# Knowledge, Community and Ignorance

by

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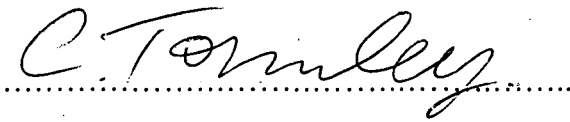
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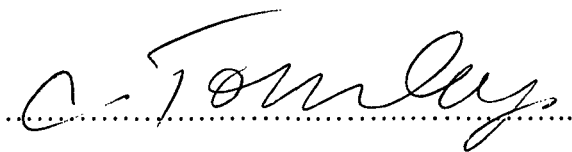
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Cynthia Townley

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# Abstract

Most epistemologists have assumed that the elimination of ignorance is an uncontroversial epistemic goal: the ideal and virtuous knower is maximally informed. This assumption is automatically extended to the assertion that ideal knowers will also be maximally informative. I challenge both these assumptions and their implication that it is always desirable to eliminate or minimise ignorance. I argue that ignorance, far from being an epistemic flaw in need of remedy, is demanded by important epistemic virtues, especially when the importance of epistemic community is recognised.

An initial account of the importance of ignorance is provided through a discussion of virtue epistemology. Standard virtue-based accounts focus on the acquisition of information through empirical evidence: scrupulousness, rigour, and objectivity are commonly identified as epistemic virtues. I argue that this list is incomplete, and must be supplemented with empathy, cooperation, discretion and humility. I show that while epistemology must attend to the desirable characteristics of knowers, epistemic virtues cannot all be understood as knowledge maximising. Furthermore, a properly communitarian epistemology must attend to relationships between knowers characterised by trust, respect and credibility. I will show that these features of epistemic interactions require the tolerance and even promotion of ignorance.

I then show the ideals of complete knowledge, epistemic uniformity and consensus to be flawed and inadequate. I argue that the ideal of knowers as information maximisers should be replaced with a conception of knowers as cooperative "second persons." The communitarian virtue epistemology defended in the first three chapters forms the basis for the discussions of trust, empathy, and authority that follow. I develop an account of trust as a source of knowledge that cannot be reduced to treating persons and their claims as evidence. Empathic knowledge requires discretion and respect from virtuous knowers rather than a desire to accumulate all the facts. I argue further that the epistemic

responsibilities of expert knowers are not limited to the provision or acquisition of accurate information. I show that an approach to knowledge that incorporates ignorance and starts from the ways that virtuous knowers engage with one another is a promising way to analyse practical epistemic concerns such as indigenous intellectual property rights. The thesis as a whole demonstrates that taking account of ignorance in epistemological theory enhances an adequate analysis of a range of epistemic practices that cannot be reduced to knowledge maximising. Ignorance is both theoretically indispensable to epistemological analyses and practically invaluable for a community of knowers.

# Acknowledgements

To my mum


*Elsa Townley*

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

Philosophy of knowledge has been approached in many different ways, but few epistemological accounts pay explicit attention to ignorance. This omission is striking since, *prima facie*, it would seem that ignorance should be as significant in epistemology as evil is in ethics. In ethics, for example, it has been important to discuss the nature of evil and whether it is just the absence of good, or a property in its own right. Vices are standardly discussed alongside virtues, (in his classic account of virtue, Aristotle identifies each virtue as the mean between two vicious extremes[1]) and, for ethicists, it is perhaps just as important to make sense of wrongdoing as it is to explain doing right.[2] Why don't epistemologists find it necessary to understand ignorance as the counterpart to understanding knowledge? I will show that epistemology can be enhanced by taking the role of ignorance seriously. Through paying theoretical attention to ignorance, it is possible to develop a more coherent account of central knowledge practices, for example, the role of testimony in gaining knowledge. Transactions between knowers cannot be accounted for by a motivation to reveal or to obtain the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so communitarian epistemology (or any epistemology aiming to account for such transactions) must give up the ideal of maximising knowledge as the central epistemic value, and must revise the associated neglect and dismissal of ignorance.

One of the main reasons for the neglect of ignorance is that epistemologists have developed models and accounts of knowledge that *obscure* the role of ignorance. If knowledge is presumed to be a single and unitary kind of thing, the highest and best level of cognitive achievement, then it is the task of epistemologists to offer a characterisation of this refined epistemic state. If ignorance is simply the lack or absence of knowledge, and the epistemological project is to give a proper account of

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[1]  Aristotle. (1962). *Nichomachean Ethics*. (Ostwald, Martin, Trans.) Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

[2]  For example, in ethics there are numerous discussions of Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments, slavery, and Nazism, and the problem of evil is a classic theological topic. In addition, there are contemporary discussions of the nature of evil itself, such as Midgley, M. (1984). *Wickedness, A*

knowledge (its necessary and sufficient conditions), then whatever fails to conform to this account (ignorance) is not salient.

However, treating ignorance as a mere negative to the good of knowledge involves a misconception concerning the epistemic domain. Knowledge is not the only epistemic good, and significant parts of the epistemic domain cannot be properly understood if this is presumed to be the case. In this thesis, I will argue that it is not the case that more knowledge is always better, or that ignorance ought always to be remedied. The epistemic domain is best understood through an account of epistemic virtues, the characteristics that are desirable for an epistemic player to possess. One recent account of such virtues includes "intellectual carefulness, perseverance, humility, vigor, flexibility, courage and thoroughness, as well as open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, insightfulness, and the virtues opposed to wishful thinking, obtuseness and conformity."[3] But competent epistemic players have to tolerate and to maintain ignorance in many situations and cannot merely treat it as an obstacle to be overcome. As I demonstrate, epistemic virtues often require ignorance. For example, when persons must be selective about what to reveal and share, in exercising the virtue of discretion, they are concerned with ignorance as much as with knowledge. A number of epistemologies are flawed by a failure to recognise virtues such as discretion, but understanding the role of ignorance is essential for understanding many epistemic interactions. This means that an epistemic agent's ignorance ought not to be presumed to be failure, and an agent's knowledge need not be taken as equivalent to success.

Philosophical neglect of ignorance is not absolute. Metaphysicians may claim that the noumenon, or reality as it is in itself, is ultimately unknowable. Ethicists investigate culpable ignorance[4] and decision theorists try to explain how we can judge rationally when important information is incomplete or lacking. In the philosophy of religion, the possibility (or otherwise) of an omniscient being can raise issues of ignorance, through the question of whether any degree of ignorance is logically necessary, and the relation

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*Philosophical Essay.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, and Kekes, J. (1990). *Facing Evil.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

3    Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 155.

of ignorance to suffering is a central concern of Buddhist philosophy. The fallacy of arguing from ignorance (*argumentium ad ignorantiam*) is committed when it is concluded from a lack of evidence for a statement's truth that it must be false.[5] In epistemology, however, ignorance is usually relevant only as the threat of scepticism, the impossibility of knowledge. Perhaps the most obvious instance of such a treatment of ignorance is Peter Unger's *Ignorance: A Case For Scepticism*.[6] Although Unger reaches a sceptical conclusion, recognising the ubiquity of ignorance, his discussion, like other discussions of scepticism, leaves the traditional understanding of ignorance largely unaltered. Ignorance is merely the lack of knowledge; its presence is a misfortune and its inevitability is regrettable. I will show that especially when a communitarian analysis of knowledge is adopted, this attitude to ignorance must be revised.

There is a sense in which ignorance is indirectly valued in science, as it can be seen as an advantage of a theory that it opens up new avenues of research. For example, quantum theory pointed to a great deal of new territory that previously was not known to be unknown. But this is a case of the prospect of knowledge and the opportunity to eliminate ignorance being valued, rather than a case where ignorance ought not to be eliminated. John Rawls' famous conception of a "veil of ignorance"[7] may also appear to imply a positive attitude to ignorance, at least as a methodological device. But since this is a pretended ignorance, a positive valuation of genuine ignorance cannot be located here.

In spite of the familiar saying "ignorance is bliss," there is an overwhelming presumption that ignorance is at best a necessary evil. In ethics, for example, it is usually supposed that ignorance impedes the good judgement necessary for responsible moral agency. Ignorance is often described as lack of knowledge, but it is not a neutral

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4   See for example, Smith, H. (1983). "Culpable Ignorance" *The Philosophical Review*, XCII(4), pp. 543-571, and Calhoun, C. (1989). Responsibility and Reproach. *Ethics*, 99, pp. 389-406.

5   For an interesting discussion of arguments from ignorance see Wreen, M. (1989). "Light from Darkness, From Ignorance Knowledge." *Dialectica*, 43(4), pp. 299-314. Wreen suggests that arguing from ignorance need not be fallacious, and that much depends on the context and what kinds of investigation are relevant.

6   Unger, P. (1975). *Ignorance: A Case for Scepticism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

7   Rawls, J. (1973). *A Theory of Justice*. London: Oxford University Press.

word, and it carries negative connotations. "Ignorant" describes behaviour that is impolite or inappropriate as well as cases when knowledge is lacking. A person exhibiting bad manners is called "ignorant," but the simple implication that she *does not* know better does not always follow, rather it may be implied that she *should* know better, or knows and should behave better. This use of "ignorance" as a term of criticism mirrors a tendency to assume that knowledge is always positive, that all things being equal, more information is better, and, for example, that experts who know better are thereby better judges of what should be done. But when we consider how ignorance and knowledge operate together, it turns out that knowledge and ignorance are not always respectively good and bad.

Given the relative neglect of ignorance in epistemology, it will be necessary to uncover the role of ignorance in a number of areas. I will show that ignorance is at the heart of selectivity with respect to knowledge, and the ways we treat information differentially in both theory and practice. It is simply not the case that knowledge is generally or uniformly valuable, and an epistemological account ought to be sensitive to the difference between doing science and counting bricks, for example. Analysing knowledge practices demands attention to ignorance. Ignorance is implicit in matters such as trust, empathy and the division of epistemic labour.

Ignorance has been misconceived in the following ways. Some knowledge is unfairly treated as ignorance in such a way that some knowers are disadvantaged and excluded. Furthermore, assumptions about the relative value of knowledge and disvalue of ignorance obscure the ways that ignorance is valuable. Finally, the view of knowledge as excluding or eliminating ignorance is mistaken. I will argue that knowledge and ignorance not only co-exist, but in some cases, ignorance is necessary for knowledge. Some ignorance should be treated as valuable, and in addition the characterisation of epistemically valuable traits should not be limited to knowledge-conduciveness. Despite its neglect and devaluation in philosophical discussions of knowledge, ignorance is a vital part of the epistemic domain. It is involved in trust, expertise, curiosity, discovery, learning, discretion, selective disclosure, epistemic

authority and knowledge transactions. Understanding the role of ignorance in epistemic affairs illuminates many of the complexities of knowledge practices, within and between epistemic communities.

It is necessary to take ignorance into account when thinking about epistemic interdependence. Reliance on others for knowledge is an ineliminable part of epistemic life, which is one of the most important reasons for taking a communitarian or nonindividualistic approach to the theory of knowledge. But knowledge differentials between persons and the division of epistemic labour involve ignorance, as others know what I do not, so understanding ignorance sheds further light on communitarian epistemology. In this thesis, I will use ignorance to criticise traditional models of knowledge and develop the concept of ignorance as a useful and positive term.

Lorraine Code's second person epistemology is an effective approach to communitarian epistemology. I will discuss it in detail and draw on its resources to develop an analysis of epistemic dependence, trust and empathy. Not all attempts to take the social contexts of knowers into account are as successful. Alvin Goldman, for example, coins the term "social epistemics" to draw attention to social aspects of knowledge, but I will show that his approach to epistemic dependence is problematic. I agree with his explanation of the importance of this field, but his position regarding expertise and epistemic paternalism remains too closely tied to traditional epistemological assumptions such as the universality and objectivity of knowledge. The analysis developed by Code is more radical in its revision of the standard epistemological position (particularly its rejection of epistemic individualism), and as I will show, it is a much more effective approach.

My approach focuses on knowers as the primary object of epistemological analysis. Rather than attempting a definition of knowledge (for example, of the "justified true belief" type) or an analysis of the concept of justification, I develop an account of persons who know and the ways they interact. I defend this position by exploring virtue epistemology, and show that, if modified to incorporate a positive role for ignorance, this is the most promising epistemological framework. I supplement a

virtue account with Lorraine Code's model of second person knowers. The strengths of this approach are made even clearer through a close examination of accounts of epistemic interactions that fail to take virtues and ignorance seriously.

Communitarian epistemology has a wider scope than traditional epistemology. Confidentiality and trust, for example, are classically discussed in ethics, but a communitarian epistemological perspective foregrounds their epistemic dimensions. That is, my analysis of the ways that knowers interact will show that trust and discretion are displayed by knowers in ways that are distinct from their moral characters. Moreover, I will argue that an adequate analysis of trust, discretion and confidentiality requires an epistemology that takes ignorance seriously.

My approach to epistemology is informed by the recognition that in order to assess the adequacy of a theory of knowledge one must investigate how the account it provides matches actual knowledge practices and also how its assumptions generate and reinforce certain practices.[8] Theories of knowledge are not only interesting topics for philosophical analysis, but have implications for many ethical, legal and practical matters. Presumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowers can affect the understanding of issues such as informed consent (through an analysis of epistemic authority), freedom of information (issues relating to knowledge, disclosure and discretion), and intellectual property rights (whether knowledge is understood as a commodity or product). In each of these areas, it can be shown that an understanding of ignorance is essential for a complete picture of the epistemic issues involved; my discussion in Chapter Six shows how the epistemological model developed in the earlier chapters provides a constructive approach to indigenous intellectual property rights.

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[8] Karen Jones uses the term "practical epistemology" to capture this idea. Jones, K. "The Politics of Credibility" forthcoming in Antony, L. and Witt, C. (eds.) *A Mind of One's Own.* (second edition). The term "practical epistemology" is also found in Code, L. (1995) *Rhetorical Spaces.* New York and London: Routledge. Sally Haslanger also argues for an approach to epistemology that includes consideration of the work the concept does in our practices. Haslanger, S. (1999). "What Knowledge is and What It Ought to Be: Feminist Values and Normative Epistemology" in Tomberlin, J. (ed) *Philosophical Perspectives.* Cambridge: Blackwell.

Thinking about ignorance also prompts insights into epistemic diversity. It illuminates aspects of approaches to philosophy of knowledge that are not explicit in standard accounts, by directing attention to what a given model excludes as knowledge, what it disallows or cannot recognise. Analysing these gaps in epistemic models provides a useful way of contrasting various approaches to knowledge, such as scientific knowledge, empathic knowledge and the indigenous knowledge discussed in Chapter Six.

I discuss ignorance both as a concept and as a state. To discuss ignorance as a concept means to explore its role in theoretical analysis, but because ignorance has virtually no presence in standard epistemological explanations, the topic cannot be approached through a straightforward investigation of existing literature. However, a significant role for ignorance as a state of knowers can be identified. In order to articulate the role of a concept of ignorance in the philosophical theory of knowledge, I will make explicit the roles of states of ignorance in epistemic activities and transactions. The aim is not to provide a single definition for ignorance, but to show that it has a range of important functions in the epistemic domain. My approach in this thesis is to show how ignorance is relevant to significant epistemological issues, and to begin to redress its theoretical neglect. I pursue the implications of taking ignorance seriously by focussing on types of epistemic dependence such as trust, and the attributes that good knowers should have, such as discretion.

## Outline

My project in this thesis is to demonstrate that taking ignorance into account illuminates central epistemic issues. In Chapter One I discuss the relationship between ethics and epistemology. I argue that even when a virtue-based epistemology is developed, the domains of ethics and epistemology remain distinct. I show that the promotion of truth and knowledge are insufficient ideals for an epistemology that includes epistemic interactions. These points are developed through a critical discussion of Linda

Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind*[9] in which it is argued that intellectual virtues must be truth conducive, and that the ethical and epistemic domains of virtue can be unified. I show that Zagzebski is mistaken on both these points, and argue that epistemology and ethics should remain distinct fields of philosophical inquiry. Zagzebski is correct to argue that the dimensions of epistemic value can be understood in terms of desirable qualities for epistemic players, but through explicating the role of ignorance in specific epistemic virtues, I show that that these cannot be reduced to truth conducive characteristics.

Chapter Two contains detailed criticisms of three approaches to epistemology. I discuss the duty to seek evidence as defended by Richard Hall and Charles Johnson, Alvin Goldman's epistemic paternalism and Jurgen Habermas's analysis of communicative rationality and joint production of knowledge, showing that, in each case, a distorted picture of the epistemic domain is generated when maximising knowledge is taken to be the supreme epistemic value and the role of ignorance is overlooked. Although standard epistemological assumptions have to be abandoned, when ignorance is taken seriously a better analysis is generated. It becomes clear that there are diverse epistemic goals that cannot be assimilated to maximising evidence, simple expertise or consensus.

In Chapter Three, I examine Lorraine Code's "second person epistemology"[10] showing that on such an account, a certain pernicious kind of scepticism can be avoided. The important consequence is that, contrary to the classic opposition of ignorance and knowledge, avoiding global scepticism does not remove ignorance from the epistemic domain. This chapter provides the positive epistemological account that forms the basis for the later discussions of trust, empathy and authority. I show in Chapter Four that, when trust and epistemic dependence are properly understood, there is an ineliminable role for ignorance. It becomes clear that trust requires ignorance because trusting precludes certain kinds of checking or seeking certain knowledge. This

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[9]  Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[10]  Code, L. (1991). *What Can She Know.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

has particular implications for the analysis of testimony because it shows that the reliance on others cannot be reduced to evidence.

Chapter Five explores the skill of empathy showing that here, too, ignorance is a significant feature. I contrast empathy with objectivity, showing that knowing through empathy is not a matter of obtaining the most secure factual knowledge by checking for evidence. I then examine cognitive authority, looking further at the ways philosophers have understood knowledge and power and explicating the role of ignorance in such structures. The complexity of relations between experts and nonexperts are not reducible to information provider and recipient: engaging with another person is different from consulting an encyclopaedia. Considering the role of ignorance generates an alternative analysis of epistemic responsibility. I am responsible to others as knowers, to acknowledge them, and to respond to their concerns. Just as an expert on an ethics committee must recognise the contributions of lay members, an expert ought to acknowledge responsibilities to the community. The responsibility of an expert is not merely to maximise and to disseminate their knowledge, but to engage with others.

Chapter Six examines indigenous intellectual property rights in order to show how the understanding of the role of ignorance developed in the previous chapters provides a constructive framework for exploring practical issues involving knowledge. I show that the adoption of models of knowledge concentrating on discovery and testing protect ownership of knowledge by scientific corporations, but different epistemic models would produce different outcomes, which are particularly relevant to the property rights of indigenous knowers.

My thesis explores the implications of taking ignorance seriously in epistemological theory, and in practical matters involving knowledge. An adequate epistemology must pay attention to epistemic interactions, both for theoretical completeness, and in order to be useful, since most dealings with knowledge are dealings with other knowers. Epistemology must accommodate epistemic dependence, and epistemological theories that account for epistemic dependence must also attend to

ignorance. Ignorance, therefore, deserves more attention than it has traditionally received.

# Chapter One

# Epistemology, Ethics and Virtue

## Introduction

Traditionally, epistemology has concentrated on the analysis of knowledge and the search for its necessary and sufficient conditions, and has pursued these tasks in very abstract ways. Until recently, discussions of epistemic agents (persons who know) arose only occasionally and peripherally in epistemological theory. In discussions of justification, for example, a distinction might be drawn between justification of beliefs and a believer's being justified.[1] In concentrating on beliefs rather than believers, epistemology has been a discipline divorced from concrete or practical knowledge issues. Believers, if mentioned at all, appear abstracted from social contexts. Epistemology, in general, has abstracted from time and context, by concentrating on isolated beliefs separated from believers, and in assessing knowledge and justification as they occur at some generic moment $t$, not as processes extended over time.

Epistemology concentrates on certainty, truth and the avoidance of error, but limiting epistemic ideals to these abstractions is misleading because there is much more to epistemic life than the pure pursuit of knowledge and truth. Such purity has little to do with the everyday activities of ordinary knowers, nor those of the scientific investigators who are frequently cited as epistemic exemplars. Exclusive concentration on truth and truth-conduciveness promotes a view of epistemic goals that is not only inaccurate, but is also pernicious because it contributes to a flawed picture of epistemic authority.

Dissatisfaction with mainstream contemporary epistemology has been expressed by a number of theorists.[2] Lorraine Code, for example, claims that:

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[1]  See, for example, Lehrer, K. (1986). "The Coherence Theory of Knowledge." *Philosophical Topics*, 14, pp. 5-27, where a distinction is made between personal justification and verific justification.

[2]  Feminist theorists are primary sources of such critiques, although not all such comments are generated by specifically feminist concerns. For example, the following comment is found in Webb, M. O. (1993). "Why I Know About As Much As You: A Reply to Hardwig." *The Journal of Philosophy*, XC, No 5, p. 270: "If I am right about the dependence of knowledge generally on trust, then all knowledge (except perhaps primitive perceptual knowledge) is as essentially social as science is ... This possibility raises several new questions, including how our analysis of epistemic concepts

> [f]eminists who expect a theory of knowledge to address people's everyday cognitive
> experiences and to examine the place of knowledge in people's lives, who expect it to
> produce analyses and strategies that will contribute to the construction of a world fit for
> human habitation, can find little enlightenment in mainstream epistemology.[3]

Social or communitarian epistemology, and virtue epistemology are the two main responses to the need to broaden the scope of epistemology. I take social epistemology to include both the explanation of knowledge as a social phenomenon, and the investigation of specific epistemic interactions, such as reliance on testimony, collaboration and division of epistemic labour. Virtue epistemology I understand to be a range of approaches which have in common the treatment of the characteristics of epistemic agents as central epistemic notions. The virtue perspective overlaps with social or communitarian epistemology as it encourages attention to those qualities involved in interpersonal interactions concerning knowledge, although it is possible to adopt a virtue perspective while simultaneously treating agents as atomistic individuals. Since notions like trustworthiness that typically arise in virtue discussions prompt interest in interpersonal aspects of knowledge, virtue-based and communitarian approaches to epistemology can work well together. In this chapter, I examine the theories of epistemic virtue proposed by Linda Zagzebski, James Montmarquet and Jane Braaten and show that there are epistemic virtues that are not truth-conducive or knowledge-promoting. I show how the boundary between ethics and epistemology can be redrawn in a way that includes attention to virtues of ignorance without collapsing ethics and epistemology into a single domain.

The theoretical neglect of the roles of epistemic relations between persons, the extent of epistemic dependence, and of reliance on testimony has produced a distorted picture both of the epistemic domain, and of the tasks of epistemologists. Communitarian approaches and virtue approaches have the capacity to raise issues about knowledge that

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should be affected, what happens to the skeptical challenge, and whether epistemic and doxastic practices can rightly be criticised on moral and political grounds." Jonathan Kvanvig also comments on what he terms the Cartesian perspective criticising "disturbing aspects of recent epistemological inquiry - aspects signaled by charges of irrelevance to the cognitive life and interminability of debate." Kvanvig, J. L. (1992). *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind*. Savage: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 187.

[3]    Code, L. (1991). *What Can She Know?* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, p. 267.

are overlooked in most mainstream epistemological discussions. Yet, even with the advantages of recent developments in social and virtue epistemology, some of the implications of expanding the epistemic domain to social contexts have not been fully recognised. Epistemological inquiry retains a strong focus on the value of increasing knowledge and the stock of true beliefs, and fails to explain epistemic practices which are differently motivated such as nondisclosure, selective informing, concealment, and confidentiality. The importance of these aspects of epistemic life is not reflected in epistemological theory.

Adequate accounts of epistemic matters like selectivity, discretion and trust are not generated by standard approaches. Indeed, mainstream epistemological approaches obscure these questions by insisting that truth and knowledge are the only valuable epistemic goals. Nor are these issues to be properly addressed through a reliance on considerations from outside epistemology. It is not enough to argue that nonepistemic (usually ethical) considerations can override the values of knowledge and truth promotion and hence can justify activities that fail to pursue these epistemic goods. As I will show, it is part of *epistemic* competence to reveal and pursue knowledge selectively.

In this chapter I show that these neglected epistemic competences can be explored constructively through epistemic virtue theory in a version that includes virtues of ignorance. Although virtue epistemologists usually claim that truth-conduciveness is the central defining characteristic of an epistemic virtue, I will show that there are epistemic virtues that cannot be explained by such accounts. The options then are either to reject such virtues (perhaps placing them in another domain such as that of ethics), or to admit that truth is insufficient as the epistemic ideal. I will defend the latter position.

I will argue that a virtue account of epistemology is strengthened by an abandonment of truth-conduciveness as the primary goal. This leaves two options for the structure of an epistemic virtue account. Either the central notion might be something other than truth (perhaps epistemic flourishing, or epistemic responsibility) or, as I will argue, there might be no central goal promoted by all virtues, but rather a plurality of epistemic goals and values irreducible to a single notion.

Discussion of virtue is more common in the ethical than the epistemological context, and it is essential to keep clear about the relation between the two areas of discussion. Although there are useful insights and analogies to be found in the relation between ethics and epistemology, unlike other theorists, such as Linda Zagzebski, whose arguments I discuss in detail, I argue that the two domains should not be brought together.

## Communitarianism and Virtue Epistemology

Virtue epistemology is becoming increasingly prominent in philosophy.[4] Before discussing specific accounts of epistemic virtue, it is helpful to clarify the use of the terms "intellectual virtue" and "epistemic virtue." The terms can be used interchangeably in many discussions, because almost all epistemology focuses on intellectual knowing. Hence the epistemic virtues that are discussed are those suited to intellectual pursuits, such as open-mindedness, intellectual sobriety, proportioning belief to evidence and courage which, for example, would be useful for a scientist proposing and testing hypotheses. But different virtues may be associated with different kinds of relationships as well as activities. Virtues such as sympathy, imagination and tolerance may be important for parents and teachers, and virtues of self-awareness may also differ from those virtues important for scientific research.

If a broad view of knowledge is taken, then epistemic virtues may not be restricted to intellectual virtues.[5] Such virtues could include the capacity to form good intuitions about character, virtues related to "know-how" or other non-propositional knowledge, trustworthiness which exceeds the intellectual domain, or those virtues related to empathy

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[4] See, for example, Guy Axtell's review article which mentions work by among others, Christopher Hookway, Linda Zagzebski, John Greco, Hilary Kornblith, Lorraine Code, William Goldman and Ernest Sosa in relation to epistemic virtue, Axtell, G. (1997). "Recent Work on Virtue Epistemology." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 34(1), pp. 1-26, and the Symposium (2000) on Zagzebski's *Virtues of the Mind* in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, LX (1) pp.169-219.

[5] Jane Braaten expands the notion of intellectual virtue to include virtues of imagination and empathy. Braaten, J. (1990). "Towards a Feminist Reassessment of Intellectual Virtue." *Hypatia*, 5(3), pp. 1-15. The distinction I am drawing is not meant to undermine such an extension of the range of capacities that should be considered intellectually desirable. But in addition to such an expanded intellectual domain there may be virtues associated with nonintellectual kinds of knowing such as empathy which I discuss in chapter 4. Zagzebski also acknowledges this possibility in her introduction (p. xvi) but it is not part of her main discussion.

and creative thinking. I discuss these qualities below: trust, in Chapter Four; and empathy, in Chapter Five.

Virtue epistemology is characterised by a focus on the qualities of a believer or epistemic subject in order to explain or define some valued epistemic state such as knowledge or justifiedness. Thus, virtue epistemology differs from traditional epistemology with its task of formulating the conditions for knowledge in ways that make no reference to a person and her character, dispositions or traits, referring instead to "justified true belief" (with some post-Gettier extension).[6] This is not to say that the elements of belief, justification, and truth are absent from virtue accounts; it is rather that dispositions or virtues are the central constructs, and other elements are understood as dependent on these. For example, Alvin Goldman suggests as a "rough" account that: "Beliefs acquired (or retained) through a chain of 'virtuous' psychological processes qualify as justified; those acquired partly through cognitive 'vices' are derogated as unjustified."[7]

Zagzebski argues that a virtue based epistemology "permits a wider range of epistemic evaluation than that which focuses exclusively on properties of individual belief states."[8] Virtue epistemology allows for the evaluation of thinkers and thinking, not just beliefs. Zagzebski is concerned that epistemology has tended to produce accounts that are too atomistic, or as she puts it too "belief-based." If we concentrate on individual beliefs, we may fail to achieve an understanding of enduring and developing epistemic subjects, which makes it unlikely that normative epistemology will be useful. Zagzebski proposes an account that is broad enough to encompass both moral and intellectual virtues. She takes a virtue in general to be an "acquired excellence of the soul" or of the person and she argues that virtues have the following characteristics: virtues are acquired through effort and habituation (although some creative virtues may be exceptions to this); virtues

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[6]  Zagzebski explains her project as follows: "... in *Virtues of the Mind* ... I am giving a theory of *human* knowledge, not an analysis of the *concept* of knowledge." Zagzebski, L. (2000). "Responses" in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, LX*(1), p. 209.

[7]  Goldman, A. "Epistemic Folkways and Scientific Epistemology." in Goldman, A. (ed.) (1993). *Readings in Philosophy and Cognitive Science*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p. 97.

[8]  Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 274.

differ from skills in that skills are not intrinsically valuable, and virtue is a much more normative term since a person is not necessarily at fault for lacking a skill, as she would be for lacking a virtue. [9] I may not be at fault for being a mediocre pastry chef, but I would be blameworthy for failure to be generous or compassionate. Virtue has a component of motivation, which means that the person is disposed to aim at and to care about aiming at certain ends.[10] This motivation ought not to lapse, as a person's interest in being successful at darts or chess may lapse without discredit, but this is not the case for her concern to be brave, just and compassionate. Zagzebski also claims that "virtue" is a success term, meaning that "[a] person does not have a virtue unless she is reliable at bringing about the end that is the aim of the motivational component of the virtue."[11] This involves, in addition to the right kind of desire to do good or to be good, some competence in achieving this end (including the requisite knowledge and understanding of the world as well as relevant skills).

Lorraine Code argues that we need to talk about *persons* who know, and for her analysis, it is crucial that the persons in question are social beings.[12] In her work on intellectual virtue, Jane Braaten shares this concern with thinkers as members of community and as builders of future communities.[13] Virtue theory is particularly useful when a community-based approach to epistemology is taken. Relationships of mutual reliance and trust are essential for knowledge. Most acquisition of knowledge takes place not under conditions of autonomy and independence, but through interactions between persons within epistemic communities. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the characteristics of the persons who are engaged in epistemic practices. Epistemic virtue theory is a productive way to understand these characteristics.

However, as my discussion below makes clear, many accounts of epistemic virtue do not pay enough attention to communitarian issues. It is important to pay such attention both in order to include the full range of epistemic virtues, and to position the boundary

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[9] Ibid., p. 135.
[10] Ibid., p. 136.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Code, L. (1987). *Epistemic Responsibility.* Hanover and London: University Press of New England.

between ethics and epistemology properly, because when epistemic relationships are taken seriously, it becomes clear that treatment of other persons has both epistemic and ethical implications. Criticisms of individualistic epistemology show that it is impossible to get epistemology right without paying attention to epistemic relations between knowers. Virtue epistemology requires the same attention to interpersonal issues.

There are subtle debates between virtue epistemologists over the exact nature of virtues, the relation between skills and virtue, between virtue epistemology and reliabilism, and the interpretation of sources for virtue theory, which I will consider only briefly.[14] I am concentrating instead on the proper orientation of virtue epistemology, rather than the precise detail of the accounts. The relevant issues in my discussion of epistemic virtue theories are the separation of ethical and epistemic domains, the problems with individualistic epistemology, and reasons to reject truth-conduciveness as a or "the" defining feature of epistemic virtue.

## Versions of Epistemic Virtue Theory

Guy Axtell takes the main distinction within theories of epistemic virtue to be that between reliabilism and responsibilism. For both reliabilist and responsibilist virtue epistemologists "the exercising of intellectual virtues is central to epistemic justification."[15] For responsibilist virtue epistemologists, the focus is on considerations such as conscientiousness, and whether the proper effort is made. Accounts of epistemic justification can be categorised as internalist or externalist, depending on whether the justification must be accessible to the knower, or might be outside the knower's introspective access. Responsibilism is related to internalism because both seem to share the intuition that "the main requirement of epistemic justification is that acceptance of a belief is rational or responsible in relation to our cognitive goal or goals."[16] Internalists cite this as an objection to externalism because the relation that bases a belief on adequate

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[13] Op. cit.

[14] Detailed discussions of these matters can be found in the Symposium on Zagzebski's work in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *LX* (1), pp. 169-219. The response closest to my position is that of Rorty, A. O. (2000). "Distinctive Measures of Epistemic Evaluation: Character as the Configuration of Traits" *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *LX* (1), pp. 203-206.

[15] Axtell, op. cit., p. 12.

[16] Ibid., p. 3.

grounds (justification) must (they argue) be accessible to the agent upon introspective reflection. Responsibilism likewise requires an introspective capacity. The general notion of virtue tends to include some introspective requirement enabling the virtuous person to hold the right motivations, engage in the right kind of cultivation, and maintain her orientation toward virtue. For reliabilists, however, "justification *qua* epistemic responsibility is not sufficient for knowledge,"[17] there also must be some competence or capacity to achieve it. According to Axtell, virtue reliabilism "emerged as a development within externalist approaches to knowledge which themselves developed mainly in response to the 'Gettier-type problem.'"[18] Thus, a major difference between responsibilism and reliabilism is whether the standard for justification is based on internal or external conditions.

In addition, responsibilists and reliabilists define virtues somewhat differently. The responsibilist criticises teleological or consequential conceptions of virtue (which are crucial to reliabilist virtue epistemology). Reliabilism seems constrained to find other knowers significant only as more or less reliable sources. Responsibilist versions of epistemic virtue theory have more resources to address relationships between epistemic players.

My discussion concentrates on responsibilist versions of virtue epistemology as these have the most potential to accommodate epistemic interactions and treat persons as more than just sources or beneficiaries of beliefs. I look most closely at Linda Zagzebski's virtue epistemology, with some attention to the accounts of James Montmarquet and Jane Braaten in order to compare the roles of truth, the relationship between ethics and epistemology and the extent of communitarian considerations. I will conclude that a virtue account must include virtues of epistemic engagement as well as those necessary for dealing with information.

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[17] Ibid., p. 13

[18] Ibid., p. 2. Gettier-type problems involve cases where a belief is true, and justified, but it seems that its being so is accidental. For example, I may hold a true belief about the Wimbledon champion, obtained by watching the tennis final at the appropriate time, but the match being broadcast is, for some reason, a replay of last year's match. It is argued that my belief does not qualify as knowledge because of the accidental nature of some crucial connection.

Virtue epistemology theories also vary according to whether an abstract analytical approach is taken, or, as in Braaten's discussion of intellectual virtues, the discussion is motivated by a specific context. Her discussion articulates the link between epistemological values and social change. The relation between epistemology and other normative disciplines is important to all three theorists: Montmarquet, Zagzebski and Braaten, but each sees it differently. They range between individualism and communitarianism and also vary according to the degree of emphasis placed on the roles of persons as sources and beneficiaries of beliefs, and as epistemic exemplars. The role of exemplars is crucial for an understanding of epistemology because knowing is learned in interpersonal practice. As I endorse a strongly communitarian approach that takes knowers as primarily second persons,[19] I argue that the capacity of knowers to acknowledge and accredit one another is logically prior to their acting as resources for one another.

As I demonstrate more comprehensively in the following two chapters, communitarian approaches to epistemology are more plausible than staunchly individualistic ones. For Zagzebski, however, other persons or knowers appear only as sources or beneficiaries of beliefs in relation to the virtues of fairmindedness and openmindedness, and perhaps the advance of human knowledge. Zagzebski does not pay much attention to interpersonal epistemic obligations, which include issues of disclosure and nondisclosure, discretion, trust and respect for privacy and confidentiality. She admits too restrictive a range of epistemic relationships. Braaten and Code, who consider epistemology with communitarian and feminist ideas in mind, come closest to integrating interpersonal and virtue issues. Both also seem to endorse a more pluralistic epistemology than Montmarquet and Zagzebski, and I will show that they are correct to do so.

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[19] I will discuss Lorraine Code's second person epistemology in detail in Chapter Three. It is an analysis of knowledge which takes knowers to be fundamentally characterised by relationships to other knowers, who relate to them as second persons, in an "I-you" or "I-thou" relationship.

## Epistemic Virtues and Truth

One of the central questions that epistemic virtue theorists must address is how such virtues relate to truth. Clearly, the attainment of truth and knowledge are important goals within the epistemic domain, so the question is not whether these are significant or insignificant. Rather, the issue is whether truth-conduciveness is an essential or contingent property of epistemic virtues, or essential for some, but not others. Are all epistemic virtues united and unified by a goal such as truth-conduciveness, or is there a plurality of sometimes competing epistemic goals? If there are divergent values in tension with that of truth-conduciveness, a pluralistic account of the epistemic domain will emerge. I will argue that it is not always and only truth that matters, and that certain characteristics do not contribute to truth-conduciveness nor an increase of true beliefs, but are epistemic virtues nonetheless. Thus, I defend epistemic pluralism in the sense that there are diverse epistemic goals and values.[20]

In this section, I will argue against the view that epistemic virtues must be truth-conducive. I will discuss the position of James Montmarquet who displays a hesitancy about the necessary value of truth-conduciveness (for reasons different from mine) but who ends up very close to Zagzebski who holds the opposite position, defending the necessity and centrality of truth-conduciveness as a motivator for epistemic virtue.

Montmarquet understands epistemic virtues as qualities of intellectual character whose exercise is under the agent's control, and for whose exercise she can be praised or blamed.[21] They include virtues of impartiality, intellectual sobriety (being scrupulous, and carefully proportioning belief to evidence) and intellectual courage.[22] These are virtues of being epistemically conscientious, even of regulating that conscientiousness which as a bare desire for truth may degenerate into dogmatism or other epistemic evils.[23]

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[20] Admittedly, this makes epistemic evaluation more complex. But, as I will show, the alternative seems to be a position implying that all seeking or obtaining knowledge is epistemically permissible, if not mandatory. This tends to make epistemology practically irrelevant, because knowers do not and should not behave that way. Even worse, it threatens to become incoherent.

[21] Montmarquet, J. (1993). *Epistemic Virtue and Doxastic Responsibility.* Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 34.

[22] Ibid., p. 23.

[23] Ibid., p. 25.

According to Montmarquet, epistemic virtues are counterparts of ethical virtues, and notions such as epistemic justification and responsibility mirror the notions of ethical justification and responsibility. Furthermore, "our notion of epistemic justification itself is guided by the consideration that a justified belief ought to be one that one would be morally justified in acting on."[24] He suggests that there may be some underlying common source for at least some virtues that have both ethical and epistemic aspects, such as honesty and concern for and responsibilities towards others, but relies on a distinction between belief and action to maintain a distinction between concerns that are ultimately epistemological or ethical.[25]

Montmarquet further suggests that virtues of intellectual creativity might be non-truth-conducive. He points out that we may plausibly ascribe similar levels of epistemic virtue to Aristotle, Aquinas and Einstein while acknowledging that "they differed greatly in the truth or truth-conduciveness of their leading ideas, intellectual methods, and the like."[26] These thinkers share, according to Montmarquet, virtues like intellectual conscientiousness, courage, impartiality (including openness to others' ideas and a sense of one's own fallibility) and intellectual sobriety. To the extent that persons can be equally epistemically virtuous, but differently situated in relation to truth and truth-conduciveness, epistemic virtue cannot be defined in terms of truth-conduciveness.

Montmarquet does not regard truth and the avoidance of error as "rich enough desires for the epistemically virtuous."[27] He refers to motivation for "*science....* [t]hat is, one seeks a kind of deep economical, explanatory understanding of the world and ourselves as a part of the world."[28] In this wider sense of "science" as he terms it, Aristotle, Aquinas and Einstein can be seen as equal. But, he argues, this richer goal is served by the same regulative traits as truth and the avoidance of error. The same character traits are the virtues necessary for truth and deeper "science." These qualities are those widely regarded as truth-conducive; they are attributes that a truth-desiring person

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[24]  Ibid., p. 108.
[25]  Ibid., p. 110.
[26]  Ibid., pp. 32-3.
[27]  Ibid., p. 33.

would wish to have, and they are qualities of intellectual character "for whose exercise or nonexercise we can properly be blamed or credited."[29]

Montmarquet has a further reason for hesitancy in declaring that epistemic virtues are necessarily connected to truth. He defines them carefully as "qualities that a truth-desiring person given the general conditions that *appear* to obtain in the world would want to have."[30] Montmarquet makes this qualification in order to overcome a sceptical problem of a deceptive world, in which truth would be best obtained by exemplifying epistemic vices. So, for Montmarquet, although truth and the avoidance of error are not necessarily associated with epistemic virtues, we ought to cultivate those traits that can be supposed to lead to truth.

Before turning to Zagzebski's argument that a trait is an epistemic virtue only if it is truth or knowledge-conducive, I will briefly examine Jonathan Kvanvig's suggestion that "virtues are not to be thought of as atomistically definable in terms of some specific goal or end."[31] A virtue such as intellectual creativity might be exercised to defend dogma, or some other epistemically undesirable end, just as the moral virtue of courage can promote or permit reprehensible actions.[32] If intellectual virtues were defined exclusively in terms of the tendency towards true beliefs, then we would not be able to find intellectually admirable qualities that were directed at intellectually inappropriate ends.[33] This position parallels a refusal in ethics to treat traits as moral virtues only if they are directed to morally good ends. Kvanvig concludes that an epistemic virtue is roughly a disposition toward or ability to acquire justified beliefs, but virtues, like justified beliefs, do not co-vary with what is truth-conducive.[34] This is plausible as far as the problems for truth-conduciveness are concerned. However, I think there is more to epistemic virtue than a disposition to acquire justified beliefs. This account of epistemic virtue leaves out the virtues involved in cooperating with others about beliefs (which generate the

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[28]  Ibid.
[29]  Ibid., p. 34.
[30]  Ibid., p. 30.
[31]  Kvanvig, op. cit. p. 119.
[32]  Ibid., p. 118.
[33]  Ibid., pp. 120-1.
[34]  Ibid., p. 141.

heterogeneity of the domain), and it excludes the possibility that it may be virtuous to avoid acquiring certain beliefs even if these are justified.

Despite their reluctance to endorse the view that epistemic virtues need not be truth-conducive, neither Kvanvig nor Montmarquet move far away from the epistemic values that Zagzebski shares. Scientific understanding, wisdom and justification would be part of what she describes as cognitive contact with reality. Although they differ with respect to the precise role ascribed to truth-conduciveness, Montmarquet and Kvanvig share with Zagzebski a view of the epistemic domain that would disallow virtues that are antithetical to knowing more, the virtues of ignorance. Zagzebski provides the most clearly articulated account of epistemic virtue that is non-pluralistic. Since Montmarquet and Kvanvig's arguments align substantially with Zagzebski's position, I will use her account as the foil for arguments in favour of ignorance. My discussion yields the result that the characteristics that good knowers ought to cultivate and possess cannot be united under a single goal; they are diverse, and perhaps sometimes conflicting.[35]

Below, I will argue that moral and epistemic dimensions of evaluation are independent: being intellectually virtuous does not make an individual a better person in a moral sense. First, I will show that Zagzebski's view of epistemic virtues being necessarily truth-conducive is mistaken for the following reasons: first, even when expanded to include understanding and wisdom, truth-conduciveness is ineffective as a uniting feature for epistemic virtues; and second, epistemic virtues are not structured around any central uniting characteristic.

Zagzebski presents a strong and carefully argued case for the linking of epistemic virtues with truth. She explains truth-conduciveness in the following way:

> In the sense most commonly discussed by reliabilists, truth-conduciveness is a function of the *number* of true beliefs and the *proportion* of true to false beliefs generated by a process. There is another sense of truth-conduciveness, however, which is important at the frontiers of knowledge and in areas, like philosophy, that generate very few true beliefs, no matter how they are formed. I suggest that we may legitimately call a trait or procedure truth-conducive if it is a necessary condition for advancing human knowledge in some area even

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[35] Amélie Rorty also suggests that there are "multiple dimensions of epistemic evaluations," op. cit., p. 205.

> though it generates very few true beliefs and even if a high percentage of the beliefs formed as the result of this trait or procedure are false.[36]

I will show that neither of these characterisations of truth-conduciveness is adequate to capture epistemic virtues.

Zagzebski takes a broader view of knowledge than that assumed in most forms of reliabilism, as the passage above indicates. She discusses understanding and wisdom as deeper kinds of knowledge. Wisdom, according to Zagzebski,

> is an epistemic value qualitatively different from the piling up of beliefs that have the property of justification, warrant, or certainty. Wisdom is neither a matter of the properties of propositional beliefs, nor is it a matter of the relations among such beliefs; it is a matter of grasping the whole of reality.[37]

> Understanding is not a state directed toward a single propositional object at all. This is not to deny that there is a sense in which one can be said to understand a proposition $p$. But the understanding of $p$ is not directed primarily at $p$ itself. One understands $p$ as part of and because of one's understanding of a system or network of truths, or to follow Kvanvig's advice in getting away from the atomistic terminology, we could say that one understands $p$ as part of one's understanding of the pattern of a whole chunk of reality.[38]

In contrast to the neglect of understanding and wisdom in many epistemological discussions, Zagzebski regards the notion of cognitive contact with reality as broad enough to encompass the values of understanding and wisdom as well as truth-conduciveness as a preponderance of true over false beliefs. (By "cognitive contact with reality" Zagzebski means that knowledge and understanding are to be understood as part of the knower's interaction with the world, not just as a consistent or coherent set of propositions.) These values, then, are complementary, and I will take her notion of truth-conduciveness to include this broader view.

Zagzebski explicitly commits herself to the truth-conduciveness of epistemic virtues. After considering the possibility that intellectual virtues may not be truth-conducive, she writes:

> So if it turned out that we were wrong about the truth-conduciveness of one of these traits, that trait would cease to be considered an intellectual virtue. What we would not do is continue to treat it as an intellectual virtue and then go on to declare that intellectual virtues are not necessarily truth-conducive.[39]

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[36] Zagzebski, op. cit., p. 182.
[37] Ibid., p. 50.
[38] Ibid., p. 49.
[39] Ibid., p. 185.

Zagzebski claims that truth and knowledge are the central goals of epistemic endeavour. Her account of virtues relies on a crucial motivational component, and for epistemic virtues this component is defined in terms of truth-conduciveness. The truth-conduciveness of epistemic virtues is therefore a central feature of Zagzebski's account. I will argue that on the contrary there are epistemic or intellectual virtues that are not truth-conducive.

Any theory claiming that what matters epistemically is a preponderance of true over false beliefs must overcome certain difficulties. Defining and calculating the proper relation between the number of true beliefs and the proportion of related false beliefs is a major obstacle. Counting beliefs is difficult, and due to the ease of generating infinite numbers of true and false beliefs, for example, by using conjunctions and disjunctions, belief proliferation is an obstacle for any account of truth-conduciveness based on counting beliefs. It is extremely difficult to find the principles that limit the numbers of beliefs that must be compared and to specify the principles according to which we should calculate and compare numbers of beliefs.

Zagzebski's inclusion of understanding in the sphere of epistemic virtue may allow her to sidestep such problems. She can respond that it is systems and networks of truths that matter, not just numbers and proportions. The objection based on belief proliferation is directed at an atomistic view of beliefs, but Zagzebski does not endorse such views.[40] However, the focus on systems and patterns of beliefs faces other problems. There are domains where I have many beliefs, for example about the topics of my research. In other areas such as organic chemistry and ancient Japanese history, I have few, if any, beliefs. These local variations in belief prevalence would need to be factored into assessments of truth-conduciveness in Zagzebski's broad sense. How is cognitive contact with reality to be assessed when there are such gaps? Are there aspects of reality with which cognitive

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[40] See Zagzebski's discussion op. cit., pp. 43-50.

contact is more important than others?[41] Are there any sectors of reality with which cognitive contact is mandatory, or with which it should not be attempted?

Zagzebski hints at some considerations that might be part of her answers to such questions when she mentions exceptional "advancing human knowledge" contexts, but is unspecific about how these arise, how they might be recognised and exactly how these generate assessments of truth-conduciveness or understanding. The most obvious way to understand "advancing human knowledge" is in the sense of Western academic and scientific work, which comprise enterprises undertaken by a very small minority of human beings. Given the importance of "human knowledge" within Zagzebski's own account, the values of truth-conduciveness and knowledge have to be understood in a collective, not just an individual sense. This requires attention to the sharing of knowledge and the contribution to and promotion of others' knowledge and discoveries. Presumably it does not count as advancing human knowledge if I destroy my discoveries before communicating them to anyone else. If collective aspects of knowledge are considered, truth-conduciveness and knowledge-acquisition are even more problematic as the defining or necessary features of epistemic virtue.

"Human knowledge" and its advances are not usually understood in such a way that any new true belief (meeting relevant criteria for knowledge) for any person constitutes an advance. Rather there is a sense of discovery or innovation: knowledge is acquired where previously no-one knew. There is also a tacit evaluative component: discovering the number of letters on a page of a phone book, or the number of grains of sand in a bucket will not count. "Human knowledge" requires virtues of selectivity and cooperation which are not reducible to those associated with truth-conduciveness.

By including an appeal to human knowledge, Zagzebski's account of epistemic virtue admits the importance of the epistemic community, but she has not followed up the implications of this enlargement of the epistemic sphere. These implications undermine her use of truth-conduciveness as central to epistemic virtue. In fact it becomes so

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[41] Sylvain Bromberger raises similar concerns in Bromberger, S. (1988). "Rational Ignorance." *Synthese*, 74, pp. 47-64.

problematic that it cannot serve the purpose of clarifying and unifying her conceptions of epistemic virtue. This is not to say that truth and knowledge are irrelevant to epistemic virtue, but they cannot serve as the centre piece of the theory, as *eudaimonia* does in the classic Aristotelian account of virtue. The goal of maximising truth pursued without consideration of privacy and confidentiality would lead to the disintegration of the epistemic community through the breakdown of trust, and promoting truth or knowledge without discrimination and selectivity would cause chaos and confusion through information overload. In practice, the epistemic virtues of ignorance allow the epistemic community to flourish, and an adequate epistemological theory should reflect this.

Zagzebski's lack of attention to the epistemic community leads to a problem for her characterisation of truth-conduciveness: there is no account of the relationship between individual knowledge and epistemic dependence. In some places in Zagzebski's analysis, it appears that epistemic virtues are understood in relation to individuals (for example "... it is true that an agent does not possess an intellectual virtue unless the trait *as possessed by him* is truth-conducive in the long run"[42] (emphasis in the original)), but elsewhere she is claiming that we may also take into account that "these traits ... will eventually advance human knowledge."[43] Both refer to the value of knowledge in the long term, but the former refers to an individual's knowledge, the latter to the knowledge of the community. The relation between these epistemic ideals is unexplained. A similar explanatory gap occurs in Hall and Johnson's account of epistemic duty, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Zagzebski's use of the concept of human knowledge leaves unanswered questions like "Whose knowledge is relevant to my epistemic virtue" and "Whose virtue is at stake in collective knowledge enterprises?" A researcher committed to a false hypothesis, who therefore misinterprets data, may achieve no knowledge. Yet, as a result of others' responses to her work, her community's knowledge advances. How is her epistemic virtue to be assessed? Zagzebski's silence is problematic both in relation to ascribing virtue to those engaged in research projects which require teamwork, and in

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[42] Op. cit., p. 186.
[43] Ibid., p. 182.

relation to the beneficiaries of such knowledge. Virtues of cooperation may differ from those of individual discovery, and it is unclear how we should understand virtue in relation to a collective.

A further problem arises with respect to Zagzebski's inclusion of a special sense of truth-conduciveness in discovery contexts, at the "frontiers of human knowledge." According to Zagzebski's account, the sense of truth-conduciveness and hence the notion of epistemic virtue, changes for such eminent thinkers as Aristotle and Einstein. There are greater risks of acquiring false beliefs when leaps of discovery are potentially made. In ordinary cases, ordinarily reliable virtues generally generate the appropriate proportion of true and false beliefs, however, this is problematic as pointed out above. But in cases of discovery, or potential discovery, the virtues of "originality, creativity, and inventiveness"[44] come into play. The notion of truth-conduciveness, therefore, changes for those who operate at the boundaries of knowledge, and whose success is more dependent on luck than is the case for ordinary knowers. Luck is important only in a narrow range of cases "at the boundaries of knowledge."[45] But this point undermines Zagzebski's account. Great thinkers should exemplify epistemic virtue to others who aspire to think well, which is how Montmarquet regards the great thinkers that he mentions. The relevant difference between ordinary and exemplary knowers ought not to be luck. If an agent has to be extremely lucky to hit upon the truth, then it seems that the relation between virtue and truth-conduciveness is weakened. One will very frequently be virtuous but fail to succeed at reaching the truth. Zagzebski's account of the discovery sense of truth-conduciveness has unacceptable features: firstly, that great thinkers are judged by different standards than ordinary aspirants to epistemic virtue; and secondly, that it is luck which makes the crucial difference to their pre-eminence. This is not parallelled in ethics: we would not consider someone a paragon of virtue if their

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid., p. 191.

avoidance of vice were significantly a matter of moral luck.[46] As Zagzebski has argued

that the domains are the same, this ought not be a welcome implication.

Ultimately, it is not clear how or if we can establish the conditions of truth-

conduciveness in either sense, or compare different actions or dispositions according to

this criterion. Even with the additions of wisdom, understanding and advancing human

knowledge, the criterion of truth-conduciveness is too unclear. Instead, as I will argue,

epistemic virtues involve a heterogeneous range of motives that are not reducible to truth

and knowledge, even within a broad conception of these terms.[47]

If we were to hold truth to be the only or primary epistemic value, we must allow

some unfortunate consequences. Virtually all important beliefs involved in past scientific

explanations can be shown to be false, and historical induction suggests that most or all

current scientific beliefs will suffer the same falsification. Therefore it will be difficult to

identify any virtuous practitioners in this field, and since science is usually considered the

best candidate for a truth-producing discipline, if this domain lacks virtuous practitioners,

they will be hard to find anywhere.[48]

The links between truth and luck create difficulties in Zagzebski's account of

epistemic virtue, but there is an even more important reason to abandon truth-

conduciveness as the centrepiece of a theory of epistemic virtue. The compelling reason is

that there are epistemic virtues that are not directed at or dependent on truth.[49] The notions

of knowledge conduciveness, scientific understanding and even truth rely tacitly on

assumptions about what knowledge should be pursued. Few, if any, epistemologists

endorse collections of useless data, regardless of whether they may be coherent, true, and

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[46] The relationship of luck to moral value is complex, but I think that the more we want to regard an
agent as excellent or exemplary, the more problematic it becomes that their excellence is a matter of
luck. For discussions of moral luck, see Williams, B. (1981.) *Moral Luck*. New York: Cambridge
University Press, and Statman, D. (1994.) (ed.) *Moral Luck*. Albany: State University of New York
Press.

[47] An interesting point is made by Sylvain Bromberger in "Rational Ignorance" (op. cit.): that seeking
answers to certain kinds of question can reveal new fields of ignorance where more investigations are
possible. The opening up of new investigative possibilities can even be seen as an advantage of a new
theory.

[48] Montmarquet's counterfactual version of truth-conduciveness would escape this objection, but
Zagzebski's does not because of the success condition.

believed with justification, through manifest virtue, or through reliable methodology. (Memorising the telephone book satisfies most philosophical definitions of the acquisition of knowledge.) In fact, we value only *some* knowledge, and *some* truth which shows that there are implicit evaluations taking place. Lorraine Code points out that "one hesitates to attribute intellectual virtue to a voracious collector of facts ..."[50] and suggests that while knowledge is "good in itself," this may not be as simple as it first appears , and evaluative capacities are also important. Zagzebski, in discussing Code, says these cases are "probably not so much vices as a waste of intellectual energy that could be put to better use."[51] In some cases indiscrimination in knowledge collection and distribution may be a vice. Seeking inappropriate knowledge about other persons may constitute invasion of their privacy; seeking to know or to make public information others prefer to keep private are all potentially vicious activities.[52] Although moral and epistemic vices coincide here, I will distinguish them and argue for epistemic as well as moral vices in cases such as these. *Epistemic* norms determine what I can expect others to reveal or conceal, and the scope of legitimate inquiry. The pursuit of knowledge is norm-governed, and in addition to restrictions on concealment and disclosure, there are norms about what counts as worthwhile epistemic effort. It can be epistemically irresponsible to pursue trivia, and while this may often be harmless, as in trainspotting, it may involve blameworthy acts or omissions, and in such cases is possibly vicious. Not all knowledge is worthwhile or intrinsically good. Epistemic virtue theory needs to explain the heterogeneity in the domain of knowledge and can do so by recognising virtues associated with knowledge *selection* as well as acquisition, and nondisclosure as well as knowledge promotion. These virtues include selecting areas where I will not pursue knowledge, or convey information, or tell only part of what I know.

Important areas of the epistemic domain are overlooked by virtue epistemologies that rely on notions of human knowledge or truth-conduciveness as if these were

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[49] Zagzebski (2000) (op. cit.) concedes that a knower may have other motivations than the pure desire for truth. A researcher may be ambitious, for example, but as long as truth is a means to the end in question, such a person may still be a knower.

[50] *Epistemic Responsibility*, op. cit., p. 59.

[51] Zagzebski, op. cit., p. 153.

unproblematic. But including privacy, confidentiality, trust and empathy in the sphere of epistemology may appear to blur the boundary between ethics and epistemology. I will now show that the two domains remain distinct, although the border has been moved.

## A Joint Domain of Intellectual and Moral Virtues?

In order to understand epistemic virtues, it is important to be clear about their relationship to ethical virtues. When epistemologists make use of ethical models such as virtue theory, there is further need to address the relationship between the domains. Is it just coincidental that ethical analogies seem to offer constructive insights, or can deeper connections, or some basic unity between the domains explain this? Are all intellectual virtues equally obligatory for everyone, as perhaps moral virtues are, and if not, how are epistemic obligations to be understood? If ethics governs the life as a whole, what is the place of intellectual and epistemic virtue in this life, and what are the theoretical ways to account for this? How are intellectual and moral virtues related?

Zagzebski argues that many accounts of epistemic virtue are flawed in that they pay superficial, if any, attention to the relationship with ethical virtue theory. She develops a careful analysis of the domains and concludes that intellectual virtues are best understood as falling within the sphere of moral virtue:

> The characteristics that allegedly distinguish the two kinds of virtue do not divide up the spectrum in anywhere near the desired fashion, and intellectual virtues ought to be treated as a subset of the moral virtues in the Aristotelian sense of the latter. Although there are some rough differences in the degree to which these two kinds of virtue involve strong feelings and desires, I will argue that an intellectual virtue does not differ from certain moral virtues any more than one moral virtue differs from another, that the processes related to the two kinds of virtue do not function independently and that it greatly distorts the nature of both to attempt to analyse them in separate branches of philosophy. Intellectual virtues are best viewed as forms of moral virtue.[53]

Zagzebski argues that epistemic virtues are distinguished by being those virtues related to knowledge, in such a way that they are always knowledge-conducive. This view has been shown to be problematic. I will argue that epistemic virtues are concerned with epistemic relationships and the obligations and responsibilities these generate.

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[52] These and related issues are discussed in Bok, S. (1982). *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation.* New York: Vintage Books.

[53] Ibid., p. 139.

Within epistemic relationships, the proper motivation is not to seek and promote truth always and everywhere, nor even to maximise the amount of *relevant* truth one conveys to others. This is where ignorance is important because it is an ineliminable part of responsible engagement with other knowers.

Having shown that Zagzebski's contention that "truth-conduciveness is an essential component of intellectual virtues"[54] is mistaken, I turn to her alignment of intellectual virtues with moral virtues. The following discussion will show that there are epistemic virtues that typically are not truth-conducive, and the epistemic domain is not structured around a single goal or value, rather, it is complex and pluralistic. The values within the epistemic domain are not moral values, and although epistemic and moral virtues intersect and overlap in complicated ways, the independence of the dimensions of evaluation can be defended.

I will argue that epistemic virtue theory *can* offer an evaluative dimension that is independent of moral evaluation, in opposition to Zagzebski's view that intellectual or epistemic virtues are best understood within an ethical frame of reference. One reason for her advocacy of a united domain is the assumption that truth is a kind of the good, but in any case, as I will show, truth-conduciveness is not the only epistemic good. Respect for others as epistemic agents is also significant.

The desire for knowledge or truth defines the motivational component of epistemic virtues and means that possession of such virtues motivates the agent to have cognitive contact with reality, or that she has "the motivation to advance knowledge for the human race."[55] It is this motivation that constitutes the only major difference between intellectual and other moral virtues. Knowledge is regarded as a good, and it is the good to which all moral virtues aim. Thus this definition is compatible with Zagzebski's broad claim that intellectual virtues are forms of moral virtue. Zagzebski asserts that in general a trait can be considered virtuous if it brings the bearer closer to a state of moral excellence than she

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[54] Ibid., p. 13.
[55] Ibid., p. 167.

would be if she lacked that trait.[56] On her account, then, knowledge, or the grasping of truth, is in some sense morally enhancing, because knowledge is a form of the good.

Zagzebski points out that when considering virtues, it is difficult to find a (principled, non-circular) way of dividing up the domains of ethics and epistemology, even though this is a standard distinction between philosophical domains. She offers a series of arguments to show that the distinction is unsustainable. These arguments can be divided into arguments in favour of similarity, and those that oppose suggested contrasts between the domains. The similarity arguments draw parallels between the development of epistemic and ethical virtues and their objects of evaluation. Zagzebski completes her case by considering and rejecting arguments that draw out contrasts between ethical and epistemic virtues.

Below, I offer detailed responses to these arguments, particularly the latter, because Zagzebski is right to claim that ethics and epistemology are not differentiated by divisions between thought and action, or belief and feeling. Both are dimensions of evaluation that can be applied to complex human activities, in which belief, thought, action and feeling may all be involved at once. But not all evaluation is ethical; not all *good* things are *morally* good.

Although sometimes the issues are convoluted, we can tease out distinct ways of evaluating complex situations, with respect to ethical and epistemic concerns. Not only can we differentiate distinct virtues, we can recognise how they cluster around ethical and epistemic dimensions. We can judge a person's overall moral character independently of her epistemic qualities and vice versa. This is not to say that ethical and epistemic traits never interact, but that it is possible and generally desirable to refrain from collapsing them into a single category of virtue. The following are Zagzebski's arguments that epistemic and ethical evaluations are not directed at different kinds of thing, but I will show that they do not show that succeed in establishing a joint domain of ethical and epistemic virtue.

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[56] Ibid., p. 95.

Zagzebski points out that it is not the case that the intellectual/moral distinction parallels a distinction between thinking and feeling, the intellectual virtues being concerned with thinking states, and the ethical virtues with feeling states. Pain and pleasure can accompany intellectual states such as confusion and understanding as well as moral states such as shame, or generosity. Curiosity, doubt and wonder are intellectual states that involve feeling.[57] Virtues such as intellectual humility, integrity and openmindedness involve affective attitudes, if not specific feelings. Justice and fairness are moral virtues that demand careful thinking. So, a division along these lines does not succeed.

Zagzebski further argues that it is not satisfactory to associate epistemic virtue with belief (or other cognitive states) and moral virtue with action, as Montmarquet suggests. The notion of justification appears in both ethical and epistemological evaluations and, usually, in ethics, the question is "was this action justified?" and in epistemology, "(how) is this belief justified?" Montmarquet proposes that doxastic responsibility mirrors its moral counterpart, and that the difference between the moral and epistemic spheres is that between belief and action. But epistemology is also concerned with behaviour, for example knowledge claims and transactions, and ethics with internal states, such as dispositions, and (blameworthy or commendable) attitudes and beliefs, so an action/belief distinction does not look plausible. The responsibility involved in each domain may still be analogous.

Zagzebski's claims that ethical and epistemological analyses are not differentiated by their objects are correct because both kinds of evaluation can be applied to action, feeling, thinking and belief. I could be epistemically at fault in relation to my carelessness with evidence, my misplaced feeling of conviction, my drawing of certain unwarranted inferences, and lazy adoption of beliefs. I can be morally at fault for certain beliefs, such as racist beliefs, even if I do not act on them, and even if my adoption of such beliefs does not indicate epistemic fault. For example, the beliefs may have been inculcated by

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[57] Ibid., pp. 144-8.

otherwise trustworthy authorities, and due to isolation I may have encountered no evidence or opportunities to acquire evidence that would motivate changing my mind.

However, these considerations do not demonstrate that a single mode of evaluation is in play. There are many ways to evaluate: a psychologist might evaluate and encourage and discourage thoughts, acts, beliefs and feelings on the basis of the client's health and wellbeing. A sports coach might aim for cooperation and team unity, or individual best achievements, and evaluate accordingly. An individual player might have a coach and a counsellor who might disagree about the very same thoughts and actions, (such as a desire to win at all costs) so the fact that the same elements are the objects of evaluation does not indicate a single dimension of evaluation. The coach and counsellor might have very different reasons for thinking that the same actions and thoughts are wrong, one considering team unity, the other the welfare of this particular player. Disagreement does not in itself entail multidimensionality, but different considerations are salient in this kind of case. The coach and counsellor may both be right, but they operate along different evaluative dimensions. If I had to decide whose advice to accept concerning my own approach to sport, I would have to decide first which was the most important – the achievement of the team, or the psychological state of the individual competitor. Zagzebski is correct that ethical and epistemic evaluation are not differentiated by being directed to different kinds of object, nor by association with feeling and thinking, but she has not shown that there is a single evaluative category in play.

Zagzebski finds a second important similarity between ethical and epistemic virtues. She shows that the two kinds of virtues develop in similar ways and draws parallels between the ways intellectual and moral virtues are acquired:

> They begin with the imitation of virtuous persons, require practice which develops certain habits of feeling and acting and usually include an in-between stage of intellectual self-control (overcoming intellectual akrasia) parallel to the stage of moral self-control in the acquisition of a moral virtue.[58]

She contrasts this view with Aristotle's distinction between intellectual and moral excellence on the grounds that intellectual qualities can come from teaching or experience,

but moral virtues come through practice and habituation.[59] This implies that intellectual virtues are in some way natural, needing only the right opportunity to become manifest, unlike the moral virtues, which require effort and cultivation. But as Zagzebski points out, while this may be true for some intellectual skills, (such as language and logical skills) for intellectual virtues such as open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, intellectual flexibility, creativity, intellectual sobriety (carefulness, attentiveness, thoroughness) and so on, it is less plausible.[60] These seem to fit Aristotle's acquisition pattern for moral virtues better than the teaching and experience model suggested for intellectual virtues. These characteristics do not seem to be the kinds of things that can be taught, nor elements of an innate rationality.

Zagzebski is correct to claim that moral and intellectual virtues have similar patterns of development, and that Aristotle's model may be more apt for intellectual skills, although it is not clear that there are two completely distinct ways of obtaining skills and virtues and perhaps opportunity, experience, effort and cultivation all play important roles in developing both. But this similarity in acquisition is insufficient to demonstrate that the two kinds of virtue form a single category. Trying to achieve excellence in one of the visual or performing arts can follow such a pattern, as may achieving excellence in some sports. It is unlikely that aesthetic achievements are morally praiseworthy, and I do not take myself to be unethical because I am not very intellectually creative.

Overall, the similarities between epistemic and ethical virtues might support, but do not demonstrate, a claim that the domains form a single category. The most important arguments are those that directly address the contrasts between the ethical and epistemic spheres. The similarity arguments (of development, and of objects of evaluation) do not differentiate ethics and epistemology from other modes of evaluation, and do not demonstrate the case for either side. Ethics and epistemics can differ in all kinds of respects, but if there is only one mode of evaluation, there should be only one category of virtue. Conversely, if the modes of evaluation are sufficiently diverse, the categories of

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[58]  Ibid., p. 150.
[59]  Aristotle (1962). *Nichomachean Ethics* (Ostwald, Martin, Trans.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Bk II.1103a.14-20.
[60]  Op. cit., p. 114.

virtue should remain distinct, irrespective of the similarity of objects and developments. I argue that ethics and epistemology require distinct dimensions of evaluation.

It is possible to identify moral flaws that are not epistemological flaws and vice versa. For example, having false beliefs would standardly be regarded as an epistemic failing, but is not a moral fault *per se*. In fact, the promotion of false beliefs can be endorsed for ethical reasons. It can be argued that one should mislead a potential murderer about the whereabouts of the intended victim. But a "noble lie" does not connote *epistemic* virtue. Conversely, being cruel is not an obvious epistemological failing. A scientist might be epistemically virtuous, diligently using good reasoning and good evidence-gathering strategies, and displaying open-mindedness and intellectual rigour, but if the experimentation involves the suffering of (animal or human) subjects and if she enjoys this aspect of her work, her moral character may not be commendable. Her intellectual practice could be judged epistemically praiseworthy, but her moral practice could be judged to be flawed. So in these cases, there are independent evaluative dimensions in play. While often, perhaps more often than not, epistemic and moral interests coincide and overlap, they can be distinguished, and, at least sometimes, this is an advantage.

Zagzebski responds to this kind of argument by comparing it to the question of the unity of moral virtues:

> If, however, it could be shown that there is a much higher degree of independence between the possession of the intellectual virtues and the possession of the moral virtues than there is between the possession of one moral virtue and another, that might indicate an interesting difference in kind between the two classes of virtue, but, to my knowledge, no such evidence exists.[61]

Zagzebski can acknowledge that the contrast is clear in certain cases, but insist that it is insufficient to show different domains of evaluation, it is just that in some contexts, virtues and vices can be manifested at the same time (to take an example within the ethical domain, imagine that I generously give you stolen money). The crux of the matter seems to be whether epistemic and ethical virtues form distinct clusters, and whether the

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[61] Ibid., p. 157.

evaluations are independent. In the cruel scientist example, it is stipulated that she has a group of virtues appropriate for her intellectual profession, and it seems that her sadistic streak is irrelevant to this group. Conversely, one can imagine a moral saint who is untalented intellectually, but this does not seem to detract from her moral goodness any more than a lack of musical talent would undermine it.

In cases where epistemological and ethical judgements diverge, it is not clear that there is one way to combine them into an overall "all things considered" judgement. However, if there were a single evaluative domain, then it might be expected that the two kinds of judgement would be commensurate. The integration of epistemic and ethical considerations would not necessarily be an easy task, but there are cases where it seems to be more than difficult - the aim seems even incoherent. If I say of a blackmailer, "Well, her investigative efforts are exemplary" this has no bearing on how her actions would be judged morally. But if I raise a moral consideration, "Well, she was under enormous pressure to find the money for her child's lifesaving operation," this might affect the judgement. Conversely, if a person is excellent in her research field, this seems unaffected by whether she bullies her younger sister, or if she is a generous contributor to charity. If, however, she is found to be careless or indiscreet with information or data, it may be significant.

I may be trustworthy and epistemically respectful in a context that promotes ethical harm, perhaps by enabling a criminal organisation to flourish, or I might use empathy to facilitate an abusive or exploitative relationship. My discretion might enable blackmail, my capacity to learn from others might allow me to defraud them. These traits seem independent of the morality of my character or behaviour. But these traits are in some sense valuable or admirable, and an independent normative dimension is the best explanation. Since these traits involve dealing with knowledge and knowers, the epistemic dimension is the most relevant candidate. The same degree of epistemic competence is necessary for effective moral or immoral action, and epistemic excellence seems as distinct from moral virtue as is aesthetic excellence.

Zagzebski points out that arguments suggesting that epistemic and ethical virtues are independent are similar to those showing virtues to be independent in the moral domain: a person may be compassionate but not courageous. If the evidence is parallel in both cases, then we should not "expect a different answer to the question of whether the moral and intellectual virtues are unified than to the question of whether the moral virtues alone are unified."[62] If virtues are all equally independent from one another, then why group them into moral and epistemic categories?

In response, I reiterate that it is not merely the independence of one virtue from another that is relevant here. The similar independence claim may work for the independence of physical and intellectual courage in precisely the same way as for the independence of compassion and physical or moral courage. But when we consider an overall morally virtuous person, her epistemic traits seem outside the relevant cluster, and when we consider an epistemic exemplar, her moral traits need not be significant. This is not to say that they could never matter, just that it remains an open question whether the morally reprehensible traits contaminate the intellectual achievement in any particular instance. The epistemic virtues include honesty, rigour, selectivity, non-profligacy and trustworthiness. Moral virtues include courage, compassion, generosity, fairness and integrity. Some seem to overlap, but it is plausible that a person may be dishonest to her family, but scrupulous in her research.

There is an obvious objection to this model. As Zagzebski points out, a number of virtues and vices have both ethical and epistemic interpretations. Among Zagzebski's examples are fairmindedness and prejudice, courage and cowardice, integrity and humility.[63] The intermeshing of ethical and epistemic virtues and difficulty in defining their distinction is evidence for Zagzebski that the two groups are continuous, and I expect she would claim that distinctions such as the one I am suggesting are undermined by such borderline virtues. It is possible, though at times difficult, to tease out the epistemic from the ethical dimensions. I have used examples above in which the

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[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., p. 148.

distinction is fairly clear, the challenge now is to show that it can also be drawn in cases where there is significant overlap. In Chapters Four and Five I draw out the distinctively epistemic character of trust, empathy and responsible expertise.

There are few nontrivial ethical matters that do not involve some knowledge issues, or epistemic issues that completely lack an ethical dimension. When epistemic interdependence is considered, there will very often be ethical as well as epistemic considerations about how persons are treated in knowledge exchanges. I argue in this thesis that ignorance is a positive and indispensable aspect of our epistemic lives. If this is right, then a further asymmetry between the domains of epistemology and ethics is revealed, because the roles of ignorance and evil are different. Evil is always to be avoided by an ethically virtuous person, but that is not the case with respect to ignorance and an epistemically virtuous person. It may seem that there is an analogy with a common response to the problem of evil: that evil is necessary for some essential goods to be in the world. But I am not arguing merely that ignorance is sometimes necessary to promote knowledge, as when the aim of an experiment is hidden from the participants. Knowledge is not the sole epistemic value, and important epistemic virtues involve ignorance. For example, discretion and selectivity (the avoidance of epistemic futility) involve ignorance.

## How the Domains Fit Together

My arguments that ethical and epistemological concerns form distinct normative dimensions should not obscure the fact that the domains interact in many ways. Ethical and epistemic values often coincide, but need not do so, and knowledge and ethics are closely related. There is a sense in which knowledge is always an element in virtue. A person must know what a virtue is in order to endorse it, desire it and be motivated by it. The person who has no understanding of bravery, generosity or compassion can hardly be said to possess the virtue. (This, of course, does not mean she must be able to articulate this understanding, or provide an adequate definition of the virtue.)

A virtuous person must also have some practical wisdom because the practice and implementation of virtue demands a degree of knowledge and, unlike skills, virtues need

to be manifest. I may still be a good chess player although I have not played in years, but I am not honest if I have not practised honesty in years. Some virtues, such as courage (physical, moral or intellectual) seem to depend on opportunities for their exercise. I can only be virtuously courageous when a situation calls for it, and conversely, I am cowardly only by manifesting such a response when courage is called for. Honesty seems different, because it is called for not occasionally, but almost constantly, and therefore, my failure to display honesty implies dishonesty. There may be a presumption that contexts calling for virtuous behaviour arise constantly, and failure to manifest the virtue in such contexts is vicious, in part because virtues are supposed to be standing character dispositions that are stable, not intermittent. Knowledge is important because it is involved in identifying contexts where virtuous action is called for.

There is also a sense in which minimal moral standing is important for some kinds of intellectual excellence. In most cases, a person who is excellent in an intellectual field will need to be sufficiently acceptable in her general behaviour to be included as part of a community, collegial network, or team. It is very difficult to operate unilaterally in an academic, research or teaching setting - usually one needs the cooperation of colleagues.[64] In cases of fraudulent research, both intellectual and moral vice are likely to be involved, and the research is probably worthless. But the scientific experiments carried out by Nazis, or, as some would argue, some kinds of animal experimentation, are morally repugnant, but perhaps epistemically acceptable.

Zagzebski points out that "[b]eing reasonably intelligent within a certain area of life is part of having almost any moral virtue."[65] But to be highly vicious might require similar intelligence. An accountant who launders money for a criminal organisation may need knowledge, legal and intellectual skills comparable to those of the fraud investigators who try to mount a prosecution. But such skills are neither criminal nor legitimate in their own right. As Zagzebski points out, it is important to differentiate skills

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[64] In the film *India Song* (directed by Marguerite Duras, France, 1975.) the Vice Consul of Lahore is excluded from the diplomatic/expatriate community. If these were his scientific peers, such ostracism would be likely to prevent him continuing with many kinds of project.

[65] Op. cit., p. 149.

from virtues, but it seems that skills and competences are the issue here. It is uncontroversial that some degree of understanding is needed to carry out the actions motivated by virtuous intentions. Likewise, however, some understanding is required to perform vicious or malicious acts and indeed to carry out any activity with success. But this need not be excellence in either theoretical or practical wisdom. It is the intellectual minimum necessary for competent action, virtuous or not.

That a degree of intelligence is necessary for carrying out intentions, virtuous, vicious or neutral, does not show that intellectual virtues are part of the moral domain. The knowledge competence essential for virtue is different from fully fledged intellectual virtue. The relation of intellectual excellence to moral excellence is not decided by the need for a virtuous agent to have some knowledge of what she is doing. Similarly, one can be intellectually excellent, but morally mediocre, because the standard of acceptable behaviour is much lower than that of virtue.

## Epistemic virtue and individualism

It is now time to return to some questions that arise from my discussion of Zagzebski's position on truth-conduciveness. What must an epistemic virtue theory look like if knowledge is a social product and epistemic virtues are not only learned and maintained in community, but also include virtues associated with epistemic cooperation, interactions and transactions? I will show that answering this question requires the recognition of the virtues of ignorance.

The notion of truth-conduciveness on which Zagzebski relies actually requires an account of epistemic interdependence. When she uses the notion of "human knowledge" as definitive of epistemic virtue, this seems to indicate a distancing from an atomistic epistemic subject and a move to at least a tacit reliance on a notion of epistemic community. However, interpersonal aspects of knowledge are insufficiently developed in Zagzebski's account of epistemic virtues. Both Montmarquet and Zagzebski focus on individual knowledge achievement and overlook the extent to which knowledge is an interpersonal enterprise. Montmarquet mentions "the mere acquisition of truths already known to others in the intellectual community" in contrast to "[participation] in the

advance of this [deep economical scientific] understanding."[66] Yet, he does not explore

potential virtues involved in either acquisition of knowledge from other persons or in

participation in developing deeper understanding. Although Zagzebski has raised the

issues of the "extension of human knowledge" and the "discovery of new truths for the

human race"[67] she later claims: "[k]nowledge is primarily a self-regarding good, even

though the search for it usually requires the cooperation of others."[68] The lack of

integration of virtue issues with cooperative issues allows Zagzebski to overlook the

kinds of epistemic virtue that are necessary for knowers understood as members of

epistemic communities.

As mentioned above, such issues are overlooked more often than not. However,

Jane Braaten, who brings feminist insights to bear on questions of intellectual virtue,

does address them. I'll use her account to introduce the idea of *communitarian* virtue

epistemology, because her analysis connects virtues directly to community membership.

Braaten is concerned with the community in general, even with the political community,

and my focus is more narrowly epistemological than hers. However, Braaten's

understanding of intellectual virtue includes attention to the engagements between

knowers which is neglected by other theorists, so it makes a valuable contribution to the

debate. Braaten's position differs from mine insofar as her intellectual virtues are closely

related to political and social transformation, whereas I defend a strong distinction

between epistemic and moral or political considerations although I do share the conviction

that knowers are primarily social agents, and that intellectual activity and epistemic virtue

must be understood in terms of interactions between knowers.

Braaten's approach derives from a motivation to rethink human intelligence. She

considers the kind of intelligence manifested in building community and relationships,

instead of regarding intelligence as something quantifiable by psychometric tests of skills

like mathematical reasoning, which give a ranking to examinees according to their

performance on highly abstract tasks like the recognition of patterns in series of numbers:

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[66] Op. cit., p. 33.
[67] Zagzebski, op. cit., p. 190.

> The value of community and other related values such as those of friendship, solidarity and plurality have been central to feminism and the historical role of women as builders and maintainers of community is emerging in women's history scholarship, and the theory of friendship, community and plurality of community is at the core of much feminist theory. The intellectual abilities involved in the pursuit of these ends provide the beginnings of a feminist conception of intellectual virtue.[69]

According to Braaten, intellectual virtues ought to be those conducive to the kind of thinking exercised in creating "an environment in which all members of the community have the opportunity to live well."[70] In this way, the goal of Braaten's feminist intellectual virtue is like Aristotelian *eudaimonia* or flourishing, but this similarity should not be overemphasised since there are important differences. One of the main differences is that Aristotle bases his understanding of virtue in an account of human nature. On the other hand, the *telos* for Braaten is inherently cultural and constructed; neither innate nor individualistic, since it is the transformation of society that is the aim. Braaten leaves the details of a good society fairly open, but the necessary changes would include the avoidance of racist, coercive and sexist social structures.[71] The virtues she describes are highly complex learned abilities that would permit such transformations, but they do not derive from a model of a fixed human nature. Indeed, we are responsible for choosing which characteristics to foster and value.[72] The aim of social transformation does not require an account of essential human nature, but of social justice, and this need not be a static ideal:

> A society decides what it is to be intelligent when it decides that high school students should turn into the sort of persons who can do calculus and creative writing rather than the sort of persons who can hunt game, tell stories, or raise a child.[73]

Aristotle tied virtues to *eudaimonia*, or the proper flourishing for persons, deducible from an analysis of human nature. Braaten shows that what counts as a virtuous or valuable trait depends on cultural norms. Importantly, she includes the capacity to reflect on social conditions as part of the range of intellectual virtues. "The third [ability constitutive of

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[68] Ibid., p. 201.

[69] Op. cit., p. 5.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid., p. 13.

[72] I return to the construction of the parameters of knowledge in Chapter Five.

[73] Op. cit., p. 4.

intellectual virtue] is an abstractive ability, namely the ability to recognize social norms and values as socially constructed, rather than as *a priori* truths."[74]

Braaten does not see truth as the aim of intellectually virtuous effort. Rather, such efforts can be directed to social change, altering the conditions under which members of a community live. The success of such efforts, and the relevant virtues, cannot be assessed by the right/wrong, true/false standards applied in many tests of intelligence. Intellectual virtues are qualities and abilities which we value and encourage and the reasons and motivations for such valuation are not limited to the desire for truth. The question of how social changes can be judged to be improvements is not, in my view, one that an account of *epistemic* virtue can answer, because the moral/political and the epistemic spheres are distinct. Intellectual virtue can permit good thinking about corrupt outcomes.[75]

One of the themes of Braaten's paper is the importance of relationships such as friendship for understanding what it is to think well, and she emphasises that understanding other persons is an intellectual achievement. This is an unusual view, particularly from the side of epistemology which rarely takes examples of knowledge and understanding from human relationships. As Braaten shows, however, if a goal of good thinking is the capacity to contribute to the improvement of the community, then understanding persons is a crucial component.

Braaten advocates a transformation "of the prevailing presumptions about intelligence"[76] to include "social intelligence." Relevant abilities include "an imaginative ability: the ability to represent alternative subjective points of view" and "an inductive ability to hypothesize about the sources of discord and wellbeing, both in personal and interpersonal affairs."[77] An intellectually virtuous person would have these abilities, although on my account they could be used for morally bad ends. Intellectual virtue may be necessary, but is not sufficient for thinking and acting ethically. Braaten's intellectual virtues are made up of social abilities. They would include a disposition to understand

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[74] Ibid., p. 6.
[75] As discussed below in relation to empathy, good knowing need not be morally good.
[76] Op. cit., p. 4.
[77] Ibid.

and engage with other knowers, and to respect and acknowledge others. These examples show that an intellectually virtuous person in Braaten's terms is markedly different from one who is motivated by a desire for truth and understanding. Clearly, imaginative and creative thinking about future social arrangements is an important intellectual process, which intellectually virtuous persons ought to be well equipped to undertake. This demonstrates the inadequacy of virtue paradigms based on too narrow a focus on science-like truth and inadequate attention to the implications of communitarian issues. Zagzebski's insistence that knowledge is primarily self-serving, and cooperation is only incidental to the acquisition of knowledge, although it is the standard view, is mistaken.

In the next section, I show how attention to ignorance enables a virtue theory to take these matters into account. I will focus on interactions between persons *as knowers* rather than *as citizens* as Braaten does. But the point is the same for persons understood as knowers or citizens – they must first be understood as engaged members of community.

## Virtues of ignorance

Epistemic virtues are the qualities that it is desirable for a good epistemic player to possess. I have shown that these cannot be identified with a propensity for truth-conduciveness, and in fact, they do not form a strict unity contributing to a single goal. Epistemic values may at times conflict; perhaps a motivation to act cautiously and avoid error may be at odds with the aspiration for significant discovery. Epistemic virtues can be grouped into two main areas: the first comprises the virtues required for dealing with information, and the second the virtues necessary for interacting with other knowers. The first is usually taken to be qualities of character that concern the acquisition of knowledge, through dealing with information, evidence and facts. Scrupulousness, rigour, belief proportionate to evidence and objectivity are the kinds of characteristics that are often cited. I would add selectivity, and its counterpart vice to be avoided: the pursuit of what is epistemically futile. These virtues associated with factual knowledge are usually presumed to be the only characteristics necessary for good or virtuous knowers, but I have argued that such accounts are inadequate.

The second group of epistemic virtues comprises those characteristics that are necessary for cooperation and engagement with other knowers: the second person virtues. These include trust and trustworthiness, recognition, respect, confidentiality and discretion. Counterpart vices are forms of epistemic disrespect and include patterned responses of disbelief and discredit, a refusal to acknowledge others as knowers (perhaps others from particular social groups) and forms of epistemic arrogance. Having these virtues and avoiding these vices would support knowers engaged in the kinds of decision-making that interests Braaten, as well as ventures such as scientific research and everyday dealings with information. In fact, neither group of virtues can be reduced to knowledge maximising, although this may be more obvious in relation to the second person virtues. The division between the two groups of virtues is not absolute, but it is useful to introduce the interpersonal epistemic virtues as a group.

Here it will be responded that I present too stark and limited a picture of the standard view of epistemic virtue. For example, honesty is often considered an epistemic virtue, and few contemporary epistemologists would deny the importance of cooperation. However, these concessions to the importance of interactions between knowers are minimal, and ultimately inadequate. The standard view of the epistemic domain remains unchanged, and the knowledge-maximising imperative remains theoretically dominant. As the following two chapters will show, there must be serious attention to the virtues of community and of ignorance if an adequate epistemological account is to be developed.

There is a further dimension to virtue, that of self-awareness. An epistemically virtuous person will be able to reflect on her epistemic practice, and will be competent with a variety of strategies, including those related to consultation, and will have good judgement about which strategies to use to obtain information. I think, however, that these are part of a general motivation to reflect on one's capacities, successes and failures, in whatever domains are important. The virtues required for effective self-reflection, or self-improvement, are probably similar in artistic, sporting, moral or epistemic excellence, so I am not nominating this as a dimension of distinctly epistemic virtue.

This analysis allows me to respond to a likely objection to my claim that the moral and epistemic spheres are independent. It may be alleged that all virtues come under the umbrella of morality because striving for excellence is a morally admirable trait, so it may appear that it *is* morally better to be a virtuous epistemic agent. However, such a claim is not limited to the relation between ethics and epistemology, but extends to any field of human endeavour. It implies an imperative of excellence for playing sport, fulfilling a professional role, producing artistic creations and so on. It is therefore an extremely demanding requirement, and I would suggest that at best it would be supererogatory, not obligatory. To be convincing, the objector would have to show which domains are especially important, and how a principle of selection between which activities to pursue would operate.

In fact I would concede that epistemic virtue might be evaluated morally, but only in the same way that my epistemic performance might be assessed from the point of view of professionalism, or another evaluative direction. Most complex human behaviour can be evaluated in a variety of ways, and moral evaluation of any human practice could be important. But this does not mean that all motivation is fundamentally moral; this would make morality trivial. I could apply a professional evaluation to a moral stance, such as loyalty or promise-keeping. Not all evaluation is moral, and not all virtues and vices, rightful and wrongful acts, ought to be evaluated from the moral dimension.

The virtues of ignorance are more common in epistemic practice than has been recognised in epistemological theory. The second person aspects of epistemic life are important parts of epistemic flourishing. They require renunciation of some opportunities for knowledge, and at times demand the withholding of knowledge, especially when privacy and confidentiality are at issue. Even if the net outcome is neutral or negative regarding knowledge, in these cases, epistemic virtue requires such actions. I will show that confidentiality and respect for privacy are epistemic virtues over and above their being moral requirements. To transgress such norms is do wrong as an epistemic player as well as a moral agent.

Ideal competent or virtuous knowers do not indiscriminately collect information or disseminate that information at every opportunity. Competent knowers are selective about what they investigate and share and they manifest the virtues that are required for this kind of selectivity. These are virtues that essentially involve ignorance. If I forbear to pursue certain information, or avoid finding out certain things, I am promoting my own ignorance, not knowledge, but I am not thereby necessarily epistemically vicious. If I do not reveal information to others, I fail to promote their knowledge and increase their true beliefs, thus I am motivated to ensure or maintain their ignorance, but I am not thereby necessarily epistemically vicious. However, the roles of selectivity and discretion are rarely mentioned in epistemological discussions, or if mentioned, not pursued. Neither Montmarquet nor Zagzebski spells out what might be involved in such epistemic virtues, which are those concerning ignorance, but I will show that they are ineliminable aspects of epistemic life. In doing so, I will meet the objection that virtues such as discretion are moral concerns, and therefore not properly part of the epistemic domain. I will argue that in addition to their roles in moral virtue, discretion and related virtues have distinctive and important roles in epistemic life.

Discretion motivates a set of characteristic behaviours towards knowledge and other knowers. These include forbearing to seek certain kinds of knowledge, and not disclosing certain kinds of information. Usually "discretion" refers to the limits on how much personal information concerning self or others is shared. There are at least two reasons why discretion has a moral aspect: first, the information is not neutral, but often deals with matters of potential moral significance; and second, discreet and indiscreet behaviour often involve choices about how to treat other persons. There are clear ethical reasons to be discreet and trustworthy, including respect for persons, respect for privacy and avoiding causing harm or unhappiness to others. In addition, there are epistemic considerations.

Discretion means that I have knowledge, but I choose not to share it. It is a character trait or disposition that differs from a skill (like diplomacy or tact), requires cultivation, and is one that we would expect a competent epistemic player to have and

maintain. The epistemic dimension of discretion includes identifying kinds of knowledge, contexts and relations, areas and degrees of disclosure, and appropriate responses to interlocutors. This dimension is not restricted to ethical contexts, and such skills are important in almost all exchanges of knowledge. I exercise epistemic discretion when judging how much information to impart when asked for directions, as well as when discussing a mutual friend in general conversation. If I were to describe in architecturally accurate detail every building you will pass on your way to the post office, you might never find your way, but I would have informed you truthfully and accurately. If, when we discover an acquaintance in common, I share with you my familiarity with her extensive record collection by listing recording details for every song title, I might bore you, but my error is not moral. The appropriate degree of detail is given in some cases by epistemic, not moral considerations. This does not mean that moral considerations are never relevant to the disclosure of information, only that epistemic considerations are also important.

Epistemic virtues such as discretion can be used for morally admirable ends, or reprehensible purposes like manipulation. A discreet agent may be epistemically excellent, but break moral rules, perhaps using information and understanding to be more effectively cruel. In Chapter Five, I show that empathy, too, can be used for malevolent purposes. Discretion is arguably necessary for the health of an epistemic community, but this is different from it producing knowledge. We rely daily on shared understandings of what information is for general consumption, and what is to be kept private. If I publicised every matter I believed true, (assuming I am reliable in my assessment of their truth) including those revealed to me in confidence or about which discretion was tacitly assumed, I would promote more true beliefs than by nondisclosure. But I would undermine trust and would risk being excluded from cooperative knowledge exchanges. There might be more knowledge for community members and for the community as a whole, but we would not be epistemically better off. People would not only be bored, and overwhelmed with trivia, the disclosures may also lead to an inappropriate or a distorted focus. Just by telling you something, I can make information sound significant.

Irrelevant clues can be misleading, even if true. Discretion, like selectivity, is an essential ingredient of epistemic success, but it is neither knowledge, nor truth-conducive in any straightforward sense, as it serves as much or more to exclude as to produce knowledge.

An objector might insist that the non-truth-conduciveness of discretion is merely an appearance. Globally, discretion is part of epistemic cooperation which is truth-conducive, and thus, discretion ultimately leads to more truth. But this objection fails. It is not at all obvious that discretion is truth-conducive in comparison to the following alternative. If we shared with all available audiences all the information of which we were reasonably certain, then there would probably be a greater proliferation of true beliefs than is the case under conditions of discretion and nondisclosure. A community of artificial intelligences could be transparent and open about everything its members thought true. It is not clear that a community that is highly discreet, and highly cooperative will overall be more or less close to truth than one that is less discreet but also cooperative. It may be better in the sense that more knowers are accredited and acknowledged, that there are greater levels of epistemic respect, and there is greater epistemic responsibility.

Discretion appears to have the characteristics of an epistemic virtue, with the exception of being truth-conducive. It is an acquired, valuable and deep character trait. It is unlike a skill because to count as having the virtue, its possessor must manifest it. However, it is not motivated by the desire to acquire or disseminate truth, but rather to act appropriately (restrictively) in regard to knowledge transmission. Zagzebski would take this as evidence that discretion is not an epistemic virtue, but contrary to her assessment, the value of discretion shows that truth-conduciveness is not the only epistemic motivation. The analysis of discretion shows its dual aspect: in regard to motivation and success it has both an ethical and an epistemic dimension.

It is undeniable that in many cases, sharing of knowledge is the main concern of my epistemic dealings with others. This is most often discussed in relation to testimony as a potential source of knowledge, but also in relation to my contributions to others' epistemic states. Insofar as my beliefs and actions affect others' knowledge, then I may have epistemic obligations to others, in addition to the moral and other obligations I may

have. For example, a teacher has professional and possibly legal obligations to her students probably determined in an unwritten code, and specific legislation. In addition she has moral obligations to treat them with fairness, to avoid cruelty and so on. But fairness and honesty also have epistemic connotations that are not identical with their moral meanings. In marking students' work, I need epistemic rigour. If I fail to be impartial, I am ethically at fault, but if I fail to understand the assessment task and criteria, I am failing to deploy properly my knowledge and communicate with my students in such a way as to enhance their knowledge and prospects for improvement. Here, my epistemic obligations are about knowledge advancement.

But the objects of knowledge and truth seeking are not merely neutral scientific facts. Much of what we discover and disclose is information about persons, and here relevant aspects of epistemic virtue are not limited to ensuring that it is only or mainly truths that are found out and disseminated. Truth-seeking is no justification for invasion of privacy, nor is truth-sharing an adequate defense for breaking a confidence. Those who trust me and share knowledge with me expect me to know the norms of this domain. These norms do not permit the sharing of all and any knowledge with others, even if the result were that more persons would know more truths.

It may seem that this is an argument that there is something wrong with treating others as objects, and indeed there is something wrong with a theory that requires that the persons on whom we depend for knowledge can be nothing more than sources, or objects like other data sources in the epistemic landscape. (I show this in more detail in Chapter Three.) But I am not claiming that objectification of persons is *morally* inappropriate, like the Kantian characterisation of treating others as means, although I think that it is so. My point here is that objectification is *epistemically* misguided. Important features of the epistemic landscape are obscured by such attitudes. Persons are not merely sources of knowledge or information like instruments. Their epistemic importance to me is much wider than as simple providers of data with disconcertingly variable degrees of reliability. Others are exemplars and mentors for me as a knower, others enable me to construct, adjust and fine tune my understandings, others inspire (or

curb) my creativity and can help me to reflect on and improve my epistemic standards and practices.

In Chapter Four I provide a much more thorough analysis of trust, but here, I will merely suggest that under some objectifying models of epistemic interactions, we could rely on but not *trust* others. And reciprocally, others could rely on me, like an instrument, but could not acknowledge or accredit me as an epistemic subject in my own right. Trust can mean more than the expectation of reliable or nondeceptive behaviour. Trust involves an attitude toward another person that expects her cooperation (and this can be on several levels depending on context). She will not, like a computer, respond only to my explicit instructions and requests. Rather, she will in some way understand and act in accord with my interests. If she is trustworthy, she will neither overwhelm me with excessive data, nor leave out relevant information even though I may not have specifically asked for it. I trust her epistemic judgement and discretion as well as her honesty.

Honesty itself is a complex virtue. It involves respect for the truth, and some kind of integrity in communication, but this does not mean treating every interaction in a uniform fashion. Honesty includes not telling everything – there are conflicts between honesty to various parties, and honesty is not about telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth at any opportunity, when doing so would increase the stock of true beliefs held by an audience. Consider the way a mentor or teacher behaves. Not only will she be careful with the information she conveys, but will direct it according to her assessment of her student's need for encouragement, challenge, and even deflation. This shows that trustworthiness and integrity cannot be identified with a simple criterion of promoting true beliefs.

When I trust in another person's honesty, I do not think I expect her to spread as much truth and as little error as possible. In some contexts, certainly, this is what I would expect, and my assessment of her honesty may not survive much deviation. But it is not a universal or monolithic expectation, and in other contexts, if she told the truth indiscriminately, I would at least cease to trust, and may even revise my assessment of her honesty as a result of feeling that she had in some way misrepresented herself to me

as reliable and trustworthy. In my view, this would not be merely a judgement about moral character, as I believe that I have the same expectation that evil persons can be as selective about revealing true information as good persons.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued against the view that ethical and epistemic virtues form a joint domain. I am not *morally* better because my fraudulent activities are backed up by excellent investigative strategies, nor am I *epistemically* worse because I lack moral courage. Epistemic virtues are those related to knowers and knowledge, and include acknowledgement, discretion and trustworthiness. While ethical and epistemic evaluations are directed at similar objects, the actions and beliefs of persons, epistemic and ethical virtues form distinct clusters of traits.

Considerations of epistemic interdependence provide powerful reasons to reject truth or knowledge conduciveness as the determining factors for epistemic virtue. Truth and knowledge are insufficient ideals for a communitarian or social account of knowledge, and as the critiques in the following chapter and Chapter Three's discussion of Code's second person epistemology will show, this kind of account is superior to individualistic accounts. The objection that epistemic cooperation itself is truth-conducive, so that measures necessary for cooperation like discretion and nondisclosure are ultimately justifiable on the basis of increasing knowledge overall, has been shown to be misplaced. A rich account of epistemic interdependence cannot subsist on the value of knowledge or truth-conduciveness. Knowers who are cooperative, interdependent and mutually responsible cannot be understood as knowledge maximisers.

Attention to the virtues involved in the interactions of knowers is necessary to give a complete account of the epistemic domain. Accounts of epistemic virtue need to include the neglected virtues of ignorance – discretion, respect, humility, selectivity - as well as those that promote knowledge, justification or truth. Consideration of both the virtues of ignorance and the communitarian nature of the epistemic domain generate a rethinking of the epistemic/ethical boundary, so that epistemology can include issues such as trust,

privacy and discretion. However, the domains remain distinct, since the boundary has been shifted, not removed entirely.

An effective theory of knowledge needs to do more than offer a definition of knowledge as true and justified belief and an answer to sceptical challenges about the very possibility of knowledge. A good epistemology cannot neglect the dynamics of knowledge exchanges, and the roles of persons in such exchanges. In addition, an adequate account of different positions of knowers must also attend to ignorance, both real and presumed, and must abandon the assumptions that knowledge ought always to be promoted and that ignorance ought always to be eliminated.

In the following chapter, I will examine three kinds of misconception that arise from the presumed disvalue of ignorance. The problems in the three accounts I discuss can be avoided by a strongly communitarian account such as Code's second person epistemology to which I will turn in Chapter Three.

# Chapter Two

# Old Models of Knowledge

## Introduction

The previous chapter discussed epistemic virtues, the characteristics that epistemic agents would do well to possess. I argued that although communitarian considerations indicate that the epistemic landscape must include trust and confidentiality, which have been more commonly regarded as strictly ethical concerns, the domains of epistemology and ethics are distinct. Virtues requiring selectivity and nondisclosure, such as discretion, were examined and the importance of taking ignorance into account was made clear, because many virtues involved in interactions between knowers are ruled out by accounts that deny the value of ignorance. It was argued that the standards for my doing well as a knower are not reducible to truth and the avoidance of error. Nor is it necessarily the case that knowledge that is checked more exhaustively is of a higher quality. As my analysis of trust in Chapter Four will show, some kinds of checking miss the point. Part of being a knower is understanding the norms of nondisclosure and noninvestigation, and these, as I argue, imply ignorance.

An epistemological approach that combines communitarianism and virtue epistemology requires a new model of epistemic subjects and their interactions, and in the following chapter I will show why Code's second person model has the right explanatory resources. In this chapter, I examine and criticise three important accounts of knowledge that move towards a recognition of its social aspects, but fail in important ways. Each (explicitly or implicitly) makes claims about what it is that knowers should do, but each makes erroneous assumptions, for example, that epistemic subjects are interchangeable, or that good epistemic practice consists in the seeking of maximal evidence.

Epistemologists have standardly distinguished between propositional knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance and know how,[1] but these distinctions do not provide an

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[1] For example, the entry on "Epistemology" by A.C. Grayling, in Bunnin, N. and Tsui-James, E.P. (1996). (eds.) *The Blackwell Companion to Philosophy.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, states

adequate set of categories to account for knowers understood as members of an epistemic community, and to illuminate the multiple ways that knowers relate to one another. Persons are not epistemic objects on a par with all other sources and objects of knowledge, and neither are all persons simply equivalent. The kinds of knowledge important to persons interacting in epistemic contexts are not reducible to the division between propositional knowledge and knowledge by acquaintance. Considerations such as degree of familiarity, trust, and authority must also be taken into account.

Standard epistemological accounts emphasise the values of objectivity and impartiality as necessary characteristics of knowledge properly so-called. This evokes an impression of a uniform epistemic domain, but this impression is problematic with respect to persons who know, and the diverse relationships between them. Accounts based on such an impression tend to obscure the patterns and dynamics that constitute the epistemic domain. Others are not merely sources and objects of knowledge, but play a variety of authorisation and acknowledgement roles. These roles make persons epistemically special, enabling us to operate as knowers, to recognise and respond to others who are operating likewise, and to train new knowers.

Communitarian accounts of knowledge demand attention to epistemic diversity because different ways of holding and exchanging knowledge within and between communities become obvious. Knowers relate in many different ways, involving the exercise of authority, testimony and expertise. Persons are known and relied on in a variety of ways, such as those involving empathy and trust. Even discussions of the social aspects of knowledge, however, are often flawed by a failure to consider these aspects of epistemic diversity, which is a consequence of a misconception of ignorance and its role in the epistemic domain. The philosophers I discuss in this chapter exemplify this neglect of ignorance, community and diversity.

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"One can know people or places, in the sense of being acquainted with them. That is what is meant when one says, 'My father knew Lloyd George.' One can know how to do something, in the sense of having an ability or skill...And one can know that something is the case, as when one says, 'I know that Everest is the highest mountain.'" pp. 39-40.

Richard Hall and Charles Johnson argue for an epistemic duty to seek more evidence, which is equivalent to the goal of elimination of ignorance.[2] My first task is to problematise their account of epistemic goals and obligations. Hall and Johnson understand knowers as evidence collectors, but this is far too impoverished a view of knowing. Secondly, I will consider a paper by Alvin Goldman in which he explicates the principles that guide epistemic authorities and explicitly denies a principle requiring the provision of maximal evidence to decision makers.[3] Goldman examines epistemic dependence and paternalism, but I will argue that he shows a flawed understanding in this area, because he retains a commitment to a view of knowers as individualistic, and to truth as the ultimate epistemic value. Goldman's knowers are explicitly engaged in joint pursuits, but Goldman does not follow his investigation of social epistemics far enough. He does not recognise the extent and variety of ways we depend on one another. The third philosopher to be discussed is Jurgen Habermas who offers a model of epistemic cooperation, arguing that rationality is dependent on interactions with others, and so it is not exercised autonomously.[4] Habermas admits the necessity of mutual reliance, but overemphasises rational consensus. As a result, his knowers are undifferentiated, and their interactions are superficial compared to the connections that are possible for strongly communitarian knowers.

My claim is not that aiming for consensus, seeking evidence, and judging experts on the basis of evidence have no place in the epistemic domain, but that their importance has been exaggerated. Analyses of these epistemic practices do not tell the whole story. I show that by taking ignorance seriously a more thorough account of epistemic values can be developed. In the next chapter, Lorraine Code's analysis of second person knowers provides the positive account of knowers which I will show to be a better account.

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[2] Hall, R. J., and Johnson, C. R. (1998). "The Epistemic Duty to Seek More Evidence." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 35(2), pp. 129-139.

[3] Goldman, A. I. (1991). "Epistemic Paternalism: Communication Control in Law and Society." *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXVIII (No 3) pp. 113-131.

[4] Habermas, J. (1981). *The Theory of Communicative Action* (McCarthy, Thomas, Trans. [1984]). Boston: Beacon Press.

## The Epistemic Duty to Seek More Evidence

The presumption that the ultimate epistemic goal is to maximise knowledge by seeking more evidence is worth addressing directly, both because it is so pervasive and because it has significant practical effects. In Chapter Six, I explore some of these effects in relation to intellectual property. Because the proposition that knowledge is always good looks so plausible, and because it seems almost self evident that if knowledge is good, more knowledge is better, it is essential to examine this claim in detail. To do so, I will examine a recently published paper endorsing the epistemic goal of believing all and only true propositions.[5] From this goal, Hall and Johnson derive the duty to seek more evidence in order to establish the truth (or falsity) of uncertain propositions. I will show that both the goal and the duty ought to be abandoned. Certain epistemic ideals, such as the desire for truth and the avoidance of error may be thought obviously valuable. But there are good reasons not to equate knowing best with knowing most.

The epistemic goal of believing all and only true propositions entails the complementary goal of eliminating ignorance. If I believe all truths, then there are no gaps in my knowledge, and if I believe only true propositions, then I avoid any false beliefs. If I were to believe all and only truths, I would thus be free of ignorance. However, this epistemic ideal has troubling implications for understanding knowledge practices, and it is not compatible with epistemic virtue. The reasons for rejecting this ideal are reasons for including ignorance as an important epistemic element. To be a good knowledge practitioner, I ought not to eliminate the state of ignorance, nor should a good epistemological account neglect the concept of ignorance. The goal endorsed by Hall and Johnson not only fails to be virtuous, but I show that there is no epistemic duty to seek more evidence, because the goal this duty is supposed to serve is problematic.

Of course this does not imply that we ought never to seek more evidence. Frequently we should do exactly that. I should confirm my airline reservation, and check that my students' results are properly recorded. But this is not because there is a standing duty to maximise knowledge that requires me to do so, rather, it is because in contexts

such as these there are good (pragmatic and instrumental) reasons to do so. In other words, I am arguing that knowledge is not always good, and in cases of epistemic harm or epistemic futility, it is not the case that a duty to seek more evidence is overridden, rather, there is no such duty. I ought not look up my friend's new number in the phone book just to have corroborating evidence that she gave me the correct number. The motivation to seek more evidence is always based in particular concrete situated reasons, not in a general assumption that it is better to know, or to have greater certainty.

If there is something plausible about the epistemic goal of believing all and only truths, it may derive from our attitude to experts. We admire those who achieve a thorough and detailed knowledge in a certain domain: knowing everything about an ancient culture, a historic event, the life of Wittgenstein, tax regulations, orchids or whatever, and perhaps think even more highly of those who have wide ranging expertise. Knowing everything about something seems at least in some contexts to be a good thing, worth aiming at. But insofar as this is plausible, it is not a construal of Hall and Johnson's assertion. We might *say* that a certain expert knows everything on some topic, but this is not strictly so.[6] Even within a limited scope, a knower must select what to know, and what to leave out. Hall and Johnson say rather that nothing should be left out, and claim further that decisions about which knowledge to pursue should be made on the basis of maximising knowledge, that is, on quantity rather than quality.

According to Hall and Johnson, epistemic duties are implied by our epistemic goals. The duty that follows from the epistemic goal of believing all and only truths can be expressed as: "for any proposition that is less than certain on one's present evidence, one has an epistemic duty to seek more evidence about that proposition."[7] Hall and Johnson insist that we should do our best to believe the truth with respect to any proposition; we ought not to be satisfied to remain agnostic, but should seek more evidence. This applies to all propositions that are less than certain, so for Hall and Johnson, given this epistemic goal, there is always a duty to seek more evidence for some

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[5] Op. cit.

[6] A similar point is acknowledged in Graham, P. J. (2000). "Transferring Knowledge." *NOUS*, 34 (1), pp. 131-152.

[7] Ibid. p. 133.

proposition. Although this does not require that complete certainty is reached, only that one not abandon the attempt to seek more evidence,[8] such a duty is indeed arduous. Until we have done everything possible to ensure the best evidence for all the propositions we may believe, we have not fulfilled our epistemic duty. Other duties may preclude the actual pursuit of further evidence, but only because they override the epistemic duty.

Hall and Johnson claim that evidence is our best guide to truth: the more evidence supports a proposition, the more likely it is the proposition is true.[9] This claim is hard to dispute, but it is perhaps misleadingly simple. Evidence is not always self-presenting, and in fact many decisions have to be made and negotiated about what counts as relevant evidence,[10] and exactly which propositions certain evidence supports. Theories are notoriously underdetermined by data, and the neutrality of scientific claims is highly contested. Sandra Harding makes the point sharply:

> "Science says...," we are told. Whose science, we can ask? The drug and cigarette companies? The Surgeon General's? The National Institute of Health's? The science of the critics of the NIH's racism and sexism?[11]

Similarly, one can ask "whose evidence?" The notion of evidence that Hall and Johnson are invoking here glosses over some important issues. Their presumption that evidence is unproblematic is a little hasty, because science is taken as the model without careful attention to how it actually works, and without considering whether it is the best model for everyday knowledge. In a footnote, they suggest that " 'evidence' refers to things like the testimony of one's senses and memory, positive instances, correct predictions, coherence with a unified explanatory system, etc. - things people educated in the Western scientific tradition would typically take as evidence."[12]

It is not entirely clear from the discussion whether Hall and Johnson intend their notion of evidence to include testimony and trust-based knowledge. Since an enormous amount of what we take to be true is obtained from others, this is a significant issue. However, an insistence that other persons can provide knowledge only by being *sources*

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[8]   Ibid. p. 136.
[9]   Ibid. p. 130.
[10]  I develop this point in the next chapter.
[11]  Harding, S. (1993). "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology," in Alcoff, L., and Potter, E. (eds.) *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York and London: Routledge, p. 63.

of evidence is mistaken, and Hall and Johnson's claim that the only way to acquire true beliefs is through collecting evidence is likewise an error. Hall and Johnson seem to assimilate all knowledge to that which is based on some kind of observation. Their view of evidence is explicitly drawn from the "Western scientific tradition." But knowledge of other persons is not like this, nor is knowledge of mathematical relations, of history and language nor of conceptual frameworks. Just as there is a plurality of epistemic values, there are multiple kinds of knowledge.

Hall and Johnson erroneously presume that evidence is a straightforward notion. But however evidence is understood, their claim that it is directly connected to the "overall epistemic goal"[13] is highly problematic. While their account of evidence is underdeveloped, the role they ascribe to evidence seeking as the fundamental obligation of knowers reflects a deeply flawed understanding of the epistemic domain. Seeking evidence is not the only route to knowledge and the pursuit of all and only true beliefs is not the ultimate epistemic goal. These problems derive from a misunderstanding of epistemic relationships and a presumption that epistemic norms can be summed up by a single goal and duty.

Although their account is couched in terms of duty, not virtue, the account of virtues developed in the previous chapter can be used to illustrate the deficiencies of their account. They do not consider the domain of engagement, and the integral virtues associated with acknowledgement, trust, and empathy, for example. There is no room for discretion, or selectivity in their account. They neglect epistemic cooperation, and the basis of common knowledge that permits the division of epistemic labour. Yet, as I show below, they need to invoke the division of epistemic labour in an attempt to offer some account of how one might pursue the claimed duty to acquire evidence. The following section reveals the problematic role of epistemic community in Hall and Johnson's account of the way evidence seeking ought to be approached.

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[12] Hall and Johnson, op cit. (p. 137, footnote 5).
[13] Ibid., p. 129.

## Problems with pursuing this epistemic duty - which beliefs?

Hall and Johnson accept some pragmatic constraints on the duty to seek more evidence which, they argue, is a *prima facie* duty, not a duty to be pursued come what may. The duty may be trumped by other factors that motivate my decisions and actions. Nonepistemic considerations include social, political and economic factors, and moral and other obligations. Therefore in any concrete situation, whether we actually ought to spend the time and energy seeking further evidence cannot be determined by purely epistemic considerations. But according to Hall and Johnson, this does not show that there is no such epistemic duty nor that it is not a pure or central epistemic duty.[14]

It might seem that since this epistemic duty can be overridden, then certain difficulties disappear. We need not seek more evidence for dubious propositions when there are other calls on our time and resources which take priority. However, I will show that there are not just pragmatic reasons that override this proposed epistemic duty, but that there are epistemic considerations against it. In fact, the defense of such an epistemic goal and its implied duty involves mistakes about the epistemic domain. Principally, Hall and Johnson are mistaken about epistemic diversity and epistemic dependence.

These problems are starkly revealed in their discussion of how I should determine which course of action I should adopt in order to perform my epistemic duty. Factors cited by Hall and Johnson that help determine where I start my evidence gathering are the degree of difficulty of gathering evidence, and relative degrees of evidential support for other beliefs.[15] To minimise my chances of false beliefs, I should attend to those beliefs where the risk of believing falsely is higher than those where there is already strong supporting evidence. Moreover, if the same amount of effort could be directed at producing evidence for one belief or at producing evidence for many, I should opt for evidence for more beliefs.

> If in 5 minutes you could gather lots of evidence on p, q, and r, whereas it would take you a lifetime to get even a little evidence on s, then by investigating p, q, and r rather than s you move more rapidly towards the goal of believing all and only truths.[16]

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[14] Ibid., p. 136.
[15] Ibid., p. 134.
[16] Ibid., p. 134.

Thus, on this account, we are epistemically obliged to abandon complex or long-term projects in favour of simpler and quicker ones. It is therefore assumed, by Hall and Johnson, that all beliefs are of the same value, it is just the quantity of beliefs that counts. That this assumption is unwarranted can be seen in several different dimensions. Beliefs have widely different scope and range. Some beliefs underpin my entire worldview: for example, beliefs about causation; the nature of reality; or the nonmalevolence of my friends and colleagues. The presence or absence of beliefs in some areas will have much more pressing consequences than the presence or absence of beliefs in other contexts. My beliefs about the locations of my keys, or my car, the nearest medical facility, or my friend's house may be critical, but beliefs about the right way to interpret the Private Language Argument are much less likely to have life threatening implications.

Hall and Johnson may respond that this is not about the beliefs themselves, but about my other projects, but such an objection misses the point. Firstly, as a knower, I am always engaged in other projects. My beliefs always are related to my activities, and interests. Beliefs do not make sense in isolation from the person holding them. Secondly, beliefs are always connected with other beliefs. There are relations between beliefs, and some are more peripheral than others. While I don't think that holding a belief necessarily means accepting all its implications (that belief is closed under implication), there are cases when adopting, confirming or disconfirming a belief will impact on related beliefs. If I come to believe that I am allergic to dairy products, or peanuts, this will modify a whole range of my beliefs about what I should and should not eat, what groceries I should buy, and what will constitute a healthy eating plan for me. If I come to believe that I ought not eat betel nuts, given that I have never tried them and cannot easily obtain them, this has very little effect on my belief system. So because beliefs are not always independent, they are not equivalent even taken just as beliefs. There is no obvious sense in which beliefs are homogeneous, in terms of value or scope. Furthermore, beliefs only make sense as the possessions of persons in community, because only "second persons" can be believers and knowers. A full defense of this communitarian epistemology is provided in the next chapter.

Hall and Johnson endorse a form of doxastic homogeneity, that all beliefs count the same. They also suggest that "we weight the avoidance of false belief as highly as the attainment of true belief." [17] This too is odd. Not all false beliefs are equivalent, some, for example, closely approximate true beliefs. It will be context that determines whether a false belief is problematic or not, and what degree of deviation from the truth is tolerable. Suppose that I am making home brewed beer, and I believe the temperature of the water is 21 degrees. Even if this is false, as long as the actual temperature is within a range of 5 degrees or so, it won't matter. However, if I am processing a roll of film, and if I believe the temperature is 21 degrees, then it matters that this is not false, as there is little margin for error if the best results are to be achieved. So a simple dichotomy between false and true beliefs is not of great practical use, and an insistence on maximal accuracy would be far too demanding for many activities. It is practically problematic, and it misrepresents the epistemic domain.

Even if Hall and Johnson had a more nuanced account of beliefs and the ways they fit together and fit into contexts, their account of epistemic obligation would still be inadequate. The failure to recognise that knowers are fundamentally not incidentally social, and the overlooking of the virtues associated with community and with ignorance have permitted them to advocate a motivation for epistemic conduct that has startlingly incoherent implications.

## Problems with pursuing this epistemic duty - whose beliefs?

Hall and Johnson suggest that in selecting my epistemic projects, I ought to consider what other evidence-gatherers are doing. They explicitly suggest that I should direct my efforts with reference to the true beliefs of the community, not just my individual situation. Thus, "if other competent investigators are already investigating s, then by gathering evidence on p, q, and r rather than s, you help the whole community closer to

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[17] Ibid., p. 132.

the goal."[18] Hall and Johnson, therefore, take the view that the epistemic goal of believing truly is one to which the belief status of the whole community is relevant.

This implies that just as my evidence gathering can contribute to bringing the whole community closer to the goal, I will benefit from others' discoveries. Otherwise, why should I take into account the activities of others? Unless I am entitled to presume that the evidence they acquire will be available to me, and that I may rely on it without checking for myself, it is not obvious that it is in my epistemic interests to avoid duplicating others' evidence seeking. There is either a presumption about communication, that everything I know will be shared, or about distributed knowledge, that in some sense the community as a whole can claim all the knowledge of its members. Neither of these presumptions is very plausible. As my discussion in Chapter Five of the division of epistemic labour will show, there are numerous ways that knowledge is shared among the members of a community, and everyone having access to everything is not the normal case. I simply do not know everything that is known by members of my community, and it seems odd to declare that my community knows everything that I know. In fact, sharing of knowledge is not all or nothing. (Shared common knowledge is often necessary for collective projects and for the division of epistemic labour. I need some common ground with an expert whom I consult, in order for me to access her expertise, so the knowledge held in common and the knowledge differences are both important.)

It seems that Hall and Johnson are taking account of the knower being a community member, but they don't connect this to an adequate account of what knowledge exchanges might really be like. They presume knowledge exchanges to be automatic and symmetrical between knowers, and they suppose that knowers and their knowledge are interchangeable. They assume I will have unproblematic access to beliefs and evidence held by others, which is implausible at best. A person who makes a new scientific discovery will be careful about how this is publicised. A person can have many reasons for not disclosing everything she knows, and even if she has no concern for privacy, it is hard to see where this total disclosure could start or end. In addition, implied by Hall and

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[18] Ibid., p. 134.

Johnson's advice to avoid duplicating others' investigations, is a presumption that I can acquire knowledge from others without this requiring me to seek further evidence; in other words, that trust is a source of knowledge distinct from evidence seeking. While I think this is correct, it is extremely problematic in the context of the position that Hall and Johnson are defending. If I can acquire others' knowledge without seeking further evidence then it is not obvious that the epistemic duty to seek more evidence is implied by the epistemic goal to believe all and only truths. Perhaps instead I ought to seek persons to believe. On the other hand, if I cannot borrow others' knowledge without further evidence, then I ought not to take their knowledge-seeking activities into account. That is, it ought not make a difference to me that others are already investigating s.

Invoking "the whole community" with respect to the goal of true beliefs raises further questions about communication and disclosure. Ought I to seek more evidence, or true beliefs for myself, or instead, should I promulgate already certain true beliefs? For example, my date of birth can be checked relatively easily, and conveyed to others with a high degree of accuracy in a short amount of time. The most accessible, easily checked and transmissible true beliefs are likely to be trivial, acquired by counting or clock reading or similar activities. Could I have an epistemic duty to maximise my collection of such beliefs, and to ensure as many persons as possible have the opportunity to believe truly such trivial facts? Hall and Johnson seem committed to answering "Yes," since they encourage me to "help move the whole community closer to the goal [of believing all and only truths]."[19] The problem is not that such a duty is arduous, but that it is absurd.

It might appear that Hall and Johnson could be rescued from this absurd predicament with a more subtle and contextualised account of which beliefs to pursue, and a richer range of knowledge acquisition strategies. But as soon as interactions between knowers are included as a significant part of the epistemic domain, serious attention must be paid to the virtues associated with engagement and cooperation. Then, the commitment to the goal of believing all and only truths must be revised because virtues of ignorance, such as discretion, must be included. As I will show in the

following chapter, an account of knowers as second persons provides a much more plausible account of epistemic norms.

Hall and Johnson assume that the nature and value of truth or knowledge is such that one can move from discussing the truths I know as an individual to the truths held by my community as if these were all part of the same system of epistemic value.[20] However, the implications of the epistemic goal of believing all and only true propositions change dramatically depending on whether or not I take my own beliefs to be the only ones that count. It is the unquestioned allegiance to the goal of knowledge that obscures the questions of whose knowledge is at stake, and why this matters. It is thought that because knowledge is good, more knowledge is better for anyone and for everyone. This is a mistake on two counts. Firstly, knowledge is not necessarily good, and secondly, it is questionable whether maximising knowledge for oneself or for other persons is a coherent epistemic approach.

## Against the goal of all and only true beliefs

There are a number of reasons to think that maximising true beliefs is not the only or even the most important epistemic goal. Ultimately, there are reasons to deny that it should be an epistemic goal at all. Firstly, beliefs are not all equivalent, and given our finite state, we must be selective and prioritise which beliefs to pursue and share. Some beliefs are more useful (beliefs about cooking techniques), some are more interesting or life-enhancing (beliefs about Nietzsche's philosophy), some are more urgent (beliefs about whether I turned the gas stove off and left my house secure). A policy, such as Hall and Johnson's, of maximising true beliefs at best offers peculiar guidance as to which beliefs should be pursued. At worst, it offers no guidance at all. Hall and Johnson's criteria mandate the seeking of trivial beliefs, because these are amenable to quick and easy

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[19] Ibid.

[20] As discussed in relation to Zagzebski's claim that epistemic virtue must be truth conducive (Chapter One) this is far from unproblematic. As the discussion of Code's second person epistemology demonstrates, communitarianism forces a significant revision of epistemic presumptions. It is simply mistaken to conflate my own beliefs and those of my community as if nothing changes when I take epistemic relationships into account.

acquisition. ("If in 5 minutes you could gather lots of evidence on p, q, and r,..."[21]) It seems implausible that this could be good epistemic practice. A second group of pragmatic reasons to avoid the indiscriminate pursuit of true beliefs is generated by basic principles of epistemic community which require us to refrain from intrusiveness, invasion of privacy, breaching of confidence and "flooding" others with excessive information.[22] Failure to comply with norms about ignorance or "when to leave knowledge alone" would have the result of undermining the epistemic community. We respect each others' privacy, and practice discretion with respect to what we reveal. Failure to comply with a community's expectations by maximising the sharing of information will not enhance epistemic cooperation. This might result in fewer true beliefs overall, but even if it did not, and even if total disclosure would produce the maximal number of true beliefs, this is still not a clear reason to embark on such a course. In addition, Hall and Johnson leave the notion of a community's beliefs unexplained. Without some careful explanation and defense, it cannot do the required work. The very idea of maximising true beliefs remains unclear in Hall and Johnson's discussion, and it is not obvious how a coherent account might be developed.

Furthermore, the epistemic duty of evidence seeking that is advocated by Hall and Johnson implies that philosophy, for example, is an epistemically pernicious activity. Acquiring the maximum number of true beliefs about Descartes' *Meditations* is unlikely to be good philosophical practice. Conversely, setting out to acquire a genuine philosophical appreciation of such a text is an enterprise that can hardly be reduced to evidence seeking, although there might be some such seeking going on. That philosophy is in some sense an epistemic enterprise requires that there are indeed epistemic values or goals other than that of believing all and only truths. These values include sensitivity to nondisclosure norms, and diverse intellectual challenges, like interpretation of texts, following or constructing an argument, and devising examples and counterexamples, not just belief

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[21] Hall and Johnson, op cit., p. 134.

[22] This is even used as a strategy to thwart information seekers, for example, cigarette producers who face class actions, and who are required to provide information about their research bury any relevant material in masses of data, presumably to keep it from discovery.

collecting. The capacities to select the knowledge I need for my projects, to be a competent epistemic colleague, and to be selective about the knowledge I pursue and share, are epistemically valuable traits, but are not reducible to or motivated by a desire for the maximisation of true beliefs. In the end, focussing exclusively on the goal of acquiring all and only truths generates perverse epistemic duties.

Hall and Johnson concede that the duty to seek more evidence can be overridden, as it is not the only duty, nor the most important in every context. They "agree that one must consider one's other obligations - moral, prudential, or whatever - in deciding whether to spend more time gathering more evidence about a proposition."[23] However, the problems with the goal and the concomittant duty are such that we have to identify different *epistemic* goals and duties. In fact there are diverse epistemic ideals and duties. The ideal proportion of true and false beliefs is not all to none. We ought to aim to be trustworthy and discreet, and while sometimes we ought to seek more evidence regarding uncertain beliefs, this depends on context. Hall and Johnson's position regarding evidence misses the reality of epistemic diversity by assuming a homogeneity in the epistemic domain. They wrongly presume that the same epistemic duty is incumbent on all knowers all the time. There is also an incoherence in their view that knowledge is interchangeable between knowers, because they implicitly rely on a notion of trust that is at odds with their own view of evidence.

Knowledge is like food: food is not good just for its own sake, but because it supplies pleasure and nutrition to those who consume it. To presume that more is always better is a mistake: to eat well is not to eat most. A good diet may involve eating nutritious food and avoiding unhealthy food, but not everyone should have an identical diet. A good diet is not eating *all* (and only) nutritious food: I ought not consume every nutritious item I encounter. The case is similar for knowledge, I ought not seek to believe every truth, nor confirm (or disconfirm) every belief. Something epistemically valuable is always valuable for a knower, invariably at a time and in a context. And while there is something plausible about the goals of truth and the avoidance of error, it is simply wrong that we

should seek all and only truths. There are times when we should be satisfied with propositions that we know are not true. For example, some positive thinking techniques work by motivating the adoption of a belief that is not true at first. I try to overcome my fear of public speaking by persuading myself that I am confident and competent, even though in this context I am neither. It has been argued that "a fearless and disinterested pursuit of the truth is disillusioning and disillusion is inimical to the pursuit of a good life."[24] Damian Cox argues that I am not better off with a *true* belief that the world is cruel and indifferent, nor that I have no free will, no enduring self, nor that life is meaningless. The value of such beliefs, or their contraries, is instrumental not intrinsic.

The claim that we should seek or tolerate false beliefs seems odd, and in a sense there is a tension between adopting or maintaining a belief while at the same time thinking that belief to be untrue. But the food analogy can be used again to show that from a different perspective, such a tension is less compelling. I could have good reasons to choose a nutritious diet with some consumption of junk food, (alcohol, chocolate, pizza and cake) over one with equal nutrition but excluding such indulgences. It might make me happier, and it might make it easier to fit in with the eating habits of my friends. Similarly, I could choose to tolerate some falsehoods within my belief system, as these could be instrumentally useful, or satisfying in some way. A high opinion of the positive qualities of the people with whom I live, and false beliefs that to some degree minimise their negative characteristics may well enable more tolerant and harmonious relationships within my household.[25] Some sacrifice of truth and accuracy can be valuable. The ideal position with respect to believing truly or falsely depends on context.

In a sense, the primary difference between my view and that advocated by Hall and Johnson is about what should be the normal or the default case. Hall and Johnson concede that there may be other priorities that can override the duty to seek evidence. I would agree that there are many instances where true beliefs are better than false ones,

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23 Hall and Johnson, op. cit., p. 136.

24 Cox, D., "Truth: What is it Good For?" unpublished paper, 1999.

25 An objection will be raised that these are non-epistemic concerns, and in a purely epistemic context, truth is valuable for its own sake. I think it would be difficult to say precisely why this should be so, or exactly what a purely epistemic context would look like. But again the problems of selectivity and

and that there are cases where we have a duty or responsibility to seek more evidence about dubious beliefs. There is likely to be significant agreement about cases where the pursuit or dissemination of truths is inappropriate. However, I think that the kind of approach which should be adopted is always context dependent. There are few, if any, instances where knowledge is an issue only for its own sake; generally, the potential knower has multiple concerns and interests. Hall and Johnson argue that on the contrary, there is always a *prima facie* case in favour of knowledge.

Epistemic values that are not reducible to maximising knowledge include treating other knowers with respect, epistemic humility and discretion. These entail that I do not seek to reveal everything that I know, nor should I expect others to disclose everything to me. Believing truly, and the avoidance of believing falsely are important aspects of epistemic competence. But it is not so obvious that this requires the goal of believing all and only truths. The goal of truth and the avoidance of error is just one of the dimensions of epistemic value, and it does not override other considerations. As discussed above, as knowers we are also interested in avoiding epistemic futility, maintaining relationships with other knowers, and being epistemically virtuous through practicing confidentiality, discretion and trust. We must make judgements about short term and long term knowledge, and be selective rather than indiscriminate in our epistemic pursuits. A diverse view of epistemic values, including virtues of nondisclosure and noninvestigation, provides a more coherent picture of the epistemic domain, and a more practical guide to our epistemic obligations than does an exclusive focus on maximising knowledge.

Having challenged the goal of knowing all and only truths, and the ensuing duty to seek more evidence, I turn to a discussion of the principles guiding interactions between knowers. Here, too, the acquisition of total evidence is mistaken for a credible epistemic goal. I show that a conflation of expertise and legitimate authority leads to a distorted view of epistemic interactions.

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accuracy would arise. I would have to judge which truths to pursue, and define a degree of accuracy to

## Goldman and Epistemic Paternalism

Unlike Hall and Johnson, Alvin Goldman begins with attention to epistemic interactions. Epistemic paternalism is an important epistemological consideration. If information providers (such as news broadcasters, advertisers, experts, and teachers) are supposed to act for the epistemic good of their audiences, then how is that epistemic good to be understood? Goldman wants to provide "a general assessment of paternalistic control practices, first in terms of purely epistemic considerations, and second on more inclusive grounds."[26] He is concerned with epistemic transactions, and the principles that guide the provision of evidence and information to other knowers. He first considers whether a principle requiring maximal evidence to be provided is generally respected in domains of epistemic authority, and he argues that it is not. He rightly rejects the suggestion that a principle requiring total evidence for individual believers (which is similar to Hall and Johnson's duty to seek more evidence) can be extended to epistemic interactions.

Goldman explores issues arising from social epistemics, or the study of epistemic practices and their regulation. As Goldman puts it, "[s]ocial epistemics studies the veritistic properties of social practices or institutional rules that directly or indirectly govern communication and doxastic decision."[27] This domain includes paternalistic epistemic practices.

Goldman's interest in epistemic dependence and decision making practices would seem to suggest a communitarian focus. But his very approach shows that he retains a traditional epistemological emphasis on individualistic knowledge: he starts with a principle purported to apply to an individual basis for belief, and extends it to interpersonal epistemic transactions. Goldman is, however, correct about the unsustainability of a principle requiring total evidence to be provided, and about the importance of exploring the domain of social practices that control knowledge. I will show that the unacceptable aspects of his account can largely be accounted for by his misconception of the relevance of ignorance to understanding social epistemic practices.

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which my efforts should apply, and I have shown these to be highly problematic considerations.
[26] Ibid., p. 121.

His analysis of paternalism, then his assessment of the principle requiring total evidence will be discussed.

Some preliminary analysis is necessary to introduce Goldman's account of the transactions he regards as epistemically paternalistic. Two relevant types of authority can be distinguished. "Authority" can mean something close to "expert", because to be an authority on a subject means to have specialised information that most people do not have.[28] But to have authority can also mean to be in a position of authority, and to have the powers, rights and responsibilities that go along with its exercise. Authority here connects to "being authorised," or having a certain kind of status and power. This may accompany expertise, as in being an acknowledged or recognised expert. But one can be an unacknowledged expert, and hence be unacknowledged as an authority, or one might have authority, but not expertise.[29]

Epistemic authority can involve either of these kinds of authority. A person can be an authority with regard to knowledge in some domain because she is an expert in that domain. Or, a person can be an authority with regard to knowledge because she is in a position to exercise control, perhaps by editing a newspaper or a website. The latter kind of authority involves authority over others' knowledge or the information available to them, but the former involves only the possession of expert knowledge that is better than the normal or ordinary standard of knowledge.

Paternalism requires the kind of authority that is related to power and status. It is a certain way of exercising authority, and has been defined as "interference with the conduct of another with their best interest in mind"[30] and as "[t]he power and authority one person or institution exercises over another to confer benefits or prevent harm for the

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[27] Op. cit., p. 120. "Veritistic" here means related to the pursuit of truth, so he is interested in whether or not a given social practice supports or conflicts with the goal of truth.

[28] This echoes the notion of epistemic privilege, which ties the possession of some particular knowledge to a specific subject or group of subjects. But what is important for my discussion is that expertise demands a context of dependence - it is only significant if others rely on that expertise, and while not sharing it, can access it.

[29] A similar distinction can be found in Fricker, M. (1998). "Rational Authority and Social Power: Towards a Truly Social Epistemology." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 159-177. Fricker distinguishes "rational authority" which is based on trustworthiness and competence from "credibility" which refers to the features of the informant which indicate whether she or he is likely to be right about the issue in question.

[30] Allen, A. L. (1988). *Uneasy Access*. Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 166.

latter regardless of the latter's informed consent."[31] As a form of authority, paternalism need not involve expertise.

Epistemic paternalism is, therefore, the exercise of control over the knowledge of others, on their behalf or in their interests. A person might occupy a position involving control over dissemination of information without being expert in the content of that information. For example, someone might decide to place warnings on cigarette packets, without being a medical expert. There is another kind of relevant expertise, in psychological or sociological understandings of how such warnings work, but while such experts may be consulted about the framing of the warning, the legislators need not be expert in this way either. Legislators need position and power, not expertise, in order to exercise paternalistic epistemic authority. However, in the absence of expertise, many judgements about the knowledge of others might be made badly, so expertise or access to it is frequently desirable for those making paternalistic decisions. My claim is that expertise is neither necessary nor sufficient for the exercise of epistemic paternalism.

Goldman, however, recognises no distinction between paternalism's being legitimate and its being the source of a correct judgement. In fact, he suggests that expertise can legitimate paternalism. The discussion of paternalism in education policy illustrates this clearly. Goldman rightly points out that students are not standardly exposed to all information and to every viewpoint on every subject. Selectivity occurs on at least two levels: firstly, the selection of what is true and accurate information, instead of what is false; secondly, selectivity also requires choosing for the curriculum content that is only part of what is true and relevant, since due to practical constraints, not all of this can be included.

As examples of views that may be left out of a classroom curriculum, Goldman mentions "the flat-earth viewpoint, Ptolemaic astronomy, or astrology"[32] as well as creationism, perhaps the most famous and contested alternative to mainstream classroom content. These cases are very different from the selections made within the accepted

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[31] Honderich, T. (ed.) (1995). *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, "Paternalism" p. 647.

canons, (for example the choice of which astronomy text to prescribe), and from legal

cases where the truth of certain evidence is not contested, but the material is inadmissible

for some other reason. Some potentially legitimate content is omitted for (largely)

pragmatic reasons; some content is omitted because it is judged not to be legitimate.

Goldman argues that both are cases of epistemic paternalism because decisions are being

made to control or restrict knowledge in the interests of the potential knowers and their

acquisition of relevant truths.

Thus far, Goldman's analysis is reasonable. But then he turns to the question of the

warrant for paternalism and makes the following claim:

> Here, too, paternalism seems to be warranted on epistemic grounds. Experts on science
> should be allowed to decide that creationism is not a scientifically viable or serious
> contender, and hence should not be taught in the classroom.[33]

But even if paternalism is warranted and necessary, as it is in educational contexts,

invoking expertise does not resolve a controversial issue. While it may be true that

science teaching ought to follow Darwin, not Genesis, this does not follow from the fact

that paternalism is warranted and scientists are experts. It is uncontroversial that decisions

about curriculum content should be made with the epistemic interests of students in mind.

Such judgements are examples of legitimate epistemic paternalism, and if such decisions

were made in the absence of considerations of the students' best interests, they would be

made inappropriately. However, the debate between advocates of mainstream science

teaching and their creationist opponents is not one between defenders of epistemic

paternalism and those who would reject it. *Both* sides would claim that their strategy

promotes the epistemic welfare and access to truth of the students in question. Similarly,

both would cite experts to support their preferred content. Conceivably, proponents of

opposing views on teaching content would share almost identical reasons for endorsing

epistemic paternalism, and would agree unanimously that it is warranted in this context.

Invoking epistemic paternalism does not resolve the issue of how to teach science, it just

raises issues about whose authority should be decisive.

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[32] Goldman, op. cit., p. 121.
[33] Ibid.

Goldman offers a discussion of expertise and authority which may be intended to defend his position, but in fact it shows where the confusion lies. Goldman claims that:

> expertise is a prime factor in the defense of epistemic paternalism. To justify any instance of such paternalism, involving a particular controller, we must have grounds for taking that agent to be an expert.34

But expertise is neither sufficient nor necessary for legitimate paternalism. If it were sufficient, then, in any situation where another person knew better than I, she would be entitled to make judgements on my behalf, but this is absurd. Better knowledge, or expertise, is not sufficient to warrant paternalism, and although this is the only condition Goldman offers for the warrantedness of paternalism, I would not ascribe such a claim to him. It is more plausible that he regards expertise as a necessary condition of paternalism, but this is also mistaken. Paternalism is not justified by expertise, it may depend on contexts and roles, relationships and circumstances. With respect to Goldman's example, why should classroom content be decided by scientists, instead of students, parents, teachers, religious experts or other stakeholders, such as the community in general? Expertise (or more realistically competence) may be important for making good decisions, but this is a different matter from the justified making of decisions. For example, parents exercise authority by virtue of relationship, not expertise, and do not lose the legitimacy of that authority by being inexpert. In any case, expertise is not a simple matter, and, as will be discussed further in Chapter Five, its relationship with cognitive authority should not be presumed unproblematic.

Complex decisions are often not best left to experts, and many decisions involving epistemic paternalism are of this nature. This is one reason why lay members are important participants on research ethics committees, and on guardianship boards or mental health tribunals where decisions are made about information. Goldman too hastily takes experts to be the best decision makers as well as the best information providers.

In many information exchanges, information is limited for nonpaternalistic reasons, mutually acceptable or tacitly consensual reasons. But regulations that are tacitly consensual are not really paternalistic. It will rarely be appropriate to aim for the total

disclosure of truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But only in some cases is the controller pre-empting her interlocutor's capacity to decide for herself on the evidence, which is one of the differences between exercising authority, exercising control for nonpaternalistic reasons, and exercising paternalism.

Expertise does not suffice for paternalistic legitimacy, nor is a person in a position of legitimate paternalism necessarily there by virtue of expertise. This is clear from the fact that while a person purported to be an expert may lose her claim to legitimate expert status by making bad judgements, the *legitimacy* of paternalistic authority would not thereby be lost, (though its utility would). For example, a teacher who has the authority to decide the content for a particular session does not lose this authority by being a bad teacher, and deciding foolishly. Goldman links paternalism and expertise much too closely.[35] I do not wish to deny that expertise may be important for assessing paternalism, but in relation to its effectiveness, not its legitimacy.

Goldman explores the issue of identifying experts as part of identifying proper contexts for paternalistic authority, or proper individuals to exercise it. But experts may not have authority in the sense of influence over others, for example, an expert orchid grower has no authority over my horticultural decisions. Even were I to consult such an expert, she has no right to act paternalistically with respect to me. My ability to judge expertise has little to do with the contexts of paternalism in which I find myself, nor those of which I am unaware, nor those which I can judge to be warranted or otherwise. The presence of experts may be necessary for epistemic paternalism to be exercised well, but this is a different issue from its being practiced legitimately or appropriately. In addition to expertise, responsibility, respect for other knowers and a perspective from outside the expert framework are important factors in good regulation of knowledge.

Expertise is one of the ways that persons are positioned differently in the epistemic domain. And, as Goldman notes, a proper account of this domain must acknowledge that it is marked by differences in "cognitive resources, skills and opportunities .... different

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[34] Ibid., p. 128.

[35] The claim that there is an important distinction between expertise and authority is not a novel one. Such a distinction is widely made, for example, in discussions of medical paternalism where expertise is uncontested, but the legitimacy of the exercise of paternalistic authority is challenged.

levels of expertise, by different opportunities for information gathering, by different levels of cognitive maturity and training, and by severe time constraints."[36] It is worth considering whether Goldman's account of expertise, detached from his account of paternalism, is a useful account of expertise *per se*.

An expert is defined by Goldman as a person who either has or can acquire true answers to core questions in the relevant domain(s). This is expertise in its primary sense. A controller might have secondary expertise, such as the skill to locate other experts, for example, "expertise on the question of speaker credentials" which would be possessed, for example, by the framers of the rules applying to legal evidence.

Level of expertise can be understood in either a comparative or absolute sense, depending on whether the individual is expert absolutely or in comparison with others. Experts can be identified through their capacity to answer questions in domains such as prediction domains, factual record domains, repair domains, and design domains. Even novices can identify experts by their success in such domains, Goldman claims.

Goldman is probably right about a necessary component of expertise being the capacity to demonstrate it appropriately, for example, by answering relevant questions, making predictions, and succeeding at practical tasks of design or repair. He may also be right about it being "relatively easy, even for novices or rivals, to identify expertise"[37] through examining and checking such successes, (although in many areas I doubt that I would know what checks or expectations would be properly relevant to expertise). But Goldman fails to consider that normal practices do not include direct detection of experts. We rely on claims to expertise, which are usually backed by complex social accreditation systems. If I consult a lawyer or surgeon, or meet a mathematician or astronomer, for example, I do not check their ability to perform certain tasks.

Goldman's account does not attend to this aspect of the division of epistemic labour. It is not merely specific or specialised content for which we rely on others, nor is it only occupants of particular (professional) roles on whom we count. There are vast

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[36] Goldman, op cit., p. 131.
[37] Ibid. p. 130.

dispersed networks of dependence,[38] and a large part of our reliance is indirect. Goldman's notion of expertise is problematic both because it misrepresents the ways epistemic dependence on experts actually works, and because of the use he makes of it in his account of the warrant for paternalism. I argue below that Goldman's discussion of the requirement of total evidence shows that he still regards an account of epistemic interactions as derivable from an individualistic account. Goldman neglects the depth of epistemic dependence because he remains compelled by the image of knowing for oneself.

## The Requirement of Total Evidence

Goldman uses the principle of the "requirement of total evidence" (RTE) as an "expository heuristic to introduce the topic of epistemic paternalism."[39] The strong form of the principle states that the best cognitive judgement demands the use of all evidence available to the agent at minimal cost, which is very similar to the position defended by Hall and Johnson. This principle is, Goldman claims, "popular in epistemology and the philosophy of science,"[40] and in fact in many theories it appears as the main principle governing knowledge-seeking activities. However, by focussing on examples of knowledge interchange, Goldman shows that those who are in a position to paternalistically control the knowledge status of others do not use such a principle.[41] For example, educators who have a clear motivation to develop good cognitive judgements in students do not (and could not) achieve this aim by providing *all* the available information.

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[38] The difference I am trying to articulate here is similar to the difference between power seen as the direct exercise of force and a Foucauldian conception of power as a network of relations and procedures.

[39] Goldman, op. cit., p. 113, footnote 2.

[40] Ibid. p. 113.

[41] Goldman discusses the principle purported to direct the control of evidence to another (C-RTE) most carefully and thoroughly in the context of certain legal practices, specifically the rules that determine the admissibility of evidence. His discussion of law has two major problems: first, he understands the law or at least the evidence rules aspect of it, as a truth seeking enterprise, and second, underlying the first error, he understands law, or this aspect of it, as rule-following. The errors in Goldman's discussion of law mean that his central case against C-RTE is not only unnecessary because C-RTE is not *prima facie* plausible, but also ineffective because his account of the main example is mistaken.

Goldman's discussion of the requirements for total evidence reveals his view of the relation between individual and collective knowledge, and why he gets the analysis of paternalism wrong. He distinguishes a weak and a strong form of the principle of the requirement of total evidence:

> (W-RTE)     A cognitive agent X should always fix his beliefs or subjective probabilities in accordance with the total evidence in his possession at the time.

The strong form of the principle adds a requirement for the acquisition of evidence, which is absent from the weak form:

> (S-RTE)     A cognitive agent X should collect and use all available evidence that can be collected and used (at negligible cost).[42]

The weak form demands only that an agent make use of all the relevant information she has, but the strong form imposes an obligation to use all available information, at least when it can be obtained at minimal cost. Goldman takes the strong form to be acceptable, and this is initially plausible. In at least some contexts, decision-makers should probably not assume their current information state is adequate, and there are often things we should know more about, for example, I should check the safety instructions, or read signs.

Goldman specifies the interpersonal version of RTE in relation to control of evidence: if Y controls the availability of evidence to X, then, "Y should make available to X all the evidence that is subject to his (Y's) control."

> (C-RTE)     If agent X is going to make a doxastic decision concerning question Q, and agent Y has control over the evidence that is provided to X, then, from a purely epistemic point of view, Y should make available to X all of the evidence relevant to Q which is (at negligible cost) within Y's control.[43]

Goldman argues that that the control version of the requirement of total evidence principle (C-RTE) is unacceptable, and sets out to show that many existing provisions and practices contravene it. He identifies authorities who operate paternalistically, or control information for others' good. He finds examples in law, education and broadcasting regulation. Such decisions, which are made by authorities in the interests of other cognitive agents, do not comply with C-RTE.

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[42] Ibid., p. 113-4.
[43] Ibid. p. 114.

As it stands, Goldman's version of C-RTE is *prima facie* implausible. Many kinds of interaction ranging from such simple activities as playing cards to complex business negotiations could not take place if such a condition were imposed, that is, if no one treated any information as confidential. Goldman might respond that these kinds of interaction are not primarily epistemic, so it makes sense that other considerations would prevail. This is fine, but now it is necessary to find a way of distinguishing between contexts that are primarily epistemic and those that are not. But we lack such a distinction,[44] and without it, it is difficult to identify any circumstances in which a principle that refers only to providing total evidence might be applicable.

Goldman probably means by "primarily epistemic" contexts those situations where the exchange or provision of information is the main aim. But even when asking for information, we do not normally expect to be told the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. If I inquire about the availability of airline bookings, I do not expect and usually would not get an account of the airline booking policy. When seeking information, we rely on edited, not encyclopaedic, versions.

Another problem with Goldman's generation of the C-RTE principle is his assumption that a principle that (purportedly) guides autonomous knowledge activities can simply be transferred to a domain of epistemic interactions. However, it is not obviously a good idea to treat individual knowledge-seeking as the model for interpersonal knowledge exchanges: indeed, the reverse might be more plausible. In most cases, the acquisition of knowledge is an interpersonal matter and perfectly autonomous knowledge activities are few and far between and quite difficult to isolate. It is usually better to use the standard or common case to explain the less ordinary situation, and in the epistemic context, this means explaining individual knowledge in social terms, not the other way around.[45]

In any case, the nature of obligations is not normally such that a principle guiding my behaviour entails a principle requiring other persons' cooperation. The fact that I

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[44] Although epistemological concerns are deeply interdependent with other concerns, as I argue in Chapter One, there are distinct domains of evaluation.

should work carefully and rigourously on my research project does not mean that others are universally obliged to assist me. Similarly, the fact (if it is fact) that I should attend to the available evidence in making a judgement does not oblige others to provide me with evidence. This may be so in some cases, but is not universally so. We in fact expect others to exercise discretion which may reflect previous commitments, tacit trust conditions, respect for another's privacy or other reasons for non-disclosure.

Goldman's remarks about the nature of epistemic interests that are to be considered by a regulator of news services are worth examining because they reveal his view of epistemic value. He argues that simplification of both the content of issues and of the range of possible interpretations can "reduce the number of truths an audience has an opportunity to acquire"[46] but this is offset by the trade-offs of avoiding confusion and error, and the increased audience size for simpler information. Simplification can thus be justified on account of epistemic paternalism, as being in the epistemic interests of the audience, so we are not confused by excessive information or discouraged, even baffled, by incomprehensible complexity. The accessibility of simpler information to a greater audience "may mean that more true beliefs (ie belief tokens) are acquired through the simplified set of messages than would otherwise be the case."[47] It seems correct that an audience may be better able to grasp less detailed information, but it is much less obvious that the benefit lies in an increase of true beliefs. As argued in the previous section, the claim that increasing the numbers of true beliefs is the proper epistemic goal is deeply problematic.

Goldman argues that fecundity (the number of persons acquiring true beliefs) is a genuine epistemic value. It is unclear whether Goldman means that all beliefs are equal, or if there are differences when different persons acquire beliefs. He does not explain how to compare fecundity with other measures of beliefs, and exactly how the trade-off of simpler for more numerous beliefs functions. It is also a little unclear exactly whose interests are those being considered by paternalistic regulators. It might be the current

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[45] In the next chapter, I give a more detailed argument for a communitarian approach to knowledge.
[46] Op. cit., p. 114.
[47] Ibid.

news-viewing audience, or the potential audience, or the community in general, and decisions might vary according to whose interests are prioritised.

Goldman acknowledges that he has so far been equating epistemically valuable outcomes with true belief and error avoidance. He defends this position and argues that other candidates for epistemic value like (Mill's conception of) deeper or livelier impressions of truth, or argumentative skills, can be cashed out in terms of grasp of truths, or the enhanced capacity to grasp truths.[48] However, there are problems with these criteria for epistemically valuable outcomes. As discussed in Chapter One, beliefs are difficult to count. Also, when looking at epistemic community and epistemic authority, it is essential to have a less individualistic account of epistemic value. My epistemic welfare includes not only the beliefs I currently hold, but also those to which I have relatively easy access, through others' expertise, among other things. For example, my medical understandings may be no better than those of my great grandparents, but I am epistemically better off in relation to medical knowledge, both as the potential recipient of treatments, and as an inquirer, because much more information is available to me. Goldman does not take seriously enough the ways that epistemic interactions force a revision of how epistemic welfare should be considered.

Overall, then, Goldman's efforts to incorporate questions about paternalism and the sharing of information into epistemological discussions are flawed by his failure to recognise how much a communitarian or social epistemology must diverge from individualistic models. It is not sufficient to take atomistic subjects posited by such a model and add them together and make a composite of their interactions. The interactions must be taken as primary, because subjects and their knowledge are constituted in important ways by these interactions. Considerations deriving from virtue and communitarian epistemology reveal the need for a new account of knowledge, and a different evaluation of ignorance.

I have argued that Hall and Johnson's claims that the only appropriate epistemological goal is to know all and only truths and that we have an associated duty

always to seek more evidence are both mistaken. I have also shown that Goldman's account of epistemic paternalism and his explanation of its warrant fail due to his misunderstanding of that nature and source of epistemic authority and his confusion of authority with expertise. This misunderstanding of expertise derives from the supposition that it does not matter who has knowledge, because it is the same for everyone. Consequently, the knowledge of experts is taken to legitimate their judgements on behalf of others, since anyone with that knowledge would judge in the same way. The presumed uniformity of knowledge produces a distorted account of epistemic dependence.

Taking ignorance seriously leads us to a very different view of knowledge where the positions, contexts and diversity of knowers are central features. Goldman is mistaken about the processes of exchanging knowledge even though he has explicitly set out to investigate some of the characteristics of an epistemic community. It may seem that an account of epistemic dependence that advocates maximal interaction and participation such as Jurgen Habermas's account of communicative rationality, would avoid the problems of more individualistic approaches. Habermas places epistemic dependence at the heart of his account of rationality through the conception of an ideal speech situation in which rational interaction is unlimited.

However, although Habermas starts with a seemingly communitarian account of knowers, I will argue that his conception of epistemic dependence is inadequate. His knowers, I will argue, are still conceived as unencumbered and abstracted from engagements with one another. All reasons can be offered for universal assessment, and all knowers participate equally in the consideration of reasons. As a consequence of this uniformity, Habermas's view of rationality as consensus cannot accommodate the crucial role of ignorance in epistemic communities and the significant differences between the knowledge of diverse persons in such communities.

## Habermas and Consensus

In this section I will argue that Habermas's account of communicative rationality involves an imperative for transparency and full disclosure that is similar to the one seen to operate

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[48] Ibid. p. 125.

in the traditional approaches to epistemology criticised above. His analysis presumes a uniformity of the epistemic domain, and of epistemic agents. I will contrast Habermas's account with Kant's view of rationality to illustrate its strengths and weaknesses.

Habermas's work is important because it properly draws attention to the mutual construction of understanding, and to the necessity of seeing epistemic subjects as participating in joint projects. His account of communicative rationality provides a version of epistemic dependence inasmuch as he argues that one essential form of rationality depends on interactions between epistemic subjects.[49] Habermas understands reasoners as primarily social, and according to him rationality involves communication, not just thinking for oneself. Rationality is an interactive process that is not restricted to an innate individual capacity. The radical development in Habermas's theory is the movement away from understanding the subject of reasoning as an individual mind or consciousness who thinks, to understanding the reasoner as a communicator: a participant in social rational action. Just as epistemic subjects, I argue, must be engaged with one another, and mutually dependent, Habermas sees rational subjects as necessarily interactive.

Because of his emphasis on the social nature of reason, Habermas seems very different from Kant, but they share a theoretical commitment to the unity of reason. This can be seen clearly when their views of moral reasoning are examined. Habermas, like Kant, thinks there are universal conclusions about morally binding norms that all could endorse.[50] Kant argues that enlightened individuals must leave behind the easy "immaturity" of depending on others' authority, and be guided by their own reason and understanding.[51] Autonomy and freedom with respect to religious and political criticism are particularly important because in these areas, unthinking dependence on authority is all too common. For Habermas, however, autonomy is not the primary goal, and dependence is a necessary and positive part of reasoning. But, for Habermas, universally

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[49] Habermas's analysis of rational agents is not explicitly an analysis of *epistemic* subjects, but the individuals and interactions relevant to Habermas's account are roughly coextensive with those relevant to my account – persons who know, communicate and interact, and their practices. So I am taking Habermas's subjects of reason to be the same group as my epistemic subjects.

[50] Kant, I. (1964). *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (Paton, H. J., Trans.). New York: Harper and Row.

acceptable moral conclusions are not realised by individuals exercising their power of autonomous reasoning, rather they are developed through rational exchange. "The central principle is that for a norm to be valid, its consequences for the satisfaction of everyone's interests must be acceptable to all as participants in a practical discourse."[52] For Kant, any rational individual can work out whether or not the maxim of an action is universalisable. But it is clear that for Habermas, the process of reasoning is necessarily interactive. So, according to Habermas, there is an important and overlooked aspect of reasoning which is exercised in participation and exchange with others. This appears to be a radical departure from the Kantian emphasis on autonomy, but an investigation of the ideal speech situation will demonstrate that Habermas's Kantian heritage remains dominant.

Even if there is no actual discussion, there is, according to Habermas, an "unavoidable and reciprocal anticipation and presupposition of an ideal situation of discourse."[53] This kind of reason is not located in an individual competence, but in interactions and particularly within discourse. Furthermore, it is not limited to moral reasoning, but is important in all communicative reasoning: I may be using reason to get somewhere, to find out the truth, to check on facts or evidence, or find out what to do. To the extent that my purpose requires communication, it is necessary to presume the possibility of communicative action. "In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions."[54]

The activities of making, justifying and challenging claims are central to Habermas's analysis. Claims can be made in three areas: we can talk about the external world; or about the rules governing talk and behaviour; or we can engage in aesthetic or

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[51] Kant. I. (1983) "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*. (Humphrey, T., Trans.) Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company.

[52] Habermas, J. (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*. (McCarthy, Thomas, Trans.) p. viii,(editor's introduction).

[53] Habermas, J. (1979). *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (McCarthy, Thomas, Trans.). London: Heineman Educational Books, p. 19, (editor's introduction).

[54] Habermas, J. (1981). *The Theory of Communicative Action* (McCarthy, Thomas, Trans.1984). Boston: Beacon Press, p 286.

expressive talk about inner life. Habermas presents a pragmatic account of truth, normative validity and aesthetic/expressive validity: three types of justification corresponding to the domains of talk. When we talk, claims will be accepted or questioned. When we are challenged, we give reasons and redeem our claims, or revise them in the light of the challenger's reasons and we expect the same of interlocutors. Truth and validity are decided in this process. "In contexts of communicative action, speech acts can always be rejected under each of the three aspects: the aspect of the rightness that the speaker claims for his action in relation to a normative context (or, indirectly for these norms themselves); the truthfulness that the speaker claims for the expression of subjective experiences to which he has privileged access; finally, the truth that the speaker, with his utterance, claims for a statement (or for the existential presuppositions of a nominalized proposition)."[55] During a communicative interaction, if challenges are not made, there is a tacit acceptance of the claims, that is, of their truth or factual accuracy, of the speaker's right to make such claims in such a context, and of the speaker's presenting the claims with some kind of integrity. Admittedly, at times, it might be inconvenient or inappropriate to raise objections, then, claims may be accepted with reservation, or provisionally. Such pragmatic motivations could arise during instrumental action, where communication is undertaken for some purpose, so a "good enough" level of understanding is all that is required.

Insofar as I need others to cooperate with me, according to Habermas, I must presuppose communicative rationality and the ideal speech situation. Habermas is not proposing that every communicative engagement involves an explicit aim for consensus, but underlying the very possibility of communication is what Habermas terms "the ideal speech situation." We must suppose that we can share an understanding of what is being said or we would not attempt communication. The ideal speech situation is the ultimate idealisation of this notion of consensus.

The ideal speech situation is a (counterfactual and imaginary) situation where rational interaction is unlimited, and impediments to unlimited rational interaction like

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[55] Ibid., p. 307.

coercion and exclusion are ruled out. Any reasons can be given and called for, which requires that in principle anyone can participate, by providing or asking for reasons. This is why all persons from all times and places are included, because all reasons are things offered by communicators. In order to include all potential reasons, the ideal speech situation must include all potential contributors. This is important because it shows a major strength of this account: for Habermas, reasons are not separable from reason-givers. Reason may transcend space and time, but not the presence of persons. This is an immensely valuable insight and with it, Habermas locates reason in persons and their interactions. This is exactly right, yet Habermas fails to see that if knowers are fully recognised as second persons, then including persons as reason bearers must include their particular contexts. Such an inclusion, I will show, renders his ideal speech situation problematic.

The importance of epistemic dependence is clear on Habermas's account, and the joint processes of normativity and rationality are emphasised. Habermas concentrates on the possibilities in the ideal speech situation of speaking, of raising any claim and challenge without restriction. When communication requires mutual understanding, participants must be able to raise, meet and resolve validity claims, or move to the level (of discourse) where justification can take place. Some limited kinds of communication may not require this: for example, that which is necessary for strategic action, or the giving and obeying of orders may not presuppose the possibility of discourse.[56] But the possibility of discourse always grounds communicative action when we speak to be understood and come to agreement. The ideal speech situation is, therefore, a regulative ideal for all communication, because all communication requires the presupposition of the possibility of mutual understanding and agreement (or a shared idea of truth, which for Habermas means consensus). Ideally, this would be universal, hence the non-exclusiveness of the ideal speech situation.

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[56] Such limited communication may look something like Wittgenstein's "slab" language. Wittgenstein, L. (1951). *Philosophical Investigations.* (Anscombe, G. E. M., Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.

Habermas's view of communicative rationality maintains an emphasis on equal access and participation: in the ideal speech situation everyone is to be treated the same, and is to count for the same. Habermas, therefore, departs from Kant's view that each individual reasoner can independently reach the right conclusion. But he claims that through discourse, each reasoner can grasp the product of consensus and can come to understand it for herself. Each gets it *for* herself, although not *by* herself. Everyone who is a rational communicator, like all others, must share an acceptance of all the claims vindicated in the ideal speech situation. Each must use the same reasoning, because, Habermas argues, all can reason in concert and get the same result. All reasons are accessible to me, although not necessarily discoverable by me. Habermas, therefore, has posited an ideal community of knowers whose different positions along dimensions of gender, historical position, class and race are all presumed to be irrelevant to the capacity to participate and to achieve consensus. Furthermore, all knowable things are treated in the same way. All sources and objects of knowledge are treated in the same way. All reasons, objections and responses are presented for everyone's evaluation, and everyone will in principle be able to agree. On the second person account developed in the next chapter, how comments are presented - to whom, by whom, and in what context - will be shown to make an enormous difference to the way any joint understanding is produced or impeded. Consensus cannot be presumed or pre-empted. Knowers and their knowledge are not interchangeable, because it is particular engagements with other knowers that permit my status as knower, and my possible (positive and negative) contributions to others. Irreducible differences may well become manifest.

For Habermas, the difference between knowers is restricted to their initial contribution, and such contributions are either validated by universal acceptance, or rendered invalid by a failure to achieve universal acceptance. On Habermas's account, there is therefore no room for ignorance. Nothing in principle is unknowable for me if another can give it as a reason. The unity of reason depends on the ideal absence of ignorance – that is, on both the possibility and desirability of alleviating it in all cases. Habermas, thus, presumes the unity of epistemic objects: they must be such that any

subject can acquire them, understand them. They differ only in origin, and once they have been presented to all knowers, such origins no longer matter. This means that on Habermas's account the initial inclusion of diverse perspectives is important, but in relation to the interactive process itself, and the outcome, diversity has no further role.

Habermas recognises that in order for all reasons to be available in the ideal speech situation all reason givers must be present. That is, he recognises that people can have different initial perspectives and reasons. But once the reasons are given, any differences between people no longer matter because consensus and unity take over. Two conditions must be fulfilled in order to achieve consensus. Participants must ultimately have access to all the same information, and accept the same facts, so full disclosure and transparency are required; and they each must have an identical rationality, because only this would enable all to reach the same conclusions, even from the same information. [57] This means that everyone must be prepared to share *all* their information, which is problematic in itself for reasons discussed above. But more importantly, this undermines Habermas's apparent commitment to diversity.

To think of knowers in the way presented by Habermas is to flatten out the differences between knowers. People may differ in the weight given to different reasons: some prioritise rights, others consequences; we may differ in the salience that certain kinds of reasons have for us (perhaps I take local considerations to be priorities, whereas you adopt a global perspective); and we will differ with respect to disclosure – the things we prefer to keep private or confidential. Habermas supposes that everyone will reveal everything that may be relevant,[58] but this presumption cannot be maintained with respect to knowers.

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[57] For detailed analysis of the multiple conceptions of rationality that are involved in Habermas's account, see Sprod, T., *A Philosophical Justification for the Community of Inquiry Approach to Moral Education*. London: Routledge, forthcoming. Sprod also provides a powerful critique of the presumed universality and uniformity of the rationality that participants bring to the ideal speech situation.

[58] It is worth remembering here that certain normative (moral and political) questions can be redeemed in the ideal speech situation, so questions of privacy and confidentiality are potentially very important. However, I am not focussing on Habermas's view of ethics although it would be necessary to address it if a fuller discussion of his account of rationality were to be presented.

It seems that equal opportunity to participate in communicative action is sufficient (in Habermas's view) for all persons to be properly acknowledged as knowers. But this equality is merely freedom from coercion and manipulation, and does little to address how persons are differently empowered to speak, or to include different ways of expression. Joan Landes offers a clear explanation of certain problems with the nature of participants in Habermas's ideal speech situation. She points out that "Habermas never asks whether certain subjects in bourgeois society are better suited than others to perform the discursive role of participants in a theoretical public."[59] Her point is that the ideal of universal participation and reasoned discourse presupposes a particular kind of subject suited to such participation, and that the option of taking up such a position is *not* equally accessible to all kinds of persons. The ideal of universal participation in public discussion privileges those who are articulate and fluent in self-expression and self-assertiveness, and whose voices, faces and bodies match those types that are respected and acknowledged in the public domain. Gender is not the only dimension of social difference that is relevant here. This ideal is also problematic in relation to groups such as persons of colour, working class, young, old, and people with disabilities.[60] In Habermas's ideal speech situation, these factors make no difference to inclusion, there is room for everybody. And participants bring their particular experiences – Habermas does not insist that a properly disinterested reasoner can speak for all. [61] Yet, these differences are important only insofar as different reasons are presented for the consideration of all, and this is a weak notion of diversity. People can speak about their history and experiences, but it seems that their reasoning is unaffected by this history and these experiences; all will reach the same conclusions. The diversity which motivates Habermas's inclusion of all potential knowers in the ideal speech situation is eclipsed by an assumption of the transcendental uniformity of knowers.

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[59] Landes, J. "The Public and Private Sphere" in Meehan, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Feminists Read Habermas.* New York and London: Routledge, p. 97.

[60] For a critical discussion of Habermas, impartiality and participatory democracy see Young, I . M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, especially pp. 117-9.

Landes also raises the issue of the kind of speech involved in Habermas's communicative reason: "Habermas overlooks the strong association of women's discourse and their interests with 'particularity,' and conversely the alignment of masculine speech with truth, objectivity and reason." [62] Landes challenges Habermas's claims to neutrality and universality both as accurate descriptions and as desirable norms. The problem is not merely that actual contexts of discussion lack the features of the ideal, because the ideal is counterfactual, but that the features of the ideal proposed by Habermas are themselves problematic. Participants seem remarkably like the typical intellectual – articulate, confident in argument and linguistic presentation, and skilled at reasoning in a particular way (the academic philosopher, probably male, probably white, and probably middle class is a perfect candidate). Habermas, in fact, presents highly specialised characteristics as if these were universal and neutral. Universal participation and consensus require the transcending of language differences and different levels of competence, different styles of communication, different norms of disclosure, and different ways of reasoning.[63]

It may be a mistake to restrict communication that is relevant to mutual understanding to linguistic presentations within reasoned discourse. A person may have complex feelings that she cannot articulate. Some persons are less fluent in spoken or written words than others, but this need not mean their thoughts are less subtle or sophisticated. Differences in communicative expertise are one set of reasons why advocacy is important in many aspects of daily life. Inarticulateness also compels us to think about other forms of expression and those who use visual media, performance, movement, and music to communicate, instead of verbal or literary forms. The concentration on one kind of intellectual skill obscures the varieties of human expressiveness that can contribute to mutual understanding. Habermas extends rationality

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[61] See Habermas's critique of Rawls in Habermas. J. (1990). *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, especially pp. 66-8. For an extensive critique of Habermas's discourse ethics, see Sprod. T. op. cit. Chapter Six.

[62] Op. cit., p. 98.

[63] One obvious source of claims about diverse modes of reasoning is the ethics of care and the ethics of justice debate. See Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a Different Voice.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

to intersubjectivity and communication, but does not explore the full potential of this expansion.

Even if Habermas's account could include all kinds of expression, and could incorporate some way to facilitate universal participation (for example, by overcoming the silencing effects of oppression), problems would remain. The nature of the dependence evoked by Habermas is dominated by the idea of consensus and uniformity: I must engage in the same way with all other knowers, and we must in the end come to share the same perspectives on facts and norms. Participants bring their diverse histories of interactions, engagements and relationships of dependence to the ideal speech situation, but, somehow, this diversity and particularity is transformed into consensus. Thinking about how this must happen reveals further problems with the Habermasian view.

Habermas's ideal speech situation fails to account for certain features of communication and for important epistemic virtues. In fact, there are respects in which the speech situation promoted by Habermas is far from ideal. To count it as ideal that information should be disclosed indiscriminately, that is, uniformly, to everyone, is equivalent to denying that there are virtues associated with maintaining confidentiality and trust. But why should virtues that are necessary in real contexts of epistemic interactions be absent from the ideal? One possible reason is that these virtues of discretion are, like coercion and manipulation, rightly excluded from an ideal situation. This is not very plausible. Confidentiality, privacy and trust are crucial to particular engagements between knowers, and this particularity is not, like coercion or manipulation, an inherently pernicious characteristic of epistemic interactions. In fact, as I will show in the next chapter, particularity and engagement are essential to the very existence of knowers. Respect for other knowers and consideration of their rights to disclose or not are rightly thought to improve communication and collective reasoning in the normal case. Their absence in Habermas's speech situation, far from making it ideal, transforms it into a *bad* speech situation.

In Habermas's communicative ideal, the emphasis on consensus and shared understanding means that important aspects of interpersonal communication are

invalidated. It seems as though everything can be made public. This runs contrary to the norms of communication to which we are accustomed, which are not just rules about disclosure, but also about privacy and respect for others' privacy. The loss of these qualities dehumanises the participants, and sets them up to interact like machines for which all information is equivalent. Ordinary knowers, virtuous knowers and even ideal knowers should not be understood like this.

Habermas's position is initially attractive because it appears democratic, inclusive and nonindividualistic. Furthermore, it makes sense that there must be some common ground in order for communication to take place. However, this does not mean that as knower, I can be presumed capable of understanding and coming to agreement about everything that any person may communicate. And it is no solution to relegate those particularities that cannot be publicly redeemed into a private sphere. Nor is the separation of the good from the right a successful solution. Public and private, good and right are not radically separate categories into which moral and political issues fall neatly.[64] As feminists have argued, the public/private split has a history of making certain kinds of work and social role invisible, and occupants of invisible roles tend to be vulnerable to injustice and oppression.[65] It may seem that Habermas's emphasis on full and uncoerced participation would protect against such outcomes, but inclusion and noncoercion are not enough. Much of ordinary conversation is not premised on respect for and acceptance of otherness, and the rules of discourse from the ideal speech situation do little to challenge this. Those who are well spoken, well respected, and well recognised will do well, as they do already. The currently marginal must become like them in order to succeed, and

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[64] Benhabib, S. (1992). *Situating the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Benhabib's discussion of the generalised and concrete other addresses the issues of morality and justice. She sees one aspect of the issue as whether "judgments of justice and right constitute the moral domain" (p. 72) and argues that Habermas is unsuccessful in defending this claim. In the area of justice, impartiality is a basic ingredient, but impartiality is not appropriate throughout the moral domain. She defends a view that it need not be the case that accepting some of Habermas's insights about communicative rationality means taking on a view that the participant in communicative action must be an unencumbered autonomous self, nor that the exercise of communicative rationality is bound to "formulate and defend a univocal conception of the human good"(p. 75).

[65] Pateman. C. (1989). *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press, especially chapter 6 "Feminist Critiques of the Public Private Dichotomy."

this looks like assimilation. This model of communicative agency privileges one type of agent so that to be a rational participant, everyone must become the same.

In proposing an ideal that eliminates ignorance, Habermas, unlike Hall and Johnson, has not proposed that we aim at the elimination of ignorance by seeking to acquire maximal knowledge. Rather, he posits the ideal as a transcendental precondition that underlies all our communicative interactions, but even in this role it is problematic.

## Habermas and Ignorance

While Habermas recognises knowing and reasoning as joint activities, he actually neglects the virtues of knowers understood as engaged and cooperative members of community. His model of ideal consensus, although intended to explain communication, is actually at odds with the requirements of cooperation. In order to cooperate with other knowers, I must be discreet and respectful of confidences; trustworthy and restrained in my pursuit of at least some kinds of evidence. In other words, at the practical level, as a knower, I need ignorance, and at the conceptual level, an effective epistemological theory needs to take ignorance into account.

Ignorance is an important factor in epistemic dependence. Without it, the only way to analyse intractable differences in knowledge is to ascribe irrationality either to those who refuse to disclose, or to those who fail to reach understanding. There is no room for epistemic respect for others' understandings without having to share all the reasons and conclusions, and no acknowledgement of the importance of the discretion to share information or not. The force of the better argument must persuade everyone alike. Relationships of trust have no place in Habermas's ideal speech situation, I must treat everyone the same.

In developing a better account of epistemic dependence, such as the second person account in the next chapter, there needs to be a revision of the account of a knower as one whose virtues are limited to those conducive to maximal knowledge. Epistemic interactions cannot be adequately explained when knowers are presumed to share the same responses to information, and to be prepared to disclose everything to everyone. I have argued that Habermas's participatory subject has not moved as far from Kant's

autonomous subject as it seemed at first. Habermas's commitment to the social nature of reason has progressed from a completely atomistic approach, but because Habermas fails to see the importance of virtues of engagement, including virtues of ignorance, his view of this reason is too weak. Participation is not merely a matter of acquiring the necessary competences, and having the requisite unlimited time. It demands sharing Habermas's unifying rationality and abandoning ignorance and difference.

In discussing and developing ideas, we are selective, not indiscriminate, about with whom we interact. This is not just a contingent feature of our time and place restrictions - I do not turn to those closest in time and space - but in closest or most appropriate relationship. (Like the Gadamerian notion of prejudice, not only is this preference inescapable pragmatically, but it is actually constitutive of some kinds of shared exploration of an issue that it be done on the basis of a particular relationship. [66]) Habermas could respond that in the case of reliance on experts, we utilise instrumental rationality and this is appropriate in many contexts. I think that in the instances when normative issues are discussed selectively he would claim that to the extent we are exclusive and refuse to take some views into account, we are irrational, but neither the ethical nor the epistemic domain can be analysed in this way. Taking particular relationships into account is not only legitimate, but necessary, and this particularity and selective disclosure entails that ignorance is not eliminated.

## Conclusion

In the previous chapter, I argued that an adequate epistemology needs to include an account of persons who know and the ways they interact. A virtue epistemology is the best way to achieve this, but an account of epistemic virtue needs to include the virtues of ignorance such as discretion. In this chapter, I have examined three epistemic models that adhere (more or less closely) to old patterns of understanding knowledge, and I have shown that the limitations of these accounts derive from a misunderstanding of ignorance and the epistemic community. In their analysis of epistemic duty, Hall and Johnson

neglect the epistemic community almost totally, and treat knowledge-maximising as the ultimate epistemic goal. Alvin Goldman recognises the importance of analysing the social aspects of knowledge, but he does not take the analysis of epistemic dependence far enough. His account of paternalism accompanies an inadequate account of expertise, and of the relationship between an individualistic and a collective understanding of knowledge. Jurgen Habermas sees interdependence as fundamental to rationality, but his commitment to consensus and unity precludes an adequate account of the engagements of knowers, and of the importance of nondisclosure. It cannot simply be assumed that knowledge is always good and more knowledge is always better. Neither is it legitimate to invoke notions of epistemic cooperation and epistemic community without revising presuppositions about the nature of knowledge, knowers and their interactions. Recognising that ignorance is not only inescapable, but valuable, prevents these misconceptions.

The models of what an ideal epistemic player ought to be offered by Hall and Johnson, Goldman and Habermas are not at all suitable for the actual epistemic world. We ought not seek all evidence, judge experts on the basis of evidence, nor aim for complete consensus through perfect communication. Since one of the main ways we acquire information is by accessing what others know, treating persons as equal and unconnected individuals, and working independently to acquire knowledge does not work. I do not simply encounter an environment, a set of facts, or propositional claims. Knowledge contexts are already shaped by the presence and attitudes of others and my history of interacting with other knowers. Social practices control and construct knowledge in a multitude of ways.

Some kinds of facts are knowable through testable, replicable observations, but persons are not known in this way. The kind of knowledge of persons at issue here is that which allows me to rely on a person's informing me, allows me to predict and explain her behaviour and speech, and to trust her and rely on her testimony. In other words, she is both object and source of knowledge to me. But, because she is a knower

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66 Gadamer, H.-G. (1976). *Philosophical Hermeneutics.* (Linge, David E., Trans.) Berkeley: University

like me, she is not like other objects in the epistemic landscape. She is neither a mere object of knowledge, nor a mere source of data.

Authority and ignorance, therefore, can be at least partially characterised in relation to each other. Those with epistemic authority control ignorance as much as knowledge, and the responsibilities of experts and authorities cannot be understood by assuming that their function is to promote or maximise knowledge. Not only are authorisation and acknowledgement functions part of the necessary background for the possibility of gaining knowledge and for initial development of knowledge, but they continue to shape the ways that we depend on others for knowledge. Acknowledgement can be formalised, for example, through professional qualifications for experts in various fields. These features are particularly important in relation to epistemic authority. In the following chapters I will explore second person epistemology, then examine the more or less informal mechanisms of epistemic dependence: trust, reliance and expertise.

A conception of knowers as second persons has the resources to explain phenomena of trust, acknowledgement and engagement that arise between knowers when they recognise one another as knowers, rather than as evidence or instruments of knowledge. In the next chapter I will defend such an account of knowers, focussing on Lorraine Code's communitarian account. The most important features of such an account are that it characterises knowers as always engaged with other knowers, and always situated in particular contexts, not as abstract subjects in a uniform epistemic domain. This account enables the discussion of trust and authority that will follow. The second person account allows for one of the things that make other knowers special - the capacity for authority and acknowledgement. I can acquire information from multiple sources, but it is only other knowers who can recognise and acknowledge me as a knower.

# Chapter Three

# Second Person Epistemology

## Introduction

In Chapter One, I showed that epistemic virtue cannot be defined solely by reference to the promotion of truth and knowledge. Epistemic virtues such as discretion, which require that knowledge is selectively pursued and revealed also require ignorance. In Chapter Two, I explored the problems faced by epistemological accounts of epistemic transactions that fail to take non-disclosure, selectivity and diversity into account. There is a clear need for an epistemological account that can accommodate trust, discretion, credibility and other features of interdependent knowers. In this chapter, I explicate and defend a second person conception of knowledge because this kind of account is not limited to understanding persons as sources or instruments of knowledge.

The topics of epistemic dependence and reliance on others have been relatively neglected in philosophy of knowledge. Recently, interest in epistemic dependence has been increasing. Philosophers such as Annette Baier,[1] Lorraine Code[2] and Kathryn Addelson[3] have considered and criticised assumptions about the nature of autonomy, rationality and objectivity, and have explored the effects of gender and power differences on educational, legal and medical practices. Among other things, these considerations inform new understandings of interdependence in relation to knowledge.

On a communitarian account of knowledge, at least part of knowing well involves how I maintain and manage the ways others contribute to my status as knower, and how I contribute to theirs. This includes, but is not reducible to, direct contributions to true, relevant and useful beliefs, and maintaining relationships that are conducive to continuing production of these. An epistemic virtue theory must account not only for

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[1]  Baier, A. (1985). *Postures of the Mind*. London: Methuen.
[2]  Code, L. (1987). *Epistemic Responsibility*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, Code, L. (1991). *What Can She Know?* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press and Code, L. (1995). *Rhetorical Spaces, Essays on Gendered Locations*. New York and London: Routledge.
[3]  Addelson, K. P. (1983). "The Man of Professional Wisdom." In S. Harding and M. Hintikka (eds.) *Discovering Reality*. Boston: D. Reidel pp. 165-86 and Addelson, K. P. (1993). Knower/Doers and Their Moral Problems. In Alcoff, L., and Potter, E. ed. 1993. *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 265-294.

cognitive dispositions that are conducive to truth and the avoidance of error, but also for dispositions that encourage trust and trustworthiness, respect and confidence. In Code's words, "Intellectual goodness, consists, then, in conducting one's moral and intellectual life so as to contribute to the creation and preservation of the best possible standards appropriate to the practices within which one lives."[4] I will show that understanding these standards and practices requires an understanding of ignorance.

In this chapter, I consider the reasons in favour of adopting a communitarian epistemic perspective, and that show that, once adopted, such a perspective requires further attention to ignorance. In *What Can She Know?*[5] Code works out a model of epistemic dependence which is an extension of Annette Baier's insights into the roles of "second persons" in ethical and epistemological development.[6] Code contrasts a communitarian account of knowledge with the tradition of individualism that is dominant in epistemology. This kind of account which emphasises persons who know, and the diversity of significant epistemic relationships, has the resources for an account of epistemic trust, and it is from such an account that the crucial functions of ignorance become apparent. So, in this chapter, I will outline Code's account, emphasising the ways it differs from standard approaches to epistemology. I explore Code's account of second person epistemology through discussing a recent challenge to it: Susan Feldman's proposal of a "second person scepticism."[7] Code's capacity to withstand such an attack arises from strengths which are also crucial for understanding epistemic trust. Explaining the failure of Feldman's challenge will thus illuminate the features of Code's account that are central to my project. Code's account emphasises that persons and their relationships are the fundamental epistemic considerations and presents a clearly articulated defense of second person epistemic communitarianism. I will show that recognising the importance of these connections between knowers requires acknowledging the role of ignorance in epistemic theory and practice.

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[4]   Code, *Epistemic Responsibility*, p. 193.
[5]   Code, L. op. cit.
[6]   Baier's position is developed largely in "Cartesian Persons" in Baier, op. cit.
[7]   Feldman, S. (1997). "Second-Person Scepticism." *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 47(186), pp. 80-84.

Cartesian scepticism which challenges the possibility of knowing anything at all, is a major concern within traditional epistemology. Code claims to show that Cartesian scepticism is actually not a central epistemological problem. It is, she argues, a blind alley that has arisen from the "autonomy obsession" that is characteristic of individualistic accounts of knowledge. This is another reason why Feldman's attempt to invoke scepticism against Code's epistemology is important. If Feldman's challenge were to succeed, Code's claim to provide a substantial alternative to individualism would be undermined. But if it can be shown that Cartesian scepticism is inapplicable to non-individualistic accounts such as second person, communitarian or social epistemology, and if this type of theory provides a good account of knowledge, then this scepticism is deprived of any significance.[8]

Code's claim can be defended against Feldman's sceptical challenge. I will argue that Feldman's criticism of Code shows how pervasive individualism is and how easy it is for a philosopher to be seduced by it even when she is explicitly trying to consider its opposite, that is, communality. First, I will outline Code's epistemic account, and then I explain Feldman's sceptical attack and why it fails.

## Ethics and Individualism

Code bases her account of epistemology on Baier's concept of second persons, which is developed in the paper "Cartesian Persons."[9] I will trace Code's arguments for this epistemic model via the analogy she draws between individualism in ethics and epistemology. Code contrasts her position with the ways that autonomy and interdependence have been conceived and prioritised in modern traditions in both ethics and epistemology. I will show how a second person model overcomes the parallel problems she identifies in both domains.

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[8]   This issue is specific to Cartesian scepticism or radical global scepticism. None of these remarks are
      intended to apply to any other scepticism, such as Pyrrhonian scepticism.
[9]   In Baier, *Postures of the Mind.* op.cit.

First, a brief account of second persons will set the scene.[10] The term "second persons" is grammatical, referring to the second person pronoun "you." (The first person "I," and the third person pronouns "she, he, they" complete the grammatical pattern.) A second person epistemological account, therefore, involves the claim that a description of a knower as an isolated individual is necessarily inadequate, and instead defines knowers in terms of their relationships with other knowers. Knowers are acknowledged by others as knowers, and are competent to engage with others as knowers. Baier makes the important point that "Persons essentially are *second* persons, who grow up with other persons."[11] The point about growing up raises the issue of dependency, both in the sense of childhood survival, and in the context of becoming and being conscious and responsible agents. We begin, and continue, as knowers who are mutually engaged and dependent.

Code begins her defense of second person epistemology by problematising autonomy and impartiality in the Kantian and utilitarian ethical traditions. Both, she argues, represent the moral subject as an unencumbered individual whose relationships are not of primary moral significance. For Kant, morality is determined by reason.[12] Under the guidance of rationality, we realise categorical principles under which everyone is treated the same. According to Kant, reason is a capacity in which everyone shares, so everyone can come independently to endorse the same moral principles. These are the Categorical Imperative and the maxims that flow from it. Desires, emotions and attachments to particular persons compete with purely rational and universalisable motives. Particular affiliations and emotional connections with others are alien to the "holy will." Even if such sentiments were to lead me to do the right thing, no moral worth attaches to actions done for affective reasons. Kant says we must

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[10] I will not recapitulate Baier's interpretive claims about Descartes from which she draws the account of second persons. However, the discussion Baier provides of Descartes and Strawson is an interesting alternative to standard characterisations of Descartes' individualism.

[11] Baier, op. cit., p. 84.

[12] Kant, I. (1964). *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (Paton, H. J., Trans.). New York: Harper and Row.

be autonomous and rational in order to act morally, so bonds to others ought not to

figure in our practical decision making.[13]

> Suppose then that the mind of this friend of man were overclouded by sorrows of his
> own which extinguished all sympathy with the fate of others, but that he still had power
> to help those in distress, though no longer stirred by the need of others because
> sufficiently occupied with his own; and suppose that, when no longer moved by any
> inclination, he tears himself out of this deadly insensibility and does the action without
> any inclination for the sake of duty alone; then for the first time his action has its
> genuine moral worth.[14]

The agent who according to Kant has genuine moral worth is an agent for whom

particular engagements with other persons have no moral significance. The "respect for

persons" version of Kant's Categorical Imperative actually requires the overriding of

personal relationships and connections because it is a generalised and impartial

"respect."[15] Likewise the universalisation procedure of applying the categorical

imperative demands an impartiality that does not go with responsibilities that are

specific and concrete.[16]

According to Code, the Kantian emphasis on autonomy comes from a conception

of moral agents as "discrete atoms who do not count intimate relations among their

central experiences."[17] Admittedly, there are some kinds of partiality, prejudice and

preferential treatment that are ethically dubious. Examples of favouritism and nepotism

abound in politics. But to eliminate any ethical obligations that derive from particular

relationships and to deny the existence of particular obligations involves a distortion of

the ethical and human landscape. A person who refuses to recognise the special claims

of friends or dependants is at best a peculiar moral exemplar. At worst, the life implied

by radical impartiality is almost dysfunctional as it entails an inability to form and

sustain relationships because they are not allowed to count for anything.[18]

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[13] Code's particular interpretation of Kant is challenged by such philosophers as Marcia Baron who argues that Kant's position is much more subtle than is generally acknowledged, and that with respect to sympathetic feelings Kant does not hold that they are best avoided. See especially "Sympathy and Coldness in Kant's Ethics," in Baron, M. (1995). *Kantian Ethics Almost Without Apology.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press,

[14] Kant, op. cit., p. 66.

[15] Code (1991) op. cit., p. 76.

[16] But see Baron op. cit. for an alternative interpretation of Kant.

[17] Code, op. cit., p. 76.

[18] For a less negative view of Kant's universalism and a defense of the desirability of an ethics based in universal principles see O'Neill, O.(1996). *Towards Justice and Virtue.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. For a strong defense of particularism in ethics see Garfield, J. "Particularity and Principle: the Structure of Moral Knowledge" forthcoming.

On Code's interpretation, Kantian ethics involve an unacceptable view of the duties we owe to others. Kant states, for example, that " ...neither fear nor inclination, but solely reverence for the law, is the motive which can give an action moral worth."[19] However, it is counterintuitive, for example, that I am obliged to care for a dependent child because and only if the maxim of my action falls under a general requirement of promise-keeping or charity, and respect for an absolute moral law. It is counterintuitive that such obligations could be recognised and realised equally well by any moral agent. Ordinarily we would think such duties like those to children or parents are of a different order than those easily subsumed under general principles like being a good citizen or neighbour. Proper reasons for meeting these obligations are not reducible to finding generalisable maxims. In Code's words, Kantian impartiality and autonomy cannot meet the basic moral demands of "the responsibility, care and concern one owes to, or might direct towards other people."[20] Kantian autonomy is a problem if we think there are such basic moral demands and if we accept that at least some of the duties we owe others exist because of (not in spite of) our relationships.

Whether or not her reading of Kant should be preferred to more sympathetic interpretations, Code's purpose is to differentiate her position very clearly from those that emphasise autonomy and individualism at the expense of second person relationships. In fact, she concedes that "It may be that no theorist who counts autonomy as a pivotal ideal intends to advocate it to the exclusion of community and interdependence."[21] Even if there are reasons to modify the extreme position she ascribes to Kant, she establishes an important contrast between a concentration on autonomy and impartiality and an emphasis on engagement, that is, a contrast between individualism and communitarianism.

Code argues that utilitarianism also has problems that derive from a degrading of relationships because of individualist assumptions. There is less overt emphasis on autonomy, and superficially more room for personal connections through

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[19] Kant, I. op. cit., p. 107.
[20] Code, op. cit., p. 76.
[21] Ibid., p. 79.

acknowledging the utilitarian benefits of friendship and intimacy. But in the end, the "identities of beneficiaries are irrelevant" and persons are interchangeable units.[22] Relationships can always be overridden in the interests of greater utility. Here too, this devaluation of personal connections is unacceptable. Advocates of utilitarianism may find the abolition of particular interests and commitments to be a strength, as it motivates equal consideration for all.[23] But if this insistence on equality precludes friendships, special concern for family members, and similar obligations, then the cost seems too great.

Code diagnoses problems that are the result of the alignment of autonomy and individualism, noting that this alignment has met increasing resistance from philosophers.[24] Autonomy has developed from the Enlightenment anti-heteronomy ideal of self governance and now involves the presentation of an autonomous man who "is - and should be - self-sufficient, independent, and self-reliant, a self-realising individual who directs his efforts toward maximising his personal gains."[25] From this perspective, others constitute threats to and conflicts with the agent's autonomous interests, and it is difficult to see how else other persons could figure in this ideal account.

Code has shown that the effects of individualism are present in both Kantian and utilitarian ethical theory. Her objection to that individualism is that there are fundamental and valuable aspects of human life that it devalues or disallows by insisting that all objects of moral concern be viewed from a neutral impartial perspective that reduces them to a flat, uniform level of significance. When autonomy is understood as the primary starting point for ethics, and as a value to be jealously guarded and protected, connections between persons tend to figure as a sacrifice of independence or threat to autonomy.

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[22] Ibid., p. 77.
[23] Peter Singer famously includes non-human animals among those whose suffering ought to be part of utilitarian calculations. For Singer, all sentient beings are worthy of similar moral consideration. Singer, P. (1975). *Animal Liberation*. New York. Avon Books. Many Buddhists take a similar approach.
[24] Ibid., p. 78-9.
[25] Ibid., p. 77.

Code challenges the primacy of autonomy in moral theory. She contrasts individualistic moral theories with an Aristotelian ethical model which admits the value of friendship and can recognise persons as second persons. This shows that instead of emphasizing autonomy, accounts of ethics *can* give priority to connections with others. Code replaces the theoretical direction from autonomy to community with that from communality and interdependence to autonomy:

> [t]heorists who start from communality and interdependence can accommodate the requirements of autonomy better than theorists for whom autonomous existence is the "original position" can accommodate the requirements of community.[26]

Accounts that begin with relational positions can encompass varying degrees of dependence and autonomy, in part because they coincide with the developmental direction that starts from dependent infancy. Because of this development, degrees and fluctuations of dependence are always present, at different times and in different relationships. An account of ethics that starts from relatedness must attend to degrees of dependence, and will regard autonomy as something developed in relationships.

Code's position is more plausible than the alternative. The transition from childhood to maturity is a move away from total dependence to greater autonomy, but development does not aim at total detachment. Maturity involves increasing self-reliance, but also becoming dependable for others. It does not mean escaping from or avoiding all relations of dependence. This would in fact be regarded as immature and irresponsible. The ability to rely wisely (not unthinkingly) on others is therefore an important part of moral maturity, as is responsibility for dependent others. The second person model begins with a view of persons embedded in social relations. As Code argues, "[m]oral agents always make choices from specific positions *vis-à-vis* other persons, within specific environmental circumstances."[27] The second person epistemic model requires this kind of contextualism because engagements with particular others are fundamental to my epistemic standing.

There is, therefore, a contrast between an individualistic and a communitarian view of the ethical domain and the role that relations between persons play in it.

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[26] Ibid., p. 79.
[27] Ibid., p. 109.

Individualism demands that the ideal ethical subject be an independent self, who treats all others with a uniform level of concern. The resultant moral attitude is characterised by the detachment evident in Kantian and utilitarian ethics. Communitarian views, of which the second person model is an example, understand persons as interconnected. Others are not radically separate from me, and some of them (legitimately) count more than others for determining my obligations. I am not independent of others, and my engagements and obligations are not uniform. The second person model replaces the view that ethics consists of principles and systems that are graspable by an undistracted intellect with an emphasis on persons who are mutually significant and engaged in complex patterns of dependence and relationship.

## Epistemology and Individualism

In epistemology, there is a contrast analogous to that in ethics between individualism and communality. Here too, Code criticises individualism and defends the view that "'personal' knowledge depends on common knowledge."[28] Individualism is problematic in epistemology for reasons analogous to those which make it problematic in ethics. In an individualistic epistemic account, the knower is like the autonomous moral subject. Insofar as she is knower, she could be exchanged for any other who, satisfying the same conditions, would achieve just the same objective knowledge. This involves two problematic assumptions: that knowers are interchangeable; and that the objects of knowledge are all of the same order, be they other knowers or not.

Baier and Code have shown that an individualistic account of ethics cannot reflect the fact that my moral dealings are with others who stand in different levels of concern to me, and my moral obligations are not identical to everyone else's.[29] They relate to my particular relationships, history and context. My obligations to my friends are not the same for each friend, and even with respect to the same friend; they will vary over time, and be responsive to changes in circumstance. Likewise, Code points out, as I navigate my epistemic world, I have to deal with reports and judgements of others who

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[28] Ibid., p. 83.
[29] I discuss Baier's account of trust in more detail in the following chapter.

are not all of the same importance for epistemic dependence. But an individualistic model which says all knowledge sources are the same and should be treated the same fails to recognise this heterogeneity. Individualistic epistemologies cannot accommodate its consequences, and as a result discussions of testimony, for example, become distorted. Second person epistemology recognises that I am a knower among others, but we are not all the same. Insistence on epistemic autonomy also obscures the fact that both epistemic resources and the ability to manage them derive from my community.

According to Code, the autonomous rational subject of Kantian ethics is very similar to the epistemic agent engaged in Cartesian inquiry. There is an "assumption that knowers are self-sufficient and solitary individuals, at least in their knowledge seeking activities"[30] which parallels the assumption of self-reliance and autonomy in moral subjects. Knowers, being alike in their cognitive capacities, can use the same strategies to get identical understandings. Contingent and particular features of knowers are irrelevant in the individualistic account and the knower is detached from other persons, (and frequently from her own embodiment and social context as well). Like autonomy in ethics, epistemological autonomy breeds detachment and a tendency to conflate all possible objects of knowledge as being the same kinds of things. But a person who informs me is different from an instrument that provides data. The point is not that a person may be more or less liable to error, but that issues of trust, integrity and credibility come into play and these cannot be accounted for by a theory that fails to distinguish between persons and data as objects of knowledge.

Reliance on others is of primary importance for adequate epistemic functioning. There are many domains in which knowing well, or knowing at all, should and must be achieved by reliance on others. Self-reliance would be self defeating in matters like complicated physics, or learning about the origin of the universe. If I need to find my way somewhere, I could make use of a street map with accurate and detailed information, or consult a local for guidance. Both choices involve reliance on others'

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[30] Code, op. cit. pp. 4-5.

provision of information to me. To choose a strategy of independence is almost incoherent - not only must I lose the map, and ask no questions, but avoid street signs and so on. Countless examples can be collected from theoretical and practical domains to support the assertion that knowledge gained from others is not a second rate component of the epistemic world.[31] The contribution that others make to my knowledge cannot be replaced by autonomous efforts.

There are two senses in which epistemic resources are held in common, which correspond to the two spheres of epistemic virtue described in Chapter One. The first is that information and epistemic labour are distributed, and, therefore, I can access information that others know. The second is that the standards, rules and norms about knowledge, epistemic respect, accreditation and discretion are dependent on the community. It is by being engaged with other knowers, and standing in second person relations to them (being recognised and acknowledged as a knower) that I learn and continue to operate according to these rules.

## Knowers as Second Persons

In relation to both practical and theoretical information, being a competent potential knower means, first, admitting the importance and utility for me of other people's knowledge, and second, being able to identify appropriate persons or products to depend on. Not only am I one among many in my epistemic world, my epistemic environment is not uniform. It is impossible to sustain the ideals of self-sufficiency and impartiality when epistemic engagements and dependences are recognised, just as it is impossible to retain such individualistic assumptions in ethics.

Attending to interpersonal aspects of knowledge is very different from Descartes' concern for certainty derived from reliance on innate ideas and the exercise of individual reasoning powers.[32] The Cartesian approach is based on the power of reason to isolate propositions that cannot be doubted, which can therefore serve as the secure

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[31] Karen Jones defends a parallel claim in relation to moral knowledge. Jones, K. (1999). "Second-hand Moral Knowledge" *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCVI (2), pp. 55-78. I discuss her position in more detail in the next chapter.

foundations of certain knowledge. Descartes attempts to "... withdraw all that might even in small degree be invalidated by the reasons which I have just brought forward, in order that there may be nothing at all left beyond what is absolutely certain and indubitable."[33] In doing so, he supposes that it is best to avoid dependence on others, because they might prove unreliable or because dependence is inferior to my autonomous employment of reason. This is analogous to the Kantian move that rules out morally good action that is motivated by particular emotional attachments. But neither of these claims is sustainable or warranted. This is not to deny the value of self-reliance or the hazards of excessive credulity, but it is to revise the theoretical priority accorded to epistemic individualism. Autonomy can never be the only value nor even the most important.

A second person account acknowledges that I develop my capacities and status as knower in interpersonal, not independent, practice. I learn consciousness of myself as a knower as I learn consciousness of myself as a person in the first place, which is by recognising others as persons and being treated as a person by them. Baier illustrates this in her discussion of how we learn to understand the use of the second-person pronoun: "[t]he correct use of the second person pronoun is the test for that grasp of the concept of a person which is essential to persons."[34] Relating to second persons who are knowers is what enables me to be a knower. I acquire competence in epistemic capacities like justification, critical reflection, warrant, challenge and defence only by participation in epistemic community, by knowing and interacting with others who are knowers. "Even the ability to change one's mind is learned in a community that trains its members in conventions of criticism, affirmation and second thinking."[35] It is my community that conditions me in epistemic practices of reliance, judgement and doubt.

Cartesian scepticism involves the assertion that even an exemplary knower fails to meet some necessary conditions of knowledge. Descartes nominates certainty, or

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[32] Descartes' proof of his existence, the *Cogito* – "I think therefore I am" – illustrates well his individualism.

[33] Descartes, R. (1911) [1641] "Meditation Two," in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (E. S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross, Trans.) in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[34] Baier, op. cit., p. 90.

indubitability, as the main concern. Because the exemplary knower is typical, all knowers face the same predicament. But Code challenges the assumption that there can be a characterless knower, who is interchangeable with any other. Both Cartesian scepticism and much traditional epistemology seem to consist in refining an account of the (abstract and general) conditions of knowledge and checking to see if (or how closely) an individual knower can meet them.

> Questions about the quality of cognitive agency – about its 'locatedness'and vested interests – *cannot* arise within Cartesian analysis. A disembodied, autonomous reasoner must treat all knowledge claims alike.[36]

But Code does not share this view of epistemology. She insists that knowledge and knowers are always situated, concrete and contextual. Furthermore, we cannot separate the "conditions of knowledge" from epistemic practice, which is not defined by an individual knower's private achievement, but by the public norms, standards and practices of the community.

According to Code, radical scepticism presupposes the knower as a solitary intellect, alone with her reason and independent as she exercises it. She rejects this assumption and shows that instead knowledge demands a community whose members are mutually dependent for both the capacity to know and in large part for the content of knowledge. To deny epistemic interdependence is therefore to deny the structures that make it possible to know and to doubt, but this is precisely what is done by the Cartesian presumption of epistemic autonomy.

The normativity of the epistemic domain requires sociality and communality in precisely the same way that Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument shows them to be required for meaning. As Saul Kripke describes the Wittgensteinian point, "When we pronounce that a child has mastered the rule of addition, we mean that we can entrust him to react as we do on interactions such as that just mentioned between the grocer and the customer."[37] It is not merely that the child can provide the right answer to a question requiring mathematical calculation. Likewise when we ascribe knowledge to another person, it is not merely the fact that she has a set of true and justified beliefs

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[35] Ibid., 83-4.
[36] Code (1991). p. 170.

to which we refer. We count her as one who will generally be trustworthy and discreet, who roughly shares our norms of disclosure and revelation. We expect her to act in good faith, and to react with a balanced and not overly suspicious nor excessively credulous attitude to others.

The defense of second person epistemology is not merely a claim that more attention should be paid to epistemic dependence. In fact, it is a reversal of the common epistemological supposition that epistemic dependence is an inferior and second rate way of knowing.[38] As Code argues, without epistemic dependence, there could be no knowledge.

Interdependence constitutes a problem for Cartesian scepticism that Code describes in this way:

> [y]et without other people, no one would be to doubt and be aware of her or his fallibility. A doubt that doubts the conditions of its own possibility is even more radical than Cartesian doubt: it verges on irrationality.[39]

Thus on a second person understanding of knowledge, Cartesian scepticism makes no sense; it is an incoherent position. If to be a knower is to be engaged with other knowers, to be recognised and addressed by them, then doubting the existence, reliability or competence of all other knowers undermines the basis of the doubter's own capacities.

Cartesian scepticism presupposes precisely the individualistic assumptions that Code contests. These assumptions are pervasive within the epistemic tradition. According to Code, this scepticism is generated on the assumption of an autonomous subject checking the status of apparent knowledge. She claims this assumption is refuted by her account of knowledge, so it cannot be used to undermine it. Susan Feldman disputes this and claims that there is a modification of Cartesian scepticism

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[37] Kripke, S. (1982). *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, p. 93.

[38] Linda Zagzebski exemplifies this attitude when she objects to reliabilism because it would count as equal in knowledge two omniscient believers who both believe all and only true propositions, but differ with respect to the mode of acquisition. The first "learned them by his own power" but the second learned them from the first. She likens the cognitive worth of the latter to "the worth of a perfect computer." Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 26-7. Her conclusion reflects the fact that second person virtues have little significance within her account of epistemic virtue.

[39] Code (1991). p. 139.

that can work perfectly well against knowledge understood socially. She devises a second person scepticism. An explanation of precisely what goes wrong with Feldman's argument brings out important characteristics of the second person account, and forms a platform for the next chapter's analysis of trust.

In order for Feldman to be right, it would have to be the case that second person scepticism avoids the individualistic assumptions that Code rejects. But it does not avoid them. I will outline Feldman's sceptical argument and show that it is begging the question by taking for granted the very assumptions about knowledge that Code shows to be inadequate. In this way, the strength and depth of Code's approach to epistemology can be made clear.

## The Sceptical Challenge

Feldman describes the second person model of knowledge as one which "situates the epistemic subject in society, and in which other people (and not just propositions and objects) are primary objects of knowledge."[40] Feldman argues that just as the knower's own existence holds fast in the original Cartesian scenario, the existence of other persons may resist scepticism. That is, in developing this challenge, Feldman grants that we can take the social environment as given. But, she argues, this has no power to strengthen any knowledge claims against the sceptical attack. "We can develop a 'second-person' radical scepticism, one which recognises people as 'second-persons', sees people as epistemically interrelated and treats other people as epistemic subjects as well as objects and sources of belief, yet uses this very understanding to undercut the truth of knowledge claims."[41]

In order to challenge Code's claim that a second person model of knowledge is less vulnerable to sceptical attack, Feldman modifies Stroud's reconstruction of Descartes' dreaming argument,[42] which requires for knowledge that we know how to exclude the sceptical alternative. For Stroud, this means that we require a reliable test to distinguish dreaming from not dreaming. Since this is unavailable, there can be no

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[40] Feldman, op. cit., p. 80.
[41] Ibid., p. 81.

knowledge of any external world claimed to be non-dreaming. (My senses and reasoning faculties are fallible, so any test relying on information based on them can be doubted.)

In a parallel argument, Feldman points to the fallibility of the second persons who are implicated in my knowledge. Even when the knower is understood as fully social, a radically sceptical argument can be generated. What if the social forces that influence my belief are characterised by betrayal, deceit and dishonesty? What if those who present as sincere and reliable commonly turn out to be traitors, spies and deceivers? This is the social nightmare, and how do I know that it is not my life?

Just as dreaming arguments hinge on the fact that no test can serve to distinguish the dreaming case from the real world case, when I imagine the social nightmare scenario, it seems that if I were in it, I could find no way of telling. Any test would be vulnerable to the same possibilities of deception. The modified argument apparently has the same force for a person conceived of as a social being as the original did for an individual dreamer. My knowledge of other persons, and the knowledge I acquire as a result of their influence is subject to sceptical doubt just like any independent knowledge I might have.

So Feldman alleges that epistemic dependence, or the second person model, may have looked like a significant change to conceptions of knowledge. But, she argues, Code was too swift in taking it to imply any protection against scepticism. Scepticism still works because "... if you know $p$, then the source of your belief in $p$ cannot be contaminated by a social nightmare."[43] If a necessary condition of knowledge is that the "knower" is able to rule out the social nightmare, and there is no way for her to do so, then nothing that depends on others is properly known. "This shows that use of society as the source and object of knowledge is no less scepticism-inducing than the use of private mental states as the source and object of knowledge."[44] Both private states and public resources are equally fallible, potentially unreliable and vulnerable to doubt.

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[42]  Stroud, B. (1984). *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
[43]  Feldman, op. cit., p. 82.
[44]  Ibid., p. 84.

The social nightmare is not merely that there is an occasional cheat or deceiver, but that my social world is strongly contaminated by perverse social forces and as an inhabitant, I cannot distinguish this from a world with little or no such contamination. I have no way of telling whether my world is one in which persons routinely betray trust, or are generally reliable. In any interaction, not only can I not tell whether it is a case of truth-telling or deception, but I cannot know whether my world is one in which deceptions are standard practice.

There are several possible versions of social nightmare and they are not differentiated in Feldman's account. I will suggest a few scenarios that could generate social nightmare insecurity about knowledge: firstly, I could fail to know because paranoia makes me refuse (unjustifiedly?) to believe anyone. Feldman states that a "socially situated paranoia can ground scepticism just as firmly as the solipsism of Descartes' *Meditations*."[45] Paranoia does not mean that anyone is actually trying to deceive me; we call people paranoid because their suspicions are unfounded and abnormal. A person in such a position is unwell and is far from presenting or exemplifying a rationally argued sceptical position. Such people usually inhabit nightmare worlds, but suffering from illness is not what Feldman has in mind. I think she uses the term in a more general sense.

Another possible scenario is that I have some reason to doubt that everyone around me is trustworthy. Such paranoia is generated by reasons, not illness. Perhaps I know some person is deceptive, but I do not know who it is and I therefore can trust no-one. There are certain problems with extrapolating from a single instance, and such a situation would tend to motivate caution, not universal scepticism. In any case, my epistemic competence is compatible with the presence of liars and cheats in the world, and even with my being taking in by them. Feldman does not want a scenario in which people are mostly reliable, although there are exceptions. This would mean some of my knowledge was questionable, but the majority legitimate. She requires a social nightmare in which my whole environment is in doubt.

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[45] Ibid., p. 81.

A social context could preclude knowledge without involving either paranoia or deception. Imagine a situation in which my informants were in error, and as a result (without malice) led me into error. I might have acquired my medical understanding under a medieval regime where the four humours and astrological movements serve to explain illness. Such error would undermine my status as knower, and I could not be said to know medical or biological facts or truths. However, my beliefs in this situation would be based on the best available information, and the use of the best epistemic strategy and practice. I believe appropriate experts and authorities, and make diligent efforts to study and understand. I lack specific knowledge, but not because I do not know whom to trust or what to believe. I retain epistemic competences and so am a knower. The error-based social nightmare then is not sufficient for the kind of scepticism that Feldman requires.

The social nightmare requires something more than local doubt. The doubt must be global and inescapable, not restricted, provisional or temporary. Feldman refers to "a world designed by an Orwell influenced by Kafka, where one never can be sure whom to trust, where one's memories and perceptions are under constant social challenge and political scrutiny, where betrayal is commonplace and where conformity is the highest value."[46] Such a world, she suggests, could exist, and may have existed, for example, in East Germany where the Stasi (secret police) infiltrated all levels of social life. The presence in her scenario of secret police and disinformation campaigns implies that some citizens are "in the know" and does not require that every person (except me) be implicated in the conspiracy. (This makes it different from strict paranoia.)

It may be the case that my social environment is substantially contaminated by a social nightmare, and I cannot legitimately claim to know unless I can rule out this possibility. In a nightmare, I do not know how to discern deceit from sincere and reliable testimony and I cannot tell of any person whether she is "a trusted friend or a spy for the secret police."[47] I cannot rule out the social nightmare because I cannot tell

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[46] Ibid., p. 82.
[47] Ibid., p. 83. Notice that Code would reject this totally. She is able to defend the intuition that I must be right most of the time about my friends, because friendship is in part constituted by a certain kind of knowing: "... particularly noteworthy is the careful reciprocal, nonimperialistic nature of the knowing

whether or not my interlocutors are representatives of the conspiracy. I am surrounded by many deceptive persons (probably motivated by pressures to cooperate with oppressive government agencies). For any claim of knowledge, I must suppose "that the other epistemic subject is not lying, insincere, out to deceive, a member of the secret police, himself brainwashed, etc."[48]

In summary, Feldman argues that while I may depend on my epistemic community, radical Cartesian scepticism can be generated because of the possible fallibility or deceitfulness of the members of that community. Feldman takes this "nightmare" scenario to show that socially understood knowers are just as vulnerable to scepticism as their counterparts described in more traditional epistemologies. But, in fact, Feldman misses the point of the second person account.

## Refuting Second Person Scepticism

I will argue that while there may be no effective test that rules out a social nightmare scenario, my epistemic competences require that others have been at least moderately reliable in their relations with me. While a secret police nightmare undermines much of my knowledge, it is not comparable to global scepticism in that a great deal is *not* placed in doubt. It might be that many news stories involve misinformation, but if commerce is continuing, advertisers must give out some right information (for example, about the locations and opening hours of stores.) And so unreliability is limited to some kinds of content. Furthermore, it does not extend to all epistemic competences, for example, within the nightmare I know what it means to trust and be deceived.

Feldman states: "That $S$ knows that $p$ entails that $S$ knows that the social nightmare is not in force."[49] The knower could be anyone, the knowledge anyone's, and the epistemic predicament is the same. There are two related problems. Epistemic competences are presupposed in Feldman's scenario. There is no account of how these

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on which good friendship depends. This exemplary 'second person' way of knowing another person affords a preliminary model for a restructured subject-object relation that could replace ideal objectivity and move toward a reconstruction of cognitive activity and epistemic goals." *What Can She Know?* op. cit., p. 105.

[48] Feldman, op. cit., p. 83.

[49] Ibid., p. 83.

could have arisen; they simply belong to each individual knower. Her social nightmare scenario (on any interpretation) does not place these capacities into doubt. Hence the second problem: Feldman's doubt is not analogous to Cartesian doubt, because his dreaming argument places everything in doubt. Radical doubt is what Code refers to and what Feldman fails to present.

Descartes' radical doubt is addressed to everything in the epistemic landscape, every part of what is normally accepted as knowledge. A radical doubt of the knowledge that comes from second persons implies a doubt of every part of their epistemic contributions, just as Cartesian scepticism doubts all sensory evidence, not just sight or hearing. According to a second person account of knowledge, others' contributions to my epistemic status do not consist only in their standing in relation to me as sources and objects of knowledge. As Code has shown, others are essential for my cognitive and epistemic development and remain significant for my continued good epistemic functioning. Only because others stand in relation to me as second person knowers can *I* know, doubt, justify, judge, criticise, rethink, question and formulate sceptical arguments. But in Feldman's scenario, these competences are taken for granted. All she has done is add persons to the set of epistemic objects to which I stand in Cartesian epistemic relations of knowledge or doubt. These are the epistemic relations of autonomous knowers, not of Code's interdependent second persons. Feldman's doubt regarding second persons is extremely limited, so her scenario is not analogous to radical Cartesian scepticism that places everything into question. So it does not address Code's claim that a second person account is not subject to Cartesian scepticism.

Feldman's knower is accompanied by others, and in this way differs from Descartes' knower for whom other people do not figure at all in knowledge. Her knower is not isolated and has access to other knowers as sources of evidence (reliable or not). Code's is yet another kind of knower: a knower not only accompanied, but embedded in epistemic community. Corresponding to these three kinds of knower (isolated, accompanied and interdependent) are three versions of scepticism. These are:

firstly, classical Cartesian scepticism in which a solitary knower applies uniform doubt to everything she can; secondly, social nightmare scepticism in which a knower doubts her social environment; and thirdly, a radical doubt of the structures of a knowledge community by a member of that community (which Code has demonstrated to be incoherent, but which would be the appropriate (second person) counterpart to Cartesian scepticism). If all epistemic elements are in question, so is my capacity to question. If I doubt everything about my community, I must doubt that I have learned to doubt. If all others were unreliable, I would lack the means to recognise unreliability. Knowledge, like language, depends upon a set of socially normative practices.[50] Proficiency in knowledge only makes sense within a framework of social reinforcement and correction. Radical scepticism needs to doubt these things, but cannot do so without making itself unintelligible.

The deep problem with Feldman's account is the failure to recognise what radical scepticism requires. Her sceptical challenge is a restricted scepticism, her nightmare does not throw everything into question. Furthermore, it is based on the assumptions of individualism and so she is not properly addressing the depth of Code's second person account. For Feldman, other persons are "primary objects of knowledge"[51] along with propositions and objects. In this, she seems to agree with Code who emphasises the significance of knowing other persons. In traditional individualist epistemology, other persons hardly appear; for Feldman they are present, which is progress. But Feldman states that "... the [social nightmare] argument would work just as well ... if we couched it as 'You know that *p*' or 'We know that *p*' or, indeed, 'You know me'."[52] Persons as knowers and objects of knowledge are interchangeable. So, Feldman's assimilation of second persons to evidentiary status as objects of knowledge or sources of knowledge is a long way from the constitutive role accorded to them by Code. For Code, others are not just truth tellers and sources of information; they are not "things I know" like other

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[50] For a discussion of the relationship between intelligibility, fallibility and the logical problem with ascribing massive error to interlocutors see Davidson, D. (1986). "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge" in LePore, E. (ed) *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson.* Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 307-319.

[51] Feldman op. cit., p. 80.

[52] Ibid., p. 83.

objects.[53] On Code's view, my participation in a community and my epistemic interactions with others are crucial because knowers are socially constituted, not just incidentally social. It is only through interactions with others that I gain competence in epistemic practices like the give-and-take of challenge and justification, acknowledgement and trust and the balance of critique and credulity.

The status of persons in Feldman's epistemic world is nothing special, nothing over and above other objects and facts that we have to strive to know. Feldman's position is hence much closer to an account such as that of Habermas than to Code's second person view. There is no sense for Feldman that knowing second persons is in any way qualitatively different from knowing facts or propositions by observation or inference. She therefore still understands the knower as independent in the individualistic sense. According to her, the sceptical challenge of the social nightmare arises for any knower, and in relation to any object of knowledge. The nightmare arises because others are nothing more than objects to be known, or sources of information. But in her scepticism, Feldman makes use of suspicion, doubt, credulity and deception and she does not place these in jeopardy. When these are taken seriously, as in Code's account, persons are more than epistemic objects and a plurality of independent epistemic subjects. The nightmare only looks plausible because the extent and nature of epistemic dependence have been overlooked.

Feldman regards her social nightmare scenario as a radical doubt of second person knowledge and as analogous to Cartesian scepticism. However, it is not like Descartes' radical doubt because it only concerns the issue of "what if everyone were not telling the truth?" That is *not* the doubt to which Code's comments refer. A radical scepticism is much more threatening than the social nightmare scenario that Feldman outlines. It would undermine the stability of the epistemic world, including the very possibility of doubt. Hence, however unreliable and deceptive people can be in a social nightmare, if I have developed the capacities of sophisticated scepticism then the influence of second persons on me must have been adequately trustworthy. Feldman's

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[53] See especially the section titled "Knowing Other People" in Code. (1991). pp. 160- 172.

scepticism relies on the assumption of individualistic autonomy: that these competences are independent of community. She has not seen that knowledge is not only about information and telling the truth, and so she has not taken into account any second person virtues such as those outlined in Chapter One.

The differences between Feldman's version of scepticism and a radical version are even more evident when we consider the details of what the latter would involve. The possibilities for radical doubt of second persons are either that every person in a knower's history has been entirely untrustworthy, or that all current epistemic connections are dependent on misplaced trust (or both, but eliminating each possibility will show that the combination is also impossible.) In order to develop knowledge, it is essential that the knower must have had an epistemic stability incompatible with all second persons being radically and extensively unreliable. So a knower's history cannot be all doubted at once. Neither can a coherent story be made that all current knowledge transactions based on trust are misplaced.[54] Without trustworthiness and fidelity there could be no knowledge transactions and no epistemic practices, so no doubt either.

The radical doubt that Code refers to is hence quite different from Descartes' and Feldman's sceptical positions. For Descartes, scepticism succeeds or fails according to whether the dreaming argument and the evil demon argument can be answered (he thinks they can). For Feldman, the issue is whether the social nightmare scenario can be ruled out (and she argues it cannot). But radical scepticism directed at Code's account of knowledge is quite another matter. It would have to involve the absence in a culture of those things that are needed for epistemic practices such as consistent rules for language, justifications, reasons, and so on. But, if there were no honesty, trust, acknowledgement and fidelity, we could not have learned anything. We could not have any conception of knowledge nor of doubt. Hence this radical scepticism is, as Code argues, self-refuting, and there is no question of answering it.

Feldman does not engage with Code's argument that individualist epistemology is incompatible with a second person model. Her social nightmare scepticism reiterates

the suppositions of individualism that a solitary knower confronts a world of objects that are all equally knowable or equally vulnerable to doubt. It is precisely these characteristics that Code has placed in question. Code is correct to claim that on her second person account, a Cartesian doubt is incoherent. Such scepticism depends on an atomistic understanding of knowers. Feldman has not recreated the Cartesian predicament in which everything is called into question and her challenge to Code has failed.

The important result is not merely that Code's account of knowledge is immune to a certain kind of sophisticated philosophical attack. My response to Feldman shows that a theory of knowledge *must* be a social theory, not only to evade the sceptical threat, but because being a knower means more than having acquired and being able to respond mechanically with correct information. It means displaying epistemic virtues: discretion, trustworthiness, and respect for other knowers.

Code's second person account brings out striking parallels with socially based analyses of meaning and language. The very normativity of knowledge is based on the ways that knowers interact and are mutually dependent. But these epistemic relationships cannot be reduced to treating everyone the same, and maximising the acquisition and dissemination of information. Second person knowers must possess the virtues of ignorance: discretion, trust, respect for confidences and restraint.

## Conclusion

The way that Code's account of knowledge can be shown to resist a particular sceptical attack shows the extent to which communitarianism is a strong revision of traditional epistemology. It has been necessary to give a detailed refutation of Feldman's challenge to Code's position because Feldman clearly misses the depth and power of Code's analysis. Usually, epistemology looks at justified beliefs, and those that are (possibly) knowledge. The objects of belief and knowledge are all the same kinds of thing - knowable or apparently knowable objects. But for Code, there is no homogeneity in the

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[54] Tony Coady makes similar arguments with respect to Martian reports (or rather mis-reports). See Coady, C.A.J. (1992). *Testimony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp. 85-96.

epistemic landscape. The whole understanding of what knowledge is like and what knowers are like has been revised. Code's knower is a member of a community of knowers, where epistemic labour is shared and epistemic resources are held in common. It is not only that there is safety in numbers, nor does Code claim that consensus can guarantee protection from error. She does claim, however, that the structure of the epistemic world is that of interdependence, and if all knowers who are second persons to me were to have failed in every way to be reliable and trustworthy, then for me or any individual, it would be as impossible to doubt as to know. I could be neither a knower nor a doubter. Cartesian scepticism, therefore, is not a coherent position and Feldman's version is not a threat. Knowledge starts not with a solitary and independent knower, but with others who are such that I can trust and depend on them, which is to know them as second persons and to know myself as a knower dependent on a community of others. This is not to say that I must trust everyone all the time, but that if I am a knower, I am in a community where trust is possible.

The position developed by Code avoids the problems described in the previous chapter. She does not impose a presumption of uniformity on the epistemic domain. Instead, her account incorporates the rich complexity of epistemic subjects and ways of knowing. She sees that we cannot simply retain goals such as maximising knowledge, believing all and only truths, or an ideal consensus by replacing the universally rational knower with a homogeneous community. Rather, we must accept diverse models of knowledge, including such nonobjective processes as empathy, which I discuss in Chapter Five.

Code's second person account forms a sound foundation for a communitarian epistemology. Yet, as Susan Feldman's response shows, it is easy to miss the revisionary implications of her position. Feldman mistakenly sets out to criticise Code by simply adding persons to the epistemic domain as traditionally understood. It is important to be clear about why this misses the point, and to be clear about precisely what point is missed by this response. It is not only Feldman, but as I have shown,

Zagzebski, Hall and Johnson, Goldman and Habermas who acknowledge the epistemic community to some extent, but fail to take it seriously enough.

It is not our capacities to deal with facts and evidence that define us as knowers, but our engagements with one another as knowers. There are clear parallels between Wittgenstein's account of language as fundamentally social, and the second person approach to knowledge. Both concern a rule-governed domain, and both characterise this normativity in irreducibly social terms. In both cases, it is possible to mistake the revisionary power of the conclusion, which, in the epistemological context is that an analysis of knowledge must begin with how knowers interact, not with a set of descriptions and prescriptions concerning justified beliefs, truth and empirical evidence. When knowers' interactions are analysed, there is no way to defend a claim that the primary obligations of knowers are to maximise the acquisition and dissemination of facts, evidence and information. Ignorance must be part of the analysis. In the following chapters, this claim will be defended with specific reference to trust, empathy, and authority.

In the next chapter, I present an analysis of trust. I show how current accounts of testimony and collaboration, the main areas within mainstream epistemology where epistemic dependence is discussed, overlook vital characteristics of trust. These are precisely the aspects of the epistemic domain that are foregrounded in Code's account, and to which ignorance is central. The conflation of trust with epistemic reliance obscures both the second person aspects of knowledge exchanges and the role of ignorance, and I will explain how these two aspects of epistemic dependence must remain distinct. I show that when others are trusted for knowledge, rather than merely relied on, ignorance is an ineliminable part of the epistemic picture.

# Chapter Four

# Trust, Reliance and Ignorance

## Introduction

The previous chapter argues for a particular communitarian approach to understanding knowledge. In rejecting an individualistic approach, Lorraine Code emphasises the need to consider the fact that it is *persons* who know, and her analysis shows that epistemic practices are fundamentally social. Code's communitarian account is not undermined by sceptical arguments such as those of Susan Feldman, which demonstrates that a certain kind of global ignorance is incoherent on such an account. Having demonstrated the importance of understanding knowers as second persons, in this and the following chapters I will explore the relationships that can be formed between knowers so understood. Specifically, I will examine the mechanisms of epistemic dependence that emerge from such an analysis of what it is to be a knower. In this chapter, I will develop an analysis of trust in which ignorance is an important element, showing that while trust is necessary for many kinds of knowledge, its importance cannot be equated to knowledge maximising. Trust is also a form of mutual recognition of knowers, and when it is denied as a proper form of epistemic dependence, crucial patterns of epistemic relationships are overlooked. As I will show, this epistemological error arises because trust is presumed to be indiscriminate. In fact, trust is an essential form of epistemic discrimination. However, the discrimination involved in trust is not merely a belief about a person's report or judgement of her character. Because trust is based on seeing another as a second person, one with whom I am engaged, my response is direct, not inferential.

My analysis of trust reflects a revaluation of both knowledge and ignorance. Trust in and reliance on others are the main forms of epistemic dependence within an epistemic community, but as I will show, there are important differences between

them.[1] Ignorance is related to trust in two main ways. Firstly, trust is a way to overcome ignorance, that is, a way to obtain knowledge. The standard way to account for this is to claim that if I can legitimately trust someone who is a potential source of knowledge then I may be able to move from ignorance to knowledge. The epistemological debate involves the questions of whether trust is a proper way of obtaining knowledge, or whether a reductionist approach can explain knowledge without appeal to trust, and if trust is ineliminable, what makes it legitimate or warranted. Secondly, however, trust may preclude certain kinds of checking, as they are incompatible with a trustful attitude. If I trust your word, I cannot keep checking to confirm or corroborate what you have told me; I cannot seek alternative sources to replace or bolster my confidence in you. In this sense, trust requires that certain kinds of ignorance be accepted, even maintained, in order for the very mechanisms of trust to operate. Ignorance, then, is necessary for generating the need for trust, and for maintaining the conditions of manifest trust. This second way that ignorance and trust are related is one of the ways that trust can be distinguished from mere reliance, because of different configurations of evidence and judgement.

Trust has been neglected in epistemology both because without a second person account it does not seem to be a significant element of the epistemic domain, and because of the way ignorance is implicated. As I will show, trust involves restraint in seeking further knowledge, in other words, ignorance. Trust is taken to be incompatible with critical evaluation, and with the autonomy that proper knowing is presumed to require. Most epistemologists who are interested in trust search for reasons that could justify trust, or motivate it. Knowledge is supposed to be well warranted, well founded, well justified, and based on evidence. However, trust is a practice or attitude that is resistant to such activities.[2] I will argue against both those who deny epistemic dependence, and those who insist that the only grounds on which our dependence on the

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[1]   I am not insisting that together these exhaust the range of epistemic dependencies; they probably do not, but my concern at present is merely to delineate the dimensions of trust so I am leaving the precise structure of the rest of the domain open.

[2]   In other words, I am opposed to evidentialism, the claim that beliefs should always be based on evidence.

word of others - testimony - can properly be based do not involve trust. I will concentrate on the arguments presented by Elizabeth Fricker[3] and show that she is wrong to equate trust with gullibility and indiscrimination. Trust is part of knowing someone well, and trust itself allows knowledge, without resort to further evidence. Fricker overlooks the special characteristics of trust which make it a way of selecting whom to believe.

Epistemic dependence, of which trust is one form, can be perceived as a threat to autonomy. But, given a communitarian view, knowledge is dependent on interactions with others. As Code has argued, autonomy arises within a context of dependence, and Karen Jones makes a similar point with respect to trust. Because it is moral contexts that place the highest demands for autonomy and responsibility, if trusting dependence and autonomy can coexist in the moral domain, they can coexist anywhere. Despite the importance of autonomy for moral judgements, Jones argues that claims that we ought to minimise dependence on the moral testimony of others are unsustainable.[4] Wise trusting allows that even in moral contexts, where responsibility is central, there is still a vital role for depending on others for knowledge. Trust works in this way because it is not the case that everyone shares the same expertise, even in moral domains. As Jones' discussion of second-hand moral knowledge shows,[5] others may be more sensitive to the presence of sexist attitudes than I may be, and the same applies to racism or any other issue requiring moral sensitivity. If I know others to be better judges than I, then I may rely on their judgement rather than my own. Others have a crucial role in my being a competent truster.

Both trustfulness and trustworthiness are characteristic of a virtuous epistemic agent. But this does not mean that their practice in every case is a good thing – trust can be misguided, and so can a response of trustworthiness. A virtuous knower will cultivate such traits and exercise them judiciously. Furthermore, such a knower will avoid some kinds of vice related to distrust. In some contexts, disbelief, discredit and

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[3]   Fricker, E. (1994). "Against Gullibility." in Matilal, B. K., and Chakrabarti, A. (Eds.). *Knowing from Words.* Dordrecht: Kluwer, pp. 125-162.

[4]   Jones, K. (1999). "Second-hand Moral Knowledge." *The Journal of Philosophy,* XCVI (2), pp. 55-78.

suspicion will undermine epistemic relationships, because other knowers are treated with disrespect. [6]

Reciprocity is an important characteristic of trust. When knowledge is transferred between persons, both the speaker and hearer may need to trust. I may have to trust you to respect and acknowledge what I say before sharing information, and unless you trust what I say, you may be unable to acquire knowledge from me. Unless I trust that you will acknowledge me, and take what I say seriously, I may not even attempt to tell you what I know. Again this makes sense only when persons are considered as members of epistemic communities, not as atomistic knowers, and implies that trust is a characteristic of relationships between knowers, which is intelligible only when knowers are not understood as purely independent individuals.

There are important differences between believing a person and believing what she says, and a careful analysis of trust must be able to articulate these. Individualistic analyses of knowledge will tend to miss the implications of the trust/reliance distinction, and will conflate trusting a person with trusting what she says. I will argue that reliance is about judgement of probabilities, but trust concerns the connections between persons. If I treat a person as one source among others, that is a case of reliance, not trust. This is not to say that evidence is never relevant to trust. But the relevance of evidence to trust cannot be reduced to risk assessment and to critical judgement. The relationship between evidence and epistemic dependence has several dimensions, and simple evidentialism cannot encompass these.

Trust is a way of relating to persons as knowers in their own right. Failing or refusing to trust can be a part of not acknowledging another person as a second person, and as a knower. So trust is not just a means of acquiring information in a way that is shorthand as well as second-hand. Trust and distrust can significantly affect those who are trusted or from whom trust is withheld. As Jones suggests, trust involves "the expectation that the one trusted will be directly and favorably moved by the thought that

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[5]  Ibid.

[6]  In a paper titled "Other Minds," Austin notices this feature of epistemic relationships. He points out "[i]f I have said I know or I promise, you insult me in a special way by refusing to accept it." Urmson,

we are counting on her."[7] The fact that trust can have this kind of effect can be a further reason to cultivate trust. Trust is self-confirming as I will both notice and elicit responses that affirm my optimistic attitude.

In this chapter I show that trusting other persons is indispensable for knowledge in contexts where I forego further checking. Trust, in addition to reliance, is involved in epistemic dependence but the distinction between them is often neglected. I identify problems with Jonathan Adler's examination of testimony and trust.[8] Adler tries to show that trust has only a minor role in epistemology, and I will show this to be mistaken. Robert Audi's exploration of knowledge and justification sharing with respect to testimony avoids such problems.[9] It is also compatible with the account of trust I develop by drawing out the implications of second person epistemology for an altered landscape of trust, knowledge and ignorance. The work on trust by Annette Baier and Karen Jones is important for the development of my account. In spite of certain problems with her "entrusting" model, Baier contributes useful insights concerning trust, and Jones' analysis of the affective side of trust and the dynamics of credibility and acknowledgement are important reference points for my account of trust. Most importantly, I show that where trust is essential for knowledge, ignorance is ineliminable. I argue that trust involves a commitment to believe, and that trust both extends and restricts what knowers can do.

In epistemic as well as ethical contexts, there is a *prima facie* distinction between trust and reliance or dependence. But what is crucial about epistemic trust is that it restricts what I can do with respect to evidence and justification, and thus ignorance is embedded in the structure of trust. Trust is a form of engagement between the trusting person and the trusted, which calls for and generally receives a response of

J. O., and Warnock, G. J. (Eds.). (1970). *J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers.* (Second Edition). Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 100.

[7] Jones, K. (1996). "Trust as an Affective Attitude." *Ethics*, 107 p. 4.

[8] Adler, J. E. (1994). "Testimony, Trust, Knowing." *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCI, No 5, pp. 264-275.

[9] Audi, R. (1997). "The Place of Testimony in the Fabric of Knowledge and Justification." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 34(4), pp. 404-422.

trustworthiness.[10] The trusting person is committed to believing the person she trusts, not to double-checking. This account of trust, which emphasises its binding character, not only explains a certain kind of commitment that arises between epistemic agents, but illuminates a basic structure of the epistemic environment. As knowers we do not encounter a flat neutral world of potential informers to be assessed impartially. At its most fundamental, trust is not a practice that is in need of justification, but is the background which shapes and makes possible our epistemic practices, including justification itself.

## Trust and Reliance

The first step in developing an account of trust is delineating the scope of trust within the wider domain of epistemic dependence, and I will start by examining the distinction between trust and reliance. First, two aspects of my approach need clarification. Although I am primarily interested in epistemic trust, I will refer to models of trust developed in ethics. However, this does not reflect a conflation of the two domains, since, as shown in Chapter One, there are sound reasons to keep the domains distinct. The boundary between ethics and epistemology remains important. Nevertheless, theories of trust developed in ethics are a useful resource.[11] Secondly, my use of terms needs to be clarified. The distinction between "trust" and "reliance" is not universally maintained in ordinary language, ethics or epistemology: it is possible to discuss trust without drawing a distinction between it and reliance, but rather making one a part of the other.[12] I use "dependence" as the umbrella term encompassing forms of trust and

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[10] Petit makes a similar point in Petit, P. (1995) "The Cunning of Trust". *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 24 (3) pp. 202-225. He regards one motivation for trustworthy responsiveness as reflecting the "relatively base desire to be well considered" (p. 203). With respect to epistemic trust, it is not merely a desire to be well thought of that elicits trustworthy responses: unless one is trusted and acknowledged, one cannot be a full participant in epistemic interactions. So it is not merely that we are motivated to be dependable because when we manifest trustworthiness it affords opportunities to "savor the good opinion of others" (p. 219). Being recognised, acknowledged and trusted are basic ways that we engage with others as epistemic agents.

[11] This does not imply that epistemic trust is a species of ethical trust. I suspect the opposite - that epistemic trust (trusting to believe or know) is the primary mode of trust - but in any case it is a major area that merits independent attention.

[12] Petit in "The Cunning of Trust" op. cit. sees trust as a form of reliance. Lawrence Becker conversely defines three forms of trust: credulity, or "a disposition to believe what another person says and to banish skeptical thoughts;" reliance, or "a disposition to depend upon other people in some respect;"

reliance. I will show that there is a fundamental distinction between trust and reliance, but this does not complete the account of trust. A further analysis of the dimensions and types of trust will follow. I will show that trust and reliance can be distinguished by affective elements, by structure, by their normative aspects, and by judgement or inferential aspects, but not by domains or objects, circumstances or content.

The difference between trust and reliance is important because these are distinct ways that we acquire knowledge from others. "Trust" at least sometimes refers to more than expectations and predictability. Sometimes I just accept information from a person who offers it. If my friend tells me she was at work late last night, I take it that I know that she was. I do not seek to confirm this fact, and if I did, it would (potentially) indicate a lack of trust.[13] Audi offers the example of a chance meeting with someone on a plane who "tells me that, at a conference, a speaker I know lost his temper."[14] Audi suggests that as the conversation develops, I begin "listening in an accepting attitude" and in the end, I come to believe this person, although initially I suspended belief about the temperamental outburst. My relationship with this informant has come to be characterised by trust; I am disposed to believe her. This cannot be as a result of independent evidence about her, as I just met her in a context where I cannot refer to outside information. I would suggest that my belief is based on trust if I do not anticipate contrary evidence, and I am neither disposed to seek it nor to be moved by such evidence should it be presented. Up to a point, although not irreversibly, I will stand by my belief in what a trusted person has told me.

An objection will be raised to my denial that trust is primarily based in evidence. Something must form the basis for my trust, and in a sense this must be evidence,

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and security, or "a disposition to have confidence about other people's motives, to banish suspicious thoughts about them."(pp. 45-6) Although it may be difficult to retain a clear distinction between ethics and epistemology on this account, these forms of trust can be independent. That is, according to Becker, I can believe without feeling secure about a person's motives, or depending on them in any obvious way. Conversely, I can depend on someone without understanding what they say, so I am not in a position to believe. Each of these is a form of trust. However, rather than identifying credulity, reliance and security as different kinds of trust, I think it is better to retain a distinction between trust and reliance and between ethics and epistemology, without presupposing that all epistemic trust is about beliefs. It seems plausible that we do rely without trusting, and even vice versa, and that trust can raise deeper questions than dependence, or just belief. This is reflected in the powerful normative connotations of terms like "trust" and "trustworthy." Becker's account extends "trust" to include any case of dependence.

[13] It is not necessary that I have a history with my informant - I could trust a stranger for directions.

because all my experience and observation can be classed as "evidence." However, there is a difference between taking my observations as evidence and (explicitly or tacitly) making use of them in a process of inference, and directly accepting what a speaker tells me by simply believing her. I construe these as different ways of engaging with a speaker, different ways of responding to the person who conveys information. I may treat her words as evidence, and treat her as a source like any other, which I term reliance. If I engage with her as a trusted person, I recognise and acknowledge her as a knower, and am committed to some extent to believing her. It may be the case that some of my past experience, or observations, motivate my trustful engagements, but this is not the same as dealing with the person as I would deal with evidence.

In fact, I may select a source of information with trust in mind. I choose my medical practitioner assuming a standard level of competence and expertise common to many practitioners, and I presume that I can depend on the information she gives me, but among my selection criteria is the desire to deal with someone with whom I can engage properly, whom I can trust and respect, and who will trust and respect me. The potential for trust is a proper consideration for a relationship in which the exchange of information will be important.

The recognition involved in trust is itself a kind of discrimination that does not require a further process of critical judgement. It might be that in my early days of observing the stars I need to think carefully to identify particular stellar formations, such as the Southern Cross. I may need to use terrestrial compass bearings to work out the direction in which to look, for example. But I will learn over time to see certain constellations directly. I will develop a spontaneous perceptual response, a kind of recognition or familiarity, that is not infallible, but does not require an inferential process of reasons. Furthermore, the fact that I could retrospectively reconstruct such a process, if called upon to justify my claim that "that is the Southern Cross" does not indicate that I tacitly followed a process of inference in my seeing the pattern of stars. In the same way, I may be able to give reasons for my trust, and I may express a belief

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14 Audi, op. cit., p. 407.

that this person is trustworthy, but trust is not just a matter of this belief and those reasons.

Trust is like recognition, it is a "seeing as" not an "inference that." This is not to say merely that the discrimination may be implicit or explicit. Instead, I am arguing for two different kinds of discrimination of which only one involves a critical process (which may be implicit or explicit.) I do not use evidence and checking to strengthen my trust in a person in the normal course of events. At times, I may have recourse to such information. Perhaps I am a professor who has hired a tutor. The employee provided references and evidence of teaching experience. If trust really were based exclusively on evidence, and the security of evidence were the only legitimate basis for knowledge claims, then double and triple checking on my colleague's references should indicate my epistemically virtuous scrupulousness and rigour. However, my trust is not reinforced by frequent reference to this evidence in order to confirm my judgement of the tutor's competence, to reinforce my trust of her. This would signal mistrust or epistemic disrespect, which in this case may well be epistemic vices. Trust is not reinforced by extra careful checking of evidence.

Some epistemologists (such as Fricker and Adler) argue that the attitude to evidence and information ought not be modified by a trustful attitude: I ought rather to maintain a critical and watchful stance. Trust, however, is a suspension of that stance, which, I argue, is precisely the way we should engage with certain of our epistemic fellows. We ought not treat all members of our epistemic community alike, and one difference is who we trust. Moreover, I often cannot stand outside my engagement with a person and critically reflect on my evidence for belief because when I am hearing another's words, I may be already responding to and engaging with that person. It is epistemically responsible and legitimate to engage trustingly with another person and to see them as a knower, without a critical attitude focussing on the possibility of being misled. An account of trust is needed to explain why it may be legitimate to trust in the absence of evidence, and to trust in the face of contrary evidence, but I do not need to claim that these trusting practices are *always* legitimate or beneficial. The fact that trust

involves a suspension of a critical attitude to evidence is one of the features that makes it a risky enterprise. A fraud will seek to establish a relationship of trust with a potential victim precisely because, once established, this relationship will make the victim less likely to regard the fraud's actions with suspicion, and exploitation will be easier.

It is worth reiterating that in defending a role for epistemic trust I am not only describing a common practice, but arguing that it is epistemically proper. Trust is a legitimate mode of knowing in is own right, it is not a degenerate mode that "will do" because I lack the time or resources for "proper" justification. While we may move from trust to reliance and back, this is not a change between mere opinion and knowledge, nor from naive gullibility to critical maturity. Just as most of the time I simply depend on my perceptions to know about the external world, but I can and sometimes should reflect upon them, and exercise judgement about them, so I can rightfully know on the basis of trust.[15] Critical reflection about what I am told is also part of my epistemic repertoire, but trust cannot be reduced to this reflection, because my epistemic relationships with other speakers and hearers are relationships of engagement, unlike the assessment of sources and instruments which, in principle, I could treat critically all the time. Epistemic dependence comes in various forms, of which trust is one of the more important, and probably the most basic form of epistemic relationship. Without trust, crucial epistemic relationships would not be initiated or maintained. Trust and reliance can be mixed, as when I accept a friend's advice with respect to a job application, but do some extra checking as well. I can also know from what another person says without trust or reliance, as when I recognise an Australian accent while the speaker says she comes from Sydney.

The main focus for epistemological discussion of epistemic dependence is not trust, *per se*, but testimony. Because epistemologists seek to analyse ways that it is possible to acquire knowledge, the central question is whether hearing, understanding, or accepting what others tell us is a legitimate route to knowledge. I see trust as the best way to approach questions of testimony because my interest is in the characteristics of

knowers who are mutually dependent and, in particular, the epistemic virtues that are involved in the ways knowers are mutually engaged. For Elizabeth Fricker, on the other hand, whether a hearer is justified in accepting testimony may depend on whether she has or needs to have independent confirmation that a given speaker is trustworthy. So her question is not really about the nature of trust, but rather about the reasons a hearer of testimony may have for believing her informant trustworthy.

Fricker sees proper epistemic dependence as requiring a critical stance, and she argues against accounts of trust similar to the one I defend in that they do not require a hearer to adopt a critical stance with respect to the speaker in order properly to obtain knowledge. Fricker understands the defense of trust as the defense of a stance of always believing unless special circumstances defeat the presumption in favour of belief. While we may obtain knowledge through the testimony of others, Fricker argues that we are not entitled to do so through (uncritical, unreflective) trust, and that we need not do so. That is, she accepts that knowledge can be acquired through testimony, but argues that a hearer is justified in believing the speaker by normal beliefs and evidence about that speaker, not by a special epistemic principle concerning trust.

Such a special epistemic principle would, according to Fricker, describe a presumptive right in favour of believing testimony. "The PR [presumptive right] thesis is an epistemic charter for the gullible and undiscriminating."[16] The key element Fricker identifies in a plausible presumptive right to trust thesis is the "dispensation from the requirement to monitor or assess the speaker for trustworthiness....the hearer's critical faculties are not required to be engaged."[17] Fricker opposes this kind of "blind" belief, but I argue that trust *is* a form of epistemic engagement which can be a basis for knowledge. The "blindness" of trust is not a problem. Rather, it is inherent in the nature of trust that it enables the bypassing of checking, which makes trust a valuable shortcut to knowledge, and that it requires the neglect of some kinds of pursuit of evidence, which makes ignorance an intrinsic part of trust. There are contexts in which I

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[15] An analogy between testimony and memory as sources of knowledge is provided by Michael Dummett. (1994.) "Testimony and Memory," in Matilal, B. K., and Chakrabarti, A. (op. cit.).

[16] Op. cit., p. 126.

[17] Ibid., p. 144.

legitimately acquire knowledge from others and do not need to judge the speaker critically. I may not have evidence with respect to a speaker, when I engage trustingly with her, but I recognise her as a knower. However, this situation is not the same with respect to every member of the epistemic community with whom I interact. I find myself engaging trustingly with some, and approaching others with a more cautious attitude. Such differentiated responses are part of what I have learned to do in becoming a knower. They are best understood as moments of recognition and trusting engagements, not as a tacit inferential process that could in principle be made explicit.

Therefore, one major difference between my account of trust and Fricker's is her understanding of trust as indiscriminate. She allows for the detection (or recognition) of characteristics that permit the ascription of sincerity and the like to a speaker, but sees this as necessarily governed by critical reflection. She has this view, I think, because she regards critical assessment as the only way that such discriminations could be made. But a lack of active critical effort does not equate to gullibility.

Fricker's claim that trust is a kind of gullibility is mistaken. Although trust is fallible, a trusting disposition is not a weakness. But my disagreement with Fricker goes deeper. For Fricker, the reasons for my *belief* in another's trustworthiness determine whether my dependence is rational or not. I have argued that trust is not a form of belief: when I trust another person, I engage with her in a particular way that is not reducible to my holding a belief about a quality of her character. Although I would generally say that I believe her trustworthy, this is not the whole story.

Fricker focusses her discussion on concrete instances of testimony arguing that the local reductionist problem constitutes the crucial issue for testimony. In other words, she sees her task as not to defend or challenge a global claim about testimony in general, but to show that in particular instances, testimony can be justifiedly believed on the basis of normal inference and evidence.[18] Fricker therefore insists on the need for me to monitor evidence about particular speakers on specific occasions. But she is

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[18] A global claim such as "always believe the testimony of others" or "speakers mostly tell the truth" is almost impossible to defend without circularity because no individual speaker will have the independent resources to support it.

not correct to think that it is only evidence about particular assertions and speakers that counts - how I relate as a knower is important too.

The fallibility of this source of knowledge, because any person may speak falsely through error or deceit, motivates Fricker's requirement of critical assessment. The monitoring for such assessment need not be excessive, but "the hearer should be discriminating in her attitude to the speaker, in that she should be continually evaluating him for trustworthiness throughout their exchange, in the light of the evidence, or cues, available to her."[19] Fricker allows that this need not be conscious, but claims that the hearer should be able to defend her judgement by reference to some kind of impression ("I didn't like the look of him") or her capacity to "tell" even if she cannot say precisely how. Trust may be the result of some impression, but it is not the case that the impression constitutes evidence for an inference that the speaker is trustworthy. Firstly, I may simply (and fallibly) recognise the person *as* trustworthy without a process of inferring from evidence. Secondly, if I see the person as trustworthy, this shapes my attitude to what she says, and to how I interpret evidence. Fricker's account reverses the explanatory order.

Fricker and I do not disagree about whether we can acquire knowledge through testimony, whether we can at times give justifications for trust, nor whether there is a default position in favour of belief for a range of subjects, such as those for which commonsense tells us persons are normally competent. Fricker admits all these. Her account " ... requires a hearer always to take a critical stance to the speaker, to assess her for trustworthiness, while a true PR [presumptive right] thesis ... does not."[20] However, not only do we frequently abandon or suspend this critical attitude, we are epistemically correct in so doing. In fact our primary mode of engagement with other knowers is not as critical judge, and the interpretive task of understanding other knowers as (second) persons is not identical to treating their words and actions as (potential) evidence.

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[19] Op. cit., p. 150.
[20] Ibid., p. 154.

Like Fricker, I see the domain of testimony as a "rag-bag" category. I do not defend a blanket presumptive right to believe, not do I wish to deny that we often exercise critical faculties in the acceptance of testimony. But I will argue that when we accept testimony in trusting relationships, it is not reducible to the kind of critically mediated dependence Fricker insists upon.

## Trust and Betrayal

"Trust" can describe an important feature of certain relationships which is important for knowers, but which is not captured by the dependence that Fricker describes. The added emotional dimension associated with trust can be highlighted by considering how trust fails. My trust can be betrayed, not just let down or disappointed, as my relying on someone can, so the reactive attitudes that can be generated in each case are different. Arguably it is only persons we trust in this full sense, although we may use the term much more broadly. I may depend on someone, without even a provisional commitment to trusting her in a strong sense, but use the term "trust" for this dependence. Likewise, I may speak of trusting a car, or bridge, or ladder and mean that I will take the risk of depending on it. However, in such cases, "trust" is used in a sense that lacks the full connotations of trusting a friend, partner or colleague. There is a *prima facie* case in ethics for trust to be different from reliance because failure to be trustworthy can constitute betrayal. It is only persons who can betray, machines and instruments can merely fail, and without a relationship of trust, persons too can only fail. Karen Jones provides an initial distinction between trust and reliance based on the possession of good will:

> [o]ne can only trust things that have wills, since only things with wills can have good wills-although having a will is to be given a generous interpretation so as to include, for example, firms and government bodies. Machinery can be relied on, but only agents, natural or official, can be trusted.[21]

For Jones, it is a broad conception of agents (perhaps with an extension similar to legal persons) that delineates the scope of trust. I use the term "persons" in roughly the same way. Only persons can respond or fail to respond to my trust, in the sense that they can

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[21] Op. cit., p. 14.

be motivated by their recognition of me as a person and as a knower. I show below that this structure is crucial. However, the presence of persons does not suffice to identify cases of trust because persons can be depended on without being trusted, when, for example, a person whom I do not trust has an interest in my being correctly informed on this occasion. Although she is usually evasive and misleading, this time she tells me where the best fresh fish can be obtained because she wants me to take her there.

It is important that the trusted person is seen as one who will not betray. Either she will not betray the person who trusts her, or she will not be a person who betrays, that is, she will be a person of integrity. Her trustworthiness might be global or local with respect to a domain of content, or a range of persons. I might trust restrictedly, but not reservedly, that is, although it is always possible that my friend might let me down, insofar as I trust her, I presume that will not happen. I might be able to depend on her because I know that she is trustworthy with respect to some matter, or that she will cooperate with me because she would not betray some other person. I might rely on her for knowledge because the penalties for deceit are severe, and I judge it to be in her interests to be truthful. For example, if she is under extreme duress or threatened with torture, then I accept and rely on her word. But I might not trust her at all, and I might remain somewhat suspicious of her even when I rely on her. Thus, in such a scenario, reliance seems distinct from trust.

A set of examples will help to clarify the independence of trust and reliance. I have two colleagues, Jane and John, both of whom are trustworthy. Jane spends long hours at her desk and is generally aware of the movements of others in the department. John has different work patterns, and is rarely in his office. Jane is an excellent source of information about people's whereabouts, I can trust *and* rely on her. But John, while equally trustworthy, is not such a good informant. A third colleague, Don, is untrustworthy, but in certain cases, when his interests and mine coincide, could be relied on for information because he generally has the facts right. But when there is no pressure on him to cooperate, I will not seek to be informed by him because although I regard him as potentially reliable, his untrustworthiness rules out consulting him. If I

am to depend on Don, I need to assess and critically evaluate his motivations in this context. But in Jane's case, I do not even tacitly consider such factors, I simply see her as someone to believe, I engage with her trustingly. My relationship with Jane involves trust and reliance; with respect to John, I trust but do not rely. As far as Don is concerned, I do not trust him, and would rely on him only with reservations, even though he generally has the facts right.

Reliance focusses on the constraints on the trusted person as evidence for the person depending to take an appropriate risk. In such cases, nothing holds the dependent person to maintaining that dependence: she can retract it without effect. However, trust commits the truster, and manifest distrust or retraction of trust can damage the relationship just as untrustworthiness can. I showed earlier that some kinds of checking indicate a lack of trust. The point here is not that trust means depending on a particular range of the trusted person's motivations - specifically those motives generated by good will, which is the position defended by Karen Jones - and that trust is misplaced in the absence of such motivations. I will argue that trust is not a judgement, not a form of belief, and not merely an attitude. It is a mode of recognition and engagement.

Trust may not be limited to an expectation of truth telling. When I am trusting someone, it may be that I acknowledge the complexities she faces, and do not expect her to tell me the truth come what may. She may be maintaining confidences towards other people, or she may be motivated by fear not to disclose certain things. But in the absence of ill will directed at me, these things need not undermine my trust in her. Trust then, may be both stronger and more flexible than reliance even in knowledge contexts. Trust, however, is also extra fragile, because it is vulnerable to betrayal as well as disappointment.

The special reaction of betrayal shows that special obligations can arise in trust contexts, and that in explaining trust, it is important to think of the epistemic agents as persons. Karen Jones' account of trust as an affective attitude moves in this direction. Jones regards trust as being composed of cognitive and affective elements. There is an

attitude of optimism about the goodwill and competence of another which involves thinking that the other "will be directly and favourably moved by the thought that the truster is counting on them."[22] This content that Jones identifies as part of trust helps to explain why it may be that another's trust or distrust of a certain person can affect my feelings toward the latter. If I know a person whom others trust, and I know she has not undermined their trust, I might have more reason to expect her to respond well to trust I place in her. Furthermore, if I persist in an attitude of suspicion against a person trusted by others I know, I reveal not just my attitude to the "shady" character, but I indicate a lack of confidence in the judgements of my other friends.

Jones is correct to point out that trust is not just a belief in another's competence, as I may retain a belief in another's competence while retracting my trust. For example, I may accept that a published restaurant review is accurate, but if I were informed in person by the writer I would be less convinced, assuming that I don't have access to both her spoken and published words simultaneously. If I have reason to distrust her in her direct engagements with me, because of a history of untrustworthiness, I may still respect her professional standards. If this is plausible, I think it shows that we may trust another publicly, but not privately, or vice versa.

Jones makes the important point that trust gives rise to beliefs that are resistant to evidence.[23] If trust involves only the belief that another has goodwill, " ... as a belief of a perfectly ordinary sort, it should not be abnormally resistant to evidence, and it should not lead us to hold additional beliefs that are themselves abnormally resistant to evidence."[24] According to Jones, the correct explanation for trust producing beliefs resistant to modification is that trust includes a " ... distinctive, and affectively loaded, way of seeing the one trusted."[25] This attitude of optimism can be revised, but it may take some strong evidence that another's character is not of goodwill in the domain where, in trusting, I ascribed it. Below I will show that this is part of the way of being engaged with others that is trust.

[22] Jones, op. cit., p. 6.
[23] Ibid., p. 19.
[24] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

An act of betrayal, or one that is conceived as such, can undermine trust more radically than a mere failure of reliability in that context. This consideration supports the claim that trust involves a feeling about, or attitude to a trusted person. There is both an attitude of optimism, and an expectation that the one trusted will respond favourably to being counted on. Trust can be undermined not only through evidence against my trust-based beliefs, but through attitudinal changes. So, while in some instances, trust is stronger than the evidence may indicate, it can also be highly vulnerable to new events that change my attitudes, especially those connected to my other affective relationships. There may be a kind of rank ordering of trust relationships: I will believe my best friend over a new acquaintance, but perhaps believe my partner over my friend.[26]

The feeling of confidence in a person's goodwill is distinct from a judgement of the risks involved in trusting her, and from expectations of her behaviour. Such confidence will probably influence judgements and expectations, but cannot be reduced to them. Likewise, it may be weakened by feelings, not just evidence. Many pragmatic considerations[27] can encourage persons to be epistemically reliable, but trust requires the parties to be mutually engaged as second persons. Trust is a way of knowing a person, not just knowing facts about her. Betrayal or failure to be trustworthy is failure in the context of that relationship. Discredit can be a similar kind of pernicious engagement if it is generated by inappropriate distrust.[28] These are not merely failures to acquire or to convey knowledge but are failures to be properly oriented towards other knowers, to be operating properly in the epistemic environment. There are occasions when I should trust, and not seek to monitor evidence with respect to a trusted person. Fricker's account does not allow for the epistemic insult that distrust can convey.

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[25] Ibid., p. 4.

[26] The "shoot the messenger" reaction to a bearer of unwelcome news can result in a person who has behaved with utter trustworthiness somehow losing status as a good epistemic player. She may be distanced, and excluded from engagements. Although many factors would influence this kind of outcome, its plausibility is compatible with the contention that trust is not a matter of evidence for truthfulness.

[27] Petit, op. cit., locates motivations for trustworthiness in loyalty, virtue and prudence, and for trust-responsiveness in the consideration of others' good opinion.

[28] It is perhaps worth noting that untrustworthiness can also be appropriate or inappropriate. I may mislead you in order to maintain a confidence or protect a planned surprise, but these are not really cases of untrustworthiness. More sustained misrepresentations raise deeper questions about trust - if I am an undercover agent interacting with a group I have infiltrated am I untrustworthy? Such issues

However, the distinctive reactive attitudes characterised by feelings of confidence and optimism, or betrayal and insecurity that are associated with the dimension of trust and distrust do not adequately differentiate trust from reliance in practice. I may inappropriately feel betrayed, or fail to respond to blatant untrustworthiness with such a feeling. Although it might be possible to develop a principled way to draw the distinction, for example, a counterfactual account based on how an ideal wise truster would react in situations of successful or unsuccessful dependence, I will not pursue that possibility here. Instead, I will accept that the attitudinal components of trust do not adequately differentiate it from other epistemic relationships, but merely offer a *prima facie* reason to think such a distinction can be made. For this reason, a stronger account is needed so I will show that trust is *more* than a positive reactive attitude, or expectation. There are other ways to analyse the difference between trust and reliance, such as different ways that evidence and judgement are involved. Trust and reliance have different structures.

## Baier's Entrusting Model

It is worth reviewing Annette Baier's classic discussion of trust in order to contrast the entrusting model with my conception of trust as an engagement and a commitment to believe. I will show that certain strengths of Baier's account are retained in my analysis, and other difficulties are avoided.

Ethical models of trust are usually designed to account for nonepistemic matters, for example, trusting someone with my life, health, or the care of something precious and vulnerable, such as a dependent child. In creating, guarding or maintaining numerous kinds of things, we need to rely on others, or, as Baier sees it, we entrust others with these goods. This leads her to a model of trust based on entrusting: A trusts B with some valued thing C.[29] This is to be understood broadly to include trusting B to do (some important thing) D.

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are discussed by Sissela Bok. Bok, S. (1982). *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation.* New York: Vintage Books.

[29] Baier, A. (1986). Trust and Antitrust. *Ethics*, 96, p. 236.

Baier does not discuss knowledge explicitly, but some features of her account seem applicable to epistemic contexts since knowledge depends on cooperation in order to thrive. There are many cooperative projects involving knowledge as a central good, for example, research projects, publications and libraries. I must cooperate, or rely on others cooperating together if these goods are to be available to me, and perhaps, I must also trust the relevant individuals, groups, organisations or agencies if I am entitled to claim knowledge by using such resources.

According to Baier, a trusted person often has some discretion about how to carry out her entrusted task. This tends to be limited as it is not appropriate for a trusted person to carry out *any* action at all concerning the matter entrusted, even if such action is to the advantage of the truster. In trusting, I allow some discretion, but the scope is restricted. I expect not only goodwill, but competence and good judgement. Certain behaviours, even if well intentioned, can constitute intrusion, presumption or paternalism which can disappoint trust, rather than enhance it. For example, if my friend is an expert chef, and constantly bombards me with information about techniques, alternative methods, ingredients and subtle processes, she will not be the person I depend on for culinary assistance. If a teacher is so directive as to prevent any error on behalf of the pupil, there may be no learning taking place.

Trust occurs within networks of social relations. Baier explains transfers and adoptions of trust by comparing them with promises. They are similar in being sophisticated social conventions, relying on a social context or "climate of trust."[30] She points out that under many social frameworks, the capacity to trust and be trusted is restricted for certain groups, notably women, but also "[s]laves, young children, the ill and the mentally incompetent do not fully possess it."[31] This point is important with respect to knowledge because similar issues arise with respect to credibility, authority and acknowledgement. As Baier notices, the same possibilities of trust and being trusted are not available to all contenders. This indicates that the mere presence of trust within a community cannot be presumed a good thing, nor can increases of trust *per se*

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[30]  Ibid., p. 246

be presumed good. Trust differentiates members of an epistemic community, and is not equally to everyone's benefit. For example, in our culture, members of certain groups get trust "for free" but for others it is almost impossible to be regarded as trustworthy - aboriginal youths are one clear case of such a group. A level of trust is necessary for an epistemic community to function, and for any person to become a knower. But it is not universal beyond this fundamental level, and in the next chapter I address questions of power, credibility and ignorance.

Baier suggests that trust may not always be a good thing: its value may depend on the value of the thing protected. Not only good things thrive under conditions of trust. "Exploitation and conspiracy, as much as justice and fellowship, thrive better in an atmosphere of trust."[32] Here too, there are epistemic parallels. Deceit, misinformation and error can be promoted within a trusting community, and scientific and other frauds involving knowledge are made possible by trust. Indeed, one pragmatic motivation for responding cooperatively to the trust of others may be the possibility of taking advantage of it later. Superstition, or excessive dependence on authority also may result from injudicious trust. So trust is both necessary and risky. But just as trusting can be morally dubious, so can the withholding of trust. If, as a result of some unfair prejudice, I fail to treat another person as trustworthy, then my attitude is morally questionable. Similarly, there are epistemic faults of excessive credulity and excessive suspicion. I can undermine the epistemic community or treat groups with disrespect by an attitude of distrust as well as by manifest untrustworthiness. This shows the practical importance of distinguishing trust from reliance. If I fail to trust where I should, I am epistemically at fault in a way that cannot be assessed by referring to the amount of knowledge that I have acquired. Think of a bank manager interviewing prospective borrowers, who directs questions about the financial situation only to the male partner of any heterosexual couple.

The epistemic value of trust is variable. Ethical trust may be good or bad, depending on whether the relationship or the thing entrusted is a good thing to protect

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 231-2.

and perhaps also on whether the trust supports or challenges a particular configuration of trust relations. Similarly, a pattern of epistemic trust (such as investing more trust in confident middle class males who speak with a reassuring manner, than in women whose manner is diffident and who speak with an accent) may be reconsidered to assess whether I am properly engaging with those in my epistemic community. Baier also suggests that some kinds of trust can be immoral, for example, if maintained by fear, coercion or exploitation. The point about trust protecting some questionable activities or relationships is correct, but on my analysis, Baier's cases of immoral trust are examples of reliance, not trust. She claims that "Where the truster relies on his threat advantage to keep the trust relation going, or where the trusted relies on concealment, something is morally rotten in the trust relationship."[33] But, if I need to enforce others' cooperation, or threaten them to ensure it, I am not trusting or being trusted. In such cases, there is no room for betrayal, which is a good but not infallible indicator of trust. More importantly, in cases of coercion or fear, I have no commitment to believing that person, in fact, it is more likely that I have a commitment to believing the opposite.[34]

Baier is correct to point out that trust involves the truster in some risk. However, Baier's entrusting model is awkward when something intangible is entrusted. She considers, for example, that "Trusting strangers to leave us alone should be construed as trusting them with the 'care' of our valued autonomy."[35] This is a very weak sense of "care", as Baier admits, and it cedes little or no discretion to the trustee. It is also a weak sense of trust, perhaps closer to expectation. If a stranger does not respect my autonomy, and infringes on me in some minor way, my expectations may be disappointed, and in the case of more severe transgression, my wellbeing may be compromised. But in neither case does my original expectation require from the other person more than inattention or an attitude of disinterest. It is sufficient that passing

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[33] Ibid., p. 255.
[34] Even a contract that provides major incentives to be "trustworthy" may not constitute the basis for a relationship of fully fledged trust. Trust surpasses a contract, and if I trust someone with whom I also contract, I both commit and expect more than what a contract specifies. They may let me down by holding to the letter of the agreement. For this reason, I do not think that a contract model is adequate to explain trust.
[35] Op. cit., p. 238.

strangers do not care about interfering with (care to interfere with) my autonomy, they do not need to care for it. So, it is hard to say what might be entrusted, and this case does not involve any positive action to safeguard my autonomy or privacy.

How does an entrusting model explain epistemic trust? If I trust someone to tell the truth, what could be entrusted? It is certainly true that often when I trust the information another person gives me, I thereby place something at risk. I may risk an outcome, such as my arrival at my desired destination, or I may incur a risk of believing falsely, or even failing to know at all. However, I do not entrust these things in the sense of handing them over. I may perhaps entrust my entire epistemic welfare to another person, if I follow a guru, or join a religious group and adopt its beliefs, including a belief in the infallibility of the leader. The entrusting model seems problematic for localised epistemic trust, where it is not clear what might be handed over or entrusted to another. If I depend on the discretion of others, it is hard to see that anything is entrusted. Secrets or confidences may be entrusted to particular individuals, and such cases seem more like handing over a valued thing. But once told, a secret cannot be returned, unlike lending an item, or delegating a responsibility. Furthermore, in order to protect a secret, it might be best to forget it, rather than care for it and keep it at the forefront of my attention. In addition, much knowledge is made common, and shared without restriction. If I trust for general knowledge, it is not clear that the provider(s) are entrusted with anything. But trust, according to Baier, involves goodwill, and this is what chiefly distinguishes trust from mere reliance. This attitudinal element is plausible in epistemic contexts where it is most centrally the person who is trusted, not institutional constraints and incentives for reliability, nor additional evidence.

A strength of Baier's account is that she distinguishes reliance from trust. Trust, she claims, involves depending on others' good will toward me, not just their predictability. Depending on another's good will leaves the truster vulnerable to the limits of that good will. Baier's account contains the important insight that in taking the risk of trusting, the truster does concede something to the one trusted. She claims that

some discretion and something valuable is commended to the one trusted, but this is not exactly right for epistemic trust. What is correct is the noticing of a dynamic of trust - the truster engages with the trusted in a particular way. This is not just the adoption of an attitude of confidence, or an optimistic expectation. I construe this engagement as a commitment to believe. It is also a commitment to good will on the part of the *truster* as well as the expectation of good will from the trusted person, a stronger commitment than that which Jones, like Baier, identifies.

## Trust and Risk

Trust has a different structure from reliance, and it can perform slightly different functions. Knowledge can be acquired through both trust and reliance, but reliance does not bind people together in the way that trust does, although it might form a background for such alliances to form. Trust and reliance operate differently with respect to risk. It is commonly held that when we trust, we place something at risk, something we value is allowed to be vulnerable to others, and this is why the "good-will" factor is important. The recognition of risk, however, ought not be taken to imply that practising trust well can be explained as doing well at risk assessment. Trust is not essentially an evaluation of risks and a decision or judgement that taking some risk is worthwhile.

Reliance involves at least an implicit probability judgement, a risk assessment, or a forced choice when there is no better option. I may choose to rely on an Internet bookstore as I judge the risks of sending my credit card details through cyberspace to be acceptable. In some cases I may have to rely against my better judgement, for example, when my judgement tells me a vehicle is unreliable, but it is the only means of transport available. In such a case, I am not really deciding to rely as a result of a risk assessment, but perhaps in spite of one. So reliance includes but is not limited to judgement of risk and probability. Trust, however, is not a similar kind of judgement that is directed toward character, a judgement with the same structure, but a different object.[36] It may seem plausible to trust a colleague's honesty, but there is something odd in claiming

that I trust her deceitfulness, though I may rely on it without such a problem. (I may depend on someone who is regularly and systematically wrong - deliberately or otherwise.) Rather than simply being directed toward character, trust is about the connections between persons. It can be mutual and reciprocal, and it not only reflects bonds, but also strengthens them. It is often noted that one of the features of trust is that it may strengthen a relationship, for example, between friends or colleagues.[37] This is trust.

Philip Petit suggests that "People take pleasure in being trusted, because people take pleasure in being well considered and well regarded."[38] This motivates people to cultivate trusting relationships. However, Petit finds this somewhat paradoxical, because "it is no complement [sic.] to be thought to want the good opinion of others."[39] As a claim in ethics this is questionable;[40] in the epistemic domain, it is even more dubious. Insofar as being accorded the status of knower is complimentary (and being denied it is discrediting), it is in no way a shameful disposition to desire it. To desire to be held in high epistemic esteem by one's epistemic fellows is to desire to be able to function effectively as a knower, to be acknowledged, trusted and credited. This is the fundamental epistemic motivation without which there would be no knowers.

Trust offers shortcuts in a different way from the way reliance does. All forms of epistemic dependence can allow a knower to know without seeing, checking or testing for herself. Reliance permits us to know by being told, by asking for and receiving information. Trust can be spoken of in terms of judgement: it may be wise, or ill-judged, or I may even trust "against my better judgement." But this is like the sense in which I may say of my friend that she is a good judge of character, which often suggests that she trusts and distrusts the right people. This need not mean that I ascribe

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[36] I am not suggesting that trust has nothing to do with character. In fact, as the following discussion shows, character is very important. But it is not important *per se*, but as part of relationships.

[37] See Jones' discussion of cultivating trust. "Trust as an Affective Attitude." op. cit., pp. 22-3, and Petit's discussion of the binding nature of trust op. cit., p. 218.

[38] Op. cit., p 219.

[39] Ibid., p. 222.

[40] A full discussion of this issue is not possible here, but I think Petit may be moved by the thought that a moral agent should want to *be* good, not just be seen to be good. However, he takes this too far, by inferring that wanting the good opinion of others undermines the desire to be good for its own sake. It

to her a high level of competence at observation, gathering and using evidence, making inferences and predicting the behaviour of others. I may mean instead that she quickly and accurately recognises qualities in others, responds to others well, and engages with them well. Fricker would claim that these capacities reduce to the evidence-related competences, but I think the two areas are distinct. What if my friend is good at ascribing qualities of character, but when she reports her general observations of behaviour these are less accurate? Perhaps she is careless with the details of observations, but her response to the relevant epistemic characteristics is admirably accurate.

Trust is a kind of fidelity in which I connect with others, and in which there is a process of mutual recognition. We recognise each other as epistemic agents (or ethical agents) and we realise that we are seen and taken into account as such. This may be a fleeting encounter, or a moment in an ongoing interaction, but the other is not a mere source of knowledge for me, and I am not just an opportunity for her to be epistemically virtuous by sharing her knowledge to fill my epistemic gap.

Being trusted places a kind of obligation on the trusted person, which is why being trusted is not always a desirable thing, since that obligation might be unwelcome. Being entrusted with a secret can be burdensome, as can being trusted to look out for another's interests. I may be trusted in connection to a project with which I would rather not be associated, or by a person with whom I do not want to be aligned. (Being relied on can also be unwelcome.) But in addition, a trusting person also incurs an obligation. When I trust, I am not only at risk in some way if my trust is misplaced, I am restricted in what I can do compatibly with trusting. I cannot trust and simultaneously expect to be let down, but my reliance can incorporate a great deal of doubt about motive, success or competence. The difference between relying on directions from a stranger and trusting them may be a difference between proceeding with optimism and confidence, or provisionally with an attitude of doubt, and how I see that person in relation to me will be affected. Trust is not merely a judgement about the probable accuracy of

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is not clear why these should be seen as incompatible, and I suspect that in the moral as in the epistemic case the importance of community strengthens rather than undermines virtue.

information, but a reflection of connectedness and mutual concern. But as in the case of strangers, it may in fact be fleeting. This commitment (not only to believe, but to think well of the trusted person) also extends into the future, which is why trust potentially has a binding function - it holds people in relationships.

A relationship of trust implies that the parties are agreed that "you are with me on this." This is why trust can be undermined, not by incompetence, but by an attitude that reveals that you are not with me. This is also why trust places obligations on someone - to trust implies a shared attitude, agenda, project, value, or priority. Trust requires that the other person be regarded as a second person, with the potential to either share or betray my interest, thus to respond to trust requires that others engage with me as a second person. Audi's example of conversing with a stranger on a plane, and coming to believe her testimony, is such a case.[41] Trust, not mere reliance, is at stake when these second person qualities are in play. In trusting, I both exhibit an attitude and ascribe one, and likewise in being trustworthy. Trust is not merely about behaviour, neither from the side of the truster nor the trusted. Audi's confidant is not believed because there is good evidence, and a proper train of inference. Nor would the best epistemic practice be to seek more evidence to check on what she said, or to withhold belief from her until such evidence was forthcoming. It is in trusting that knowers take full account of one another as second persons. Because of the ascription of good will to the trusted person, regarding a shared project or concern, that is, a certain domain, I am not regarding her merely as a source or instrument on which I might rely, but as a co-participant in epistemic transactions.

From the above discussion, it is clear that it is primarily persons whom we trust. This suggests that we engage with the person, we believe the words of those we trust, and we inhabit a world populated by epistemic agents. The responsible commitment is not to believe absent contrary evidence, but to treat other epistemic players with respect. The framework of trust would be destroyed by distrust as much as by untrustworthiness, perhaps even more quickly. Examples of a community where trust is

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[41] Op. cit.

undermined rarely make this explicit.[42] In the last chapter, I showed that global social scepticism, or distrust of all the members of my epistemic community is fundamentally incoherent, and it turns out that the argument for social scepticism rests on a misunderstanding of trust. The environment of trust is that of an epistemic community in which obligations are mutual, not merely unilateral dependence.

This is why certain kinds of failure by a potential truster or trusted person are so damaging to our epistemic world and the space in which we reason. In some cases, this trusted person is one who helped me structure and maintain the very space of reasons, so the failure disrupts my sense of my self as a knower at all, and as a wise truster.[43] Likewise, being unacknowledged or discredited can be enormously damaging. In neither case is the main concern that I have failed to convey or receive knowledge or information. The status of knower has been threatened, the fabric of epistemic community rent asunder. The implausibility of Feldman's arguments discussed in the previous chapter, rest on her misunderstanding of Code's analysis of second person epistemology, and her consequent misunderstanding of the nature of trust.

Trustingness, trustworthiness and associated character traits are important epistemic virtues. Knowers are more than information gatherers, and these virtues are essential to the epistemic community. Epistemic disrespect, insult and discredit are vices. But they are not vices because they permit or promote ignorance at the expense of knowledge, but because they are dispositions to mistreat other knowers.[44] Ignorance is not co-extensive with epistemic vice, and knowledge is not co-extensive with epistemic virtue.

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[42] I suspect that the games that model the effects of "trust" and "distrust" are unable to capture the interactions of being treated with epistemic respect or disrespect, so I do not think they will furnish good evidence in favour or against this claim.

[43] Keith Lehrer makes a related point: "Rather than one source of information constituting the basis of all justification and knowledge, our evaluation of the trustworthiness of the sources and, most crucially of ourselves as evaluators of trustworthiness drives the engine of justification." Lehrer, K., (1994) "Testimony, Justification and Coherence" Matilal, B. K., and Chakrabarti, A. (Eds.). *Knowing from Words*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, p. 57.

[44] Although these epistemic vices may coincide with ethical vices (perhaps I disbelieve someone and manifest cruelty) they need not indicate ethical vice. I may be morally well-intentioned, but epistemically culpable, or inept.

## Testimony and Evidence

With this account of trust in mind, I will examine several important accounts of testimony, the main area where epistemic dependence is discussed. Is trust a proper way of obtaining knowledge, and if so, how do trust, belief and critical evaluation intersect? I have argued that trust and reliance are distinct ways of acquiring knowledge, and that treating trust as a form of belief or inference misrepresents the way that trust can permit knowledge based on testimony. The question of the relationship between trust, testimony and critical evaluation remains, and to answer it, I will sketch some of the ways the relationships between trust, reliance, evidence and testimony have been conceived.

> Michael Welbourne contrasts testimony with other kinds of evidence:
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> Here we come upon the commonest of all misapprehensions about knowledge and testimony. Again and again we find philosophers apparently supposing that the only (proper?) way of receiving testimony is as evidence for the truth of the proposition affirmed .... to receive testimony as evidence is precisely not to receive it as testimony.[45]

Welbourne's concern is that when testimony is treated as evidence, there is frequently a disparity between the original knower's evidence and that of the second knower, so that it can easily appear that the warrant for knowledge decreases as we pass along a testimonial chain.[46] It seems, therefore, that testimonially-based knowledge becomes increasingly degenerate. Welbourne disputes this, arguing both that it is part of the nature of knowledge to be "commonable" or capable of being transmitted and shared, and that it is trust that "binds" the members of an epistemic community.[47] According to Welbourne, when I trust another person as a knower, I do not treat her assertions as evidence, but rather as authoritative.[48] When I trust, I accept that the other person knows, and presume that when I understand her correctly I know too. It "is [part] *of the nature* of knowledge to be transmitted under these conditions, and when they obtain it

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[45] Welbourne, M. (1981). "The Community of Knowledge." *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 31(October), pp. 311-2.

[46] See also Tony Coady's discussion of the disappearance of history in Coady, C. A. J. (1992). *Testimony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Chapter 11.

[47] Welbourne, op. cit., p. 303.

[48] I return to authority and expertise in professional contexts in the next chapter. Here, I just want to pursue the distinction between reports from trusted persons and those treated as evidence.

*cannot* be denatured."[49] In other words, knowledge can be transmitted through trust, and I can acquire knowledge at second hand. Knowledge need not degenerate into mere opinion just because another person provides it to me.

However, Welbourne's distinction between trust and evidence is not quite right. There are cases where we do treat testimonial reports as evidence. For example, if many witnesses attest to certain events, but there are contrary considerations, such as vested interests or incompatible circumstantial evidence or opposing reports, then the evidence of testifiers is usually treated like other evidence.[50] But Welbourne sees correctly that this is not the only way I can treat what others report to me as knowledge. Cases of trust are not like cases of evidence. My response to the testimony of medical experts when I am a juror in a court of law may be very different from my direct acceptance of a diagnosis from my family doctor. When I trust, I accept that a person speaks honestly, and my trustful attitude is in part a commitment to believing her. If she knows what she is talking about, and is trustworthy, and I trust her, then I too know. This is different from assessing her testimony in the context of other (confirming or disconfirming) evidence.

Welbourne's discomfort with treating testimony as evidence reflects concerns similar to mine. However, it may be difficult to apply Welbourne's distinction to certain contexts such as those when legal testimony is taking place. In a courtroom, eyewitness and expert testimony are specific sources of evidence (although witnesses do not speak directly to the matter before the court, that is, to the guilt or innocence of the accused) so in such cases, Welbourne's formulation is potentially confusing. There are times when it is appropriate or necessary to rely on persons like evidence, as instruments or sources of knowledge. But, as Welbourne correctly notices, this does not account for the whole epistemic landscape. As the term "trust" has the advantage of recalling the relationship aspects of this important form of epistemic dependence, I think its use is a good way to draw attention to the difference between being trustful and treating a

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[49] Welbourne, op. cit., p. 303.
[50] Hume's discussion of testimony to miraculous happenings is like this. Hume, D. (1902). *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, Chapter X.

person's reports like evidence. (These could be described as two different ways of accepting testimony or perhaps as accepting or using testimony.)

If this difference between trusting someone and using someone's words as evidence is not noted, it is usually the second person aspects of epistemic interactions that are neglected. As described by John Hardwig, who defends a role for trust in knowledge: "[a]lthough epistemologists debate various theories of knowledge, almost all seem united in the supposition that knowledge rests on evidence, not trust."[51] Not only is trust problematic because it seems incompatible with the autonomy of knowers, it also seems to bypass the proper critical reflection that characterises legitimate paths to knowledge. This is a reason to reject epistemic trust different from the global denial of epistemic dependence, for example, by insistence on individualism or autonomy. If critical evaluation is antithetical to trust,[52] this is taken to mean that in trusting we acquire opinion only, not knowledge, but there may be other ways to obtain knowledge from others. Welbourne characterises this attitude thus: "We can not know by trusting in the opinions of others; we may have to trust those opinions when we do not know."[53] Such antitrust arguments usually take the following form:

1. Critical evaluation is incompatible with trust

2. Critical evaluation is essential for knowledge not mere belief

3. We do acquire knowledge from others

therefore

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[51] Hardwig, J. (1991). The Role of Trust in Knowledge. *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXVIII. No 12, p. 693

[52] Coady suggests that "the attitudes of critical appraisal and of trust are not diametrically opposed, though in particular cases, one cannot, in the same breath, both trust what a witness says and subject it to critical evaluation." op. cit. p. 47. Coady however, associates testimony with evidence:
A speaker S testifies by making some statement p if and only if:
(1) His stating that p is evidence that p and is offered as evidence that p.
(2) S has the relevant competence, authority, or credentials to state truly that p.
(3) S's statement that p is relevant to some disputed or unresolved question (which may, or may not be, p?) and is directed to those who are in need of evidence on the matter. p. 42.
Unlike Welbourne's account, this offers few resources to distinguish between basing knowledge on trust and on evidence.

[53] Welbourne, op. cit., p. 393.

4. Trust is not the kind of epistemic dependence involved in acquiring knowledge (which is not mere opinion).[54]

The next move for those who accept this argument is generally to propose non-trust grounds on which our reliance on testimony can be properly based. So, for example, Jonathan Adler[55] points to background conditions, general rather than specific evidence of reliability and the confirmation by other means of information initially gained from testimony. I will show that such reasoning misses the implications of the trust/reliance distinction, and that the antitrust argument fails. Specifically, I will contest premise 2 of that argument, and show that at least sometimes we acquire knowledge through trust.[56] (Note, though, that I don't need to defend the claim that we never acquire knowledge through mere reliance, nor through processes in which critical evaluation is central. Not all epistemic dependence involves strong trust.)

Adler regards trust as merely a convenient way to obtain information that is subsequently confirmed by other sources. He contests the claim that trust is fundamental in some sense to either the transfer or discovery of knowledge. There is therefore a need to show that trust is not merely a pragmatic advantage that is maintained only provisionally, as Adler argues. There are problems with Adler's notion of provisional trust, both because it does not seem to describe ordinary practices, and because it seems to contradict the very idea of trust. Trust may be fallible, it may even be revisable, but if I trust provisionally, then it may not be real trust, but rather a form of reliance. I will examine Adler's arguments to show that they go wrong because the role Adler ascribes to trust should really be understood as reliance and because he misconceives the role of trust in a way that obscures the role of ignorance.

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[54] Fricker presents her account of epistemic dependence in opposition to a somewhat different transcendental argument to the effect that there must be a presumptive right to trust because this is the only way to gain knowledge via testimony. This argument, which I think is implicitly endorsed by Adler, makes the converse point that trust *cannot* be the source of knowledge gained through testimony.

[55] Adler, J. E. (1994). "Testimony, Trust, Knowing". *The Journal of Philosophy*, XCI, No 5, pp. 264-275.

[56] The more common way to defend trust as a legitimate means of knowledge acquisition is to define trust in a way that makes it compatible with critical evaluation, but if the account of trust I have developed is plausible, that option is not appropriate.

Adler regards testimony as on a par with other evidence, and similarly dependent on other beliefs and processes of inference. He suggests that while I might first obtain a piece of information via testimony, this does not make trust as important an ingredient in knowledge as others have argued. Adler claims that trust sustaining knowledge is implausible, but does not deny its role in the origination of knowledge. He explains the distinction as follows. An information seeker often has access to increasing evidence such as the convergence of testimonial reports, and may have opportunities for confirmation or disconfirmation of information initially gained via testimony. Thus I might initially come to know of a killing in Florida from my neighbour, but when television and newspaper reports confirm this news, my knowledge ceases to depend on my neighbour's testimony.[57] In these ways, I can maintain knowledge initiated by testimony, but in such a way that my knowledge no longer depends on the testimony.

Background information is also important for the way that an information seeker comes to believe a testimonial speaker. Adler claims there is a "foreground/background illusion" that leads to exaggerated claims about the importance of testimony. Testimony is an explicit interaction that takes place in the foreground, and by concentrating on that exchange, we miss the context and background which "supplies an enormous, if hardly noticed, critical foundation for the seeker."[58] Thus, for Adler, a truster already has evidence and reasons for accepting testimony, for example, knowledge about general reliability in such contexts. Additionally, there is, as Hume and others have pointed out, a capacity in some cases at least, to evaluate the content of testimony. (Hume famously suggests that we ought not accept highly improbable accounts of such events as the violation of a law of nature, or miracle.)[59] The acceptance of testimony occurs against a background of supporting knowledge which at least reduces the need to depend on trust. Even if the initial acceptance of a testimonial account is based on trust, we continue to exercise critical faculties and if we obtain further corroborating or converging evidence

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[57] Ibid., p. 265-6.
[58] Op. cit., 265.
[59] Hume, op. cit.

for certain information, "the dependence on trust is soon swamped by success or failure in its use."[60]

For Adler, to take trust rather than evidence as crucial for testimony would require that I know little about my informant. Adler argues that the focus on a particular act of testimony, and whether the new knower "must rely on the word of his informant without knowing him"[61] obscures the widespread division of epistemic labour which relies on community and chains of testimony, not single acts. A single testimonial is to be viewed as "a moment in an ongoing process which has shaped and guided our own participation in it, providing resources for critical judgement."[62] The grounding for any instance of testimony is implicit in these practices. Here too, a particular instance of reliance is part of a larger pattern of interdependences. When we take a person's word "on trust," we do not do so in an evidential vacuum, although we may lack specific evidence about this particular informant. Adler argues that Hardwig and others conflate evidence and specific evidence, and thus exaggerate the role of trust.

Adler, therefore, opposes the suggestion that "all evidence that $X$ is reliable can only be specific evidence of the reliability of $X$." [63] He also opposes the claim that "the granting of trust must be a trust in an informant's character."[64] In both cases, according to Adler, there are background assumptions, such as that the informant is acting within norms, reasonably competent, subject to external checks, and possessing internal concerns for being respected and trusted, hence legitimate assumptions that she is willing and able to be trustworthy. These assumptions need not be about her character specifically, but may be assumptions about persons in general, or more fine grained generalisations, for example, distinguishing members of certain professions such as librarians, lawyers or used car traders.[65] In addition, we may be entitled to assume that an informant is motivated by pragmatic considerations, so the assessment of her

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[60] Adler, op. cit., p. 266.
[61] Ibid., p. 265.
[62] Ibid., p. 268.
[63] Ibid., p. 268.
[64] Ibid., p. 269.
[65] Ibid., p. 272.

trustworthiness need not be wholly based in an assessment of her virtuous character, a point with which Petit agrees.

In summary, Adler claims that unnoticed background and general considerations support judgements of the probability of the content conveyed by testimony, and these background beliefs are implicit in the reasoned acceptance or rejection of testimony, a position similar to that of Fricker described above. Those beliefs relevant to risk assessment are the crucial ones for Adler, who seems to suppose that my only epistemically significant relations with other epistemic agents can be summed up by my beliefs about them - precisely what I am contesting. My relationship with a trusted person is, on Adler's account, nothing more than a collection of experiences which furnish evidence for my acceptance of their testimony. If my account of trust as distinct from reliance and from evidence is correct, then such a presumption is false. There are several points on which Adler's account is mistaken. The attempt to restrict the role of trust to initial knowledge, and to eliminate trust from any role in sustaining ongoing knowledge is implausible.

Adler's account suggests that there are few cases where knowledge based on trust would remain uncorroborated, but I think he would acknowledge that trust would remain significant when further evidence is not forthcoming. Cases where there is only a single provider of information are much more common than Adler concedes. Everything my sister tells me about her workplace is known to me only through her. If someone questioned how I know, I would acknowledge it is only on the basis of what she says. The same applies to all the times there is only one person involved in telling me about something, such as the conversation on the aeroplane described by Audi. If I come to know, and it is a trusting relationship, my knowledge remains dependent on trust. Adler will respond that I have an extensive set of background beliefs about the person as an individual or type and about the probability of the content of what I am told. But it is the role, not the presence of such beliefs, that is at stake. Adler correctly sees that instances of testimony do not usually arise when the believer has no evidence relevant to the informant's credibility. He correctly points out that we "have both an

enormous warrant for an act of accepting testimony and we do not first investigate its credibility."[66] We have a background of contextual information and a history of epistemic dependences and trustful practices. Yet this does not constitute warrant and evidence to eliminate trust. Trust is not redistributed when further evidence appears in the same way as reliance can be. In any case, it is the seeking of further evidence that would count against trust being retained, and this is not what Adler describes. However, Adler is right in pointing out that I rarely have no evidence for the reliability or otherwise of my informant. I do not encounter other knowers in an evidential vacuum, so I do not trust them in such conditions either. I am suggesting that while this background is present, it is not always the salient factor for whether or not I trust.

I think it is clear that this background need not be explicit in my deliberation. In many cases, I don't actively assess the probability of the testimony or make a judgement about the veracity of my informant. The question is rather, does this background explain what I do when I trust, do these beliefs explain how trust works? For two reasons I think they do not. Firstly, trust is an engagement, or a commitment that is forward looking, not merely the summary of past experience. Adler's account of trust and testimony, like Fricker's discussed above, will not explain this feature of epistemic interactions. Secondly, this background has not emerged independently of trust, and is not a neutral basis from which I can derive the justification for my trust practices. The collection of evidence has often been simultaneous with and dependent on my trustful engagements with others. It is simply not available prior to trust, as trust shapes my attitude to evidence, to what counts and to what I accept.

Adler's claim that trust drops out in the presence of alternative evidence is even more problematic. Evidence may confirm what I have come to know via trust, but why is my trust thereby rendered insignificant? My trustful attitude to the person informing me is not eliminated, so it must be the dependence of my knowledge on trust that disappears. But this seems to be little more than a presumption. If I already know that the lecture is to be held in the humanities building because a trusted and trustworthy

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[66] Ibid., p. 268.

colleague told me, then why does the evidence I acquire by seeing a poster with that information eliminate that epistemic dependence? It is not a matter of priority in time, because if I had come to know initially through looking at the advertisement, then Adler would not concede that my knowledge comes to depend on testimony when subsequently my colleague presents me with that information. Adler suggests that the difference lies between the origin and sustaining of knowledge, but he seems to presume that the transfer of epistemic dependence can go only one way, that is, away from trust. Adler claims that "dependence upon trust is soon swamped."[67] He seems to suppose that if I am depending on someone, then alternative supports will redistribute that dependence, just as if I reinforce a bridge, then I am no longer depending on the original structure. But in cases where this is correct, there seems to be no reason that precludes dependence on testimony from entering the network that sustains knowledge, so the roles of other persons are not eliminated. In fact, in Adler's own example, the new sources of evidence such as newspapers and broadcasts are in any case forms of testimony.

In addition, if the distinction between trust and reliance defended above is right, then Adler's account of the redistribution of dependence works only for reliance. Trust is not susceptible to the same kinds of disconfirmation as reliance, and confirmation works differently too. Trust is incompatible with some kinds of seeking of confirmation, since if I am constantly checking up on you my claims to trust you are substantially undermined. Trust as a resource for knowledge brings ignorance with it because it requires that certain information is foregone. If trust is a central part of the epistemic domain, then so is ignorance. Trust enables knowledge, but rather than maximising it, the process of trusting selects what will be left unknown.

Rather than simply redistributing epistemic dependence away from trust, evidence can affect trust and reliance in a variety of ways. For example, evidence against my informant's words might prompt me to abandon my trust. However, not all evidence against the truth of my informant's words will be evidence that my trust has

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[67] Ibid., p. 266.

been betrayed. It might be an innocent error, or an understandable mistake, and a trustworthy person need not be infallible. It needs to be evidence of untrustworthiness or evidence that you are not dependable because "you are not with me on this." Evidence that confirms my trust-based knowledge may remain incidental, as it does in other cases where there is over-confirmation. When I successfully find the post office from your directions, I do not reassess you as more trustworthy than when I believed you initially. But when I rely on but do not trust an attester, evidence may raise my assessment of her as reliable. It may allay some doubts, or overcome some concerns that were present in my initial risk-assessment. It may even encourage me to see her as trustworthy. Evidence against a person on whom I rely but whom I do not trust will generally undermine the assessment of her reliability. But when evidence goes against the persons I trust I will often reject the evidence. Family members often uphold each other's words when an outsider would be convinced by circumstantial evidence. Some may see this as a problem for my endorsement of trust, because trust tends to encourage an irrational partiality. But I would respond that trust includes a commitment to believe that is not as easily overturned as the reliance that is based solely on risk assessment. I do not and should not try to treat the epistemic environment as uniform, as though all knowers in our community were the same to me. That trust is sensitive to important differences in my relationships with other knowers is not a weakness in the account.

Adler's argument that further evidence overrides the basing of knowledge on trust fails. He is not really talking about knowledge that is based on trust at all. While Adler identifies two levels of evidence, specific and general, he does not notice the pervasiveness of trust at both levels. Trust is important not only when there is an evidence vacuum, but whenever there is a gap between what is warranted based on available evidence and what is concluded or believed. Trust is not, however, a route to the elimination of ignorance, but a way of knowing some things that leaves others unknown. Trust enables and even requires the bypassing of exhaustive checking, and it is a frequently successful, albeit fallible, way of knowing. Even as a source of knowledge, trust always leaves ignorance remaining. The point of trust is not to fill

every gap in my knowledge. Trust on my account is not a belief, nor is it based on evidence. It is not a judgement of another's likely veracity, but a way of being engaged with her.

Accounts of trust as encompassing more than reliance have been largely absent from discussions of testimony. I have argued that trust involves engagement and recognition, and that acknowledging the trusted person as a knower is necessary for me to acquire knowledge. If there is no trust, I simply do not have the resources to acquire knowledge. The mechanism of coming to know from testimony through trust must be, as Robert Audi claims, noninferential. Like Adler, Audi[68] is concerned with how background operates in the acceptance of testimony. Audi argues that normally we just believe what trusted people tell us, without inference. Just as confirmation and disconfirmation operate differently for trust and reliance, the salience of the background for trust differs from the salience of background for evidence and reliance.

Audi's example of a person becoming increasingly credible as a conversation develops shows that trust and a disposition to believe can emerge without conscious attention, (or deliberate assessment of evidence) and that the process of forming beliefs need not be inferential.[69] He proposes that standing beliefs can influence the formations of new beliefs, but without necessarily proceeding through inferences. This suggests that testimonially acquired beliefs need not depend on active inference from "certain premises, say that the witness seems sincere and that the testimony in question fits what I know about the case."[70] Such background beliefs may "play a mainly filtering role" such that they can operate to block beliefs, but unless triggered, they remain inert.

According to Audi, the stance where such beliefs remain passive is a kind of trust. "Indeed, if I am basically trusting of people's word, then normally, when someone tells me something, my belief system stands ready to be stocked..."[71] As I have suggested, trust involves more than beliefs, as when I trust someone, I am committed to believing

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[68] Audi, op. cit.
[69] Ibid., pp. 407-8.
[70] Ibid., p. 406.

them. Adler is describing an attitude of inclination to believe, which I think is different from fully fledged trust. Such an attitude is compatible with both trust and reliance as I have described them.

In offering an analysis of trust, Jones suggests that evidentialism (we should not believe anything without sufficient evidence) is a question independent of trust because trust is not a kind of belief, nor is it based on beliefs.[72] Audi also presents a treatment of epistemic trust as non-inferential, that is, not based on antecedent beliefs and judgements. But it seems to me that trust generates beliefs, so the question of whether trust is itself evidence seems relevant to the matter of evidentialism. If trust does any work in being a source of knowledge, it has to be the basis for beliefs and if trust itself is not a kind of evidence, then evidentialism is false.

Reports or testimony can yield knowledge in several ways. The crucial ones for trust and reliance are when I come to know *because* you tell me. In other kinds of case, I may come to know because I learn from what you convey unwittingly. This might be due to your lack of understanding of what you say if, for example, you repeat the stages of a complex argument that you have memorised but don't really grasp, or pass on a message you do not understand.[73]

According to Audi, the transmission of justification is different from the transmission of knowledge because "even if I am not justified in believing that the speaker lost his temper, I can be credible in such a way that you *can* become justified in believing this on the basis of my attesting to it."[74] If you can justifiedly believe me sincere and competent, you can justifiedly believe what I say. This also shows that the attester and the hearer do not have identical justifications for belief. When I come to know something because you tell me, my belief is not justified by the same reasons that justify your belief. In other words, when A comes to know that p because B knows that p, the justification for A differs from that possessed by B.

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Jones, "Trust as an Affective Attitude" op. cit.

[73] It has been claimed that knowledge can be acquired through chains of testimony even when the initial speaker does not know. See Lackey, J. (1999). "Testimonial Knowledge and Transmission." *The Philosophical Quarterly, 49* (197), pp. 471-490.

[74] Ibid., p. 409.

This is only slightly different from a point made by Hardwig that "in order for testimony to be useful, A cannot already have B's reasons."[75] Otherwise, A would be able to know p independently of B's attestation, and irrespective of whether B really knows p, and B's testimony would be irrelevant as a source of knowledge. Audi's claim is that A's justificatory reasons remain different.

Audi bases his claim on "the two facets of testimonial credibility, the sincerity dimension, concerning the attester's honesty, and the competence dimension, concerning attester's having experience or knowledge sufficient to make it at least likely that if the attester forms a belief that p, then p is true."[76] But these are both aspects of reliance as opposed to trust, according to the distinction I have defended. There are at least two modes of justification, associated with trust and reliance. In trust cases, I don't believe you because I am assessing your credibility or competence, but because I am engaged with you. What I know when I trust is you as a friend or cooperative party. Your claim is not justified because I trust you, but if I repeat it as something I know, it must be the case that my knowledge is based on trust.

There are cases when in depending on another person for knowledge we make an (informed) judgement which may implicitly or explicitly include beliefs about the person, general background matters, and the content of the attestation. These other kinds of evidence are relevant to the justification for my new belief, they are the reasons why I believe what she tells me. But there are other cases of epistemic dependence in which it is my relationship to the person who is telling me things that matters most. I do not treat the words of a trusted friend as probable, or to be checked, but instead my very connectedness to that person forms the basis for my belief in what they say. I do not treat her words as evidence, nor is it on the basis of evidence that I believe her. While I acquire knowledge through trust, it is not by seeking to maximise the evidence I have, and to eliminate any residual ignorance. I regard a trusted person in a certain light, and interact with her on the basis of that attitude. I believe what she tells me because I trust

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[75] Hardwig, op. cit., p. 699.
[76] Audi., op. cit., p. 409.

her. Trust involves an engagement and a commitment, not just an assessment of risk, or a judgement of justification or warrant.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that there are at least two mechanisms for acquiring knowledge from other people, and that trust and reliance can be distinguished by the presence of confidence or doubt, by whether or not the information is treated as evidence or as a report, and by the kind of considerations that count as support for the belief. By distinguishing trust from reliance, I have shown that trust is a way of knowing a person, or in other words, a crucially 'second person' aspect of the epistemic domain. When I know a person as trustworthy or trusted I am not merely judging that her reports are plausible and that she has an interest in not being found deceitful. I have a commitment to believing her that precludes certain kinds of evidence seeking. If Jane tells me the lecture starts at 11am, but I insist on looking at the timetable, then she could rightly say, "you don't trust me."

Trust is a way of obtaining knowledge from others. But trust is incompatible with a demand that knowledge requires maximum evidence, and with presumptions of individualism. Trust requires that I do not seek further evidence confirming the content of what the trusted person communicates, and that I do not seek to test the trustworthiness of the trusted person. I do not monitor the reliableness of that knower: if I did, I would show that trust was lacking. Maintaining trust requires retaining ignorance. I could not claim that my seeking evidence of the person's reliability was intended to strengthen my trust – trust does not work like that. Cases where I am trying to establish or cultivate trust are different, because these are like trying to overturn *distrust*. For example, if I say "I will trust you just this once" I am pointing to my distrust.

I have argued that trust constitutes a stance or orientation which involves committing (neither infallibly, nor reluctantly, nor irrevocably) to a certain way of understanding and engaging with another knower, which I have called a "commitment to believe." Am I just cashing out what is the effect of this affectively loaded "way of

seeing" another knower, and spelling out precisely how trust works as a mode of inference? Is trust not merely an attitude prompted by my history of interactions, and inferred (implicitly) from the evidence of my experience of persons in general, or of this particular person?

By challenging Fricker's arguments against trust as a kind of gullibility, and examining Adler's account of testimony, I was able to show that trust is not a process based on evidence, but a prior condition that enables knowers to deal with evidence. It is not a way of engaging with other knowers that needs to be justified, but it is the foundation of the possibility of justification. Trust shapes what is salient to me, as evidence or justification. Because my epistemic environment is primarily interpersonal, trust (engagement with others) not critical reflection shapes my experience and competences.[77]

Like other kinds of epistemic dependence, such as reliance, trust permits knowledge that is otherwise unavailable. Furthermore, it is an extra constraint on others to be good informants, although this cannot be interpreted as maximising the information conveyed to others, by seeking to keep their ignorance to a minimum. Others might be motivated to be trustworthy because it is an epistemic good, even an epistemic necessity. But the value of trust to an epistemic community cannot be reduced to its knowledge-conduciveness. Trusting well is not equivalent to believing those who know best or most, and the avoidance of being misled. It is about maintaining epistemic respect and avoiding epistemic insult, such as discredit in the modes of disbelief, distrust and refusal to acknowledge.

So trust is not just a summary of direct or background evidence. It shapes how evidence appears to me, and what I can look for, and insofar as this is restricted by trust, ignorance is ineliminable. Trust often mandates privacy, confidentiality and non-pursuit of potential knowledge - in a word, ignorance. Trust allows the replacement of ignorance with knowledge, but in doing so, it mandates that other areas of ignorance remain undisturbed.

This analysis of trust does not account for every use of the term "trust" in ordinary language, in ethics or in epistemology. However, I think that the account does suit core cases of trust and I have shown that trust should be taken to be an important and basic form of epistemic dependence. Other uses of the term are therefore derived from cases where trust is a strong engagement or commitment to believe. I think it is right to describe the cases where betrayal, fidelity, discredit and acknowledgement are involved in terms of trust not some other kind of epistemic dependence because of the normative (epistemically not ethically normative) connotations of the term.

All epistemic dependence offers short cuts to otherwise unavailable knowledge, and in this sense, trust enables the acquisition of knowledge. The functions of trust differ from the functions of reliance. Reliance allows me to ask for and obtain information, and trust overlaps to some extent. Trust also is needed for the way we depend on others to develop, maintain and modify judgements about evidence or justification and other epistemic competences. If I am uncertain about my competence in a certain domain, I need trustworthy others to ask for feedback. This is trust not for information, but for orienting my own self-trust. I need to trust others to ensure my own trustworthiness.

Trust is not reliance with some additional positive attitude from the truster or trusted person. It is not learned through a process of matching up expectations and evidence to form good judgements of others' tendencies to provide good information. Trust is learned through being recognised as a knower, and thus learning to acknowledge others.

Claiming that trust is a legitimate means of knowing may seem to imply that it promotes knowledge over ignorance. But it is not so simple. Trust restricts what we can know because as well as going beyond evidence, it rules out seeking certain kinds of evidence. Taking trust seriously shows that not only is there no necessary connection between knowledge and rational scrutiny of evidence, but trust has an indispensable epistemic role, enabling us to navigate the epistemic social environment. This account

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[77] It was pointed out to me in a conversation with Karen Jones that Coady acknowledges this point by noting that it is through others that I get observational evidence. See Coady, op. cit., Chapter Four.

of trust promotes a way of understanding knowledge which includes a role for ignorance.

Having argued for trust as constitutive of the epistemic environment, I turn in the next chapter to an investigation of expert knowers and what is involved in their responsibility and epistemic virtue. I will argue for a model of expert virtue that is compatible with trust, engagement and ignorance.

# Chapter Five

# Knowledge and Power - Who Knows Best?

## Introduction

> *Socrates*: ... And, again, is it not an extreme absurdity that he should suppose another thing to be this, and this to be another thing; - that, having knowledge present with him in his mind, he should still know nothing and be ignorant of all things? you might as well argue that ignorance may make a man know, and blindness make him see, as that knowledge can make him ignorant.
>
> Thaeatetus

In this chapter I will develop an account of the roles and responsibilities of experts, using the difference between objective and empathic knowing to illustrate the interpersonal, or second person, dimensions of expertise. The analysis of trust as a basic form of epistemic dependence, presented in the last chapter, is supported by earlier arguments that the qualities of knowers that contribute to relationships with other knowers must be recognised as epistemic virtues, in addition to the more commonly recognised virtues necessary for dealing with facts and information. I have argued further that knowledge maximising is not the primary epistemic goal, and endorsed a communitarian account of knowledge that does not treat knowers and the epistemic domain as uniform. These considerations are as relevant to expert knowers as they are to everyday knowers.

When a second person approach is adopted, which takes engagement and ignorance into account, experts' relationships with others (including the community in general, particular dependents, and colleagues) are taken as primary. That is, the expert has not transcended those relationships with other knowers by virtue of superior information: the expert is *not* responsible only to the facts. Because of the influential role of expert knowers, certain attitudes are particularly pernicious if manifested by experts. Experts can engage with non-experts in such a way that epistemic respect is withheld, and such non-acknowledgement can have a devastating effect on those whose epistemic capacity is denied. Certain groups within communities are particularly vulnerable to epistemic disempowerment, and an account of the epistemic virtue and responsibility of knowers needs to include those virtues required for engagement with others.

Ignorance is involved in an account of professional responsibility, because at the most basic level, the division of epistemic labour means that some know what others do not. But as I will show, this is not sufficient to explain the multiple dimensions of the division of epistemic labour, and how social status and epistemic authority are awarded to certain kinds of knower. Some knowers acquire the authority and power to pronounce on behalf of others, to be authoritative beyond the arena of their specific expertise, or to credit or discredit others' knowledge claims. I will also show that denying any positive role for ignorance is a mistake and that the best way to understand the responsibility of epistemic authorities requires keeping ignorance in mind.

First, I will briefly discuss expertise and the division of epistemic labour. Then, through a discussion of objectivity, I will show that an account of the role of ignorance advances critical reflection on the ways knowledge is produced by interactions between knowers. One problem with the prevailing notion of objectivity is that it implies a kind of gapless or seamless knowledge, with each piece supporting all the others. For example, foundationalism and coherentism both require each piece of knowledge to connect to other pieces and form a total picture, like a finished puzzle, with everything in place. In both cases completeness and lack of gaps are important. Perhaps this image is part of the reason why possessing certain kinds of information allows some individuals to be authoritative beyond their clear expertise - when a lot of the puzzle is in place, it is clear what the other parts should look like. In the discussion of Habermas's epistemology in Chapter Two, the philosophical tendency to regard knowers as simply interchangeable was problematised, and the same lack of differentiation between knowers and between objects known is evident in the "gapless knowledge" view of expertise. I will show that expertise and epistemic dependence are best understood through an epistemology that takes ignorance into account. It may seem that such an approach blurs the boundaries between epistemology, politics and ethics, but I will argue that power, authority and expertise need to be understood in *epistemic* terms as well as from political and moral perspectives. Epistemology has practical as well as theoretical tasks.

Presumptions about objectivity allow the division of epistemic labour to appear neutral because, in principle, anyone could possess the knowledge that is in practice held by experts. Yet, if we do not suppose that knowledge has to be objective in this sense, then it becomes imperative to consider how those with the power and privilege associated with epistemic advantages can operate responsibly. Scientific knowledge is commonly taken to be the highest form of knowledge and is thought to exemplify the characteristics that all knowledge should possess.[1] In this chapter, I will continue to develop a pluralistic conception of knowledge, focussing on alternatives to scientific objectivity. The scientific paradigm of knowledge establishes objectivity, impartiality and the weighing of evidence as epistemic ideals. Precision, certainty and the possibility of replicating results are central features of scientific knowledge, and the collection and categorisation of data are emphasised. Scientists are the epistemic workers who occupy the position of highest status. Scientists know best, or so it is thought. Three philosophical challenges to the scientific notion of objectivity contribute to my analysis of expert responsibility: Sandra Harding's account of objectivity and who gets to be a knowledge-maker; Lorraine Code's account of empathy and what gets to count as knowledge; and Kathryn Addelson's account of the responsibility of those who deal professionally with knowledge. Harding offers an alternative model of objectivity; Code challenges the privileged position of scientific knowledge as the ideal paradigm of knowledge; and Addelson shows that responsible experts must attend to ways that knowledge is created as well as discovered. I argue that epistemic responsibility must include both information-related and engagement-related epistemic virtues, and must have room for ignorance.

Ignorance is important because the same attitudes to knowledge that encourage its coalescence with authority and status tend to come from a dismissive attitude to

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[1] John Hardwig provides an explicit statement of this tendency: "I think my argument is applicable to many areas of knowledge. I shall take science and mathematics as my paradigms, however, for they have provided the primary models of knowing for Western epistemology for the last 350 years." Hardwig, J. (1991). "The Role of Trust in Knowledge." *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXVIII (12) pp. 693-708.

ignorance. Information would be the same for anyone, so anyone who is expert is in a position to tell another person how it is. The hearer should accept what an expert says about topics within the scope of her expertise. These attitudes encourage a "natural" association of expertise and power. The corollary of these attitudes is the view that ignorance is always to be avoided. Thinking about ignorance shows how to challenge some assumptions about knowledge which back up the alliance of knowledge and power: knowledge is always good, more knowledge is better, information and factual gaps should be filled and knowledge ought always to be objective. A serious consideration of ignorance reveals that these assumptions must be modified.

Epistemic authority is significant only because ignorance is also pervasive. Without some persons being ignorant, it would make no sense that others were expert. Ignorance is not always based on a contrast between the one who knows and the one who is ignorant. One of the important roles of knowers is the confirmation and recognition of what others know. I may lack information and be called ignorant, or recognition may be withheld from me, and I am ascribed ignorance. Some ignorance is the denial not the lack of knowledge, but some ignorance is not an epistemic vice at all. When ignorance is part of respectful, empathic or trusting engagement with another knower, it is part of epistemic virtue, and epistemic authority needs to incorporate this kind of epistemic virtue as well as that associated with information.

When collective action replaces objectivity as a primary characteristic of knowledge, the question is not "how is knowledge to be maximised?" but "how is the collective practice working?" Ignorance is always an aspect of the arrangement of persons with respect to information and/or power, it is not a simple lack or absence of knowledge that can be avoided or remedied. If the division of epistemic labour is organised in such a way that there is no reciprocity between the authority and the object or seeker of knowledge, then the second person epistemic virtues are absent. As Code argues with

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[3] Linda Tuhiwai Smith provides a powerful analysis of literally imperialist knowledge, see Smith, L. T. (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* London: Zed Books, especially Chapter Three "Colonizing Knowledges."

respect to empathic knowledge, certain expert practices can be imperialist.[3] By this, Code means that the space of another's feeling is taken to be available for the expert's description, understanding and knowledge, so the expert becomes the authority on what is felt. "Indeed, one of the indicators of privilege in a hierarchically structured society is the capacity to act as a 'surrogate knower': one who can put himself in the place of anyone else and know *for* them what their best interests are."[4] But I will argue that such tendencies can be resisted by admitting the value of ignorance. If the expert sees her own knowledge, as well as that of the non-expert, as partial, perspectival and revisable, then instead of the expert claiming to have superior knowledge and thus the right to inform others, she has responsibilities to acknowledge and respond to the other knower. Admitting one's own ignorance, not just crediting one's expert knowledge, is a crucial element in such responsibility. The way that experts engage with other community members is a neglected dimension of their epistemic virtue.

In the last two chapters, I have argued that a revised conception of knowledge, specifically the second person account, has the resources to explain epistemic trust. In this chapter I will draw out the implications of this conception of knowledge for the responsibility of expert knowers. I will argue that there is a challenge to avoid a pernicious kind of "epistemic blindness" to which experts may be tempted. This is not the overlooking of evidence, but a blindness to the knowledge of the (non-expert) people with whom the professional is engaged, which in the most extreme form becomes treating them as objects, not subjects, of knowledge. A distorted epistemological perspective may also generate a kind of blindness to the actual practices in which the expert is engaged and to her associated responsibilities. I will argue that the best response to the recognition of such blindness is not to patch it up with knowledge, to make oneself more informed, but to maintain a responsibility that incorporates epistemic humility, an understanding of ignorance and an avoidance of epistemic vices such as discredit.

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[4]  Code, L. (1995). *Rhetorical Spaces*. New York: Routledge.

## Division of Epistemic Labour

The division of epistemic labour is central to issues of professionalism and expertise. The epistemic hierarchy arising from the division of epistemic labour frames Code's and Addelson's concerns with empathy and cognitive or epistemic authority. Under traditional conceptions of epistemic value, epistemic dependence on others tends to be problematic, but I have shown that both trust and reliance are legitimate ways of acquiring knowledge from others. In this chapter, I develop an account of what it means to be a member of a community in which epistemic labour is shared, and of what is involved in being an expert on whom others depend. As will be shown with respect to empathic knowledge, not all knowledge is such that any person can acquire it from any other.

Knowledge and power intersect in professional contexts. Power can be exercised through knowledge; it is a way of controlling and manipulating others through labelling them, or through holding information about them.[5] Power is also exercised over knowledge, by revealing information to some and withholding it from others. Certain kinds of knowledge are associated with status and social power, and some professionals have the power to make knowledge (through research, discovery, and determination) on behalf of the rest of the community, for purposes of regulation as well as information. Knowledge is intimately connected to power because, as Foucault has argued, it generally is the mechanism and motivation of these practices of indirect control. Therefore, when undertaking an analysis of responsible expertise, it will be important to consider how power and authority may be involved in the practices of experts. Knowledge, power and disempowerment are connected to ignorance in several ways. Often power is exercised through the denial of knowledge to certain groups, either by excluding them from participation and access to knowledge, or by denying that they have

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[5]   Michel Foucault is the philosopher generally credited with making relationships between power and knowledge explicit. Power, he points out, is not only force or direct domination, but is exercised throughout the understandings, discourses and sciences that frame social interactions. See, for example, Foucault, M. (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Sheridan Smith, A.M., Trans.). New

knowledge or the capacity to know (ie denying any capacity to reason). The devaluation of empathy as a feminine way of knowing and the way that empathic knowing can be used as part of an exercise of expert authority are both examples of disempowerment.

A simple conception of the value of knowledge combined with a certain view of objectivity yields a misleadingly simple justification of epistemic authority. If knowledge were always objective, those who are experts would be closer to, or would have a more extended view of, an information domain that would look the same to anyone with the opportunity to make the same observations.[6] On such a view, epistemic authority is unproblematic, because anyone, in principle, could have it. Those who are experts happen to know more than others do, and the knowledge that counts is that which is authorised by the proper institutions. Institutions and practices that successfully produce knowledge are thereby justified; firstly, because knowledge is considered to be a good thing in its own right, so producing it is good, and secondly, because since knowledge is actually produced, it seems that there cannot be too much wrong with the practices that generate it. These practices must be sufficiently neutral and nondistortive to produce objective knowledge. Additionally, knowledge is thought to be a good for everyone, but in practice, its benefits are far from universal. For example, medical research is said to be for the good of humanity. But in fact the benefits tend to go to research corporations, and to patients from the wealthier sections of wealthier communities, whereas participants in medical trials often come from vastly different communities and social groups, generally those who are much less advantaged.

The distribution of epistemic authority itself is not uniform between social groups. There are explicit or tacit acknowledgement structures that serve pernicious stereotypes, for example, when labels such as 'unreliable' or 'sneaky' are attached to members of certain racial groups. Thus, 'acknowledgement' labels a multiplicity of aspects of epistemic dependence, and to ignore these is to neglect a set of epistemically salient features. In order to properly account for epistemic authority, the notion of authority, that

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York: Pantheon Books, and for useful commentary, see May, T. (1993). *Between Genealogy and Epistemology*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

of epistemic value and the issue of who benefits from knowledge need to be reviewed, and this can be done through attention to second person epistemic virtues.

It is an error to approach the question of the epistemic division of labour with an assumption that the best arrangement will be the one that produces the maximum amount of knowledge for the community. This is problematic because the very notion of "maximum amount of knowledge" is unclear,[7] and because plausible ways of explicating it each face difficulties. Should we count as a community's knowledge that which is held in common, such as everything that is on the public record, or all that is common knowledge?[8] Specific problems arise in the context of the division of labour. Firstly, it is not useful to analyse a community's knowledge in such a way that differences between knowers are rendered invisible. Selecting common knowledge would seem to leave out the specialised knowledge which is precisely what is at stake when considering the epistemic division of labour. Secondly, it may be problematic to assume that all community members share, or have equivalent access to, a wide range of information. Problems of physical access such as geographic isolation, or disability, and literacy and language competences are relevant considerations, and just as epistemic labour arrangements need examination, so these access issues require explication.

Perhaps then, the community's knowledge comprises everything anyone knows. This makes sense, although, of course, not everyone knows everything. My most closely held secrets would constitute part of the "community's knowledge," even though they are unknown to any other member of the community. Restricted knowledge of specialised or secret information is compatible with this view of "community's knowledge." But shared information is a little more problematic. Do I increase the community's knowledge when I communicate, or does unshared knowledge count just as much? A great deal of work would need to be done on the idea of what counts as the community's knowledge in order for its maximisation to serve as a justification for some arrangement of epistemic

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6  See Nagel, T. (1986). *A View From Nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
7  The problems with this misconception were introduced in Chapter One.
8  These are not necessarily the same. For example, there may be an official story on the public record, while a different account is common knowledge.

labour. But more importantly, it is not obvious that maximising knowledge for a community, even if it can be given a coherent interpretation, should be the primary epistemic goal. As I argued in Chapter Two, cooperation between members of an epistemic community is not always served by sharing all knowledge, but is often maintained by selectivity and discretion. Furthermore, because knowledge is so closely linked to power, there are reasons to be cautious about how the social structures surrounding knowledge are arranged, so too hasty a justification for any epistemic arrangement should be avoided.

Even in cooperative projects, it is seldom the case that I ought to share everything that I know. For many projects I need to rely on others for cooperation and collaboration. But this does not mean that I share *all* knowledge with *all* those with whom I am engaged in joint projects. For example, in medical research projects whose very aim is to increase knowledge, ignorance may be crucial. The subjects must not know whether they are taking the active drug or a placebo, and those running the experiment must not know either. The division of epistemic labour shows that if some are to know on behalf of others, then it is important that there is a sense in which the latter can access the former's knowledge. This does not require that I can come to know exactly what an astrophysicist knows, as this would seem to defeat the purpose of the division of labour. I need to be able to borrow that knowledge without going through the arduous process of coming to acquire it myself, and without necessarily sharing the expert's reasons and evidence for the knowledge.[9] In fact, I will most likely acquire only a tiny amount of the expert's knowledge, and what I learn may well be simplified, generalised or out of context.[10]

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[9] As discussed in the previous chapter, an explanation of how this can work is given by Audi, R. (1997). "The Place of Testimony in the Fabric of Knowledge and Justification." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *34*(4), pp. 404-422.

[10] This could be problematic if the transferred knowledge is supposed to be identical for the speaker and hearer, but their contexts and relative levels of expertise are very different. Graham, P. J. (2000). "Transferring Knowledge." *NOUS*, 34 (1), pp. 131-152 presents an "information-theoretic" account of this type of transfer, which would avoid such a problem: as long as the new knower has access to information, then they can be said to come to know. On Graham's analysis, the new knower need not acquire knowledge that is identical to that of the expert.

The epistemic implications of the division of epistemic labour are distinct from the ethical considerations. To understand her own activities, the knower must see herself as engaged within the community and have some sense of what it is to be a knower on whom others depend. Treating the knowledge of experts as neutral, impartial and constrained only by factual accuracy leaves important epistemic considerations out of the analysis. A further reason to articulate the relationship between authority and responsibility is that development of theoretical frameworks by experts have practical implications, as the experts' view may become the one used for social governance and ordering. Philosophers can also be knowledge-makers in this sense. In the following chapter, I will show how intellectual property regulation is underpinned by understandings of knowledge. Drug use, for example, can be understood under a treatment model as it is by health professionals, or as a law and order issue under a criminal model. Although not all professionals within a given discipline will agree on everything, even to qualify as an expert or professional requires training in the application of a certain range of concepts and systems of analysis. A Freudian and a Jungian psychologist will offer very different explanations of an individual's behaviour, but their accounts may have more in common with each other than with an astrologer's explanation. An account of the epistemic responsibility of professionals cannot focus exclusively on information.

## Objectivity and the Epistemic Community

Objectivity is important both with respect to the division of epistemic labour, and the kinds of knowledge that count as legitimate. It is worth reviewing the concept of objectivity in order to show precisely why it cannot provide an adequate account of expertise. I will argue that taking objectivity to be an essential characteristic of knowledge generates too restrictive an account of what knowers do. I will examine Sandra Harding's attempt to "strengthen" objectivity which brings into focus the question of who plays which roles within a community where epistemic labour is divided and some knowledge-makers are privileged, and Lorraine Code's analysis of empathy that challenges the claimed necessity for knowledge to be objective. To be objective with respect to facts or

to a situation means to be dispassionate and impartial. This objectivity is understood in contrast to holding a subjective view that is engaged and particular and which is more like opinion than genuine knowledge.

Code's claim that empathy is a genuine and legitimate way of knowing runs counter to the standard characterisation of knowledge as objective and impartial. Clarifying the problems of an objectivity that rules out empathic knowing will support the development of an account of epistemic responsibility with room for ignorance. In Lorraine Code's words, the standard view of the objectivity of knowers means that "[k]nowers are detached, neutral spectators and the objects of knowledge are separate from them; they are inert items in the observational knowledge-gathering process."[11] Code challenges the claim that "proper" epistemology ought to deal with this kind of knowledge and knowers, and insists that instead epistemologists should "take subjective factors - factors that pertain to the circumstances of the subject, $S$ - centrally into account in evaluative and justificatory procedures."[12]

An apparent benefit of objectivity is that it seems necessary for consensus. If I am objectively right, then others should be able to recognise this, and if others disagree, then it is not I, but they who have the distorted view. So being objective is being neutral and dispassionate, not being limited by my own particular point of view, in other words, impartial. In science my observations and experiments ought to be replicable. It shouldn't matter that it was I, not someone else, who performed the experiment.

The motivation to endorse objectivity is complex, but much stems from the desire to avoid the perils of partiality, parochialism and bias. The presumption seems to be that particular perspectives are best abandoned or transcended, in favour of a universal view. However, objectivity itself is a particular way to look at a situation, if it is not an incoherent ideal. Any position occupied by a knower involves a perspective, and from any perspective some things are clear, some are obscured, some are foregrounded, some

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[11] Code, L. "Taking Subjectivity Into Account" in Alcoff, L., & Potter, E. (Ed.). (1993). *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York and London: Routledge. p. 17.

[12] Ibid., p. 20.

backgrounded. Questions can still be raised about perspectives: is the view too narrow, does it exclude some considerations it ought to include? The recognition of the ineliminability of perspectives does not, however, imply that no evaluation is necessary, but that it is contextual, and not based on the single goal of objectivity or neutrality.

Objectivity seems also to coincide with the devaluation of emotions. It is undeniable that emotions can at times prejudice our understanding of the world. Love is often blind. But emotions can also contribute to accurate understandings of the world. Fear keeps me alert to potential dangers. Thus the need to be cautious with respect to some emotions some of the time does not warrant the conclusion that emotion and subjective factors, such as empathy and attachment, are always antithetical to knowledge. Empathy, in any case, is not merely an emotional response, but successful knowing through empathy does not imply the elimination or minimisation of emotional subjectivity.

The concept of objectivity therefore carries two presumptions about the nature of knowers, and about the nature of the objects known. Firstly, objectivity seems to imply that knowers should be interchangeable. Knowers as such could be anyone, because qualities that are unique to each person as an individual are not part of objective knowing. Only factors that could in principle belong to anyone, such as time spent pursuing information in this area, or access to certain evidence, might differentiate knowers. If knowledge is properly achieved, then knowers must have transcended their particularity. Secondly, the ideal of objective knowing implies that the objects known are independent of knowers, and are the right kinds of thing to be known in this way, perhaps to be observed scientifically. To be objective is to eliminate the bias that comes from one's particular situation, perhaps to adopt a "view from nowhere,"[13] or to deal with material that seems immune to any distortions generated by personal attitudes: objects such as bricks, atomic particles, genes, or microbes. Physics is more objective, and has a higher

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[13] This phrase is from Nagel, op. cit.

status than biology, and biology than sociology, perhaps because it seems to deal with a purer subject matter.

Objectivity can become a way of dismissing other kinds of concerns. Science purports to be the most objective kind of knowledge, so nonscientific concerns can be dismissed as unreasonable, or unworthy of consideration because they are not objective. My personal interests, or my emotional connections, or certain kinds of practical knowledge and skills, such as those of midwives in comparison to obstetricians, are irrelevant to the ideals of objectivity. The history of midwives is discussed by Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff, who record that the responsibility for assisting women in childbirth was taken over by trained physicians while at the same time "women were systematically excluded from entering universities, medical schools, and training clinics as these began to arise."[14] The authors argue that this is a case of privileging officially sanctioned knowledge over knowledge based in experience, empathy and knowledge gained through practical skills and competences.[15] Here, there is a difference between knowledge claimed to be objective and personal experience, and only the former model of knowledge is recognised as authoritative. The high valuation of 'objective' knowledge supports and maintains the status and privilege of those who possess it. Persons with this kind of knowledge are 'better' knowers, and thus their views on all matters attract more respect. The presumption that better knowers are those who are more objective maintains the fiction that this arrangement of epistemic privilege is neutral and inevitable.

Appeals to objectivity can mask systems of dominance, and can serve to exclude aspects of experience that are associated with femininity or qualities of other marginalised groups. As the following discussion of empathy shows, it is simply not the case that all good knowledge is characterised by objectivity. Objective knowledge can miss the point, leave out precisely what is most salient. I might know all the facts about a disease such as diabetes, but might fail to relate to the person and her context. I might be a dietary expert,

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[14] Dalmiya, V and Alcoff, L., "Are "Old Wives' Tales" Justified?" in Alcoff, L., & Potter, E. (Eds.). (1993). *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York and London: Routledge, p. 223.
[15] Ibid., p. 226.

and know all the facts about nutrition, and about the situation and cultural context my client is in. But if I don't engage effectively with the person, and if I am not trusted and respected by her, my telling her what I know could be to no avail. (This is an epistemic failure because on a second person account, epistemic success is not simply a matter of my individual knowledge, but of engaging properly with the knowers around me.) Such an epistemic failure is not resolved by my becoming better informed by knowing new facts. An objective description and a detached approach may not capture the heart of the matter, so to speak.[16]

Sandra Harding argues that in order to achieve objectivity, rather than abstracting from personal, political and particular contexts, we ought to be more inclusive. She accepts that knowledge ought not to be distorted by particular interests, but proposes a radical approach to eliminating such distortions.[17] Harding claims, for example, that including representatives from a greater range of social locations in research projects will produce more critical questioning and thus maximise or strengthen objectivity. We become more objective by paying more, not less, attention to political issues and social concerns.[18] Harding, like Habermas, advocates an inclusive approach because, like him, she recognises that different knowers bring different understandings and perspectives to knowledge enterprises.

Harding comes to this conclusion by examining the claims of objectivity and contrasting these with "the surprising fact that politically guided research projects have been able to produce less partial and distorted results of research than those supposedly guided by the goal of value-neutrality."[19] Here, she is referring mainly to the identification of sexist bias in scientific descriptions. Harding argues that all knowers and knowledge are socially situated, but proper attention to this makes what she calls "strong

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[16] The point is a little different from a related claim, that art, especially fiction perhaps, can tell us deep things. I am suggesting that as *knowers* we do much more than deal with information that can be treated objectively.

[17] Harding, S. "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: 'What is Strong Objectivity?'" in Alcoff, L., & Potter, E. (Ed.). (1993). *Feminist Epistemologies.* New York and London: Routledge.

[18] This is similar to the Habermasian approach discussed in Chapter Two.

[19] Op. cit., p. 49.

objectivity" possible. The traditional conception of objectivity is too weak to serve even its own goals of neutrality and impartiality. The strategy of treating all social interests as irrelevant to purely scientific or objective concerns does not produce value-free research.[20] Strong objectivity allows for a thorough critique of the various stages of scientific inquiry, including the selection of problems and the interpretation of data. Starting knowledge projects from non-privileged social situations means that there will be broader critiques of presumptions embedded in conceptual frameworks, and thus a greater chance of identifying distortions. Strong objectivity requires the inclusion of a wider range of persons than currently participate in research ordinarily thought to be objective, and an openness to questioning from all kinds of directions. Strong objectivity demands not just a presumed or intended impartiality, but careful and structural effort to identify and remedy the potential for bias. Some of the bias involved is by its nature invisible to those who hold it - it is just what is taken for granted. If I share the perspective or bias of my social group, then those around me may not notice it although they may identify individual or idiosyncratic bias. However, according to Harding, the social situatedness of epistemic subjects is not an impediment to objectivity that must be transcended by abstracting from particular characteristics. Rather it can be used to maximise objectivity by maximising opportunities to identify bias by including diverse social perspectives.

For Harding, the situatedness of epistemic subjects generates the realisation that no-one can be totally objective alone.[21] Furthermore, it is not in aiming for consensus that we are most objective, but in attending to differences. Harding also recognises that both the subjects and objects of knowledge are socially conditioned.[22] This is true of the objects studied by natural scientists as well as social scientists: "... to treat a piece of nature with respect, violence, degradation, curiosity, or indifference is to participate in

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[20] Ibid., p. 70.
[21] This is very much like the Habermasian claim that no-one can be fully rational alone.
[22] Op. cit., p. 64.

culturally constituting such an object of knowledge."[23] A scientist encounters an object that already has been understood in certain ways in past scientific discussions, and in the general culture. So a scientist both inherits and can contribute to a cultural way of understanding an object: it is simply not the case that any object of study, natural or social, is self presenting, neutral and uninterpreted. (Kathryn Addelson, discussed below, takes up a similar point.) But this problematises the notion of consensus, or of unifying diverse perspectives into one objective view.

Harding shows that social factors are epistemically relevant. She is right about the problems of confusing objectivity with abstraction from any particular characteristics of knowers. Rather than finding neutrality, we tend to find a bias toward protecting the dominant view in mainstream science and social science. This bias may be best corrected by strategically increasing the perspectives involved in research and discovery, and by "starting from marginalized lives."[24] Those whose experience does not match that of the mainstream or dominant groups are more likely to present diverse perspectives which can generate challenging and critical questions. When trying to avoid bias, it can be invaluable to try and think from other perspectives. Thus, "starting from marginalized lives" means both including representatives from marginalised groups at all levels of knowledge-making, and recognising the value of starting thought from lives other than one's own.

Although she concedes that there are multiple points of view, Harding rejects the label of relativism. She points out that a theory that acknowledges a multiplicity of standpoints from which the world is understood is not committed to the claim that all are equivalent in utility or accuracy.[25] In fact, her motivation to rethink objectivity is precisely the opposite, because she is arguing that all claims are not alike. Harding rejects this kind of universalism and the associated blindness to historical position and cultural and social locatedness. In Harding's view, strong objectivity does not imply

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[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., p. 73.
[25] Ibid., p. 61.

obliviousness to these social and historical features, but enables a careful and critical response to them, in order to combat the distorting effects of mistakenly assuming their irrelevance.

The lesson to be drawn from Harding's analysis is that political considerations, and even political commitments, ought not be treated as irrelevant to the (scientific) pursuit of knowledge. Yet objectivity understood as nondistortedness remains problematic. Harding's "strong objectivity" retains the ideal of completeness, and strong objectivity is not achieved through eliminating particularity and including only what is universal, but by being maximally inclusive of different perspectives. This aim for completeness, and an absence of distortion and partiality, is equivalent to the elimination of ignorance. However, as argued earlier, this is not a necessary nor a sufficient requirement for knowledge. Harding's strategy for strengthening objectivity is not useful in contexts where particular engagements between knowers are important, for example, where empathy is concerned.

The insistence that the best knowledge must be objective leaves out any kind of knowledge that is specific to particular knowers or contexts. Knowledge that depends on trusting engagements with particular other knowers, rather than on evidence that anyone could see in the same way, is very different from objective knowledge. While Harding's modified objectivity is an advance on an objectivity that is oblivious to its own distortions, empathic knowledge cannot fit with Harding's strong objectivity any more than it can be accommodated within a traditional conception of objectivity. An analysis of empathy, like the analysis of trust in the last chapter, requires attention to particular engagements between knowers. In fact, processes that would encourage strong objectivity are likely to obstruct empathic knowledge. The inclusion of many different perspectives will not enhance the quality of empathic knowledge.

Even if we take objectivity to be minimal distortion, it does not seem to be the right way to characterise empathy. Empathy cannot be neutral because it cannot be indifferent. Nor is empathy enhanced simply by taking other perspectives into account - what matters is that I am sensitive to this person (or group) not that I am listening to what (many and

diverse) others say about her (or them). It is not just inclusion that is important, although this does not mean that attention to systematic exclusions should be abandoned. As the discussion of Habermas in Chapter Two has shown, the ideals of consensus and uniformity conflict with the particularity necessary for virtuous epistemic engagements. Any perspective, or group of perspectives, will leave out others, and it is the virtues of respect and acknowledgement that permit this diversity to be approached responsibly.

But if expert knowledge is not defined by objectivity (or proximity to objectivity, or strong objectivity in Harding's sense discussed below), and if the knowledge of experts is not universal and therefore simply interchangeable between knowers, then how do we think about knowledge? What makes the authority of experts legitimate if it is not objectivity, (maximum neutrality) nor maximum knowledge for all the community? If knowledge, even the knowledge of experts, is particular, not interchangeable, then how can epistemic dependence be justified?

Answering these questions is not a matter of discerning some prior reasons that legitimate expert authority. Instead the question can best be approached by considering responsibility. Kathryn Addelson describes a move to thinking of knowledge as collective action, rather than the impartial discovery of truths that could be universally endorsed. Knowledge is generated by members of the epistemic community interacting in various ways (collaboration, argument, persuasion, and dissent) that produce discourses such as psychology, medicine, and criminology. Addelson focuses on the activities and responsibilities of experts and professional knowers. However, as argued in Chapter One, this is not a shift from epistemological to ethical considerations. Rather, it is an extension of the domain of epistemology that is required by a communitarian focus. Empathy is a virtue of engagement between knowers. It is a way of interacting and recognising the other as a knower and acknowledging their authority over what is communicated. Although this epistemic virtue may be used for malign moral purposes, this is not problematic because the domains of ethics and epistemology are independent. As I will show below, empathy practiced by experts can go wrong in both moral and epistemic ways. I'll first explain why empathy must be counted as a legitimate way of

knowing, and go on to describe its important role in the analysis of epistemic virtue and expert responsibility.

## Code's Account of Empathy

In Lorraine Code's discussion of empathy, she criticises an account of rationality that banishes and obscures empathy as a potentially legitimate means of knowledge. In other words, Code provides a defense of empathy as a mode of knowing. Through foregrounding the question "whose knowledge?" Code also identifies problems with a use of professional empathy that serves to reinscribe cognitive authority. I extend and deepen her view of empathy by suggesting a way of looking at empathy with ignorance in mind. A thorough understanding of empathy requires attention to both power and ignorance.

Empathy is standardly defined as understanding another person by identifying with their feelings. Empathy is characterised by the claim that "I know just how you feel," which expresses a sense of mutuality and understanding.[26] It is a qualitative type of knowledge, which is responsible and responsive to the other's particularity, and which requires sensitivity, and a creative capacity. It is not just a matter of guessing, imagining or inferring how another feels, nor is it just a matter of taking another's point of view or interests into account. It is a way of engaging with the person that differs from other kinds of interpretation or imaginative identification because the person needs to be present in some way, usually but not necessarily face to face.[27] Thus, my empathic understanding of a friend is different from my sympathy with or understanding of a movie character. Knowledge through empathy remains dependent on the other person, but not in the sense of information being transferred from her to me. Empathy is a skill of delicacy and subtlety that can be a source of genuine knowledge.

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[26] Code, L. (1995). *Rhetorical Spaces* op. cit., p. 123.
[27] I may empathise via telephone, letters or email, although I think for many people, the instant response of conversation or email means that letters are less used as a resource for empathic connection than may have been the case in the past.

The presence of the other person is not sufficient for empathy: what is important is the type of interaction between the knower and the known. Empathy differs from sympathy because the latter involves a systematic gap between the feelings of the sympathiser and the one sympathised with. You feel sad or hurt, I sympathetically feel pity or compassion. Strictly speaking, I don't share your sadness, although I might be reminded of my own sadness. I may feel sympathy with my friend as well as empathising with her and I think often the feelings are mixed. But in order to understand empathy as a mode of knowing, it is necessary to understand it as more than just a feeling. With empathy, the gap between my feeling and that of the other is minimised. I want to fully understand how she feels, and not just be moved by it. This involves epistemic work and conscientious effort; it is not just a natural or intuitive emotional response. As I see it, empathy is reflexive in a way that sympathy is not. It is possible for me to be sympathetic to someone, even if she does not think I am. But when another rejects my claim to empathise, that claim is undermined much more seriously. It is part of empathy that I am guided by the other's statement of how she feels, because I know how she feels through her, not in spite of her. If she says "You don't understand, you don't know how I feel," then I must listen to that, and adjust my understanding accordingly.

What is most important, as I show below, is that the empathiser as knower is responsive and open to being affected by the one known through empathy. This is not to say that one who uses empathy for negative purposes, such as cruelty or manipulation, is not truly empathic. Empathy is a process by which knowledge can be gained, and the knowledge may be used to satisfy any end, whether benign as in therapy, or vindictive, as in revenge.[28] In some cases, my empathic understanding can affect the one understood. For example, in grief counselling, I might speak of my own experiences of grieving and in doing so might alter the perspective of the one with whom I empathise. Thus, empathy is a process in which both participants might come to know differently,

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[28] If a person is using empathic knowledge for malicious purposes, at some point the relation between those involved will break down and that will, I think, rule out any further development of empathic

but this is a potential aspect of empathy, not a necessary condition of it. It is also an important way that empathy can be an abuse of power, and these potentially negative aspects of empathy are discussed below. But empathy is an important way of knowing, crucial for understanding other people, and relating to them as one knower relates to another. As an epistemic virtue, empathy involves epistemic respect, not moral responsibility. Code explains that: "'[k]nowing just how you feel' is the antithesis of the observational knowledge that makes individuals into objects of study and seeks to achieve interpersonal control."[29] This comment illuminates one connection between the scientific view of knowledge and bureaucratic control - both demand that persons are understood as a mere objects or cases. The person is fitted into a framework of understanding, or a bureaucratic practice, regardless of her particularities, uniqueness or any way she might experience or express these. These scientific and bureaucratic ways rule out empathic knowing. In such contexts, questions about power focus on the ways that a person's concrete and particular experience is fitted into a framework of knowledge and regulation. Scientific knowledge tends to make its objects just that - mere objects - not persons as such, and, importantly, not knowers as such. Similarly with bureaucratic knowledge, power is exercised by treating a person as a "case," and applying rules and categories impartially.[30] Code sees that, as in Foucault's analysis,[31] the use of bureaucratic and expert powers can involve the imposition of practices and procedures on an individual who becomes a "case" or an object for others' knowledge, assessment and even manipulation. Knowing through empathy, however, requires being a participant as

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knowledge. But although empathic knowledge may, to some extent, depend on there being a nonhostile relationship between the parties, I do not think it reduces to being innately ethically good.

[29] Op cit., p. 124.

[30] The current debate taking place in Australia over mandatory sentencing laws involves the question of whether justice is served by the application of inflexible and objective rules or whether empathy and judicial discretion might produce a better understanding of situations and better justice outcomes.

[31] As members of a community, we are subjected not only to the power of the state, backed by police and armed forces, but the implicit control of bureaucrats, economists and financiers and the indirect governance of scientific and medical experts. The power of these latter is maintained by a view of knowledge which presents the authority of experts as straightforwardly automatic or natural, and therefore in need of no further justification. Foucault's interest is not in power as domination, but as indirect systematised practices that control, constrain and direct many (or most) aspects of people's lives.

well as an observer, interacting with the other person, responding to her and developing understanding with her, not just observing and drawing conclusions about her.

Many things could motivate my desire to develop an empathic understanding of another person. I may feel morally obliged to do so, because this person is part of my family, or perhaps I identify a moral failure in my previous attitude of hasty condemnation, stereotyping or unfairness. I may have a pragmatic motive to cultivate empathy: with either a benign or an immoral agenda in the background, I may need some understanding in order to pursue my purpose. I may have an intellectual interest, and seek to satisfy a thirst for knowledge. The skill of empathy, however, is a skill of knowledge that a virtuous epistemic agent would do well to possess.

If we insist that knowing must be objective, then we must deny that we know persons except as observed items in the external environment. This seems incorrect.[32] If the claim that I know just how you feel can be true, then the knowledge in question is not a relation between a disinterested observer and a neutral object. My knowledge of how my friend feels may be fallible, but no more so than observational knowledge, where errors are fairly common. The difference is that with respect to empathic knowledge it is the direct and deliberate intervention of the known person as a knower in her own right that can refine and justify my knowledge claims.[33]

As Code has argued, an epistemology that concentrates on free floating information items believed by characterless and unconnected individuals does not illuminate the concerns of persons who seek to know, learn and inform within a community. A philosophy of knowledge should attend to these concerns, not merely to the analysis of

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[32] A similar point is made in Olafson, F. A. (1998). *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-7. Olafson suggests that the positing of the "other minds" problem derives from a misconception of persons as external objects that can be avoided by taking a relational view of persons, which he derives from the Heideggerian concept of *Mitsein.*

[33] This discussion touches on the enormous topic of introspective knowledge, and first person authority, but I am leaving those issues aside, as it is second person knowledge that is my concern here. But see Donald Davidson's account of first person authority and its relationship with language and interpretation Davidson, D. (1984) "First Person Authority" *Dialectica.* 38, pp. 101-112, and the extensive discussion it has generated, some of which can be found in Preyer, G., Siebelt, F. & Ulfig., A. (1994) (eds.)*Language, Mind, and Epistemology: On Donald Davidson's Philosophy.* Dordrecht: Kluwer.

abstract concepts. Code shows that empathy is a genuine, though often devalued, way of knowing. It is a way of knowing that allows us to know persons as such. It is different from the classic categories of knowledge - knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance.[34] Knowledge by description is like propositional knowledge, knowledge about objects and their properties. Knowledge by acquaintance is what we acquire by noticing or observing things, and it does not need to have propositional content. Empathic knowledge is not simply descriptive knowledge about another person, nor is it obtained just by being familiar with that person. It is knowing by being engaged with the person, listening to her express how she feels, reflecting on this, and on my own relevant experiences. Including the concept of empathy in the scope of epistemology allows it to explain how we know some important human truths. In addition, understanding empathy clarifies some important epistemic virtues. Empathy requires a high level of sensitivity to others' experience and expression and to our own experience. Moreover, empathic knowing demands recognition of other persons as second persons. Code claims that "empathy at its best resists closure, invites conversation, fosters and requires second-person relations."[35] However, as Code points out, empathy is not always viewed positively. When seen as a feminine trait, it is one that does not count as knowledge. It is regarded as a natural, maternal, caregiving capacity, rather than a practiced skill, and it is taken to be based in emotion rather than thinking. Empathy is devalued by taking it to be " ... located in an untheorized female nature, 'naturally' confined to the caring nurturing activities of a 'private' domain."[36]

But empathy is not only recognised as a "natural" characteristic of women, it also features as a significant aspect of certain professions. Therapists, psychologists and psychoanalysts all require this skill, and it has become part of professional competence to develop it. The denial that empathy is a mode of knowing can operate to characterise women as ignorant. It is part of the devaluation of women's knowledge, and coincides

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[34] Russell, B. (1912). *The Problems of Philosophy*. London: Oxford University Press.
[35] Op. cit. p. 126.
[36] Ibid., p. 137.

with the exclusion of women from reason. But empathy is also a recognised way of knowing, in some circumstances at least. Code explains these two sides of empathy in this way: "[a]s a female practice its knowledgeable, rational dimension disappears into the chaos of inchoate affectivity; as a male-defined professional accomplishment it is a peculiarly effective, nuanced mode of knowing."[37] So arguments against empathy as a way of knowing are not merely about empathy as such, but about women. It might seem that reversing the disvalue of empathy is an empowering move, as it can involve the revaluation of a presumed feminine characteristic, and give credence to women's knowledge. But it is not so simple.

Code makes the point that empathy is a legitimate way of knowing, but empathic claims can also have a negative imperialist potential.[38] When there is a significant power differential between knowers, one person's claim to know how the other feels can be treated as superior, and can dominate both persons' understanding, in such a way that any reciprocity is lost. Empathy can be as problematic as scientific objectivity. Code offers as an example, interactions between expert professionals and their clients, where one party has the power to define, or even override another's experience. In a medical consultation, for example, the empathic claim " I know how you feel" can "expand into a claim that I will tell you how you feel and *I* will be right."[39] As with other kinds of knowledge, the skills of empathy can be used for negative purposes. If I understand you well, I can manipulate you better, or I can find more subtle ways of being cruel.

As well as being a professional and therapeutic skill which may be problematically used as a mechanism of power and authority, Code argues that empathy is a way of knowing persons that has the potential to avoid taking individuals as mere "*objects* of study"[40] Empathic knowing requires sensitivity and responsiveness to a concrete person, and it is very different from an impersonal assessment. In other words, empathy requires that I am seen as a second person; but even given this recognition there is room for a

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[37] Ibid., p. 130.
[38] Ibid., p. 130.
[39] Ibid., p. 131.

great deal of variation in the extent to which I am respected as a knower in my own right. The power to acknowledge or to refuse acknowledgement is very often part of professional practice, and a professional can treat her client either as someone credible and competent, or can treat her as a person lacking authority and needing direction and guidance. There is a need to exercise caution in this area so ignorance is not mis-ascribed. Within our culture, not everyone has the same credibility status. This varies according to factors such as age, gender, class, race, language, and disability. But there is a further role for ignorance because as I'll show, empathy, properly understood, is not only a mode of knowing, but is a way of knowing that centrally involves ignorance.

Empathy is a way of knowing that is essential for intimate relationships, but is also important in contexts of professional knowledge. Acknowledging the credibility of the person known is important, even when the knower is the expert. So the virtues of acknowledgement and humility are important qualities for an empathic knower. It is not that everything claimed by a person known through empathy must be taken as final, because empathy allows for reciprocity between the knower and the known person. But the person must always be seen as potentially credible with a presumption in favour of her capacity to say how it is, not in favour of the expert's ability to judge or determine how it is. Furthermore, when knowing through empathy, it is essential to consider the person known as one with her own perspective, not just different information, and not as a person who, if she had the expert's information, would think about it in the same way.[41] The idea of responsibility I develop below is a way of thinking about the practice of expertise, when the expert is understood as a knower among other knowers.

The empathic process is open-ended, and when I claim that "I know just how you feel" this is not true (like scientific discoveries are supposed to be) once and for all, with the facts of the matter completely settled. Engaging with others in a properly empathic

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[40] Ibid., p. 122.

[41] When relating professionally to persons with mental illness, these are vitally important concepts. The notion of a person's capacity (to give informed consent to treatment) and the question of insight (into the nature and state of illness) are treated very differently in contemporary legislation such as the Tasmanian *Mental Health Act (1996)* from how they were understood in the past. Previous approaches presumed both a lack of capacity and need for obtaining informed consent, and little or no priority was

way leaves them a space to contribute their knowledge, even to develop it. To an extent, my empathic knowledge must always be provisional, revisable and modifiable. That is to say, in empathy there is a space of ignorance - my empathic knowledge is always incomplete. In empathy, I have to see the other as a knower with her own perspective, one I have to strive (and might fail) to appreciate. Knowledge that is shared and acquired through empathy is not universal or neutral.

When knowledge is conceived as antithetical to ignorance, the goal seems to be a gapless knowledge - along the lines of completeness, total grasp of evidence, or a theory of everything. Such a model mandates that the ideal knower observes, classifies, and organises and collects information, becoming as certain as possible about as much as possible, and relying on others only to fill gaps that would otherwise remain. But this is not the way knowledge is understood on a second person conception, and it is a further strength of such a conception that empathic knowledge can be recognised as legitimate.

Empathy allows for a multi-layered kind of knowledge that is richer than flat data collection. It leaves room for more information, and for increasingly deep understanding. Empathic knowledge explains how in coming to know a friend's history, we may go over the same material, revisiting previous topics and conversations, which in another sense is developing new understandings. The second person communitarian approach characterises knowledge as multilayered, with new depths and nuances coming from interactions with other persons, instead of as just a collection of facts and data, which can be completed unilaterally and once and for all. Objectivity is therefore not a universal characteristic of knowledge, and in fact it is incompatible with empathic knowledge. There remains a role for objectivity in the sense that many distortions ought to be remedied, and I am not insisting that scientific objectivity is never valuable. But it ought not be seen as a necessary characteristic of knowledge, because this generates a distorted view of knowledge and would disallow one of the most important ways that we know other people.

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given to the provision of clear and understandable information about diagnosis and treatment options to those receiving treatment for mental illness.

## Failures of Empathy

A different epistemic failure than that of treating a person as the wrong kind of object[42] is possible in cases of empathic knowledge. This is the epistemic failure of non-acknowledgement, of failing to see another as a knower in her own right, and failing (or refusing) to allow her contributions to affect my own knowledge. This failure to acknowledge is a form of epistemic discredit, like distrust, as discussed in the previous chapter. The misuse of empathy in contexts of cognitive or professional authority (imperialist empathy)causes problems identified by Code which require not only an ethical response, but also a response based on epistemic considerations. As I show below, Addelson's analysis of the responsibility of professional knowledge-makers contains the resources for such a response.

In addition to the theoretical problems of overlooking empathy's importance to understanding knowledge, there are distinctly ethical *and* epistemic ways that I can go wrong with empathy in practice. I can misuse empathy (or knowledge gained through empathy) for harming or manipulating another person, or other morally questionable activities. Empathy, or claims to empathy, can also be part of an asymmetrical power structure, in which empathic claims can be used to reinforce a relationship of dominance. An example of such a claim is "I know what is good for you." Empathy can conceal the paternalistic overriding of another's feelings - "I know how you feel, but you must understand that.....", "when you are older you will understand..." In such cases the empathy may be practiced well, but used malignly and the fault is moral. In other cases, empathy is not practiced well and the fault is epistemic. I may try to understand you, but I may fail because my presumptions and preconceptions lead me to misinterpret what you say.

Epistemic failures can arise because there is a failure on the part of a paternalistic knower to recognise and respond adequately to the fact that it is another *knower* with whom she is dealing. That is, there is a misconception regarding the person who is

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[42] This kind of epistemic error is discussed in Chapter Three.

supposedly being known by another better than she knows herself. More importantly, there is a misunderstanding of the process of empathic knowing, and hence a failure to be epistemically responsible or virtuous. For example, I might not recognise the need to exercise empathy in a certain context (finding out what happened in a dispute perhaps), and try and know the person indirectly, abstractly, or in an objectifying way. Or in using empathy, I might fail to listen carefully enough, or be too quick to suppose my own story to be similar, or be insensitive to another person's style of presenting her story.

Like carelessness with evidence, these are potential epistemic failures, but they cannot be reduced to inappropriate attention to *evidence*. To treat a person as evidence guarantees failure at empathy. An epistemic vice of arrogance[43] corresponds to empathy - not just because I might arrogantly get it wrong, or because I might be morally arrogant, but because I can be epistemically arrogant. Even though I have true and justified beliefs, I may treat another person wrongly not (only) in an ethical sense, but epistemically, by not fully crediting her as a knower.[44] Epistemic humility shows the importance of attention to ignorance. This includes my realisation of the limits of what I know, the provisionality of my knowledge of another person and the importance of remembering that another may know more than I. This is important with respect to expertise since an expert, precisely because of her status, presumed objectivity, and power, may find the epistemic humility that is intrinsic to empathy in tension with that very expertise.

Code does not argue that there must be perfect symmetry of power and expertise in all situations, nor is she defending infallibility and inviolability of first person privilege, but she is concerned to acknowledge that empathy has various forms, and that not all are benign. Problems with empathy are not merely those of moral error, of treating another person unkindly, disrespectfully or instrumentally. Code's example above demonstrates

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[43] Julia Driver's account of the virtue of humility raises a similar issue, although she is concerned with ethical virtue and self-evaluation. Driver, J. (1989). "The Virtues of Ignorance" *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXXVI(7), pp. 373-384. The similarity lies in the fact that the virtuous empathiser must also avoid the vice of arrogance, and must not be too quick to presume that she knows.

[44] Such discredit may be a form of oppression when the dominant cultural attitude discredits an entire social group. This would fit into the form of oppression described by Iris Young as marginalisation

the epistemological problems of the professional who claims to know how another feels, but fails to keep her claim open to the confirmation, interpretation and contribution of the other person. When reciprocity fails, the expert is not *knowing* well through empathy at all. Empathic knowledge at its best is a knowledge that allows a space for this reciprocity and negotiation to take place. Here, as in Chapter One, differences between ethical and epistemic modes of evaluation can be identified. I can be morally benign, but inept in my epistemic practice as an empathic knower (I just don't get it), or I can be epistemically arrogant, and refuse to acknowledge what I need to do in order to practice empathy properly, even if my moral intentions are good. Epistemic deficiencies are independent of good or bad moral intentions. A researcher whose theoretical commitments prevent her from understanding another's story, or who is too hasty in coming to a conclusion may be well intentioned in a moral sense, but fail epistemically.

Like discussions of epistemic virtue, discussions of knowledge and power require the scope of epistemology to be carefully delineated. As well as requiring epistemology to take account of the social and political contexts in which knowledge practices take place, Code sees epistemological questions as part of understanding issues of social power.

> The issue seems not to be an epistemological one, but to have more to do with social interaction: with power and the distribution of cognitive authority. So mapping the rhetorical spaces that legitimate or discredit testimony - that foster or forestall incredulity - seems to rather be a way of mapping social-political power structures. Yet it is also is an issue about knowledge at the most basic level, where what is at stake is the nature and status of empirical evidence.[45]

There are two important points here. Firstly, the ways that institutionalised knowledge and individual knowledge are understood have a great deal of impact on how such interactions take place. It matters what view of knowledge is adopted for practical reasons as well as theoretical accuracy. This suggests a strong critique of epistemologies that rule out this kind of issue as antithetical or irrelevant to a proper theory of knowledge. Secondly, the abstraction of epistemology from concrete features of knowers is untenable. Harding rightly points out that race, class, history and gender can affect the

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in which "a whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life." Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 53.

[45] Code, *Rhetorical Spaces*, op. cit., p. 62.

way we see the world, and Code correctly insists that when political and social factors determine how and what we know, they must be acknowledged as epistemic concerns.

It is through recognising virtues associated with epistemic engagement that the role of ignorance was introduced in Chapter One. With respect to expertise, ignorance is important both in relation to the interaction between the expert and the nonexpert, and in relation to the expert's own understanding of her role. Code points out that an alternative account of knowledge is required both to analyse practices of institutionalised expertise, and to offer some positive suggestions as to how such interactions might be managed better. One important element of such a response is the acknowledgement of empathic knowledge. Revising the objectivity requirement of knowledge also allows for a stronger sense of epistemic responsibility, and ignorance is central to this theoretical project. When we revise the ideal of objectivity, we must also revise the model of knowledge being completable and ignorance completely eliminable. In the following section, I will suggest ways that an epistemology with a revised account of ignorance, incorporating responsibility, trust and empathy, can provide useful understandings of the power relations that operate in conjunction with expertise.

Several kinds of power as well as several kinds of knowledge are relevant to Code's analysis. Not only is power seen as that which is possessed by the dominant at the expense of the subordinated, (for example, when scientific proof is provided of women's natural unfitness for learned professions), but it is also the (almost) invisible social patterns of credibility and authority which remain even when formal barriers to the participation of some groups are removed. Such networks of power are often tacitly operating when the knowledge of some groups is ignored, or appropriated.[46] The knowledge in question can be objective, factual and positivistic, or empathic, subtle and sensitive. Power can be power to have one's own knowledge prevail, or power to determine what counts as knowledge, for example, by including only a narrow segment fitting a scientific paradigm, or by counting professional empathy, but discounting the

cognitive authority of women whose "natural" and "emotion-based" empathy is characterised as antithetical to knowledge.

When a communitarian epistemological account, such as the one Code offers, is accepted, there is a central role for ignorance. This is an ignorance that is not to be eliminated, but kept in mind because it is what allows the space for another's contribution. This is important both for the one obtaining information from an expert, and for the expert who deals with other knowers. Ignorance, or the recognition of ignorance, works against imperialist empathy. My analyses of trust and empathy show that epistemic responsibility and epistemic virtues entail the recognition of others' perspectives, not just the information they have collected. The standard focus on the epistemic virtues necessary for information gathering must be supplemented with the epistemic virtues required for engagement with other knowers. Thus, given that knowledge by empathy works by always being incomplete, there is an ineliminable role for ignorance in epistemic virtue.

## Epistemic Authority and Responsibility

In this section I will show that the type of epistemic respect necessary for empathy is also involved in responsible expertise and that it is important to include an account of ignorance in an analysis of epistemic responsibility. There are aspects of professional responsibility that cannot be reduced to providing information to others, nor to seeking it most effectively. Treating others with epistemic respect involves recognising that they can know what I do not, so even as an expert, I ought to be aware of my own ignorance. It is inadequate to define the expert as one who knows in opposition to those who are ignorant. Paradoxically, ignorance enables a more thorough understanding of expertise.

I have argued that knowledge must be understood by starting with an analysis of the characteristics of persons who know, and that these epistemic virtues cannot be properly explained with a focus on individual knowers whose aim is to maximise knowledge and evidence. The responsibilities of knowers who work to provide explicit

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[46] In Chapter Six I examine the epistemological underpinnings of the appropriation of indigenous

or background information for the community are particularly important. It matters too, how the makers of knowledge see their own position and associated responsibilities. When we talk about knowledge as a communal activity, and admit that knowledge is created jointly rather than individually, it is important also to consider who belongs to the collectives which are making knowledge. If knowers are not substitutable *qua* knower, and different persons have different kinds and amounts of knowledge and power, then it clearly matters who is situated where with respect to knowledge and knowledge making.

Frédérique Apffel-Marglin criticises the standard view of professional knowledge as follows:

> Knowledge is pursued for knowledge's sake so that regenerative (or procreative) concerns have no place. The non-human world is not an interlocutor, not a sentience with whom one converses, not a being (or beings) whose integrity must be respected, not a sentience to nurture and be nurtured by. Knowledge is not an activity, not a living, not a mutual interaction.[47]

This is knowledge and authority without responsibility. Just as ignorance is invisible, responsibility is rendered irrelevant. When knowledge is pursued for its own sake, relationships with others have no relevance. But to align knowledge and responsibility demands an engaged account of knowledge, and the proper analysis of this engagement cannot be based on a dismissive attitude to ignorance.

The power to determine what counts as knowledge is a classic instance of the intersection of knowledge and power. Knowledge is made legitimate by fitting it into a system or order and those who occupy positions at higher levels of the (professional or bureaucratic) structure exercise the power of legitimating knowledge. Those with high status in the knowledge hierarchy can know about and for others. Their practices can include the treatment of other persons as credible and authoritative knowers in their own right, or simply as objects of knowledge. Some problems of epistemic authority arise because supposedly objective and neutral knowledge seeking and producing enterprises (such as science) are pitted against cultural understandings and social orderings. Within

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knowledge through intellectual property rights.

[47] Apffel-Marglin, F., & Pratec (Ed.). (1998). *The Spirit of Regeneration: Andean culture confronting Western notions of development.* London and New York: Zed Books, p. 42. Apffel-Marglin is concerned with a wider sense of engagement than the engagement between human knowers, but she expresses an important insight about the limited view of knowledge that is the standard in epistemology.

science as elsewhere, certain social roles confer greater authority than others. It seems simple enough to say that scientists have the authority to produce knowledge for the wider community. But not all practitioners of a given specialisation play such an authoritative role. Within a field of specialisation, social arrangements surround the development of understandings, the building of knowledge and the exercise of cognitive authority. Many conditions affect who is judged to know best.

Kathryn Addelson's work is explicitly directed at the issue of responsible knowledge making. She is particularly concerned to explain the construction and creation of knowledge by authoritative professionals. Addelson examines epistemic authority,[48] and provides an analysis of knowledge in the following way. The knowledge produced by professionals is not a simple matter of experts setting out to undertake research and make discoveries through objective assessments of data. Most obviously, (but not only) in the social sciences, professionals both discover the content or data and develop the concepts and methods of the discipline. In Addelson's words: "[t]he professionals define the nature of the subjects and the activity, and they define what is to be included as environment and what is to be ignored and hidden."[49] In other words, researchers not only 'find' evidence, but also determine what counts as evidence, and how it is to be categorised. Furthermore, by deciding what to pursue and what to leave unexplored, researchers and other professionals decide the scope and boundaries of the discipline, either by maintaining conservative borders, or through radically renegotiating them. Researchers, and experts, thus have the authority to decide what becomes knowledge, and to define knowledge and ignorance.

Like Harding and Apffel-Marglin, Addelson questions claimed objectivity, and the simple assumption that some people (experts) can be knowledge-makers on behalf of everyone else. Harding notices the exclusion of marginalised groups, and advocates their inclusion in knowledge-making processes in order to generate less distorted and more

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[48] Kathryn Addelson uses the term "cognitive authority" for what I am terming "epistemic authority". Since her term is broader, this change should not distort her views.

[49] Addelson, K. P. (1994). *Moral Passages.* New York; London: Routledge, p. 161.

strongly objective research practices and outcomes. Addelson goes further, and draws out the processes of group formation and identification, recognising that the very structure of a group can make manifest outsiders and insiders, deviants and authorities. Addelson, unlike Harding, does not conclude that greater inclusiveness may produce more objectivity and unity: for Addelson, diversity is irreducible. As Christoph Cox describes the appropriate response: "[i]t is not a demand that the world be rendered 'the way it really is' but rather a demand for 'honesty' regarding the presuppositions, inclusions, exclusions, aims and goals that motivate any given perspective."[50] Addelson offers an analysis of epistemic authority which is intended to explain both how the production of knowledge is a collective project, and how professionals can think responsibly about their practice of such authority. She develops this analysis keeping in view an understanding that truth, knowledge and expertise are embedded in our social practices, within specialist disciplines and everyday activities. Ideas and frameworks of concepts are often developed in academia, but professionals are trained in these ideas and practice them in the wider world. It is not the case that professionals gain objective and neutral knowledge of an unchanging world, and that this same knowledge could in principle be discovered by anyone committed to that pursuit. Rather, what gets developed and presented as knowledge is what certain people and groups define and promote. This does not make it worthless, nor should the recognition of this process undermine the legitimate authority of experts in many contexts. The point is not that we ought never to consult a medical specialist, but that we ought to be cautious about regarding such an expert as representing a neutral and impartial discipline and its purely scientific body of knowledge. A philosophical theory of knowledge should not present such an uncritical view of expertise.

Addelson rejects the simple view that because their knowledge is objective there are no problems in the way professionals operate "as makers and transmitters of the knowledge used to benefit some groups of people and to label others" and as advisors to

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[50] Cox, C. (1999). *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.

policy makers.[51] First of all there are problems in supposing that the professionals'

knowledge is objective (undistorted and impartial), and then it is also problematic to

suppose that its generation and implementation in social projects is unrelated to systems

of professional status. But the hierarchy of knowledge possession by which standard

experts obviously know best is not the only consideration for epistemic responsibility.

Non-experts, who are comparatively ignorant can actually have an epistemic advantage,

because they are not blinkered by the training that is typical of the expert's discipline.

Training can make certain things natural and obvious which outsiders would not take for

granted. The importance of lay members on ethics committees and boards overseeing

professional groups such as nurses reflects the importance of diverse perspectives.

Diversity and creativity are linked in Addelson's analysis because when knowledge

is seen as creative, then the epistemic domain cannot be regarded as a uniform field, in

which knowers are differently positioned. This produces a new account of epistemic

authority and dependence on experts. According to Addelson, the cognitive authority of

professionals operates as a "folk concept." For Addelson, "folk concept" and "folk term"

refer to ways that people organise doing things together. This can be by pointing out the

activity, or by coordinating it. She explains that "Folk concepts pick out activities that

'the folk' take to be the same, in the sense that people interact together in making 'that

sort of thing happen.'"[52] So a folk concept can be anything that determines what people

do together, that requires a shared understanding of what is going on. As a folk concept,

epistemic authority is a cultural artifact. This means that we can think about our

participation in systems of epistemic authority and recognise it as part of the range of

collective possibilities of making knowledge and constructing our communities.

Addelson characterises the folk concept of epistemic authority as follows: "... we

scholars are supposed to be at once detached and engaged, at once observers and

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[51] Addelson, op. cit., p. 179.

[52] Ibid., p. 155. Addelson's use of "folk term" differs from the concept of "folk psychology" used in philosophy of mind to distinguish the commonsense view of consciousness from the view of experts (cognitive scientists, psychologists, neurophysicists or philosophers). According to Addelson, (following Howard Becker) folk terms and folk concepts are used by people to organise the ways that we act together, and to understand the (social) world in which we act.

activists, at once knowledge-makers and expert advisors."[53] This supposed objectivity is at odds with a social responsibility and, Addelson explains, with the demands of professional loyalty to disciplines, institutions and the political and economic frameworks that sustain them.[54] But she suggests revising this conception to acknowledge and incorporate the creative and collective aspects of knowledge making, in contrast to objectivity, that is, to develop a conception of epistemic responsibility supported by a communitarian account of knowledge. The activities of experts and intellectuals are creative whether new categories and understandings are generated, or existing ones are re-enacted. Addelson uses the example of Margaret Sanger's making birth control a public and political issue rather than simply a private moral issue.[55] She recounts the process whereby understandings of the social and health issues were developed, information was distributed, and laws prohibiting such information were challenged. In addition, reproductive expertise started to become a domain of knowledge, and now, in urban Australia at least, such experts are easy to find. In this case, the creative work of marking out a new territory of expertise is clear, but Addelson points out that the maintenance of a discipline or domain continues to be as creative as its construction.

The creativity of experts is clearest when there is a revisionary challenge to the mainstream perspective of a discipline, for example, when feminists contest dominant assumptions in philosophy or history. As I have argued throughout this thesis, it is not theoretically sufficient to incorporate epistemic interactions and ideas about the community of knowers without substantially re-defining both the territory and the approach to epistemology as a whole. It is a creative practice to re-define the parameters of the discipline, but it is equally, although less obviously, creative to maintain their standard construction.

It is clear that Addelson identifies the need for a careful analysis of expertise and authority that does not simplistically conflate it with truth, since ideas of truth are also

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[53] Ibid., p. 179.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., Chapter 4.

part of the creative project. On her account, "knowledge is not contained in theories, language, textbooks or journal articles ... knowledge is *embodied in sensitized people*."[56] What is meant by sensitised people comes from the notion of sensitising concepts which " ... are developed to investigate a world in which participants are continually creating and changing and reinterpreting the meanings of their activities."[57] They are part of the know-how that is acquired through training in a discipline, and can constitute a mainstream perspective or a conservative view. These are contrasted with simple categories and strategies of testing claims for truth and falsity. According to Addelson, "[t]he old view was that the researcher came to the research situation with a set of theoretical propositions to be tested."[58] Objective facts and data are the evidence against which theories are tested and confirmed or disconfirmed. Such a view hides the creativity of researchers and obscures their responsibility.

Because epistemic authority is a "folk-concept" it can be revised. Its revision demands attention to the notions of knowledge and ignorance that are involved. Addelson's analysis of epistemic authority reveals ignorance not merely as a lack of certain specialist information, but as a structure that entrenches some ways of understanding the world. Thus there are two aspects to the dependence of expertise on others not knowing, and one is not at all benign. Firstly, expertise only makes sense in a context where some know what others do not. I only count as an expert when my skill is in some way special. But if my expertise, as in the case of many professionals, also carries with it the power to determine what else counts as knowledge or understanding, as a member of such a select group I can protect and maintain the system of cognitive authority, and also decide who else qualifies as having knowledge. This can produce the kind of distortion that worries Harding, especially when it masquerades as objectivity. It also imposes a kind of ignorance upon authorities by delimiting what is investigated. On Addelson's analysis, experts are not responsible only for knowing about and on behalf of

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[56] Ibid., p. 170.
[57] Ibid., p. 171.
[58] Ibid., p. 172.

others, but their responsibility further involves acknowledgement of others' understandings.

Addelson's view of how knowledge is made enables her to advocate a kind of professional responsibility which makes visible the authority of such professionals and the different ways it can be exercised. One of Addelson's insights is that knowledge-makers can operate in a reflexive way, seeing the collective action not just as collaboration between experts, but as involving responsibilities and requiring sensitivities to those who are part of the research and to the community in general. She argues that contemporary structures of professionalism are designed to prevent reciprocity, and that this is one of the ways that cognitive authority is maintained.[59] Professional status is often justified by service to public needs or goods. Yet "[p]rofessionals themselves have a major hand in defining the public need and good that they serve."[60] We expect educational experts to inform us about the best way to organise the education system, and medical scientists to guide the community with respect to health matters. In doing so, they remain within the framework of academic institutions and institutions of governance. Experts, then, determine how both knowledge and ignorance are constructed in a community. Experts on knowledge, a group which includes but is not restricted to epistemologists, have the potential to influence how knowledge is understood and regulated within a community. How experts see themselves with respect to others' ignorance can vary between an attitude that "they lack the knowledge that we have," or "they have different perspectives that perhaps we ought to take into account" or even "my expertise may make me ignorant of other things and hence generates my dependence on others, not just their dependence on me."

Persons have epistemic authority not because their knowledge is more objective, or because they have more knowledge, but because through the division of epistemic labour they are engaged in making knowledge and enacting truth. On Addelson's view, the researcher is socially embodied, and it is part of her responsibility to consider her own

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[59]  Ibid., p. 208.

professional perspective, and the framework within which she is operating. There are at least two ways in which Addelson's account allows for ethical and political considerations to be part of an account of epistemic authority. These are acting responsibly while being a member of a knowledge-making group, and acting appropriately toward other groups and the community as a whole. As I will show in more detail in the following chapter, epistemologists should bear in mind the practical effects that a theory of knowledge may have. Addelson's account of the responsibilities of knowledge-makers differs importantly from notions of professionals serving the common good (as defined in professional ethics) and from the ideology of truth and objectivity faithfully pursued by professionals on behalf of other community members. Addelson distinguishes between two conceptions of professional responsibility, one being that which is responsible within the (self-regulating) discipline, and the other which is being responsibly attuned to the creative power of professional and cognitive authority.

This latter version of responsibility involves not being blinded by the ideal of epistemic objectivity to the practice of epistemic authority. It requires an alternative view of knowledge because, as Addelson puts it, "[t]he individualist perspective and the old theory of knowledge, truth and science supported the authority of professionals and allowed them not only to define scientific truth but to make major contributions to the definition of how we should live."[61] This is because we look to experts to guide social policy and social change. In summary, an account of epistemic authority that simply bases authority on expertise, or access to the truth (or, according to Goldman, the capacity to answer questions in relevant domains, which I discussed in Chapter Three) both depends on and sustains a particular view of knowledge. It is a view of knowledge that renders invisible the power of epistemic authorities to define the framework and rules of knowledge, and thus to reinscribe their own authority.

Engagement is not only important in the social sciences. A much-discussed example of engaged research is Barbara McClintock's work on the genetics of maize. As

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[60] Ibid., p. 140.
[61] Ibid., p. 169.

described by Evelyn Fox Keller, for McClintock "[d]iscovery is facilitated by becoming 'part of the system,' rather than remaining outside; one must have a 'feeling for the organism.'"[62] Keller argues that science can be understood as conversation rather than domination, or as engaged rather than detached. The success of McClintock's approach, recognised with a Nobel Prize in 1983, strengthens the claim that striving for maximal objectivity is not the only way to know well, and that engagement is an important epistemic virtue. Similar points can be made in relation to expertise that is not explicitly related to knowledge formation. I consult a vet about my dog's health in whom I can recognise a way of carrying out that work not with expert detachment, but with engagement and responsibility. I am not suggesting that this is always the way to think about expertise. (Perhaps if I were a farmer, and my interests were different, I would select differently. In that case, it may not suit me to deal with a vet who sees the animal as a friend.) However, engagement is a way of knowing that makes a difference to what is known and how it is known.

Given Addelson's conception of knowledge as a collective enterprise, what follows for ignorance? Under the standard detached model of objectivity, ignorance is a simple lack of knowledge. Evidence may as yet be undiscovered, but it is out there, and in principle anyone can get it. It does not really matter who acquires knowledge, because any investigation would yield the same results. Any failure to acquire or to share knowledge is an epistemic vice. Thus, ignorance is remediable, and should be remedied. Reliance on others as sources of knowledge is relatively unproblematic, and occupying the position of expert demands only attention to factual accuracy. Obligations and responsibilities are reduced to dealing rigorously with facts.

However, under Addelson's conception, questions about the selective pursuit of knowledge become central, and the issue of participation in knowledge making is crucial. On Addelson's account choices about how to go on mean that decisions are (collectively) made, and as a result some truths are enacted and others don't become manifest. For

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[62] Fox Keller, E. (1991) [1987]. "Feminism and Science" in (eds.) Boyd, R., Gasper, P., & Trout, J.D.

Addelson what is left out is as significant as what is pursued, and epistemic virtue consists in a responsibility which is not reducible to some simple or obvious answer. As long as there are different perspectives within the community (minimally with respect to insiders and outsiders), a responsible knowledge-maker must be sensitive to the impact of her perspective on others whose views diverge and not presume permission to ignore those other views.

Unlike Harding, Addelson does not provide an explicit procedure and justification for how the group of knowledge-makers can be increasingly inclusive and representative, but understanding epistemic authority is helped by a constructive attitude to ignorance. My epistemic responsibilities cannot be reduced to the elimination of ignorance and promotion of knowledge and, as Addelson argues, my responsibilities as a knowledge-maker include a sensitivity to the ways that expertise can exclude other possibilities of knowledge. Attention to the real ineliminable ignorance of professionals replaces attention to the presumed eliminable ignorance of nonexperts through a recognition of diverse perspectives and the acknowledgement that both knowledge and ignorance are constructed and created products

The standard view of objective knowledge characterises ignorance as the lack of knowledge. Ignorance is excluded by the presence of knowledge, as shown in the quote from Plato that opens this chapter. The same structure is presumed in the relations between experts and those who do not know, as is found in the relations between knowledge and ignorance that Plato describes. But when a second person view is adopted, and multiple perspectives are recognised, this model needs to be replaced. The fact that another person does not share my perspective does not entitle me to judge them ignorant in the light of my knowledge. My knowledge is constructed and partial, and the epistemic domain is not homogeneous, so my knowing does not rule out others' knowledge.

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*The Philosophy of Science* Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, p. 285.

However, none of the philosophers discussed in this chapter endorse radical relativism, or claim that anything at all can count as knowledge.[63] As the discussions of objectivity and empathy show, recognising diverse ways of knowing generates a more complex picture of the epistemic domain, not a less rigourous one. Knowledge is not universal and uniform between contexts, but particular, and heterogeneous. There are multiple epistemic perspectives, but this does not imply that it doesn't matter which is adopted and which ignored. Judgements about perspectives should be made with reference to relations between knowers who are always second persons, and to the virtues of engagement. Judgements about perspectives cannot be made by merely aspiring to truth and objectivity.

As an expert, I am presumed to be responsible to the facts: so as long as my research is properly carried out, then I am fulfilling my responsibilities. Such a view fails to acknowledge the relations between persons that are central to the construction and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, adherence to this view obscures the responsibilities of a knowledge-maker who does not merely discover but also enacts truth. Harding's programme of including representatives from marginalised groups is one way that a revised understanding of an epistemological concept like objectivity has implications for appropriate knowledge making practices. Addelson's analysis, too, motivates a different understanding of professional responsibility and a different attitude to epistemic authority. Unlike Foucault, Addelson does not analyse the power located in institutional practices. Rather, she locates responsibility in the actions of those persons who form and maintain those institutions. She is concerned with the power of professionals and intellectuals in academic institutions to determine the course of knowledge. This analysis operates at a different level from the Foucauldian analysis of the archeology of practices and structures, but the contexts are not independent as there

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[63] Lorraine Code in fact endorses relativism, but in such a way that she rejects the universalist-objectivist model of knowledge *and* the "anything goes" relativism that is posited as its only alternative. Code rejects this dichotomy in favour of a relativism that is contextual, dialogic and open to negotiation. See Code, "Must a Feminist Be a Relativist After All?" in *Rhetorical Spaces*. op. cit.

will be mutual influence between theories and practices at both levels. Addelson's collective action is the level at which second person virtues are most important.

The second person virtues give an epistemic justification for including others as knowers. Failure to credit and acknowledge other knowers can be a vice. If members of some social groups are excluded from the privileged knowledge making groups, this vice would be noticed by persons practicing the kind of responsibility advocated by Addelson. (This is similar to Harding's insistence on inclusiveness, although Addelson's motivation is not to promote objectivity.) Addelson does not advocate a specific response, but a mode of responsibility: she says, "[b]eing intellectually responsible requires, for professionals like myself, devising theories and practices that can make it explicit what the collective activity is and what some important outcomes of the activity might be."[64] Addelson is explicitly committed to engagement as a central part of professional responsibility. In discussing the human genome project, she states:

> ...there is the general issue of the authority of the researchers in defining what we are, who we are, and how we should live - not in words or empty theories, but in ways that will be implemented in the health care, educational, and legal systems. Using DNA testing in the courts, labelling people deviant by genetic testing is a powerful contribution to the definition of how we should live. My point here is not to say the scientists involved in the genome project are promoting false theories. I'm saying rather that they are abstracting the experimental situation of their research out of the larger collective action that includes themselves. It is not that their work isn't "true," it is that they run a very serious risk of not exercising moral and intellectual responsibility.[65]

As Addelson points out, there are both moral and intellectual considerations here. On this account, the difference between an expert or professional and others is not only that one has a greater quantity of knowledge and the others are in a position of dependence. Those who are epistemically responsible in Addelson's terms need to be conscious of the role of professional knowledge-makers, and recognise their participation in exercising authority. They need to practice the second person virtues, as well as the virtues of information. However, while second person epistemic virtues may coincide with social justice objectives, they will not guarantee morally good outcomes. Epistemic virtue and vice is distinct from moral virtue and vice.

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[64] Op. cit., p. 18.

In discussing empathy, it becomes clear that the requirement for knowledge to be objective makes the category too restrictive, because it means that an important way that we know other persons does not count as knowledge proper. Here, another problem with the alignment of objectivity and knowledge becomes clear. Experts can be blinded by the idea of objectivity to their own responsibilities in the production of knowledge, because this ideal can obscure the fact that it is always persons who know, who are engaged, interested, concrete, embodied and socially situated. These are failures of epistemic virtue.

Responsibility, in this sense, involves ignorance because it cannot be reduced to maximising the collection of facts and evidence. Recognition of the other persons as knowers is important. It is not the case that those who do not share the experts' view are therefore ignorant, nor that the existence of alternate perspectives cancels the experts' claim to knowledge. Ignorance and knowledge are not mutually exclusive. The notion of epistemic humility is important too, because it cannot be assumed that an expert judgement captures all the important facets of a situation, nor expresses the only right way to understand it. Not only are the understandings of the situation socially generated, but the very authority of professionals itself is also a created product. This contrasts with the idea that authority is grounded in knowledge, and that that the authority of experts is therefore a natural result of their superior information.

## Conclusion: Answering the Question "Who knows best?"

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the epistemological presumption that knowledge demands a maximally secure basis in evidence does not provide an adequate account of epistemic value. Only a communitarian epistemology can account for virtues such as discretion, selectivity, trust and nondisclosure. These are virtues that essentially involve ignorance, and I have shown that attention to ignorance assists the understanding of knowers as "second persons" who are engaged in many different ways. Experts are also

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[65] Ibid., p. 148.

"second persons" whose responsibilities include relationships to knowers who are dependent for information, and to the community in general.

The question "who knows best?" can be answered in many ways, and the right way to answer it will depend on contextual factors. From the above discussion of Harding's strong objectivity, it is clear that it is not sufficient to answer "the person who is most expert in that area," nor "the person who has the best experts on whom to rely" because such responses leave out empathy and engagement. There are many reasons for a person to be nominated or recognised as an expert, and as noted by Addelson, expertise does not simply derive from an impartial and thorough knowledge of the relevant area. Rather, expertise derives from the relationship between the expert and the community, and in cases of responsible expertise, from the mutual respect between expert and nonexpert knowers. In addition, what counts as knowledge is going to be relevant to a knower at a time and place, and the most accurate, or deepest or most complete objective information may not be the most useful or desirable. If, for instance, I am passing on a phone number, then if the last digit is out by one, it is significant; but if I am asked how many records or cookery books I own, then being out by one probably does not matter. The need for accuracy is determined by the context, and the situation always matters when it comes to understanding who knows best.

Factors relevant to who knows best include the domain in question, and whether it is one demanding a high degree of accuracy, or where approximation can be tolerated (or is even preferable), for what purpose the knowledge is intended (including who is seeking to know) and to what extent the question is about authority. I may get a different sense of a friend's health situation from a family member, a nurse or a medical specialist. If I have to decide who is the best person to ask, then a great deal depends on what I want to know, and on what I can expect to be disclosed to me. A consideration such as who might be the source of most information is not suitable to guide my pursuit of knowledge in this context. The same roles and connections are not equivalent for all knowers or for every context.

I have argued that the status that accrues to some kinds of profession is supported by ideas about the value of knowledge, and the nature of knowledge, and particularly the presumption that objectivity is the primary criterion for knowledge. Expertise is not just a necessary consequence of the division of labour, some doing intellectual work while others work in different fields as artists, primary producers or child carers. As my critique of objectivity shows, ignorance is not only a negative thing, consisting of gaps to be filled with knowledge. We are knowers only because of gaps, and we are better knowers because of gaps. As I have shown with respect to empathic knowledge, to know well in some contexts requires that even experts understand their knowledge as incomplete so that there is space for negotiating with others. Ignorance is always implicated in empathic knowledge, and accepting the limits of knowledge is an important dimension of epistemic responsibility.

Common epistemological assumptions about the value of knowledge and disvalue of ignorance coincide with structures of expertise and cognitive authority. Furthermore, problems have been identified with the coalescence of knowledge and power such that power and status accrue to those who possess certain kinds of knowledge and knowledge in some domains tends to extend authority beyond those domains. The power associated with knowledge can become a power to deem others ignorant, and the ascription of ignorance becomes a factor that justifies excluding some persons from authoritative positions, or enables experts to act and decide on others' behalf. The negative valuation of ignorance therefore has problematic repercussions for interactions between persons because inevitably there are knowledge differentials: some know what others do not.

The ways that expertise makes some persons superior to others on the basis of (real or deemed) knowledge and ignorance are not the only ways in which ignorance has to be recognised. Ignorance is necessary for this structure of expertise, but only as the devalued opposite to knowledge. But as I have argued, collecting knowledge in order to eliminate ignorance is not in itself a good epistemic goal. And automatically valuing knowledge over ignorance seems to support the view that expert knowers seem to deserve some special status, because their work is highly valuable, and valuable in a way

that advantages all persons (this is reflected in the idea of advancing human knowledge criticised in Chapter One). Addelson develops an analysis that prompts more careful questioning of the responsibility involved in epistemic authority. Understanding epistemic responsibility also requires sensitivity to the heterogeneity of the epistemic domain, and how knowledge is understood. Here too, ignorance is significant. We cannot presume that epistemic responsibility requires sharing all knowledge, nor that knowledge naturally implies any kind of authority, nor that certain kinds of knowledge such as professional expertise rule out that others also know.

In the following chapter, I turn to rights over knowledge. A specific area of regulation of knowledge - intellectual property - will be examined, and epistemological assumptions identified and challenged. Antipathy towards epistemic dependence and an emphasis on discovery and testing as the only proper routes to knowledge combine to exclude indigenous knowledge from the potential protection of intellectual property legislation. I will show how models of knowledge affect dealing with knowledge in practice. The dominant models of knowledge emphasise evidence, checking and discovery, and describe a knowledge that is amenable to commodification. In Chapter Six, I will describe an alternative way of understanding knowledge that encompasses the way it can involve obligations and expectations. The discussion of indigenous intellectual property rights will illustrate the way that an epistemology which includes ignorance can be constructively applied.

# Chapter Six

# Knowledge, Ownership and Rights

## Introduction

> In Australia, the Western Australian government has licensed Amrad, a pharmaceutical company, to develop an anti-AIDS drug from the Smoke-bush plant which was traditionally used by Aboriginal peoples for medicinal purposes. Amrad has obtained a global license to develop the patent from the United States National Cancer Institute. Should the project be successful, the WA government will receive royalties in excess of $100 million by the year 2002. No provision, however, has been made for any remuneration of the Aboriginal people who first discovered the medicinal properties of the drug.[1]

What epistemological commitments are revealed by a transaction such as the one above? Amrad has a global patent; in other words, Amrad has worldwide intellectual property rights to products from the Smoke-bush plant, but the indigenous people from whom the plant and information about it were obtained seem to lack any such rights. Important moral and political issues are raised by a situation such as this. However, the attitudes to knowledge and its ownership embedded in the concept of intellectual property,[2] rather than the moral or political issues raised by such cases, are my concern in this chapter. As demonstrated in Chapter One, epistemological issues can be separated from moral concerns in general, and similarly, the epistemic aspects can be distinguished from the social justice dimensions of the intellectual property debate over indigenous knowledge systems. Moreover, it is important to recognise that the adoption of epistemological positions can have significant practical consequences, in this case, with respect to indigenous intellectual property. I will show that attention to the second person virtues of engagement and recognition implies that a revision must be made of a common justification for knowledge regulation: that regulations are warranted insofar as they promote knowledge. The point here is not that a proper epistemological account will eliminate exploitation and injustice, but that understanding knowledge transactions in

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[1]   Githaiga, J. W. (1998). "Intellectual Property Law and the Protection of Indigenous Folklore and Knowledge." *E Law - Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, 5(2), p. 8.

[2]   In this discussion, I will rely on a set of standard legal theory claims about intellectual property without reference to specific jurisdictions and the subtle differences between them. I will also leave aside questions about intellectual property rights in works of art or other non-knowledge artefacts.

terms of virtues, ignorance and community can provide a useful theoretical and practical approach which forestalls a justification for some ethically problematic practices that are based on an epistemological misconception. That misconception permits, or even mandates, the collection of knowledge as if it were a resource detached from knowers. My analysis shows this view of knowledge to be erroneous, not least because it makes important epistemic virtues invisible.

Certain forms of knowledge ownership and exchange are explicitly regulated through the Western legal institution of intellectual property. Some of the problematic ways that the institution of intellectual property rights operates with respect to indigenous intellectual property result from a specific epistemological perspective like that exemplified by Hall and Johnson, Goldman and Habermas in Chapter Two. As Joseph Githaiga has suggested,

> There is, therefore, a clear bias in the operation of these laws in favour of the pharmaceutical industry and other institutions based in the industrialised nations. The modern patent laws allow these institutions to monopolise the benefits derived from the exploitation of indigenous knowledge at the expense of indigenous people's interests.[3]

Ignorance and knowledge are central issues in this debate because it is the understanding of knowledge that determines what is protected by intellectual property regulation. The fundamental mistake of seeing knowledge and ignorance as antithetical and knowledge as always good, (hence the goodness of acquiring it) coupled with a narrow scientific discovery-based model of knowledge lends justification to the power imbalance to which Githaiga refers.

When ideals such as advancing or increasing human knowledge, or knowledge for the good of humankind are invoked, it is important to look closely at what kinds of knowledge are being considered legitimate and what kinds of consideration affect knowledge acquisition. Any specific understanding of knowledge, or use of a particular model of knowledge, can produce different patterns of what counts as known or unknown, who counts as knowledgeable, who is credited with knowledge, and who counts as ignorant. A simple presumption that knowledge is good tends to obscure the

specific account of knowledge that operates in any given context. Furthermore, such a presumption tends to focus on information, to the neglect of the broader range of epistemic virtues. As I have demonstrated with respect to trust and authority, analysing knowledge transactions properly requires an account of ignorance, real and ascribed. Epistemic responsibility is not limited to collecting and checking facts and evidence, and the treatment of other knowers merely as sources or instruments of knowledge can indicate a lack of epistemic virtue.

Western systems of intellectual property regulation raise questions about disclosure, such as whether and how information becomes public property, and which kinds of use of information are allowed by which kinds of disclosure. Questions of who has and should have the authority to determine what counts as knowledge, what ownership of knowledge means and how information is to be understood are matters to which epistemological theory ought to be applicable. Discussions of intellectual property often rely on a view of knowledge that is too narrow and too uniform. The commodification of knowledge rests on an epistemological account that fails to include the virtues of engagement. Before turning to a critical examination of the epistemological commitments of two commentators on intellectual property, some clarification of terms is needed. "Intellectual property" is a term that refers to the products of human thinking, and is designed for the protection of accreditation, ownership, and commercial interests in those products. Intellectual property rights are posited to explain or justify the ownership of ideas, the authority to use them or the right to profit from them. The main ways of protecting intellectual property are through secrecy, patent and copyright. The legal institutions governing intellectual property guarantee its holders rights to the profits made from the intellectual products, or require that due acknowledgement be made, for example, by the proper citation of sources and the obligation to avoid plagiarism. Legal institutions specify a range of protections for owners of intellectual property, and sanctions for infringements. The legal categories concerning ownership of information can be summed up as follows:

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³  Githaiga, op. cit., p. 2.

> [c]opyright covers the expression of ideas such as in writing, music and pictures. Patents cover inventions, such as designs for objects or industrial processes. Trademarks are symbols associated with a good, service or company. Trade secrets cover confidential business information.[4]

Although knowledge is not mentioned explicitly, copyright and trade secrets are clearly about information, and much of the concern with intellectual property can be understood as a concern with who owns and controls knowledge. Privacy and nondisclosure are particularly relevant to a discussion of intellectual property because this is an area where both knowledge and secrecy are vital. The protection of information and its nondisclosure can be justified in various ways, and an adequate theory of knowledge ought to be able to offer useful insights into these kinds of practical issues about knowledge.

When discussing indigenous intellectual property, the concept of bio-prospecting is useful.[5] This term refers to the (scientific) exploration of biologically diverse environments with the aim of locating commercially valuable genetic and biochemical resources. If the area has indigenous inhabitants, then their knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants is commonly used as a basis for the scientific work of pharmaceutical researchers. For example, Shaman Pharmaceuticals Inc., a company that makes use of the knowledge of indigenous healers, claims a success rate of 50%, which suggests that "the 'filter' of indigenous knowledge [is] 5,000 times more effective than random collection."[6]

The development of medicines (from traditional herbs or otherwise) is a scientific practice that is said both to advance human knowledge, and to promote human welfare. The practice of sourcing knowledge of traditional remedies from indigenous peoples is associated with enormous profits for pharmaceutical companies and has been described as

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[4]  Martin, B. (1995). "Against Intellectual Property." *Philosophy and Social Action*, 21(3), p. 8.

[5]  The mining metaphor also occurs in discussions of information privacy. The gleaning of information from databases or medical records is known as "data mining." This metaphor reinforces the attitude that information is a common resource, the use of which ought to be maximised. Collected data, or indigenous knowledge can be regarded as unowned, and thus open to discovery and available for exploitation. The acquisition of information from indigenous peoples also has colonialist connotations. Just as indigenous land ownership was denied (in Australia by an explicit claim of terra nullis) at the same time as battles were fought over occupation, profiteering from indigenous knowledge coincides with an almost total lack of recognition of any indigenous intellectual property rights.

bio-prospecting, or bio-piracy[7] because the financial benefits of new medical technologies tend not to accrue to indigenous peoples who, in addition, are generally last in line for healthcare improvements. Such practices raise epistemic questions in addition to the moral and political ones, and these epistemic questions are the primary concern of this chapter. The failure to credit indigenous knowers with knowledge, and associated intellectual property rights, is in tension with the use of indigenous knowledge to enhance Western research into agriculture and pharmacy. Bio-prospecting practices involve the treatment of indigenous knowers as instruments and sources of knowledge, but not as knowers with whom researchers or "prospectors" must engage responsibly.

It has been argued with respect to ownership and patenting of genetic materials that "[t]here is a striking asymmetry inherent in the relationship between, on the one hand, the indigenous groups and local communities, and on the other hand, the groups acquiring the information, such as multinational pharmaceutical companies."[8] There is a failure to acknowledge and credit indigenous knowers, which is an epistemic failure of treating other knowers merely as resources, rather than as knowers in their own right. In addition, there is a requirement for epistemology to treat such practical issues seriously, and, as I have argued, only an epistemology which accounts for trust, empathy and epistemic responsibility will do so effectively.

As I argued in Chapter Three, relationships between knowers are of primary importance for understanding knowledge. In many, even most, cases of acquiring knowledge, it matters how and from whom it is obtained; many people remember particular teachers more than particular facts. In many, even most, cases of transmitting

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6 Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) (1994). "Bioprospecting/Biopiracy and Indigenous Peoples." *Rural Advancement Foundation International Communique*, p. 1.

7 Like "bioprospecting" this term refers to the collection of biological specimens and particularly genetic material, (even from people as in the Human Genome Diversity Project), from indigenous groups for use by Western scientists in various biotechnology projects. "Piracy" carries the implication of stealing, and emphasises the unscrupulous attitudes and exploitative practices that have been characteristic of some pharmaceutical companies. For example, the patenting of agricultural plants such as the "Enola" bean has allowed a US company to sue the Mexican bean exporters whose communities were the sources for the original seeds from which the patented variety was developed. See RAFI news "Mexican Bean Biopiracy" at www.rafi.ca. Once a research corporation has patented material sourced from an indigenous community, they have exclusive rights to market the resultant products.

8 Quiroz, C. (1994). "Biodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge, Gender and Intellectual Property Rights." *Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*, 2(3), p. 1-2.

knowledge, it matters who we are telling; knowers are discreet, selective and sensitive deliverers of information. These qualities, not indiscrimination, are the epistemic norms for persons in a community of knowers, and attention to the relationships between knowers ought also to be a priority for scientific knowers engaging with indigenous knowers.

In this chapter I will firstly explore the models of knowledge that are implicit in discussions of intellectual property. I then show that the focus on discovery and the presumed uniformity of the epistemic domain that characterise this way of thinking about knowledge are unsuitable for thinking about indigenous intellectual property. While there are some difficulties in categorising indigenous knowledge, understanding knowledge through relationships with knowers seems to be a promising theoretical and practical option. I therefore suggest some alternative ways to develop thinking about intellectual property, by considering trust, empathy and engagement between knowers, and by contrasting some standard accounts of intellectual property with the idea that knowledge can by understood as a gift. Thus, this chapter will draw out some of the implications of my revised conception of epistemic value and of the expanded scope of epistemic virtues.

## Models of Knowledge

Intellectual property is an important feature of contemporary society, not only in terms of the profit from scientific products, but also with respect to acknowledgement and plagiarism in academic contexts, or the use of sampling techniques in music. However, I think that the way that the values associated with intellectual property need to be understood more broadly than is currently the case. As I have argued, attention to epistemic virtues can enhance the understanding of knowledge transactions that are based on trust and empathy, and I will show that similar considerations can enhance the understanding of intellectual property. There are various models of knowledge involved in intellectual property discussions. There are at least three different ways that models of knowledge can determine the landscape of ignorance. The first is perhaps most obvious. A model of knowledge can determine areas of ignorance because by deciding what

knowledge to pursue, we leave other areas unexplored. One commentator has described this in this way:

> Because of the structuring of science, the tracks of knowledge could also be considered from another perspective as tracks of ignorance, because a particular knowledge line defines a particular area of exploration as valid and leaves the area outside this demarcation unexplored ... A knowledge track or tube is by training of the scientist, given tradition and practice, as much programmed to structured ignorance as to structured knowledge.[9]

Taking scientific investigation in a certain direction of exploration has the result that certain tracks are followed, others are ignored. But as I have been arguing throughout this thesis, the landscape of ignorance should not be presumed to be a wasteland that lies outside the productive sector of knowledge. The point made above is that even scientific knowledge works only because of selectivity, and as I have shown in Chapters Four and Five, empathy and trust clearly require that certain opportunities of obtaining knowledge are foregone. So the proper pursuit of knowledge even understood in scientific terms necessarily leaves some things unknown. As my analyses in Chapters Four and Five show, however, the diversity of epistemic subjects and their relationships makes treatment of knowledge and ignorance as mutually exclusive highly problematic.

Secondly, on any given model of knowledge, some understandings do not count as knowledge. One example is the exclusion of knowledge based on empathy, as discussed in Chapter Five, because of a requirement for knowledge to be objective. If knowledge must be objective and impartial, it seems that there cannot be such a thing as empathic knowledge. And it is worth recalling that the association of women with feeling and empathy coincides with the ascription of ignorance to this group, through a denial of the capacity to reason and know. This is not to say that the best model of knowledge is the one that is most inclusive, but rather that any model will have the potential to exclude some kinds of knowledge. As argued in the last chapter, it is necessary to see the epistemic domain as heterogeneous, so there will be no single model of knowledge suitable for all cases and contexts.

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[9] Goonatilake, S. (1987). "Transfer Systems in Science and Technology and Indigenous Intellectual Initiatives." *Philosophy and Social Action*, XIII (1-4), p. 15.

Thirdly, a model of knowledge can determine how transfers of knowledge are treated and understood. The characterisation of knowledge will determine the ways that it can be transmitted, stolen and shared, and will affect who qualifies as a knower, or legitimate owner or controller of knowledge. It is these effects of a model of knowledge on which I will focus in this chapter. I will look at how rights to intellectual property are justified, with particular attention to how indigenous knowledge is understood.

In Chapter Five, I discussed the ideal of complete and gapless knowledge, and suggested that knowledge is implicitly taken to be like a jigsaw puzzle. Such an image reinforces a conceptualisation of knowledge as objective, and also implies that the "world of facts" is "out there" (the truth is out there), its elements awaiting discovery. Then, these facts or evidence, treated properly - that is, checked, tested and properly positioned within a scientific system - become legitimate knowledge. This "discovery" model suits scientific activities, and the corporations who profit from them.[10] But this model is significantly limited. The virtues of epistemic engagement are totally ignored, and knowledge acquired through epistemic dependence is left out. Empathy and acknowledgement are not included as part of the responsibilities of epistemic agents. If, as I have argued earlier, we can know on the basis of what others tell us, for example, through testimony and trust, then we know through epistemic dependence, not only through discovery. Concepts of discovery and innovation are not appropriate to describe or defend existing knowledge and this is important when considering that a community may have a knowledge heritage of thousands of years.

One common justification for intellectual property rights combines the Lockean idea that through mixing labour with something a person establishes rights to property,[11] with a supposition that all knowledge is good and what leads to knowledge is also good. This latter presumption is implicit in Zagzebski's claim that there is a unity of epistemic and

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[10] I am not claiming here that that such a model accurately describes all scientific activity, just that the discovery model aligns with the view of scientific knowledge as the paradigm of knowledge.

[11] Locke, J. (1993). *The Second Treatise of Government*. In D. Wootton (ed.), *John Locke Political Writings* Harmondsworth: Penguin, Chapter Five, "Of Property."

moral virtue because knowledge is a form of the good[12] and in Hall and Johnson's notion of epistemic duty, since the duty to promote or increase knowledge arises because knowledge is presumed good. I have argued against this simple evaluation of knowledge and the treatment of knowledge as property with an emphasis on its potential economic value will be further challenged in this chapter. Presumptions about the universality of knowledge (knowledge is the same for anyone) and homogeneity of knowledge (it can be accounted for by a single set of criteria that will work for all cases) that were problematised in Chapter Two reappear in Edwin Hettinger's discussion of intellectual property.[13] He justifies intellectual property rights through an appeal to utility of increasing knowledge which shows that theoretical assumptions about ignorance play a role in practical knowledge issues.

The idea of inherited or acquired knowledge contrasts with a way of conceiving knowledge as very abstract, as if it consists of detached free-floating bits of information that anyone could know.[14] Dealing with knowledge is often assimilated to dealing with other kinds of commodity, producing a marketplace view of knowledge transactions, within the "free market of ideas." But knowledge should not be treated as a commodity freely available for exchange in all contexts. I will return to the concept of knowledge as a gift following a brief discussion of intellectual property, and show that it is a promising alternative way to think about knowledge and epistemic engagements.

Combining the discovery and commodity models has direct implications for intellectual property, and therefore, for how conflicts between scientific and indigenous

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[12] A similar view can be found in Kant's classic paper "What is Enlightenment?" in Kant, I. (1983). *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays.* (Humphrey, Ted, Trans.). Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. Kant advocates that everyone should "think for himself" and claims that to do otherwise is immaturity. He also endorses the free flow of ideas in the context of scholarship.

[13] Hettinger, E. C. (1989). "Justifying Intellectual Property" *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 18(1), pp. 31-52.

[14] Information on the world wide web is like this. Everything is presented in a format that fits on your screen, cues about origins and authority are just labels that may or may not correspond to external structures. Anyone can present a persona in a chat room, or put material on to the web. I might write about a topic and post my account, but a reader could not necessarily tell if I am an expert, a flake, a student, or a joker. In the virtual realm, it looks as though the information is all out there, and all the pieces are alike, even equivalent *qua* pieces of data. But this is not a good model for knowledge in the non-virtual word, and arguably, it is not how the world wide web is developing. There are sites that are clearly more official than others, and increasing numbers of e-journals whose contents are reviewed, not just posted.

knowers are resolved. The scientific view positions the indigenous as ignorant, but if a view of knowledge were adopted that saw an engaged relationship with the natural world as necessary for knowledge, the local herbalist's knowledge would be easier to recognise than the scientist's. An appeal to scientific objectivity does not show different approaches to knowledge to be inferior, because, as argued in Chapter Five, objectivity does not define knowledge.   Engagement and particularity are already important epistemic considerations within Western epistemic communities, and they seem also to be significant in at least some accounts of indigenous knowledge. It is not that engagement is invoked purely to accommodate indigenous knowledge; rather, an epistemology that includes the virtues of engagement has more resources to acknowledge diverse ways of knowing than one that adheres to narrow notions of scientific objectivity.

## Indigenous Knowledge

It must be noted that indigenous knowledge is a problematic category. It is hard to define the category and fix what it includes. Which indigenous groups should belong, and do indigenous groups from Australia, North America, Japan and Africa really have much in common? If a group has been relocated, in what sense is it still indigenous in its new location? Furthermore, there are complex questions about how an outsider can discuss aspects of another culture without distortion or appropriation. My comments on any indigenous group are further complicated by the fact that I can only read reports of groups in English, probably generated by nonindigenous researchers,[15] so how can I be sure that what I am claiming about indigenous knowledge accurately represents a perspective that members of those communities would accept?  It would be too ambitious to think that I could resolve such questions here, and I do not think that looking at the epistemic issues will resolve all these questions, or avoid the need to address them. But discussions of indigenous knowledge raise important issues, (for example, about whether knowledge is

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[15] One important exception is the recent book by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, (1999). *Colonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books. Smith both criticises the way that western, or European, research has been aligned with colonialist practice and philosophy and presents an indigenous programme for research projects and priorities, which is emerging from the Maori people of New Zealand.

understood individually or communally, and whether detachment or engagement between knowers and objects known is taken as the norm) and it is worth examining the relationship between these issues and the understanding and regulation of knowledge from the perspective of communitarian epistemic virtue that I have defended.

Although I argue against the presumption that ignorance ought to be eliminated, there are cases where it is improperly ascribed and used in a way that establishes or maintains relations of dominance and subordination. So I would not want to claim a positive role for ignorance in every context. The ascription of ignorance or denial of knowledge to indigenous peoples leaves the way open for the "discovery" of information, or new plant varieties, or medicinal remedies, by Western researchers. The knowledge and rights to it naturally belong to the scientists, because before their investigations, there was no knowledge that would be recognised by a Western scientific model of knowledge. This ascribed ignorance needs to be reassessed.

At the opposite extreme from dismissing indigenous claims to knowledge (by wrongly ascribing ignorance to indigenous peoples, or devaluing indigenous knowledge by presuming that it is not well founded, because it is "traditional") there is the equally problematic idealisation of indigenous knowledge as more pure, genuine, or innocent than Western knowledge. This converse position also presumes a strict dichotomy between indigenous and Western scientific knowledge.[16]   My view is that such a dichotomy is unsustainable, and that it can be avoided by an epistemological account that recognises the heterogeneity of knowledge, the importance of engagement, and the multiplicity of epistemic perspectives.

Furthermore, it will not always be appropriate to treat an indigenous group (or perhaps any group) as a single unified entity. Within a group of indigenous people, as with any group, there are likely to be diverse perspectives, and knowledge itself will not be distributed uniformly within a group. Theoretical attention to respectful engagement with knowers can accommodate these differences, and could enhance intercultural

epistemic interactions in practice. It seems that there are resonances between the view of the virtues of epistemic engagement that I have been developing, and some accounts in the literature that describes indigenous attitudes to knowledge. To the extent that this is the case, attention to the virtues of engagement may enhance cross-cultural epistemic interactions. The virtues of respect, acknowledgement and empathy, which require an openness to the contribution of other knowers are a promising start, at least.

A further definitional problem arises in relation to the characterisation of indigenous knowledge itself. The notion of "traditional knowledge" is itself controversial. In a discussion of the epistemology used by one African group a concern is raised that when knowledge is labelled "traditional" this tends to imply its devaluation. "The sense of the word 'traditional' is that the reasons or explanations most commonly produced by such thought systems are little more than an appeal *to* tradition."[17] This, the authors note, is a pejorative connotation, implying an absence of critical reflection, and an unenlightened attitude to knowing. This kind of label carries a negative assessment of indigenous knowledge, so if it is used to contrast scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge, it is likely to do so by making the latter appear inferior. I would advocate a positive conception of tradition, which includes respect, acknowledgement and engagement. Inheriting the knowledge of a tradition is not necessarily a passive participation, and, to take a familiar example, there is a sense in which many aspects of academic study can be seen as participation in a tradition. In any case, people in all cultures succumb to uncritical reliance on tradition at times, (Kant points this out, calling it "immaturity"[18]) so the presence of such dependence does not distinguish some kinds of culture from others. In defending my analysis of trust in Chapter Four, I have already argued against this dismissive attitude to epistemic dependence, but it plays an important role in this context, so it is worth considering it again.

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[16] A comprehensive discussion of this point can be found in Agrawal, A. (1995). "Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge: Some Critical Comments" *Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor*, 3(3), pp. 1-5.

[17] Hallen, B., & Sodipo, J. O. (1997). *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, p. 5.

[18] Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" op. cit.

There is a strong presumption in epistemology that knowledge acquired independently is superior to knowledge obtained through dependence. For example,

> ... suppose there are two cognitive beings, S1 and S2, each of whom knows all and only what the other one knows. They acquire their knowledge in different ways, however. S1 knows on the basis of investigation; S2 knows on the basis of being told by S1. In such a case, S1 is a superior cognitive being to S2. However, this superiority cannot be explained in terms of the knowledge or justification which attaches to each.[19]

The author, Jonathan Kvanvig, takes it as uncontroversial that the investigator is cognitively superior to the truster.[20] In the light of a second person account of knowledge, however, this superiority is not so obvious. As I argued in Chapter One, a knower's level of epistemic virtue does not depend only on the level of information obtained, and the autonomous skills used in its acquisition, but also on relationships with, and attitudes to other knowers. A knower who knows only on the basis of investigation will *not* necessarily be better than one who instances the virtues of dependence, in relationships that manifest trust and acknowledgement. A knower is *not* better because she shares all her information, and in fact this may indicate a vice of indiscrimination or indiscretion. So a second person account offers an alternative way to think about the virtues of knowers and knowledge. It is a promising approach for cases when knowledge does not fit models of investigation, discovery and innovation, nor the kind of intellectual labour that would suit a Lockean justification for property rights, as discussed below. Epistemic dependence does not constitute epistemic inferiority, and knowledge inherited within a tradition is not necessarily inferior to scientific objective knowledge.

Some descriptions of indigenous knowing focus directly on epistemic relationships. These are compatible with the concepts of engagement and responsibility, which, I have argued, are crucial components of epistemic virtue, and are obscured by a concentration on information and knowledge maximising. Frédérique Apffel-Marglin

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[19] Kvanvig, J. (1992). *The Intellectual Virtues and the Life of the Mind.* Savage: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 148.

[20] Linda Zagzebski makes the same assessment as Kvanvig, with respect to a similar case. Zagzebski, L. (1996). *Virtues of the Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 26-7.

cites the use of metaphors of conversation and nurturing,[21] referring to the mutual

connections between indigenous knowers in the Andes and their environment.[22]   As

Apffel-Marglin argues, knowledge and land are part of the culture that unites the group.

An Australian case involving an artefact with a confidential meaning exemplifies the

way that intellectual property regulation privileges a certain attitude to knowledge. The

case of *Yumbulul v Reserve Bank of Australia*, which foregrounds conflicting attitudes to

knowledge and its dissemination, is here described by Joseph Githaiga:

> Terry Yumbulul was authorised by tribal elders to craft the Morning Star Pole ("the pole")
> and license its display in selected museums. The Reserve Bank of Australia commissioned
> an agent to obtain authorisation from Yumbulul for the use of the pole on a ten-dollar
> banknote...[23]

This latter use, on the 1998 Bicentennial commemorative banknote, was alleged to

infringe customary law, prompting a legal challenge from Terry Yumbulul, who argued

that although he had signed a licence, he did not appreciate the intended use of the

reproduced image. As was pointed out by the defence, "[Australian copyright provisions]

allow the reproduction of a sculpture that is on permanent display without the permission

of the copyright holder."[24] The legal ruling was apparently unable to accommodate the

distinction made by the indigenous people between different kinds of public display, one

which maintained the confidential nature of the meaning of the pole, and the other which

destroyed it. Furthermore, the interaction between the artist, the indigenous community,

and the bank and its agents do not seem to have been characterised by epistemic

responsibility and trust.

> In Yumbulul, the mere public display of the Morning Star Pole in the museum did not
> negate the confidential nature of its sacred meaning, since that particular use was authorised

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[21] Apffel-Marglin, F.with PRATEC (Eds.). (1998). *The Spirit of Regeneration: Andean culture confronting Western notions of development*. London and New York: Zed Books.

[22] Apffel-Marglin problematises the description of indigenous relationships with the world as knowledge: "There is no simple act of knowing, for such knowledge acquiring activity presupposes that there is something to be known, irrespective of who knows it." p. 40. I prefer to revise the conceptions of knowledge in order that such relationships can clearly be included as part of knowledge. A similar position is defended by John O. Browder. See Browder, J. O. (1995). "Redemptive Communities: Indigenous Knowledge, Colonist Farming Systems, and Conservation of Tropical Forests" *Agriculture and Human Values*, 12(1), pp. 17-31. Browder suggests that indigenous and colonist knowledge and land use practices be viewed as continuous rather than dichotomous.

[23] Githaiga, op. cit., p. 3, s 30.

[24] Ibid., p. 4, s 30.

under customary law. However, when the pole was reproduced in a manner that contravened indigenous law, the aspect of confidentiality was lost.[25]

Here, we see an instance of proliferating information being seen by the original owners to have a severe impact on the original meaning, when material was used in a way that the original owners did not anticipate.[26] In other words, this artefact, in the view of the original owners, contained information and meaning which required a certain kind of respectful or confidential treatment, but subsequent to its initial display, they lost authority over it because the replication of the image was, under the Australian copyright law, presumed to be a normal part of its use. There was a further issue as to whether the ascription of ownership to the individual artist reflected the communal rights of the indigenous group. Justice Michael Kirby comments with respect to this case that "the Federal Court of Australia found that communal rights were not protected by Australian copyright laws."[27] An individualist understanding of knowledge is thus implied in these regulations.

Engagement is important with respect to both meaning of particular knowledge and relationships with other knowers. Browder points out that

> ...indigenous knowledge is associated with a system of social accountability absent in modern society. Someone (eg. a shaman) is held responsible for the application of indigenous knowledge, whereas no one is responsible for (mis) application of modern knowledge.[28]

Seeing knowledge as deeply connected to the accountability of knowers helps to explain why the "stolen generations" (indigenous children removed from families and communities in accordance with past Australian government policy[29]) have enormous difficulty regaining the lost knowledge because of the disruption to relationships and

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[25] Ibid., p. 4, s 45.

[26] Ibid., p. 5, s49. Conceivably, breach of confidence could provide a legal remedy, but Gilgaitha sees that as a "piecemeal solution" and favours more radical legislative reform. For reasons of space, I will not discuss the details of Gilgaitha's proposal for legislative reform, but merely note that it is an attempt to respond to the different understandings of knowledge, ownership and custodianship that the Yumbulul case reveals.

[27] Kirby, M. (1998). Address to a UNESCO workshop, at the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

[28] Browder, op. cit., p20.

[29] Details about the practice can be found in an extensive report, Wilson, R. (1997). *Bringing Them Home, Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families.* Canberra: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The

engagements. On the view Browder presents, knowledge always carries responsibilities, but there is no suggestion that these epistemic responsibilities could be reduced to maximising knowledge. Thus, even when knowledge is seen as communal - for example, through "a notion of communal property rights aimed at maintaining and developing indigenous cultural identity"[30] - it is not a straightforward move to maximising the dissemination of knowledge, or taking knowledge to be already public in the fullest sense. A communitarian account of knowledge understands knowledge as a common not an individualistic achievement. The processes of acquiring knowledge are also joint projects, and it is even at times taken as characteristic of knowledge that it is "commonable" or able to be shared.[31] But the commonability of knowledge is not the same as public knowledge, and even if all knowledge can be shared, that does not mean that all sharing of knowledge is alike. Just as there are degrees or kinds of privacy, so there are degrees or kinds of publicity. What is not disclosed may be as important as what is revealed, so ignorance has a crucial role when transmissions of knowledge occur within relationships of discretion, discrimination and trust.

The attitude to knowledge and the public domain revealed in Yumbulul is not an exclusively indigenous perspective. It is important to recognise that everyday knowledge need not be seen simply as a public item available for any kind of exchange or use. As argued in Chapter Five, empathic knowledge is precisely this kind of particular knowledge, so this recognition of the particularity and context-dependence of knowledge need not be based on seeing indigenous knowledge as radically different from nonindigenous knowledge. As I argued in the last chapter, involving more knowers does not enhance empathic knowledge. Increasing the number of people involved in a knowledge process can have a detrimental effect on knowers and what is known. Formal and informal conventions of confidentiality limit not the possible but the proper

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loss of knowledge is not the only nor necessarily the most significant loss suffered by the stolen generations, but I think it is a genuine and significant loss for which no simple remedy is available.

[30] Githaiga, op. cit., p. 4.

[31] See for example, Welbourne, M. (1981). The Community of Knowledge. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 31, 302-314, and Code, *Epistemic Responsibility.* op. cit., Chapter Seven.

transmission of knowledge, whether the relevant knowers and community are indigenous or not.[32]

The outcome of the Yumbulul case reflects a presumption by regulators that knowledge is neutral and replicable, a commodity. Below, I will consider an alternative view of knowledge that is better suited to an account of knowers engaged as second persons. First, I will examine the notion of intellectual property, and show how it is justified by some commentators by precisely the epistemological claims that I have argued against. The point is not that the very notion of intellectual property is inherently flawed, but that its current form embodies an understanding of knowledge that neglects important aspects of epistemic responsibility: the virtues of engagement. My aim is not to argue for the elimination of the institution of intellectual property: it is deeply entrenched and it can offer some protections for some kinds of knowledge. But a thorough analysis of intellectual property needs to be based in an account of epistemic virtue, not just an appeal to knowledge maximising.

## Intellectual Property

It is worth examining some standard justifications for intellectual property. Rights to property are often associated with labour, classically through Locke's influential doctrine that people have a natural right to the fruits of their labour. So, for example, if I work the land, and through my labour it becomes a farm, then I deserve to own the land and its produce. "The labour that was mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath fixed my property in them."[33] According to Locke's account, this is how property rights are established. Extrapolating from the Lockean model, to obtain initial intellectual property rights I must have worked to produce the knowledge. This implies the importance of novelty, supporting the discovery model discussed above. The

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[32] Since, as I have argued, the epistemic domain is heterogeneous, there may still be distinctive aspects to indigenous knowledge, but there is also considerable common ground between indigenous and nonindigenous understandings of knowledge. This is especially clear when the virtues of engagement are recognised in standard Western epistemic contexts.

[33] Locke, J. op. cit., p. 275.

contemporary legal notion of intellectual property retains certain suppositions from Locke's notion of property rights about effort and hence innovation.

Edwin Hettinger's account of the justification for intellectual property relies on just this model of knowledge.[34] The intellectual objects that are particularly important for Hettinger are those that are in some sense new ideas, where creation or discovery can be ascribed to some individual or group such as a corporate entity. But this view of intellectual property is disadvantageous to indigenous owners of so-called traditional knowledge, and others whose knowledge does not fit the discovery model.

Hettinger invokes utilitarian justifications for corporate intellectual property. He claims that more value is produced with property rights and the restrictions these involve, than would be produced without the institutions of intellectual property, copyright and trade secret protection. The optimal output of intellectual products requires restrictions.

> Granting property rights to producers is here seen as necessary to ensure that enough intellectual products (and the countless other goods based on these products) are available to users.... This approach... establishes a right to restrict the current availability and use of intellectual products for the purpose of increasing the production and thus future availability and use of new intellectual products.[35]

Thus, intellectual property rights (copyright and the right to trade secrets) are justified on the grounds that such protections and regulations provide incentives that will promote intellectual progress. But the only epistemic value that Hettinger considers is the increase of information, and as I have demonstrated, this is too narrow an epistemological view.

As Hettinger admits, there is something paradoxical about the argument that restrictions on the flow of information can be justified by appeal to greater knowledge production. He argues that, in fact, there are various ways to explicate this paradox. One is to draw a distinction between knowledge in the short and long term. Restricting knowledge in the short term produces a future outcome of greater knowledge. Another way is to appeal to the value of new discoveries and the need to reward and support those who generated them. Those who already have a track record of producing new

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[34] Op. cit.
[35] Ibid., p. 48.

knowledge may continue to do so, and are both rewarded for prior efforts and encouraged in their practices.

Hettinger appeals to the free flow of ideas when he suggests that "trade secrets [are] undesirable in a way in which copyrights or patents are not."[36] Patents enhance the free flow of ideas, "trade secrets do not have this virtue."[37] This reference to the free flow of ideas could encompass both current access to the ideas themselves, and future ideas that are built up from them. However, Hettinger does not question the presumed goodness of maximising knowledge. He shares this presumption with Hall and Johnson, and it is theoretically unsustainable, as I have shown in Chapter Two. Furthermore, he has been criticised for taking this to be a clear unitary goal. Lynn Paine, who defends intellectual property rights, but on a different basis from Hettinger's utilitarianism, offers this objection:

> Hettinger seems to think he has provided a clear-cut objective against which to measure the effectiveness of our intellectual property institutions. Yet, a set of institutions that maximised the "dissemination and use of information" ([Hettinger] p. 49) would not necessarily be most effective at "promoting the creation of valuable intellectual works" or promoting "'the progress of science and the useful arts'" ([Hettinger] p. 47). A society might be quite successful at disseminating information, but rather mediocre at creating valuable intellectual works.[38]

Paine's assessment seems correct, as there are multiple epistemic goals here, which Hettinger does not distinguish.[39] Novelty is different from dissemination, and in each case, as I have argued, the value or disvalue of discovering or sharing information depends on context. But the problem is even more serious than the lack of clarity of the goal on which Hettinger's argument depends. As I have argued earlier, maximum dissemination of information would flood an audience with too much detail and prevent useful communication. All our epistemic achievements would be severely compromised by serious aspiration to the goals that Hettinger (like Hall and Johnson) endorses. The

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[36] Ibid., p. 36.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Paine, op. cit., p. 248, footnote 5.
[39] This objection parallels a point made by Hilary Kornblith with respect to intellectual virtues: "on the one hand there is intellectual courage, but on the other there is deference to others; there is boldness and originality, but there is also intellectual humility." Kornblith, H. (2000) "Linda Zabzebski's Virtues of the Mind." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, LX*(1), p. 200. The same tension between creativity and dependence is implied.

ignoring of second person epistemic virtues generates an account of epistemic value that is both theoretically flawed and practically pernicious.

Paine's criticism of Hettinger, however, relies on too individualistic a notion of epistemic value, because it is based in a recognition of private rights in knowledge. Paine argues that "Even if common law trade secret rights did not promote intellectual labor or increase the dissemination and use of information, there would still be reasons to recognise those rights."[40] Ideas, she points out, are not like common resources, but belong to people. The proper basis for understanding rights in ideas is the relationships between knowers.[41] Within Paine's framework, there are no general claims on ideas, and there is no general obligation to contribute to a common pool of ideas. In fact, as she sees it, the notion of a common pool of ideas, a resource that ought to be generally accessible, is not the right way to conceive of ideas and rights to them.

Paine's view, which is a view that includes ignorance as part of understanding knowledge, reverses Hettinger's explanatory direction. Rather than limitations to the free flow of ideas needing to be justified, and this justification coming from an overall increase in the flow of ideas, Paine argues that:

> [i]deas are not, in the first instance, freely available natural resources. They originate with people, and it is the connections among people, their ideas, and their relationships with others that provides a baseline for discussing rights in ideas. Within this conception, the burden of justification is on those who would argue for disclosure obligations and general access to ideas.[42]

On Paine's account, disclosure obligations are not general, but arise from contexts and relationships. I should tell you certain things, because you are my friend, my insurer, or my employee. I should trust my friend with confidences, certain disclosures to insurers are required by contract, and an employee should be kept informed about impending changes to working conditions or company ownership. Paine's is a much more plausible

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[40] Paine, op. cit., p. 257.

[41] Ibid., p. 261. Paine does not mention indigenous intellectual property, but on her analysis bioprospecting would be a problematic practice. For Hettinger, the legitimacy of scientific research and development that utilised indigenous knowledge would depend on whether there was an increase to the general stock of knowledge or the free flow of ideas.

[42] Ibid., p. 261.

account of knowledge transactions, and it is an advance on Hettinger's account, but the virtues of engagement are still neglected in favour of an account of individual rights.

Paine recognises diverse epistemic values - it is not just increasing dissemination of ideas that is important, nor innovation, but recognising the sources or originators of ideas.[43] Rather than seeing ideas as public goods, she is interested in private rights in ideas. "Within this alternative framework, the central questions are how ideas may be legitimately acquired from others, how disclosure obligations arise, and how ideas become part of the common pool of knowledge."[44] There is a clear contrast between a justification for intellectual property rights based on general considerations, such as "advancement of human knowledge" and one based on individual rights over one's own ideas, primarily the right to withhold or to disclose information. Specifically, Paine argues that "the rights recognised by trade secret law are better understood as rooted in respect for individual liberty, confidential relationships, common morality, and fair competition than in the promotion of innovation and the dissemination of ideas."[45]

Paine argues that a person has the right to control the initial disclosure of her ideas. There is no general obligation to disclose, but certain "specific undertakings, relationships, and even the acquisition of specific information can give rise to disclosure obligations." [46] Professionals in various fields are obliged to report certain types of information; if, for example, I am engaged in a commercial relationship, I may be required to disclose certain information; insurance companies demand certain information; and mandatory reporting in certain circumstances is required of medical practitioners, teachers and social workers. Even something as informal as friendship may mean I should tell my friend certain things, as part of the honesty that is expected. But Paine suggests such obligations arise against "a general background right to remain silent."[47] This is in part because a person's sense of self is connected with her ideas, and her public

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[43]  Ibid., p. 249, footnote 6.
[44]  Ibid., p. 250.
[45]  Ibid., p. 250.
[46]  Ibid., p. 251.
[47]  Ibid., p. 251.

persona with her expression of them. Paine offers only a brief defense of these claims, suggesting that:

> [r]espect for autonomy, respect for personality and respect for privacy lie behind the right to control disclosure of one's ideas, but the right is also part of what we mean by freedom of thought and expression.[48]

In spite of her acknowledgement of the importance of epistemic relationships, Paine's account remains too individualistic. To be a person who knows is not only to have information, but also to be in relationships of trust, epistemic dependence, cooperation, secrecy and disclosure. Paine's emphasis on autonomy, personality and privacy reflect her focus on individual rights. She contrasts her position with Hettinger's concentration on the general proliferation of information within a community and the free flow of ideas. Neither Hettinger, nor Paine, acknowledges that engagements between knowers are fundamental, that is, they analyse knowledge without reference to the second person relationships that are fundamental to the very possibility of knowledge.

Thinking about knowers as second persons raises a new range of questions with respect to intellectual property. The epistemological issues raised by intellectual property are not limited to ownership of, and rights over, knowledge and information. It is important to ask also what relationships between knowers are at stake, and whether all the parties to epistemic transactions are being treated with epistemic respect and trust? When scientists engage in bio-prospecting, are indigenous knowers being treated with trust and acknowledgement, or merely as useful sources? Hettinger's utilitarian account supports an instrumental attitude to other knowers, they are considered only in terms of a potential contribution to a general store of knowledge. Knowledge is considered only as a product to be to be collected, and a commodity from which profit might be made. Paine's emphasis on individual rights recognises the importance of knowers, not just their products, but does not take communitarian considerations into account. She does not

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[48] Ibid., p. 252. A more extensive discussion of secrecy can be found in Bok, S. (1982). *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*. New York: Vintage Books. Bok shows that there are good reasons for some secrecy and concealment in some contexts. Nancy Goldberger considers how silence and different modes of speaking intersect with ways of knowing, in Goldberger, N. "Cultural Imperatives and Diversity in Ways of Knowing" in Goldberger, N. R., Tarule, J. M., Blinchy, B. M.,

develop an account of the ensuing obligations and responsibilities to which virtuous knowers must attend. She thus neglects the fundamental issue for members of an epistemic community (taken in its widest possible sense to include all those with whom I engage in any epistemic contexts): the issue of the treatment of knowers as such, in the full second person sense I defended in Chapter Three. This requires incorporating confidentiality, trust and discretion, and therefore ignorance, as epistemic features relevant to an adequate account of intellectual property.

So how might responsible engagement with other knowers be manifest? There is no single set of rules for "getting it right" because the contexts will vary enormously. But at least, the context could be taken into account – with, for example, some attempt to recognise the indigenous knowers' epistemic context.[49] For example, with respect to a case like Yumbulul, the issue of communal rights as well as individual authority over an item with particular meaning was important, and the possibility of different norms with respect to the display and reproduction of information needed to be considered. Responsible engagement with the knower(s) own view(s) requires attention to the virtues of empathy, to reciprocity and to leaving a space for the other knower to respond without pre-empting the outcome. While changing the account of knowledge and its value will potentially affect social, political or moral outcomes, working with the correct understanding of knowledge is an epistemic rather than an ethical issue. Considering these questions will not necessarily prevent a prospector from exploiting other knowers: as I have argued, epistemic and ethical virtues are independent. One can be epistemically virtuous and morally bankrupt. But this approach would prevent a morally well-intentioned knower from failing morally on the basis of an epistemic mistake, by rationalising appropriation for the sake of a mistaken epistemic value.

If I am responsible and epistemically virtuous, I should ask how that knower understands the information, rather than treating it as atomistically detachable from the knower and the community, or presuming that their perspective on its permissible use

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& Belenky, M. F. (Eds.). (1996). *Knowledge, Difference and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing*. New York: Basic Books.

[49] Apffel-Marglin, op. cit., describes the complexities of such a process in the introduction to her book.

coincides with mine. I should see my actions as forming part of a relationship between knowers, in which I have responsibilities, rather than as a mere exercise in finding information. I ought to think about what this knower wants to teach me, not just about what information I think it would be useful to acquire. I should consider trust and trustworthiness, both as part of my own practice, and as attributes that might be understood differently by knowers from a different community. I ought to think about confidentiality and disclosure, and the possibility that these are understood differently. In general, I should think about my interactions as contributing to relationships with the knower with whom I am conversing. Am I treating every knower I encounter as evidence, or have I made epistemic commitments to trust, and have I lived up to those who trust me? Fundamentally, am I treating other knowers with respect, or merely as an instrument for my own epistemic ends? A focus on second person engagements will deliver a different assessment of epistemic practices than a consideration of rights or knowledge- maximising. This is not merely a consideration of fairness and justice, although improper denial of others' knowledge can be an injustice. It is, moreover, a way of responding to the diversity within my epistemic community, and the different positions and perspectives of knowers with whom I interact.

The second person account of knowledge encourages a revision of the Lockean model of property rights. This is not the only way to conceive of intellectual property, and the protection of commercial interests and maximisation of knowledge are not the only relevant considerations. We can benefit in an epistemic sense from a proper appreciation of different forms of knowledge, from being clear about epistemic responsibilities and from recognising and promoting the virtues that contribute to our being good knowers in a resilient epistemic community. (The regulation of intellectual property is only one area of epistemic practice that could be enhanced by attention to epistemic virtues, others include informed consent and freedom of information.) An exhaustive survey of alternative approaches is not feasible within the constraints of this chapter, but it is worth considering one other possibility: the concept of gift, which is cited in discussions of indigenous knowledge and which seems to incorporate a range

of ideas that are compatible with second person responsibilities. Rather than regarding

knowledge as a neutral object with no connections to persons, knowledge should be

understood in a way that reflects relationships between knowers, and virtues of

engagement. It seems that a promising alternative to understanding knowledge as a

commodity is to think of knowledge as a gift.[50]

The phrase "the gift of knowledge" is already familiar in Western contexts, and the

concepts of gift and knowledge are also associated in some descriptions of indigenous

knowledge, which I discuss below. This concept provides a promising direction because

it covers a wide range of transaction types and the range of ways that gifts can function in

a community makes the concept a rich source of ideas for models of knowledge. I will

suggest that this way of thinking about knowledge encourages attention to the epistemic

virtues of engagement which the treatment of knowledge as a commodity tends to

obscure. Although I am not advocating that understanding knowledge as a gift ought to

become the new unique model, (a range of models is necessary) this understanding is a

constructive way to understand some aspects of knowledge.

## Knowledge as a Gift

Some accounts of indigenous knowledge make the contrast between knowledge as a

commodity and knowledge as a gift explicit. For example, Laurie Ann Whitt has argued

that "[l]ike life itself, genetic information and knowledge more generally are for many

indigenous peoples understood to be given, not produced. They are gifts, not

commodities."[51] Whitt suggests that some indigenous communities present an

understanding of the relationship between knowledge and the natural world, as well as

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[50] Giving and purchasing are not the only ways that redistributions of property take place. Property can be shared, borrowed, stolen, appropriated, repossessed or forfeited, but gift provides the clearest contrast with the marketplace model. For interesting discussions about gifts in general, see Schrift, A. D. (Ed.). (1997). *The Logic of the Gift.* New York and London: Routledge. Much of the focus of these discussions is anthropological as well as philosophical. A different approach concentrating on analysis of language and literature referring to gifts is found in Derrida, J. (1992). *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money* (Kamuf, Peggy, Trans.). Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Much more work would be needed to incorporate existing theoretical accounts of gifts with the provisional account of knowledge as a gift that I am sketching here, but I think that one of the advantages of this concept is that it is a rich source of philosophical discussion.

[51] Whitt, L. A. "Metaphor and Power in Indigenous and Western Knowledge Systems," unpublished paper, 1996.

the relationship between knowers within a community, that is very different from that of

Western scientific world view. Frédérique Apffel-Marglin reports the relationship

between indigenous cultivators and their land and environment in this way:

> We have great faith in what nature transmits to us. These indicators are not the result of the
> science of humans nor either the invention of people with great experience. Rather, it is the
> voice of nature itself which announces to us the manner in which we must plant our
> crops.[52]

The knowledge of such farmers is clearly not, in their own view, detached from and

independent of the land and its produce. The environment does not merely furnish

evidence, but is rather acknowledged as an informant, an "announcer," a trusted expert.

The knowledge is a gift from nature, and this gift is possible only within a set of

relationships in which the requisite respect is present. The concepts of gift, reciprocity

and obligation are not only relevant to indigenous knowledge, but resonate with aspects

of everyday Western experience with knowledge, for example, with instances of trust and

empathy. These engaged aspects of knowledge are absent from mainstream

epistemological accounts because epistemology has confined itself to too narrow and

refined a sphere of virtues of information rather than those of engagement.

The idea of knowledge as a commodity or a product that can be collected without

any of its qualities changing, is very different from the idea of knowledge as a gift which

may occur within the context of a relationship, carry obligations about what is given or

establish bonds or responsibilities between the giver and recipient. I am suggesting here

that seeing knowledge exclusively as a product to be acquired as property, sold or stolen,

is to divert attention away from the relationships between knowers that are fundamental to

there being knowledge at all. Seeing knowledge as a gift encourages attention to these

relationships: what bonds are being forged or reinforced, what responsibilities or

obligations accompany the transfer of knowledge? To receive something as a gift is

different from discovering or collecting an item that is detached from any relationships

with other people.

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[52] Apffel-Marglin, F. and PRATEC op. cit. p. 33. The words are credited to "a Bolivian peasant."

There are different kinds of gift, of course; while some have "no strings attached" others set up very definite responsibilities. The very fact that such a phrase is used to make explicit the type of gift that is in question indicates the potential for confusion in relation to gifts and the complex expectations they engender. Different kinds of knowledge require different kinds of considerations and obligations: the information contained within the phone book does not usually require any special responsibilities, but information that is confidential or sacred or private often does.

Obligations with respect to gifts are not located in individual rights, but in norms and practices that are socially instituted. Gifts can be ways of continuing, establishing or confirming relationships between members of a group, and giving or receiving a gift can be a way of acknowledging and demonstrating respect for others. A gift does not always have the same role and significance throughout transactions: if I give you an heirloom, and you give it to charity, very different engagements may be indicated. The timing of exchanges may also be important – perhaps that sequence of events must be understood differently depending on whether the intervening time is days, or years. Furthermore, gifts have different roles in different cultures; it cannot be assumed that a particular form of gift-giving that is normal in one community is appropriate in another community where the norms of reciprocity and hospitality may be very different. So in this context of diversity, one should proceed with caution, in theory and in practice, being sensitive to the possibility of inadvertent disrespect. Although my telephone number is in the phone book, I have felt uncomfortable in some situations when a friend has passed the information on. For some groups, certain information such as names is to be treated with enormous discretion. These examples parallel that of the heirloom because the meanings and the propriety of transactions vary enormously and are not given once and for all.

My point is not that knowledge ought never be treated as a commodity, nor that payment for information is never appropriate. Nor am I arguing that a particular form of gift exchange ought to be the unique model. I have argued for diverse kinds of knowledge even within a western cultural context which is not monolithic. Rather, I am suggesting that gifts have the capacity to reveal, sustain and create relationships between

persons. Instead of regarding knowledge as detached information atoms available for distribution, collection and purchase, we might consider that exchanges of knowledge can have such significance. While there can be "one-off" gifts, gifts are often part of ongoing relationships, the gift contributes to the relationship and the relationship contributes to the meaning of the gift. Transmitting information that is secret or confidential can indicate trust and can build friendships, but these kinds of disclosures, for example, in professional or collegial contexts, also build the bonds necessary for epistemic communities. Importantly, such communities are not sustained by maximising revelations, but by discretion, discrimination and selectivity, so ignorance plays a central role.

This is not to say that knowledge cannot be stolen, appropriated or purchased – it is clear that these kinds of transactions take place. But to be a responsible knower is not to abstain from or minimise such transactions, to be "independent" or autonomous, nor to see these possible transactions only as opportunities to maximise my collection of information. It is to be a responsible giver and recipient, to be receptive to what is offered, and to establish and maintain relationships in which gifts are possible.

Being a good knower is not primarily a matter of the collection of information, and there is a pressing need for new theoretical accounts of relationships of epistemic dependence. Second person virtues and a revision of the knowledge as commodity paradigm can provide new models of knowledge and community. More work needs to be done to develop the analysis of knowledge as a gift before it could really serve as the basis for alternative mechanisms to regulate intellectual property. But it is a promising new way to approach the aspects of epistemological questions concerning which standard analyses are silent.

Considerations of human rights and social justice focus attention on the appropriation of indigenous knowledge, and the issue of protecting indigenous culture when that requires restrictions of access to or recognition of prior ownership of certain types of material. The resolution of these issues requires attention to moral factors, justice and reconciliation as well as the epistemic considerations discussed above. My

discussion shows that the adoption of particular epistemic models can have decisive implications for practical knowledge management issues. Thinking about epistemic virtues as primarily involving interactions between knowers, and abandoning knowledge maximising as an epistemic goal invites a different attitude to other knowers. They cannot be seen merely as sources and instruments that may contribute to the progress of human knowledge.

Epistemology has a practical role to play in contexts where regulation of knowledge requires that the way it is conceived is made explicit. It is crucial that epistemologists do not adopt too narrow and abstract a view of knowledge if their contribution is to be relevant and valuable. Taking ignorance seriously enables an account of the virtues of epistemic engagement to be developed that makes clear the importance of trust, discretion and acknowledgement. Intellectual property regulation is just one of the areas where the contemporary context needs a more complex analysis of knowledge and knowers, such as the one I have given here. Other issues include freedom of information, informed consent and privacy regulation.

Intellectual property regulations restrict what can be done with information. Both the legitimacy of restrictions on knowledge and the kind of knowledge that gets protected, (and hence which owners enjoy the profits) depend to a large extent on how knowledge is viewed and valued. In other words, they depend on the model of knowledge. I have shown that a common justification for intellectual property rights rests directly on problematic epistemological claims. Through an examination of justifications for intellectual property, it is possible to see how the revised perspective on knowledge and ignorance developed in previous chapters could apply to a concrete situation.[53]

In Chapter One, the qualities of knowers were shown to be the best starting point for an account of knowledge, especially when knowledge transactions are to be analysed. The importance of recognising knowers as socially situated epistemic subjects, rather than mere placeholders in a world of abstract knowledge, was demonstrated. With respect to

intellectual property, trust, reliance, and epistemic respect all need to be taken into account. But the importance of these aspects of epistemic interactions is obscured by an uncritical claim that advancing human knowledge is the main epistemic goal. Proper epistemic goals are not reducible to maximising knowledge or ensuring that it is most effectively supported with evidence. Responsibility, empathy, epistemic respect and acknowledgement are all elements of virtuous epistemic practice. An account of how knowers are dealt with is particularly useful for evaluating epistemic transactions that take place between members of diverse cultures. While the implications of understanding knowledge as a gift need further development, and the sketch above suggests as many questions as it offers solutions, nevertheless it seems to be a promising direction for further investigation.

## Conclusion

This chapter shows that certain common presumptions about knowledge tend to advantage certain kinds of knowledge and certain kinds of knowers within the economic and legal framework of Western society. I showed that an account of knowledge that attends to ignorance and diverse epistemic values is a more promising way to approach cases when knowledge is understood to be held communally, knowledge is understood to be connected to the land, or ownership and rights to knowledge are not based in a notion of discovery. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that standard conceptions of knowing are inadequate for understanding the diverse kinds of knowledge within Western societies, and in this chapter, I showed that they also tend to exclude ways of knowing that are found in some indigenous communities. This exclusion has problematic practical consequences, for example, in indigenous intellectual property contexts. I have argued against an epistemological account that views the collection and maximisation of information as the fundamental epistemic goals, and in this chapter, I have shown that this account is not only theoretically, but also practically, important.

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[53] The second-person approach to knowledge could also be applied to other kinds of knowledge interactions such as freedom of information and informed consent, but there is insufficient space to develop those ideas here.

How we view knowledge is important not only for the sake of doing epistemology well, but because of the things we do with knowledge. In other words, although epistemic virtues are distinct from ethical virtues, and the domains of evaluation are distinct, epistemic commitments can have ethical and political implications. How the value and nature of knowledge are conceived or misconceived can make an enormous difference to which aspects of knowledge are regulated, recognised and developed. Ignorance is important in this context because crucial problematic assumptions about knowledge and how it should be regulated concern its universality (for example, that knowledge is the same for everyone) and its value (for example, that knowledge ought to be maximised). As argued throughout this thesis, such assumptions coincide with claims that ignorance can and should be eliminated or minimised, thus challenging these claims involves accounting for knowledge in such a way that ignorance can be accommodated. In this chapter, I showed how these erroneous assumptions play a role in arguments relating to the control and exchange of knowledge, specifically intellectual property debates. The presumption that knowledge is universally good permits practices that promote knowledge to be defended on the basis of the common good, and this argument appears in defenses of intellectual property. My point is not that knowledge is bad, but that a presumption in favour of its goodness is given too much weight in these arguments. It distorts accounts of intellectual property by mandating collection and dissemination, and obscuring the importance of discretion and discrimination.

In this chapter, I have briefly outlined a practical implication of my earlier arguments that the aim of maximising knowledge depends on the mistaken presumption that knowledge is all alike, and also generates a very peculiar, if not incoherent, view of how an epistemic community ought to function. Probably the most pervasive assumption in this area is that knowledge is always good and ignorance is not, and throughout this thesis I have been arguing against such a presumption. There is a dominant model of knowledge which involves taking it as a commodity in the marketplace of ideas, and I have shown how this is related to assumptions about objectivity, maximisation and universalisation of knowledge. I contrasted this with another model of exchange, that of

gift, and explored the different implications for ownership of knowledge. Another important contrast that I explored is that between knowledge understood as tradition and discovery. I have shown that taking ignorance into account motivates attention to epistemic virtues such as discretion and respect for others' knowledge and privacy, the adoption of an inclusive view of knowledge in all its variations, and the recognition of forms of knowledge that are not purely objective, or discovery-based. Like empathic knowledge, some kinds of indigenous knowledge, have to be understood differently, and it is through communitarian epistemology and attention to ignorance that this can be achieved.

I have shown that a presumption in favour of the general goodness of knowledge is theoretically unsustainable. I have found echoes of this presumption throughout a debate about the justifications of intellectual property regulation, and have shown that a better account arises from rejecting that assumption. Intellectual property is best understood with reference to the responsibilities of knowers, and the building of relationships between them. The discussion of intellectual property provides a clear example of how taking ignorance seriously supports a more subtle and more useful account of our concerns with knowledge and illuminates practical knowledge issues.

# Conclusion

Epistemology can be an abstract and rarefied discipline, but since knowledge itself is vitally important and ubiquitous in everyday contexts, consideration of such practical contexts should play a significant role in philosophical theories of knowledge. Furthermore, the way that knowledge is understood can have significant practical effects, and so it is not merely theoretical coherence and consistency to which epistemologists must pay heed: the ways that ideas about knowledge are used in real world contexts ought also to be considered. Practical examples can clarify philosophical issues. For example, it is from considering concrete cases of trust that an adequate analysis of the concept of trust can be generated. My approach to epistemology uses concrete examples to illustrate and clarify claims about knowledge, and emphasises the practical implications of epistemological theory.

Epistemic communitarianism is an indispensable framework for understanding knowledge. Individualism fails as the basis for an epistemological account not only because all knowers depend on others for most of the content of their knowledge, but because the very capacity to know depends on community-based norms of justification, acknowledgement, trust and critical reflection. If I am to be a knower at all, I must be acknowledged by others as such. Treating knowledge as an individual achievement for which autonomy is the prime concern obscures the importance of such epistemic interactions, and even precludes a coherent account of them. The need to give an adequate account of the issues of epistemic dependence, testimony, trust and empathy is a central reason that a communitarian approach is superior to epistemic individualism. In fact, as my discussion of second person epistemology shows, *all* knowledge is best understood as based in engagements between knowers. Communitarianism has further advantages as, for example, Lorraine Code's second person epistemology has been shown to be resistant to sceptical challenge. For these reasons, the arguments of my thesis are based on a communitarian approach to knowledge.

Communitarian epistemology needs to incorporate attention to the concept of ignorance. It cannot be presumed with respect to knowers that a state of ignorance

ought always to be remedied. However, the reappraisal of ignorance defended in this thesis does not, and is not intended to imply that knowledge is never good, nor that it cannot be taken to be good in many cases. The point is rather that in both theoretical and practical contexts, such as the justification of intellectual property rights, it ought not to be assumed that the expansion of human knowledge is its own justification, or even that the meaning of such a phrase is self evident. Despite its lack of recognition in mainstream epistemology, theoretical attention to ignorance is vital for understanding knowers who are interdependent, engaged in cooperative projects and responsible to one another. This is not to say that the pursuit of truth and knowledge are never worthwhile, just that they do not tell the whole epistemic story. Ignorance is not always antithetical to epistemic virtue, but forms a central part of knowledge interactions.

Virtue epistemology is a promising framework to replace an abstract definitional approach to understanding knowledge. The virtues of an epistemic agent understood as a member of an epistemic community must include the epistemic virtues necessary for relating to other knowers. Analysis of the virtues required to operate in an epistemic community reveals that discretion is as important as honesty, selectivity as crucial as accuracy. Virtues of ignorance are, therefore, necessary elements of a knower's repertoire. I have shown that knowers as second persons cannot be understood as knowledge maximisers, and that an adequate account of epistemic virtues must include the virtues of engagement with other knowers as well as those related to the acquisition of information. Ignorance, therefore, has a significant role in an adequate epistemology and is not merely an irrelevant or a negative matter outside the domain of epistemology. Ignorance is not necessarily antithetical to knowledge, and issues involving ignorance are not peripheral to epistemology, but are crucial matters which arise in many different areas. Ignorance therefore needs to be revalued as well as redescribed at both a theoretical and a practical level.

I have argued that theoretical accounts of epistemic virtue and epistemic dependence are best developed with ignorance in mind. It may seem that including virtues in the domain of epistemology will collapse the distinction between ethics and

epistemology, but this is not the case. Attention to ignorance allows the virtues involved in trust and empathy, as well as discretion, confidentiality and nondisclosure to be treated as epistemic issues, rather than taking them to be exclusively ethical concerns. In addition, attention to virtues of ignorance such as discretion and selectivity enables attention to epistemic diversity. Knowers are not all the same, even *qua* knowers, and epistemic dependence is not about knowers becoming more alike through sharing more knowledge. Different kinds of reasons matter differently, knowers reason differently, and even information can be different for different knowers, in the sense that each knower incorporates it into her own perspective, and understands it from her own context.

In this thesis, I advocate a revaluation of ignorance and knowledge and develop a revised analysis of epistemic communitarian virtues. In Chapter One, I showed that Linda Zagzebski's attempt to show that there is a joint domain of epistemic and ethical virtue fails. The expansion of the epistemic domain does not require it to be conflated with ethics. There are distinct dimensions of ethical and epistemic evaluation: I am not a better *knower* because I am merciful and not cruel and I am not *morally* better because I am intellectually scrupulous or creative. This chapter demonstrated the utility of virtue epistemology and the importance of epistemic virtues in spheres of both engagement and information. I developed an account of distinctively epistemic virtues, the characteristics which are desirable for knowers, which includes features of knowers and their relationships, in addition to more established epistemic virtues (such as impartiality, rigour and sobriety) involved in the acquisition of information and evidence. Epistemic virtues are not reducible to characteristics that are knowledge-conducive, but include qualities necessary for trust, acknowledgement, discretion and empathy.

In Chapter Two, I provided specific critiques of common assumptions about knowledge and its value, through a close examination of three philosophical discussions. Richard Hall and Charles Johnson defend an epistemic duty to seek more evidence, and I showed their position to depend on incoherent assumptions about the

epistemic domain. Using the goal of believing all and only truths to explain epistemic duties requires aiming for the total elimination of ignorance. I showed Hall and Johnson's defense of this goal to be internally problematic, because it relies on forms of epistemic interdependence, (Hall and Johnson explicitly take the knowledge of others in the community into account) at the same time as insisting on autonomous evidence collection. Moreover, such an epistemic goal has unacceptable practical implications, as it mandates the collection of trivia, and makes nontrivial epistemic pursuits pernicious. I then examined Goldman's discussion of epistemic paternalism, and found that his adherence to the view that knowledge is good and meritorious produced a misunderstanding of expertise that flawed his account of dependence on epistemic authority. Without a presumption against ignorance a better account of expertise and authority can be developed, one which attends to epistemic responsibility, as I show in Chapter Five. Finally, I examined Habermas's conception of the "ideal speech situation" which he takes to underpin communicative rationality. I showed that while this approach has the advantage of admitting the indispensability of epistemic dependence, Habermas's analysis is problematic because of his emphasis on consensus. Habermas presumes a uniformity between epistemic participants which prevents proper consideration of the diverse positions and perspectives of knowers. This diversity includes knowers' history, social context and capacity and desire for self-presentation. Habermas treats everything anyone knows as available for universal negotiation, which even a brief consideration of discretion, nondisclosure and trust shows to be mistaken. We do not engage with all other knowers in exactly the same ways; we are discreet and selective about with whom we confide. Taking ignorance into account promotes attention to differences between knowers at several levels: as a necessary condition of knowledge transfers and with respect to the status of knowers, acknowledgement and the ascription of ignorance. Only an epistemology that attends to ignorance has the required resources for an analysis of epistemic diversity, with respect to knowers and disclosure.

In Chapter Three, I defended epistemic communitarianism, concentrating on Lorraine Code's second person epistemology, which takes "I-you" or "I-thou" relationships between knowers as the fundamental starting point for epistemic analysis, in contrast to taking an isolated knower's relationship to an object (characterised as some form of justified true belief) as primary. I showed that not only is second-person epistemology a constructive approach to understanding knowledge, but that it motivates the abandonment of the classic epistemological fascination with refuting sceptical arguments, and the related antagonism toward ignorance. A communitarian knower is not only dependent on others for information, but for the norms and interactions that make knowledge possible, and as I argued, Susan Feldman's scepticism does not pose a threat to second person epistemology. Radical doubt of other knowers is unsustainable because it involves undermining the very conditions that make sense of doubt itself, as well as other epistemic practices. This revised approach to epistemology allows for a richer and more practically useful understanding of knowledge, and especially of epistemic dependence. Taking knowers and their relationships to be the primary focus of epistemic analysis enables a better account of trust, empathy and acknowledgement as I show in the following three chapters.

In Chapter Four, I developed an account of trust as a genuine source of knowledge, using the second person analysis as a foundation. Building on the analyses of trust developed by Annette Baier and Karen Jones, I demonstrated that trust is distinct from reliance: trust is a form of engagement between knowers that is not reducible to treating others as evidence, whereas reliance is a matter of risk assessment and evidence checking. I further explained the importance of such a distinction for analyses of testimony. Trust is prior to reliance because it is the framework from which the capacity to deal with evidence is generated. Elizabeth Fricker and Jonathan Adler mistakenly explain all dependence on testimony as reliance, which requires the treatment of all knowers merely as sources of evidence. As Robert Audi points out, believing testimony must be seen as part of a relationship between knowers and I argued against understanding trust merely as a judgement based on evidence or an

assessment of probability. Because there are obligations on both sides of a trusting engagement, and some of these disallow the seeking of certain kinds of evidence and corroboration, the importance of acknowledging ignorance for a proper understanding of trust was made clear. Ignorance is essential because trust both permits some knowledge and excludes some checking.

In Chapter Five, I explored the themes of power and responsibility in epistemic contexts, and defended Lorraine Code's analysis of empathy as a legitimate form of knowing. My account of empathy was based in a critical discussion of objectivity. Through exploring Sandra Harding's "strong objectivity" I showed how an ideal of gapless knowledge is implicit in the goal of objectivity and showed that this is challenged by an acknowledgement of empathic knowledge which requires gaps as part of the openness to other's contribution to my knowledge. Ignorance is also implicated in the way that power and knowledge operate, for example, persons can be disempowered by being kept ignorant, being deemed ignorant or being labelled ignorant. Failure to acknowledge what a person says, responding to her claims with incredulity or appropriating her ideas or knowledge can be effective tools (that may be used deliberately or unconsciously) to keep some groups from exercising authority, and to maintain others in superior positions. An obvious example is the treatment of women, and women's claims to knowledge as inferior to men's, and this suppression is reinforced by an negative attitude to ways of knowing that are associated with the feminine or with marginalised groups. Empathic knowledge and indigenous knowledge are clear examples of knowledge that is devalued. Ignorance is a component in certain ways of knowing, such as empathy and trust, and it is also important for understanding some of the dynamics of knowledge and power. The responsibility of experts, I argued, can be properly understood when the claim that the expert is responsible only to the facts is replaced with the recognition that relationships (with colleagues and other community members) are primary. Moreover, those relationships are best understood when the ideal of objective knowledge has been revised. Knowledge is particular and

contextual and, as Kathryn Addelson argues, experts need to be conscious of their roles in making, not just discovering knowledge.

In Chapter Six, I argued that assumptions such as the neutrality of knowledge and the primacy of discovery as a warrant for intellectual property protection echo the common, but erroneous, epistemological commitments that are challenged in the earlier chapters of my thesis. I showed that keeping epistemic considerations distinct from ethical concerns provides a better way to argue for the recognition and protection of indigenous knowledge. There are prevalent, but mistaken, presumptions that proper knowledge involves discovery, and that increasing knowledge is a good thing. I showed that an understanding of ignorance as a counterpart of knowledge can support a more subtle analysis of knowledge transactions. I argued that intellectual property need not be seen as a commodity, but rather as a gift, because adopting this perspective draws attention to relationships between knowers, and to the possibility of diverse expectations and norms with respect to appropriate interactions. Starting from engagements between knowers is an approach that could also be extended to issues such as freedom of information, copyright issues and many aspects of epistemic authority. The final chapter suggests that accounts of knowledge that fail to acknowledge the importance of ignorance are restricted in their capacity to analyse the practical issue of intellectual property regulation. For these practical and theoretical reasons, ignorance is an important although much neglected aspect of epistemology. Epistemological analysis has the potential to provide useful accounts of many kinds of knowledge transactions, but only if epistemology is seen as a dimension of evaluation that is independent of ethics, the goals of which are not reducible to knowledge-maximising.

The importance to me of other knowers in my community is not reducible to them acting as sources of knowledge. Others are not merely instrumental in my acquisition of knowledge, and rather than other knowers being simply sources of evidence, my relationships with other knowers form the ground that enables me to deal at all with evidence. My virtuous engagements with other knowers must involve trust, empathy

and discretion, and cannot be reduced to the elimination of ignorance. A positive epistemological conception emerges from my reaffirmation of a constructive role for ignorance in the theory of knowledge. I have argued that epistemic responsibility comprises a range of virtues, some that are mostly related to the mere acquisition of information, and others that concern epistemic engagements. Both are associated with ignorance in the first instance because of selectivity and the need to avoid what is epistemically futile, and in the second because epistemic relationships with other knowers cannot be reduced to knowledge maximising. I have shown that too strict an identification of knowledge with models of discovery and objectivity that are suited to corporate and scientific interests in knowledge rests on presumptions about the goodness of knowledge, or a justification couched in terms of the increase of "human knowledge." Important epistemic issues look very different when different views of knowledge are adopted, and an adequate analysis of trust and empathy requires attention to ignorance. In particular, there is a significant contrast between when knowledge is viewed as universal and knowers as interchangeable, and when the diversity of knowers is taken as a fundamental tenet, and knowledge and its value are both understood as variable. I have explored this diversity by bringing ignorance into a central theoretical position. I have shown that the interactions of members of epistemic community can only be understood by abandoning the presumption that ignorance ought to be eliminated. An epistemology that is adequate to explain epistemic dependence, and to respond to the practical challenges of a complex knowledge-based society, must take ignorance into account.

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