemically speaking – bad for the epistemic environment. It is risky information that can lead people to form unjustified beliefs, and is justified by dubious methods that would be recognised as informal fallacies in other contexts (e.g., excessive reliance on anecdotal evidence, arguments from tradition, false authority etc.). We might want to describe this content as tokens of information pollution. For these reasons alone, the isolation thesis seems implausible for online content. We are primarily concerned, though, with the interpersonal aspects

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of our epistemic community so what we really desire to know is how responding to online lectures like this impacts Samsquamptchs'cousin as a participant in collaborative epistemic activity.

I suspect it is unlikely that this kind of online behaviour would result in someone responding like our students from the charity example in a university lecture. What it may do, however, is make them more likely to be dismissive of what they hear offline that goes against their pre-existing beliefs. Why? The concern is that the expectations for this kind of response online acts as a license for uncharitable listening and engagement. When it is expected that people will behave uncharitably, but not addressed when they do so, it becomes tacitly permissible. This can make the norms we apply in person look merely like matters of politeness, rather than norms that demand something more substantive: charitable listening and sincere engagement with the opinions of others. These offline norms so described, then, can be understood as norms securing social-epistemic recognition respect. Expectations of online discourse that tacitly permit these sorts of responses in turn permit denials of social-epistemic recognition respect.

To endorse the isolation thesis would be to think that the kind of aggressive and dismissive response shown by Enlightened-Banana is either all play-acting or not indicative of their reactions to hearing what they disagree with. Note that even if this is trolling behaviour and Enlightened-Banana is play-acting, then those seeing the comment still expect to see comments of this sort. This is sufficient for creating an epistemic community in which people expect that others will respond to sincere work uncharitably and dismissively, and so possibly undermines in the same way I described in the previous paragraph. What this suggests is the low expectations for online discourse and acts of the sort represented by these two examples are not isolated from our efforts to build desirable epistemic communities. They help to create a space where uncharitable, insincere, dismissive, and possibly abusive responses to others are expected behaviours that will not be disapproved of. Once again, they permit denials of social-epistemic

recognition respect.

It is certainly true that many people are upset with the state of online discourse, but it is also true that we still expect the kinds of negative responses that Lehrer received on Twitter during his apology. If we took seriously the project of creating an epistemic community where people can develop and enact their social-epistemic agency with support while receiving the social-epistemic recognition respect they deserve, we would be invested in mediating this behaviour more. It is also true that automated moderation exists in many platforms, but these often look for profanity or other kinds of rude language. The problem, though, is not profanity. Human moderators may be able to detect and prevent the publication of non-profane but otherwise disrespectful or abusive content. Of course, this is merely plastering over the problem without treating the source.

Much like being treated with moral disrespect, I suspect online discourse of this sort makes us disinclined to keep trying to engage with those who disrespect us. In §4.1.1, I discussed how the structure of epistemic communities is built on the epistemic dependence of its members. I also discussed how trust and social-epistemic respect are crucial for epistemic dependence: feeling respected by one's fellow community members, being able to trust them as informants and rely on their competence are important. To repeat the concern articulated there, we should be worried about the extent to which low standards for online discourse may gradually erode the epistemic norms that support social-epistemic agency. Many people spend a considerable amount of time on social media, indeed, a recent poll from the Pew Research Center puts access to smartphones among American teenagers at around ninety-five percent, as a result of access to smartphones, forty-five percent say report they are "online on a near-constant basis" (Anderson and Jiang, 2018). Another recent poll from Pew reports that eighty-eight percent of 18 to 29 year olds use some form of social media, seventy-eight percent of those aged 30 to 49, sixty-four percent among 50 to 64 year olds, and thirty-seven per-

cent of those aged 65 or more (Smith and Anderson, 2018)[28]. These poll results indicate that social media use is widespread across the population, and it would be surprising to find that our expectations of and exposure to the kinds of negative online discourse so-far discussed had no effect.

I want to extend the worries raised above about Samsquantch'scousin and Enlightened-Banana beyond undermining their ability to charitably and sincerely engage with others to "epistemic estrangement". By "epistemic estrangement" I mean a gradual process of alienation from particular members of one's epistemic community, resulting in a failure to recognise that they are deserving of social-epistemic respect. Put differently, one starts to assume that certain groups within one's wider epistemic community are really at base simply irrational, and their beliefs and values need not be taken seriously.

Filter bubbles are one source for this kind of concern, as we are more easily able to select our sources we become unfamiliar with the arguments and beliefs of those whom we take ourselves to disagree with. This is of some serious concern for debates around moral and political matters. Echo chambers are a related but distinct concern that can also lead to epistemic estrangement. The "echo chamber" concept describes a situation where one is exposed only to information from like-minded individuals (Eytan Bakshy, 2015). In both cases, we end up effectively in conversations with people we already agree with and the tenor of online discussion about those "on the other side" is represented in the charity example, the responses to Lehrer and Sacco, and the Bigfoot example. The affirmation that this can afford for the rightness one's own beliefs and worldview can plausibly lead to a dismissal of people who continue to believe otherwise.

The concern here is that low standards for online discourse – both for "speakers" and "listeners" – causes us to become estranged or distanced from the actual positions that people hold and this leads us to assume that the people holding those beliefs are irrational. That is, we may be more likely to assume that those with whom we disagree

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[28]The platforms include Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, and Twitter.

are irrational either because we have been licensed to simply dismiss them, because people in our "bubble" describe their views uncharitably or worse, or even because they express their views online in overtly aggressive or obnoxious ways [29]. Conversations with arrogant people are not terribly productive ones. Epistemic estrangement may also lead us to believe that those with whom we disagree actually hold the caricatured views attributed to them. A third potential consequence is that epistemic estrangement causes us to fail to recognise the areas of overlap with those whom we take ourselves to disagree with. Each potential worry I sketch here falls in an intersection between concerns around personalised and filtered online experiences and a lack of sincere dialogue and deliberation between members of the epistemic community.

Is it possible, though, that we really ought to just recognise that there are different standards online? If the distinctness thesis is plausible, then we are wrong to judge Samsquamptchs'cousin and Enlightened-Banana for behaving poorly, it may be that they are acting in line with online behavioural norms. If I am right that we ought not endorse the isolation thesis, then it seems that these online norms are not acceptable. So, even if it is true that there are distinct online norms, the distinctness thesis is not convincing because these distinct norms are bad ones. It is true that people behave differently online than they would offline, but given that so many people object to the standards of online comments sections, e.g., shows us that this just isn't seen as a space with its own acceptable norms. It is hard to see what the justification is for abusive, dismissive, or trolling behaviour that would make these norms acceptable. If it were true that online life was artificial and our presence on it was always mediated by similarly artificial aliases and not our real selves, then we might have reason to accept it (albeit as play or make believe)[30]. As genuine communicative and epistemic interaction, though,

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[29]See Boninger et al. (1995) for work on how strong opinions can cause one to misrepresent wider opinions on a subject, and Holtz and Miller (1985) for work on how strong opinions can cause one to exaggerate in-group consensus.

[30]Of course, a view like this would also seem to entail something like the beliefs expressed online by the alias are also distinct from our offline beliefs. This also seems implausible. I suppose it is possible to

it is difficult to imagine the justification for this sort of behaviour.

An extension of these worries is that continuing to treat the Internet as though it is a space with its own set of epistemic and communicative norms is what I term "debate chilling". Describing something as having a "chilling effect" is to suggest that it is acting as a behavioural deterrent. In this case, that the expectation of and exposure to poor quality online discourse acts as a chilling effect on people's desire to engage in dialogue and deliberation. Hampton et al. (2017) provides direct support for the idea that debate chilling is a potential consequence of social networking sites. In a poll study, Hampton et al. found "clear support for the hypothesis that [social networking site] use has a direct, negative relationship to willingness to discuss a political issue in offline, face-to-face contexts" (2017, 1098). This effect was stronger for Facebook than Twitter, and was present for discussion with co-workers, at community meetings, and at social events with friends.

If people's primary place to engage in debates is online, then consistently low quality and abusive discourse may prevent them from engaging. Alternatively, it may limit the range of people they are willing to talk with or undermine their desire to engage in debate at all. Debate chilling is a serious risk for the health of our epistemic community because it undermines some of the most basic methods for achieving our epistemic ends. The moral of the previous discussion, then, is that our expectations for online discourse are so low that we are making it permissible to deny others social-epistemic recognition respect. Furthermore, we are neglecting the ways that these low online standards may be harming discourse more generally. Ultimately, the concern is that this combination is undermining our ability to create the kind of epistemic communities that we desire: ones that enable social-epistemic agency to flourish. I propose that we understand the insincere, uncharitable, abusive, trolling behaviours as instances of social-epistemic

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imagine that one's online alias has all the same beliefs and makes all the same inferences, e.g., as one's "real" self, but then one starts to wonder why posit the alias at all. It seems more plausible to just deny that there is a distinct realm of communicative and epistemic activity online that is both distinct from and isolated from offline epistemic activity.

disrespect. It is tempting to write-off online comments like those considered here as just online antics, but as we have just seen there is not good reason to think that this behaviour is taking place is a distinct social environment nor is it isolated to that environment.

In the next section I discuss the proposal that we do away with Internet anonymity in order to address issues surrounding online discourse. I conclude that this is not a desirable option, for reasons to do with both wider moral and political values, and for reasons concerning our epistemic community.

4.3 Anonymity and epistemic community building

A tempting response to these problems of online discourse is to suggest that we do away with anonymity on the Internet. If people are forced to speak as themselves, then they won't behave poorly online by trolling and abusing others, or so the thought goes. We already have reasons to be sceptical of the effectiveness of this proposal from our discussion of the distinctness thesis. It's not at all clear that people will behave differently online when they are identifiable if they take online discourse to have different epistemic and communicative norms. In addition, it is hard to imagine how regulation of this sort, assuming that it would be put in place legally, could be implemented. We can still, though, discuss the idea in the abstract to see whether or not it is appealing. In so doing, I will raise a general issue for the imposition of paternalistic measures in service of epistemic ends online.

One argument against online anonymity is provided by Robert Fellmeth in an interview with Ralph Nader (2017). Fellmeth's objection is grounded in an interpretation of the first amendment to the United States constitution. He contests the idea that we have an online right to anonymity on the grounds that listeners have rights to know who they are listening to, "People talk about the right to speak and free speech on the utterance

side. But that's only one part of it. The other part of it is the right of the audience to weigh the credibility of the speaker". Fellmeth's reasons are clearly compatible with a desire to build an epistemic community that helps us meet our social-epistemic ends. They are motivated by our hallmark of trust, our ability to assess the credibility and reliability of those we may listen to. Fellmeth's concern is not with the standard of online discourse directly, but rather our ability to assess credibility. Thus, he is concerned about how anonymity may negatively effect our ability to afford social-epistemic appraisal respect (see 3.3 and Gunn and Lynch (Forthcoming)).

There is a deeper conversation to be had here about whether this is a plausible interpretation of the first amendment, but I will not engage in this here. I think we can evaluate an epistemic version of the suggestion without having to ground it in constitutional rights. As discussed in §3.4, there are independent arguments for a robust account of epistemic rights on offer (Watson, 2018). Watson argues that these include rights to epistemic goods such as knowledge, information, understanding, and the right to form justified true beliefs. If we have a right to justified true beliefs, then it is plausible that we have a right to assess the credibility of our sources for evaluating the credibility of a source is important for determining whether it can provide justification for one's belief. If we determine that anonymity is an essential component behind the propagation of misinformation, the withholding of relevant information, or the propagation of falsehoods, then we will have an argument, supported by Watson's account, that anonymity is directly implicated in first-order violations of epistemic rights (Watson, 2018, 94). I take these three kinds of rights violations to be amenable to the concerns that Fellmeth raises as dangers resulting from anonymity online.

If we have epistemic rights of the sort described above, and no right to online anonymity, then we have a basis from which to argue against online anonymity. We now enter the complicated territory of privacy rights and the Internet. In addition, we challenge the status of the Internet as a place where the liberal ideals of free speech, free

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association, inclusivity, etc., reign supreme. The ideal of the completely free Internet is widely attributed to Barlow (1996), *The Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace.* As Barlow's piece notes, the Internet is both everywhere (digitally speaking) and nowhere (physically speaking), thus determining which laws and norms ought to apply there is a complicated matter[31]. We have strayed again, though, into wider concerns about our epistemic environment as it exists on the Internet. Our concern is still primarily what we can do to address the ways that online discourse and our expectations for online discourse do not promote social-epistemic recognition respect.

We can, though, observe here that any attempt to promote epistemic ends online will infringe or at least challenge these ideals of a completely free Internet. Consider an academic community that upheld the standards we have online. We would have to remove a great many of the rules and regulations that demand transparency and accountability of researchers in service of the integrity of information. We require researchers to be qualified in order to get funding and institutional affiliations, thus limiting the potential pool of participants. We impose restrictions on the methods that scientists may use, on the ways that the present information to others, and on the ways that they can train and teach students. Academic communities are places where epistemic goals are held highest, or most foundationally. Thus, putting in place measures that restrict the actions of members are reasonable and necessary.

The Internet, despite its epistemic promise, is not most basically an epistemic endeavour. Online activities are social, political, religious, artistic, and the list continues. As Barlow declares, "Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not think that you can build it, as though it were a public construction project. You cannot. It is an

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[31] "We have no elected government, nor are we likely to have one, so I address you with no greater authority than that with which liberty itself always speaks. I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear. Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. You have neither solicited nor received ours. We did not invite you. You do not know us, nor do you know our world. Cyberspace does not lie within your borders. Do not think that you can build it, as though it were a public construction project. You cannot. It is an act of nature and it grows itself through our collective actions." (Barlow, 1996).

act of nature and it grows itself through our collective actions" (1996). Trying to address epistemic issues on the Internet, then, will always be put against other values and ends at work in the same spaces. Demanding that social media users only create accounts with their real identities will challenge their ability to use those platforms for political ends that may require anonymity for safety or efficacy. Which reasons take precedence in each case will depend on the details of said case, a blanket ban on anonymity in the service of epistemic goals seems a rash decision.

Depending on our diagnosis of the cause of negative online discourse, different solutions can be put forward. I have proposed here that the problem lies in a disposition to fail to recognise that others are deserving of social-epistemic respect. Graham Smith, Michael Morrell, and Paolo Spada present a similar analysis for the problem of online comments for media outlets online. Their approach to the problem is to see whether inducing empathy between users can promote more "reason-based, intellectually humble dialogue" (Smith et al., 2017). The ability to take the perspective of someone else is one way to foster social-epistemic recognition respect, through encouraging understanding of someone else's epistemic perspective. Solutions to the problems of negative online discourse need not be tackled online, it may be that we need to invest in education and dialogue offline that encourages us to develop skills for charitable and sincere listening.

For the goal of upping the standards of online discourse, then, I hesitate to suggest means that would impose restrictions on individuals' abilities to use the Internet in their own ways. Given that I have located one of the main threats to social-epistemic recognition respect in a kind of psychological distancing, measures of this sort also seems to miss the main problem. What would appear to be required for addressing these issues of abusive or dismissive online discourse is that we find ways for individuals to come to see those they interact with online as social-epistemic agents who are deserving of social-epistemic recognition respect. Through, for example, sincere engagement with their online content, by refraining from abusive or trolling behaviours that demean others or

belittle their point of view.

In this chapter, I have argued that we are invested in a process of epistemic community building, in part revealed to us by present debates around social media, Internet personalisation, and online discourse. Two hallmarks of epistemic communities that support the development of social-epistemic agency have been introduced: trust and mutual investment in the epistemic perspectives of members (i.e., social-epistemic recognition respect). I have suggested that part of the cause of poor standards of online discourse is that we fail to see others as deserving of social-epistemic recognition respect, thus we fail to respond to them online in ways that supports their social-epistemic agency. I have considered and rejected two reasons for why online discourse may not undermine our efforts to build the kind of epistemic community we desire. I have also suggested that continuing to neglect online discourse may result in epistemic estrangement from members of our epistemic community, and in debate chilling which has consequences for public discourse more generally. The issue of online discourse is closely related to concerns about the general standards of public discourse, and in particular around public discourse of political matters. In the next chapter, I continue this reflection on social-epistemic agency and public discourse.

Chapter 5

Intellectual humility and social-epistemic agency in the classroom: A case study

In this chapter, I focus on intellectual humility as it is proposed as a solution to problems of public discourse. Specifically, I focus on it as a solution to bringing about productive debate and dialogue on controversial or divisive topics. In order to address these issues, many have taken to developing robust accounts of open-mindedness and humility. The long-term goal of such work is, I take it, to engage in education and awareness campaigns to promote the development of these traits, with the proposed cumulative result of improving the standards of public discourse through the development of intellectual character in individuals. I critically consider this approach here, arguing that there are a number of ways in taking an approach geared towards developing and supporting social-epistemic agency is a more effective plan for these same ends. Education efforts often involve engaging people in dialogue or debate on controversial matters with intellectual humility as a guiding norm. An awareness of the broader dynamics of social-epistemic

agency can help make us aware of what else needs to be in place to support productive engagement in these environments. When we consider conversations about controversial or divisive matters as social-epistemic activities, then we can identify barriers that don't *invite* and *enable* individuals to exercise their social-epistemic agency.

To ground my discussion, I draw on my experiences over the last two years in developing and teaching courses about intellectual humility and public discourse. These classes were a part of the Humility and Conviction in Public Life project (HCPL)[1]. The mission of HCPL is to look directly at the apparent tension between humility and conviction in order to attempt to answer how we can repair fractious public discourse by better balancing these attitudes. The narrative of this chapter follows the development of the course over the two years I was involved as instructor of record. As mentioned above, one component of the solution to these problems of public discourse is education aimed at developing the intellectual character of individuals and having them participate in structured dialogues or debates, and it is this process that I focus on here.

In §5.1, I begin by elaborating on the intent and initial design of the courses. I then explain how we might recognise barriers to engagement in divisive or controversial dialogue and debate through a social-epistemic lens. I proceed to propose three observations from my experiences in the classroom that I argue have consequences for thinking about how we engage in intellectual humility education. First, I discuss the importance of establishing common ground between educators and students, what I will describe is a process of establishing social-epistemic trust (§5.2). Second, I discuss the process of creating places *for* dialogue on divisive issues, I raise the importance of atmosphere and physical space for creating places that support social-epistemic agency (§5.3). Third, I identify two apparently competing demands for safe (conversational) spaces in response to divisive and controversial issues on campuses (§5.4). I argue that both are reasonable from the perspective of supporting and enabling social-epistemic agency, albeit in differ-

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[1]A interdisciplinary research project hosted at the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute, and funded by the John Templeton Foundation and the University of Connecticut.

ent ways. I also address in this section what I call the 'servility objection' to accounts of intellectual humility. I conclude in §5.5 by briefly considering how these observations comport with existing accounts of intellectual humility.

5.1   Aims of the classes, a concern, and a risk

In this section, I begin by describing in more detail the classes and their connection to the research project. I then raise a concern about the model of educating for intellectual humility. The concern is a practical one, about framing, that results from common models of intellectual humility as a mean between intellectual arrogance and intellectual diffidence. I propose an advantage to re-framing the goals in social-epistemic terms that avoids this concern. I then raise a risk inherent in inviting people to engage in conversation on controversial topics. This risk is spread out asymmetrically across persons, and concerns the ways that asking people to call into doubt their epistemic perspective can be potentially harmful to them. The concern and the risk can both function as barriers to public discourse on controversial subjects. I conclude the section by describing 'epistemic arrogance' in terms of social-epistemic agency.

The three classes I will reflect on in this chapter were all 1 credit, First Year Experience (FYE) classes titled, "Disagreement and Debate: Science, Religion, and Public Discourse". They consisted of small (between 7-13 students) groups of first and second year university students, making the classes suitable for discussions that involved everyone in the room regularly participating. The pedagogical goals of the classes were to teach the students about intellectual humility while helping them to develop intellectual humility through an applied, dialogue based course on the controversial topic of science and religion in the United States.

The definition of intellectual humility used by HCPL and in the FYE classes is a broad

one, including themes from several prominent accounts in the philosophical literature[2]. The definition is the following,

> Intellectual humility can be understood as involving the owning of one's cognitive limitations, a healthy recognition of one's intellectual debts to others, and low concern for intellectual domination and certain kinds of social status. It is closely allied with traits such as open-mindedness, a sense of one's fallibility, and being responsive to reasons.

The first course in the fall semester of 2016 progressed from the topics of religion and democracy, to areas of disagreement between science and religion, to barriers to public discourse, and concluded with the final weeks on intellectual humility and relativism[3]. The abstract plan, then, was to explore the problems around religion and science, and look at particular problems of public debates on these topics. Some of these included gay marriage rights, teaching religion in schools, and the exclusion of religious reasons in political life. Intellectual humility and other virtues were introduced as a means of addressing these issues of public discourse. Students were required to watch or listen to media (e.g., podcasts, YouTube clips) relevant to each week's conversation out of class and come to class prepared for a discussion.

The content of the course would promote the idea that intellectually humble discourse was a missing element that could enable more productive public discourse. In addition, that our convictions about, e.g., our personal religion or about the superiority of science, are inhibiting our ability to productively engage with one another. The method in the classroom, as I approached it, was to engage in open discussion on the media and the theme of the week (e.g., religion and education, or religion and democracy), would attempt to promote intellectual humility through the instructor serving as an exemplar and also prompting students to practice intellectually humble enquiry[4].

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[2]They include, notably those of Whitcomb et al. (2017); Roberts and Wood (2003)
[3]The course was initially developed by Casey Johnson and Michael P. Lynch.
[4]The role of exemplars for teaching intellectual character traits has a long history, as discussed

I want to raise a practical concern at this point about some models of intellectual humility. It is not uncommon for 'intellectual humility' to be defined as an Aristotelian mean between intellectual arrogance (being overly confident and convicted about one's beliefs, making them resistant to change) or intellectual diffidence (having very little conviction about one's beliefs, thus giving up on one's beliefs too easily). If we adopt a picture like this, then we frame the problems inhibiting productive public discourse on controversial issues as a matter of a lack of individual character traits. Furthermore, we judge that people are either too intellectually arrogant or too intellectually diffident, and thus that they are in need of intellectual character work before productive conversations can be had with them. Transparency around pedagogical aims in a class designed for intellectual humility education, then, runs the risk of telling students that they are intellectually arrogant or diffident[5]. Or at a minimum that students take it this way, whether its really entailed by the model or not. Of course, many virtue theorists note that few persons reach the level of the sage and so we should expect that individuals do not possess full intellectual virtue. The terms come with normative weight, "arrogance" is never a positive character trait in non-technical uses. This is something that needs to be accounted for in introducing the notions to students.

If we understand the proposal in purely social-epistemic agential terms, then we will not adopt this framing of character development. We understand social-epistemic agency as the degree to which an individual is able to bring about desired social-epistemic changes, and we look closely at the ways that their ability to do this is subject to inter-personal constraints. The traits or attitudes that we want to capture with 'intellectual humility' may then be understood in terms of social-epistemic competencies that bear on one's ability to engage in productive dialogue and debate[6]. We introduce the topic

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by Battaly (2016). Battaly (2016) proposes five strategies for teaching lower level logic students virtue responsibilist virtues. See also Ritchart (2002) for further discussion of teaching for intellectual character virtues.

[5]Alternatively, it runs the risk of students seeing *others* as intellectually arrogant or diffident, while cognitive biases may lead them to think they are intellectually humble.

[6]This is intentionally disjunctive, some propose intellectual humility as a character trait of the excel-

by discussing dialogue and debate as a social-epistemic activity with a particular end, e.g., coming to a decision about whether religion should be taught in schools. We then reflect on the ways that our beliefs, values, and personal desires may influence our ability to participate. The conversation can then take the form of engaging in self-reflection to uncover the cognitive attitudes that form our epistemic perspective, the processes of socialisation that lead to their acquisition (personal experience, wider socio-cultural structures, etc.), and opens up the possibility for engaging in critical assessment of those attitudes and beliefs in light of these facts. I think this is less threatening, because it allows for a broader reflection on how and why we might have beliefs particularly resistant to change (e.g., they were assumed to be true at home and were not up for debate).

This leads to the risk that I think is inherent in engaging in conversation on controversial topics. When the topics are controversial matters (politically, morally) it is not uncommon that people's stance on the issue in question, e.g., whether religion should be taught in schools, will crossover with some basic values or fundamental beliefs in their epistemic perspective[7]. Thus, controversial conversations are likely to be ones where our epistemic perspective is to some degree put on the line for critique. That is, if my epistemic perspective is shaped to a large degree around my religious beliefs then engaging in a debate about the legitimacy of religious belief is likely to be significant for me in ways it isn't for an agnostic or an atheist. When we scrutinise *this subject*, we also scrutinise the way that I make sense of the world. Some topics, then, may be particularly costly to engage in debate around for some persons. Accounts of intellectual humility often involve some means by which we should admit the limitations of our intellect, call into (sometimes radical doubt) our existing beliefs, or take seriously the possibility that someone else's worldview that contradicts some aspect(s) of ours is plausible. Taken together, we have the possibility that taking these humility recommendations seriously

lent thinker (Zagzebski, 2012; Roberts and Wood, 2003), while others propose it as an attitude (Tanesini, 2018).

[7]Of course, it may be politically or morally risky for them to participate as well. I want to focus here just on the social-epistemic risk posed to their epistemic perspective.

may be significantly disorienting for some people.

I don't make these points to undermine the idea that we ought to have a healthy dose of scepticism about our beliefs, nor that we should not be open to the idea that we may be wrong. These points are instead significant because we are considering the need to engage people in conversations and to engage from a perspective that might be radically different or even deeply unsettling to what they are used to. That is, we may be asking people to question their own epistemic perspective in ways that can undermine their usual methods of making sense of things, and then to express themselves in unfamiliar ways. This is – particularly for people who may be encountering it the first time – very demanding work. It is the kind of activity that may in some cases be sufficiently disorienting that it inhibits a persons ability to exercise their social-epistemic agency.

As I will consider in a later section (§5.4), I think it is clear that there are some contexts in which asking people to put aside their beliefs in order to engage in dialogue on divisive issues that are personally risky may be an unreasonable demand. In situations like these, recommending that people own their cognitive limitations or otherwise doubt their epistemic perspectives (as most accounts of intellectual humility recommend in some fashion) is potentially harmful. The concern and risk I have just outlined can both serve as barriers to conversations on controversial topics, but they are not insurmountable ones if we intentionally design for them.

There are a range of ways that barriers can prevent participation in conversations on controversial issues, given the interpersonal dimensions of social-epistemic agency the ways that others respond to us in an important aspect. Lynch (2018) proposes an account of 'epistemic arrogance', a social-psychological attitude that causes some people to act in a variety of ways that indicate that they do not think they have anything to learn from others. "They are ... committed to the idea that some or more aspects of their worldview will not be epistemically improved by the evidence or experience of others" (Lynch, 2018, 5). Clearly, those who exhibit this kind of attitude are not going

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to be supportive of others' social-epistemic agency. Their arrogance inhibits the ability of their interlocutors to bring about certain kinds of social-epistemic changes, e.g., being able to convince, advise, or otherwise influence the beliefs of the arrogant. As Lynch notes, the presence of epistemic arrogance is likely to diminish participation in public discourse.

Epistemic arrogance can result in silencing and credibility deficits. In these kinds of cases, the social-epistemic agency of those trying to engage with the arrogant may be inert, thus it is pointless for them to participate (insofar as their desire to participate is predicated on their ability to actually influence the conversation). Arrogance may manifest in a lack of mutual social-epistemic respect[8]. Credibility deficits can amount to a failure of social-epistemic appraisal respect. For example, someone who endorses scientism may not afford deserved credibility to religious people in the conversation. Alternatively, it could be that their support of scientism causes them to deny the very rationality of the religious participants, thus denying them social-epistemic recognition respect. These kinds of cases present a barrier to public discourse through making it an uninviting social-epistemic activity.

Viewed in these ways, engaging in conversations about controversial or divisive material is likely to be (social-epistemically) risky for some members. This may be because the topic requires them to suspend belief about things they find basically valuable and so would undermine their epistemic perspective. People may be resistant to engage because of the likelihood that they personally will not be afforded social-epistemic appraisal or recognition respect by other potential attendees. In the next sections, I take up some barriers to discourse I encountered over teaching the FYE class. I begin with the lowest point in the trajectory of the course — fortunately a period only at the very beginning. Changes in the content, method, and physical space introduced resulted in a marked improvement, and can be understood by paying more attention to the social-epistemic

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[8]My initial presentation of social-epistemic recognition respect can be found in chapter 3, beginning in §3.3.

agential needs of students in the class. My suggestion is that these observations are relevant for thinking more broadly about ways we can encourage and facilitate productive public discourse on these issues.

5.2   Social-epistemic trust and investment

The first observation I present draws our focus to the role of what I will call 'social-epistemic trust' for facilitating conversations on controversial or divisive topics in the classroom. I begin by describing the problems I encountered with the initial design and implementation of the first FYE course. I then raise two points to support this observation, and explain them with reference to how I changed the class over the semester.

The first concerns the need to develop an understanding of the epistemic perspective of the members of the group in order to make these social-epistemic activities both appealing to them and something they feel they can contribute to. The second is that engaging in conversations on controversial or divisive subjects makes us vulnerable to one another in a social-epistemic kind of way. It does so by causing us to put on the table some of our important values or beliefs and subject them to scrutiny by others. We risk being shutdown by others (having our social-epistemic agency undermined), being critiqued by them (perhaps having our social-epistemic competence weighed and measured), having to defend some of our basic commitments. From the philosopher's perspective, we would expect nothing less — these are all good things we should be prepared to do! But we should not overlook how this can strike a group of students, or other groups whom we may be trying to engage in dialogue or debate on controversial issues[9].

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[9]As will become important later, we should also not overlook that some people are often the subject of critique for their worldviews. Without considering any of the ways in which this may or may not be justified (which will of course turn on the worldview that they have), it is important for considering the dynamics of a conversation. Students who are religious, for example, are likely to spend a lot more of their time defending their beliefs than those who are agnostic or atheist, and this may influence their desire to participate or their attitude when participating.

The main barrier was the following: the conversation that the course was centred on – disagreement and debate on religion and science – assumed that the students in the course were familiar with, or at least interested in, public discourse on controversial issues. I found myself in the first week in a very small class of seven freshmen in their first semester of university who not only had no idea what the course was on but little to no antecedent interest in the topic. Even though the class was small, their unfamiliarity with one another made them reluctant to contribute. In short, the class was silent, the students uncomfortable, and the material assumed a background they did not possess. Over the first few weeks, I tried a mixture of lecture slides, worksheets, whiteboard-based activities, and round-table discussions on the material but did not experience any major shifts in the class.

The is a unique sort of situation, nonetheless, there are certainly similarities between this class and the wider speech situation regarding public discourse that are worth thinking about. When we propose that the solution to problems of controversial public debate is that we need the participants to be more humble, we are assuming that there are participants. This may not be true. Further, it might be that the participants are drawn much more from certain groups than others, and the barrier may not be arrogance or diffidence but just a lack of interest. If one of the major barriers is that people do not seem to be engaging, then we need to strategise ways that they might be included in these debates.

Eventually, I abandoned the syllabus altogether and decided to just initiate conversations with the class around an open-ended question. I started with a "would-you-rather" game with the following options, "Would you rather know when you are going to die, or how you are going to die?"[10]. My motivation at the time was to just to get them more familiar with one another and myself, to try to dispel some of the (what I thought may be) nervousness in one's first semester at university[11]. The game created a more

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[10]My thanks to The Starters, "The Drop-Off: Would you rather" podcast episode for the inspiration.
[11]I will point out in full disclosure that this was at least in week 4 or 5 of the semester. The classes

inviting atmosphere, I followed it with asking them what they thought about their expectations versus their actual experiences so far at university. Over the next couple of weeks I asked similar open-ended questions about the point and purpose of education, their beliefs about the value and utility of tertiary education, and worked up to talking about religion. The question I used to initiate a conversation on religion was on the same education theme: what do you think about religion in US schools, and why is the conversation seemingly about including Christianity and not Native American belief systems? The group was a diverse range, and included two students with close connections to Native American reservations. We had a very productive conversation about their experience, and about all of the class members' slow and incremental education about the reality of colonisation.

How might we understand this in terms of social-epistemic agency? What we expected to be able to do in the class was to engage in a more thorough consideration of debates the students would be somewhat familiar with. From there, we would work on developing skills for understanding and evaluating debates in an intellectually humble way. The topics of the course were intentionally chosen to bring up specific psychological weaknesses we all share (implicit bias) and examples of personal doxastic strife (an orthodox minister accepting his homosexual child), providing a good basis from which to talk about many aspects of our definition of intellectual humility. This, though, amounts to a discussion about a particular social-epistemic skill for engaging in debates or engaging in self-reflection on one's beliefs: how might I make sure I am intellectually humble when recalling memories about matters of substance? How might I remain open to a family member or friend who tells me something about themselves that goes against a strong belief or value of my own? In my view, this amounts to working on developing A3 competencies: helping students to develop social-epistemic skills for engaging in particular kinds of conversations, enquiry, or self-reflection (i.e., in intellectually humble

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were once a week for 50 minutes, so there was not a lot of contact time.

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ways)[12].

While this is a worthwhile goal, I had not established a sufficient connection with their existing beliefs, values, and interests. That is, they were not brought into this social-epistemic activity in a way that allowed them to make it their own. If the group was already interested in the topics, then this may have been less of an issue, but that was not the case. I saw a stark shift in engagement in the week where students were able to bring their own experiences into the discussion. The topic then became relevant to them, their interests and knowledge became aligned with the course objectives in a way it hadn't really done so before. This aligned their motivational attitudes, A1, with those of the class. This was preceded with the intervening weeks where we established a better in-class atmosphere, one that was more inviting to the students so that they felt that it was a place where they could talk about something controversial. For the two students with close connections to Native American reservations, the topic was clearly an emotional one and had significant ties to their early educational experience and growing political interests. Thus it was risky in the ways I described at the end of the previous section, but by this stage they felt comfortable participating and teaching us what they had learned.

When I switched to the "focus group" style, I stopped lecturing entirely and took on a different role in the class where I mostly listened to the students, pursuing the lines of conversation that came up. I would direct the conversation towards the themes of barriers to discourse but only indirectly. For example, when asking them about their expectations versus experiences of university we discovered some stark differences among the group. One student viewed their tertiary education purely vocationally, and so wanted classes with well structured learning goals and assignments and little creative or open-ended discussion. Other students wanted the experience of open-ended and wide ranging lectures with plenty of time to discuss with their peers. These students

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[12]See chapter 2 for the discussion of social-epistemic agential competencies.

were less concerned about grades and more concerned with having a particular kind of experience. This conversation made some sense of the vocationally oriented student's reluctance earlier in the course to participate; the class was not designed in the exam-oriented way that she preferred and it didn't clearly appeal to her career interests. Once I was aware of this, I could take different strategies to involve her in the discussion and make more directed efforts at explaining how this course was beneficial even though it wasn't providing content specifically geared at particular careers.

What this shows, I think, is that in order to create a space for dialogue and debate on these controversial issues, a base of social-epistemic support needed to be established. In order to achieve this, we needed to reach a place where at least I, as instructor, had some understanding of the A1 and A2 aspects of their social-epistemic agency. There is a sense in which coming to understand someone's social-epistemic agency involves getting to know the background cognitive attitudes (the doxastic, motivational, and affective states that affect and direct their social-epistemic agency) and the desires that shape the ways that they participate in social-epistemic life. In a class where you are directly trying to shape their social-epistemic abilities, it would be surprising to find that one does not need to engage with and try to understand the epistemic perspective and existing social-epistemic agency of the participants to some degree. Understanding their background in these ways makes it possible to ask questions that connect their beliefs and values with the subject matter, and in ways that they feel they can constructively contribute. Overtly working to understand someone's perspective can show that you respect it, you are invested in their opinion, and in their sharing it with the group. This serves the important role of establishing that everyone is included in the discussion regardless of their background beliefs. As an instructor in a position of social-epistemic power, this is a very powerful tool — and particularly in spaces where we are discussing potentially risky subject matter.

In fact, there was one belief shared across the students in each of the three FYE

classes that undermines the very goal of engaging in dialogue and debate on controversial issues. This was a scepticism about an epistemic distinction between knowledge, belief, and opinion. While it is common to tackle this with respect to moral beliefs or religious beliefs in teaching introductory ethics courses, for example, this was a more widespread attitude that encompassed a scepticism about things like the shape of Earth. My observations across these classes don't provide us with a representative sample of the population, and I don't claim here that this is an attitude we would find throughout the population (or across undergraduates, or etc). Rather, it is an example of a background belief that can seriously undermine attempts to foster intellectual humility and teach about intellectual humility. The way this background belief functioned is best exemplified by a common refrain I heard across the classes, "Well, that's their truth though, so you can't really do anything about it", or, "They can believe what they want to at the end of the day". This simultaneously seemed to license conviction for a number of students, and undermine the need for them to seriously consider that they might need to engage in debates with people who had different worldviews. I anticipated this belief after the first FYE class and was able to make it an integral part of the lesson plan for future classes. This demonstrates a clear way in which teaching about and for intellectual humility is benefited by doing work to establish an understanding of one's students: by allowing one to uncover pre-existing beliefs that might undermine the very purpose of the class.

We are familiar with discussions of epistemic trust in philosophy, but these concern whether or not it is reasonable to trust the testimony of others or how it is possible to take testimony as a source of justification for belief[13]. What was needed here was an establishment of *social-epistemic* trust. The approach started by understanding who was in the room, why, and by engaging their desire to contribute to this activity in a way that was supportive of their social-epistemic agency. They were then in a position

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[13]Examples of this crossover between trust and testimony are found in Coady (1992), Fricker (1995), Foley (2001), Zagzebski (2012), and Jones (2012).

to place trust in myself and the other members of the class that we would support their attempts to exercise their social-epistemic agency and afford them social-epistemic recognition respect through sincere listening. This is closer to familiar notions of trust of the non-epistemic flavour in being connected to vulnerability, but the vulnerability is to one's social-epistemic agency. The risk here arises in participation in dialogue on controversial or divisive topics.

Given the specific nature of the class with its particular content (religion, science) and the goals (trying to change their methods of enquiry, trying to make them consider alternative worldviews), this groundwork of trust is important in ways it isn't for a typical philosophy class — even ones that involve discussions of abortion, euthanasia, or animal ethics[14]. Establishing this common ground lets educational work start from where *they are*, instead of where we wanted to be as the research team; and it did so in a way that legitimised and included their epistemic perspectives, i.e., by establishing a baseline of social-epistemic trust.

It is certainly possible to impart the definition of intellectual humility to students and to ask them to apply it to a wide range of cases over a semester. If we want to achieve something more – to actually have the students engage in dialogues about controversial or divisive subjects – then I think we find a need to create an atmosphere of social-epistemic trust, to find ways to make the students take on the project as their own, and to feel as peers in the discussion. After all, the goal of the class – and of HCPL more broadly – is to provide education about (and for) ways that we can try to improve public discourse. With this goal in mind, finding the best on-the-ground methods for having genuine conversations about divisive subjects is important.

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[14]While these topics are divisive, we are often teaching about a particular article or argument and comparing it to another. The need to move on to the next topic or argument means that class conversations are unlikely to be as free flowing as this FYE course permitted, where the structure for class came from their participation and not the arguments under study.

5.3 Creating the right spaces for dialogue

The notion of social-epistemic trust encourages us to take seriously the idea that there may be certain kinds of conversations that cannot take place without particular "groundwork" first. I suspect this is right, and my observation for this section concerns the role of the structure of the conversation. The contention is that discussions on controversial or divisive subjects may just be the sort of conversation that are unlikely to happen productively without creating the right space for dialogue. The kind of space that we need is one that mutually supports the social-epistemic agency of participants and ensures that they are treated with social-epistemic respect.

Just briefly, I want to point out that this observation about creating spaces for dialogue applies to the subject of my previous chapter: the Internet. One of the very appealing features of the Internet is that it "brings us together", a great many online platforms are open and incredibly inclusive. This creates the possibility for a space where we might be able to have conversations with people whom we otherwise would never meet in our day-to-day lives. By extension, it is a place that is ripe for intellectually humble dialogue and deliberation between other-minded individuals. Of course, the topic of the previous chapter was just that the quality of online discourse is often terrible and decidedly un-humble. Nonetheless, many individuals are determined to use platforms like Twitter or Facebook for the kinds of intellectually humble and epistemically progressive conversations we aspire for in classrooms. What I will suggest here about creating space for dialogue does entail – I think – that many of these platforms are simply not up to this task[15].

In the time between the first class described above and the second that I taught, I

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[15] One of the conditions that I press here is a need to develop social-epistemic trust between participants. As I describe it here, this requires interaction with one another. It is possible that we could establish norms in an online space that establish something akin to social-epistemic trust and thus establish a base-line of conduct for participating in conversations in that particular online space. I do not develop this line further here, but do see possibilities for something of this kind in the ways that sub-cultures mediate the kinds of conversations and conversational moves, e.g., that take place within sub-Reddit communities on Reddit (e.g., specific Internet meme types, specific content).

was able to go through a two day training course in Civic Reflection facilitated dialogue with Deva Woodly[16]. Civic reflection promotes a model aimed at creating conversations for participants to reflect on their beliefs and values and inform their choices. The goal of these facilitated sessions is *conversation* — conversation that helps us to engage in reflection on our basic values, and to learn to talk with people whom we might not normally encounter. The physical space should be non-hierarchically organised, e.g., everyone sitting at the same level and in a circle. Ideally, refreshments are present to create a more social atmosphere. The method is designed intentionally to indirectly bring about deep and reflective conversation through an object, e.g., a poem, short-story, image, video. A conversation plan will consist of questions of three kinds: clarification, meaning, and implication. Importantly, the facilitator does not act as a guide for interpreting the text, the three kinds of questions can help to jump start a conversation or guide it along some themes. The conversation on the day, though, depends on how the participants respond to the text and so the facilitator needs to be prepared to be flexible.

The physical organisation of the room is important for removing presumed epistemic authority in the teacher, so that students (and the teacher!) will treat one another as peers. This helps to establish social-epistemic trust by not creating a situation where the teacher's epistemic perspective is not afforded higher status than any of the students'. The round-table layout also makes it the case that students are less likely to default to the position that the teacher will run the class, thus spreading responsibility for the conversation more evenly amongst the group. This is important for creating a space where a *conversation* can take place instead of a *lesson*. The expectations, then, on how everyone in will participate in the class are represented in how we set up the room. If we are asking students to be intellectually humble, and part of our method includes the teacher acting as exemplar, then the students need to feel that the teacher is actually sincerely considering their points of view as well, and that it isn't just they (the students)

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[16]The Center for Civic Reflection is hosted at Valparaiso University in Indiana. See the Kettering Foundation and the National Issues Forum for examples of alternative facilitation models.

who need to be working on listening appropriately.

We are concerned here with some of the ways that social-epistemic power operates in the classroom (§1.3), and in trying to mitigate the ways that it might undermine the goal of genuine self-reflection. If what we desire in intellectually humble conversation is that people will sincerely and charitably listen to and seriously consider the perspectives of other people, then it is unhelpful to have a situation where the majority of the group feel that they are being assessed. If we desire the self-reflective skills of our intellectual humility units (or whole classes) to be applied more broadly than the class, it is important to create a situation where the content of the class is internalised as something meaningful *for the student* and not merely *for a grade*. The atmosphere of a class can help this process. A rich conversation among peers about what makes life happy is very different in kind to a lesson that asks students to report on what they think makes life happy, and then subjects those beliefs to Socratic questioning. I think the rich conversation is more likely to result in members considering others' points of view as relevant alternatives[17]. The non-hierarchical layout of the room can help in this process by creating a space where everyone's voice is supported and presented as of equal worth.

The object-directed nature of civic reflection helps to address some of the barriers that have arisen so far in the ways that it supports the development of social-epistemic trust and minimises some of the risks to individuals. As I understand it, the assumption in the model is that our epistemic perspective changes how we respond to these objects, so in interpreting them we can reveal to ourselves, and share with others, some of the basic values and beliefs that shape how we respond to the world. Thus, it allows for the group to get to know one another through a cooperative activity that is low stakes, and so establishes the important groundwork for building social-epistemic trust. Part of the importance of reading a text together to see how it strikes each of us, rather than engaging in guided interpretation, is that it opens up a space for comparing and

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[17]This language is taken from Heather Battaly (2018) and her description of the close-minded individual as one who does not consider the viewpoints of others as relevant alternatives to their own.

contrasting our interpretations or spontaneous associations without worrying that one is getting it wrong.

Most significantly, the object-directed nature of these activities indirectly invites reflection on our basic values with one another and consequently removes some of the pressure of scrutiny that might come from asking individuals what they believe about a given topic. The object-driven method creates an indirect way to facilitate conversations about the plausibility of, e.g., miracles (the object was an excerpt of Albert Camus, "The Plague"). Students can speak about the object itself without having to talk about themselves, or they can share something of their own beliefs or experiences. Thus it enables people to feel secure in contributing to the group without feeling threatened. As people come to know one another and themselves better, our basic commitments become more transparent (our convictions, what intellectual humility would target hardest): a worldview premised on science, one on Christian religion, one actively being shaped through human rights education[18]. As the class was not set up as a room to challenge one another or our beliefs, students seemed comfortable sharing "From my perspective, and I know I always put it this way, but . . . ". That is, students were self-aware of their own values and how it was influencing their participation.

I have raised two important ways that we can intentionally go about manipulating the space and the structure of a conversation to facilitate dialogue on controversial subjects while supporting the social-epistemic agency of participants. Clearly, the suggestions here about space and structure do not translate into all contexts in which we might want people to engage in dialogue or deliberation in intellectually humble ways. Nonetheless, I think the methods, and similar alternatives, in civic reflection are a strong candidate for reliably creating space for productive conversation on controversial subjects. Moreover, I think the benefits come from the ways that the non-hierarchical setting and structure functions to equalise the social-epistemic power of those in the room. The overall effect

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[18]These items on the list represent some of the "characters" of students over the years in the class, i.e., the themes of their epistemic perspective.

is that a space is created in which participants feel equally included and supported in their participation. This also makes clear the narrower role of intellectual humility in these conversations, it is a valuable skill when we are taking part in the dialogue; but its usefulness is dependent on creating spaces that are mutually supportive and inclusive of the social-epistemic agency and epistemic perspectives of participants.

5.4 Safe Spaces and epistemic servility

A philosopher's perception of the barriers to public discourse often characterises it in purely epistemic terms, thus solutions are along the lines of equipping people with tools for argumentation and assessing one's reasons. By taking a social-epistemic perspective, though, we are better able to understand a wider variety of social-epistemic needs and thus ways that barriers can arise for public discourse. An interesting case in which epistemic and social-epistemic interests diverge can be found in calls for safe spaces on university campuses, and I will discuss that case here. The final observation that I will propose here concerns, then, the appropriateness of asking for intellectually humble participation in these different kinds of safe spaces. This has consequences for thinking about what intellectually humble conversations should reasonably be expected to be in a classroom, and by extension in other settings [19].

Here are two definitions for 'safe space' that represent a particular kind of conversational space,

> Safe space: A place where anyone can relax and be fully self-expressed, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, age, or physical or mental ability; a place

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[19]This section is a development of a talk co-written with Nathan Sheff, "Civic Intellectual and Civic Ethical Virtues: Skepticism and "Safe Spaces" in 2016 for the Public Discourse Project Seminar series at the University of Connecticut. My sincere thanks to Nathan for his contributions to that presentation that I draw on in this chapter.

where the rules guard each person's self-respect and dignity and strongly
encourage everyone to respect others. (Advocates for Youth, 2008)

Safe space is a term for an area or forum where either a marginalised group are
not supposed to face standard mainstream stereotypes and marginalisation,
or in which a shared political or social viewpoint is required to participate
in the space. (Geek Feminism Wiki, 2018)

I take it that neither of these examples represent 'intellectual humility' in any intuitive
sense. I agree. However, the norms that they recommend do seek to establish an
important kind of conversational space and one that I take it facilitates a method of
support for social-epistemic agency and activity. Communicative actions take many
forms and can have just as wide a range of functions. What these safe spaces guarantee
is a place where one can engage in self-expression without worries of being undermined
by others.

If we recall the "risk" I outlined in §5.1, these safe spaces try to create a conversational
space that is completely free from the possibility of having one's epistemic perspective
critiqued by others. In these safe spaces, people should feel safe and supported to express
their own values, opinions, and beliefs without being challenged and asked to defend
them. Having spaces where we can be free from scrutiny and being on the defensive are
particularly important for those who have marginalised worldviews. To be constantly
under the microscope, as it were, is not only draining but it is to experience a disrespect
to one's epistemic perspective. It does so by holding the recognition respect for one's
epistemic perspective hostage to one's ability to constantly defend one's worldview. It
is possible to respectfully scrutinise someone else's worldview, and I will argue below
that establishing a situation of social-epistemic trust is one such way to do so. In
conversational spaces where scrutiny is likely to be an attack, though, we find social-
epistemic disrespect.

Thinking about the need for spaces like this is important in considering when we we want people to be intellectually humble, and what we want them to be intellectually humble about. Accounts of intellectual humility that define it as a character trait suggest that to be intellectually humble requires developing a disposition to act in intellectually humble ways. This also suggests that individuals ought to seek to remain constantly open to the worldviews of others, and this may involve worldviews that contradict or undermine some aspect of their epistemic perspective[20]. If I am correct about safe spaces being places that protect self-expression and guarantee social-epistemic recognition respect for one's epistemic perspective, then it seems that intellectual humility would require that we ought to maintain a level of risk of the sort described in §5.1[21].

This gives rise to what I will call the 'servility objection' to intellectual humility. There are concerns among feminist philosophers (at least) that calls for intellectual humility are calls for intellectual or epistemic subservience or submission. The core of the objection is that it is inappropriate to demand epistemic subservience from particular marginalised groups. When intellectual humility requires that we attribute ignorance to ourselves or take a sceptical attitude towards our beliefs, it can put us in situations where we need to doubt our knowledge of, e.g., oppressive structures or ideologies. Should a racially oppressed group have to be intellectually humble with respect to the worldview of their oppressors, that they believe maintains their experiences of oppression? Should a woman who believes that her male co-workers receiving higher salaries demonstrates gender discrimination take an intellectually humble stance towards this

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[20]Battaly (2018) is a notable exception here in her considerations on whether close-mindedness and dogmatism can ever be virtuous.

[21]Of course, many accounts of virtue include a version of the clause that one ought to act with particularly virtuous dispositions or traits "in the appropriate circumstances and at the appropriate times". This leaves room for a development of an account of intellectual humility that can explain what the appropriateness conditions are, and in such a way that they can answer to the servility objection. My account of social-epistemic agency provides an answer along reflecting on the harms and gains to be had. In cases where members of oppressed groups are exposed to high levels of risk to their epistemic perspective, the epistemic ends sought in debate may be simply outweighed. I explain below that we do not have to forfeit the epistemic pursuit if we engage in sufficient groundwork to establish a conversational space that supports the social-epistemic agency of those who bear social-epistemic risks in contributing to a debate.

belief, and seriously consider their alternative opinion that her work (identical work) is simply less meritorious? To locate this objection in a class, should a religious student have to be intellectually humble towards their overtly atheist peer whose beliefs render their worldview as irrational?

I think we can find a response to the servility objection by understanding intellectual humility as a social-epistemic skill for engaging in certain kinds of conversations or enquiries. To develop this response, it is helpful to take a look at the kinds of demands for intellectually humble engagement in response to controversial debates or situations that give rise to the servility objection.

It is not uncommon to hear opinions that suggest that safe spaces, of the sort defined above, undermine efforts to improve public discourse. They are thought to be harmful to these efforts because they create spaces where people do not engage in debate about controversial issues, and instead create spaces where like-minded individuals can convene and embolden one another's worldviews. Here are two examples of university officials responding to students calls for "safe spaces" on university campuses that demonstrate this attitude,

> If you don't like a costume someone is wearing, look away, or tell them you are
> offended. Talk to each other. Free speech and the ability to tolerate offence
> are the hallmarks of a free and open society. [Quote of Erika Christakis, in
> an email sent to Yale University students.] (Shire, 2015)

> Addressing students for the first time in her new role, [Louise Richardson,
> new vice chancellor at Oxford] urged them to be open-minded and tolerant;
> and to engage in debate rather than censorship. (Crocker, 2016)

Christakis and Richardson are proposing that instead of safe spaces of the sort we previously considered, we ought to secure "intellectual safe spaces". These are spaces that instantiate core elements of the ideal of academic freedom: all ideas should be able to

be freely expressed and subject to critique. This shares some key features with many accounts of intellectual humility in that the intellectually humble remain in an intellectual stance of critical receptiveness to others' views and opinions. The conversational space that these quotes describe is a safe space for critical, intellectual debate. One that would ensure that all opinions can be expressed and that they are all also candidates for critique.

One such account stands out, that of Hazlett (2012). Hazlett proposes an account of intellectual humility as a *civic virtue*. He proposes to understand a civic virtue as a 'virtue' in the conventional virtue theoretic sense: as an excellence to perform some action in the right way and at the appropriate time; and to understand it as 'civic' because it is an excellence to do something well in the civic domain. In liberal democracies, this domain requires of citizens that they articulate and defend their views while critically engaging with the views of others. Intellectual humility is an "inwards looking" civic virtue that requires taking a *sceptical* attitude towards our own beliefs, knowledge, and values[22]. We are intellectually humble on this view when we have developed an excellence in attributing ignorance to ourselves, questioning whether we know, and withholding claiming knowledge. Hazlett also provides an "outwards looking" civic virtue, that of 'intellectual criticism'. Intellectual criticism applies the same sceptical attitudes as intellectual humility but to the beliefs and knowledge of others. That is, it is an excellence in attributing ignorance to others, questioning whether they know, and withholding knowledge attributions to them.

Together these form the conditions for the intellectual safe space we were introduced to above: a space where individuals engage in intellectual humility and intellectual criticism. In such a space we don't assume that what we know is true, and we work to actively critique all views put on the table. These are valuable spaces for social-epistemic

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[22]The sceptical dimensions of Hazlett's account are significant and interesting but go beyond my needs here. The sense of sceptical that Hazlett has in mind is formed through reflection on David Hume and Pyrrhonists, who take scepticism to be a practical attitude for cognitive action (rather than merely a conceptual problem).

agency too, but they are differently valuable. Intellectual safe spaces allow for traditional kinds of epistemic pursuits like argumentation, peer review, lectures, debates, and more generally activities in pursuit of truth. But, intellectual safe spaces stand in almost exact contrast to our original definitions of safe spaces as places where we can be confident that what we want to express is justified, and where we will be free from critique.

I have so far sketched two kinds of safe space, one safe for the free and uncritical expression of one's beliefs, values, and opinions, and one intellectual safe space where nothing is taken for granted and the pursuit of truth is the main objective. Both meet different needs of social-epistemic agency by facilitating different kinds of social-epistemic activity. Intellectual humility, though, only seems compatible with intellectual safe spaces, because it threatens to bring exactly the kind of social-epistemic risk that safe spaces are constructed to avoid[23].

In the previous two sections, I have been explaining observations about how we can create classroom spaces that invite critical self-reflection on one's epistemic perspective without introducing the risk posed by intellectual safe spaces. What is important to note, though, is that this was done by creating a very structured conversational space in which participants first developed a relationship of social-epistemic trust with one another. What this ensured was that all members of the class would feel that they were being afforded social-epistemic recognition respect by the other members. Now, it was not the case that this situation meant that students would necessarily be convinced by the worldviews that others presented, but that they would instead feel that they would be listened to sincerely and charitably by their peers and myself.

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[23]One might try to argue that even in safe spaces where speakers remain unchallenged, it is the responsibility of the listeners to act in intellectually humble ways in order to show appropriate respect to what is being expressed by the speaker. Given that safe spaces are often places of individuals seeking a place to share their experiences with similarly placed others, an appeal to intellectual humility strikes me as largely unnecessary. Understanding the dynamic in terms of social-epistemic agency is richer. We can understand the speaker as exercising their social-epistemic agency from a position of support of their audience — without which they would be unable to perform their desired social-epistemic acts. The audience engages in deliberate listening (§3.4) and in doing so shows social-epistemic recognition respect to the speaker. We can develop a descriptive account of the situation, and a normative explanation of the demands on the audience in terms of social-epistemic agency.

What I take this to have established is a space where the risk was avoided, a key feature of safe spaces, but where we could continue to engage in intellectual exploration of people's suggestions through using the object as a target rather than the individual, thus maintaining an intellectual safe space. Of course, the space was not perfect and this was not always the case, but at least this is how I came to see the one of the aims of the class structure. At one point in the third FYE class, for example, one member of the class realised that they could not maintain the intellectual safe space without saying something that would potentially deny social-epistemic recognition respect to one of their peers. The object was an excerpt about mind viruses, and they were worried that they could not frame their question about religious beliefs in such a way that it wouldn't disrespect our Catholic peer. The member of the class expressed this to me, asking me both for a possible response that a religious person might provide and for how they might ask their question in a way that wouldn't offend our Catholic peer[24]. I take it to be an achievable goal to create educational spaces that both afford social-epistemic recognition respect and invite critical reflection on our beliefs and values. This requires, though, understanding something of the dynamics of social-epistemic power, social-epistemic respect, and the ways that these come together to enable the social-epistemic agency of participants. My notion of social-epistemic trust captures these, and my observations above suggest that building relationships of social-epistemic trust is a key method for creating educational spaces for dialogue and debate on controversial matters.

Whether we are concerned with creating safe space or an intellectual safe space, what I have argued here is that we are catering to slightly different social-epistemic needs. On the university campus, the need for these different safe spaces, and thus a particular kind of social-epistemic support, is determined importantly by the respective identities of those who are to take part. That is, if the voices are those of marginalised groups who are routinely unable to exercise their social-epistemic agency to have their opinions taken

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[24]This was a striking moment in the semester, as this student had began the semester as a very outspoken atheist.

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seriously by others, for example, then we ought to create safe spaces and not intellectual safe spaces. We should not expect that students of marginalised identities will be willing to subject their worldview to sceptical challenge when they have not been able to first be treated with social-epistemic recognition respect. If we have a shared interest in the development and support of one anothers' social-epistemic agency, then we have a vested interest in ensuring that we create both of these kinds of safe spaces with respect to the specific needs of those who take part. It is possible to assess particular spaces and activities against their ability to cater to social-epistemic agential need, and thus to consider how we might best create a space that meets the different social-epistemic agential needs of the individuals we expect to take part[25].

Insofar as we are concerned with improving conditions of public discourse, should we maximise our efforts on creating one kind of safe space over the other? My inclination is to say "No". What we should do is recognise that the barriers facing public discourse are many, and thus the solutions to public discourse will need to be varied in their approaches. In cases where participation in a conversation on a controversial or divisive issue presents some potential members with significant risks to their epistemic perspective, we need to create spaces for dialogue that ensure they are treated with social-epistemic recognition respect and we do not simultaneously demand intellectual humility from them with respect to their epistemic perspective. This means that some spaces are "off-limits" for these conversations if we are invested in making sure that they are supported. Alternatively, it means that some subjects may be "off-limits" in certain conversational contexts, and that this needn't be seen as unreasonable for taking part in those conversations would cause harm to some members. In my discussion here, then, intellectual humility has taken on a role of facilitating only certain kinds of conversations. I have suggested that it is inappropriate in some conversational contexts, suggesting too that it is a skill for some kinds of social-epistemic activity rather than a

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[25]My thanks to Suzy Killmister for her comments on this section.

general disposition.

In the next section I conclude with some final thoughts on the relationship between some existing accounts of intellectual humility and social-epistemic agency.

5.5   Concluding thoughts

Over this chapter, I've presented three observations developed from my experiences teaching courses on intellectual humility. Taken together, they describe conditions that need to be met to create a conversational space that will help to ensure that participants are mutually supported in their attempts to exercise their social-epistemic agency, and that they will be shown social-epistemic recognition respect. These conditions go beyond what accounts of intellectual humility themselves provide, namely, accounts of intellectual traits conducive to epistemic activity, and bring our attention to some of the social-epistemic conditions that support such activities.

It is clear that the kinds of traits that are described in accounts of intellectual humility are important for our ability to engage in productive dialogue and debate on controversial issues. I have suggested that we should, then, consider understanding intellectual humility as a term for particular social-epistemic skills (A3) for engaging in certain debate and dialogue. These skills, however, can only be put to good use when we are actually in these debates. Considering these conversations from the perspective of social-epistemic agency broadens our attention to think about what other barriers might exist that inhibit participation or make participating a risky activity.

As discussed, I think it is possible to create educational spaces in which we meet the social-epistemic needs of students in order to facilitate genuinely self-reflective and productive dialogues on such issues. However, this requires thinking carefully about how we organise the space, structure, and methods of these conversations. We can do these things in classrooms with relative ease. How we translate these conditions into more

traditional forums for public discourse is a topic for future research.

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