An Epistemological Framework for Inclusive Democratic Deliberation

by

Mary Stewart Butterfield
B.A., University of Alberta, 2006

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Cindy Holder, Supervisor
(Department of Philosophy)

Dr. Colin Macleod, Department Member
(Department of Philosophy)

Dr. Patrick Rysiew, Department Member
(Department of Philosophy)

Professor Jeremy Webber, Outside Member
(Department of Law)

Supervisory Committee

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Professor Jeremy Webber, Outside Member
(Department of Law)

ABSTRACT

My primary focus is in articulating a *theory of knowledge* that can support a robust, justice-driven conception of democracy and deliberation. I argue that it is not possible to achieve this task without conceiving knowledge as explicitly *social* in a significant way. A central focus in my argument is thus what kind of sociality is required for the epistemology of democratic deliberation to be adequate. Building on this focus, I claim that inclusive deliberation can be *epistemologically* transformative. My goal is an articulation of the epistemic value of inclusive deliberation – I argue that such an articulation rests upon a reconception of epistemological agencies that takes *communities* as the primary agents.

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To Curtis, my favourite peer and dear friend

"Theories of knowledge, like theories about anything, are tools to organize, explain, and reconstruct our present and past experiences, and to be used in the service of our efforts to develop better knowledge and epistemic practices. Such theories, like all theories, emerge and evolve concomitantly with others and with the interests, values, projects, and practices that motivate and shape our work to generate them." – Lynn Hankinson Nelson

Introduction

In recent years there has been an increase in the attention given to the role knowledge might have in democratic processes. My interest is the connection between democracy and social knowledge. I start with the assumption that there is value in exploring the epistemology of democratic deliberation. This assumption is justified due to the perceived purpose of deliberation – through talking with others we learn things that inform us, give us knowledge, and help us to form political decisions.

Further, Western democracies are deeply diverse, motivating the need for political communication across boundaries. Importantly, however, my project diverges from those undertaken in the field of political philosophy due to my conviction that what must remain central to any such investigation is the idea of knowledge itself. My primary interest is in developing a theory of knowledge as social that can provide the foundation for a model of radically inclusive democratic deliberation. Making use of Iris Marion Young's insight that what we seek knowledge of in democratic deliberation is not knowledge of our interests but rather knowledge of one another I argue that the knowledge that is relevant to democratic deliberation is irreducibly collective – it cannot be understood in individualistic, summative terms. Recognizing this makes it possible to establish a stable epistemological framework for deliberation, one that consists of a theory of knowledge qua knowledge.

My first chapter introduces the basic elements of an epistemological conception of democracy, starting with the work of political theorist David Estlund. Unsatisfied with Estlund's account as properly epistemological, I turn to the work of Alvin Goldman, namely his book *Knowledge in a Social World.* Widely known as a "traditional epistemologist", Goldman forays into the subject of social epistemology, examining the role various social institutions have in knowledge production and acquisition. Goldman's work is valuable to my project because it is undertaken specifically as an epistemological investigation. It is precisely his interest in knowledge itself that bears relevance for my analysis of the epistemology of deliberation. My primary focus is in articulating a *theory of knowledge* that can support a robust, justice-driven conception of democracy and deliberation. I argue that it is not possible to achieve this task without conceiving knowledge as explicitly *social* in a significant way. A central focus in my argument is thus what kind of sociality is required for the epistemology of democratic deliberation to be adequate.

In a paper given at a Social Epistemology conference at Sterling University entitled "Why Social Epistemology is Real Epistemology", Alvin Goldman demarcates the scope of so-called "traditional epistemology":

> First, in traditional epistemology the epistemic agents are exclusively individual human beings. Second, mainstream epistemology is heavily invested in the study of several concepts of epistemic evaluation or normativity, including justifiedness, rationality, and knowledge. Traditional epistemology is concerned with how individuals can acquire knowledge or maintain justified or rational credal states. Third, it is assumed that the evaluative/normative standards of rationality and justifiedness are not merely conventional or

> relativistic in a pejorative sense, but have some sort of universal, objective validity. Fourth, the central notions of epistemic attainment -- certainly knowledge and possibly justification – either entail or are linked to truth. Knowing proposition p entails p's being true, and a person's being justified in believing p (at least according to one mainstream view) is associated with belief-forming methods or circumstances that are truth-conducive. Finally, mainstream epistemology typically assumes that truth is an objective, largely mind-independent, affair. Let us call these assumptions the core assumptions of mainstream epistemology (Goldman 2007, 1-2).

He continues, defending a view of social epistemology that fits within these parametres. This view undergirds his work in *Knowledge in a Social World*. Goldman is of particular interest because of his commitment to this mainstream approach. We have good reason to care about knowledge and democracy because knowledge *matters*. However, Goldman limits his work on this connection by adopting an aggregative model of democracy. My first chapter aims to accomplish two things: to persuade the reader to be skeptical of the model of democracy Goldman considers, and to introduce a conception of social knowledge as irreducibly collective. These are related issues. I argue that a deliberative model of democracy poses a problem for Goldman's view, pointing out as it does the lack of sociality.

In my second chapter I discuss Iris Young's model of inclusive deliberation. Young takes up the ideas of "situated knowledge" and "social knowledge", making her a natural choice for my undertaking here. Young claims that inclusive deliberation can be transformative, specifically that deliberation can engender a transformation of *interests*, My argument, which continues into my final chapter, is that inclusive deliberation can be *epistemologically* transformative. Relying on feminist standpoint epistemology, Young argues that when we increase our information about other people and our relationships to them, this knowledge has an impact on our individual interests, and our ability to translate our interests into claims of justice. Using the epistemology of Lynn Hankinson Nelson, I then argue (in Chapter Three) that social knowledge can change the ways in which we deliberate and reason together, thus changing the ways in which we know. My goal is an articulation of the epistemic value of inclusive deliberation – I argue that such an articulation rests upon a reconception of epistemological agency that takes *communities* as the primary agents. This reconception helps to both explain the difficulties a pluralistic society faces in reaching consensus on moral and political issues, and to provide an epistemological framework for thinking about deliberation as political theorists.

Chapter One

My purpose in this chapter is to motivate an epistemological investigation of the relationship between knowledge and democracy. I am primarily interested in the ways in which such a relationship might get cashed out as uniquely *social*. I begin by briefly articulating the limitations of projects that are not explicitly epistemological, looking at David Estlund's work on the epistemic value of democracy as an example. With these limitations in mind, I look to Alvin Goldman's book *Knowledge in a Social World* as a work that takes knowledge, rather than democracy, as its starting point. Though I think his account has much to offer, retaining a traditional epistemological view of knowledge as true belief, I suggest that there are problems with how Goldman conceptualizes democracy itself. These issues affect his ability to achieve meaningful epistemological depth with regard to the concept of *social* knowledge. In the next two chapters, I will argue for a deliberative model of democracy that prioritizes social and political *inclusion*, as well as feminist naturalized epistemology, in order to best do this.

Introduction:

Traditional analytic epistemology has come under fire in recent decades, accused of overlooking social aspects of knowledge. There has been increasing attention paid to the connection between knowledge formation and acquisition and social institutions. This attention has taken popular forms in arguments about the influence things like power, gender, race and class have on the shape knowledge takes and the role it plays in society. As such there has been growth in the discourse around "social knowledge". My focus in this chapter is to lay the groundwork for a particular conception of social knowledge as non-summative, or irreducibly collective. I am interested in democracy as a social institution that might have particular relevance in support of such a conception. There is something worthwhile in examining the knowledge-consequences of political institutions, given they have immediate and practical impact on our daily lives. I evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in current attempts to account for this relationship, examining the work of David Estlund and Alvin Goldman as two examples. Though there are efforts within democratic theory to engage with epistemological concerns, I will argue that we ought to undertake a specifically epistemological investigation of democracy.

A Political Approach: Epistemic Proceduralism

Democratic theorist David Estlund has argued that democracy has a specifically epistemic value. He describes this view as expanding on the concept of democratic legitimacy. Estlund claims that democratic decisions are widely viewed to be authoritative and legitimate if they result from procedures that treat each voter equally. In "Beyond Fairness and Deliberation: The Epistemic Dimension of Democratic Authority" he provides an argument for the role of epistemic authority in political legitimacy. Estlund does an admirable job of raising the question of the specifically

epistemic value of democracy, and deliberation in particular. However, Estlund's approach is weak in two related regards: first, his epistemological account is unsatisfying *qua* epistemology, and second, he overlooks the transformative potential of deliberation, assuming a rigid model of human understanding, and fixing the concept of the epistemic agent as necessarily individualistic. However, Estlund's project is integral to my work here, as he argues for a reconsideration of democratic legitimacy on epistemological grounds, setting up the connection between knowledge and democracy that I will elaborate on during the course of my thesis.

Estlund distinguishes procedural views from substantive ones. Procedural approaches to democracy call for legitimacy as the result of a fair process, where the outcomes are not held to some standard that is independent of the process. Substantive views, alternatively, are those in which the outcomes are evaluated in terms that are prior to or separate from any given procedure. That is to say, on a substantive view, the result of a vote would be deemed legitimate if it were in accordance with a pre-determined concept of fairness or justice. Like Estlund, I embrace procedural rather than substantive views for the simple fact of political pluralism. In a diverse society there are bound to be competing ideas of what justice demands – a procedural view avoids generalizing over minorities by relying on a fair process to generate justifiable outcomes. A way for a democratic community to respond to a diversity of interests within society is to put in place a fair procedure that reflects the aggregation of interests without permanently marginalizing individuals or groups. Many procedural views, therefore, contain an element of deliberation, whereby individuals share their divergent opinions in an attempt to reach an outcome that is acceptable to everyone.

Though proceduralism may be able to reckon with the fact of pluralism, it locates the justification for democratic outcomes within the procedure, rather than the result. Estlund articulates a view he calls "Epistemic Proceduralism". On his view, the right kind of procedure allows us to see the justification for a democratically-produced outcome as partially embedded within the outcome itself – a result produced by the appropriate procedure gives the outcome epistemic value. He arrives at this view after rejecting three popular procedural approaches in the literature on democratic theory: fair proceduralism, fair deliberative proceduralism, and rational deliberative proceduralism. The first requires of democratic decisions only that they are produced by means of a fair procedure – an approach that Estlund implies is not actually attributable to anyone, given that "fairness", on this model, is akin to a coin flip; the idea that everyone comes together and puts their suggestions in a hat, agree that selection from the hat will be fair to everyone, and further agree that whichever suggestion is picked from the hat will be the course of action everyone will follow (Estlund 1998, 71).

Fair deliberative proceduralism follows the first form, with the addition of a process of deliberation, where would-be voters share their convictions about certain issues, and then vote under a fair procedure. Estlund criticizes this view, claiming that theorists who advocate for such a view have very little weight behind their demand of deliberation:

> If the outcome is to be selected from individuals' views, it can perhaps be seen as enhancing fairness if their views are well considered and stable under collective deliberation. If the goal

> is fairness, though, why select the outcome from individuals' views? It is true that if the outcome is not selected in this way it might be something no one would have voted for. But that does not count against the fairness of doing so. It is just as fair to choose randomly from the available alternatives (Estlund 1998, 73).

This approach is again likened to a coin flip, though a "post-deliberative" one, where despite the inclusion of deliberation into the procedure, ultimately a fair result could still be chosen by flipping a coin between two opposing and equally valid views.

The final "non-epistemic" approach, rational deliberative proceduralism, attempts to insert procedure into deliberation itself, alleviating some of the concerns Estlund raises. He describes this view as being based on reason-giving, where the procedure produces fair outcomes in virtue of having been the result of a "reason-recognizing procedure" (Estlund 1998, 73). Estlund rightly points out the internal inconsistency in this view as properly *procedural*, however. If reasons are to mean anything, they must be evaluated on some procedure-independent scale, where good reasons count for more than do poor ones. What makes reasons good and bad, however, remains to be decided outside of the process in which they are being articulated. Some theorists, comments Estlund, have adopted a form of this view in which fair outcomes are those which best reflect an *ideal* or *hypothetical* procedure. He includes both the Rawlsian "original position" and the Habermasian "ideal speech situation", arguing both imply that "actual procedures that mirror the ideal procedure will tend to produce the same results as the ideal" (Estlund 1998, 74). As with fair deliberative proceduralism, either we have no grounding for the substance of democratic outcomes, or we have to agree on an idea of fairness that our procedures will aim at (Estlund 1998, 74). He writes, "deliberative conceptions of democracy are forced to ground democratic legitimacy either in the infertile soil of an impartial proceduralism, or in a rich but combustible appeal to the epistemic value of democratic procedures" (Estlund 1998, 74). For this reason Estlund turns to theories that are, in his estimation, *epistemic* in nature.

Estlund situates his view in opposition to theories that hold that "political decisions are legitimate only if they are correct by appropriate procedure-independent standards… [and democratic procedures] are sufficiently accurate to render the general run of laws and policies legitimate under favorable conditions" (Estlund 1998, 75). Estlund has Rousseau in mind as articulating such a theory. This view, in Estlund's estimation, is the epistemic push "getting out of hand" – it is *too* epistemic (Estlund 1998, 75). Instead, he intends epistemic proceduralism to be a middle ground between fair proceduralism, and so-called "correctness theories" of democracy. Epistemic proceduralism both improves upon other procedural views and better answers challenges to them. The improvement comes from providing a non-substantive foundation for democratic legitimacy, locating it instead in an idea of democratic decisions as epistemically privileged.

For decisions to be so valued, democracy must be understood as having the "tendency to produce outcomes that are correct by independent standards" (Estlund 1998, 70). Estlund goes on to claim that democratic legitimacy is a result not only of a fair procedure, but of the acknowledgement that the outcomes resulting from such a

procedure are epistemically valued – they are *better* than those that would result from a simple coin toss. An epistemic approach is itself valuable, because it can help to justify the practice of majority rule in a way that mere fairness cannot (Estlund 1998, 77)[1]. However, Estlund rightly points out that the *probability* of a majority, having participated in a fair process, producing results that are *correct* does not provide moral justification for a minority to surrender their own judgment (Estlund 1998, 77). However, if fair procedure is wed to the idea of derivative epistemic value, Estlund believes both the coin-flip argument and the problem of the tyranny of the majority can be avoided. While I accept this as the key strength of the view, I think there are important deliberative and epistemological concerns.

The Epistemological Weaknesses of Epistemic Proceduralism

Estlund, while providing a satisfying political justification for grounding legitimacy in epistemology, actually demonstrates a weak epistemological position in articulating what he calls an "epistemic" theory. Insofar as epistemic proceduralism is interesting *epistemologically*, it is so because it opens a space for an examination of the connection between knowledge and democracy. For a theory to be interesting epistemologically, it must answer at least one of three pertinent knowledge-related questions: 1)What do we know? 2)How do we come to know? 3)How can we become better knowers (get more/better knowledge)?[2],[3] This could very well be of no concern to Estlund – indeed his intended audience is one made up primarily of democratic theorists. However, his view provides an excellent jumping-off point for precisely these questions as they apply to democracy as a social institution, and as such it is worthwhile to consider some of the epistemological assumptions that his view relies on. Additionally, he does seem to engage with at least the second question – epistemic proceduralism is concerned with getting democratic outcomes that are *good*, with having results that are better than others.

Estlund deals with a popular objection to such an epistemic conception, one he calls the problem of deference, where citizens find themselves having to defer to the expertise of any other (Estlund 1998, 69). If some results are better than others, it stands to reason that some people might be more politically authoritative than others. Estlund formulates the problem as "[letting] truth be the guide without illegitimately privileging the opinions of any putative experts" (Estlund 1998, 75). To consider this a challenge, Estlund must accept the idea of political truth as something that in principle can exist in this way, as substantive, or independent from the procedure. Indeed he responds in kind:

> An adequate response [to the worry over epistocracy]…is to

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[1] See Estlund's discussion of Condorcet's Jury Theorem, pg. 77.

[2] In setting these out as the relevant questions for epistemology, I aim to bracket the question of epistemological skepticism. While certainly the issue of how we know we are not brains in vats, or being deceived by Descartes' demon is relevant to what kind of relationship there might be between knowledge and democracy, in order to address this question I would have to be engaged with a different project altogether, one which would far exceed the appropriate limit for a Master's thesis. I assume, then, that we *can* and *do* know, and that there is practical work to be done in answering these three questions.

[3] See Matthias Steup, *A Contemporary Introduction to Epistemology*.

> argue that sovereignty is not distributed according to moral expertise unless that expertise would be beyond the reasonable objections of individual citizens. But reasonable citizens should (or at the very least, may) refuse to surrender their moral judgment on important matters to anyone. Then, unless all reasonable citizens actually agreed with the decisions of some agreed moral/political guru, no one could legitimately rule on the basis of wisdom. So there might be political truth, and even knowers of various degrees, without any moral basis for epistocracy (Estlund 1998, 75).

In other words, Estlund claims that even if correct decisions do exist in this way, they are not necessarily morally legitimate without the acquiescence of all reasonable citizens, despite their epistemic legitimacy. We ought to be skeptical at the outset of a theory that pertains to correctness in a pluralistic domain. How is it, in a morally and culturally pluralistic society, that any one individual *could* realistically have access to the interests and preferences of others? What *is* "moral expertise"? These are questions that Estlund does not address, questions I argue are significant to anyone interested in knowledge. Indeed, in the following section I demonstrate how epistemologist Alvin Goldman deals with precisely this concern, and I will bracket it until then.

A related issue Estlund raises is about political truth, and here again he suffers from a lack of detail. What is political truth truth *about*? How do we ascertain whether or not it *is* true? To what standards do we hold our evaluative moral judgements? Who knows the truth and who does not? Certainly it seems inconsistent to think that there could be *political* truth that no one knew, at least not if we are committed to the idea of democracy where we deem legitimate rule as rule by the people. Adopting a correctness view like this amounts to little more than "rule by the people, insofar as the people arrive at the right answer". The fallout of this view is that a democratic society can produce a result that is not legitimate because it is *wrong*. As Estlund points out, this makes correctness theories very epistemically demanding with regard to the reliability of democratic procedures (Estlund 1998, 79). He doesn't think that epistemic proceduralism is susceptible to this criticism, however, due to its allowance of the possibility of legitimacy without correctness (Estlund 1998, 79). In this way Estlund retains the important proceduralist element.

How is it, then, that epistemic proceduralism is *epistemic*? Estlund adopts the metaphor of the "public view", and suggests that doing so "signals the application of cognitive intelligence to the moral question collectively faced" (Estlund 1998, 85). In this way Estlund thinks he can explain why it is that one can accept a decision as legitimate without agreeing with it. If I think the outcome is wrong for me, I can take solace in the fact that it is right to the part of me that is a member of the public: "Just as each agent has a duty to do what he believes to be right, the agency of the public – and each person qua public citizen – has a duty to do what seems right from the public point of view" (Estlund 1998, 85). Epistemic proceduralism is preferable to the forms of proceduralism Estlund dismisses because it isn't random, and because it reflects a collective cognitive intelligence. In other words, epistemic proceduralism produces collective knowledge about political decisions.

Because he has already shown the implausibility of "bare proceduralism",

Estlund displays a level of comfort with setting out a number of substantive constraints on what will count as a fair, epistemic procedure. These include the requirement of equal ability to participate and equal consideration of interests. These conditions are not problematic or unwarranted, but his requirements that participants "accept and address a shared conception of justice, and this is common knowledge", and "sincerely address questions of justice, not of interest group advantage, and it is common knowledge that this is so" (Estlund 1998, 81) seem to beg the question of proceduralism. Though I agree that legitimate decisions must in some way require this shared conception, it is unclear on Estlund's account how this comes to be. Though his view presupposes the permitted participation of everyone equally, he does not seem concerned with explaining how it is that a concept of justice can come to be shared in the first place. This seems to fly in the face of proceduralism's initial motivation: the fact of pluralism. The reason we deliberate is because we *do not* share a tremendous amount. In a sense, then, Estlund assumes that we must share a great deal of knowledge before we can engage politically with each other, and I am suspicious that this in some ways begs the question of epistemic value. From an epistemological perspective, I question how it is that individuals can be seen as sharing anything as the result of a procedure with the minimal demand of permitted equal participation. As I will argue in my next chapter, inclusion is a necessary constraint on any procedure that is expected to produce epistemically valuable outcomes.

Estlund doesn't deal with the possible interplay of individual vs. community knowledge in explicating the epistemic value of democracy, the idea that knowledge *can* be shared, changed, expanded upon, etc. In essence this is the very basis of my argument – I suggest there is knowledge to be gained from the deliberation process itself. Further, I argue that the dynamics of democratic deliberation themselves create the foundation for political truth, so that if sense is to be made of political truth, it can only be so after a process where knowledge is shared. This is because I think there is a way of talking about inclusive deliberation that illustrates its capacity to generate epistemological change, not only in that it can change *what* we know, but also *how* we know. Finally, and most importantly, embedded within deliberation as inclusive is the promise of doing better – of acquiring better political knowledge.

This is not to say that epistemic proceduralism cannot accommodate a model of inclusive deliberation if pushed. However, my argument is that if there is epistemic value in democratic processes, it is not only an intrinsic value, as Estlund suggests, but also an instrumental one. By this I mean that yes, perhaps we ought to cherish democracy because inherently we cherish wisdom, and if democracy contributes toward our acquisition of it, then so too is it privileged. However, I think this is separate from the idea that inclusive deliberation is itself epistemically valuable instrumentally, as it is the *process* by which we acquire knowledge. Thus the primary epistemic value of democracy is to be found in the process of deliberation, and the process is *instrumental* in the creation of outcomes that are themselves epistemically valuable. Estlund, and also Goldman, as I will argue below, seem to assume that the value of democracy in relationship to knowledge is found in the outcome – it is voting, and its results that matter[4].

[4] According to Goldman, democracy functions properly when individuals have the right political knowledge, and vote based on this knowledge.

An Epistemological Approach: Core Voter Knowledge

Similar questions have been asked about democracy by epistemologists. In *Knowledge in a Social World*, Alvin Goldman examines democracy as a social institution that has a relationship with knowledge. Goldman has a very specific view of what the most salient questions are regarding *what* and *how* we know, a view which I argue is not in fact well-suited to understanding the epistemological dimensions of democracy. However, his argument points toward some very useful suggestions for what actions we might have to take politically to ensure that we do well when acquiring political knowledge. Just as Estlund, the political philosopher, had epistemological weaknesses, so to does the epistemologist have weakenesses in his approach to democracy. First, I will examine the view itself, focusing on a tension between his epistemic individualism and the project of understanding social knowledge.

In *Knowledge in a Social World*, Alvin Goldman proposes to investigate the social paths to knowledge. His motivation comes from a desire to take seriously the criticisms of mainstream analytic philosophy's inattention to the social dimensions of knowledge and epistemology. In his previous work, Goldman had focused primarily on developing an individualistic, naturalized, externalist theory of knowledge. Knowledge, for Goldman, is justified true belief, where justification is a result of a reliable process. However, for the purposes of his investigation in *Knowledge in a Social World*, Goldman sets aside *strong* knowledge – justified true belief – and claims instead that all that is needed for social knowledge is *weak* knowledge – true belief, come apart from justification. Goldman describes weak knowledge as what we mean when we talk about knowledge in an ordinary sense, as opposed to when we subject it to epistemological scrutiny.

As Goldman outlines in Chapter Three of his book, "The Framework", veritistic evaluation can be approached from two different perspectives: *fundamental* or *instrumental* veritistic value (Goldman 1999, 87). The purpose of the first part of *Knowledge in a Social World* is to explicate fundamental veritistic value, value that applies to *states* such as knowledge, error, and ignorance (Goldman 1999, 87). The second part investigates instrumental veritistic value by looking at *practices* that are catalytic to knowledge acquisition and belief formation (Goldman 1999, 87). These practices are primarily social, hence Goldman's assertion that he is engaged in "veritistic social epistemology" (Goldman 1999, 87). I will begin with an overview of the project as a whole before narrowing to a discussion of the role knowledge plays in democracy as a social institution.

Goldman is clear about the parameters of his project, undertaking a general theory of knowledge by articulating "what exactly is knowledge, as opposed to ignorance and error, and how…social factors contribute to its growth" (Goldman 1999, vii). The reason for expanding the scope of epistemology beyond traditional undertakings is the inevitability of the influence of social factors on the "prospects for knowledge" (Goldman 1999, vii). However, Goldman emphasizes the need for his particular project because of what he identifies as an assault on knowledge by recent work in postmodern philosophy and the sociology of knowledge (Goldman 1999, vii). Underlying the whole endeavor is a refreshing optimism that social factors don't

necessarily *subvert* the acquisition of knowledge. Goldman is wholeheartedly committed to giving us prescriptions for doing better, and seeks to explicate various social routes to knowledge – how it is that the interactions of individual agents within social institutions facilitates the acquisition of knowledge. Given his explicit interest in veritism, he focuses on ways in which social institutions can either help or hinder us in our acquisition of knowledge as true belief, instead of error or ignorance. Goldman assumes that knowledge as true belief accurately maps onto the ordinary conception of knowledge: "People's dominant epistemic goal…is to obtain true belief, plain and simple. They want to be *informed* (have true belief) rather than *misinformed* or *uninformed*" (Goldman 1999, 24).

In Chapter Ten of *Knowledge in a Social World*, Goldman provides a veritistic account of democracy. He admits of having to make several general assumptions about democracy, taking as his starting point "that the essence of democracy is rule of the people for the people by means of voting" (Goldman 1999, 315). This opens a space for Goldman to make voting – and voter knowledge – the primary focus in an investigation into the role knowledge plays in democracy. His argument is that representative democracy requires that participants have a way of acquiring true and accurate political knowledge in order to vote in a way that will maximally benefit them and their interests. He is interested in *what kind* of knowledge voters ought to possess in order to express true opinions or statements through voting (Goldman 1999, 315). The social practices to be evaluated, therefore, are those that promote and/or impede the acquisition, by individuals, of true political belief.

Goldman therefore restricts his discussion of democracy to the relationship between voting and knowledge. He begins by rejecting the preference-model of voting, where one casts their vote based solely on their own personal preferences. Preferences, he argues, cannot be either true or false, they offer "no straightforward clue to the sort of knowledge that voters in a democracy ought to have" (Goldman 1999, 315). Instead we must look at statements or opinions – "precisely the kinds of things that can be true or false" – to form a framework through which the relationship between individual voters' behaviour and their knowledge can be fully investigated (Goldman 1999, 315). In addition, he restricts his scope further by denying the plausibility of a 'correctness theory' of voting that describes a correlation between accuracy with regards to a "common will" and the reasonable correctness of individuals' political beliefs (Goldman 1999, 316)[5]. This is the wrong place from which to examine the epistemology of democracy, Goldman claims, because there is a difference between the common will and the interests of particular individuals.

This implied dichotomy between public and private interests will become increasingly important in my next chapter, and it is worth getting clear on how exactly Goldman sets it up, as well as why he rejects what Estlund refers to as epistemic theories. Goldman takes up the argument that when we vote on whether something is in accordance with the public good, what we are doing is voicing our opinion on just that: whether it does or does not reflect the common will (Goldman 1999, 316). He points out that this view is starkly at odds with how things seem to proceed during a vote:

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[5] Like Estlund, Goldman has Rousseau in mind as the chief proponent of such a view.

> Suppose a group of people wish to take a sightseeing trip together, but they must first agree on where to go. A good way to decide where to go is to take a vote and see which destination is most popular. Here it is natural to encourage everyone to vote on the basis of his or her own interest. Must each vote nonetheless be interpreted as a statement that the voted-for destination is the *group's* preferred destination? That is highly implausible. Sally may know antecedently that most members of the group prefer, say, Yosemite to Yellowstone, even though she prefers Yellowstone. When she votes for Yellowstone, must we still interpret her vote as a statement that the group's interest is to go to Yellowstone? That would be absurd (Goldman 1999, 316).

It would be further absurd, he writes, to think that voting consists merely in voicing one's opinion about the common good, for one can do that with ease whether or not voting is involved (Goldman 1999, 317). This highlights that there is something missing in so-called correctness theories – the idea that voting reflects knowledge about the public good needs also an account of what it means to be able to vote. Goldman advocates Thomas Christiano's view of a vote as a *resource,* "a resource that enables one to influence that body's collective decisions in a manner specified by certain rules" (Goldman 1999, 317).

A Political Analysis of Goldmanian Democracy

Goldman makes a decisive claim about what the aim of democracy is: a correct outcome from the proper functioning of institutions and individuals within them. This procedural view stands in stark contrast to deliberative models of democracy that emphasize the importance of fair processes. What Goldman is interested in is the "*core* type of political question, one that voters in a representative democracy should answer correctly if the democracy is to function optimally" (Goldman 1999, 320). His goal, then, is to examine various social institutions in order to ascertain what helps and hinders voters in acquiring "core voter knowledge" (Goldman 1999, 320). I have already mentioned what Goldman takes the goal of democracy to be: "to achieve the citizens' goals or aims" (Goldman 1999, 320). In a representative democracy, the people's aims are achieved, presumably, by electing the candidate they believe will most closely represent their interests (Goldman 1999, 321). Therefore, one of the core political beliefs that we ought to be concerned with getting *right* is true belief about which candidate represents our opinions or preferences.

Core voter knowledge is the knowledge held by individual voters. The knowledge that each individual holds is what Goldman calls the answer to her core political question: which candidate will best represent her interests (Goldman 1999, 324)? This is what causes Goldman to claim that when democracy is functioning properly, it does so when every voting citizen has "full core knowledge", which is "a situation in which every voter knows the true answer to his or her core question" (Goldman 1999, 326). However, as I hope my discussion of Estlund made clear, the proper function of democracy is perhaps better understood as the production of legitimate outcomes, where such outcomes can be "defended on grounds it would be

unreasonable to object to" (Estlund 1998, 71). If we recognize a deliberative procedure as itself the source of knowledge, and if we take seriously the fact of pluralism, Goldman's view falls short of giving a robust account of the relationship between knowledge and democracy.

If a vote is conceived as a resource, it follows that we ought to maximize our use of it if we are to fully exercise our democratic right. For Goldman, the correct way to maximize our vote is to have true and accurate knowledge with which to make a decision. Given this stance towards democracy, the picture that Goldman paints reflects a grim assessment of the current state of western democracies, subject as they are to corruption and economic influence. Despite our susceptibility to bias and influence, we ought not to be nihilistic about the possibilities of achieving a properly functioning democracy, and I take Goldman's discussion on this point to be one of the major strengths in his account. He rightly points out that no individual can attain political information in a vacuum (Goldman 1999, 340). We must rely, in part, on other means. The main vehicle that Goldman assesses as primary of dissemination of information to individuals is the media (Goldman 1999, 340). Because of this, we ought to be committed to ensuring freedom of the press, and to holding the media accountable and keeping them as honest as possible. He gestures briefly at a number of measures that he identifies as "shortcuts" to helping us achieve our goals of true political belief, and I will mention a few of them quickly.

Among these shortcuts are rules around campaign financing (Goldman 1999, 333) and party or candidate transparency (Goldman 1999, 337). Limiting campaign financing is desirable because "differences in financial resources are readily translated into differences in persuasive power, even when the persuasion obscures the true answer to each voter's core question" (Goldman 1999, 333). This reflects what Goldman sees as the aim of political candidates, namely the desire to *get elected.* Because of this aim, it is reasonable to assume that candidates will attempt to persuade voters of their merits alongside the downfalls of their rivals. Though candidates obviously have every right to speak to the electorate and try to sway voters to support their political platforms, in the interest of the attainment of core voter knowledge we ought to have an interest in fairness on this matter. Merely "limiting" campaign financing might not be enough, and Goldman suggests both the option of publicly funding all political campaigns, and/or limiting financing coming in from interest groups lobbying and raising money on behalf of a particular section in society (Goldman 1999, 333). The mention of interest groups is tied to Goldman's second chief contribution to eliminating sources of core voter error.

This second contribution is the idea of *party transparency* (Goldman 1999, 337). Goldman again relies on empirical evidence to demonstrate that parties and candidates often provide misleading, biased, or even untrue information, either about themselves, or about their competitors. Further, political campaigns are often generously funded by corporations or interest groups, implying that the candidates who operate with these funds are primarily focused on achieving the ends of those that help, financially, to get them elected (Goldman 1999, 338). Therefore, Goldman suggests policies requiring transparency. These policies can be either institutionalized (by limiting or denying altogether private funding) or be promoted by the media (Goldman 1999, 338). He discusses the option of requiring political ads to be scrutinized by media watch-dogs,

or including a "message to accompany a commercial saying, "Warning: The opinions expressed here are not those of any candidate for office but are paid for by Corporation X which last session employed 87 lobbyists on Capitol Hill, received $640 million in tax breaks, and got exempted from 237 government regulations"" (Goldman 1999, 338).

These would both be excellent courses of action to take. However, for the purposes of this thesis, I am more interested in the suggestions that Goldman spends much less time on. These are the *structural* changes that could be enacted to facilitate the acquisition of core voter knowledge. The suggestion that is particularly relevant to my purposes here is Goldman's brief mention of the proposal he attributes to James Fishkin of a "national caucus":

> The idea is to assemble a national sample of the citizenry, a cross-section of the electorate, for several days. These "delegates" would interact in person with the major candidates...and would debate the issues in depth with the candidates and with one another. The delegates would then be polled on their preferences, and their opinions would be given coverage in the media...[This caucus] could help everyone achieve greater core knowledge (Goldman 1999, 335).

Goldman suggests this could help to counteract empirical research that shows that people usually deliberate with others who tend to share their views (Goldman 1999, 335).

This suggestion is as close as Goldman comes to acknowledging the role democratic deliberation can have with regard to knowledge. An institutionally recognized caucus that makes the results of their deliberation public seems to me the best way of counteracting the empirical data Goldman cites to support the suggestion that when individuals engage in political discussion they predominantly do so with other individuals who already share their political interests. Not only do we choose to talk to those who agree with our goals or values, we are prone to dismissing the viewpoints of those who oppose us (Goldman 1999, 335). The kind of body that Fishkin supports would bring people together who oppose each other, and support open deliberation, which would result in the participants' exposure to "a richer and more diverse array of information, including the sort of countervailing considerations that ordinary citizens rarely encounter" (Goldman 1999, 335). The idea of a caucus, an institutionalized deliberative body made up of a "cross-section of the electorate", is surely worth more than the claim that such an idea "*might*" improve our goal true political belief (Goldman 1999, 335). Indeed, in the next chapter I will argue that inclusive deliberation is the most salient contributor to an understanding of *social* knowledge.

Social Epistemology?

Goldman lacks two important considerations in this account of democracy, and I will argue in the next chapter that the second is a consequence of the first. I have mentioned the first aspect missing from his discussion: an account of the deliberative processes widely agreed by contemporary political theorists to be integral to the proper function of democracy. The second criticism has to do with social knowledge.

Goldman claims that his evaluation is of the social practices that impinge on our acquisition of knowledge. However, Goldman overlooks the inherent sociality of democracy itself, sociality which directly impacts the role democracy plays in creating or facilitating – or affecting in any way – knowledge. That there is insufficient sociality in his account of democracy makes it hard for Goldman to adequately capture the value of democracy for knowledge. This is because sociality is key to understanding the nature and value of deliberation – this is the focus of my next chapter. The result of this is a question of whether what Goldman is engaged in is best understood as *social* epistemology.

Goldman claims that the aim in his chapter on democracy is to show "how democracy's success hinges on social practices that advance the prospects for accurate political opinion" (Goldman 1999, 348). I have tried to show not only the inconsistency of his view with the widely held assertion that democracy ought to be as deliberative as possible, but also how his conception of democracy excludes any idea of the individual as an interdependent part of a particular community. Together, these two oversights lead Goldman to ignore the value of the process of deliberation in acquiring knowledge, but not knowledge in his traditional understanding. Instead, as Young points out, knowledge about political decisions is most accurate when it is constructed through the inclusion of varied and particular points of view. While Goldman's suggestions for how to improve the quality of democracy do not go unnoticed, their foundation lacks reliability as a result of a thin and atomistic understanding of the relationship between the individual and society. A consequence of this is that Goldman mistakes what kind of knowledge is relevant in understanding how democracy as a social process functions. While he is right to draw our attention to the relationship between knowledge and democracy, he posits the salient knowledge as being knowledge of oneself, of one's interests, of the probability of outcomes. Instead, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, the knowledge that *matters* to a functioning democracy is knowledge about each other, about our place in society, and about that society as a whole.

It seems to me that Goldman's restriction on the concept of what counts as social epistemology arises out of his desire to retain "true belief" (rather than merely justification) in his inquiry, which goes hand in hand with his rejection of the "veriphobic" epistemologies of social constructivists and post-modern sociologists of knowledge (Goldman 2002, 186). He is led, therefore, to articulate his project in individualistic terms, thereby maintaining continuity with mainstream epistemology and remaining distinct from the veriphobia and relativism he sees as prevalent in the social epistemology literature. While I have identified Goldman's retention of true belief as one of the most notable strengths of his view, I am uncertain as to whether an investigation of "weak knowledge" requires the individualized epistemological agents that Goldman seems to assume as basic. Further, I claim that an inquiry that deals with various effects and influences social practices and institutions have on individual knowers is not one properly labeled as an inquiry into *social* knowledge.

In a symposium on *Knowledge in a Social World*, William J. Talbott makes a criticism of Goldman's approach that is similar to mine. Talbott questions whether an individualistic approach can adequately capture what is truly *social* about social epistemology. Talbott proposes a kind of systems analysis that is primarily social,

rather than a study of the individualized cognizer within social institutions:

> Rather than viewing social cognition in terms of the individual inferential steps of the members of the relevant group, I believe that it would be more fruitful to view it as a kind of social mechanism. Then rather than prove theorems about agents who reason ideally from true or rationally impeccable evidence, social epistemology would become a kind of systems analysis in which one would explore the sorts of feedback processes and other social mechanisms that would produce increases in veritistic value for social systems made up of individuals who reason far from ideally on evidence that is far from rationally impeccable (Talbott 2002, 202).

Talbott continues, elaborating on the limitations of the individualistic approach in accessing the salient features of the practical examples Goldman provides. Most significant to my project here, Talbott points out an important oversight in Goldman's example about juries (Goldman 1999, Ch. 9). Goldman examines the American jury system, and Talbott claims that his individualism "colors" his discussion here (Talbott 2002, 204). Namely, Talbott points out that Goldman emphasizes the "cognitive limitations of individual jury members" while noting that the most interesting aspect of juries for a social epistemologist is the "remarkable error-correcting tendency of the group as a whole" (Talbott 2002, 204). As Talbott makes clear, the emphasis on individualism in Goldman's approach "prevents him from fully appreciating one of the most striking successes in applied social epistemology – the development of a social practice that…corrects for the epistemic limitations of the individuals who participate in it" (Talbott 2002, 204).

While I endorse Talbott's criticism, my own worries go deeper, and are founded on the epistemological value of deliberation. As I will develop further in the following chapters, the epistemological agent as individual is problematic with regard to understanding why deliberation would be valuable to the democratic process. In particular, deliberative theorists often claim for deliberation a transformative element; deliberation is a means through which a diverse society can, despite differences, govern itself. As David Kahane writes, "Democratic theorists set out to show how well-structured deliberative institutions can make space for a diversity of situated perspectives, while issuing in just and legitimate outcomes" (Kahane 2000, 510). While Goldman's take on the democracy-knowledge relationship explains why an individual might vote in a particular way, it does nothing to justify the outcome of a vote as a whole. How does core voter knowledge figure into the attainment of a justified outcome that is acceptable to everyone, regardless of whether or not they personally agree? If the only relevant knowledge for a proper functioning democracy is which candidate will best represent my interests, what reason do I have for accepting a result when the majority elects a different candidate? In short, Goldman provides no resources with which to accommodate democractic pluralism, a characteristic widely acknowledged to be central to western democracies and democratic theorists.

Conclusion

On his account, Goldman's approach overlooks the relevance of the knowledge

we have, and come to have, about each other as a result of our participation in the "social institution" of democracy. However, his approach also lacks the resources with which to defend the transformation that seems so central to the calls by democratic theorists for increased participation and deliberation. In my third chapter I will defend an epistemological view that makes sense of transformation in a way that is epistemologically significant, namely transformation that is specifically *epistemological*. This view, however, conceptualizes social knowledge as *irreducibly collective* and reconceives the epistemological agent as a community, or group, rather than an individual. In this way social knowledge is best understood as a top-down phenomena – starting at the level of the community, rather than something that is accumulated through the aggregation of the knowledge that individuals have.

Thus there are two reasons that I see a connection between deliberation and social knowledge. The first is that deliberation gives us a way of understanding how it is that individuals can stand in relation to each other in the democratic process. Goldman believes that the proper function of democracy requires true political belief held by individual voters. However, leaving out deliberation as a means by which people come to *acquire* belief means leaving out the significance of what our political knowledge is about: true belief about each other, about social values, about our own political goals. Indeed this is what I most clearly identify as the *social* aspect of social knowledge. This is my second point. I mean to show that though it may be the case that true belief about which candidate will best represent me is important to a functioning democracy, it is not the case that I can have this knowledge as an individual without first *sharing* knowledge in important ways. In the next chapter I illustrate the connection between an inclusive model of democratic deliberation, and the concept of social knowledge as irreducibly collective.

Chapter Two

My previous chapter concluded with the suggestion that the proper object of interest for epistemologists with regard to democracy is more than individual knowledge of one's political interests. My focus in this chapter is to discuss Iris Young's conception of the role that *social knowledge* plays in democratic deliberation, with particular attention to her claim that deliberation can be *transformative.* I defend Young's position as pinpointing what knowledge is relevant for democracy. However, I will identify some limitations with this approach, which will lead me into my third and final chapter, on Lynn Nelson's feminist naturalized epistemology. My argument against Young is that rather than providing an account of how deliberation can be epistemologically transformative – that is, to *change* the way we think and know – she describes only various ways in which we can *increase* our knowledge about each other.

Introduction:

In the previous chapter, I set the foundation for an investigation of the connection between social knowledge and deliberation. In this chapter I will consider a particular view of democracy as requiring inclusive deliberation in order to refocus the discussion about the correct object of knowledge with regard to democracy. A central reason to consider deliberation as a key part of any properly functioning, legitimate democracy is participatory inclusion. As Iris Young puts it:

> Inclusion increases the chances that those who make proposals will transform their positions from an initial self-regarding stance to a more objective appeal to justice, because they must listen to others with differing positions to whom they are also answerable (Young 2000, 52).

Young suggests that inclusive deliberation can be transformative in part because of the role that political communication must play. In particular, she argues that narrative can be a means by which we acquire important knowledge about others. In the first half of this chapter, I will examine her model of deliberation as inclusive. In the second half I will suggest that her reliance on standpoint epistemology as a foundation for her account of narrative as transformative actually creates barrier to the inclusion and transformation she conceptualizes. I argue that though inclusive deliberation is intimately connected to social knowledge, Young's theory of knowledge cannot properly support a meaningful account of transformation.

Inclusion

In *Inclusion and Democracy*, Iris Young parses out two forms of exclusion in political processes: external exclusion, whereby individuals are restricted from accessing the political process in some way, and internal exclusion, in which the terms of participation themselves are exclusionary, though the individuals excluded might have physical access to deliberative publics, the ability to vote, etc. Examples of external exclusion are things such as discriminatory voter registration rules (such as

those in the United States prior to the Civil Rights movement) and the influence wealth can have on political campaigns and party success. These are instances of "the many ways that individuals and groups that ought to be included are purposely or inadvertently left out of fora for discussion and decision-making" (Young 2000, 54). Internal exclusion, as mentioned above, has to do with the structure of deliberative participation itself, for example, what kinds of things count as *political* communication, what the appropriate standards of public reason are, etc. (56). Young notes that while external exclusion has received attention from deliberative theorists, internal exclusion remains largely ignored (Young 2000, 55). However, focusing on the benefits of internal inclusion can make the call for deliberative democracy even stronger.

Young argues that reducing internal exclusion promotes the kind of social knowledge essential to a deliberating polity. For this reason, the first half of *Inclusion and Democracy* is dedicated to exploring the connection between internal inclusion, social knowledge, and social difference as a resource. This is in direct contrast to Goldman's view, which focuses on reducing barriers to *external* inclusion, as in his emphasis on how individuals can best acquire core voter knowledge. As Goldman shows us, there is a clear sense in which an externally exclusive political community can only create or acquire partial knowledge, and so his project is certainly essential to a full understanding of the relationship between knowledge and democracy. However, if the connection that Young draws between *internal* inclusion and knowledge holds, then we also have good reason to worry about internal exclusion, and so Goldman's project is only a starting point for this particular inquiry. There is more to the relationship between knowledge and democracy than merely the correct information about which candidate best represents one's interests. I argue that the complexity of the relationship rests upon the idea of knowledge as *social*.

Young conceptualizes social knowledge as uniquely non-hegemonic. That is to say that knowledge and knowing are not things that are the same for everyone. In this way, "to know" does not denote an action that maps on to everyone it applies to in the same way. She describes social knowledge as the accumulation of situated social perspectives, starting as she does with an epistemological view located within the phenomenology of the continental tradition[6]. According to this view, individuals are not autonomous beings. That is to say that the idea of an individual, disengaged from anything "morally arbitrary" and self-sufficient with respect to relationships with others, is an impossible ideal and does not reflect the reality of our actual situation in the world. Instead, we are each of us situated within a particular horizon of intelligibility, from within which we view the world and understand those around us. Our situation is unique to each of us[7].

To be situated, for Young, is not just a matter of social location. Like those whose epistemology she relies on, she places an importance on *physical* location, or embodiment, as well. Helen Longino describes it succinctly: "Embodiment means location. Bodies are in particular places, in particular times, oriented in particular ways to their environments. This places limitations on aspirations to universality…"

[6] For a concise and readable rendering of the view, see Charles Taylor's essay in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* on engaged agency.

[7] See Jennifer Nedelsky for further explication of the idea of autonomy as relational.

(Longino 1999, 333). There is something about where and who we physically *are* in the world that shapes and structures our experience of it. This is because anything I can know I can only know from my own perspective, from within my own "horizon". Thus I have my own "standpoint" from which I view the world. As I will argue later, this view of the individual as embodied and situated leads Young to rely on feminist standpoint theory as the epistemological foundation of her view of social knowledge.

Young adopts the phenomenological terminology of "throwness" to describe how we find ourselves in a world that we did not create and that in many ways we have no control over (Young 2000, 100). According to Young, we find ourselves thrown into social relationships with people with whom we did not – and even *would* not – choose to have social relationships. Of central concern for a just society, then, is coming to grips with situations that are often out of the control of the individuals that find themselves within them. In this way, we must come to grips with each other, both because of the impact that those around us have on us, and because of our impact on others. Because inclusion is at the core of justice for Young, a just democractic society requires our active participation. This is because Young in part defines democracy as a process of collective problem solving (Young 2000, 28).

It is for this reason that deliberation is a key part of the democratic process – only through communication can we come to have knowledge about and understand others in a way that, in her words, will be "transformative" (Young 2000, 76). One of the central reasons this is of import, in her view, is that without knowledge of others, our democracy risks illegitimacy due to the possibility of internal exclusion. Though everyone may get a vote, if minorities are not given the opportunity to voice their interests and desires, we run a greater risk of reverting to a merely aggregative democracy with a set of permanent minorities. However, it is only when voicing one's opinion actually has the possibility of being picked up by others that one is truly included. Inclusion then, in this sense, depends in a large way on tapping into the social knowledge created from sharing different perspectives.

Social knowledge for Young is the knowledge we have about each other. Indeed it is this kind of knowledge that bears relevance to democracy, more so than the knowledge that each of us as individuals has about which candidate, if elected as a representative, will best reflect our own interests. Thus the transformative feature of deliberation: deliberation can move us from our narrow, situated interests into the public sphere. Young writes, "Having to be accountable to people from diverse social positions with different needs, interests, and experience helps transform discourse from self-regard to appeals to justice" (Young 2000, 115). She is careful to distinguish the idea of appealing to justice from appealing to the notion of the "common good". On her view, framing a claim as an appeal to justice means only that it is made in such a way that "take[s] others' interests into account and which others *ought* therefore to accept" (Young 2000, 116). It becomes obvious that knowledge of others is essential to the capacity to frame one's claims in an inclusive, public way.

Young provides the example of the creation of a Police Civilian Review Board in Pittsburgh in the late 1990s. Despite resistance from both the city council, and the police themselves, the coalition pushing for the establishment of a review board was successful. Young points to this as an illustration of the role inclusive deliberation can play in changing the political landscape in a way that is more attentive to justice,

moving away from a problem that arose in part due to racial inequalities and injustice. She writes, "When the issue first emerged, many white middle-class people saw no urgency in it; having the opportunity to read about and listen to the experience of others changed the minds of many of them" (Young, 2000, 3). Necessary to the process, then, was the inclusion and participation of marginalized groups, groups that may not have been included in previous decision-making. This inclusion introduced the creation of the review board as an issue for everyone, rather than as something local.

Young describes how the issue of civilian review had been "simmering" in the background of other public issues, but that had "come to the boil" when a police shooting became highly publicized. This incident resulted mobilization of a number of groups responding to different aspects: "The Coalition to Counter Hate Groups joined with the newly formed Citizens for Police Accountability to develop a proposal for a Review Board. At the same time the Pittsburgh chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union began documenting cases of alleged police abuse or harassment" (Young 2000, 1). Young notes how these events contributed to placing the creation of a review board as "centrally in the public eye", as something that society as a whole was forced to face. Justice requires that we take into consideration issues that affect those around us, even if initially we do not see them as immediately ours. The construction of public problems itself requires inclusion. Further, the solutions to such problems are something that must be sought through the active inclusion of everyone.

Young makes a similar point elsewhere with her use of the example of debates over welfare reform in her short essay, "Justice, Inclusion, and Deliberative Democracy". She points out that often it is assumed that merely putting welfare reform on the public agenda is an act of inclusion – surely welfare recipients are part of the political sphere if their interests are being considered. However, Young makes clear that it is not enough that politicians talk *about* welfare recipients. Instead, inclusive democracy demands that they speak *to* them, that anyone who might be affected by a particular decision has the right to publicly deliberate on it[8]. This is required because knowledge is *situated.* It is incomprehensible that someone could know what potential welfare recipients need or want without either being one or talking to those who are. Talking to others is how we come to grips with them, providing us with a way of ascertaining what our issues and problems *are*, as well as a means of solving them.

That said, it is specifically *inclusive* deliberation that promotes transformation, because it is inclusion that facilitates the creation of social knowledge. Once we begin acquiring this kind of knowledge, presumably we will be able to amass larger and larger quantities of information about each other. Young claims this information will assist us in improving the deliberative process, as we will be more apt to speak to those we have overlooked in the past, whether by means of external or internal exclusion. Despite the fact that learning about others transforms us with regard to the relationship between the information we have and the way we present our own interests, Young privileges our situatedness. Even if we were to acquire enough information to enable us to move from a self-interested point of view to one that is more inclusive, we do not

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[8] An important distinction here is that Young does not claim that decisions that are made inclusively are necessarily just. Rather, inclusive deliberation guarantees their *legitimacy*. I emphasize this because justice is not exclusively procedural in this way.

do so by transcending our own particular locations. Instead, she relies on Hannah Arendt's concept of "plurality", and the "enlarged mentality" that contributes to it (Young 2000, 112).

Arendt's work – particularly the distinction between public and private – is both necessary and antagonistic to Young's own view. In *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt*, commentator Michael Gottsegen describes Arendt's public sphere as something that exists whether or not we actually inhabit it. According to Gottsegen, "The public is…the lasting world that is built by, and the home of, human acts" (Gottsegen 1994, 50). Additionally, the public sphere is constituted by us through language – with a "discursive give-and-take" which "establishes the world as a *common* world even while it manifests the irreducible perspectival multiplicity of its denizens" (Gottsegen 1994, 51). So for Arendt, common space is constituted *by* individuals, rather than being constitutive *of* them. The particularity of each individual means that "only in virtue of what is shared in the common realm of the public can we be said to share a world in common with one another at all" (Gottsegen 1994, 51). Because of this view of commonality, public issues must be those that are "truly common concerns, and they must be of such a nature as to relate those who are gathered around it *to* one another through their differences *from* one another" (Gottsegen 1994, 52). Thus for Arendt, and too for Young, this sharing happens in the political realm.

With Arendt's influence in the background, Young focuses on the important role that specifically *political* communication has in facilitating the production and acquisition of social knowledge. There is social knowledge to be gained through political communication – the process of communication itself involves both teaching and learning. Young's view of democratic deliberation is that we all have something that we can teach others, and in turn, we all "are ignorant of some aspect of the social or natural world" (Young 2000, 77). Deliberation opens a space for the transformation of individual interests from a place of self-interest to claims about justice through the means of inclusive political communication.

Political Communication: Rhetoric, Recognition, and Narrative

Internal inclusion, for Young, is integral to the deliberative process because it is transformative (Young 2000, 52). Her distinction between external and internal inclusion serves to undergird a common focus on rational argument as a sufficient condition for deliberation. Supplementing traditional methodology, Young defends the validity of other forms of political communication: greeting, rhetoric, and narrative (Young 2000, 79). Attention to alternative ways of sharing information results in greater inclusion; the openness to difference resulting from not privileging rational argument exclusively over other forms of communication is a *resource* for the acquisition of shared knowledge among equal and included deliberators (Young 2000, 102). This is because just as knowledge is non-hegemonic, so too are the ways in which we come to know. In this way, public reason-giving cannot be confined within rational argument as doing so excludes those who may have knowledge that does not fit into argument form.

Young's view seeks to expand what kinds of communication count as vehicles for delivering public reasons in the deliberation process. In this way, Young is better

able to develop the connection between democracy and social knowledge than many other deliberative democrats whose work emphasizes political communication as rigid or limited in ways she seeks to challenge. Specifically Young is critical of deliberative models that privilege arguments, understood as "the construction of an orderly chain of reasoning from premises to conclusion" (Young 2000, 37)[9]. The reason to be hesitant about argumentation as the primary mode of political communication is that it must be based on things that are already shared – we must share "a generally accepted conceptual and normative framework for framing the issues" (Young 2000, 37). We must share things because deliberation is about convincing others to take our own value judgments seriously, hence we must have a *public* discourse that allows us an exchange about public issues. However, Young questions whether arguments are the most valid form of such exchange.

Though usually privileged in deliberative contexts, argumentation does not have a monopoly on politically significant communication: "A lack of premises or discursive framework for making an argument about a need or injustice does not imply…that there are no ways to communicate the need or injustice to others" (Young 2000, 37). There may be things that cannot be articulated in an argument that require our attention nonetheless. Young gives the example of the rise of discourse around sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, long experienced by women, was not understood as an injustice – there was no vocabulary to speak about it in terms of argument. However, through sharing personal stories and experiences, "discursive reflection on them then develops a normative language that names their injustice and can give a general account of why this kind of suffering constitutes an injustice" (Young 2000, 72). This sharing and discursive reflection contributed to a public discourse around sexual harassment, moving it into the public sphere. As a result, the political landscape shifted and expanded, and now sexual harassment is recognized as a fundamental harm to women.

One of the main things Young focuses on in her discussion of internal inclusion is the way that communication itself can be exclusive. External inclusion, remember, is about who is allowed to participate, while internal inclusion is inclusion with regard to the terms of participation themselves. The terms of participation extend to the accepted modes of political communication, and Young suggests we re-examine the idea that such communication is best stripped of rhetoric, or emotional content (Young 2000, 65). She writes, "Such allegedly purely rational discourse abstracts from or transcends the situatedness or desire, interest, or historical specificity, and can be uttered and criticized solely in terms of its claims to truth" (Young 2000, 65). On her view, a proper understanding of speech act theory requires that we see the incoherency of demanding that the form of argument be stripped of its meaningful content[10]. She

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[9] As I noted earlier, insofar as Goldman's approach can accommodate deliberation, it does so within a narrow view of what would count as appropriate, knowledge-conducive deliberation.

[10] "Locution refers to the content of a speech act, that about which there can be truth-value. The illocutionary component of a speech act, on the other hand, is the performative force with which the locution is uttered…The perlocution aspect of a proposition is its effect on the hearer. This latter we can associate with rhetoric…It is arbitrary, however, to separate speech acts whose function is solely to communicate meaning and reach understanding from speech acts that serve a strategic goal of the speaker by producing specific effects on listeners…[as] it deviates from the speech act theory of Austin and Searle, who theorized both illocution *and* perlocution as aspects of *all* speech acts. Every

argues that rhetoric is best understood as a *resource* – it can situate both speakers and audience in relation to one another in such a way that can better facilitate the sharing and accumulation of social knowledge (Young 2000, 53).

Inclusive communication is not only a resource for the acquisition of knowledge, but also serves in part to lessen the concern of many deliberative theorists of where to draw the parameters of what counts as *public reason*. According to some, drawing any boundaries requires that we have a robust network of background conditions and moral suppositions – that in fact we *already* share a great deal (Holder 2004, 515). On Young's view, we need not worry about the parameters being too rigid, as deliberation that is appropriately inclusive can itself serve to collapse the public-private distinction. Indeed, she describes this tension between the common good and private interests as a "false dichotomy" (Young 2000, 108). In order to support this view, she claims that the rhetoric, recognition, and narrative are not only constitutive of inclusive deliberation proper, but that they are constitutive of the very conditions for deliberation itself:

> In order to proceed [with deliberation], those of us engaged in meaningful political discussion and debate must share many things. We must share a description of the problem, share an idiom in which to express alternative proposals, share rules of evidence and prediction, and share some normative principles which can serve as premises in our arguments about what ought to be done. When all these conditions exist, then we can engage in reasonable disagreement (Young 2000, 72).

Instead of a model where what counts as public is a result of excluding anything that is not shared, Young pushes us to see the value of her own model, where what our goal is not to cut away things that we disagree on, but rather to bring what is not shared into the public sphere – to create a *bigger* public discourse; to expand what counts as public.

Young acknowledges that appeals to the common good won't do any work for us when there is disagreement or conflict due to inequalities, but this does not mean that the necessary alternative is interest-driven individualism. Instead she proposes a third alternative where the differences in situated positioning throughout society can act as a resource "for enlarging the understanding of everyone and moving them beyond their own parochial interests" (Young 2000, 109). Even when we attend to difference in the way Young outlines, it is still possible to have a sense of solidarity, it would just be one that didn't rely on mutual identification, but rather on mutual recognition (Young 2000, 110). Recognition, or "greeting", is another untapped aspect of political communication that can contribute to inclusive deliberation.

Key among these alternative forms of political communication that have been historically discounted as providing adequate public reasons is narrative. Though greeting and rhetoric are fundamental aspects of Young's view, it is narrative that has

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communicative effort both intends a contextualized force for its assertion and aims to produce specific effects on those to whom it communicates…While it is appropriate to distinguish between communicative acts that aim to further understanding and co-operation and those that operate strategically as means of using others for one's own ends, this distinction cannot be made by means of a distinction between purely rational and merely rhetorical speech" (Young 2000, 65-6).

the greatest potential with regard to creating *knowledge*. One of the biggest barriers to meaningful deliberation is a lack of common ground between the deliberators:

> Some internal exclusions occur because participants in a political public do not have sufficiently shared understandings to fashion a set of arguments with shared premises, or appeals to shared experiences and values (Young 2000, 71).

Further,

> Through narrative the outsiders may come to understand why the insiders value what they value and why they have the priorities they have (Young 2000, 75).

Young's discussion of narrative elucidates how we might come to share a starting point with others whose views are disparate to our own. Sharing personal stories provides a kind of understanding not available through the giving and taking of reasons that is traditionally accounted for in deliberative theories.

It does not matter for my purposes whether this approach to political communication can be accommodated within other deliberative views. What is significant is that Young explicitly makes the connection between narrative and social knowledge. On Young's view the exchange of stories is not only a feature of deliberation itself, but in many instances a *precondition* of deliberation:

> [Narrative] reveals a total social knowledge from particular points of view…[Exhibiting] the situated knowledge available from various social locations, and the combination of narratives from different perspectives produces a collective social wisdom not available from any one position. By means of narratives expressed in public with others differently situated who also tell their stories, speakers and listeners can develop the 'enlarged thought' that transforms their thinking about issues from being narrowly self-interested or self-regarding about an issue, to thinking about an issue in a way that takes account of the perspectives of others (Young 2006, 76).

Including personal testimonies in political conversation is part of what contributes to robust, inclusive deliberation. I previously noted Young's example of the re-conceptualization of sexual harassment. In this example it is narrative that does the bulk of the work in providing a means of articulating a discourse around an invisible injustice.

On this account political communication can be away of speaking across difference, of sharing local knowledge. It is Young's reformulation of what takes place in democratic deliberation that collapses the apparent dichotomy between private and public interests, and the strongest parts of her argument centre on this idea of shared knowledge. This reformulation can be seen as a close parallel to the feminist epistemology of Sandra Harding and her call for "strong objectivity" in science. According to Harding, privileging the viewpoint of only one segment of society – predominantly white middle class males – in scientific inquiry will lead to partial or incomplete information. The best way to attain "strong objectivity" – that is, the strongest viewpoint we might have – is to include the most diverse group of knowers

and inquirers in the research process[11]. For Young, sharing knowledge about each other within a political community transforms us from situated, self-regarding individuals, into situated other-regarding individuals, able to make public claims in virtue of inclusion into the political community. In effect, it gives us a 'strongly objective' view of our own political community.

In this, Young claims that deliberation can move us from "an initial self-regarding stance to a more objective appeal to justice" (Young 2000, 52). This is the transformative aspect of deliberation. I argue, however, that the transformation Young's view is capable of supporting is in fact very limited. Through the creation of social and political knowledge, our own interests can come to change, reflecting the information we have about those with whom we exist in society. However, I will suggest that we may, and by Young's own lights, *should* push for an understanding of deliberation that is much richer in terms of transformation. That is, I argue that Young's model of deliberation falls short of a realization of the priority of inclusion that is necessary in a diverse society. In the next section I examine her reliance on standpoint epistemology in order to draw out the salient weaknesses in her view.

Feminist Standpoint Epistemology

In a paper entitled "Why Standpoint Matters", Alison Wylie draws a distinction between "situated knowledge" and "standpoint epistemology", one which she claims is commonly blurred in discussions of feminist epistemology (Wylie 2004, 343). In *Inclusion and Democracy* Young advocates a view of knowledge as "situated" (Young 2000, 70). She writes, "Situated knowledges can both pluralize and relativize hegemonic discourses, and offer otherwise unspoken knowledge to contribute to wise decisions" (Young 2000, 7). This view strongly echoes the view of the standpoint theorists: her focus on embodiment as individuating, and her reliance on a standpoint conception of objectivity as central to her discussion of social and political knowledge[12]. Standpoint theory posits all knowledge as situated, inclusive of geographical, physical (re: embodied), and social positioning. As Young clearly emphasizes the importance of location in each of these ways, and explicitly relates her ideas about knowledge and objectivity to those of well-known standpoint theorists, I think it is safe to interpret her *as* a standpoint theorist.

In the introduction to *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, Sandra Harding locates the origins of standpoint epistemology as an attempt to explain the "surprising successes" of feminist methodology and research in various disciplines (Harding 2004, 1). She notes that such successes were seen as surprising because "feminism is a political movement and, according to the conventional view…politics can only obstruct and damage the production of scientific knowledge" (Harding 2004, 1). Standpoint theory was put forth as an alternative methodology, an epistemology "no different" from established methodologies except in its commitment to "empowering oppressed groups [and] valuing their experiences" (Harding 2004, 2). Importantly

[11] See Harding's *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives* Ithaca: Cornell University Press (1991), especially chapter 2, "Feminism Confronts the Sciences".

[12] In two footnotes on pages 114-5, Young refers to the work of Donna Haraway and Sandra Harding as examples of epistemologies that act as a foundation for her views of social difference as a resource. The Haraway paper I deal with here is the one that Young mentions.

standpoint theorists sought to emphasize the idea that not all politics necessarily distort knowledge acquisition – some can enhance and strengthen it:

> Standpoint projects were to see "beneath" or "behind" the dominant sexist and androcentric ideologies that shaped everyone's lives to the relations between, on the one hand, the actualities of women's everyday lives and, on the other hand, the conceptual practices of powerful social institutions... Political engagement, rather than dispassionate neutrality, was necessary to gain access to the means to do such research" (Harding 2004, 6).

Much like Young's claim that social and cultural difference can be a resource for deliberation, Harding cites difference as a resource for science and politics (Harding 2004, 7). The key overlap is the emphasis on situation. As Harding firmly writes, "Let us begin with the claim that knowledge is always socially situated" (Harding 2004, 7).

However, as Nancy Hartstock points out, standpoint theory is more than that: "A standpoint carries with it the contention that there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible"(Hartstock 1983, 37)[13]. And so, a common critique of early standpoint theory has been the reduction to essentialism that it often seems to imply, as if to say that marginalized standpoints are epistemically privileged in principle. That is to say that there are some social positions from which some things are visible, and other positions from which those same things are *in*visible. Standpoint indexes knowledge claims to social positions, suggesting the idea of perspectivism, or partiality. The reason we ought to be attentive to the margins is because there are aspects of our own reality that might be invisible to us because of our location. Therefore, the position a person occupies in the web of social, political, economic and cultural structures that she inhabits is both a resource and a constraint on the knowledge claims she may make.

In the essay "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", Donna Haraway provides an account of the emergence of feminist standpoint epistemology[14]. She too describes the roots of

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[13] "This contention should be sorted into a number of distinct epistemological and political claims: (1) Material life (class position in Marxist theory) not only structures but sets limits on the understanding of social relations. (2) If material life is structured in fundamentally opposing ways for two different groups, one can expect that the vision of each will represent an inversion of the other, and in systems of domination the vision available to the rules will be both partial and perverse. (3) The vision of the ruling class (or gender) structures the material relations in which all parties are forced to participate, and therefore cannot be dismissed as simply false. (4) In consequence, the vision available to the oppressed group must be struggled for and represents an achievement which requires both the science to see beneath the surface of the social relations in which all are forced to participate, and the education which can only grow from struggle to change those relations. (5) As an engaged vision, the understanding of the oppressed, the adoption of a standpoint exposes the real relations among human beings as inhuman, points beyond the present, and carries a historically liberatory role" (Hartstock 1983, 37).

[14] In this section I treat the views of Harding and Haraway as mostly interchangeable. I do so only in reference to the point about situated knowledge, as they each refer to the others' work to make their points. Additionally, Young too seems to take Harding and Haraway as making the same point about knowledge as local and embodied. It is the focus on embodiment and situation that I will explicitly take up in my final chapter.

standpoint theory as being found in Marxist epistemology, drawing from the resources of a theory that attempts to identify the ways knowledge claims reflect social positioning (Haraway 1991, 84). Sandra Harding claims that standpoint theory, like Marxism, arises out of a need to account for oppressed peoples and marginalized voices (Harding 1994, 4). Haraway writes, "Marxist starting points offered tools to get to …nuanced theories of mediation" (Haraway 1991, 84). However, one of the strengths of this new epistemology, according to Haraway, is it's ability to give an empirically *better* description of the world, not one that, under a social constructivist (and as she implies, a traditional Marxist) view of knowledge, would merely provide an alternative who's success would be determined by power relations (Haraway 1991, 84).

Haraway criticizes the reductive aspect of the language and epistemology of the natural and social sciences, claiming that most projects in these areas have been mobilized around "a search for translation, convertibility, mobility of meanings, and universality" (Haraway 1991, 85). On her view, these ascriptions are constitutive of an illusionary model of objectivity (Haraway 1991, 87). Instead, she argues for an acknowledgement of our radical embodiment – "objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment, and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility" (Haraway 1991, 87). Interestingly, part of Haraway's push toward embodiment and location as the condition for the possibility of knowing is also a move away from so-called "irresponsible" knowledge claims, those that cannot be "called into account" in any way due to their seemingly transcendent nature (Haraway 1991, 88). Standpoint theory calls for a revisioning of what it means to hold knowledge – though both Haraway and Harding suggest that knowledge is ultimately held by the *individual* (due to the primacy of embodiment), each of us holds distinctly unique knowledge about the world. This uniqueness is what makes all knowledge *situated* (Haraway 1991, 89).

Harding and Haraway call for a re-imagining of what objectivity means. Working from Haraway's claim that "…feminist objectivity means quite simply *situated knowledges*" (Haraway 1991, 86), Harding defines strong objectivity as something that "can take the subject as well as the object of knowledge to be a necessary object of scientific explanations" (Harding 1993, 137). This involves being more inclusive with regard to who gets to be involved in the process of discovery, as everyone who participates is capable of only a partial perspective. Haraway argues directly for partiality itself:

> I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims…[and] rational knowledge does not pretend to disengagement: to be from everywhere and nowhere, to be free from interpretation, from being represented, to be fully self-contained or fully formalizable. Rational knowledge is a process of ongoing critical interpretation among "fields" of interpreters and decoders (Haraway 1991, 93).

On this view of knowledge, partiality motivates Young's call for inclusive deliberation. If everyone comes from a unique location, the partiality of perspectives

supports her call for difference as a *resource*, rather than something to smooth over or be eliminated through the process of deliberation. We cannot leave behind things we might not share with others before we step into the public sphere, and Young-style inclusion explains why it is that we need not be worried about that.

The problem of epistemic individualism

As I have suggested, Young's emphasis on inclusion as a necessary feature of a working model of democratic deliberation makes space for a discussion of the relationship between knowledge and democracy in a more sophisticated way than is possible in Goldman. Indeed, the way she conceptualizes inclusion allows us to view her work as properly epistemological, as well as political, as she retains an idea of *knowledge*. As I discussed in Chapter One, this differentiates her work from that of other political theorists who might mention epistemology[15]. However, because she ties the idea of situated knowledge to her inclusive claim of difference as a resource, I think it is fair to expect that when she describes deliberation as politically transformative that it also be *epistemologically* transformative. Though there is a marked difference between the political understanding of democracy on both Goldman and Young's views, I suggest that epistemic individualism resonates in each of their accounts of the relationship between knowledge and democracy. While Goldman's individualism surely arises in part due to the limitations of the aggregative model, I argue that Young's individualism is a result of founding her epistemology on standpoint theory.

In her discussion of rhetoric, Young states that a key feature of rhetorical communication is its ability to draw the line between speaker and audience (Young 2000, 53). She makes clear that when we share stories through narrative exchange, there is emotional content imbued in the storytelling. Thus, Young seems to set up narrative as a kind of *performative* mode of communication. This becomes clearer as she describes the actions of both "speakers" and "listeners" in her account (Young 2000, 76). Young writes, "Stories not only relate the experiences of the protagonists, but also present a particular interpretation of their relationships with others", while listeners "can learn about how their own position, actions, and values appear to others from the stories that they tell" (Young 2000, 76). On this account the storyteller does not react to the listener, the flow is one way. It seems plausible to conclude, then, that on her view narrative is often a form of monological communication; one speaks their piece, and the job of the audience is merely to listen and absorb information.

This seems to miss a key element of narrative communication, namely the way that such communication can be reflexive. When I hear a story about something I have had no personal experience with, not only do I gain insight into another's experience, they too learn about me when I ask questions or request clarification or background information. So *our* understanding changes; what we share enlarges. Though perhaps it is merely an oversight on her view that she accounts for narrative as a performative action, rather than as conversation, I think the mischaracterization goes deeper than that, and indeed cuts through the ability of her view to accommodate dialogical interaction, both inside and out of the political realm. Young writes of narrative that it

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[15] I have looked at David Estlund's view in some detail, however Cass Sunstein and Josh Cohen are among others who have examined epistemic concerns in democratic theory.

is "a means by which people whose experiences and beliefs differ so much that they do not share enough premises to engage in fruitful debate can nevertheless reach dialogical understanding" (Young 2000, 53). However, situated selves, as articulated by standpoint epistemology, are hard-pressed to reach dialogical understanding. Dialogical understanding involves more than accumulation of information sufficient to articulate public claims of justice.

What is "dialogical understanding", properly understood? Charles Taylor shares a view of the self as situated that is strikingly similar to Young's, however where she emphasizes embodiment he focuses on relationships. Taylor is working to situate the individual in a moral community. He writes, "Each one of us has an understanding from our home culture, and it is woven very deeply into our lives...Indeed, much of our understanding is quite inarticulate; it is in this sense a pre-understanding. It shapes our judgments without our being aware of it" (Taylor 1990, 149). For Taylor, this pre-understanding comes from articulating our previous experiences in language; the way we have previously experienced the world comes to shape the way in which we form judgments and expectations of our future experience. In this way our particular horizon of understanding - though unarticulated - comes into being.

Despite our situation, Taylor claims that human understanding - our way of perceiving the world - is not static, it can *change*. It changes through a process of comparison, by "articulating things that were purely implicit before, in order to put into question...[things] that were formerly limits to intelligibility" (Taylor 1990, 149). In this way there is a transformative aspect of our relationships with others, as Taylor believes "other-understanding changes self-understanding" (Taylor 1990, 149). The example he provides is of understanding the Aztecs:

> In terms of the motives I recognize as understandable, the Aztecs act pretty weirdly. Their normal behavior, in any case of priests and rulers, includes things like ripping people's hearts out, which I would expect only from psychopaths. Unless I want to rule out the whole society as pathological, which conflicts with other evidence, I have to face a challenge (149).

I use this example because I think it is particularly interesting how Taylor manages to articulate *dialogical* understanding without giving an example involving two or more people. Instead, the Aztec example is obviously a historical one, meant to illustrate how our understanding of a culture can change by negotiating between one's own home understanding and something that is foreign. When understood interpersonally, Taylor uses the phrase "fusion of horizons" to encapsulate the process of dialogical understanding, something he aptly describes as a "challenge":

> I meet this challenge by altering and enlarging my understanding, remaking its forms and limits. This means that I articulate things that were purely implicit before, in order to put them into question. In particular, I articulate what were formerly limits to intelligibility, in order to see them in a new context, no longer as inescapable structures of human

> motivation, but as one in a range of possibilities (Taylor 1990, 149).

It is in *this* way that Taylor thinks the process of recognition is carried out - we expand our horizons to include an understanding of others that was previously inaccessible to us. Young too thinks that other-understanding can change self-understanding, but only insofar as confrontation with the perspectives of others "teaches each the partiality of their own view and reveals to them their own experience as perspectival" (Young 2000, 116). On this view, the value in being confronted with others whose values differ from my own is that I will recognize that my way of viewing the world is not the only one – that moral issues are deeply complex. This recognition causes me to try and articulate my claims in ways that others can understand and accept. This view falls short of capturing the transformation that happens in reasoning when we are confronted with differing views. When we deliberate in a way that encourages a widening of what counts as public, the things that matter to us can change, as can our political priorities.

Taylor and Young agree that we understand others through our home understanding, however on Taylor's account there is the possibility for expansion of *understanding*, rather than information alone. This is important because it seems implausible that merely knowing something about someone else has the power to transform a self-interested individual into someone capable of transcending self-interest to articulate claims of justice. This is particularly relevant to the political realm, because here, significantly, understanding *matters*. Getting it right about different people and cultures is important for democratic deliberation, because ultimately we still need core voter knowledge. True understanding of others can help us to move from a place of narrow self-interest to one that is justice-oriented[16].

Although there is strength in Taylor's view, it is important to note that there is a fundamental disagreement between Young and Taylor over what exactly is changing. On Taylor's view our understanding can only change through articulation of things that were formerly invisible to us. It is our identities that are shaped by our dialogical interactions with others. While Taylor thinks that it is the understanding of the *individual* that is enlarged, Young suggests that the *collective* understanding changes:

> The appearance of a shared world to all who dwell within it precisely requires that they are plural, differentiated and separate, with different locations in and perspectives on a world that are the product of their social action. By communicating to one another their differing perspectives on the social world in which they dwell together, they collectively constitute an enlarged understanding of that world (Young 2000, 112).

However, situated selves that share a collective understanding seems to imply a spooky philosophy of mind. Because situated knowers are embodied individuals

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[16] I don't have room here to go into theories of action. I think Margaret Gilbert's idea of beliefs influencing action is interesting, and worth exploring, and I certainly acknowledge that there is a gap in my account by leaving out the appropriate connection between how a transformation of a belief from self-interested to justice-oriented specifically influences one's actions when they deliberate and/or vote on the preferred outcome of deliberation.

incapable of transcending their partiality, in actually partaking in a real sense in a properly *collective* belief, what seems to emerge out of this view of plurality is a kind of understanding that somehow exists separate from any particular individual - that there is a collective *mental state* that belongs to the group, but not to any one individual.

Irreducible Collectivity

What is a collective, rather than individual belief? In "Modelling Collective Belief", Margaret Gilbert articulates a way in which we can move from a personal belief to acceptance of a collective belief, without relying on the idea of a "group mind which is independent of the minds and wills of the people involved" (Gilbert 1987, 201). What is distinct about Gilbert's approach is the way that she defines a group. Instead of adopting a social ontology where the world comes in already-given groups, Gilbert defines a group as a set of individuals who participate in a collective intentional state. In other words, instead of declaring a set of individuals a group, and then looking to see whether it has beliefs, Gilbert looks for whether a group exists based first on the presence of collective intentionality, including collective beliefs.

Gilbert and Young share a rejection of what Gilbert calls the "summative account" of collective belief. Young of course does not explicitly articulate this as her view, however in her use of Arendtian "plurality" she makes clear that social knowledge does not arise from each individual contributing to a general pool of shared knowledge which everyone accesses in the same way[17]. Similarly, Gilbert rejects the summative account of collective belief that defines it as something that is merely the sum of the beliefs of the individuals in the particular group (Gilbert 1989, 225). Collective beliefs are not reducible to the individual level, although there is a "close connection" between the collectivity of a belief and the "generality at the individual level" (Gilbert 1987, 198). Instead, if I am part of a group, a belief that we hold collectively is *ours* in a way that constitutes or reflects our existence as a plural subject (Gilbert 1989, 303). Gilbert writes,"I argue that our concept of a collectivity is the concept of a plural subject of action, belief, attitude, or other such attribute. Such subjects exist when people do things together, for instance. A very simple example of people doing things together is that of two people going for a walk together. I argue that in order to do things together people must view themselves in a certain special way" (Gilbert 1989, 17).

Gilbert's conception of collective belief provides one way of understanding how beliefs might be *shared*, however, what of knowledge? Here too Gilbert has an important contribution, and I adopt her view on common knowledge in order to defend my later claim that social *knowledge*, like collective belief, is irreducibly collective. Gilbert uses the idea of a "plural subject" to disambiguate between knowledge that is common because it is shared in the sense of present in all or mutual to all, and knowledge that is attributable to a "plural subject". A plural subject is one which describes itself as a "we", although importantly, doing so does not necessarily require being jointly engaged in some activity but rather can be understood in terms of "joint commitment" (Gilbert 1989, 169). Although the engagement in joint action would

[17] Instead, individuals somehow tap into the "enlarged mentality" of the public sphere from their particular location.

certainly be a appropriate time for the use of the designation "we", Gilbert argues that joint action is not a necessary precursor:

> It seems that in order to proceed with proper confidence to do things together, people must already justifiably see themselves as 'us' or 'we'. It is not our dancing together, say, which 'creates' or is a precondition for the appropriateness of 'we'. Rather, it is the perceived appropriateness of 'we' which makes our dancing together possible. Our dancing together must come after, or at least depend for its occurrence on, the assurance that we are 'we', rather than vice versa. Our actually dancing together may of course confirm our sense that we are 'we' in various ways (Gilbert 1989, 169).

What separates a *plural subject* from the view of a joint action of goal is the qualification of some kind of willingness to share – a joint commitment, whether explicit or implicit (Gilbet 1989, 179).

Assumed in Gilbert's account is a generally accepted notion of "openness", that there is sense to be made of the phrase "out in the open". Without falling into the semantic notation she uses, I think what Gilbert means by this term is that which is widely held by all and known to be so. In order for p to be common knowledge for A, B, and C, Gilbert claims that p must be *open* to A, B, and C, that all three have a concept of *openness*, and that all three know that each of them have such a concept (Gilbert 1989, 191). She claims this is the paradigm situation of common knowledge. However, common knowledge and plural subjects do not reduce to one another:

> Common knowledge is one thing…and plural subjects are another. Common knowledge does not automatically give rise to plural subjecthood, though it is a requirement of plural subjecthood. For plural subjecthood, people must 'get together' in a way other than the special mesh produced by common knowledge (1989, 203).

The use of 'common' here draws a useful analogy to the idea of the commons, a shared or mutually held resource accessible by all. There is no collective intent or joint commitment required for this kind of knowledge.

I will argue that an inclusively deliberating polity is best understood as a plural subject, rather than merely a loose association of situated individuals who share common knowledge. Deliberation, I argue is transformative because of its ability to move us into plural subjecthood with others. However, this kind of subjecthood requires an understanding of knowledge not reducible to the individual. Young is not able to accommodate this qualification as on her view she lays out social knowledge as ultimately reducible to individual knowledge. In deliberating we acknowledge our willingness to engage with each other, thus constituting a plural subject.

However, Young's view is not entirely irreconcilable with Gilbert's. After all, Young relies on the Levinasian view of "greeting" as a precondition to inclusive deliberation. In greeting one another as she describes, we agree to participate as equals in deliberation. However, Young retains the notion that when we deliberate, we do so as individuals, and the beliefs we share are importantly our own, reducible to each of us. We can not ever *share* beliefs in the sense that Gilbert suggests, and the only way

of formulating collectivity on Young's view seems to be the idea of a shared *mind*. When I share my particular beliefs, I reveal to you your own partiality, but I do not enhance it, I do not "fuse" with you in any way. What is absent from Gilbert's view, however, is the definition I accepted in my first chapter of knowledge as *true* belief. This is significant for political deliberation because justice (understood in Young's non-substantive way) requires objectivity of some sort. Gilbert's discussion of plural subjects and common knowledge helps to bolster my critique of Young's conception of knowledge as "social", however in my final chapter I will suggest that even Gilbert's view is held hostage by a privileging of the individual as an epistemic agent.

Conclusion

Modeling collective belief in the way Gilbert suggests helps make sense of what Young is after in the connection between knowledge and inclusive deliberation. Young wants to provide a way of understanding deliberation as transforming our interests, which would be connected to transforming our beliefs about our interests. Gilbert's conception of plural subjecthood illustrates a way in which individuals come to hold collective beliefs. The problem with this solution is that Gilbert's view, like Goldman's, takes for granted the individual as the starting point for thinking about such matters. It is this assumption that makes unavailable resources that might be helpful for developing an epistemology for inclusive deliberation.

I think there is a better account, one which is less complex, but which requires letting go of the proposed dichotomy between knowledge as entirely individual, or entirely social[18]. This requires a deeper revision of Young's epistemic commitments, one that would do no violence to her theoretical commitments, but would alleviate some of the tensions I have exposed. There is a way of privileging situation without relying on the primacy of embodiment. I argue that on Young's own view – that we live together – standpoint epistemology creates dissonance in the face of real interpersonal understanding. Standpoint theory does not have a monopoly on the importance of mediated or located experience. Finally, Young's insistence on embodiment seems to itself undermine her own starting point: togetherness. In my last chapter I will examine Lynn Nelson's account of knowledge as communal, rather than individualistic. In exploring Nelson's claim that it is communities, rather than individuals that are the primary agents of epistemology, I will demonstrate how it is that deliberation can be transformative with regard to knowledge. I believe this provides a much stronger epistemological framework with which to support Young's call for inclusion as a necessary requirement for deliberation.

Ultimately I argue that social knowledge, properly understood, does not involve an aggregation of individual knowers who have information about those they live in the world with. Social knowledge, on my view, is importantly *shared* – that is, we can not make sense of a knowledge claim as originating from an individual. Rather, the individual herself is part of a knowledge community. If knowledge is local and situated, it is *communally* so. In my final chapter I consider Lynn Nelson's epistemological position as a source of some useful tools for articulating the relationship between democracy and knowledge in a way that both supports

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[18] See Longino, "Essential Tensions – Phase Two: Feminist, Philosophical, and Social Studies of Science", in *A Mind of One's Own*, eds. Louise M. Antony & Charlotte E. Witt.

democratic legitimacy and procedural justice, and protects the idea of knowledge as *true belief*. I will demonstrate that social knowledge so understood provides us with a way to understand how deliberation can be epistemologically transformative, as well as creating a larger, inclusive political knowledge community.

Chapter Three

My purpose in this chapter is to develop my earlier claim that social knowledge is properly understood as *shared* knowledge, and to further support an understanding of democratic deliberation as epistemologically transformative in light of this claim. To do this I rely on the work of Lynn Nelson and her account of epistemological agency as fundamentally communal. Nelson's project fulfills two goals for my project here: first, it provides a way of understanding social knowledge as something valuable, and distinct from individual knowledge. Secondly, it makes possible an account of epistemological transformation within the deliberative process, one that satisfies my hesitations over the usefulness of Young's epistemology. Both of these functions hinge on a reconceptualization of epistemological agency.

Introduction

My central undertaking in this chapter is defending Nelson's epistemology as the model of knowledge best suited to an understanding of the transformative value of inclusive deliberation. I aim to demonstrate the capacity of feminist naturalism to support epistemological transformation – transformation that goes beyond changing the interests and/or beliefs of individuals to changing the way a community reasons together, and the standards against which their reasoning is evaluated. This strengthens Young's model of deliberation by delineating a robust understanding of *epistemological* transformation made possible by deliberation that is both internally and externally inclusive. The account I provide here retains the centrality of knowledge as situated so important to Young's view, as well as the insights of Gilbert about irreducibly collective belief. However, my argument rests upon a call to revision the agents of epistemology as primarily communities, rather than individuals. That Nelson's view can both preserve the strengths of Young's epistemological position and deepen the connection between knowledge and inclusion that she presents is a notable merit of feminist naturalized epistemology.

Epistemological Communities

In her paper "Epistemological Communities", Lynn Hankinson Nelson proposes an understanding of the agents of epistemology as one of communities, rather than individuals. This paper builds on and develops her position as a feminist naturalist, integrating the insights of feminist theory and epistemology with naturalized epistemology. She begins with three assumptions: that the category of epistemological agency is not fixed, that any explanation of such agency must be understood as tied up with the way we understand evidence, and that epistemology must be viewed as "radically interdependent with other knowledge and projects" (Nelson 1993a, 125). The first assumption unseats the ease with which we may accept knowledge as being something that necessarily only individuals have, something Nelson claims is taken for granted in mainstream analytic epistemology. The second assumption emphasizes the role empiricism plays in her view, claiming as she does that answering the question "Who Knows?" involves a critical understanding of what knowledge is and how it is

acquired. Finally, the third assumption opens space for Nelson to not only incorporate feminist knowledge and methodology into her project, but also allows her to maintain continuity with current naturalistic projects in mainstream epistemology that emphasize the need for any theory of knowledge to be informed by empirical research (Goldman, for example, looks to cognitive science in much of his epistemological work, while Hilary Kornblith relies on the work of cognitive ethologists and evolutionary biologists to develop his own position).

Nelson posits a community, rather than the invidividual, as the primary epistemological agent. That is to say, for an individual to have knowledge, she must first be part of a community that knows, where that knowledge cannot be automatically reduced to individual knowledge. In this, she is not arguing for a group mind (discussed below), nor is she positing group agents of the sort found in Gilbert's account (discussed in the previous chapter). Instead, Nelson's view gives us a way of talking about knowledge that explains the aspects of social knowledge that seem irreducibly collective, but avoids the pitfalls of talking about "plural subjects". In the first half of this chapter I consider Nelson's view. In the latter half of this chapter I will point to its strengths over Gilbert's account of plural subjects.

Nelson argues that we need the coherence of a community's beliefs and knowledge practices before we can say that we *know* anything at all. My assertion, for example, that the sun is *x* distance from the earth is dependent upon a knowledge community that accepts what it is that I am referring to when I say "sun" and "earth". This is, on its face, a trivial claim. However, less trivially, I must be part of a community that agrees upon my use of distance-measurements and object-relations in order to be making a knowledge claim at all. This is not denying that individuals can know; rather it is to point out that their ability *to* know – their ability to discriminate between methods of testing beliefs and to accept some as offering greater vindication than others – is dependent on their membership in a community, being part of, as Nelson calls it, a "we":

> The "we" as I understand things, is a group or community that constructs and shares knowledge and standards of evidence – a group, in short, that is an "epistemological community"…[These] communities that construct and acquire knowledge are not collections of independently knowing individuals; such communities are epistemologically prior to individuals who know (Nelson 1993a, 124).

It is this focus on community that brings out the significance of evidence to an account of knowledge (I discuss this significance in detail below). Nelson writes:

> My claims to know are subject to the knowledge and standards constructed by the various communities of which I am a member; indeed I have the ability to know only because there are such communities, and both my communities and I will judge my claims by reference to communal standards and knowledge. Hence the primary epistemological agents are groups – or, as the foregoing suggests, communities (Nelson 1993b, 186).

Because at any given time we may find ourselves involved in multiple projects that may overlap with or diverge from one another, Nelson points out that epistemological communities are not necessarily "monolithic" (Nelson 1993a, 150). In other words, membership in a particular knowledge community does not presuppose that one shares all knowledge with all other members. Rather, an epistemological community is one that has "generated bodies of knowledge, adopted standards, and developed categories of which each member of these communities accepts some" (Nelson 1993a, 150). Importantly, for an epistemological community to be defined as such, it is not required that each member holds the same body of knowledge. Further, these communities are defined primarily pragmatically – what counts as a knowledge community depends on particular and current shared projects and goals (Nelson 1993a, 149) – the boundaries are neither temporally rigid, nor fixed with regard to specific content.

Feminist Naturalism

There is an unquestionable connection between Nelson's epistemological work and W.V. Quine's infamous paper, 'Epistemology Naturalized'. Nelson is up front in her description of her own project as "naturalistic", and refers to her epistemology as "feminist naturalism". However, one need not be a naturalist in order to appreciate the facets of Nelson's view that are relevant to my particular project here. In this section I will briefly consider Nelson's project, contrasting it with the most salient features of standpoint theory that I introduced in the previous chapter. The remainder of this chapter will defend Nelson's view as primarily an empiricist one, however, although her insights on epistemological agency do not demand that we be naturalists about epistemology, it is instructive to consider her view of the connection between feminist naturalism and communal subjects of knowledge. This brings out the element that makes her view so well suited to Young's project: the importance of experience.

Feminist naturalism emphasizes the "radical interdependence" of epistemology and other empirical endeavours, including not only psychology and cognitive science, but also sociology, anthropology, and political science, among others. This expansion of the social scientific net beyond psychology is one of the things that distinguishes feminist naturalism from more traditional versions. Another feature that distinguishes a specifically feminist naturalism is the incorporation of feminist critiques of science in the use of empirical studies and theories prevalent in other disciplines. So a feminist naturalist advocates epistemology's continuity with science and the social sciences, but retains a critical feminist perspective on the empirical studies she makes use of. Nelson claims that both of these features fit nicely within a naturalistic epistemology, and serve to strengthen its core tenets.

This interdependence does not, as many critics have claimed, reduce epistemology to a merely descriptive enterprise. Nelson writes, "a naturalized epistemology recognizes that evaluations of knowledge claims and of the processes and arrangements through which knowledge is generated are appropriate" (Nelson 1993a, 126). This way of viewing the way knowledge is acquired is normatively useful because of its flexibility and fallibilism. These two features contribute to normativity as *contingent*. Understood in these terms Nelson explains how our standards and expectations will change and evolve with respect to the kinds of results we get from

looking at the world from a set of particular standards and expectations (Nelson 1993a, 150). Thus we retain the right to revise our theories and our descriptions of our own experiences if necessary. It is our experience in the world that underwrites our knowledge claims, argues Nelson, but the way in which we experience things will be shaped in part by what we already know. As long as we recognize normativity as contingent we are able to retain a robust sense of evaluative standards. Experience acts as our ultimate tribunal.

Because of the emphasis on *experience* in Nelson's view, she is able to accommodate situated knowledge in a way friendly to Young's model of deliberation. While I will pursue the role of experience in Nelson's view further below, it seems relevant to revisit the requirements Young sets up for any theory of knowledge that fits her framework for inclusive deliberation. Remember that on Young's account, a theory of knowledge must be able to accommodate "the situated knowledge available from various social locations" (Young 2000, 76). She further writes, "Individuals have particular knowledge that arises from experience in their social positions" (Young 2000, 114). Citing standpoint theorists Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway with approval, this moves Young's view away from a mere focus on situated knowledge to one that explicitly relies on standpoint theory as its epistemological foundation.

The distinction of Alison Wylie's that I drew attention to in my earlier discussion was situated knowledge vs. standpoints. Wylie writes, "standpoint theory is concerned, not with just the epistemic effects of *social location*, but with both the effects and emancipatory potential of *standpoints* that are struggled for and achieved, by epistemic agents who are critically aware of the conditions under which knowledge is produced and authorized" (Wylie 2004, 343). Not only is standpoint theory, as I argued, overly individualistic, it also demands a critical self-awareness that seems unnecessary to Young's project. I offer Nelson's view as not only a better account of the sociality of social knowledge without any individuation problems, but also as one that is simpler, un-mired by messy psychological or ontological commitments.

Feminist Empiricism and the importance of 'evidence'.

Helen Longino describes feminist empiricism as offering "an account of knowledge as partial, fragmentary, and ultimately constituted from the interaction of opposed styles and/or points of view" (Longino 2002, 94). This is in part because "Data are never naïve but come into contact with theories already selected, structured, and organized" (Longino 2002, 99). This organization happens against the backdrop of complex and layered background assumptions:

> [These are] the vehicles by which social values and ideology are expressed in inquiry and become subtly inscribed in theories, hypotheses, and models defining research programs. If the first step in meeting the feminist challenge is finding an appropriately modest statement of empiricism, the second step is recognizing the role of background assumptions in evidential reasoning and in the analysis and organization of data. The combination of these two steps is the position I am calling "contextual empiricism" (Longino 2002, 99).

With regard to experience itself, Nelson adds:

> Our collective experience indicates that nature is a point of resistance with which we need to contend, and the hypothesis that there is a world that constrains what it is reasonable to believe is woven through most of our theories because it makes the most sense of what we experience (Nelson 1993b, 175).

Due to the role of experience in the justification of our theories, we do not lose the sense of objectivity or truth, but we gain the ability to revise our theories if they don't satisfactorily make sense of our experiences in the world. Though we are ultimately held accountable to the "tribunal of experience", there are numerous possibilities with regard to how to best proceed. This leads Nelson to develop a social epistemology that finds a middle ground between radical critiques of traditional epistemology, and the tradition itself. This is possible because she embraces empiricism as necessary to any theory of knowledge, and remains committed to the ideas of truth and objectivity so central in mainstream epistemology. This situates her firmly within the analytic tradition. However, her feminism motivates her to take seriously the feminist critiques of science and epistemology oft rejected by the tradition (in the paper of Goldman's I discuss in my introduction many of the projects from which these critiques are levied are dismissed as non-epistemological). She begins with the observation that "beliefs and knowledge claims have consequences" (Nelson 1993a, 151). Because of this we take seriously the complaints of those who may more egregiously experience those consequences. The challenge is to do this without losing a grasp on what it is about knowledge that makes it so significant.

Nelson achieves this through both her focus on the importance of evidence and her reconception of epistemological agency. In this way she altogether avoids the dichotomy she describes as dominant in current debates about social epistemology: that is, either the knowledge we have is objective, and about something true and enduring, or we have nothing more than relativism and subjectivism, and no grounds upon which to stake our claims to authority. Nelson argues that the reason we ought to be attentive to what a different community might have to contribute to science is because that community might experience the consequences of a particular theory in a way that we are blind to, but she importantly rejects the idea commonly attributed to standpoint theory that doing so requires either essentializing such knowers or privileging the epistemological margins. In this way her view does not reduce to subjective relativism.

Being held accountable to experience is how we can alleviate the tension between objectivity and relativism so widely criticized in feminist accounts. Certainly there are better and worse ways of capturing our experience, but that does not entail that they are either necessarily or universally so:

> There are no pretheoretic notions of evidence, no standards or methods laid down prior to the business of constructing theories to explain and predict what we experience. Rather, it is within our various epistemological projects – in daily life, in science, in philosophy, in politics – that notions and standards of evidence emerge, concomitantly with the unfolding of those projects (Nelson 1993b, 173).

Once we accept the idea that our explanations and predictions emerge concomitantly with our projects, even something like epistemological agency is not unshakeable. In Nelson's view, the fact we have no reason to assume that the epistemological agent is necessarily fixed as the individual opens up the possibility of a better, more resilient account of what it is we ascribe to people when we say of them that they know.

The plausibility of Nelson's view hinges on our willingness to reconsider what it is we pick out when we talk about epistemological agents. Nelson captures the idea, so essential to Young's epistemology, of *partial knowledge*. In Nelson, however, partiality does not arise from individuals; rather it results from the dynamics of an epistemological community that functions (necessarily) to restrict or limit certain kinds of knowledge:

> Although experience and evidence are inherently unstable and knowledge will never be "complete", the experiences and stories that have been the center of focus to date have been, in fact and at best, only partial; in their claims to "universality", they have simultaneously excluded and mystified other experiences and knowledge's; and in their denial of their situatedness they have been distorted (Nelson 1993a, 151).

Partiality, then, is defined "in terms of what it was or is possible to know in given historical, social, and cultural contexts and further qualified in terms of divisions in experience brought about by social relations" (Nelson 1993a, 151). In order to best identify and correct biases that encourage or make invisible partiality, we must "abandon individualism in all of its guises" (Nelson 1993a, 151). In order to properly account for the construction and acquisition of social knowledge, we must understand the agents of epistemology to be communities rather than individuals. In the next section I will deal in detail with the way Nelson reconceptualizes epistemology to place communities at the centre of any investigation into the question "Who Knows?"

The Group Mind Objection

Does this then mean that Nelson is suggesting that communities are sites of knowledge via the existence of some kind of group mind? Nelson argues that communities rather than individuals ought properly to be treated as the primary site of epistemological agency. In this, it might be thought that she is proposing that we think of communities as not just the site of a distinctive form of cognitive agency but as distinctive cognitive agents. Nelson is not, in fact, proposing such a view: she is not proposing that knowledge attributions proceed via some form of group mind. To see this, it is useful to consider what it is to posit a group mind, and what kind of claims might require adopting such a position.

Rob Wilson describes the attraction of attributing mental states to groups as follows:

> We often naturally talk of groups of people as having intentions, beliefs, goals, and memories. My claim is that what such talk does is add intelligibility to the actions of those groups, and a greater sense of their place in the causal and normative nexus, through their assimilation to human agents. Without the attribution of cognitive agency, the agency of

> groups can seem puzzling, unclear, and even mysterious. Cognitive agency removes this puzzlement, unclarity, and mystery (Wilson 2005, 235).

On this view, there are some claims about groups that only seem to make sense if we treat them not just as a site at which a distinctive form of cognitive agency occurs, but as cognitive agents in their own right. For example, as we saw with Gilbert in the previous chapter, an irreducibly collective belief does seem to demand a "plural subject". Though Gilbert takes care to draw distinctions with regard to individual and collective belief, her view raises a number of questions about group subjectivity. The confusion that arises with respect to Gilbert's view is largely a function of the individual/collective dichotomy present in her view. However, this is not an issue for Nelson. Nelson's view dissolves this dichotomy, and therefore she avoids having to develop an account of group subjectivity.

In particular, while Gilbert is correct to postulate that collective beliefs require more explanation than merely appeals to common knowledge, or individual cognitive states, she actually leaves herself open to the worry about group minds by means of her staunch individualism. After all, if individuals ultimately underwrite collective beliefs, even in the "special", independent way Gilbert describes, why talk about collectivities as something distinct in the first place? In this way Gilbert misses an alternative, plausible answer to the question driving her attempt to define social groups: how is society possible? (Gilbert 1989, 146). This is the alternative I have already suggested, the idea that individual knowledge is derivative from a knowledge community, rather than the other way around. In previous sections I illustrated why an empiricist view of evidence both underwrites and provides support for this account. Further, on Nelson's view, we have resources with which to criticize, revise, and improve our collective beliefs and shared knowledge. This is the topic I turn to in the final section, however there are some loose ends to tie up with regard to Gilbert.

The Irreducible collectivity of social knowledge

In the previous chapter I considered Margaret Gilbert's view of collective belief as a way of understanding what Iris Young might mean by social knowledge. In this section I levy a criticism from a view that places a higher priority on what is *collective* than does Gilbert, thus satisfying my initial concerns with the interplay between sociality and social knowledge. Earlier I described Gilbert's definition of a plural subject as one in which the individual participants see themselves as part of such a subject. With this definition, Gilbert is able to explain the concept of shared action. A shared action is the result of a shared goal, one that is "not equivalent" to the acceptance of the goal by each individual as their own goal (Gilbert 1989, 17). It is this non-summative way of talking about shared goals that hints at my concept of social knowledge – shared knowledge is something that is not an amalgamation of individual knowledge. On her view, what is shared arises out of individuals, the primary agents. However, I will argue that flipping the individual-community hierarchy, as Nelson envisions, does all the work of adequately making sense of social knowledge, and does not get mired in the objections to plural subjecthood that I discussed in the previous section. Instead of collective belief supervening upon individual belief, Nelson's account posits individual belief as derivative of group knowledge.

Gilbert asserts that there are instances of collective belief that cannot be explained in virtue of individuals alone. In my previous chapter I make clear why it is that appeals to summative accounts of collective belief as well as those of common knowledge leave us with puzzles with regard to beliefs that we actually find within groups that do not match up to these explanations – social knowledge cannot be necessarily connected to collective intentionality because so much of what we know is tied up in the complexity of our background assumptions, many of which may be invisible to us (later in this chapter I consider such an example in the work of Dorothy Roberts). Gilbert posits that collective belief does have to be so connected to collective intentionality, whereby intending to carry out a joint action with someone else is a different kind of intention than one to act alone. This implies that as far as we are talking about collective belief on this account we assume a voluntarism in association as primarily necessary[19].

Though I do not have time to develop the concept of collective action here, this characterization does not lend itself fully to an epistemological inquiry. For my purposes, *what* it is that we hold in common is more interesting than explaining how we act jointly on any knowledge we might share – indeed I began by explicitly framing my project as developing an account of what social knowledge *is*. So while I agree that there are instances of shared belief that are irreducible to individual beliefs, I'm interested in what it is about the shared aspect that makes it so. Nelson's claim of communal knowledge as prior to individual knowledge makes sense of what we mean when we say "we know". The further, and more significant, strength of Nelson's view is its ability to explain how epistemological transformation might be possible as a result of inclusive deliberation. I initially introduced Gilbert's work as a suggestion for how we might understand Young's concept of shared or social knowledge. However, it is my claim here that epistemological communities provide a more satisfying account in favour of the value of deliberation.

Knowledge Communities Deliberate

How does all of this relate to deliberation? Thinking of communities as knowers allows us to explain and encourage deep epistemological transformation. This is because if we see ourselves as part of communities that both allow and limit the acquisition of knowledge in various ways, it stands to reason that the expansion of knowledge communities and the expansion of our membership in them can contribute to our ability to know in different ways. If our experience is limited by our own situation, the knowledge we have of the world will both be informed by the experiences we have, as well as shared by those similarly situated. The primary difference between Nelson's view and those I have already discussed is that while other views see social knowledge as somehow derivative of individual knowledge, Nelson claims that the individual knower herself arises out of a knowledge community. Individual knowledge is not possible without shared knowledge, hence Nelson's view lends itself well to talking about deliberation.

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[19] I think that if one were to fully develop Gilbert's account as applied specifically to democratic deliberation there would arise controversial claims about civic engagement. In other words, Gilbert's view would seem to imply that in order to share political knowledge, knowers would require a level of civic engagement that is widely criticized in political theory as overly demanding.

Young is right to be concerned about the partiality of individuals' knowledge, but she mistakenly locates that partiality in a view of embodiment that stifles real transformative deliberation. That we construct knowledge in this way – necessarily with others – not only makes sense of why deliberation is valuable, but also justifies the normative framework of internal inclusion that Young sets out. In the previous chapter I explicated how Young motivates the need for inclusion as a necessary component of deliberation by drawing a connection between inclusive deliberation, and knowledge.

What Young misses out on, in her account of deliberation as transformative, is a way in which public reason itself can be transformed: the way that political conversation can contribute to specifically epistemological transformation, in which the boundaries of reasoning communities can shift and enlarge. Instead, Young talks about enlargement with regard primarily to the individual. However, as I argued in the previous chapter, what gets enlarged, or transformed, is not (or not just) individual reasoners but the *community* of reasoners collectively. We (at least potentially) build an epistemologically robust community by the creation of new social and political knowledge.

There is a difference between the joint acceptance of a belief, and shared knowledge. The former ultimately depends on individual agency, whereas I argue the latter is primitive in the sense that it is not in any way supervenient upon individual knowledge or knowers (indeed I have argued that it is the other way around). Nelson's position maintains the distinction between these and offers a more satisfactory account of both than does standpoint theory. I have suggested that it does this chiefly through a feminist empiricist methodology, out of which falls the reconception of epistemological agency. Moreover, Nelson's view allows us to describe the social knowledge that deliberation produces as irreducibly collective, without either reducing that knowledge to an emergent property of individual beliefs or requiring a group mind. These features can be illustrated with an example from feminist legal theory: Dorothy Roberts's critical examination of the medical system and medical practices that oppress women of colour.

In "Reconstructing the Patient: Starting with Women of Color", feminist legal theorist Dorothy Roberts argues that an expansion of medical ethics to include the perspectives of women of colour is a "matter of justice" (in "compensat[ing] for their past exclusion"), as well as a means by which we can improve a public institution for everyone:

> Because women of color experience the intersection of gender and racial oppression, they may have unique critical insights to offer mainstream feminist theory and practice, as well as bioethics… Denied the privileges of race and class, these women have the least to gain from the present institution of medicine and the most to gain from changing it. I claim that their perspective not only helps to identify what is wrong with the practice of medicine, but also to envision a better system. Thus the benefit of adding the perspective of poor women of color is creating a system that better meets their needs, but also a system that is better for everyone (Roberts 1993, 117).

Roberts here describes poor women of colour as being outside the dominant community in which the medical system operates. There is some knowledge that those for whom the medical system is adequate may not have access to, for example the consequences of unjust ethical actions to less privileged individuals (Roberts 1993, 117).

With this description, Roberts acknowledges that social situation plays a role in knowledge and knowledge claims. However, she takes care to criticize what she calls the "philosophical armchair" view that such situation can be understood in an aggregative sense. This is to say that an understanding of the perspective of a poor woman of colour is not properly achieved by starting with an abstract individual and adding various characteristics such as "poor", "woman", and "coloured":

> Sex, race, and class are more than demographic variables that influnce the way doctors treat their patients. Race does not merely compound the difficulties that all women experience as a result of medicine's patriarchal attitudes and practices. Women of color are not treated the same as white women, only worse. Sex, race, and class represent inequalities of power that construct the meaning of the patient and her relationship to the doctor (Roberts 1993, 125).

This criticism demonstrates why it is that Roberts undertakes the sociological investigation she does. Through an examination of public records (for example, Roberts notes the frequency with which doctors violate the principles of confidentiality in reporting drug use among pregnant patients when that patient is a poor woman of colour) and personal narratives, Roberts points to the possibility of "reconstructing" aspects of the medical system.

Roberts's work fits as a good example of what Nelson is advocating for two reasons. First, Roberts begins by acknowledging the need for empirical inquiry, and indeed includes narrative – a focus of Young's I discussed – as a way in which to collect "evidence" for her position. Secondly, and more significantly, this example fits nicely with the idea of knowledge communities. Key here is Roberts's description of these women as occupying an "intersection" between gender and racial oppression. When viewed through the lens of epistemological communities, we can make sense of how it is that poor women of colour have a contribution to make to revisioning the medical system. This is because, as Nelson points out, our knowledge communities not only make possible our knowledge, they also function to limit or restrict it. On Nelson's view, those individuals who experience the intersection of various forms of oppression have access to different knowledge – and indeed different ways of acquiring knowledge – than those not within the boundaries of that particular community. There are real structures of exclusion and oppression that certain communities *share* – I argue that these are things that cannot be explained by the standpoint theorist. Any attempted explanation would have to either make reference to some form of essentialism (as in, there are some things that a poor black woman knows in virtue of her essence as such), or adopt the view of partial knowledge, where such partiality implies that there is a "complete" picture to be had by bringing together all standpoints. Instead, a central feature of Nelson's view is her insight that knowledge changes – communities overlap, shift boundaries, increase and decrease.

There's no way to make sense of a "complete" picture.

In fact, the need for *transformation* of the conditions under which medical dialogues proceed to which Roberts points is easier to appreciate through the lens of Nelson's view. That women of colour might make a unique contribution to an analysis of the medical system supports the theory that individual knowers result from membership in particular knowledge communities, communities that themselves help to shape, limit, and restrain the kind of knowledge that is possible. If a view of a group agent is rejected in favour of an emphasis instead on situated, embodied individuals, it seems Roberts' account requires an element of essentialism that seems at odds with any idea of interpersonal understanding. To understand what it means for women of colour to experience the medical system in different ways not currently accounted for in conversations about possible reform or improvement we need not say that there is something biologically or psychologically unique about each individual woman that gives her a means to knowledge that others cannot access; Nelson's view suggests instead that these beliefs arise out of a knowledge community – out of the fact that they are a set of individuals who *share* something.

Longino writes, "The sorts of assumptions upon which it's permissible to rely are also a function of consensus [within a community]…and are largely invisible to practitioners within the community. Although invisible, or transparent, to the members of a community holding them, these assumptions are articulable and hence in principle public" (Longino 2002, 101). I take two significant points from Longino here. First, members of a knowledge community construct and acquire knowledge according to standards and assumptions that are widely accepted, and these standards may be implicit or transparent to those who operate under them. However, despite the possible invisibility of such background conditions, they are in principle public, and importantly shared. This is not to suggest that all communities are isolated from one another, trapped in their own background assumptions. Rather, the vague boundaries Nelson outlines for epistemological communities leaves room for membership in multiple communities, for communities to overlap with one another, for membership to shift and dissolve. Remember, the identification of communities is primarily a pragmatic one: we can be confident that we are looking at a knowledge community when we see people working together on a shared project, or engaged in a shared activity. However, Nelson's view also allows us the freedom to attribute knowledge to communities who share *situations* – we need not rely on collective intentionality, as Gilbert claims, in order to identify social knowledge.

This description fits Roberts's analysis, and indeed Roberts's analysis is significantly inclusive, a feature her view shares with Young's. The push to look critically at the medical community from the perspective of women of colour in a sense created a knowledge community, one made up of members of the community being examined, those engaged in the research, and the participants themselves. Through critical articulation and description of different experiences, we are forced to come to grips with others in ways we might previously have been unaware of. Though Longino is talking explicitly about scientific knowledge communities, we may apply her ideas to broader communities. Roberts's example demonstrates that feminist critiques of knowledge production and acquisition are relevant to projects other than the institution of science and discovery.

Roberts's focus on inclusion helps us to see why inclusive deliberation is not merely valuable from the perspective of political justice; rather she shows us that there is an important normative element within such critical inclusion. Namely, Roberts demonstrates that including the voices of those who have been overlooked contributes to social projects in a way that improves them for all involved. Indeed, Longino explicitly supports a principle of inclusion in knowledge production, one that is consistent with Roberts's example. Longino writes, "Individual variation is dampened through critical interactions whose aim is to eliminate the idiosyncratic and transform individual opinion and belief into reliable knowledge" (Longino 2002, 101). We are better knowers when we actively seek out critical interaction with others. This makes the decision to examine the medical system from an historically overlooked perspective one not of mere fairness, but also by a desire for improving our knowledge, for doing things better.

Inclusion, then, is not only a matter of justice, it is an issue of epistemic concern. Longino writes, "Because background assumptions can be and frequently are transparent to the members of the scientific community for which they are background, because unreflective acceptance of such assumptions can come to define what it is to be a member of such a community (thus making criticism impossible), effective criticism of background assumptions requires the presence and expression of alternative points of view" (Longino 2002, 102). Here we see the possibility of epistemological transformation through deliberation. We reason as members of communities, against our already accepted background assumptions. Therefore, in order for transformation to occur, it is the background assumptions that must transform, not merely the information we have about each other as a result of those assumptions. This transformation can occur when we find ourselves up against those who may not be members of our local knowledge communities.

Conclusion

It is a common complaint that in order for real understanding to take place in a deliberative context, we must share a certain amount prior to engaging in discussion in the first place. Longino writes, "In order for criticism to be relevant to a position, it must appeal to something accepted by those who hold the position criticized. Participants in a dialogue must share some referring terms, some principles of inference, and some values or aims to be served by the shared activity" (Longino 2002, 104). This reflects Nelson's claim that communities are often defined pragmatically, by their shared goals or pursuits. In turn, this relates to Young's motivation for inclusive deliberation: the fact that we *live together*. That we are thrown into social relationships we did not choose does not negate a common goal that we might share, namely to set up and then follow terms of participation in society that are reasonable and agreeable to all. Given Young's claim that democracy is in part a kind of collective problem solving, it is appropriate to consider a community of deliberators, made up by smaller, overlapping and ever-changing knowledge communities. Transformation is necessary because it helps us to come to grips with each other, disparate as our staring points may be.

Finally, Longino's claim is sensitive to Young's concern with both physical and social location – even if two separate knowledge communities in a remote location

share very little socially, there is a sense in which they share a great deal in terms of the physical space in which they exist, a feature that some claim is integral to understanding the knowledge and identity of others[20]. At the same time, there is a negotiation that must happen in order for transformation to take place, for community boundaries to shift and expand. Deliberation itself is the catalyst for this transformation: "What is required is not that individuals capitulate to criticism but that community members pay attention to and participate in the critical discussion taking place and that the assumptions that govern their group activities remain logically sensitive to it" (Longino 2002, 103). By understanding social knowledge in this way I have provided support for thinking about inclusive deliberation as about more than political justice; additionally, we may think of inclusive deliberation as having epistemic weight.

[20] A local example is that of the Lubicon Cree in Northern Alberta, and the burgeoning oil industry in and around Fort McMurray. An indigenous group and large oil companies may not share many things in lieu of their social locations, but both have a vested interest in the physical space they occupy. As such, on Nelson's view there exists some kind of epistemological community, informed by the shared experiences that result from that particular geographical location.

Conclusion

I began this investigation by motivating why it is we ought to be concerned with getting at the connection between democracy and social knowledge. Through my initial consideration of current work in this area I demonstrated the need for a robust understanding of democracy as deliberative in order to best anchor any valuable connection. This led me to the work of deliberative theorist Iris Young and her model of inclusive deliberation. Though Young provides a strong moral and political defense of inclusion in *Inclusion and Democracy*, her position lacks a strong epistemological foundation. This is worrying because she needs a theory of knowledge to ground her view, depending as it does on account of social knowledge. I then critically examined Young's use of standpoint epistemology, arguing that this epistemological foundation limited her ability to fully support her own claim of deliberation as significantly transformative. Ultimately I concluded that Young's view required a better approach to knowledge, one friendly to the central principles of inclusive deliberation without the pitfalls of her epistemological commitments. Above all, I concluded that Young's view required a less individualistic epistemology in order to fully capitalize on her insights. I proposed Lynn Nelson's view of communities rather than individuals as just such an alternative.

Though I criticize the conception of democracy found within Goldman's epistemic analysis in *Knowledge in a Social World*, he provides perhaps the central cornerstone of my work here in his claim that knowledge *matters* when it comes to democracy. We have a lot at stake in terms of getting things right, politically. As such, I take seriously his insistence on *knowledge* as epistemologists have traditionally understood it. Young sets up "living together" as a kind of collective problem that deliberation aims to work out, and when her view is examined with Goldman's insights in the background it is evident that getting clear on what knowledge *is* must be paramount. A persistent criticism of standpoint epistemology is that it is not a theory of knowledge at all – at best it gives us a political feminist methodology with which to evaluate knowledge claims, at worst "standpoints fragment into myriad individual perspectives, and…reduces to the relativism of identity politics" (Wylie 2004, 341). Through my use of Nelson and Longino, I have shown that there is space for a middle ground between what I have identified as the individual-driven epistemology of Goldman and the collective model of knowledge Young requires but cannot stably articulate.

Finally, I want to consider briefly Goldman's own thoughts on Nelson's work in social epistemology, because it is my contention that he overlooks the central tenets of her view that cause what she does to fall within the realm of epistemology proper, as he describes it. In his paper that I discuss in my introduction, Goldman is clear that epistemic agents, traditionally understood, are "exclusively individuals" (Goldman 2007, 1). I quote him at length on his definition of traditional epistemology, and he goes on to provide a number of other key features. Given that his claim about agency is the first point he makes, Nelson's work is necessarily ruled out, positing as it does the community as the primary epistemic agent. However, I am not convinced that Goldman gives us good reason to follow suit in this blanket rejection. In my third chapter I maintained that one of the chief strengths of Nelson's view is its ability to

explain collective knowledge without positing a group mind, or falling prey to the post-modern relativism Goldman is at pains to avoid.

Remember that Goldman is interested in *knowledge* – the study of what knowledge *is* and how we acquire it is the primary focus of epistemology. And remember too that Nelson takes care to clarify that epistemological communities do not deny individual knowledge. So where is the disagreement here? A closer look at Goldman's paper on social epistemology suggests that he mistakenly categorizes Nelson's project as "rejectionist", lumping it in with "postmodernism, deconstructionism, social constructionism, relativism, and social studies of science, including the "strong programme" in sociology of science" (Goldman 2007, 2). But Nelson explicitly distances herself from each of these endeavours! Furthermore, Goldman emphasizes the importance of evidence and evidence-collecting in any proper investigation into knowledge (Goldman 2007, 7), and this is one of Nelson's chief engagements. While Goldman's work on democracy in *Knowledge in a Social World* misidentifies the value of *social* knowledge to democracy, I am hesitant to make the claim that his view necessarily precludes an approach similar to Nelson's. As I suggested in my first two chapters, my first departure from Goldman stems from the aggregative model of democracy that he uses to explicate the significance of core voter knowledge. Building on this mistake, I criticize the way his excessive individualism prohibits him from a valuable discussion of social knowledge. It is not, however, my claim that were Goldman willing to revise his conception of democracy that his account would be so limited. This remains an area worthy of inquiry.

If framed in Goldmanian terms, I have demonstrated why we ought to be concerned about Iris Young's epistemological foundations given that they seem unstable with regard to articulating a significant theory of knowledge. Though I hestitate to agree with Goldman that Nelson's view cannot be considered *epistemological*, I concede that his claims about what do and do not count in this category concretely rule out standpoint theory as a candidate for a stable theory of knowledge. However, as I just indicated, we have plausible reason to rule out Goldman's work as significantly *social*. I hope to have shown why we ought to take Nelson seriously as an epistemologist proper, but more importantly why her view gives us such a refreshing starting point for talking about *social* epistemology. Indeed, as I demonstrate in my first chapter, there is good cause for being suspicious of Goldman's description of his work as social. My purpose was to create a space for understanding social epistemology as something distinct from the relationship between individuals and the social institutions they operate within. Rather, I push for a conception of social knowledge as *irreducibly collective*. In this way I am able to defend Young's claim that deliberation is *transformative*, and also provide the resources with which to deepen this claim. While on Young's account we experience a transformation of interests, with a robust understanding of collective knowledge we can assert deliberation as *epistemologically* transformative as well.

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