Toward an Engaged Account of Objectivity: Contributions from Early Phenomenology

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TOWARD AN ENGAGED ACCOUNT OF OBJECTIVITY:
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EARLY PHENOMENOLOGY

a dissertation

by

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TOWARD AN ENGAGED ACCOUNT OF OBJECTIVITY: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM EARLY PHENOMENOLOGY

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In this dissertation, I develop an engaged understanding of objectivity, or good knowledge practices. I argue that for knowledge practices to be good, they must both be truth-conducive and engaged, that is, explicitly implicated in the critical appraisal of background values and assumptions. I pursue this argument in six stages. First, I consider work in epistemology that countenances a place for values in objectivity. I conclude from this that truth-conduciveness is not sufficient for objectivity, and that a social approach to knowledge is called for. Second, I consider standpoint theory, a prominent feminist approach to objectivity. This allows me to show the possible insights available to marginalized perspectives, while indicating that this will be a component of rather than itself offering an account of objectivity. Third, I consider a more comprehensive approach in Helen Longino’s critical contextual empiricism, which locates objectivity in the social features of inquiry. Her approach is promising, but requires the insights of early phenomenology in order to develop that potential. I develop the phenomenological framework in Chapter 4, where I consider Husserlian phenomenology. Fifth, I bring the insights of phenomenology to the challenges presented by critical contextual empiricism, and develop my positive view, critical phenomenological objectivity. On this view, inquiry is objective when individuals and communities foster critical perspectives, seek transformative epistemic experiences, build coalitions, foster diversity, and pursue empirical adequacy. In the final chapter, I consider a case study that enables me to defend the merit and warrant of these features of objectivity.
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**Introduction**

How can we incorporate our understanding of the effects of power and values on inquiry while maintaining a normative account of our knowledge practices, i.e., while preserving objectivity? This is the question I seek to answer in my dissertation.

It is an important question for at least three reasons. First, it is valuable to have an account of what constitutes good knowledge practices in order to guide current and future practices. Second, epistemologists, like others, typically hope that knowledge will end harm rather than further it. Given this hope, it is important to probe the conditions under which knowledge has both managed, and failed, to reduce harm. Third, feminists and other marginalized groups need an epistemology that will offer a framework for truly asserting that they have been oppressed, without relinquishing the ability to make distinctions between better and worse claims to knowledge. This feminist concern places the imperative of addressing the issue of objectivity in sharp relief, though feminists do not have a monopoly on this project. Theorists like Thomas Kuhn and many others have noted the challenges of conceiving objectivity when we understand our knowledge practices as intertwined with human interests (1977). Many of these social approaches have not, however, involved an explicitly political dimension.

The question of what constitutes objective inquiry arises differently in different sets of literature. In the literature I will be concerned with, it arises in the guise of aiming to make sense of the successes of some feminist research, in light of the traditional claim that objectivity is in opposition to subjectivity, which means that it is in opposition to value-laden inquiry. This traditional conception of objectivity prevents us from seeing the
ways in which feminist research, which is by its definition engaged, has yielded insights that were untapped without the feminist research. Where this traditional conception has prevailed, the positive views developed have emphasized some issues to the exclusion of others. In particular, work has tended to accept and defend one of three views: individualism in epistemology, or the fundamental role of the community for objectivity, or the world-directedness of objectivity.\(^1\) Considered along a different set of priorities, the approaches have tended to emphasize either the need for our knowledge practices to track the truth, or the need for them to undermine oppression, that is, to pursue knowledge in order to pursue a just society. All of these approaches have to engage with a few sets of problems, notably the problem of relativism and the problem of excluding groups of epistemic subjects and areas of research.

My research fills a gap in the current literature. I adopt a phenomenological approach which allows me to mediate between some competing considerations because I am able to show how they are different moments of a common project. This is of pragmatic importance considering the problem that internecine fighting among social epistemologists, and among feminist epistemologists more particularly, may contribute to further ghettoizing. The degree of agreement between different groups may not be heard over the disputes. Finding common ground is not simply of pragmatic benefit, but is also of philosophical benefit. To my mind, open-minded communication lends itself to advancing philosophical debate more than a vision of philosophy as a duel or a rout does. Moreover, it will be one of the arguments of chapter 5 that finding common ground is

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\(^1\) For individualism, see *inter alia* Antony 2001. For an emphasis on the community, see Nelson 1993 and Longino 2002. For an emphasis on the world-directedness, see Haack 1993.
included among the features of objective inquiry. Since this is a method I will argue for, I set the stage by deploying it as a hypothesis throughout my work.

Phenomenology involves considering appearances as they appear to us, and trying to clarify the necessary and sufficient conditions of those appearances. That is, I address the conditions that must be in place to have a given kind of experience, including epistemic experiences. This kind of analysis allows me to look at the emphases on individuals, community, and the world as different moments or different provisional starting places that must all be interrogated or considered in order for inquiry to be objective. If they are necessary for objective inquiry, then it is important to incorporate them into an account of objectivity. I develop this method into a robustly engaged account of objectivity, which I call critical phenomenological objectivity. This account is concerned to incorporate both attention to truth and to justice. Aristotle is clear that for any virtue, one extreme will typically be worse than the other extreme. For example, it is worse to be cowardly than foolhardy. Aristotle did not emphasize that the virtues were particularly dependent on social structures and philosophical climate. I do think that, in a climate where engaged accounts of objectivity are still marginalized, I am more concerned to work against oppression than to work against falsehood. When the pendulum swings, I may well revise this view. In the current climate, I am more tolerant of problems with my view that make it too inclusive of marginalized voices than of problems that make it too exclusively focused on truth.

This last point may seem antithetical to epistemology. It is the purpose of the first chapter to show how issues of justice, even as they may pull against concerns for truth,
are pertinent to epistemology. I do this by clearing conceptual space for a social and value-laden approach to objectivity. In this chapter, I discuss three prominent views that incorporate a role for social values in their accounts of good knowledge practices. These are the views of Philip Kitcher, Miriam Solomon's social empiricism, and the feminist empiricism defended by Louise Antony and by Richmond Campbell. All of these views take truth as the primary or exclusive norm of epistemology. I show, through a discussion of the Nazi hypothermia experiments, that these views are not able to account for the way in which these experiments were not only ethically horrific, but were also bad science. The result of this discussion is that objectivity requires more than just truth conduciveness.

In chapter 2, I consider a set of views that places values, particularly politically engaged values, at the heart of epistemology and discussion of objective inquiry. I discuss feminist standpoint theory in its different iterations. What this set of views shares in common is the thought that power inequalities are of epistemic importance because those who are disadvantaged by social structures can occupy a better position from which to see both how the world is and the workings of power relations. I argue in this chapter that this is insightful, and the insight of standpoint theory can contribute to a better account of objectivity. However, there are problems with standpoint theory that show it to be incomplete.

In chapter 3, I consider a particularly strong feminist epistemology which has a good claim to being more complete than the standpoint views discussed in chapter 2. This is the view developed by Helen Longino, critical contextual empiricism. According to
critical contextual empiricism, objectivity requires individuals with a certain doxastic autonomy vis a vis their community, but objectivity is determined in the appropriate community interactions. Thus, claims are objective when they meet the following four conditions: there are (1) avenues and (2) uptake of criticism, (3) there are shared standards, and (4) a tempered equality of authority. This view has many benefits, including incorporating a conception of a just community at the heart of her account of objectivity. However, there are four significant problems with her view. The first two are that she offers insufficiently rich understandings of the nature of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. The third is that she fails to incorporate a theory of power and its effects in her epistemology. The fourth is that she fails to address the challenges of developing shared standards. These problems do not entirely undermine the four features of objectivity. Rather, the problems call for a shift in methods and a refiguring of those four features. Developing a shift in method is the task of chapter 4, while refiguring the features of objectivity is the task of chapter 5.

In chapter 4, I develop the phenomenological resources for addressing these problems through a consideration of Husserlian phenomenology. Husserl's approach, while problematic in its own right, is helpful for addressing the problems in Longino's view because he theorizes subjectivity and intersubjectivity in helpful ways. Additionally, he offers a critical understanding of the lifeworld which allows us to address power relations. Finally, his account of the relation between presence and absence in perception, and his understanding of knowledge as activity allow us to conceive of the emancipatory potential of objective inquiry, when objectivity is rightly understood.
In chapter 5, I use these phenomenological tools to develop critical phenomenological objectivity. This approach is explicitly self-reflexive, and offers the conditions for fruitful rather than immobilizing self-reflexivity, at the group and individual levels. I address each of the four problems with Longino's work using the resources developed in chapter 4. As a result of this, I offer five guidelines, which map onto Longino's four guidelines along with her commitment to empirical adequacy. The new guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity include (1) fostering critical perspectives in order to foster engaged standpoints, (2) aspiring to transformative epistemic experiences in order to uncover the workings of power in our perceptions, (3) building coalitions to develop overlapping standards, (4) fostering diversity to enable the first three guidelines, (5) and pursuing empirical adequacy to avoid endorsing falsehoods. I expect that at this introductory stage, the guidelines seem fanciful and impracticable. I endeavor, over the course of the first five chapters, to argue that they are motivated. In the fifth chapter, part of my explanation of the guidelines shows that they are practicable because they are gathered from practical contexts.

In the sixth and final chapter, I develop a sustained case study that allows me to show the usefulness of the guidelines of critical phenomenological inquiry. The case study will also allow me to vindicate Longino's critical contextual account of objectivity which was the source of my guidelines. However, I show that the insights of her view are more readily discernible once we have considered the case study using the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity. The case study concerns witchcraft theories in seventeenth century England. I address the epistemic and political context of these
theories, both of the historical time period, and of the contemporary context of studying the historical time period. Following this case study, I address residual concerns that critical phenomenological objectivity is insufficiently naturalized, too demanding, or unwarranted.
Chapter 1: Toward a Social Account of Objectivity

Dr. Reid: Your results will be corrupted. You cannot be both an observer and participant.
Pearl: I cannot but be both. “Observation is participation.”
Dr. Reid: Who said that?
Pearl: No one; but someone really ought to. Was I to work and dwell at your side, never knowing my true relation to the subject?
Dr. Reid: Knowing who she was would have hindered your ability to discover what she is. What is the good of such knowledge? ...
Pearl: Was it rational to deprive me of the crucial fact?
Dr. Reid: A fact that would have destroyed your objectivity.
Pearl: What is objectivity but the ability to consider every influence on our powers of observation? Facts, uprooted, can tell us only so much. A fact out of context is like a fish on a slab, inexplicable without water. (MacDonald 2005, 146-147)

In *Belle Moral*, Ann-Marie Macdonald's recent play set at the turn of the last century in Scotland, Pearl is confronted with a family secret. Late in the play, she discovers she has a sister, thought an abomination because of her elfin ears. Stealing the daughter away to the attic drove Pearl's mother to suicide, Mr. Reid—Pearl's suitor, science teacher and the lifelong family doctor—to lies, and the family to the edge of madness. Yet finding the sister, Claire, allows the family to heal its wounds. Pearl realizes that “we are all here so briefly” and engages in the project of studying her family from within, living “with passionate curiosity and unreasonable kindness” (147-148). Mr. Reid cannot fathom this, and is driven to despair even as the others rejoice in their new connections. Claire brings the family together, in their passion and responsibility for each other, and Pearl articulates this reorientation as a reorientation of objectivity. That this work is a play, and so is by its nature interactive and social, reinforces the lesson the characters learn from one another. This lesson is also the lesson of my dissertation.
In this chapter, I lay the groundwork for an account of objectivity that incorporates values. I do this by considering two sweeping criticisms of such a project, and by surveying recent work on objectivity and values in mainstream analytic epistemology. The point of is to show that objectivity typically involves a social dimension and that good knowledge productive methods need not immunize themselves against values, including social values. The third point, related to the point about value-laden inquiry, is to show that the pursuit of truth is insufficient as the guiding epistemic norm.

As many have noted, objectivity has been attributed to (or withheld from) beliefs, theories, individuals, data, methods of inquiry, knowledge claims, and communities (Longino 1990, 62; Harding 1995, 332). It has been said to require value-freedom, impartiality, political engagement, lack of political engagement, community, solitarity, equipment, lack of equipment, and a great many other mutually incompatible requirements. Typically, though, it has been opposed to subjectivity and all that falls on the side of the subjective, such as affects, desires, perspectives, and all those elements that have the "wrong direction of fit", imposing our wants on the world, rather than taking our cues from the world. Objectivity, by contrast, has been said to require receiving from the world in a non-distortive way.

Historically, through Kant and Husserl, objectivity meant something along the lines of "objecthood", that is, of having a status beyond the subject. Along this meaning, objectivity is not an honorific notion, but a statement of status. It is the result of pointing, rather than of giving approval. As is clear in the phenomenological tradition, this sense of
objectivity need not bear a relation to the "objective world" of facts and things, since we can take our thoughts and intentions themselves in an objective sense, that is, take them as the object of our reflection, just as I can reflect on a dream or wish, without reifying the dream or wish. This is no longer the only—or even the main—sense of objectivity, and it is not the one I am concerned with in this dissertation. I am concerned with the sense of objectivity that is attributed to good knowledge productive practices, and hence concerns individuals, their tools, communities, and the objects of study.

I proceed in five steps. In the first, I consider Susan Haack's strident rejection of social accounts of objectivity, in which she reaffirms the traditional, value-neutral ideal. Next, I address Catharine MacKinnon's vigorous rejection of objectivity as itself oppressive of women. I conclude from both of these sweeping rejections that, despite Haack's and MacKinnon's arguments, room is preserved to pursue a social account of objectivity; indeed, that rehabilitating this notion is important. In the third section, I discuss Heather Douglas's survey of the different meanings of objectivity in order to show that these all refer to a social setting. By social setting, I mean that all of the senses she discusses are best understood in the context of a community of knowers. Fourth, I address a series of issues that accounts of objectivity either implicitly or explicitly make commitments on. Finally, I discuss the merits and shortcomings of three prominent approaches to objectivity in recent philosophy of science.

Given that my aim is not to develop an account of objectivity that is primarily directed at the sciences, my discussion of work from the philosophy of science may seem out of place. The reason for this focus is that the sciences and, with them, the philosophy
of science have been particularly concerned to account for objectivity, in the sense of
good methods and practices. Moreover, it is in this arena that resistance to political
discussion had been most acute. However, the current trend as I understand it is that the
epistemologies of science are among the most fruitful and sensitive accounts of
knowledge. Many philosophers of science have engaged with liberatory epistemologies,
like those offered by feminists, and to a lesser extent critical race theorists.\(^2\) This has
meant that philosophers like Joseph Rouse, Miriam Solomon, Philip Kitcher, and others
have justice concerns in mind as they develop their theories. There are difficulties in
using epistemologies meant for scientific knowledge as resources for a more general
project. Though I have some misgivings about Susan Haack's claim that the sciences are
like the rest of our knowledge practices, only more so (2004, 37), I find this a useful way
of bringing claims about scientific knowledge and general knowledge closer together.
The misgivings concern the very different level of organization, professional
commitment, and history of scientific knowledge as compared to my knowledge of how
to do my laundry, how to get to the butcher's, and how to bake cookies. However, there
are many similarities such as the possibility of being mistaken, possibility of being
mislead, and need for accuracy. Where there are particular challenges in the comparison,
I will address them. Here, however, I turn to the criticisms of social accounts of
objectivity.

\(^2\) I take liberatory epistemologies to be those theories of knowledge which are explicit about the aim of
reducing the harmful effects of oppressive knowledge practices.
I. A Global Rejection of Social Approaches to Objectivity

In "Fallibilism, objectivity, and the New Cynicism" (2004), Susan Haack leads a virulent attack on the view she calls “the New Cynicism,” which includes among its proponents “radical feminists, multiculturalists, sociologists and rhetoricians of science, and ... a good many philosophers” (35). While her comments are more strident than some others', they are certainly representative of a certain mainstream approach to more deeply social epistemologies, especially to those that are attentive to the workings of power.\(^3\) I argue in this section that her intolerance to these social approaches to epistemology is tied to her naive conception of objectivity as a simple objectivism—i.e. as simply leading us to the mind independent world. Indeed, it is this presumption that we are so easily rid of our values in our quest for truth that blinds her to the insights of the views she criticizes (1993, 2004).

The label the “New Cynicism” is meant to include such diverse projects as Richard Rorty's brand of pragmatism, the work of the Edinburgh school of the sociology of science, and the work of various feminists and multiculturalists. These positions are said to be cynical as a consequence of their relativism. If I am a relativist, and nevertheless make positive claims, then I can't really believe the claims I'm making, since belief is a belief-in-truth. As a relativist, I have done away with truth. If I make claims that I do not believe, I am being cynical (1993, 192).

Haack argues that “there's no need to give up on the objectivity of truth, evidence,

\(^3\) See, e.g., Goldmann's brief chapter “Epistemology and Postmodern Resistance” (1999, 3-37). This is the lengthiest recent treatment of so-called postmodern approaches, and is still very cursory and dismissive. A sharp contrast is to be noted with social philosophies of science which take feminist work seriously, though work attendant to race remains neglected (for philosophy of science, see Kitcher 2001, Rouse 2002, Solomon 2001. For the neglect of work on race, see Mills 2007).
etc., provided you're fallibilist enough” (2004, 36), i.e., provided you have a sufficiently gradational notion of justification and don't require a class of beliefs that are absolutely certain as a foundation (1996, 646-47). As in other places, she does not specify the sense of objectivity she means. She does not address the possibility that objectivity is a contested concept, one who's meaning requires critical work to understand. This oversight is at the background of her misunderstanding of at least some of the views she groups together as New Cynics. She contrasts her fallibilism with the supposed dogmatic scepticism of the New Cynics for whom there:

(1) lies a profound intolerance of uncertainty and a deep unwillingness to accept that the less than perfect is a lot better than nothing at all. Again and again true, fallibilist premises are transmuted into false, cynical conclusions: (2) what is accepted as known fact is often enough no such thing, therefore the concept of known fact is ideological humbug; (3) one's judgment of the worth of evidence depends on one's background beliefs, therefore there are no objective standards of evidential quality (2004, 36).4

Haack sees (1) as following from (2) and (3), and treats these latter as deeply connected: both are cynical conclusions. She accepts that the premises of (2) and (3) are sometimes plausible, if cast in fallibilist terms, rather than in the cynical terms of the New Cynics. Haack stresses the acceptance of known fact and the judgment of the worth of evidence. It is on this point that the New Cynics go wrong, according to Haack: rather than acknowledging that it is by accepting claims or making judgments prematurely that we err, the New Cynics blame the conception of evidence and of judgment. This is sometimes true. For example, Barnes and Bloor take knowledge as what is accepted by a community, denying the possibility of a gap between knowledge (or acceptance) and

4 I have added the numbers in brackets.
truth (1982). Haack claims to target “radical” feminists as well, although she does not discuss what she means by radical feminism. In fact, although her article appeared in 2004, she cites no feminist work more recent than 1992. From her claims, she seems to mean any view that strays from early liberal feminism—that is, the feminism that calls only for the inclusion of women in the public sphere, without critically addressing the structure of society, and without considering the effects of power imbalances. However, the gaps in Haack’s scholarship tie in with her easy acceptance of (1), that the less than perfect is better than nothing. While this may sometimes be true, at points in history, less than perfect understanding has been more harmful to knowledge and to people—hence worse—than nothing at all. Less than perfect craniometry is worse than no craniometry: if we do not attempt to make racialized claims based on skull measurements, we are better off, epistemically, than if we attempt to make racialized claims on the understanding that our tools are imperfect. In addition to her premature acceptance of an old conception of objectivity, her uncritical acceptance of the value of progress indicates a dogmatism in her view. This kind of attachment to the “less than perfect” is at the heart of the problem with her criticism of the New Cynics.

Haack’s main target is often Richard Rorty. She is sharply critical of his conversationalism and deeply opposed to his hermeneutics, where richness of interpretation is privileged over the pursuit of truth. Yet, after explicitly rejecting hermeneutic approaches to philosophy, Haack herself makes some very hermeneutic claims regarding Rorty’s poor grasp of the history of philosophy, and of his not having taken into consideration the philosophical import for understanding Descartes’ work of
the writings of the sceptics discovered in Descartes' time (1993, 185). The purpose of Haack's foray into interpretation and history—or, hermeneutics—is to highlight how formulating and reformulating questions is one way of making progress in the sciences. It's a modest progress she admits, but it's still progress. As with her use of “objectivity”, Haack never offers an analysis of “progress” and thus takes it for granted that it has in fact occurred and that it is in fact unproblematic as a conceptual tool and as a goal. She means the possession of more significant truths, both in terms of a greater number of truths, and truths of greater significance. This approach remains silent on the question of what a more significant truth is. It is not always obvious that we have had the right notion of what kinds of significant truths to pursue.

Though Haack is refreshingly fallibilist when it comes to individual claims to knowledge, she is insufficiently modest about the possibility that values may (and often do) have an epistemic impact. Consider, for example, studies on the effects of divorce on women (Anderson 2004). When these studies tracked only so-called objective markers (i.e., quantifiable data like income), women were inevitably worse off after divorce. However, when studies were altered to include questions about senses of well-being, the conclusions drawn were quite different: despite being materially worse off, women typically considered that, overall, they were better off after their divorce. Of course, when making measurements in biochemistry, or other disciplines, we won't ask the enzymes how they're doing, but the case of divorce indicates that the kind of markers that are deemed appropriate to inquiry will depend in part on the goal. Here, the goal of a comprehensive explanation required the inclusion of questions that are not so obviously
objectively quantifiable. And yet, their exclusion gave a distorted view of the state of affairs, and a view that is not innocently distorted. Rather, it is warped in a way that systematically makes women seem worse off, which is one way of calling it sexist.

Arguing that thorough research sometimes requires the inclusion of values does not entail relativism about truth. Rather, it calls for a more thoroughgoing fallibilism about methods and questions. The appropriate attention to context need not index truth to context, but considers what contextual factors may be truth-indicative. Haack never countenances this possibility. Haack claims that these are questions for structuring inquiry, whereas she is interested solely in justification, which she maintains remains inhospitable to social factors and values. However, justification will often depend on the goal of inquiry, as my discussion of Kitcher and Campbell later in this chapter will indicate.

This discussion of Susan Haack's global rejection of all those who develop social accounts of objectivity, shows that Haack's rejection is tied to her naive acceptance of uninterrogated conceptions of progress, and objectivity. Here, I am critical of her criticisms. Her positive view, foundherentism, contains much of interest, though discussing it would take me too far afield. Her neglect of the potential problems with traditional accounts of progress and objectivity offers a hint about how we can improve on our knowledge practices: she has failed to reference recent writings on the issues she publishes on, and thus immunizes herself from criticism. She does not allow for room to theorize her own areas of ignorance, and cannot see that this might mar her epistemology. Because of these shortcomings, her argument does not preclude the possibility that a new
account of objectivity is impossible or undesirable.

II. Mackinnon’s Critique of Objectivity

MacKinnon’s views are quite radical and have often been discounted on that basis. Nevertheless, considering her rejection of objectivity as an oppressive ideal is helpful for understanding gender, and the ways so-called objective inquiry can be oppressive. I will, however, show that MacKinnon does not offer sufficient reason to think that every account of objectivity will necessarily be oppressive, and so this section allows me to clear space for renewed inquiry into the nature of objectivity.

The conception of objectivity as detachment is at the basis of MacKinnon’s critique of objectivity as an oppressive concept. In *Feminism Unmodified*, MacKinnon addresses the relationship between power and claims to knowledge (1987, 49). Gender inequality is to be revealed “in the socially constructed relationship between power—the political—on the one hand and the knowledge of truth and reality—the epistemological—on the other” (1987, 147).

Consider gender as a set of norms developed out of social roles. The social role determines what norms, or ideals, are appropriate. For example, it is appropriate for firefighters to run into a fire; if others do it, they are foolish or heroic or mad. When it comes to gender, the typical bifurcation of genders into masculine and feminine (with their categories “man” and “woman”) emerge from the hierarchalized social roles of men and women.5 Gender norms are also typically understood as bearing a relation to the body,

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5 I want to make it clear that I am not engaging in “male bashing”. Just as I am complicit in oppression in my role as affluent, straight, white woman (though I do work hard at tempering the harm I cause) we need to acknowledge the way that men may be complicit in gender oppression in virtue of their social
although those in power—those with a masculine gender—often minimize or deny their embodiment. Under conditions of gender inequality, the two genders emerge hierarchically. French feminists have made it clear, in the last sixty years or so, that femininity develops as a lack in relation to masculinity (Beauvoir 1953, xvi; Irigaray 1977, 26).

According to MacKinnon, a feminist theory of knowledge takes as its starting point a critical engagement with the way that the male position of power has structured social life and knowledge about it (MacKinnon 1987, 49). Thus, epistemic questions emerge out of social practices. The question feminists need to ask, according to MacKinnon, is what creates the conditions that make us powerless? MacKinnon thinks the problem is objectivity, which she understands as a stance occupied by men in their domination of women. The conception of objectivity MacKinnon uses involves: (1) epistemic neutrality, whereby one takes the regularities one notes as emerging from the nature of the object under observation; (2) practical neutrality, of being constrained by the nature of the object under question—i.e., not trying to alter its nature; (3) absolute aperspectivity, whereby one takes the regularities noted as genuine provided they were observed under normal conditions by normal observers. Men have assumed the position

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7 I follow Haslanger's helpful articulation of MacKinnon's understanding of objectivity (2001, especially 232-233). It is worth noting, here, that the requirement of aperspectivity is not the largely outdated claim to a view from nowhere. It's rather the subtler point of assuming that one has adequately controlled for one's location. Think about looking through the right side mirror while driving. We are able to control for our location by remembering that the objects in the mirror are closer than they appear. We know if we failed to control for our location when we drive into another car.
of knower, of subject, and have relegated women to the position of object; they have objectified women.

To objectify (someone or something) is to view objects as having natural traits you desire them to have, and to be in a position where you have the power to make it have these properties (2001, 234). Thus, the scope of objectifying acts is narrower than the scope of acts whereby we take something as an object: to think of cancer as having certain properties is not necessarily to impose my desires regarding its nature on it. To be good at objectifying, you must have power over the object, which is much easier if you have at least some true beliefs. One important aspect of objectification is the illusion that one's true beliefs are natural and hence immutable—it is through this illusory belief that one is able to justify objectifying. If you desire to suck on a sweet mango, your desire is more readily satisfied by the nature of the ripe mango, which is sweet. If you desire to suck on a sweet lemon, your lack of true beliefs about lemons will sadly thwart your desire.

In a very different case, however, if you desire a submissive dog, you may beat your dominant dog until he cowers when you come around. This can create the illusion that dogs are, by their nature, submissive, since he does, in fact, cower when you come around. The analogy to women is the simple point that Wollstonecraft, Mill, and others have made: if you have (or lack) certain expectations of women, these may well be fulfilled in fact, though not on the basis of their nature. If you take women to be less capable of reason, and thereby keep them from education, they will likely say less

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8 A less unsettling example may come from maps, whereby the use of a map can alter terrain in such a way that nature resembles what you are seeking. For example, by listing a route as a hiking path, more people will walk that way, widening the path until it resembles a hiking path.
reasoned things.

What makes MacKinnon more radical, however, are what she regards as the systemic consequences of the objectification of women. It is not simply that women will know less if they have no education; it is that even when they say reasonable things, they will be taken as unreasonable. MacKinnon’s point then is that, by definition, an object can’t alter knowledge, since knowledge is the sole province of the subject. Epistemic practices devalue and sustain the objectification of women. If women are only ever seen as objects, it is not obvious that they can simply start speaking up and join the discussion. Another epistemological method—inimical to this conception of objectivity—is called for.

This poses a potentially insurmountable problem for the feminist, since she is conditioned by her objectification. Unlike men, women have not been allowed to assume the stance of the subject, supposedly separate from the world. If pursuing knowledge objectively—that is, in separation from the object—is the only way to pursue knowledge, it’s not clear that women can proceed. However, if we find a new approach, we may be able to find a way forward. That way forward, MacKinnon maintains, is going to be through a consideration of the condition which is most our own, namely the condition of being gendered. “Consciousness-raising” is what she calls the process of attending to the condition of being gendered a woman. The claim is that we live our objectification. A consequence of this is that, in critically considering our inequality, we are at once the subject of inquiry and its object. This may seem to imply self-subjugation. However, it need not have this effect: the critical engagement with the dual role as subject and object
of inquiry allows the tensions of the dominant view—which sees women as objects
instead of seeing them as subjects—to be exposed. These tensions involve contradictory
beliefs and practices as we find, e.g., in Rousseau’s *Emile*, in which Sophie must be
forced, by a lack of education, to achieve her nature. MacKinnon sees the possibility of
resistance in the collective, compassionate consideration of selves as subjects and
objects.⁹

MacKinnon’s point, however, is not merely to chart the background of engaged
accounts of knowledge production, but to show how gender inequality taints objectivity
altogether. The problem according to MacKinnon is not simply that the objective
standpoint is unavailable to women. This would amount to the criticism that what is
claimed as objective is insufficiently so and would not undermine the norm itself.
MacKinnon claims that objectivity invariably results in objectification. Feminism is the
critique of the objective standpoint, MacKinnon claims.

However, MacKinnon has not demonstrated that every epistemic act of
detachment constitutes a gendered harm. We may well find that detachment is sometimes
called for. Moreover, as Douglas showed, objectivity has been used in many ways that
extend beyond the sense of detachment and separation from the object of study, which is
the sense that MacKinnon foregrounds. What is insightful about MacKinnon’s view, if
she does not offer compelling reasons to reject objectivity altogether? MacKinnon shows
how the claims of objectivity have been wielded as a weapon to perpetuate the oppression
of women, by legitimizing their objectification. The stance of subject of knowledge has

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⁹ For a helpful, practical discussion of consciousness-raising, see hooks (2000, chapter 2).
been denied women, and so little room has been left for destabilizing these structures of knowledge. That is, MacKinnon has shown how claims to neutrality, tied to detachment in her account, have been used to further political stances with harmful effects. The harmful effects have also involved epistemic harms: knowledge of and by women has been blocked by the male subject, female object split.¹⁰

MacKinnon has also shown that the problem will not be resolved by simply including women as knowers and maintaining knowledge practices as they are. This is because the call for detachment is often both illusory and harmful. It is illusory and so is a poor assumption for epistemology, and it is harmful in perpetuating a hierarchical relationship between knower and known. It is problematic in a second respect as well: the ideal of neutrality and detachment encoded in the conception of objectivity that MacKinnon criticizes is unable to uncover its own prejudices and blind spots because it does not count these as operative in knowledge practices. Moreover, by objectifying those who would reveal the prejudices and stereotypes maintaining the illusion of neutrality, the ideal is stabilized. Thus, the upshot of MacKinnon’s view is that detachment and neutrality are unable to uncover partiality and prejudice. Haack’s dogmatic rejection of social accounts of objectivity demonstrates this problem.

Instead of taking these points as calling for a rejection of objectivity altogether, however, they point to the urgent need among oppressed groups to develop more responsible knowledge practices and, concomitantly, more responsible understanding of objective methods. Thus, I take MacKinnon as offering a structure for understanding

¹⁰ Barbara McClintock’s passionate engagement with the individual corn plants she studies shows the epistemic potential of resisting the separation and detachment typically involved in a subject-object split (Keller 1995, 158-176).
knowledge as gendered, and as demonstrating the need to pursue epistemology with
greater caution and attention to power and social elements. She has not, however, shown
that objectivity is irredeemably tarnished by oppressive practices.

III. Senses of Objectivity and Their Irreducibility

To call something or someone objective is to mark approval; it is at least to say "I
endorse this and you should too" (Douglas 2004, 453). But what objectivity is, in addition
to this approval, warrants further consideration. In a recent article, Heather Douglas
argues for the irreducibility of objectivity, identifying eight distinct senses that fall under
three groupings. My aim in discussing her taxonomy is to show that the first two
groupings—object-directed and individual's reasoning—depend on the third grouping, as
well as to survey some of the uses of objectivity. The first group, Objectivity₁, has to do
with “processes [which] attempt to directly ‘get at objects’ in the world.” This sense is
related to objectivity as objecthood. Objectivity₂, focuses on the thought processes and
the role of values in individual reasoning. Objectivity₃, focuses on the social processes
involved in epistemic procedures. She is motivated by pragmatic concerns of offering a
useful account of objectivity that can help us “make good decisions in a complex world.”
This aim illustrates a common tension between the desire to offer a descriptive account of
how we use "objectivity," and the normative aim of producing an account that can and
should be deployed. Claims to objectivity are evaluable on methodological grounds: “I
call the product objective solely because the process of its production has certain
markers” (456) However, in an unconventional move, what is to be counted as objective
for Douglas is the result of a given process. While this could make sense when we're talking about tools, it does not when we turn to questions of subject locations conducive to knowledge. Others, like Longino, operate with the reverse characterization: if science is objective in the sense of involving accurate account of the facts, this is because the view provided by science relies on non arbitrary and non subjective criteria for developing theory and claims. In other words, objectivity is conferred by methods, that is, structured ways of fulfilling criteria (Longino 1990, 63-64).

1. Objectivity1: Objectivity and Tools

In the first group Douglas discusses manipulable objectivity. We claim something as objective when it can be used to do something else. A paradigmatic example is Ian Hacking's account of microscopes. In Representing and Intervening, Hacking considers the history of the microscope. He does this to show that when we attend to what scientists do rather than what philosophers say, we can see how some methods build in checks and balances on procedures so that they reliably yield knowledge (1983). This she calls manipulable objectivity, because manipulation or tool use is central to its sense. As she puts it, “when we can use a new concept or theory like a tool to intervene reliably in the world, ascriptions of the objectivity of those new tools come easily and with strong endorsement” (457).

This meaning of objectivity makes better sense if we take it to refer to the role of the tool in some practices. The electron microscope isn't itself objective, but rather has a place in objective inquiry into the world. It occupies the place simply in virtue of being a
reliable tool in an objective practice or process, rather than itself being objective. While we can grasp this problem in her taxonomy with the microscope, it is particularly clear where Douglas generalizes the point beyond the sciences. She considers using the objects around us, like glasses for drinking water. Yet our beliefs about the glass are objective to the extent that they allow us to reliably drink water from the glass.

In these cases, however, Douglas should call these beliefs about our tools true or false. There were (likely) objective processes that went into the formation of our beliefs about tools, and these beliefs may factor into objective processes for finding other things out. However, it is misleading to talk about the objectivity of our tools. While I agree with Douglas that one group of senses of objectivity has to do with being directed at the world, it fits what we say and makes more sense to think of the role of our tools in practices which admit of degrees of objectivity. When we say of data, for example, that they are objective, we mean that they were gathered in an objective way—indeed, this is what makes them data rather than unrelated facts. They are objective by reference to some processes or practices in which they are used reliably. When we think of the objectivity of some results, this is again by reference to some reliable method. Thus, reasoning processes and measurement practices, among other things, appear central to accounting for objectivity. This leads to the second set of meanings of objectivity.

2. Objectivity 2: Objectivity and Individual Reasoning

The second grouping of objectivity has three senses under it, all concerning individual reasoning practices. By contrast to the first group, where values don’t come
up, these three all involve stances towards the role of values in individual reasoning. The first is detached objectivity, where values should not blind to unpleasant evidence. The second is value-free objectivity, where all values are banned since they introduce bias and idiosyncrasy. The third is value-neutral objectivity, that is, where there is no preferable value, one should stay neutral between them. This last sense diverges from more common uses of “value-neutral”, which more typically indicate that (at least social) values do not and should not play a role in inquiry, whether or not there is a preferable value.

Douglas considers detached objectivity as the least controversial sense of objectivity. Douglas writes that “simply because one wants something to be true does not make it so, and one’s personal values should not blind one to the existence of unpleasant evidence” (Douglas 2004, 459) This can work out quite differently depending on whether we are considering more social values or more cognitive values.\footnote{This is not a distinction that stands up well to close scrutiny—see Longino (1995). Nevertheless, I think we can fruitfully think of values as along a continuum.} Consider the place of the value of accuracy in space travel research. We can imagine the scientists working on flight plans and the like to hold on quite dearly to accuracy, at the expense of simplicity, and this dogged attachment to one value may be quite appropriate, given a certain goal. On the other hand, it is quite true that a steadfast commitment to accuracy may at times be perverse, and we want our reasoner to take an appropriate distance from her preference for this cognitive virtue. For example, if you ask how large a dinner portion is in a restaurant, it seems reasonable to suppose you would take some distance to a preference for accuracy and settle for simplicity.
When it comes to personal attachment, however, the picture looks different. Douglas has in mind cases of personal attachment to certain values or outcomes, and the distance that is called for is a distance towards one's own goals and commitments. While this is certainly appropriate sometimes, the more important questions for working out an account of laudable epistemic practices are when is it appropriate to take some distance from your goals and expectations? How is this possible? Which values does one need to become detached from?

Objectivity as detachment of the subject from the object of knowledge has often been criticized. For example, Susan Brison is critical of the emphasis in the philosophy of mind on fantastical thought experiments involving trauma, the detriment of consulting actual survivors of trauma. Such consultation was avoided in the belief that to it creates a distortive separation of theorist from the object of research, even as it is meant to probe intuitions. Her work develops an account of selfhood that stems from her experience of rape and its aftermath, and hence she takes herself as part of the object of study (Brison 1997). Much of this critical work concerning the way subjects and objects are enmeshed highlight the ways in which sorting out what is required to genuinely grasp what one wants to learn about is part of the inquiry.

Presuming the appropriateness of detachment as distancing sometimes involves getting the facts wrong. We can't suppose in advance of answering every question what relationship among inquirers and topics of inquiry is called for, or what degree of involvement is appropriate. Consider this on a parallel to really listening to someone. We can do it sometimes, but it's hard, and it takes skills, and it takes a certain balance
between holding off on judgment, and remaining very much implicated in the
conversation. Perhaps this is a better way to think about an appropriate stance for
learning, other than presuming detachment is what constitutes objectivity.\footnote{This careful, fragile approach to knowledge emerges in much work in ecology, particularly as it is understood by Code in Ecological Thinking (2006).}

Detached objectivity, when taken in a strong sense, begins to look like value-
freedom. The difference between value-free objectivity and detached objectivity, as
Douglas understands these senses, is this: it is irrational to ignore evidence whereas it is
perfectly rational to count some errors as more significant than others (460). Thinking in
this way can gloss over the work of establishing what counts as the evidence for which
questions. For example, there is approximately a 15 points IQ gap between Blacks and
Whites (Flynn 1999, 12). Arthur Jensen, a major theorist about the IQ gap and race,
offered a two step argument for claiming that environmental factors could account for
only 5 points of that difference. Thus, according to Jensen, even under conditions of
social justice, Whites would enjoy a 10 point advantage in IQ. The first step of his
argument was that only “12% of IQ variance within White Americans was explained by
between-family environmental factors,” and he hypothesized the same was the case for
Black Americans. Second, appeal to the obvious difference between Whites as a group
and Blacks as a group was not able to explain the full 15 points difference. Controlling
for socio-economic status eliminated three points of the difference (Flynn 1999, 12).
Given this, an analysis of how much poorer environmental factors would have to be for
Blacks to explain the difference makes it wildly improbable that a satisfying
environmental explanation is on the horizon (Jensen, in Flynn 1999, 12). Flynn rightly
finds this result troubling.

Jensen's argument makes use of indirect evidence, namely, evidence based on what we could expect to be the case under different circumstances, based on evidence we have of current circumstances. That is, Jensen's evidence is based on what we could expect to happen if Blacks were no longer disadvantaged socio-economically. Countering Jensen requires either more compelling indirect evidence or—better still—direct evidence. Direct evidence would be evidence that comes from situations where Blacks are actually in different environments, ones that approximate White environments. Some evidence of Black babies or children adopted by white or mixed race families in the U.S. supported Jensen's thesis. However, Flynn discovered evidence in favour of genetic equality, that is, in favour of an environmental explanation for the gap. In Germany, Black and White American soldiers fathered children to (presumptively White) German mothers over the course of the American Forces presence in Germany following World War II. These children had virtually identical mean IQ scores, and so there is support for seeing the IQ gap as explainable in environmental terms.

This shows that it is reasonable to consider the genetic and evolutionary accounts of various hierarchies between different groups with a certain scepticism. Those who have experienced oppression purportedly justified by so-called scientific arguments for their inferiority—like women as weaker, Blacks as less intelligent—should be particularly motivated to develop an account of objectivity that is able to count as rational the rejection of current evidence, given that the questions which have produced the evidence have often been misguided. With regard to IQ, the question has been "what
biological account explains the poor performance of Blacks on IQ tests" whereas the question should instead be more like "what environmental features help explain the performance." Nor should we be satisfied if we come up with some sort of theoretical answer. To ask the question in this way demands political action, hence demands commitment to some values.

In discussing value-free objectivity, Douglas vacillates between understanding values in the thin sense, as cognitive values (e.g. the values that would be used to determine the acceptability of some errors over others) and social values. If she means by value-freedom the exclusion of cognitive values in reasoning, Douglas ought to have excluded this sense as being without normative force.13 If value-freedom means the exclusion even of norms of reasoning, then this is not a sense of objectivity that can be used. However, she does seem to want to relegate social values to the realm of what ought to be silenced (or at least distanced) in proper reasoning. That is to say, she seems to think that there is a legitimate sense of objectivity in which this is done. This is a common usage but a hasty one, and one I am a pains to put to rest in this dissertation.14

The third sense of objectivity2 is value-neutrality. This is contrasted with value-freedom, since it does not require renouncing all values. Rather, it involves being neutral with regard to a certain spectrum. While Douglas doesn't explicitly discuss this, she means that we ought to be neutral with regard to the values relevant to a particular inquiry. Her example is of writing a literature review, which ought to be balanced with

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13 Douglas excludes those uses of objectivity she considers non-operationalizable. For example, the use of objectivity to mean the utterly mind-independent world as grasped from a mind-independent stance is excluded from her discussion (455).
14 For example, see Haack (2004) for this usage.
respect to the works presented. She restricts her claim to those cases where there is no
clearly better value; in particular, she acknowledges that where racist or sexist values are
at one extreme, then to take the middle course between these and non-racist or -sexist
values would be misguided. This is an improvement on absolutely endorsing value-
neutrality, but I worry that the aspiration to a “reflectively centrist” position, other things
being equal, may blind us to cases where objectionable values are implicit. After all,
what counts as a racist or sexist value and where these appear is still debated. The
aspiration to a centrist position has the effect of ensuring a conservative take on these
issues. If we want to be neutral between value extremes, without adopting indefensible
ones, we need to be able to (objectively) locate the values at work. This becomes one of
the tasks of inquiry, but it is covered over if we accept the straightforward rejection of
values in inquiry. The question of how I can know if I am sufficiently neutral emerges.

Now, it is significant that for the senses of objectivity Douglas identifies as falling
under the reasoning processes of the individual, all three senses bear a relation to values,
and involve taking a (distancing) stance to these values. I've shown how insisting on
taking a distancing stance to the values can be epistemically detrimental in some cases.
I've also claimed that objectivity in the sense of value-freedom is not operationalizable,
though Douglas is right to note that it is often invoked. A number of questions come up in

15 For example, James Watson does not think his comments regarding evolutionary explanations of
apparently poor work performance of Blacks offensive. He thinks he is being scientific. As Hunt-
Grubbe reports in her interview with Watson, "[Watson] says that he is 'inherently gloomy about the
prospect of Africa' because 'all our social policies are based on the fact that their intelligence is the same
as ours – whereas all the testing says not really', and I know that this 'hot potato' is going to be difficult
to address. His hope is that everyone is equal, but he counters that 'people who have to deal with black
employees find this is not true'. He says that you should not discriminate on the basis of colour, because
'there are many people of colour who are very talented, but don’t promote them when they haven’t
succeeded at the lower level.'" (in Hunt-Grubbe, 2007).
discussing objectivity as the reliability of individual reasoning processes. There are the questions of when and what kind of detachment is appropriate, as well as questions concerning how to tell whether I am detached, or reasoning free from values, or achieving neutrality with regards to certain values. It would seem that, when it comes to potentially biasing factors, I can only tell if I am in a social context, with others to point out my assumptions; I don't notice my biases alone. To develop an account of objectivity that admits of use, we will have to take account of this practical requirement. Douglas maintains that the three groupings of objectivity are irreducible, but through my critical exegesis, I have shown she is mistaken. Just as the first group of meanings, where objectivity had to do with a relation between inquirers and the world, pointed towards the second set of meanings concerning individual reasoning processes, so the second set of meanings points towards the third set of meanings which invoke a social dimension to objectivity.

3. Objectivity: Objectivity and Sociality

Under objectivity, Douglas looks at the different senses of objectivity that allow us to uncover objective social processes. The three senses are procedural objectivity, concordant objectivity, and interactive objectivity. The first of these allows society to render processes uniform, for example, by standardizing the tax code, or having standardized exams with prescribed answers, in order to eliminate idiosyncrasies in treatment or grading. Of course, as Douglas notes, while procedural objectivity allows us to eliminate the idiosyncrasies of particular reasoners, it is silent on the presence of
values in the process itself. Also, the fact of proceduralism is, of itself, no indication that it isn't simply the idiosyncrasies of the maker that have been encoded. Proceduralism is not sufficient to secure our endorsement. Nevertheless, once certain parameters have been set, we can see that following procedures of some kind will reduce the influence of particular subjectivities. We will have greater uniformity, which in some cases will produce more uniformly endorsable results.

The next two senses of objectivity can fall under the heading of intersubjectivity, according to Douglas. The first is concordant objectivity. This sense of objectivity is central for Quine. Quine discusses the requirement of intersubjectivity as what makes science objective in the context of discussing easily decidable observation sentences. What counts as an observation sentence is always indexed to a community.\textsuperscript{16} The class of observation sentences will vary by community. In a smaller community—say, the molecular biologists of lab A—the class of observation sentences will be quite large. For a larger community—say, the molecular biologists of lab A and all of their undergraduate students—the class of observation sentences will be considerably reduced. The point of this sense of objectivity is that it is the result of polling rather than of discussion. In other words, it doesn't admit of more or less agreement, but rather of fewer or more people agreeing. Like procedural objectivity, it does not guarantee freedom from values, nor does it guarantee freedom from error. Agreement regarding significant questions, where significant questions are those we care about answering, typically results from an

\textsuperscript{16} Consider Richard Grandy's definition of an observation sentence: “O is an observation sentence for community C with respect to stimulation pattern class S of modulus M to degree n if at least n percent of C agree in their patterns of assent, dissent, and suspension of judgment for all stimuli in S of modulus M” (Grandy 1992a, 198 in Longino 2002, 100).
interactive process, even if this interactive process has been sedimented as is the result of much training and education. It results from interaction rather than agreement, because agreement as concordance is static.

Interactive objectivity involves more than concordant objectivity. With interaction comes the elimination of individual idiosyncrasy, which can contribute to greater objectivity. Douglas cites Longino's work as privileging this sense of objectivity, where consensus is sought through discussion, debate, and collective analysis. However, she cautions, this sense of objectivity suffers under a tension that affects concordant objectivity as well. The tension is between the shared standards that are required for there to be a basis underlying agreement or disagreement, and the requirement to have sufficiently diverse participants to avoid idiosyncrasy and systematic bias. This tension runs through the account of objectivity in Longino's work, but it can be a productive tension, as I will argue in Chapter 4, in my discussion of Husserl.

4. The Irreducibility of the different senses of objectivity.

Douglas considers three groupings of objectivity. Objectivity\textsubscript{1} captures the human-world interaction. Objectivity\textsubscript{2} captures the individual reasoning processes. Objectivity\textsubscript{3} looks to social processes. She contends that the eight senses classed under these headings are not reducible to one core sense of objectivity. Though they are not reducible, there is nevertheless a certain coherence to the concept. The coherence is tied to a call to our trust: if a claim is objective, Douglas maintains, it calls upon us to affirm it (Douglas 2004, 468). Thus, a claim or tool would be said to be trustworthy if it allows us
to do certain things. A reasoning process is said to be trustworthy if it bears certain markers, like detachment or appropriate value-neutrality. A social process is said to be trustworthy if it involves clear procedures, or concordance of judgment, or interactive agreement. Yet this discussion of Douglas's occurs independently of a discussion about what makes a claimant or a group trustworthy.

Douglas accepts the wide variety of senses too quickly, because of the conflation of her normative and descriptive aims, and this leads her to accept the complexity of objectivity too readily. While reducing the senses is likely to be unproductive, I have teased out the ways Objectivity, bears an implicit reference to individuals and their reasoning processes, while this second sense bears a reference to the third, social sense. Thus, my account of objectivity will need to address the social dimension. Interestingly, this mapping merges well with Husserl's attention to three avenues of inquiry, into subjectivity, the world, and intersubjectivity, which I pursue in chapter 4.

**IV. Five Issues**

There are five issues that various accounts of objectivity will have to address or be oriented towards, either explicitly or implicitly. These are (1) taking a stance towards naturalized epistemology, (2) emphasizing discovery or justification, (3) addressing the relationship between the individual, community, and the world, (4) emphasizing inclusion or exclusion, and (5) stressing pragmatic or practical aims, or stressing truth-conduciveness.
1. Taking a Stand on Naturalized Epistemology

One way of thinking about naturalized epistemology is to think that the question of how we ought to arrive at our beliefs cannot be answered independently of answering the question of how we do arrive at our beliefs (Kornblith 1985, 9 in Solomon 2001, 137). Naturalized approaches to knowledge typically suppose that our knowledge practices are continuous with our scientific practices, particularly with the physical and cognitive sciences (Goldman 1999, Kitcher 1993, Kornblith 1985, Quine 1959, Solomon 2001).

Others, however, broaden the scope of naturalism in two related ways. One is to understand it as more inclusive; the other is to understand it as less strict. Those who understand it in a more inclusive manner incorporate the social sciences, along with the physical and cognitive sciences (Anderson 1995, 2004, 2006). Straddling the distinction between a more inclusive and a less strict naturalism are epistemologies that incorporate our everyday knowledge practices, such as learning to become better cooks or friends, which incorporate explicitly moral, affective, and imaginative dimensions (Babbitt 2005, Code 1995). These approaches are both more inclusive, and loosen the naturalism because incorporating these affective, moral, and imaginative dimensions of some empirical practices also shifts focus from knowers as material and hence subject to the same causal laws as the objects of study. Focus is shifted to knowers as creative, rational beings, where creativity and rationality are not understood solely in terms of the empirical manifestation of these qualities. In the looser conceptions of naturalism, “the results from the sciences of cognition may be relevant to, and may be legitimately used in
the resolution of traditional epistemological problems" (Haack 1993, 118). How that happens and what role the empirical results play depends on the particular views. Haack preserves the traditional project of developing the rational grounds for the justification of belief. Longino's naturalism extends toward understanding subjects as empirical beings in the sense that they are socially and historically located. Her epistemology nevertheless engages in reflection on some of the central concepts of epistemology, such as objectivity and rationality. In this sense, she strays from a naturalized epistemology because the normative force of her recommendations is not limited entirely by their applicability to current epistemic practices. On a stricter naturalism, like the one Solomon develops, the normative force of epistemology is dependent on its empirical successes.

Naturalized epistemology involves accepting circularity: we start with giving an account of robustness of our current (best) knowledge, model our normative views on those cases we have identified, and take this model (or these models—we need not presume there is just one) to other cases. We remain fallibilist and accept that our best current theories may be replaced. But to the extent that we have theories with significant empirical success (that is, particularly with strong prescriptive possibilities), we are safe enough building our normative epistemology on this basis. A stricter naturalized epistemology is able to adopt a very lean distinction between discovery and justification, whereas a less strict naturalized epistemology may have to contend with a larger gap between descriptive and prescriptive aspects. The nature of the naturalism defended will affect an account of objectivity, since taking a stance on naturalism in epistemology constitutes taking a stance on what counts as good knowledge practices and their relation
to epistemology.

2. Discovery and Justification: Description and Prescription

This distinction has thinned considerably since its creation early in the twentieth century by Reichenbach and Carnap, in reaction to Neurath's Marxist standpoint epistemology (Howard 2006). Paul Hoyningen-Huene considers five formulations of the distinction, noting objections to them all, and preserves a lean (phenomenological) distinction (2006). Theodore Arabatzis, in a similar vein, argues that the context of discovery is itself deeply enmeshed with the context of justification (2006). Hoyningen-Huene offers the most fruitful way of thinking about the distinction.

Hoyningen-Huene identifies five versions of the distinction. In (1), discovery and justification are temporally distinct processes. A key objection is that this fails to account for subsequent refinements of a theory, since we then have to appeal to overlapping contexts, but this undermines the temporal distinctness. In (2), the distinction is between the factual process of discovery and the normative method of justification. One objection to (2) is that it is simply a case of the distinction between the descriptive and normative, where something counts as justification only if the goal of knowledge is achieved. But this warrants the question of what justifies the norms (3) is a thinner version of the previous distinction, siding discovery with the empirical and justification with the logical. However, justification is broader than simply logic, and so although this avoids the problems of (2), we are not able to develop a research program on its basis. In (4) the distinction is mapped into fields, where philosophers get to handle justification while the
empirical disciplines toil with discovery. The problem is that, like (3), this view of the philosophy of science has waned because it is unfruitful. Also disciplines like history seem to avoid this spectrum, since a historian has to offer justification of her account of some episode. Thus, disciplines like history seems to straddle discovery and justification. Moreover, a consequence of naturalized epistemology is that descriptive sciences are helpful in determining epistemic norms. In (5) discovery and justification are distinguished by the kind of question we are inclined to ask. In discovery, we are interested in asking what happened and in justification, we are interested in asking if some claim can be justified. This manner of expressing it sounds circular, but it is not. Here, Hoyningen-Huene clearly takes "is C justified?" as short for "should we accept C beyond the context under which we have found it?"

Thomas Kuhn denies the distinction between discovery and justification because he detects elements typically reserved for discovery in the context of justification. Theodore Arabatzis denies the distinction in the opposite way, noting the presence of justification in the context of discovery. In particular, he highlights the way in which discovery itself is an evaluative term which is only deployed once a theory has been justified (217). The stamp of discovery is retroactive. Nevertheless, his rejection of the distinction on this ground is premature.

Hoyningen-Huene offers a rejuvenated form of the distinction, which involves a difference of two perspectives that can be taken to scientific knowledge (128). We can take the descriptive perspective or we can take the epistemic-normative perspective (128). Hoyningen-Huene insists that this distinction is quite lean, and is not committed to
the utter separation of facts and norms, or to the exclusion of factual presuppositions from norms or of normative presuppositions from facts (129). He does not address the possibility that epistemic norms have moral or aesthetic normative presuppositions, as some argue (Longino 1995). Nevertheless, his arguments enable us to maintain an appropriately lean distinction between discovery and justification in a way that allows us to build up the social features of justification.

Such a distinction between discovery and justification is helpful, not only for scientific knowledge, but for our knowledge practices more generally because it offers a way of talking about the tension between descriptive and normative features of inquiry. Though several of the philosophers I discuss typically deny a distinction, they sometimes implicitly rely on one. This can affect what is considered to contribute to objectivity, and what is thought external to considerations of objectivity.

3. Relationship between individual, community, and the world

All views take a stand on this relationship by stressing individual knowers, communities as knowers, or the world-directedness of knowledge. That is, epistemologists tend to recognize that we aim to know something about the world, and that we are in communities and interact with the world. Decisions about privileging the three aspects of the relationship depend on how central some aspect seems in the context of the theory's priorities. For example, if you take the particular social and contextual features of an individual's situation as of negligible importance, then the community will not be stressed. This is the kind of view developed in traditional epistemology, where our
knower is always and only “S”. By contrast, if you take an individual as merely a member of a community, then the community’s store of knowledge will be privileged. In this case, the emphasis will be on the community as knower. This is the view developed in Lynn Hankinson Nelson’s work (1990). The role of the world in this relationship—where the world means something like mind independent reality—depends on how one understands the other two elements. If knowers are individuals who grasp propositions, then the world is something that stands against the individual. If, however, the knower is an embodied community member, then knowledge of the world will not necessarily be thought of as knowledge distinct and separate from the individual. These various issues are related to objectivity because developing a conception of good knowledge practices involves taking a stand on who knows what; establishing who can know what involves establishing a relationship between individuals, communities, and the world.

4. Emphasis on Inclusion or Exclusion

Some epistemologists favor inclusion whereas others favor exclusion. Those who favor inclusion worry about missing considerations if we do not include a diversity of views and voices (Anderson 2006, Longino 2001); they see our knowledge productive practices continuing in harmful sexist, racist, and classist ways in the absence of a diversity of criticisms and considerations. Those who favor exclusion worry about being forced to engage with patently false and potentially harmful views, like the views of young earth creationists; they see their children forced to learn creationism alongside
evolution. These who want to walk a line down a sensible middle will face the challenge of establishing defensible ways of excluding some views and including others. These options are related to objectivity since good knowledge productive practices involve a conception of what is good about a given knowledge productive practice. These different stances will involve a different wager about whether inclusion or exclusion will produce the most and best knowledge, and different senses of where the burden of proof lies. In favoring inclusion, the burden of proof for excluding a particular view lies with those who want to exclude it; it lies with the center. In favoring exclusion, the burden of proof lies with those who want to be included; it lies at the margins.

5. Emphasis on the Practical or the Truth-Conducive Aim of Epistemology.

It is uncontroversial that epistemology aims at accounting for knowledge. What involves decision is whether that aim of acquiring knowledge is the ultimate aim of inquiry, or whether that aim is subordinated to practical aims. This question has often been addressed over the centuries: Kant’s theoretical philosophy is meant as support for his practical philosophy; although Descartes was offering a metaphysical grounding for science and pure mathematics, the argument against scepticism in the Meditations aims beyond itself. Taking a stand on this issue will affect what we mean by “good knowledge practices”, and so affects what will be incorporated into an account of objectivity. If truth is the absolute priority, all and only those maximally truth-productive practices will be

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17 This type of worry is voiced particularly loudly in question periods at conferences.
18 A further challenge I will develop in later chapters is ensuring that inclusion is not superficial—i.e., that we do not presuppose, from the center, that we already know what criticisms and considerations are relevant.
endorsed; if practical concerns are the priority, truth will be subordinated to whatever
works. Views that fall between these two will have to justify how and when to privilege
practical or truth concerns. This distinction is made more complex when we include, as a
layer of consideration, searching for the truth of what counts as better practical concerns.

V. Contemporary Views

1. Miriam Solomon: Social Empiricism

Solomon’s development of a naturalized epistemology emerges, at least in part,
from her emphasis on the application of our concept of scientific rationality. The aim, she
rightly notes, is not simply to develop an account of scientific rationality, but to account
for how we are able to apply it. We ought to be able to assess particular decisions, and
make suggestions for improving scientific decisions (2001, 140). A consequence of
holding this view is that naturalized epistemology becomes multidisciplinary. As she
writes, among other examples of the challenges of applying notions of scientific
rationality, there is the need for specialized knowledge and skills, like knowledge of how
to identify gendered concepts.

Solomon’s positive view, social empiricism, allows for the inclusion of social
background assumptions in our reasoning about the sciences. Instead of the loaded term
“bias”, she opts for “decision vectors” which are neutral about values. Her view is deeply
consequentialist: the concern is to find scientific truth which accounts for empirical
success, and determining how we are best going to find it is an empirical question. Thus,
if certain values or activities typically lead to truth, these will be epistemically
acceptable, regardless of their value-ladenness. Interestingly, she stresses the value of dissent rather than consensus, treating consensus as a special case of dissent, where dissent approaches zero. Dissent is epistemically warranted, she argues, if there is more than one theory that has empirical (that is predictive or explanatory) success. If this is the case, there is warrant for pursuing more than one avenue.

With her focus on science and scientific knowledge, Solomon's understanding of knowledge treats it as publicly, hence communally, held. As such, she does not offer an account of the subjective conditions necessary for knowledge, beyond noting psychological features which can be decision vectors, such as conservativeness or pride (56). Social empiricism is strictly naturalistic in the sense that norms are warranted only to the extent that they are successful in cases. Her emphasis on dissent shows a willingness to countenance inclusiveness, however her strict naturalism and strong emphasis on truth over pragmatic concerns renders her inclusiveness more conservative.

Solomon argues for a version of realism she calls “whig realism.” Though she agrees that whig history—the view of history as culminating in the present—is bunk, she thinks that a modest version of this approach is appropriate to a historically informed epistemology of science. With Kitcher, who defends a modest realism with regard to past theories, Solomon thinks that promising theories in the history of the sciences had something true about them. She contrasts her whig realism with whig science history, which evaluates past theories in terms of their resemblance to present knowledge. In support of her realism, she discusses the rather quick acceptance of continental drift theory in the first half of the twentieth century. Though the early version was false in
many ways, its early explanatory successes are best explained by its correctness about the relative displacement of continents over time (2001, 47). By contrast to the whig science historian, “the whig realist evaluates past theories in terms of their empirical success at the time they were developed; only the explanation of that success is ascertained from a whig perspective” (2001, 42).

Restricting the scope of evaluating cases from the history of science by appealing only to the explanatory success at the time is reinforced in a paper co-authored with Alan Richardson (2005). There, they are critical of evaluating early modern science from our vantage point. If we want to exclude claims from early modern science as knowledge, the claims must admit of rejection on the basis of the epistemic norms at the time.\(^{19}\) While Solomon is right to reject whig history, this should not entail rejecting all evaluation of epistemic practices from other time periods that employ conceptual resources we currently have. It is important to be able to judge from here, and not merely explain, because this may allow us to better understand both our situation, and the earlier context. Though Solomon's own work in the history of the sciences is hermeneutically sensitive, her explicit argument presumes a simple ability to separate explanation and evaluation. The explanatory and evaluative aspects of our engagement with historical case studies are not always so clearly separable, since we often need to deploy our evaluative concepts in order to uncover the relevant documents and research methods in order to begin explaining earlier theories. For example, we need to evaluate the earlier research community as being rational in an identifiable way in order even to include them as a

\(^{19}\) This discussion occurs within the context of a criticism of the normative force of Longino's critical contextual empiricism. I come back to their discussion in chapter six, where I address claims to knowledge about the existence of witches in early modern science.
scientific community. Indeed, Solomon's strict naturalism should preclude her reliance on a distinction between the normative and descriptive tasks in the history of science.

A further worry about Solomon's social empiricism may stem from its strict naturalism. One may find it suspect to think we can generalize from case studies if we don't have a prior conception of knowledge in order to determine what are case studies and what aren't. One example may involve failing to incorporate the epistemic relevance of power relations. If we cannot bring power relations to the fore in our analysis, some axes of appraisal may remain hidden. Thus, social empiricism is more exclusive than inclusive. My discussion of MacKinnon began the work of highlighting the epistemic role of power, and further discussion in chapter two will foreground it. At this stage of the discussion, I just want to consider the possibility that power relations can be of epistemic significance and consider whether the views discussed are able to account for that. If our case studies don't bring power inequalities to light, then our conception of knowledge will take power relations as epistemically inert, and so will not pick out case studies where power relations are of epistemic significance. Solomon clearly takes some power relations as sometimes of epistemic significance, since she mentions the relevance of gendered concepts, and addressing gender involves addressing power since masculinity and femininity are constructed hierarchically.

Solomon claims that social empiricism is a version of standpoint theory, because it incorporates the partiality and situatedness of knowledge practices (2001, 142). It is telling that she fails to pick up on the explicitly engaged nature of “standpoints” by contrast to possibly apolitical perspectives. Solomon writes that “Haraway, Harding,
Keller and Nelson simply advocate more pluralism, perhaps with special emphasis on politically suppressed approaches” (142-43, italics added). She misunderstands the central point of standpoint theory, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Social empiricism is not as closely related to standpoint theory as a Solomon suggests. Moreover, Solomon's epistemology is open to the charge that it will applaud harmful practices which are truth-conducive.

The value of social empiricism for developing an account of objectivity lies in its inclusion of value-laden decision-vectors in a realist epistemology. Moreover, encouraging dissent under typical research conditions offers a fruitful way of incorporating tensions in or between knowledge productive practices. The challenges that emerge from her understanding of the appraisal of cases from the history of philosophy, and those presented by her strict naturalism and strong emphasis on truth present reasons to resist adopting social empiricism.

2. Philip Kitcher: Truth and Democracy

Philip Kitcher articulates and defends a fairly traditional conception of objectivity, but he places this conception in a broader context of politicizing science. Thus, he does not think a value-neutral conception of objectivity prevents us from developing a social epistemology or from denouncing some scientific research programs on moral and political grounds.

The ideal of objectivity he interrogates and defends involves three features. These are detachment, pursuit of truth, and ignoring mundane distractions (2001, 29). Though
he is not explicit about this, these features are features of individual scientists in their scientific activity. Kitcher considers events in the history of science to address whether or not values enter into hypothesis acceptance. Since scientific controversies are often protracted, we need to pay attention to the shifts in views and shifts in evidence for and against competing hypotheses. When we pay attention to the protracted shifts, Kitcher maintains, we can see that some views prevail on the basis of the accumulation of evidence. This leads him to conclude that there is no reason to doubt the possibility of resolving scientific controversies independently of value-laden choice. There is no reason to think values inevitably enter the justification of theories (41). Kitcher defends the exclusion of values from the ideal of objectivity by restricting the scope of objectivity to hypothesis choice. That is, the ideal of objectivity is secure because it is not always necessary to appeal to values to defend hypothesis choice.

Objective explanation, that is, explanation that results from achieving the ideal of objectivity and which offers the truths which stand in the right relation to the topic at hand, is also itself devoid of values. However, contrary to philosophers like Haack who end the discussion at this point, Kitcher argues that objective explanations, while themselves devoid of value judgments, are only objective explanations against the background of our questions and interests. These questions and interests are historically situated and are open to specific pragmatic and cognitive interests (75).

Kitcher discusses the ideal of objectivity and the background questions of objective explanation in the context of arguing against any but the thinnest notion of the purity of sciences. The myth of purity is the myth that scientists are motivated only by a
concern for truth and are immune to mundane and political considerations like competitiveness, desire for fame, and political affiliation. Given their purity, their work is immune from moral and political criticism. There are two strands of a criticism of this view. The first is that value-laden decision affect which questions are pursued. The second is that the ideal of objectivity is itself misguided (85). Kitcher takes his vindication of the ideal of objectivity to have answered the second criticism; he accepts the first criticism: it is both empirically and normatively the case that value-laden decisions affect which questions are pursued. Consider the greater funding of diseases of the one-third world as compared to diseases of the two-thirds world (White 2004).20 Addressing how health care research should be funded will occur against the backdrop of values.

Science pursues answers to significant questions, where the significance of the questions must be established with goals of research in mind. These goals are the kinds of things that are open to being value-laden and political. The significance of questions, Kitcher maintains, is appropriately open to moral and political critique. This has as a consequence that some research might not warrant pursuit, on moral and political grounds. That is, scientists cannot simply insist that they are engaged in the pure pursuit of truth, and that this pursuit overrides all concerns. As Kitcher points out, we are already comfortable with constraining research: tests on neonates to determine their tolerance for pain are rightly prohibited (95).

Yet, some researchers claim that the right to free inquiry should protect

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20 I follow Chandra Talpade Mohanty in talking in terms of one-third and two-thirds worlds instead of in terms of western and non-western. This avoids geographic assumptions, and allows the inclusion of underprivileged peoples within the national boundaries of privileged countries.
controversial research. Kitcher discusses the work of sociobiologists like E.O. Wilson, who pursued a biological basis for sex difference. Wilson, when faced with criticism, accused his critics of attempting to block free inquiry, which must be protected in a free society. Kitcher notes that Wilson was working with the assumption that the truth will win in the long run (95). However, Kitcher offers a very different analysis of politically sensitive research seeking a natural basis for hierarchalized differences, such as between men and women or between “races”. Consider a society with inequalities, much like our own. Kitcher claims that no good can come from conducting research into whether these inequalities have a basis in biology. The inequalities between the sexes and especially between “races” have, associated with them, attitudes about the naturalness of the inequalities. In our societies, we are often disinclined to voice these attitudes, under cover of politeness. Thus, given these attitudes, there are two likely outcomes of research. The first is that the research will show the inequalities are natural (presuming, for a moment, that the research is able conclusively to show that), in which case attitudes will worsen because of the research. The second is that attitudes will stay the same, given that they are already there, and given the implausibility of improving social attitudes on the basis of scientific research (98). Now, if we add to this the scenario—well supported by much existing research in sex and racial differences—the likelihood that evidence for the natural basis of inequality will be accepted given inequality biases of researchers, the situation is even more worrisome. Kitcher concludes that while we should not ban this research, as a ban has its own problems, there is no defensible reason to pursue it. The hope for truth on these matters is overridden by the inevitability of harm.
Though I agree with Kitcher's conclusion, I am not sure that his analysis of the myth of purity is right, and this has consequences for our understanding of the defensibility of research into sex and “race” differences. Kitcher rehearsed two arguments against the myth of purity. One he accepted, which involved that value-laden decisions affected the pursuit of certain questions. The second, which he rejected, involved indicting the ideal of objectivity.

His defense of the ideal of objectivity was unconvincing. He defended it on the grounds that it is sometimes possible, if we think of the choice between two hypotheses in the history of science, that is, over time as the evidence comes in. Thus, Kitcher emphasizes the place of objectivity in justification, excluding a role in inquiry, which includes framing research programs, and hence involves discovery. Defending the possibility of deciding between hypotheses independently of value-laden choices is not sufficient to defend the ideal more generally. Though Kitcher stresses inclusion at the level of developing research programs and choosing significant questions, since these require balancing a range of issues, he does not discuss the constitution of the research community itself, beyond requiring most researchers to admit that they are not immune from political and ethical criticism. Moreover, the uncritical acceptance of detachment as an ideal is worrisome, as I will show in my criticism of Louise Antony and Richmond Campbell. Nevertheless, Kitcher's argument to the effect that developing significant questions has epistemic significance and is value-laden is compelling, as is his arguments for the ethical impermissibility of research that will reinforce systemic stereotypes. Thus, Kitcher strikes some balance between a commitment to truth and a commitment to
pragmatic benefit of bringing about a just society.

3. Louise Antony and Richmond Campbell: Quinean Naturalized Epistemology

Louise Antony defends an updated Quinean epistemology in her attempt to articulate. Quine put logical positivism—the research program that sought to supply a phenomenalistic reduction of the material content of the natural sciences into a logical-mathematical structure—to rest with his related theses for the underdetermination of theory by the data and for meaning holism. The underdetermination thesis shows that there is always a logical gap between observational data and the theory the data are said to support, because there is always a generalization. According to meaning holism, individual sentences have no consequences, and so only properly have meanings taken jointly. The consequence of these views is that our responses to failed predictions are not dictated a priori: choices are made concerning what will be relinquished in the face of counter-evidence. Moreover, any principle that helps narrow our theoretical options is incorporated into the theory, so that there is no outside to the theory, and there is no sharp distinction between facts and values (Antony 2001, 124-128). Quine infamously called for epistemology to fall in as a portion of empirical psychology. Antony argues that Noam Chomsky has internalized the implications of Quine's philosophy better than Quine did: we cannot presuppose an empiricism that goes all the way down; rather, our empirical sciences are able to discover innate structures, and so our trust in them is often vindicated. Chomsky did this when he was able to demonstrate that we have structured innate capacities for language acquisition by inference to our best explanations of
language acquisition.

The implications Antony draws from this discussion are that naturalized epistemology offers all the resources necessary for articulating the partiality of our knowledge without succumbing to relativism. She notes that some of those who take the sociality of knowledge—and, consequently, incorporate social features into epistemology—seriously must contend with the bias paradox. This is particularly the case, she claims, for feminists. I will come back to the bias paradox in the next chapter, and consider some feminist attempts to overcome it. Here, I state Antony's formulation of it in order to contextualize her positive account, which is meant as a response to the paradox.

Antony writes:

On the one hand, it is one of the central aims of feminist scholarship to expose the male-centered assumptions and interests—the male biases, in other words—underlying so much of received “wisdom.” But on the other hand, there's an equally important strain of feminist theory that seeks to challenge the ideal of pure objectivity by emphasizing both the ubiquity and the value of certain kinds of partiality and interestedness. Clearly, there's a tension between those feminist critiques that accuse science or philosophy of displaying male bias and those that reject the ideal of impartiality.

The tension blossoms into paradox when critiques of the first sort are applied to the concepts of objectivity and impartiality themselves... Put boldly: If we don't think it's good to be impartial, then how can we object to men's being partial? (114).

Antony maintains that many views that reject the ideal of impartiality will fall into the bias paradox. By contrast, Antony argues that naturalized epistemology has already rejected impartiality by showing that impartiality is neither possible nor necessary for knowledge. We must presuppose some knowledge—hence some empirical position—in order to pursue new meaningful claims. At its thinnest, Antony thinks that we are innately structured for language, and this itself constitutes a bias. Thus, the difference between
being predisposed to language and to sexist assumptions is, on her view, a difference of degree rather than kind. Thus, Antony agrees that epistemology must inquire into the subject of knowledge, and cannot presume that different knowers are identical. The aim has shifted from detecting and rejecting any bias to telling the good bias from the bad, and this will require “empirical study of the cognizer” (115).

However, she notes that this only offers us a descriptive epistemology and, particularly for those who want to uncover the workings of oppression as feminists do, this will be inadequate: a normative epistemology is needed. She locates the ability to make normative distinctions between different process in an appropriately realist conception of truth, which is possible within naturalized epistemology. We need a realist notion of truth because we need to be able to distinguish how things seem (e.g. That women are weaker or less intelligent) and how things really are. In other words, “what makes the good bias good is that it facilitates the search for truth, and what makes the bad bias bad is that it impedes it” (115).

i. Campbell's Criticism and Revision

The situation is not as simple as Antony thinks. She faces the problem of circularity, that the paradox lurks whether she believes it or not. If we take her appeal to truth as distinguishing good from bad biases, this seems to presuppose that we already know how to distinguish them (Campbell 2001, 197). Yet this is not borne out by empirical study—there is no agreement about exactly which biases are truth-conducive

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21 This is questionable, but I will not pursue a criticism here. It does seem, however, that a conception of bias as assumptions that could be otherwise may be more useful.
and which aren't. In this case, the appeal to truth is not helpful. Yet, if having access to the truth is not dependent on having the right biases, then she seems to be smuggling the ideal of impartiality in again, which she explicitly rejects.

The second problem is the problem of relevance. Suppose that a good bias favours a hypothesis that runs counter to the evidence available at a given time. If biases can be good even if they fly in the face of evidence, it can seem irrational to follow good biases. Moreover, we face the consequence that sometimes “believing according to the weight of evidence” does not lead to believing the truth. This is because, if good biases are indexed to truth, and good biases lead away from current evidence, then current evidence must be false. If we reject this view and maintain that biases are only good if supported by the evidence, then they are epistemically inert since all we need to do is follow the evidence (Campbell 2001, 203). Antony does not address either the circularity or the relevance problem.

Richmond Campbell proposes a solution to the problem by contrasting his notion of truth-conducive objectivity to the traditional value-free objectivity, which is meant to be a friendly revision of Antony's view. Whereas value-freedom obviously entails the elimination of bias, this is not the case for truth-conducive objectivity. Campbell cites the well known situation of gendered research into coronary heart disease, where the largest study, Mr. Fit, focused exclusively on men. It has since been discovered that while heart disease is the most frequent cause of death in women just as it is in men, the first

manifestation of the disease differs according to sex. Campbell claims that Mr. Fit fails

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22 Interestingly, this subsequent research was done only after political bodies twice insisted upon less gender-biased research methods. The change did not occur as a result of changes internally to the concerns about evidence (Schiebinger 1999, 113-114).
the test of objectivity in the truth-conducive sense since it fails to capture the facts about coronary heart disease in women, and hence shows an “unacceptable bias.” However, we need not suppose researchers were maliciously falling short and may have seen themselves as conducting inquiry that is objective in the first sense of being value-free. Campbell further supposes that their shortcoming with regards to offering truth-conducive results follows from their allegiance to the false ideal of impartiality. Because they believed themselves impartial, they did not seek to uncover ways in which their biases promoted falsehoods and harm (203).

Campbell finds this example shows that a bias towards finding out about women's health led to more objective in the sense of truth-conducive inquiry into the causes and nature of coronary heart disease. In this case, Campbell is using bias as indicating a preference towards pursuing some questions. Campbell’s approach offers ways of addressing the bias paradox by retaining a commitment to uncovering the truth, with truth understood broadly to include narrative and non-propositional knowledge. With regards to the issue of inclusion or exclusion, Campbell’s account of objectivity tends to inclusivity in the sense of positively incorporating new questions and new assumptions brought to bear on questions, as shown in his appraisal of Mr. Fit and the improvements in subsequent research. The approach developed by Antony and refined by Campbell is naturalized in the sense of being continuous with our knowledge practices. Campbell’s naturalism is less strict than Antony’s in incorporating knowledge practices that allow for narrative forms of truth. The view is largely descriptive, with the normative force coming from its truth-directedness, as we saw somewhat with Kitcher, and especially in Solomon.
By contrast to Solomon, who socializes knowledge, Antony and Campbell see knowledge as the affair of an individual knower. The community is relevant only to the extent that it is the source of values and biases, which are either truth-conducive or not. Interestingly, his approach incorporates attention to ignorance, since the researchers conducting Mr. Fit failed to achieve objectivity by failing to know that they didn't know, and thus opens up space for an inclusive epistemology. I’ll come back to ignorance in chapter 2. Here, I consider how Campbell's approach leaves an important issue aside.

ii. A Shortcoming

Campbell's discussion of the shortcomings of a social constructionist conception of marital rape points to an oversight of his own view. He addresses Anne Seller's discussion of marital rape which was only criminalized a couple of decades ago. She writes of the reconceptualization required to criminalize it that it is better taken as “a decision to understand behaviors in a different light” rather than simply being the “discovery of a previously unnoticed fact” (in Campbell 1998, 51). Campbell analyzes the situation by analogy to maps: to say that a map is a social construction does not preclude there being a fact about whether the map is a good one—that is, whether it corresponds in relevant respects to the terrain. While he acknowledges that the case of marital rape is more complex, he maintains that there is at least sometimes a fact of the matter as to whether wives have been raped by husbands. There needs to be a clear conception of what constitutes consent and sex. This clarity will be the result of social convention, as he agrees with Seller. However, he claims “an important reason that we
care about making good decisions in this regard is that we want to represent accurately how husbands act toward their wives” (Campbell 1998, 52).

Campbell is mistaken about this: the reason we care about making good decisions about the concepts involved in understanding marital rape is not so that we can accurately represent how husbands act towards their wives. That aim is subordinate to two other aims. The central aim is the reduction of harm to wives in abusive situations, which requires an understanding of marital rape. This second goal of understanding marital rape motivates an accurate representation of actions. Thus, I am not contesting Campbell’s realism—I find his and Antony’s realist arguments compelling. However, I am skeptical about the possibility that this truth-directedness is sufficient for objectivity as it fails to take account of the practical aims of many of our knowledge productive practices.

4. Challenging Their Views

Consider the case of Nazi research into hypothermia. As part of Nazi “medico-military research”, Dr. Sigmund Rascher tried to duplicate the conditions that German pilots would face if downed in the North Sea, in order to determine how long they were likely to live. Rascher experimented on about three hundred prisoners at Dachau, and nearly one in three died as a result (Cohen 2009). Though we are inclined to think of Nazi science as utter pseudo-science, conducted by madmen unidentifiable as doctors, Proctor cautions us against this facile conclusion (1988, 284-285). Many of the racial theorists were “superbly qualified”; eugenics movements were common throughout the
industrialized world. Though the military research differed in not having an explicitly racial focus, it is part of this larger medical project. There are two issues. The first concerns the need to call the experiments bad science. The second is the moral and epistemic questions that are the legacy of the hypothermia experiments.

If the experiments were truth-conducive, and produced valuable (because accurate) data, what is the epistemic sense in which the research constituted bad science? I think the horror I feel in asking this question is telling: there is no way in which we could become detached from the origins of this data in order to answer the question. Detachment, here, is grotesquely inappropriate. In other words, achieving detachment in this case would indicate a misunderstanding of the question—it would be to take the question as calling for an answer, as though we were asking about any uncontroversial study. Thus, in the hypothermia case detachment would not only be a moral failure, but also an epistemic failure, because it would indicate a failure of understanding of the phenomenon. Taken this way, truth-conduciveness is moot in our understanding of the evidence.

However, the matter is complicated when it comes to contemporary hypothermia research. Because different animals respond very differently to the cold, and because researchers are unwilling to lower consenting human research subjects’ body temperatures below 36°C, relatively little is known about hypothermia (Cohen 2009). It is important to understand hypothermia for a variety of reasons, including improving our ability to treat it, improving survival suits worn by fishers in northern waters, and

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23 Indeed, the Canadian legacy of eugenics is particularly shameful: the hero of our universal healthcare, Tommy Douglas, was a champion of eugenics. Worse still is that this fact has dropped from collective memory.
improving knowledge of the time-frame available to search-and-rescue teams. The *New England Journal of Medicine* refused to republish the Nazi data; Dr. John Hayward uses the data in his research on hypothermia (Cohen 2009). Here, the question of the accuracy of the data becomes relevant. Without reducing our sense of horror in the face of the data, some see a call to assess whether the data is accurate in a way that can contribute to acceptable research on hypothermia. If that data was considered inaccurate, however large our gap in knowledge about hypothermia is, we couldn't aspire to narrow the gap using the data. Thus, the question of accuracy reemerges, despite being silenced by my first question concerning how the hypothermia experiments constituted bad science. Hayward thinks the data is useful, despite the obvious fact that the prisoners would not have been representative of the general population because under extreme psychological, physical distress, as well as being malnourished. Despite these problems, the data is compatible with data ethically gathered by Hayward, which suggests its reliability.

In this case of appraising whether and why the data should be used to further our understanding, detachment still seems like the inappropriate attitude to take to the data. To use this data is to recall that in an ethical world, such research will never again be done. Moreover, the data is not used solely in the interest of truth. It is used in the interest of furthering research that can save lives. In the absence of this goal and reasonable expectations of achieving it, the question concerning whether or not to use the data would resemble the question concerning whether or not the hypothermia experiments constituted good science. Thus, truth-conduciveness is important but not sufficient to recommend using the data.
This example shows that truth-conduciveness is not sufficient for objectivity, if we take objectivity as laudable epistemic practices, nor is detachment secure as an element of the ideal of objectivity. Nevertheless, issues of accuracy and truth do not disappear from discussion. Rather they are contextualized and, often, placed in the context of broader practical concerns.

Kitcher, Solomon, and Antony and Campbell all make contributions to a social understanding of objectivity. All wrestle with the epistemic aspects of harm, particularly of the systemic harms of sexism and racism. They all incorporate values into good knowledge productive methods, but fail to uncover the unacceptable consequences of their strong truth-focus. Kitcher mitigates this by according a large role to the development of significant questions and avenues of research. Yet he failed to thoroughly appreciate the impact on objectivity, while offering inadequate arguments for preserving detachment or value-neutrality as a criterion of the ideal of objectivity. Solomon offered a version of empiricism that took communities as knowers while avoiding the relativism one often associates with other communal approaches. Moreover, by incorporating features of individuals as decision vectors, she did not eclipse the epistemic role of individuals. Campbell improved on Antony's position by addressing some of the challenges of a strongly truth-focused epistemology. He added the further insight that inquiring into one's areas of ignorance, as in the case of cardiology researchers who looked into gendered issues, improved epistemic practices. However, his discussion of marital rape opened space to see the challenge of these three strongly truth-focused views. The normative force of these naturalized social epistemologies relied greatly or
entirely on its truth-directedness. However, this focus failed to allow us to make sense of
the Nazi hypothermia experiments and the value of the data.

VI. Conclusion

Thus far, I have been silent on the question of why we might want to indict an
ideal rather than the practices that claim to meet the ideal. That is, new conceptions of
objectivity are premised on the failures of the old objectivity as an ideal. Antony argues
that the old objectivity—the ideal of impartial knowers—is a poor ideal because it is
false: we are situated and partial in virtue at least of our minds being structured in some
ways (2001, 140). The ideal is false because the theory of human cognition assumed by
the ideal is false. In my discussion of the shortcomings of these truth-directed views, I
have shown that truth-directedness is not sufficient for an ideal of objectivity. That is, to
pursue the truth is not enough for a practice to count as objective because of
epistemically problematic consequences. Thus, establishing the falsehood of the ideal of
impartial objectivity is insufficient for establishing what a defensible positive account of
objectivity would be like.

In this chapter, I have set aside the worry, found through Haack and MacKinnon's
dismissals of social accounts, that there is no philosophical room for a robustly,
responsibly, social account of objectivity. I addressed the ways in which many object-
directed and individual-centred senses of objectivity referred back to a social sense. I
considered three prominent approaches to objectivity which incorporate some social
elements and considered the place for the values that undergird social relations. Each had
merits, and all were decidedly truth-centered; in fact, the main normative force of these various naturalized views depended on their truth-directedness. This truth-directedness meant that they were unable to handle challenging cases like that of Nazi hypothermia research. In the next chapter, I consider more thoroughly social approaches to objectivity which also center the practical aims of epistemology, focusing on feminist approaches. The goal is to uncover norms of reasoning in addition to the goal of producing truths.
Chapter 2: Toward an Engaged Account of Objectivity

“You stole that shoat, didn’t you?”
“No. Sir.” said Sixo, but he had the decency to keep his eyes on the meat...
Schoolteacher smiled. “Did you kill it?”
“Yes, sir. I killed it.”...
“Well, then, did you eat it?”
“Yes, sir. I sure did.”
“And you telling me that’s not stealing?”
“No, sir. It ain’t.”
“What is it then?”
“Improving your property, sir.”
“What?”
“Sixo plant rye to give the high piece a better chance.
Sixo take and feed the soil, give you more crop. Sixo take and feed Sixo give you more work.” (Morrison 1988, 190).

Toni Morrison's novels are sometimes thought to be the first real slave narratives. Not because no one, or because no Blacks had written slave tales before, but because her novels are the first that are not tales of triumph in adversity. They are not adventure stories, but are novels. Morrison thought there were no Blacks in American fiction until she became a writer, and realized that the author controls the surprise, controls what is normal and acceptable and possible. It was then that she realized that Blacks had been there all along, but were there in a way that made the reader think they shouldn't be. They were there from the outside (Morrison 1992, 17). In Beloved, the tale of Sethe and the hauntings of her past as a slave and as a freed woman, Morrison makes a different kind of understanding of slavery, of literature, and of Black heritage possible. She does this by starting from the lives of her characters, from their richly layered decisions and lives. She does this by showing how Sixo, a slave who knew Sethe back in the south, is cleverer than his owner. In the passage quoted in epigraph, Sixo shows a clearer understanding of
the logic of slavery than his owner expresses. It is this kind of increased understanding I explore in this chapter.

In chapter 1, I considered three social approaches to objectivity, all of which countenanced the epistemic appropriateness of incorporating values into inquiry in different ways. All of the views considered were realist and truth-focused in the sense that the overarching epistemic norm was the pursuit of truth. I showed how this norm was insufficient for objectivity, that is, for ensuring that knowledge practices produce significant knowledge, where significance cannot be entirely divorced from practical concerns. It follows that there can be epistemic concerns which override or which interfere with the pursuit of truth. My example from the last chapter was the Nazi hypothermia experiments, which, however accurate the results of the studies may be, are not candidates for good science. Thus, we are not concerned primarily with their truth, but with the horror of their context. What I stressed less in the last chapter, but which will be placed in sharper focus here, is the epistemic imperative of keeping the context salient. In particular, I develop a case for keeping the workings of power salient through my discussion of feminist standpoint theory. I am motivated to pursue inquiry into objectivity in this way because of the shortcomings of the views developed in the last chapter. Despite the many insights of those views, they all failed to attend sufficiently to the role of harm and power in knowledge practices, which I showed was tied to the emphatic truth-directedness. Yet, those views also highlighted the importance of truth for justice, as well as for advancing knowledge.

In this chapter, I will consider views which establish and theorize the epistemic
significance of power-laden social relations. These views yield engaged conceptions of objectivity. In particular, I focus in on feminist approaches. These views are deeply insightful, yet present significant challenges. I focus on feminist standpoint theory and related approaches. Several prominent feminist approaches to epistemology have been versions of standpoint theory (Collins 2004a, 2004b, Haraway 1991, Harding 1993, 1995, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, Hartsock 1983, 1999, Ruddick 1989), while many others have developed closely in tandem with standpoint approaches (Alcoff 2001, 2007, Babbitt 2005, Code 1995, 2001, 2007, Crenshaw 2000, Mohanty 2003, Yuval-Davis 2006). Still others have reacted against some aspects of it (Hekman 2004a, 2004b, Longino 1997, 2001). Thus, standpoint theory is a good focal point for addressing feminist approaches to knowledge practices. After discussing some preliminary matters, I will discuss Nancy Hartsock’s strongly Marxian formulation of a feminist standpoint.24 Third, I will consider Sandra Harding’s refinements and reformulation. Fourth, I will consider the possibilities and problems of taking oppression as yielding epistemic insight through a reading of Susan Babbitt’s account of moral imagination and self-respect (2005). Babbitt’s work allows me to show that standpoint theory can only account for some good knowledge productive practices, where good means advancing knowledge as well as opposing and explaining injustice. This points to standpoint theory’s value as part of an account of objectivity without being sufficient for one.

24 It has become a convention to use “Marxian” to indicate views with a strong debt to Marxism, but that make no claim to orthodoxy. Following this convention, I reserve “Marxist” for views that are closely in line with Marx’s own work.
I. Preliminary Matters

1. Harm

Before discussing the particulars of standpoint theory, I want to say something about harm and power, two terms I have been using without thematizing. By harm, I mean a wrongdoing with nefarious consequences. Thus, grounding your child for doing something dangerous, with the (nefarious) consequence that she misses the school dance does not count as a harm, on my usage: she has done something to warrant punishment, the punishment wasn't outrageous, and so there was no wrongdoing in grounding her. Similarly, if someone possesses something acquired unjustly, to remove it from them does not constitute a harm, even if they have become reliant on it. Suppose I steal your daughter's bicycle, and enjoy the freedom having a bicycle affords me, I am not harmed when the police divest me of the bicycle—your daughter was the one initially harmed by my theft. Now, the kind of case I am interested in is more complicated, since I am especially interested in the kinds of harms that are associated with broader injustices, and are not best captured in easily calculable distributive terms. These include the harms of abusive relationships, the harms of poor public health initiatives, and the harms of racism. The reason to say that not all nefarious consequences are harmful is to highlight the thought that being compelled, for example, to confront my internal racism, however unpleasant it may be for me, does not constitute a harm, whereas failing to acknowledge someone's experience of racism does. Similarly, being compelled to recognize that my ill-treatment of my girlfriend stems from my own problems and not from her is not a harm in the way that her experience of ill-treatment is. These two examples involve failures of
acknowledgment.

The failure of acknowledgment is of moral concern, but it is also of epistemic concern. Failing to acknowledge harm typically involves both a general failure of acknowledgment and a failure of understanding. Failing to acknowledge the equality of Blacks in obvious cases of white supremacy shows this: having explicit beliefs about the superiority of whites involves having false beliefs, and lacking true beliefs about the history of oppression in North America. Related to the case of the white supremacist is the inquirer who mis-evaluates the reliability or epistemic fitness of another. We commit what Miranda Fricker has termed “epistemic injustice” when we underestimate someone's rational authority, particularly on the basis of group membership (1998, 2007). That is, epistemic injustice occurs where rational authority and perceptions of credibility are separated. This is an epistemic injustice, because you wrong someone in their capacity as a knower. Moreover, you wrong yourself by denying yourself access to potentially valuable truths. However, if you fail to learn because of racist or sexist denials of another's rational authority, you are not harming yourself as you are harming them.

Interestingly, on Fricker's account of epistemic injustice, we must preserve a conception of genuine rational authority as a contrast to mere credibility, where mere credibility is the (mis)perception of someone as a good informant. If we can only access mere credibility, then we cannot make sense of instances of epistemic injustice. Since we can make sense of at least some such instances, for example taking gentlemen in previous centuries as having credibility in virtue of belonging to the class of gentlemen, we must be able to drive a wedge between rational authority and mere credibility. That we can
sometimes drive such a wedge offers promise that we will not be compelled to accept relativism and that we can sometimes tell the difference between genuine claims and the products of power. That is, we can sometimes tell when someone has mere credibility and when someone has genuine rational authority.

2. Power

Power can be understood conflictually, as power-over. This can be the power to make someone act or be the way you want them to act or be; it can be the power over parts of the natural world that has sometimes been the hallmark of western science. This is the sense of power at the heart of MacKinnon's theory of oppression, discussed in the last chapter. The other salient sense of power is power-to, as captured in Hannah Arendt's classical statement of power as “the human ability not just to act but to act in concert” (1970, 44). In my usage, both these senses are deployed. When I address a point critically, power is power-over. Power-over is typically bad because it is a power to compel individuals against their interests. However, if their interests require perpetuating harm to others, or perpetuating their own power-over others, protecting their interests is less important than reducing harm. Consider the situation of the mining industry at the turn of the twentieth century in the United States. It ran counter to the interests of mine owners to ensure safe conditions for mining, until the miners organized politically. However, the interests of the mine owners rested on direct and preventable harm to the miners, and so was illegitimate.⁵ For some discussion of the challenges of uncovering individuals' real (objective) interests, and developing the appropriate political structures to meet these interests, see Babbitt (1993).
the aim is not to reverse power trends, but to dismantle the structure of having power-over. For example, the aspects of radical Black Liberation movements which stressed the superiority of Blacks over Whites reinscribed the dyadic understanding of race and power, and as such, pointed to an inevitable failure of liberation. By contrast where I (and others) address empowerment or redressing power imbalances, I shift to power-to, or power-with.

3. Feminist Desiderata

One question that often arises is what makes an epistemology feminist? A feminist epistemology will involve the following features: it will (1) keep the epistemic salience of power relations in the foreground (Hartsock 1983), (2) address the epistemic relevance of gendered locations (Hartsock 1983, Code 1995), (3) offer an account of subjectivity to make sense of objectivity (Code 1995, Babbitt 1993, 2005), and (4) work to overcome the bias paradox and with it, relativism (Harding 1995). A final aim (5) is to keep the pragmatic, practice-centered needs of feminist theory at the foreground, since the aim of all feminist theory is improving the lives of women (Mohanty 2002). A concern with empirical adequacy runs through all of these commitments, and enables feminist epistemologists to build bridges to traditional epistemologies.

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26 A different example is of a parent compelling her teenager to do his homework. This is an exercise of power over the teenager which is (typically) in his interests. I accept this, but find the appropriateness of paternalism of this example is not generalizable.

27 This is not to deny the possibility that such assertions may have pragmatic and motivational benefits.

28 I have referenced only the most characteristic works for each of these desiderata, since most feminist theory does all of these.
4. Two Case Studies: Power Relations and Epistemic Practices

I begin with two brief case studies to which I will refer over the course of this chapter. The first is a study on visual-spatial ability, drawn from Anne Fausto-Sterling's work on biological theories of sex differences (1985, 30-32; discussed in Campbell 1998, 28). One of the most popular and often run tests for sex differences in visual-spatial ability is the rod and frame test. In this test, the subject sits in a chair in a completely dark room facing a large luminescent frame. A lighted rod bisects the frame. One version of the test involves an experimenter who tilts the frame in different directions, and the subject must ask the experimenter to adjust the lighted rod by small increments until the rod is at the position believed by the subject to be vertical. In the twelve studies in which this test was run, men scored better than women in seven instances and in five there were no sex-related differences. Thus, it is believed that men are better at visual-spatial representations than women. Moreover, H.A. Witkin, the psychologist who designed this test, thinks they “suggest a relationship between general intelligence analytical ability, conformity, passivity, and visual-spatial abilities” (Fausto-Sterling 31). However, according to Fausto-Sterling, the studies did not take into consideration alternative explanations of the data. For example, she points out that the study is conducted in a pitch dark room, with a female subject and (likely) a male experimenter. “What female”, she asks, “would not feel just a little vulnerable in that situation?” The studies do not countenance the possibility that this power imbalance affected the data.

A second example is more troubling, but illustrative, and concerns domestic abuse cases in the courts. One of the aims of the courts is to enable the truth to be uncovered in
order for justice to be done. Its explicit aim is to prevent or rectify illegal harms. When we take the issue of domestic violence, however, the common law system often functions to replicate the intimidation and alienation of women who are abused (Bartky 2005). Sandra Bartky discusses spatial, cultural, and linguistic intimidation, as well as interpersonal intimidation by lawyers and judges over and above the the other intimidations. Many courthouses are built in a grand style with columns and large, wide staircases; more democratically modeled buildings are cold and faceless. “The battered woman, who has perhaps come from a bungalow, a tenement, a shelter, or a mobile home, finds herself in a temple” (56). One of the spatial aspects of intimidation involves the levels of bureaucracy that must be negotiated: different statements are needed from police, lawyers, prosecutors, and doctors in order to make a case. These are rarely available at a small number of locations, and often require multiple visits. Legal language can be both culturally and linguistically alienating. For native speakers of English, even for those with higher educations, legal language is confusing and hard to follow. If the woman is not a native speaker of English, particularly if she does not have a legal education in her native language, the intimidation may well be heightened. The experience of the building and the practices can be one of perpetuating the experience of being out of control, of having your life done to you rather than by you. This is one of the characteristic experiences of women suffering abuse.

The following story illustrates the intimidation of a woman over and above the spatial, cultural, and linguistic intimidation. Bartky discusses the triple intimidation of a

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29 I thank Deirdre Reddick for enlightening me as to these challenges. Bartky does not discuss them.
battered woman—let's call her Ana—where the domestic abuse was recapitulated twice in the courtroom. Ana's counselor from the women's shelter recounted the story to Bartky. The judge “ordered a very reluctant woman to go into the corridor, 'talk it over' with her battering husband, and 'make it up'.” She was reluctant but obeyed the judge's orders. In the corridor, she faced her enraged husband who “shook her (but not hard enough to attract the attention of a bailiff) and (softly) threatened her with severe bodily harm if she did not drop the charges.” The demoralized woman went back into the courtroom to tell the prosecutor she was thinking of not pursuing the charges. “Now it was the prosecutor's anger (expressed of course sotto voce) she had to confront.” He tried guilt then, when that didn't work, switched to threats: no one would take her case again if she dropped the charges. Thus, Ana first suffered abuse at home, then she suffered the intimidation of the judge's unreasonable order, which faced her with the accused. Third, she faced the intimidation and threats of the prosecutor. The system that was meant to protect her doubly reproduced the violence experienced at home. There were obvious harms that resulted from layers of power imbalance, some of which are of epistemic salience. The court never uncovered the truth. The judge demonstrated mere credibility rather than genuine rational authority when it came to understanding both his role and the nature of domestic violence. The prosecutor demonstrated a lack of understanding of the woman's psychology and of the nature of domestic violence by employing guilt and threats rather than trying other means of persuasion. The woman's feminist counselor, Morgen Alexander-Young, was likely appalled but not shocked by this case.30

30 The continued prevalence of domestic violence, and rising murder rate of women, point to a systemic rather than isolated problem. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of fifteen and forty-four in the United States. Forty percent of women who are murdered are
II. Nancy Hartsock: Towards a Feminist Materialism

“A standpoint is not simply an interested position (interpreted as bias) but is interested in the sense of being engaged” (Hartsock 1983, 285). It is a position from which knowledge claims are made, but it is explicitly engaged in social relations, including power-laden ones; it is particularly concerned with relations of production and reproduction in this early formulation. Hartsock’s account of a feminist standpoint emerges out of five Marxian 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 rulers 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 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 (Hartsock 1983, 285).

Ana’s story helps illustrate these abstract claims. The first claim, that material life sets limits on the understanding of social relations, is borne out in Ana’s case: those occupying positions of power—the lawyer and the judge—demonstrate an inability to understand the phenomenon of domestic abuse by failing to act in a way which would show such an understanding. Ana and Alexander-Young are better positioned to note these failures than are the lawyer and judge. The point here is that members of marginalized groups are less likely to mistake themselves for a generic knower with a view either from nowhere or murdered by a husband or lover. For these and other figures, see Bartky (2005, 55).
everywhere because they are subjected to particular forms of social relations (Hartsock

Alexander-Young, the counselor from the women's shelter, is relatively
disempowered in this context as she is there only on behalf of the victim. She is in a
position to understand the scenario because she is able to understand both her client's
actions, and the workings of the powerful in court. That is, she is able to see that the
vision of the powerful is both partial and perverse, which is the second claim. It is partial
(rather than simply false) because, in some contexts, imploring a couple to work it out
could be good advice. Its perversity comes from the harm that is generated in this
instance, that is, in the case of taking the advice of working things out as always or
generally applicable. Of central importance here is that Alexander-Young does not only
surmise that the vision of the powerful is as she sees it, and is partial and perverse, but
she knows it to be the case. That is, she is reaching at truths that are not (or are less)
available to the powerful. Thus, standpoint theory is committed to a form of realism
which involves multiple levels of reality.\textsuperscript{31} Initially, it was conceived as having two
levels, modeled on Marx's division into proletariat and bourgeoisie. More recently,
Hartsock has acknowledged that the duality of feminists and patriarchs is inadequate for
uncovering axes of oppression other than gender. The call to realism is made on the basis
of political need: we need the motivation to act against injustice, and we will only have
the confidence to act if we are able to believe that we can know the world. This differs
from some postmodern pragmatisms, where an attitude of ironic disengagement is

\textsuperscript{31} By realism, I mean the tendency to believe in the truth of warranted claims, rather than having the anti-
realist tendency to resist accepting warranted claims. Thus, I use realism in a broader, more general way
than is common in the philosophy of science.
considered appropriate upon giving up the search for a view from nowhere. Here, the engagement is both real and serious. I will come back to the difficulty I see for grounding realism primarily in a political call to action. The motivation for invoking levels of reality is to capture the thought that the view from below is able to explain its own position as well as the position of the ruling group. If feminists were mainly concerned with *identifying* difference, then appealing to different perspectives would suffice. However, the point is not just that the levels of reality are different, but that the view from below is better because more complete and accurate. Ana's story, and the example of feminist criticism of visual-spatial ability research supports this. However, I will come back to concerns.

The partiality and perversity of the vision of the ruling group cannot simply be dismissed as false (though it does show a genuine lack of understanding) because it is the vision that structures material relations everyone must participate in, the third claim. This is aptly illustrated in Ana's situation, where the judge is the acknowledged authority figure. Different activities and therefore different groups contain what Hartsock calls a “working epistemology” (1998, 240). This means that there are implicit views about what counts as knowledge and about standards of evidence in most of our practices. The aim is to read off the epistemologies of different activities, referring back to the way power relations can obstruct or reveal the latent epistemology and therefore elucidate the nature of the practice. In the case of Ana's trial, Alexander-Young is more than likely—and Ana is possibly—in a position to detect the latent epistemology of the powerful in a way the judge and lawyer need not be aware of, because they are not confronted with the
consequences of their understanding.

To be able to see past the vision of the ruling group and see how that vision is partial and enabled by the position of power, constitutes an achievement. The ability of Alexander-Young to see the workings of power in this case, and to recognize the recapitulation of intimidation, constitutes an achievement resulting from struggle. The education called for is not necessarily institutional education, but the education of critical thinking, thus illustrating the fourth claim. Alexander-Young demonstrates the possibility and difficulty of creating alternative visions (Hartsock 1998, 240-241). That the standpoint is achieved motivates my appeal to Alexander-Young's vision, rather than presuming Ana was able to critically grasp the reality of the courtroom at the moment of her vulnerability. At that point, she may have been operating in a survival mode, and not been engaging critically.

The fifth claim follows from the above where, from Alexander-Young and Ana's perspective, the understanding yielded by this standpoint shows that the power-laden social relations in this case were inhuman. The inhumanity of the relations calls for an understanding that leads to change.

These claims underpin the appeal to a standpoint epistemology. The epistemology is engaged in the sense that the motivation for uncovering real relations of production and reproduction comes from a desire for a more just world. Its engagement is understood to increase objectivity in the sense of developing good knowledge practices, rather than decrease it, since from the perspective of those who are marginalized, it can be seen that perspectives and the activities that constitute these perspectives are typically politicized.
In other words, it can be seen that neutrality is the illusion of the powerful. In Marx, this
illusion comes from taking exchange value as the only kind of value, particularly the
exchange of labor or goods for pay. By contrast to the bourgeois, the worker identifies
use value, that is, the value something has insofar as it is useful. The value of labor is not
that it can be exchanged, but that it can produce the means of our subsistence. Hartsock is
rightly critical of Marx for failing to address gender difference in his understanding of
use value, excluding as he does the reproduction of humans, including workers.

The basis for Hartsock’s feminist standpoint theory is this sexual division of labor
which Marxism fails to uncover. Hartsock accepts Marx’s emphasis on concrete material
conditions and social relations in contrast to the abstractions required to privilege
exchange value. She also shares the Marxian emphasis that individuals are only
individuals within networks of social relations. Subjectivity is not practicably separable
from intersubjectivity. However, she stresses that the concrete conditions of caring for the
home (including caring for the bodily needs of men) and ensuring the reproduction of the
species form the real base of a liberatory epistemology. Affirming life, which she
associates with women’s work and our social relations, reveals the perversity of the
violence of masculinist conceptions of selfhood, where the other is subordinated to the
ego.

This view sounds more biologically essentialist than it is meant to. On Marxian
views, reality is constituted by human activity, which is materially, socially, and
historically situated. Thus, while these views are strongly realist, they are also somewhat
historicist. In other words, the truth of claims is indexed to a historical time period, and to
geographical and cultural locations. Prescriptions developed on the basis of accurate
description point beyond their immediate context: what is true for feminists is true for
anti-feminists. However, the prescriptions do not claim intelligibility and hence
normative force at all time periods. Thus, the claim that feminists have a better
understanding of the world on the basis of the work they do as women is not equivalent
to the claim that women ought to do this work, that they are biologically designed only
for this work, or that men are incapable of the work of caring for the production and
reproduction of subsistence.

However, this charge of biological essentialism points to problems with
Hartsock’s feminist standpoint theory. Two common criticisms of Hartsock are that she
asserts cross-cultural categories and that she claims to uncover unmediated relations to
the truth (Hekman 2004a). 32 The most intense worry about making cross-cultural claims
leads to affirming the kind of relativism that the bias paradox shows is counter-productive
to liberatory aims, let alone to advancing knowledge. However, the more serious worry is
not that one must avoid making cross-cultural claims, but that one must be able to avoid
reproducing oppression through false or oppressive cross-cultural claims. Thus, the issue
shifts to subjectivity: who is making the claims, and on what grounds do they claim
authority? This is precisely the issue that Hartsock aims to deal with, and so, on the face
of it, she seems to elude this challenge. If there is a problem with making claims across
cultures, the source of the problem will lie deeper.

The charge that Hartsock promotes an unmediated access to the truth also arises

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32 These are also the criticisms made by Nancy Fraser, Linda Nicholson, and Jane Flax (Hartsock 1998,
230ff).
from postmodern anxiety about ontologizing. As will be demonstrated in my adoption of
phenomenological method in the fourth chapter, I share the misgivings about
ontologizing prematurely, but do not share the misgivings about claiming that truth is
possible and often achieved. Hartsock is able to resist facile versions of this criticism
through her Marxian methodology, where truth is understood as emerging out of human
activity, and where the main concern is relations between people, rather than between
people and inanimate things, particularly since for Marx—which Hartsock accepts—
nature is “created” by humans, even as they create themselves (Hartsock 1998, 235-36).
In unsophisticated moments, one may think Hartsock simply means that nature is made
by humans. However, a more sensitive reading allows for understanding “creation” as
“constitution” or “conceptualization”, where we understand both of these as able to have
a material impact on the mind independent world. For example, many of the resistant
bacteria that are the scourge of hospitals have developed through of exposure to
antibiotics and anti-bacterial agents. Thus, Hartsock, like many others, aims for the
ground between hubristic absolutism and immobilizing relativism by understanding our
praxis and ontology as intertwined. Moreover, truth is mediated on her account, since
the deeper levels of reality are covered over by layers of ideology or false consciousness,
and she has no illusions that standpoints—that is, engaged social locations that are able to uncover reality—can be predicted with certainty (237).

However, there is a different formulation of a similar worry about claims to truth.
Hartsock acknowledges that the standpoints cannot be predicted, but she does not address

33 In this literature, “absolutism” means adopting the perspective that one utters truths for all time.
the problems of identifying them. This leads to the most serious charge against standpoint theory, namely that it is viciously circular: theory is required to identify standpoints, and standpoints are constituted through adopting a certain theoretical perspective. I think that appeal to the empirical success of some studies which are developed on the basis of certain standpoints can help undercut this charge. For example, the feminist analysis of the shortcomings of research into visual-spatial representation, discussed in section 4 of part I, demonstratea that using feminist assumptions in the construction and evaluation of research was better in the sense of uncovering explanatory problems with previous studies. However, considering the sources of the charge of vicious circularity in Hartsock's work is instructive as it indicates challenges other views will have to avoid.

In Hartsock's second claim for standpoint theory, the view of the powerful is taken as an inversion of the view from below, and the interests of the powerful are taken as opposed to the interests of the powerless. Thus, she notes that the powerful actually have an interest in not seeing the real relations required to maintain the status quo. However, if we accept the language of inversion and opposition, Hartsock seems locked into a greater essentialism than she anticipates, and than is acceptable. This is because she is committed to feminists having similar oppressions in order to make sense of them as having similar interests. If we experience oppression differently, and especially to the extent that some women are oppressive of others, then within the group of women, interests will be structured oppositionally, as will be the ability to understand well. This

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34 What I did not discuss, but which occurred, was that these feminist criticisms of the standard test resulted in better tests, where the possible effects of vulnerability did not emerge (Fausto-Sterling 1985, 32ff).

35 This is also pursued by Alcoff (2007) and Mills (2007).
would undermine the possibility of a feminist standpoint. One reply to this is that
standpoints need not map onto social location: men can be feminists and white women
can be allies in anti-racist struggle, and achieve the understanding that is attendant to the
social locations of women of color. It will be harder, but not necessarily impossible.

Yet this is not sufficient as a reply to the challenge that oppositional interests
undermine the unity of a feminist standpoint, and thereby undermine the normative force
claimed of feminist standpoint theory. By acknowledging that deeper levels of reality
uncover the workings of the more superficial levels, some feminists will have to
acknowledge their partial and perverse understanding. Of course this is right: many
feminists have reinforced oppressive practices. Yet acknowledging this is insufficient for
ensuring the normative epistemology Hartsock defends. An implausible alternative is to
seek out the most marginalized standpoint conceivable, and have those who occupy that
standpoint develop our normative epistemology. It is implausible to think we could
discover one maximally oppressed standpoint. An alternative way to ensure the normative
force of feminist standpoint theory without failing descriptively may be to build humility
or reservations into the theory.

By their nature, Marxian theories are provisional in one sense: they are developed
by interrogating material social relations, which are affected by historical features.
However, they are also committed to a robust sense of justice as involving the
rectification of oppression. This commitment often comes with more or less self-
conviction that one and one's group are on the right track. Sometimes the negative
consequences of acting with conviction are far outweighed by the advantages. Richard
Levins and Richard C. Lewontin, Marxist biologists, activists, and essayists, greatly benefit the science community and readers of science essays by their analyses of scientific and related social practices; the negative consequences of their Marxist (to the neglect of, perhaps, to their feminist) focus are negligible. Sometimes the negative consequences are desperate, as with many of the atrocities committed in the name of communism. Some conviction is required for action, and since action is central to Marxian theories, then conviction seems also to be required. However, if this self-conviction is not tempered within the theory, then applying the theory is likely to reproduce oppressions not previously identified. The conviction driving the theory and its application may be resistant to revision. Many oppressive practices involve an epistemic dimension since social relations contain an implicit epistemology and give rise to our knowledge claims. Thus, allowing the perpetuation of oppressive practices, on such a politicized epistemology, makes it a bad epistemology.36

The dangers of conviction may seem to point to an irresolvable tension between the need to act and the impossibility of knowing one is acting rightly. However, the theory misses an important consideration. It fails to thoroughly incorporate first person perspectives. While standpoint theory explicitly dismantles claims about the interchangeability of knowers, it fails to appreciate that knowledge—even in the sense of human activity directed at understanding social relations—is irreducible to the third

36 This relates back to my worry about grounding realism in a political call to action. Hartsock motivated her realism by appealing to the need to be able to aspire to knowledge rather than mere opinion because mere opinion would not justify or motivate action, and action is needed given injustice. A better grounding for the realism standpoint theory invokes is making sense of phenomena as uncovered in analysis from marginalized standpoints. This proposal should be friendly to Hartsock's view because she does take standpoint theory as committed to making sense of material relations. Thus, it can be taken as a hypothesis.
person perspective. It is clear that Hartsock fails to incorporate this insight where she argues that the view from below (entirely) explains the higher levels of reality. Incorporating the relevance of first person perspective, or a view from inside, makes it possible to undercut the self-convictions of some Marxians. This was the challenge to Hartsock’s early standpoint theory, that it failed to account for differences between women which would destroy the unity of interests necessary to generate a feminist standpoint.

Hartsock’s strand of realism, tied to a call to action and based on acknowledging oppositional consciousness, generates worries that it does not have the theoretical resources to spot its own exclusions. This results from building epistemic strengths on strictly oppositional perspectives: the vision or consciousness of the dominant is an inversion of the the vision of the dominated. When we take into consideration the power imbalances among women—even when we understand this category as historically situated and non-biologically determined—a unified feminist standpoint is impossible because the interests of dominant women will be an inversion of the interests of women who are oppressed along multiple axes. Early standpoint theory was not able to uncover this using only its own theoretical resources. Thus, the rejection of relativism was bought at too high a price. The real threat of reproducing oppressions is unacceptable for a feminist epistemology. Yet the notion of the vision of the oppressed as an inversion of the vision of the dominant is one of the central claims of Hartsock's early work. This leads either to a fragmenting of the feminist standpoint or to the exclusion of the interests of some women.
III. Sandra Harding: Strong Objectivity

Hartsock’s feminist materialist approach has been altered in more recent articulations of standpoint theory, most prominently by Sandra Harding (1993, 1995, 2004a, 2004b). Harding aims to preserve the normative force of Hartsock’s view without relinquishing the ability to take account of multiple axes of oppression, that is, without understanding oppositional consciousnesses as inversions of one another. She tries to cull what is most central from the more strongly Marxian approaches to mount a defense of strong objectivity against weak objectivity.

Weak objectivity is the traditional sense of objectivity that aims at neutrality. Harding maintains that it is useful in some contexts, and so warrants being called objectivity (1995, 338). However, weak objectivity is not able to evaluate the design of research programs. It is also unable to rule out the way in which power—which by its nature is not neutral—is exercised through institutional structures. Ana’s case is an example of this. Weak objectivity is not able to evaluate the design of research programs since it is deployed in the context of justification and so makes no claims about the choices made in the context of discovery (1995, 338). However, Harding maintains, it is at the level of the design of studies and the choice of research questions that potentially harmful decisions are made. Feminist epistemologists are not the only ones to notice the problems attendant on immunizing science against values. This issue has been taken up by Philip Kitcher, as discussed in chapter 1. The second problem with weak objectivity is

37 Harding’s distinction between discovery and justification is problematic, but her broader point is not affected by this.
38 When Hartsock and Harding talk about science, they mean it in the broader sense of Wissenschaft, or human sciences.
that it is unable to uncover pervasive distorted assumptions and beliefs, because in a homogeneous research community, all members might hold these assumptions and beliefs. For example, the ability to put any evolutionary theory to work in defending racist theories shows the intransigence of racist beliefs and assumptions (Gould 1992).

As a more encompassing and thorough conception of objectivity, Harding proposes strong objectivity. This is the conception of objectivity that emerges from a refined version of standpoint theory. Unlike the views from chapter 1, in which inequalities were incorporated to greater or lesser degrees into existing epistemologies, standpoint theory starts from the acknowledgment of social inequality. It also starts from accepting that this makes an epistemic difference.\textsuperscript{39} Consider Fausto-Sterling's reflection that vulnerability may have affected data in visual spatial aptitude research.

Instead of beginning inquiry from the concerns of those who have institutional power, as has typically been the case, standpoint theory maintains that we should begin inquiry from marginal lives. This takes up the insight from Hartsock that material relations structure and impose limits on what is known. However, by phrasing it as \textit{beginning} inquiry from marginal lives, Harding incorporates three insights. The first insight is that the accrued understanding made possible by marginal perspectives may not be restricted to knowledge \textit{about} those marginalized groups. In other words, feminist analysis can yield greater knowledge on topics other than understanding women. The second insight is that inquiry and its results extend beyond the sphere of the marginal lives that initiate research. This generates space for understanding the results of inquiry as

\textsuperscript{39} This acceptance is justified by appeal to those cases where differential power relations have yielded differential knowledge.
compelling to those who occupy different non or less marginalized stances. The third
insight is that significant questions are developed on the basis of issues of concern to
those occupying marginalized positions. These issues are value laden and admit of
choice, particularly given the scarcity of research funding. By insisting that we start from
marginal lives, standpoint theorists are committed to devoting epistemic energy to the
concerns of those who have typically been left out. Thus, standpoint theory is committed
to producing better knowledge, both in the sense of more empirically adequate, and more
just.

Moreover, this shift to starting from the lives of marginalized groups broadens the
scope of the experiences that are thought constitutive of our epistemic practices. In
Hartsock, the emphasis is on relations of production and reproduction. She offers an
analysis of feminist labor practices that give rise to the feminist standpoint, on her view.
Harding broadens this to include all manner of social relations and experiences as being
potential sources of epistemic value. This is more plausible in one sense, since it is not
theoretically committed to the economic determinism that much Marxism has been
accused of being committed to. However, the change carries with it the possibility that it
will be even harder to discern what counts as a standpoint and who will occupy it, given
this broadening of activities to take into consideration. I will come back to this concern
below.

Harding emphasizes the potential epistemic advantage of the outsider perspective
(1995, 344). Patricia Hill Collins also pursues the advantage of the “outsider within,”
analyzing the unique perspective of Black women in white households (2004, 103).
Collins discusses how Black women working in white families often expressed “the sense of self-affirmation they experienced at seeing white power demystified—of knowing that it was not the intellect, talent, or humanity of their employers that supported their superior status, but largely just the advantages of racism” (103). Collins builds from this history of Black domestics occupying an outsider within place to the structure of insights of Black feminists, who are uniquely located to see the multiple workings of oppression and privilege in the academy and in the theory produced by the academy. (104). Harding stresses the ability, from the margins, to spot gaps in conceptual resources and she addresses the ability of feminists to generate the conceptual space for women’s “double-work day,” “marital rape” and “sexual harassment”, all notions which were literally unthinkable at various times, because there was no way to communicate the phenomena to those who had neither the conceptual nor the experiential resources to understand. Harding’s point is that feminists were able to draw not only on their experiences of transgression and unfairness, but also on their position of marginality vis-a-vis the dominant conceptual schemes. Her point is that feminists were advantaged by lacking facility with the dominant language. This lack of fluency meant that experience often exceeded the ability to articulate it. Thus, the lack of fluency meant that feminists gained facility with trying to understand experience that exceeded the language available to express it. This meant that they had a better sense of an experience—despite being unable to describe it—than those who were accustomed to finding le mot juste. In having a better sense of the experience, they would be able to insist on the reality of the experience, even
when they discovered that there was at the time no conceptual space for the experience. hooks puts this point elegantly when she writes of an all night conversation with a Black filmmaker, Eddie George, about “the struggle of oppressed people to come to voice” (2004, 153). George said that “ours is a broken voice” (in hooks, ibid.). hooks writes

my response was simply that when you hear the broken voice you also hear the pain contained within that brokenness—a speech of suffering; often it's that sound nobody wants to hear. Stuart Hall talks about the need for a 'politics of articulation.' He and Eddie have been in dialogue with me in a deeply soulful way, hearing my struggle for words. It is this dialogue between comrades that is a gesture of love; I am grateful (153-154).

hooks expresses in the passage the difficulty and necessity of struggling for words, and the affective dimension of finding a community where this struggle can be healing rather than combative.

The outsider perspective and its possibility for conceptual innovations points to standpoints as achieved rather than natural—the hard work involved in conceptualizing what was previously unthinkable constitutes an achievement. In Hartsock's work, this takes the form of a distinction between women's perspectives and feminist standpoints. Harding recognizes that this distinction is both needed and problematic. She attempts to refine the distinction between a perspective and a standpoint by reinforcing that standpoint theory calls for us to begin thought from marginalized lives, particularly from the cares and concerns expressed collectively. Harding is sometimes criticized for not

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40 Harding has not put the issue in this way. She claims that one advantage of standpoint theory is that it is neutral with regard to modernism and postmodernism (2004, 27). However, my understanding of her view of the advantage that can accrue to the outsider means that standpoint theory is committed to experience unmediated by language, which would place it against postmodernism, since postmodernism is typically understood as tying experience to language. I do not think this is a major issue because I think the dichotomy between modernism and postmodernism is false.
making clear what it means to begin thought from marginalized lives, and so fails to clarify the distinction between natural perspectives and standpoints (Longino 1997, 29). Collins’ work offers a concrete way of understanding the idea of starting thought from below.\textsuperscript{41} Her point is not only that Black domestics were uniquely situated to understand the power structure in the homes in which they worked. Her point is also that starting inquiry into the insights made possible by being Black feminists in academic settings is heightened by starting inquiry not just from their (and her) own experiences, but also from the perspective of an understanding of Black domestics. Thus, one starts by trying to understand many marginalized experiences, which lay bare relations of power. In other words, Collins learns about the structure of insights available to Black feminist theorists not just by thinking about themselves, but also by thinking about the lives and insights of Black domestics.

By taking the social situation of knowledge claims more seriously, Harding maintains that it is nevertheless possible to avoid relativism and absolutism by adopting the humility of aiming at “less false” beliefs (1995, 346; 2004b, 257). Hence, Harding adopts a strong anti-realism by thinking she can avoid a commitment to truth. If this works, she is able to avoid the criticism of Hartsock’s work. This is the criticism that according to early standpoint theory, levels of reality are required in order to preserve some notion of truth and capture the accrued insight available to marginalized positions. However, if we endorse levels of reality, we have to endorse levels of oppression, which means that there can be no feminist standpoint because the interests and vision of some

\textsuperscript{41} Indeed, Collins’ work predates Harding’s and so this example is one that Harding has drawn on in her thinking.
women will be an inversion of the interests and vision of others. The problem of
difference becomes insuperable. Harding's emphasis in less false beliefs is meant to avoid
ontological commitments. However, as I will show later, her position is not convincing.

Strong objectivity mainly involves a politically sensitive strong reflexivity. This is
the central lesson learned from taking into consideration both the insight that material
factors affect possibilities for knowledge, and the insight that standpoints are achieved
perspectives rather than natural, spontaneous perspectives. The way to achieve a
standpoint is to critically engage with one's beliefs, presuppositions, and interests. This
contextualizes Harding's remarks by emphasizing communal rather than individual shifts
in consciousness. Critical self-reflexivity requires a community—indeed, it most often
requires a number of overlapping communities. Articulating this lesson cannot occur
independently of the discussion of power relations and of the view from the margins.

Strong objectivity does not simply involve any self-reflexivity, but requires engaged self-
reflexivity. It involves becoming critically aware of the workings of power, and the
effects of these workings on epistemic practices. Standpoint theory emerged in order to
explain the successes of feminist work in diverse fields. As such, it is a naturalized
epistemology, developed to account for earlier successes and failures.

Yet there remain three problems with Harding's refinements of Hartsock's earlier
work. The first concerns resistance to using the language of truth. Standpoint theory has
been accused (and, from other locations, applauded) for remaining committed to truth,
which postmodernism claims to have shown as an ethno-centric, oppressive presumption.
Harding aims to avoid this criticism by embracing a more humble approach, whereby
standpoint theorists aim at claims which are less false, rather than simply true. This distinction does not work. Falsity is most commonly understood as the conceptual pair to truth. Harding’s talk of “less false” is somewhat like claiming that I did not get the book wet, I merely rendered it less dry—this would not be compelling to the person whose book I damaged. Harding has not managed to avoid the problem she set out to avoid. Her motivation for taking this approach may have been to avoid the problems that beset Hartsock’s realism. She does discuss truth in one place, where she writes that "claims to truth are harmless as long as they promise no more than the evidence that can be produced in support of such a claim" (2004b, 260). She does not elaborate on this, and does not clarify her understanding of what is “promised”.

However, there are standpoint resources available that allow for using the language of truth without becoming committed to some form of absolutism. This is to reflectively endorse the circularity of standpoint theory. Standpoint theory developed to explain the successes of feminist theory, and has been able to explain further successes. Thus, it has become reasonable to follow the lead of those we take to occupy valuable standpoints, whether among feminists or critical race theorists. Three such examples are Charles Mills, a Black philosopher of racism, Chandra Mohanty, transnational feminist theorist, and Karen Barad, scientist and gender theorist. All adopt forms of realism and use the language of truth, which they find helpful and non-oppressive (Barad 2008; Mills 2007, 15; Mohanty 2002, 502-503). This is not an argument for realism, but it is a reason to accept a modest realism, and thereby to dissolve a stale discussion.42

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42 For an argument on leaving realism and anti-realism debates in the philosophy of science, see Kourany (2000).
The second problem concerns the failure to develop an understanding of self and community, despite relying on this distinction. She does not develop an understanding of the kind of activity that would transform perspectives into standpoints. Offering more discussion of the relation between individuals and communities could offer her the resources to make this distinction, without relying as heavily on her invitation to “start thinking from below.”

Third, this invitation is hard to understand, which is problematic given the theoretical work to be done by such thinking. Starting thinking from below is confusing. Collins' example uncovers some of the thrust and potential of Harding's call to start thinking from below. However, what I find difficult to grasp is not that we must listen to marginalized voices, including our own. What I find confusing is the sense of “starting” that Harding requires. If we need to start thinking from marginalized standpoints rather than perspectives, and if standpoints are achieved perspectives, then there is work antecedent to starting thinking from below, namely achieving the standpoints. I do not think this is a fatal challenge, since I suspect that we will be able to distinguish the different actions and attitudes that lend themselves to better knowledge. However, Harding would benefit from articulating the knowledge productive practices that lend themselves to such work, as Helen Longino attempts to do, which I will discuss in chapter 3. Harding would also benefit from considering the resources of phenomenology, which allow us to theorize multiple starting places, as I will discuss in chapter 4.

A fourth problem is that it is not clear to what kind of knowledge Harding’s position is applicable because she doesn't give hints about what happens after starting
thinking from women's lives. She does address how her approach opens up research questions and she emphasizes uncovering power relations. This is necessary, but it is not clear that it is sufficient to provide us with valuable knowledge. In other words, not all knowledge productive practices will be exhausted by understanding the workings of power relations.

Harding's strong objectivity, despite its problems, has some advantages and yields insights into how we can incorporate different experiences without succumbing to all the problems attendant upon Hartsock's view. On strong objectivity, the strongly self-reflexive move enables us to work through our oppositional interests, which are needed to build allegiances across differences. This is not fully theorized in Harding's work, but the examples we can find from activist epistemologists like Mills, Collins, and hooks provide rich and helpful clues as to how the work can be done.

IV. Susan Babbitt: Self-Respect, Questions, and Moral Imagination

Susan Babbitt's work on moral imagination and objective self-interest is instructive for understanding feminist standpoint theory. In some ways, her work is complementary to though in others it indicates the incompleteness of standpoint theory for objectivity. Though Babbitt focuses on moral epistemology, her account offers resources for epistemology more generally. Her main insight is that we should have a conception of how society ought to be before we can recognize some questions as genuine questions. Before we can ask the questions whose answers will illuminate a range of phenomena, we need to have a sense of how the world ought to be. Thus, she
incorporates a strong role for imagination and possibility into epistemology. By pursuing
the implications of her approach, she offers a fruitful understanding of the working of
oppression on selfhood. These two points—about how research requires moral
imagination and about the effects of oppression on selfhood—are useful for
understanding strong objectivity in two ways. First, we need to understand the potential
limits of the standpoint of the oppressed given the possibility of harmed perception and
self-perception. Second, we need to see that not all research starts from the lives of
marginalized groups, but that some starts from the situation that gives rise to certain kinds
of lives.

Babbitt addresses a problem in liberal approaches to rational self-interest and
selfhood (1993). Contemporary liberal views steer a course between paternalism where
self-interest is dictated along universalistic lines, and a Benthamite utilitarianism, where
what is good is simply whatever someone desires. For example, a Rawlsian might think
that anyone has a rational self-interest in self-respect and autonomy. If anyone considers
her self-interest carefully, she would agree that self-respect contributes to her own good.
Babbitt disagrees with this picture. The problem is that it fails take into consideration the
effects of systemic oppression. Babbitt addresses the “deferential housewife” who often
comes up in the literature on autonomy, as a challenge to liberal conceptions of
autonomy. The deferential housewife appears to have freely chosen heteronomy. Perhaps
from the wife's conception of self, which may well be damaged, defining herself in
relation to her husband is fulfilling her sense of the good, and self-respect and autonomy

43 Arguing for this does not mean we must suppose the view from privilege is less distorted because less
harmed. We can think it may be differently distorted.
are not desirable. For these to become desirable would require that she become, in an important respect, someone else. Since the liberal reasoner avoids paternalism only by restricting the scope of rational deliberation to what an individual would actually choose for herself, the liberal framework fails to incorporate the role of transformation in determining objective self-interest. In other words, if the Rawlsian argues that autonomy is a good that one would choose for oneself if one underwent a transformative experience, the door is opened to forcing the conditions for such transformations. But at the heart of the liberal project is the goal of protecting individuals from coercive or unchosen experiences. So, if the liberal theorist wants to maintain that autonomy is in someone's objective self-interest, then she must do one of two things. She must incorporate room for transformative experience, which is illiberal, or she must abandon the claim that autonomy is in someone's best interests, which is also illiberal. In any case, the liberal is stuck.

The interest of this argument, in the context of my current discussion, is to address what is necessary for individuals to recognize their experiences. It is necessary for standpoint theory that those at the margins be able to make accurate sense of their experiences in order to use those experiences as an epistemic resource. Even if standpoint theory does not ultimately yield an adequate account of objectivity, those elements of standpoint theory which warrant inclusion nevertheless call for addressing how people can have a right understanding of their situation.44

Under conditions of oppression, a given conceptual framework may not yet have

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44 To have an accurate understanding need not mean that every truth about the context is transparent.
space for self-affirmation. Babbitt cites an episode from the novel by Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, during which Celie is being put down by Mister. Mister taunts Celie, listing her attributes: poor, ugly, black, woman. “You nothing at all” he tells her. Celie responds by repeating the attributes, “but I’m here”. She doesn't deny his categories, but still insists that, nevertheless, she exists. “In Celie's situation, the inexpressibility of her experience is of particular epistemic significance. For it is not just another dimension of her expressible experience. What she understands but is incapable of expressing provides, or potentially provides, the interpretive standards that could make a more adequate expressed experience possible” (in Babbitt 1993, 254). She is pointing to a space where experience *should be* expressible, *might* be expressible, but isn't. Moreover, the point isn't just that it should be and could be expressible for her, but that she could, potentially, make it expressible *tout court*.

Babbitt's point concerns Celie's self-understanding, and its relation to social structures, that is, to moral epistemology, but it is relevant to questions of objectivity more generally. For one thing, considering the possibility that epistemic subjects may have damaged selves destabilizes the conviction that being an outsider within will be an epistemic strength in a clear and practical way. On Babbitt's view there is the possibility of an added insight, but it is not clearly an insight that can be translated into shared standards or articulate criticisms, precisely because relevant concepts are lacking, or relevant questions are not easily framed.

Thus there is a tension between the possibility of seeing the world more accurately from a marginalized perspective, and being harmed in such a way that
understanding the better vision may be difficult. This tension—which can be productive—is well expressed through Robin Dillon's understanding of self-respect, particularly as it comes up in Babbitt's work (Babbitt 2005, Dillon 1997). Dillon notes that “individuals who are blessed with a confident respect for themselves have something that is vital to living a satisfying, meaningful, flourishing life, while those condemned to live without it or with damaged or fragile self-respect are thereby condemned to live constricted, deformed, frustrating lives, cut off from possibilities for self-realization, self-fulfillment, and happiness” (1997, 226). Dillon doesn't insist that those without self-respect are only ever miserable. Rather, her point is that there is an affective, persistent voice that operates under the radar, constantly telling you you are nothing. Babbitt takes this up in the context of considering the desirability of choice and the effects of institutions on self-respect. Those who suffer from systemic oppression—who, in the eyes of dominant institutions are valued less—suffer more from a lack of self-respect. Dillon notes that questions about self-respect arise more often for women than men because “feelings of inadequacy, defectiveness, and being wronged are appropriate for individuals living a subordinated-group existence. [These] emotions, that is, disclose the prevailing devaluation and subordination of women in a patriarchal society” (Dillon 1997, 247).

There are two interesting points about differential “basal self-respect”, as Dillon calls the base of self-respect, whereby one expects one's full share of respect (243). The first is that lacking it can negatively impact one's ability to exercise autonomy of thought and insist on one's vision of the world. The second, which pulls against the first, is that it is only by lacking basal self-respect that one can see that there is a question about
choosing self-respect (Babbitt 2005, 152). You can’t choose something you have always had and have never imagined not having. For example, you can’t really choose a career-path if you have never had any doubts about the path being the right one, or if you have never had the material opportunity to aspire to a different career. If self-respect has never been a question, then it has never been a choice. The only way to open up the question of choosing self-respect is if someone has not had it. Yet, to see self-respect as a choice, it is not sufficient for it to be lacking. It must be lacking and be seen as a possibility. This is what some women who have been in abusive situations recount about why they stayed: they believed that life could not be another way, and that they did not deserve for life to be another way. Both of these needed to change in order for self-respect to become a possibility, in this case. There is a sense in which it is better not to have to choose self-respect, to have it already be there. We can grant that it is better for someone not to confront the question of self-respect, and still think that those who do see it as a question, as something that must be chosen and striven for, have understood something more than those who go along unaware of the possibility that self-respect could be a question. The issue of seeing self-respect as a question shows both how marginalized standpoints can be a source of epistemic insight as well as a source of deformed views. It also shows the importance of achieving healthier selfhood for epistemic practices, once power relations are seen to be of epistemic relevance. This is because understanding self-respect as a question also involves seeing it as a possibility. Some of our trust in others will be trust not only in socially and historically situated others, but in vulnerable others, just as we, too, are vulnerable in ways that are of epistemic salience.
The second insight of Babbitt's work involves the role of moral imagination in conducting research. She draws on Marilyn Frye's example of a bird in a cage (Babbitt 2005, 154; Frye 1983, 4-5). If you look at a bird in a cage, it looks like it's making it's own choices as it moves around, and so is moving freely. The bird still looks free if you only look at the wires on the cage one by one. If the bird really wanted to, we may think, it could fly around those wires. But it is only when you look at the birdcage itself that you see that the bird's actions are not free, that the cage prevents the bird from behaving like a bird. You can think that the bird chooses how to move around within the cage, but if you want to understand or explain the bird's actions, you need to look at the cage, and at the role the cage plays. Thus, explaining the bird's behavior depends on antecedently identifying the situation the bird finds itself in. Frye develops this example to explain the workings of oppression.

Babbitt develops this example to explain the workings of inquiry in power-laden environments. Her point is that research needs to look at the situation people find themselves in, not just look at people's behaviors. This is primarily applicable to research into humans, but it may be generalizable.45 Babbitt discusses an ongoing research project, “Diaspora, Islam, and Gender” (DIG). The DIG project researches the situation of people of Islamic origin in a host country. Typically, behaviors of people of Islamic origin in host countries are thought to be explained by the group's Islamic origin. The hypothesis of the DIG project is that people's beliefs and behaviors are explained by the way the Islamic members are regarded by the non-Islamic members. That is, understanding the broader

45 Lewontin's research on drosophila in their native environments works in this way, assuming the situation of the items under considerations will factor heavily into explanations. Additionally, Einstein's theories of special and general relativity show that frames of reference affect observations.
situation is more important than understanding the group's originary beliefs, in order to understand the group. Structuring research in this way, as Babbitt argues, requires moral imagination. Before you can see whether the host country's attitudes and perceptions to those of Islamic origin explain more about the groups than their Islamic origins, you have to consider the possibility that the broader society is implicated; you have to recognize that things could be otherwise. Even more basically, you have to recognize the group studied as sharing in the humanity that makes them susceptible to the regard of others.

Incorporating imagination into epistemology should not be surprising. Philosophers of science have developed epistemologies appropriate to the sciences, and imagination is at the heart of our image of central scientific figures. Einstein famously said “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.” However, with the creation of the distinction between discovery and justification, imagination was often relegated to the context of discovery. Thus, although Babbitt is motivated by work in the philosophy of science (2005, 144), she rehabilitates imagination and the role of possibility in epistemology, and particularly for accounts of objectivity. In order to do responsible research, that is, research that is likely to yield explanations and avoid harm, we need to imagine how things might be in order to ask the right questions about how things are.

This approach both contributes to the insights of standpoint theory and pulls against them. It contributes to the insights of standpoint theory by showing how a correct understanding of a power-laden situation is necessary for asking the right questions, and so contributes to the view of standpoint theory that an engaged perspective is necessary
for knowledge. The DIG project takes on an engaged hypothesis, that understanding the (racism of) the host community will explain people's behaviors and beliefs better than their professed beliefs might. However, this approach pulls against standpoint theory in the sense that it begins—for some meaning of begins—inquiry from the perspective of the situation, rather than from the lives of marginalized groups. Research is structured by those with experience in the margins—the Director of the DIG project, Haideh Moghissi, herself comes from a racialized Islamic background. However, the research does not quite start from consideration of her own life. It is research from the third person perspective

Thus, Babbitt's work helps to clarify and contextualize standpoint theory. It clarifies it by showing both how achieved standpoints can yield greater understanding and how this greater understanding is vulnerable. The example of those for whom self-respect is a choice rather than a given is helpful. One needs both to have lacked self-respect, and to see it as a possibility, in order to uncover the epistemic insights possible to those who have failed to have it. Babbitt's work also contextualizes standpoint theory by showing that starting research “from below” is only one moment of research. Another moment involves starting by an appraisal of the situation that encompasses the phenomena one is trying or ought to explain. These different starting points involve different questions, assumptions, and kinds of knowledge. Thus, Babbitt's work does not constitute a challenge to the value of standpoint theory, but rather points to its incompleteness.
V. Conclusion

In chapter 1, I discussed the so-called Bias Paradox. That is the paradox that faces many perspectival epistemologies, but particular faces feminists who want both to assert the reality of women's oppression, and the impossibility of aperspectival knowledge.\(^{46}\) The paradox comes in when we see bias as rampant, and yet want to endorse some biases over others. If we criticize masculinist work for being masculinist, how can we then applaud feminist work for its objectivity? Antony and Campbell directly aim to address this paradox by reaffirming the norm of truth as adjudicating between biases. Those biases which are truth-conducive are to be endorsed; those biases which are not truth-conducive are not to be endorsed. I showed some problems with this position, namely that it does not exhaust the normative force of attributions of “good science” and “bad science”. I considered social epistemologies that offered social accounts of objectivity, or good knowledge practices. I showed how the norm of truth, even when aspiring to that norm allowed for value-driven research, was insufficient for objectivity. The shortcoming was not that values were included, but that they were subordinated to the norm of truth.

In this chapter, I have discussed standpoint theory, and its resources and problems. Standpoint epistemology involves an explicit attention to the asymmetrical access to the truth provided by power-laden social locations. Those with less power, it is argued, are able to see more. This approach is able to resist the challenges to the views of chapter 1, because an analysis of power and the values that are intertwined with power relations are understood as epistemically salient. Thus, there is no presumption that truth is the only

\(^{46}\) For the way in which all perspectival epistemologies may face some version of the paradox, see Heikes (2004).
In her strong objectivity, she discusses standpoints, which are achieved social locations from which more is visible. Thus, occupying a marginal perspective with critical self-reflection positions you to be a better knower than those who are not so situated because you are not only able to note the same phenomena others are, but also see the workings of power. This need not be a natural perspective—with work, privileged people can take up many aspects of a marginalized position. There were problems with this approach. The main problem in relation to the bias paradox involves identifying when someone occupies a standpoint. I have addressed a few examples that I find quite compelling. Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks both write convincingly of the struggle that has enabled their “double visioned,” or “outsider within” perspectives, and both have theorized the advantages and limitations of this vision. To deny that they occupy some kind of black feminist standpoint which can shed light on the workings of power and which is harder for those of us with different or more privilege requires an unwarranted skepticism.

The skepticism also requires denying the successes of feminist research. These successes can be understood in truth-conducive terms—Campbell in particular addresses examples of successful feminist research (1998, 28). However, these successes are understood more thoroughly by keeping the issues of power in the foreground, rather than understanding them as subordinated to the norm of truth. Babbitt's discussion of the DIG project as well as of self-respect show how the situation of power imbalances is important for understanding phenomena.
I do not think standpoint theory has solved the bias paradox. However, it offers some convincing grounds for diffusing the worry. There is no principle that guarantees we will identify all and only those instances when groups or individuals occupy valuable standpoints, but nor should we expect this kind of certainty of our epistemology.

Nevertheless, standpoint theory is itself fairly silent as to how the broader research community (or knowledge productive community more generally) may encourage and benefit from the knowledge more readily available to marginalized standpoints. This is because, in theorizing standpoints, the emphasis is on the increased knowledge of the workings of power. This increased knowledge is taken as sufficient for explaining all of our knowledge practices. However, I showed, through my discussion of Babbitt’s work, that standpoint theory only uncovers some of the issues of epistemic importance, because although understanding the workings of power is (often) a precondition to pursuing knowledge productive practices, it is not the whole of it. Thus, meeting the requirements of standpoint theory will be important for objectivity, particularly where power imbalances are epistemically salient. However, strong objectivity is not sufficient for objectivity because it does not say enough about the structure of inquiry. Engaged self-reflexivity is essential, but it is not sufficient. It is with these advantages and shortcomings of standpoint theory in mind that I turn to the view developed by Helen Longino.
Chapter 3: Critical Contextual Empiricism

Dynamic objectivity aims at a form of knowledge that grants to the world around us its independent integrity but does so in a way that remains cognizant of, indeed relies on, our connectivity with that world. In this, dynamic objectivity is not unlike empathy... The struggle to disentangle self from other is itself a source of insight (Keller 1995, 117).

Dynamic objectivity, or the view that we pursue knowledge of the world on the basis of recognizing our interconnection with the natural and social world, is one of the germinal feminist conceptions of objectivity. Evelyn Fox Keller, scientist and feminist, developed this view through a consideration of the history of scientific metaphors, which relied on gendered images of detachment and violence. Helen Longino, feminist epistemologist of science, finds Keller's dynamic objectivity appealing, but not sufficient for objectivity (1993, 108). What is appealing in Keller's work is her ability to look beyond the philosophical arguments which reproduce the problematic detachment encouraged on some visions of science. Longino acknowledges the love and passion that fuels scientific inquiry, and aims to articulate a better, healthier, more humble and less harmful love of knowledge that will allow us to undermine knowledge as domination. Her account of objectivity aims to offer guidelines for incorporating dynamic objectivity and more sincere humility into our knowledge practices.

Longino's work is promising in two ways. In the first, she offers helpful clarifications of the conceptual tangles that have contributed to underestimating the influence of social values in reasoning. In a second and related way, these clarifications of the concepts of knowledge, rationality, and objectivity allow us to develop a positive,
liberatory understanding of objectivity. She does not always pursue the radical potential of her work, but that potential is what I want to borrow for my own account.

In this chapter, I proceed in three broad sections. In the first, I address some issues in the background of Longino's view and consider how she disambiguates key concepts. Second, I consider Longino's view in detail. Third, I consider the challenges and potential of her view.

I. Critical Contextual Empiricism: The Fundamentals

Critical contextual empiricism is exactly what the name suggests: an epistemology that defends contextualism, a modest empiricism, and the centrality of criticism. It is able to tackle the dual task of feminist philosophy of science. The dual task involves the eradication of masculinist ideologies and the development of the liberatory potential of the sciences (1993, 125). As I discussed in Chapter 1, such a dual goal is said to face the bias paradox. In particular, it is said that a social, contextual approach leaves no room for a normative epistemology, since it is based upon subjective preference (under cover of politically motivated goals). Without a normative epistemology there is no room for objectivity. Longino argues that this purported problem emerges from reliance on a false dichotomy between the rational and the social. In The Fate of Knowledge, Longino addresses this dichotomy, and shows how an account of objectivity can be preserved. She does this by locating objectivity—or, as she sometimes calls it, epistemic acceptability or justifiability—in the social practices of knowledge production. A practice is objective to the extent that the community incorporates criticism, responds to criticism, develops
public standards, and fosters a tempered equality of authority (2002, 129-134). Unlike feminist standpoint theory, however, this view is not explicit in incorporating power relations.

1. Undermining a Distinction: The Rational Social Dichotomy and Knowledge

Longino uncovers the false dichotomy between the rational and social at the heart of the great impasses of the Science Wars of the past few decades. Both the philosophers and sociologists of science who have engaged in the Science Wars are said to assume there is a dichotomy between the rational dimension and the social dimension. This means they assume a separation between the normative force of uncovering ideally rational justificatory practices, and the empirical weight of accepting how knowledge is actually pursued. Sociologists of knowledge begin from the side of description of social practices, and make their generalization about scientific practice and knowledge on this basis. Philosophers begin from the normative side, addressing the ideal conditions for justification, and then turning to actual practices. Each side thinks the other is radically missing the point. Longino argues that the various players are talking at cross-purposes, particularly in deploying different conceptions of knowledge.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge-productive practices</th>
<th>Empirical (Sociological)</th>
<th>Normative (Philosophical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PPₜ: processes or practices that succeed in fixing belief or in having some content accepted in some community.</td>
<td>S accepts that p, and p is accepted in C, and S's acceptance of p is acceptable in C.</td>
<td>S accepts that p, and p is true, and S's accepting that p is an outcome of or accords with PPₛ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing</td>
<td>Contentₛ: what is accepted in some community C or the outcomes of PPₛ in community C.</td>
<td>Contentₛ: the subset of truths which is known (whether by an individual or by a community).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Longino distinguishes three senses of knowledge: knowledge as practice, as the state of the one who knows, and as the content of the knowledge claim. Empirically minded social scientists typically begin from practices and understand the other two senses as derivative. For them, knowledge is whatever is considered knowledge by a community of practitioners (Longino 2002, 80). These practices are in fact social, and hence knowledge must be social. The second sense of knowing is built on the basis of this first sense, so our epistemic subject is said to know if she believes what is accepted in her community. Similarly, the content that is called knowledge is whatever the content of the knowledge productive practices is.

For the philosophers, by contrast, knowledge is seen typically as the content of the knowledge claim, and the other senses are derivative. But the differences are greater than this simple changed starting point. The social scientists take these different senses of knowledge under an empirical description. Philosophers are interested in normative accounts, where knowledge is an honorific term typically indicating success of content. This follows from the view of epistemology as having been driven by the ideal of approaching the complete truth. If a complete account is the main goal, knowledge as content is the main sense of knowledge, and the other senses are derivative.  

So, philosophers seek to establish the conditions under which we can say of someone that she has certain truths. This leads us to the second sense of knowledge, that someone accepts a

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47 Reproduced (with minor changes for clarity) from Longino (2002, 84).
48 This may sound outdated, but see Schmitt's review of Solomon's work, in which he insists that "scientists prefer [seeking a single theory], as shown by the fact that theoretical science continues to seek a single theory with all the empirical successes whether or not this increases the total quantity of empirical success (Schmitt 2007, 496).
claim which is true, and which is an outcome of the first sense of knowledge, namely practices of belief acquisition that justify belief.

It is worth noting that in taking epistemology as beginning from the content sense of knowledge, we emphasize knowledge as a possession, as the outcome of inquiry. Doing this privileges those practices that produce facts. Epistemologists have long been attentive to the desire for significant facts, and to the exploratory research and inquiry that is necessary. However, emphasizing fact-finding makes us insufficiently critical in our epistemology, because the critical phase of inquiry can be seen as a distraction from the aim of acquiring truths, rather than as part of increasing understanding. Longino doesn't discuss this, but it is on the basis of thoughts like this that she emphasizes knowledge in the sense of knowledge-productive practices.

Longino develops an account of knowledge that does not reduce to one sense of knowledge, however, and that incorporates the locatedness of knowing subjects (2002, 89). She considers the contemporary analytic philosopher's classic definition—of having appropriately justified true belief—which requires focusing on the conditions that constitute a subject's knowing that something is the case.49 The necessary conditions are treated as being definitive of knowledge, and delimit what is to be counted as knowledge. When this conception of knowledge becomes sedimented, she argues, the particularities of the subject's social and historical location are abstracted, particularly those that are not perceived as necessary for accounting for the subject's possession of true beliefs. The result is that the conditions for knowledge are thought to hold independently of any

49 Beliefs must be appropriately justified, rather than simply justified, to take account of Gettier's counterexamples.
particularities of the subject. This means that the class of things that can be known is quite restricted, namely, whatever will remain certifiable as knowledge across differing contexts and goes against how we are inclined to talk of knowledge more broadly.

The Strong Programme sociologists of science pick up on a different aspect of knowledge. They take knowledge as whatever is deemed knowledge by a community. That is, they deny the distinction between acceptance and warrant. Barnes, Bloor, and Henry are careful to insist that they are not denying that scientists engage with materials and are sometimes able to offer models and theories that yield predictive successes (1996, 33). However, they warn, “we must not treat the contingent, material core of these interactions with the world as the whole story or as giving us the essence of the matter” (ibid.). This warning demonstrates that they do not have room for a normative account of knowledge, that is, an account that distinguishes between accepted opinion and warranted attributions of knowledge, because they do not maintain that the predictive success afforded by theories or models are of greater explanatory significance than any of the social interactions. They are deemed as “contingent” as the particularities of the social interactions. Yet even if we are skeptical that what has often been called knowledge has turned out not to be, or has only been partly right, we are still making distinctions that extend beyond the purely descriptive. In other words, we make normative distinction between more or less warranted assertions, often with great success. The Strong Programme sociologists are not able to take account of this.

Considering how Strong Programme sociologists are firmly on the side of the empirical, from the table above, allows two things to come to light. The first is that
naturalized epistemologists like Antony, Campbell, and Solomon, discussed in chapter one, are firmly on the rational side of the dichotomy. This is because, although they share an attention to the description of our practices with the Strong Programme sociologists, this descriptive aim is subordinated to the aim of making normative distinctions, that is, of sorting knowledge and opinion. The second is that the sociologists are committed to the same dichotomy as the philosophers, since they consider that for a practice to be rational, and hence recommend itself to us as a guideline for future practices, it must ignore social features. On this view, as soon as we countenance social features, we are no longer able to make distinctions between knowledge and opinion.

2. Against the Bias Paradox: Nonindividualism, nonmonism, nonrelativism

Longino argues that those on either side of the rational-social dichotomy view a number of epistemological and metaphysical positions as inextricably linked. In particular, those on the side of the rational link individualism, monism, and nonrelativism, whereas those on the social side link nonindividualism, nonmonism (or pluralism), and relativism. Individualism is the view that individuals know independently of their relations with others. Monism, in this literature, is the view that there is one correct account of the world. Nonrelativism is the position that knowledge is not relative to some desire, circumstance, and subjective preference. The link is such that, according to Longino, a philosopher who has argued for individualism takes this argument as sufficient for rejecting relativism. Longino cites Kitcher as an example, since he takes himself to have refuted nonindividualism with arguments against relativism
(Longino 2002, 51-68, 90; Kitcher 1993). Kitcher argues against relativism by assuming monism. If there is one true account of the world at the end of some long road of a discovery, relativism cannot be true, because there is a fact of the matter as to whether our claims are right or wrong. If relativism is defeated, Kitcher assumes nonindividualism is defeated.

Longino argues that closer consideration of each element shows that they are separable from their habitual linkages. This leads her to prefer nonindividualism, nonmonism, and nonrelativism. This is a particularly helpful set of arguments for situated accounts of knowledge and objectivity because social approaches, metaphysical pluralism, and relativism need to be prised apart in order to avoid the bias paradox. We need to find a way of avoiding relativism without reaffirming the aperspectival subject position that "disappears gender" and other markers of particularity. There have, of course, been many attempts to do this since Antony's paper articulating the bias paradox, but Longino helpfully articulates the conceptual confusion that leads philosophers to take the three positions are enmeshed.50

Longino argues that one's epistemology should not foreclose the possibility of some sort of metaphysical pluralism.51 It is a metaphysical prejudice to assume there must be a world able to be accounted for by one consistent theory. If the preference for monism results from unwarranted presumption, the appropriate attitude would be to accept that pluralism may be the case. However, Longino relies on pluralism more than is reasonable, which I will discuss among other challenges to Longino's view.

51 For further arguments against assuming monism, see Lloyd (1995).
Longino identifies three senses of nonindividualism: wholism, or the view that only the community knows; eliminativism, or the view that the cognitive agent is superfluous since knowledge is contained in publicly available media; “socialism”, or the view that individuals know through their interdependence. Longino defends a version of “socialism”.52 She intends to preserve a conception of the individual, without being committed to an individualist epistemology. I will show, once we have had a closer look at critical contextual empiricism, how there are deeper challenges, unmentioned by Longino, to the project of articulating an acceptable notion of epistemic subjects. This is, in part, why the resources of phenomenology will prove useful. Longino's resistance to wholism, or the view that only the community knows is meant to secure a degree of doxastic autonomy that an individual has vis a vis his community. One of the challenges I discussed through MacKinnon's account of objectivity and objectification, is that if we think of individuals as entirely doxastically conditioned by their community, there is no room for innovation or liberation. This is one of the challenges to wholist approaches to knowledge.53

There are also two comprehensible senses of nonrelativism. One is absolutism, where justification is entirely independent of any context, or is aperspectival. The second interpretation, which Longino adopts, is contextualism. According to contextualism, justification is neither arbitrary nor subjective, but emerges from rules and procedures that are determined within a context of inquiry.54 Though Longino does not discuss this,

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52 This use of “socialism” is hers. I grant that it is awkward, given that the word has a common meaning much different than the one she uses. To keep this anomalous use in view, I put the term in quotations.
53 For a discussion of these problems, see Grasswick's critique of Nelson, who holds such a view (Grasswick 2004, Nelson 1990).
54 Longino offers a third interpretation, which I suspect is offered more for symmetry than clarity, because
contextualism need not prevent us from taking rules from one context and finding uses for them in other contexts. The point, however, is that they need to be recontextualized, rather than simply applied across contexts. It is important the we preserve some possibility for transcending some context, or else objectivity will fail to have any normative force. As Scheman discusses, it is particularly imperative for feminists to think that feminist claims can have normative force beyond our knitting circles and guerrilla groups (2001).

II. Critical Contextual Empiricism

1. Knowledge: Observing, Reasoning, and Justifying

Before moving ahead, let me summarize the main points this far. Longino distinguishes between three interrelated senses of knowledge and how they are conceptualized by philosophers and by sociologists. These are (i) knowledge as practice, which includes causal or justificatory processes, (ii) knowledge as a state of an individual, bearing a relation to the appropriate causal patterns or justifications, and (iii) knowledge as content, either as what is accepted in a community or what is true. Longino argues that by socializing cognition, we are able to build a normative account of knowledge that is at the same time answerable to the most important aspects of the sociologists' understanding of knowledge. There are two main aspects to her attempt to socialize cognition. In the first, she argues that one of the hallmark activities of the

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it is not useful. The third interpretation is the view that justification is either impossible or unnecessary. It is unnecessary if we have some kind of intellectual intuition such that we can simply intuit the rightness of our views and do not need to establish their rightness. Justification is impossible if we are stuck with relativism—since we will not be able to surmount the narrow confines of inquiry to offer justification
scientist—observation—is social whereas it has often been assumed to be solitary. Her sense of observation is quite inclusive, and so is compatible with a practice-centered approach to scientific knowledge, as opposed to a "theory obsessed" approach. The second addresses reasoning, which is the other hallmark activity of the sciences. Longino addresses both constructive and justificatory reasoning.

A complex map emerges here. Though Longino is not explicit about it, observation and reasoning are the typical activities of the scientist, and so constitute her sense of knowledge productive practices. Thus, Longino's views on observation and reasoning constitute her views on the first sense of knowledge, knowledge as practice. Her views on epistemic agency, which she addresses next, map onto the second sense of knowledge, as a relation or state of having knowledge. Her account of "conformation" is meant to replace the problematic notion of truth, and accounts for the content sense of knowledge. The three senses are only analytically separable, and in any instance of knowledge, we typically find all three senses. For example, conformation is sensitive to the goals of inquiry, and epistemic agents are conceived in their engagement in knowledge productive practices.

Consider how observation may be a social activity. Longino offers an example from lab studies, wherein several molecular biologists are identifying the constituents of a sample of DNA (Longino 2002, 100). At the beginning of discussion, the sample is seen as supporting a variety of readings, but eventually one reading is preferred. This change is not the result of any change in the object of study—it is still the same sample—but

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55 See Hacking 1983 for reasons to resist the theory focused philosophy of science.
results from the interaction between scientists. While Longino does not address the issue here, worries about epistemic authority raise their heads when power relations can affect the discursive practices in the lab. For example, having a well established, forceful researcher in the group may silence others who would have made fruitful contributions to the discussion on observation. The point of Longino's example from the lab is that, in this case at least, observation was honed in interaction.56

Reasoning is similarly social. Longino distinguishes reasoning from mere calculation and notes both the constructive and justificatory senses of reasoning (2002, 103). The constructive sense involves combining ideas or information to produce new ideas. The justificatory sense involves establishing the plausibility of the ideas. This is a very broad account of constructive reasoning and justification. A better way of accounting for these activities is to address the complexities of distinguishing the context of discovery and the context of justification. Longino aims to distinguish the kind of reasoning appropriate to the context of discovery, i.e., the constructive reasoning, and the kind of reasoning that goes on in the context of justification.

2. Background Assumptions and Justificatory Reasoning

Longino's argument is that "justificatory reasoning gets its point in a social context, a context of interaction among individuals rather than of interaction between an individual and the object of her cogitations" (2002, 103-104). Different kinds of considerations count as reasons in different practices. For example, in the empirical

56 Recall Grandy's socialization of observation sentences, as mentioned in chapter 1, where an observation sentence is an easily decidable sentence for some community.
Longino is particularly concerned, observational and experimental
data are the right kinds of considerations. Longino has a broad account of what can be a
reason and doesn't want to restrict observations to observation sentences, but includes
maps, models and the like. Consequently, reasons need not be propositional.

Longino argues that the assignation of evidential relevance of data to a hypothesis
relies on background assumptions, both substantive and methodological. Some of these
background assumptions are the ones Pierre Duhem had in mind in articulating his
underdetermination thesis. Inquirers make methodological assumptions about their
instruments and substantive assumptions about how correlated observational data points
to causation (Longino 2002, 126). The interesting point that supports an engaged
epistemology is that the assumptions are not always, or even typically, innocent of social
values. Social values involve some sort of substantive orientation to the world. Assuming
the accuracy of your telescope no longer involves controversial value-laden
assumptions. By contrast, in Galileo’s time, entertaining the possibility that the
telescope indicated that the moon was mountainous rather than spherical and perfect
required a reorientation toward the nature of the heavens. Early observations of the moon
suggested an affinity between the mountainous earth and the mountainous moon. Now,
we could reply that the telescope was precisely the tool that uncovered others’ faulty

Of course, we can always construct a scenario where someone’s social values intervene on their
appraisal of materials. Suppose someone hated the Swiss, and supposed her Swiss telescope was
inaccurate because the Swiss produce shoddy equipment. While this kind of value-laden assumption is
more common than we suppose, our assumptions about our tools are nevertheless distinguishable in
some meaningful sense from more routinely value-laden assumptions. Jerome Bruner’s account of
narrative is useful here: we only narrativize events when something out of the ordinary occurs. In this
case, we only offer up our prejudices as explanations of equipment failure when the equipment fails to
meet our expectations, and seems to require an account of the failure (1990). Otherwise, we just carry
on. Our anti-Swiss telescope user usually does not conjure up her anti-Swiss sentiments when the
telescope is working well.
value-laden assumptions, namely that the heavens were not explicable in the same terms as the earth was. But the interesting point is that the assumptions at work in the early days of developing the telescope were adjusted bit by bit. The social, religious background assumptions were adjusted at the same time as assumptions about the tool were—there was a *va et vient* of value adjustment. Moreover, our inclination to say of the telescope that it did not involve value-laden assumptions is telling: if it's *right* or *accurate*, then there are no values involved; values only come into the picture to explain failure. The a priori move to think about values as operative only where there is a cognitive failure is unwarranted.

Moreover, the insights of standpoint theory from the last chapter lend support to the inclusion of values in constructive and justificatory reasoning. In order to make sense of the successes of some feminist science, we need to incorporate a positive role for values. Second, we cannot make sense of the epistemic role of power relations unless we incorporate values. We will be unable to account for the development of questions and the appraisal of situations unless we acknowledge that social values are descriptively and normatively present in much research.

Where the subject matter of research relates to humans or to any matter that admits of anthropomorphism, the case for the constitutive role of social values is particularly clear. Consider assumptions about the Australopithecine remains named Lucy. She was declared a woman because she was small in stature, and had a broad pelvis for giving birth to big-brained babies. However, there is no other skeleton from the time to compare her stature with, and humans didn't have big heads until a few million years later, and her
hips weren't that broad after all (Schiebinger 1999, 126-127). In another episode in paleoanthropology, two sets of footprints, one large and one small, were taken as evidence of a heterosexual couple rather than as evidence of adult and youth, or some other pairing. Here, the assumptions are about the nuclear family and about humans' morphology (127). One may want to simply eradicate these assumptions and stay silent where there is insufficient evidence. In paleoanthropology, however, there simply are not enough remains to warrant an evidence-based consensus. This is why the orthodoxy is that it is a "softer" science. However, by looking at the limitations of evidence, the practice draws attention to the many layers of learning that occur as a result of a certain practice. For example, we don't simply learn about the human and cultural remains and the possible social structures at the time, but also about our presumptions and hopes, our research tools and priorities, and about our interpretive practices. The insight of feminist epistemologies, and about Longino's attempt to include social values among the legitimate background assumptions in research, is that more counts as epistemically salient. If we acknowledge that background assumptions affect our research, we will look at those background assumptions, and see that we learn about more than the subject matter at hand. That is to say, in developing feminist or women-centred paleoanthropological theories, more is brought to light than the remains themselves: the assumptions of previous theories are brought to light, and their place in a broader social context.

Despite often being invisible, the values in background assumptions are

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This should be unsurprising: it is what we tell children when they claim learning math and biology will be useless.
articulable and thus are public. They are often invisible because they belong to particular groups, and so can fade into the fabric of our everyday lives. Yet in being public, they are open to challenge, as are the observations and hypotheses of research. Longino provides some argument for how the values can be uncovered and disputed in her paper "Gender, Politics, and the Theoretical Virtues" (1995). In this work, Longino takes up the traditional cognitive values that enter into reasoning without undermining the objectivity of theory choice, as Kuhn argued (1977).

The traditional values according to Kuhn are accuracy, simplicity, consistency, breadth of scope, and fruitfulness. These values close the gap noted by underdetermination arguments. Scientific theories are chosen because they are not compelled by data. If they are chosen, how can they be objective? Kuhn argues that objectivity is preserved because these values admit of judgment. As Longino puts it, "they function as virtues, qualities of a theory, hypothesis, or model that are regarded as desirable and hence guide judgments between alternatives" (1995, 385).

Kuhn never supposed his list was definitive. It certainly has a great deal of merit, and we can find countless examples of these values in use. Longino argues, however, that these cognitive values which are constitutive of the sciences and which epistemologists have finally come around to, cannot be as neatly contrasted with what Longino earlier called contextual values—e.g. a preference for feminist assumptions, or other more explicitly social values, which may vary from context to context. She argues that Kuhn's cognitive values sometimes cover up contextual background assumptions, without defending them. Kuhn's values have been defended on the grounds that they are
 conducive to truth. But, Longino wonders, “if an alternative set offers grounds for accepting theories or models that do just as well as those validated by traditional standards at organizing and generating explanations of the phenomena, then this argument is shown to be hollow” (1995, 386). Perhaps Kuhn's list is often truth-conducive, but Longino argues convincingly that we should not suppose it always is. Further, my discussion of the hypothermia experiments from Chapter 1 shows that even if they are typically truth-conducive, this is not sufficient to make them definitive of epistemic value. That is, even if the values guiding choice of theories or models is truth-conducive, this does not exhaust the scope of what is of epistemic value. Unethical research is bad as research not simply if it fails to give us knowledge.

Longino offers the following set of values: empirical adequacy, novelty, ontological heterogeneity, complexity of relationship (among constituents under study), applicability to current human needs, and diffusion of power. Empirical adequacy of data and hypotheses is a value shared by both traditional scientists and liberatory scientists. Nevertheless, empirical adequacy is a central virtue, if not indefeasible. It is central to any account of objectivity since it is the point at which method overlaps with conformation; it's where we get our "reality hook", however modestly we conceive of that hook. Yet on its own, empirical adequacy is not able to specify which range of data or considerations is relevant.59

The third value of novelty "pulls in the opposite direction" of internal and external consistency. The value of external consistency holds that new theory should fit with

59 Unlike the other theoretical values, empirical adequacy is quite similar to accuracy. Longino finds that stressing empirical adequacy rather than accuracy emphasizes the role of goals of research in determining what counts as adequate, by contrast to accuracy.
accepted theory. By valuing novelty, we mark our suspicion that current frameworks are
either not up to the task of explaining the phenomena we want explained, or, more
strongly, that current frameworks encode androcentric (or other oppressive) values that
have been invisible.\textsuperscript{60} One example is of the role of the egg in conception. Through the
1970s, conception was understood as resulting from the active sperm penetrating the
passive egg (Schiebinger 1999, 145). In the 1980s, research took a different turn, when
Gerald and Heide Schatten portrayed the egg as an active agent as well, directing the
growth of microvilli—fingerlike growths on its surface—which tether and direct the
sperm. The growth of microvilli was documented in 1895, but was not explained for
about eighty years. Thus, we can make sense of the insufficiency of empirical adequacy
to entirely determine research, since evidential relevance depends on certain background
assumptions. In this case, the assumption that some particular features of the egg need not
be accounted for in an explanation of conception was ignored for several decades. We can
also make sense of the value of novelty. In the explanation of conception through the
seventies, the passivity of the egg and the activity of the sperm fit with broader theories
of gender. Men and the masculine are active, and women and the feminine are passive.
However, a new set of background assumptions yielded a different result: there is likely
to be more reciprocity in conception, just as women need not be thought of as passive.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} We can grant that novelty is not always to be preferred. Explaining the nature and role of hormones in
human behavior will not best be answered by a performance of superb balloon twisting, however novel.
However, that (some instances of) novelty are unfruitful does not mean it cannot or does not act as a
constitutive value in some scientific research.

\textsuperscript{61} Interestingly, the insistence on the egg as active has received feminist criticism for encoding masculinist
values of activity. We want to see the egg as active because we agree with traditional values that activity
is preferable to passivity. Thus, the feminist scientists who uncovered the active role of the egg may,
themselves, have been guided by First-wave feminist values of inclusion in a man's world. The
emphasis on equality diminishes the role actually played by the egg (Bonnie Spanier, in Schiebinger
1999, 146). This third phase indicates how complicated the relation between gender assumptions and
The value of simplicity is roughly contrasted with the value of privileging ontological heterogeneity. Medical researchers assumed until the 1990s that men and women would react similarly to drugs and dosages. Here, the value of simplicity was working in the background, where "the human being" was taken as the appropriate level of ontological generality. As a consequence, only men were studied. The assumption that this made no epistemic difference was mistaken. Drugs such as Valium (and about half the drugs tested in a General Accounting Office study of 1992) were never tested on women, though 2 million women per year take Valium. Women are typically prescribed drugs at dosages set for men's average weights and metabolism. Yet we now know that, e.g., acetaminophen, a common ingredient in many pain relievers, is eliminated less well in women—at about 60 percent the rate for men, which increases the risk of overdosing for women (Schiebinger 1999, 113-118). In this case, operating under the value of ontological heterogeneity, where we don't assume that the “human being” is the appropriate ontological category, would have improved studies. Longino uses the example of economic analysis, where the head of the household is taken to be the main economic actor. This model assumes the normality of the nuclear household and that the interests of the other members of the household share the same interests as the head.62

There are similar points made regarding a preference for complexity of interaction versus simplicity or breadth of scope. Traditionally, researchers have sought a dominant mechanism that can uniquely explain a wide range of phenomena, to the exclusion of research is, how historically located it can be. Perhaps this new set of assumptions will lead to new insights into conception. Nevertheless, it shows how novelty can lead to insight in research.

62 However, preferring ontological heterogeneity is not scientifically or ethically foolproof. Research into “racial” differences in intelligence point to a problematic differentiation (Flynn 1999, Gould 1992).
approaches that favor interaction. Margaret Lock’s work on menopause and what she terms “local biologies” is instructive (2001). Lock notes that the majority of clinical researchers and physicians assume that biological changes associated with menopause are universal (494). In her research on reported symptoms in Japan, Canada, and the United States, Lock has found that Japanese women report far fewer and different symptoms than in North America. Moreover, the incidence of diseases linked with being post-menopausal differ considerably as well (497-500). Lock considers the possibility that these variations are the result of differences in the medicalization or in the reporting of symptoms, but these differences are not able to account for the results obtained by her study. Thus, she argues that menopause needs to be understood in terms of “local biologies” which are able to reflect the different nutritional, social, and physical environments women live in. Thus, Lock calls for a greater attention to the complexity of interaction of biology and environment than is typically assumed or pursued.63

Longino also includes the values of applicability to human needs and diffusion of power, which appear more pragmatic than obviously epistemic. Though Longino doesn’t put it like this, the pursuit of truth for its own sake can be deferred by other concerns, such as finding better ways to eliminate hunger or promote health. The value aims at a pragmatic end, but one that requires increased knowledge of some kind to enable us to achieve the end. With the value of diffusing power, some feminists have sought the

63 By contrast, appeals to differences among the natural development of infants and children in different parts of the world—i.e. assuming that “child development” was too general a level of ontological specificity—was wielded in order to justify insufficient health and nutrition care for children. In this case, work by biologist Cuberto Garza and others, showing that differences in development are entirely the result of differences in treatment has been essential for clearing space to pursue more just treatment of children throughout the world (2009).
inclusion of practices like midwifery as scientific practices. It is possible to do this
without sacrificing the higher percentage of live births that followed the medicalization of
childbirth. However, these improved numbers have been paired with a marked disregard
for the comfort and agency of the woman. Other measures could include promoting
health by preventive measures rather than privileging high tech intervention (1995, 389)
and similar such practices.

Longino acknowledges that the values offered above might not, in every context,
further feminist ends. However, under current conditions, she maintains, it is clear that
they would enable us to reveal gender and make women's activities visible in a way that
the traditional list of values has been less likely to do, and this is a hallmark of a feminist
theory (1995, 391). While we may think that Kuhn's list, if reinterpreted, could satisfy the
demands Longino's list satisfies, this does little to undermine the worth of considering a
new list in order to prompt us to reconsider how certain cognitive values are deployed in
defense of conservative science. To fail to consider the potentials of a new list can
indicate an uncritical allegiance to Kuhn's list in its habitual interpretation, which itself
points to the need for a new means of generating reflection and discussion. Whether or
not her list must supplant Kuhn's, it gives us reason to see the cognitive values as
regularly encoding socio-political values in ways that have typically been invisible to
those deploying them.
3. Critical Contextual Empiricism and Objectivity

Longino offers a clear articulation of her position:

I've argued for a view I call contextual empiricism—while experience (experiment, observation) constitutes the least defeasible legitimator of knowledge claims in the sciences, the evidential relevance of particular elements of experience to hypotheses is mediated by background assumptions operating at many levels. What controls the role of background assumptions is interaction among scientists, interaction consisting in criticism of assumptions involved in thinking a given hypothesis plausible, of assumptions involved in the application of particular methods to the solution of particular problems. To be successful in uncovering such assumptions, criticism must proceed from a variety of points of view, ideally as many as are available (1995, 384).

The value of scientific claims of knowledge will be at the level of the community rather than at the level of the individual. In this respect, her account is more deeply social than many others. For example, Goldman (1999) and Kitcher (1993, 2001) both identify social factors as relevant to epistemology, but it is the effect of the social dimension on the individual reasoner that interests them. Instead of looking at the social conditions that encourage or enable an individual reasoner to make objective claims, Longino identifies social processes that "transform the subjective into the objective" (2002, 129).64

According to Longino, there are four social conditions that make inquiry objective. They are: (1) venues for and (2) uptake of criticism, (3) public standards that are agreed upon by the defender and critic of a theory, and (4) tempered equality of authority. (1) and (2) require that criticism be afforded a more prominent place in scientific discourse, and that researchers be attentive to relevant criticism, and be willing to modify their views as a result. Perhaps this sounds quite simply like a reiteration of the injunction that scientists should be rational, and one of the hallmarks of rationality is

64 Longino uses “objectivity,” “epistemic acceptability,” and “undergoing transformative criticism” interchangeably.
being able to defend one's view against criticism. It shares in that traditional injunction, but Longino's requirement is stronger in two respects. In the first respect, what will count as a relevant criticism must be addressed. Thus, venues and uptake should include discussion about relevant types of criticism. It will certainly involve more than the scientist has traditionally thought, as background assumptions are opened to discussion. The second respect in which it is a stronger claim is that an agonistic model of criticism and defense is undermined. Longino is committed to people being more open to the possibility of being mistaken, that is, to their not being wedded to defending their view to all comers.

The norm of public standards addresses the commonplace that for genuine disagreement, there must be a point of contact from which to identify disagreement. That is, there must at least be some "shared referring terms, some principles of inference, and some values or aims" held in common in order to avoid the charge of incommensurability. Longino notes that this will be easy enough within one community, since a community is partly defined in terms of commonalities, and notes that across communities, "effort is required to identify commonalities and produce agreement or disagreement" (2002, 130). This effort, she indicates in a footnote, will be no simpler than cross-cultural communication ever is. While she claims that it would take her too far afield to attempt to exhaustively specify a method for achieving cross-cultural discourse—and we could not really hope to do it a priori—this footnote fails to capture the way in which commonalities must often be achieved rather than identified.

The grounds for supposing that scientific work may be improved by spending
time learning other pursuits is suggested in work like Evelyn Fox Keller's, where she asks us to imagine what a science might be like that did not operate mainly with military metaphors. She argues that the kind of metaphors operative in science are tied to the images of a given society. Science contains “the vivid traces of a reflected self image” (Keller 1995, 70). In twentieth century science, the overarching metaphors are of dominance and control, particularly with a military flavor. This is unsurprising since a great deal of scientific knowledge has been gained as a result of explicitly military research programs, and defense monies fund even more research. But what, we must ask somewhat rhetorically, would science sound like if we didn't have the overwhelming military concerns? The main point is that, while Longino is right to identify a requirement of shared or public standards, she does little work to flesh out how they can be achieved or often have been achieved. This is a significant oversight since a great deal depends on this norm. Both the liberatory potential and risk of conservatism depend on the articulation of the shared standards.

The fourth requirement is that of a tempered intellectual equality. The equality is tempered, as Longino notes that we are not all in a position to judge of evidence in all domains. For example, I may be well situated to judge of the motivations of large pharmaceutical ventures as a professional critical thinker, yet I am not well situated to evaluate many scientific claims. Others have the expertise that I lack. The essential point is that diversity of perspectives is epistemically desirable, and hence a healthy scientific community will aspire to diversify its members, without expecting that the local comedian be called in to adjudicate between two rival interpretations of observational
data. A modest consequence of this norm would involve affirmative action programs since diversity is itself epistemically valuable. It is epistemically desirable because it creates conditions that make a diversity of criticisms likely. It is not clear from her work how to decide what kinds of diversity are valuable.\footnote{Antony and Solomon and Richardson argue that, while desirable, it is not an epistemic value (Antony 2008, Solomon and Richardson 2005).}

4. Conformation and Objectivity

Longino claims that these criteria are not offered as criteria for determining truth, but for determining legitimate and illegitimate consensus building practices (2002, 131). Longino's approach to knowledge is not as purely procedural as she occasionally makes it sound. She introduces a consequential element with her account of conformation. Whereas the norms of objectivity are meant to create conditions that are hospitable to answering questions about the world, conformation is concerned with the goal of answering those questions. Consider the third sense of knowledge which involves the success of content. The success of the content is at least what marks it off from the content of opinion. Typically, the success of the content has been marked by calling it true, as in "our predictions about the world are successful if they are true." The claim that the cat is on the mat is successful if it is true that the cat is on the mat. This account of success of content works very well for simple statements of fact which are easily ascertainable, but does not work as well with less easily ascertainable claims.

Longino rehearses Nancy Cartwright's arguments concerning the literal falsity of the laws of physics and Ian Hacking's arguments concerning the construction of the
problem and solution of "The population of Paris in 1800." These arguments show two things. The first is some shortcomings of a notion of truth that emerged from philosophical obsession with propositions. The second is that success of content bears a relation to the goal of inquiry. A map is only as good as it is helpful: a map of natural resources is not helpful for finding the trail to the ski lodge. There is no map which is good tout court, but only good relative to some purpose (Longino 2002, 116-118). Thus, insisting upon truth as the success term for knowledge content covers over a number of problems for different kinds of knowledge. The advantage of conformation allows us to consider that historical claims to knowledge, which we would no longer want to ratify, can still be understood as rational in the sense of having conformed to the world as closely as any account at the time. Thus, we don't have to strip every historical period of the honorific "knowledge" simply because we now consider their claims false. Nor, however, are we pushed into talking of knowledge of what is false.

When the norms of objectivity and the ideal of conformation are paired, we get a new set of senses of knowledge that map onto the three senses charted earlier. These are knowledge as practice, as state of a subject, and as content. In the new formulation, to claim knowledge requires both conformation and objectivity. On this account, the normative claim of philosophical accounts is preserved, and the reference to the community of the sociological accounts of knowledge. On this account, too, social features act as a validating rather than corrupting element in knowledge, and hence we

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66 Cartwright argues that the laws of physics are only useful when they are rendered more general and less accurate. Otherwise, the math is unwieldy and useless. Hacking argues that calculating the population of Paris at a given time requires that we be clear about who is to count towards the population—e.g., those who reside in Paris, or those who have trade there?—as well as the statistical tools. For these arguments and a discussion, see Longino (2002, 110-113).
can make sense of the inclusion of social values in reasoning (2002, 122). The liberatory element of her epistemology, i.e., the way of resisting some current claims to knowledge which appear empirically adequate, is carried out by the appeal to the norms of objectivity.

The question now concerns the relation between conformation and epistemic acceptability. Longino is often unclear about this, particularly where she distances her view from Jürgen Habermas's. Habermas develops a procedural, communicative account of truth, where truth is whatever a community that pursues communication without reserve concludes. Longino insists that, unlike Habermas, she offers her norms as criteria of legitimate and illegitimate consensus building practices (2002, 131). Thus, she separates conformation from the norms of objectivity. Elsewhere, however, she claims that meeting the criteria for objectivity is what transforms the subjective into the objective. If this is untethered to conformation (or truth), then she needs to give reasons to think the typical outcome of objectivity is knowledge. If not, it is not clear that she is doing epistemology. It would appear, then, that conformation and objectivity are more closely aligned. This is borne out by considering the interdependence of establishing conformation and epistemic acceptability. Establishing conformation involves establishing epistemic acceptability, or criteria of legitimate and illegitimate consensus building practices. From the other side, establishing epistemic acceptability involves "justification by empirical data," and hence a reference to conformation, as well as requiring the fulfillment of the social norms. The overlap occurs because the degree of

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67 For one version of Habermas' theory of truth, see chapter 1 of Between Facts and Norms (1998).
68 Here, she is addressing the norm of tempered equality of authority in particular.
conformation required in a given practice is determined in part by reference to the goals of inquiry. Pointing in the right direction can be sufficiently conformative when the knowledge productive practice is showing someone the direction of Mecca; it fails to conform if someone with a poor sense of direction is looking for directions across Venice. Thus, while conformation is object-directed, Longino also indicates that it is goal-directed. If it is goal directed, and the goal is partly determined on the basis of social interaction, then conformation and epistemic acceptability are not entirely conceptually separate.

We could try to separate them by claiming that establishing the goal of inquiry, while social, is not social in the same way as the norms of objectivity are. Establishing objectivity is justificatory, unlike establishing the goals of inquiry. Here, it seems like we're back to the distinction between justification and discovery. I established earlier that a thin distinction can be preserved, but the question now is whether the distinction is thick enough to generate different epistemic activities: the activities of determining goals, and the activities of establishing the epistemic acceptability of research. If they are sufficiently different, then conformation and epistemic acceptability are separable, as Longino often suggests. Hoyningen-Huene's lean distinction between discovery and justification, which I adopted above, shows that the distinction is one of taking two different perspectives to knowledge, rather than as picking out separate activities.

There are two issues: one of accounting for answers to questions, and one of accounting for the development of questions. This distinction is Ian Hacking's, from his paper on the inevitability of the results of science, but maps nicely onto Longino’s
distinction between the goal of inquiry and the norms of objectivity (Hacking 2000). Hacking picks up on the notion of a "live" question from William James (68-69). As Hacking articulates it, one of the issues in accounting for scientific knowledge—and, plausibly, for knowledge more generally—is determining not just which answers are right, but which questions are live, or "true-or-false"—i.e., candidates for being thought determinable in a given context and hence worth pursuing. Sorting out which questions are askable has a direct bearing on which questions are answered, and is hence related to answering questions. These questions are decidable in the context of asking for and giving reasons in a social setting that is the hallmark of Longino's account of epistemic acceptability. If we are convinced that I.Q. tests track inherited intelligence, it does not make sense to ask what cultural conditions can improve a group's scores. On Longino's account, it is not only the proposed answers which warrant justification, but the questions (and attendant research programs) as well. 69

The question I've been considering is the sense in which Longino's account of conformation and objectivity are conceptually related. They are certainly distinguishable in terms of their aims. Conformation is directed to the natural or cultural world and to answering questions about the world. The norms of objectivity are directed at establishing the conditions hospitable to raising and answering those questions. The concern was that Longino is incorrect in saying that the norms of objectivity are separable from the goal of conformation because conformation depends upon first establishing the goals of inquiry, that is, it depends on objectivity. I considered whether perhaps these two acts are social in

69 Again, Susan Babbitt's work on the role of imagination in articulating questions is helpful.
different ways, and so Longino could preserve her clear distinction between conformation and objectivity. However, since determining the questions that are answerable—the precondition to seeking conformation—falls under the norms of objectivity, conformation relies on those norms. Thus, conformation and epistemic acceptability are separable in their focus, but they are nevertheless conceptually interdependent. This is particularly clear if we think about the difficulties of sorting the "live questions" from the rest. As several feminists articulate, one of the challenges of feminist theory, is showing that there are legitimate feminist questions to be answered (Babbitt 2005, Frye 1983).

Uncovering these various relations between conformation and epistemic acceptability tempers some of Longino's more radically social claims, such as her claim that "effective critical interactions transform the subjective into the objective" (Longino 2002, 129). The close relation between conformation and objectivity temper this claim because it keeps us from slipping into a coherentism that is untethered to the world. The tether to the world allows Longino to stand up to the criticisms that her work is blindly procedural, as I will discuss below. It also shows that establishing conformation is not immune from social values.

III. Notable Challenges and Potential

Many mainstream epistemologists find Longino's work unwarrantedly extreme (Antony 2008, Kitcher 2002, Solomon and Richardson 2005). Goldman and Solomon argue that Longino's proposals are not defensible within a naturalized epistemology and are too procedural. Antony is critical of Longino's claim that social values can be
properly epistemic values. From the other side, feminists who are suspicious of analytic method, like Lorraine Code, would include Longino's work in their criticism (Code 1995).\textsuperscript{70} I will not pursue this second set of arguments here. Rather, I focus on the charges that critical contextual empiricism is too procedural, pluralist, and local, before considering the potential of the view.

1. Proceduralism

There are two common approaches to epistemology: consequentialist and procedural. In this section, I consider consequentialist challenges to Longino proceduralism. Consequentialist approaches are evaluated on the basis of what the methods produce, be it pragmatic success, or veritistic value. These are aligned with sharply naturalistic epistemologies, where the actual formation of human knowledge is the target. The claim is that because the sciences produce a desirable result, namely knowledge, the methods must be correct, or at least desirable. Proceduralist approaches, by contrast, evaluate the epistemic value of knowledge claims and practices on the basis of their intrinsic merit, that is, the merit of the method is what confers merit on the consequence (Solomon and Richardson 2005, 212-213). One procedural criterion is rationality. Goldman notes that simply appealing to rationality is ambiguous or indeterminate (1999, 76), or in any case problematic. He points out that it is hard to see how a process's rationality is determined independently of appeals to the consequences of reasoning. Goldman assumes that rationality is restricted to formal arguments and logic.

\textsuperscript{70} See also Hoagland's work for a criticism of redeeming rationality. I take it that if we do not pursue questions of rationality, we will not pursue questions of objectivity (2001).
This restriction is unwarranted, and feminists—among others—have been right to work with a broader account of rationality (Babbitt 1995, 2005, Code 2006, Harding 1995, Longino 1990, 1993, 1995, 2002).

In any case, Goldman does not think that Longino has been as proceduralist as he takes her as claiming. Goldman criticizes Longino for the inconsistency of importing consequentialist concerns into her explicitly procedural account, yet applauds these consequentialist moments and reinterprets contextual empiricism along the lines of his reliabilism. Longino addresses the social role of eliminating epistemically problematic partiality and arbitrariness, which Goldman considers is best evaluated along veritistic lines because we value nonarbitrariness and impartiality because they are conducive to truth (Longino 1990; Goldman 1999, 78). However, Longino is not seeking the exclusion of all partiality—a point she established more clearly in later work, which Goldman does not consider (Longino 1993, 1995, 1997, 2002). Hence, this criticism misses the mark by reading Longino’s proposal as being more closely aligned to Goldman’s own work. This fails both as a criticism of her proceduralism and as a rehabilitation of her view along veritistic lines because it demonstrates a misunderstanding of Longino’s view. She is not developing a view that is solely concerned with increasing truth, nor should she be. I showed in my example at the end of chapter one why privileging truth over all other norms was problematic. Though Longino does not explicitly address the possibility of foregoing knowledge, she is sensitive to this issue, as is evidenced by her proceduralism.

However, Goldman is right that Longino’s view is not as proceduralist as she

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71 Goldman refers to Longino’s early work, before she developed the critical aspect of contextual empiricism. Solomon also detects consequentialist moments in Longino’s epistemology, particularly in her criticisms of others (Longino 2002, 167; Solomon and Richardson 2005, 216-217).
claims, and that it benefits from this consequentialism. There is value in seeing Longino as committed to a certain consequentialist epistemology, since it is going to have to be by virtue of consequences that we weed out both offensive and epistemically problematic assumptions. Nevertheless, it is unfaithful to Longino’s work to suppose that we can see her proposals as reducible to enabling the goal of conformation. On Longino’s account of science, the goal is not simply conformation, but conformation in light of other concerns, including pragmatic ones. Unethical research is bad research, not only if it fails to give us knowledge, but on other grounds as well.

Like many others developing liberatory epistemologies, Longino does not spend enough time explicitly addressing the possibility that ensuring just practices of inquiry may impinge on the production of genuinely useful knowledge. For example, a great deal of what we know results from wartime research. Consider how it was only in the battlefields following the French Revolution that doctors discovered that irrigating wounds helped them to heal. This was discovered only when doctors ceased listening to the patients’ wishes, which occurred during wartime. We may deplore the way a patient’s autonomy was undermined, and the war that was the background for innovation, but we regularly appreciate this knowledge. Longino seems satisfied that creating just conditions for knowledge production will have an epistemically positive result, but this is not something she argues for explicitly. Thus, she seems to risk taking her proposals as capable of enabling all the good, wholesome knowledge productive practices and their results, and excluding all and only the bad ones. This optimism is both historically

\footnote{Kitcher, by contrast, is sensitive to this (2001).}
unfounded and conceptually confused. Her view does, however, admit of being fleshed out to cope with this concern, since epistemic acceptability is not just oriented to conformation, that is, to the production or discovery of true claims, but is also oriented towards justice. Her account of objectivity is meant to offer guidelines for what we are willing to accept as reasonable knowledge practices. Since values enter into our reasoning, it is reasonable to include values in our choices about research projects. This is reasonably uncontroversial: most agree that we should not pursue vivisection, or experiment on children if it can cause them harm, or use racialized groups as misinformed test cases for drug trials. What Longino creates room for, however, is counting these value judgments as of epistemic consequence. As such, there is room for supposing that some epistemic practices fall far short of the norms of objectivity, in the sense of being the result of practices that would likely be prohibited if there was a sufficient diversity of moral sentiment among researchers—that is, they fall short of addressing moral criticisms that may result from the tempered equality of authority. If they fall short in this respect, we have reason to forgo some inquiry, and hence to forgo some knowledge. However, I think this possibility that a just epistemology may sometimes preclude knowledge needs to be explicitly stated so that it can be fully chosen. Longino needs to dispute the appropriation of her view to a consequentialist view, where truth is the sole desirable consequence. She should acknowledge that truth is a desirable outcome, as is a more just society. Knowledge practices should not only aim at achieving the norms of objectivity, but should also aim beyond those, at the goals they encode, namely at desirable outcomes.
2. Pluralism

In his review of *The Fate of knowledge*, Kitcher criticizes Longino's strong pluralism as unmotivated. Pluralism is at least the view that the significance of truths depends on us (Kitcher 2002, 555). In Longino's recent work, it is a stronger view, namely that different representations of the same phenomenon may be nonreconcilable (Longino 2002, 207; 2002b, 575). Kitcher accepts the more modest pluralism, where pluralism is explained by the partiality of representation. Like Longino, he appeals to examples of maps. There is no problem in saying that the world is like one map in some respects, and like another map in different respects. He notes that Longino defends a stronger version of pluralism in light of her contextualism. According to Longino's contextualism, determining the truth of statements is dependent on their context, or at least on some context. Thus, if contexts are sufficiently different, there may be irreconcilable accounts of a phenomenon (2002, 94). Kitcher acknowledges this, but takes it as a commonplace. He suspects that Longino is aiming for something more interesting, but cannot determine what it is.

Longino, in her reply to Kitcher's review, states the motivation for her pluralism: she countenances pluralism because she countenances “the possibility of different equally defensible background assumptions facilitating inferences to quire different and irreconcilable, even non-mutually-consistent, representations of what is pre-theoretically identified as the same phenomenon” (2002b, 575). Because justificatory reasoning occurs against the backdrop of assumptions, and because we can imagine different but equally defensible background assumptions, we cannot preclude this strong pluralism. If it cannot
be precluded, then we need to allow room for it. Thus, Longino's stronger pluralism is motivated by the modesty of her view.

3. Local Epistemology

There are other problems with Longino's view that Kitcher has not put his finger on. The problem lies more in Longino's claim that particular values of inquiry only have normative force in communities that have cognitive goals furthered by those particular values (1997, 28). Longino mounts her argument for local epistemology as a response to feminist criticism that her list of feminist theoretical values need not further feminist ends. To preserve them as potentially meeting feminist ends, Longino contextualizes them. Even empirical adequacy, the least controversial theoretical value, requires supplementation by other values because on its own, it cannot determined evidential relevance of acceptable levels of error. Longino argues that it follows from this that “normative epistemology will be local epistemology, i.e. Epistemic norms (apart from general prescriptions like 'establish evidential relevance') will be only locally and provisionally binding” (1997, 33). The challenge here is that Longino neither questions nor defends the trans-contextual normative force of her norms of objectivity. Thus, she seems to condemn critical contextual empiricism to suffer under the bias paradox, after her arguments suggested she was in the clear.

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73 These are the values of empirical adequacy, novelty, ontological heterogeneity, complexity of interaction, applicability to human needs, and diffusion of power.
4. The Potential of Critical Contextual Empiricism

Despite the challenges, critical contextual empiricism has potential, at least as a springboard to a more engaged epistemology that still draws on the insights Longino has drawn from her reworking of mainstream epistemology. Longino developed a proceduralist view and defended local epistemology and pluralism as part of her aim of developing a more just epistemologies, compatible with her feminism (1993, 1997). She built humility into her account by defending local epistemologies and democratized objectivity by including equality of authority among her norms of objectivity. She argued that knowledge must be deemed knowledge by a community, and that communities develop questions on the basis of interests, thus what is ratified as knowledge will be significant knowledge. All of these aims share in the aim of avoiding oppression.\(^74\)

Longino has not been entirely successful at meeting these aims or at satisfying her mainstream community for a series of related reasons. Her proceduralism sometimes goes too far; when she incorporates consequentialist concerns, they are unclear. Her contextualism goes too far; when it does not, it is not clear what she means. She develops these views in light of her democratizing motivations, which I share. However, I think she would have been better to develop further argument in areas where her views are unclear. By incorporating a richer account of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, paying closer attention to the workings of power, and articulating what is required to develop shared standards, she would have given herself the resources to offer a more convincing account of objectivity. These are points I will pick up on in subsequent chapters.

\(^{74}\) This aim is put in clearer focus in the papers with a clearer feminist focus (1993, 1995, 1997) than in The fate of knowledge (2002).
Longino offers insufficient discussion of the nature of subjects and communities. "[A]dherence to some set of standards as regulative of cognitive endeavours constitutes a cognitive community out of a set of individuals" and that there can be subcommunities within a broader community (2002. 145-146). Longino rightly notes that genuine interaction requires a certain diversity of beliefs. In the absence of diversity, there is never an opportunity to alter beliefs on the basis of new reasons. Her claim, however, that "[w]hat identifies a given community as a community is not a set of shared substantive beliefs, but a set of public standards to which community members appeal in critical discursive interactions" is too aprioristic. Communities, including cognitive communities, will be formed in a range of different ways, with a range of different shared assumptions. For example, a philosophy department may well be unified by certain beliefs, but disagree quite dramatically on other beliefs about methods and standards for proceeding. Indeed, it may be hard to imagine there is much of a community since different members often think that their colleagues don't even do philosophy. However, denying that there is a cognitive community seems artificial, particularly on those occasions where the diverse members come together, e.g. for colloquia.75

Moreover, Longino's sense of community and community membership suggests communities are things one opts into, or at least one is satisfied in belonging to.

Nevertheless, Longino is sensitive to the possibility of tension that results from belonging

75 Of course, we are not only drawn together by our shared assumptions, but because we share other things like feelings or experience. Think of people drawn together because they witnessed an atrocity. They may not be able to give a single coherent story about what they saw/know, even though in some sense they are unified (a community) by what they do, individually, know: their individual accounts of what they saw. But they may have common interests that unite them rather than common assumptions or accounts, e.g. a need to share, tell, be reassured, give witness.
to different communities, for example being a member of a scientific community and of a
social group suspicious of knowledge produced by scientific communities (2002, 155).\textsuperscript{76}
She sees this as a potential source of epistemic advantage, which is in line with the views
of standpoint theorists. Multiple community membership allows someone to (at least
potentially) see different points of view on a question, and to introduce criticism which
acts as a new test that a hypothesis or view must pass. If we take membership in multiple
communities as a common situation, we can see that on Longino’s account, individuals
have a fair degree of epistemic autonomy, because multiple membership can enable a
critical perspective. This is an advantage of Longino’s view, since a degree of epistemic
autonomy from a group helps make sense of change. Moreover, in her emphasis on the
advantage of multiple group memberships, she opens up space for considering the
possibilities and advantages of achieved standpoints.

However, I have certain concerns about Longino’s conception of the relation
between the individual and the community. I have already discussed the problems
associated with assuming that shared standards are readily had. A second concern is that
Longino does not explicitly address the power differential in groups, and between groups,
and how this acts as an obstacle to simply implementing the norms of objectivity under
current conditions of oppression. She lays herself exposed to this criticism where her only
consideration of standpoint approaches lies in rejecting Sandra Harding’s call for a

\textsuperscript{76} For example, a black scientist may have the Tuskegee syphilis trials in mind. The Tuskegee Syphilis
study spanned forty years, from 1932 to 1972. In this study, 399 black men from Tuskegee Alabama
who were deemed likely to have syphilis were offered free medical care in exchange for being involved
in the study. However, the aim was to study the progression of the disease, and so treatments were
refused. The study was only ended, in 1972, when its existence was leaked to the press. Incidentally,
very little of any practical benefit was learned from the study.
reflexive epistemology. Reflexivity is insufficient, Longino argues, because self-awareness is insufficient to garner change (2002, 164-165). Instead, she thinks the appropriate reflexivity is the result of the norms of objectivity she articulates. While I agree with her that her norms have a great deal of potential, optimism is stunted by the relatively small space afforded discussion of how to start undermining power relations through employing the norms. In this respect, her work is overly idealizing.

Finally, Longino’s account of subjectivity is inadequate to the task of ensuring better knowledge productive practices. Although Longino incorporates a subject of knowledge who is historically, geographically, and socially located, and who must interact with others in order to act in her cognitive capacity, she makes certain unlicensed assumptions about subjects (2002, 107). She assumes that the subjects have the kind of psychological integrity that enables them to use their multiple group memberships as a resource, rather than being harmed by them. hooks talks about the pain of being unable to find the words, and the joy at being able to share and hear this broken voice in dialogue with her comrades (2004, 153). This harm and struggle is part of what makes hooks able to transform her membership in multiple groups a strength, a cognitive advantage, rather than merely a source of pain or vulnerability. Assuming psychological integrity covers over the work that was required for hooks to come to this greater understanding.

In chapter 2, I discussed how this strength cannot be taken for granted because I showed how the struggle itself constituted part of the accrued insight some have. Recall that in the discussion of self-respect from chapter 2, to see self-respect as a question means that it must have both been lacking and seen as a possibility. In other words, we
cannot assume that epistemic agents have the kind of cognitive unity that will allow them to be masters of their situations in the way Longino does. Indeed, to enjoy the epistemic advantage of multiple community membership, it may be that subjects need to remain outsiders, rather than feel at home in each of the communities. If this is the case, then we need a more thorough account of what kinds of experience are able to yield epistemic insight.

The final two areas that warrant further elaboration concern the workings of power and the development of shared standards, both of which were discussed in the previous chapter. Though Longino is aware of the epistemic impact of power relations, given that her work is feminist in the sense of preventing gender from disappearing from view, it is not clear that her recommendations are able to keep power relations in view. If power relations cannot be kept in view, then they cannot be challenged. This is tied to her thinned notion of requiring public rather than shared standards, which glosses over the challenges of building functional cognitive communities. Different ways of achieving shared standards may reflect and affect subsequent inquiry. Thus, it is not sufficient to stipulate that some shared ground must be found. Rather, a suitably social account of objectivity must incorporate a discussion of the development of these standards.

IV. Conclusion

Before properly concluding this chapter, I want to address the relation between Longino's epistemology for the sciences and a more general epistemology. Longino is explicit that, although she focuses on scientific knowledge, critical contextual empiricism
is a general epistemology. Nevertheless, she does acknowledge that it may be cumbersome to incorporate the features of objective inquiry in some clear cases, e.g. where I state that the teacup is on the table (2002, 208-209). While her point is well taken, one thing that I have been building up over the course of the first three chapters, and which comes into sharp focus in the next chapter, is how many of our mundane knowledge claims and practices warrant more critical analysis. I grant that we cannot challenge every statement everyone makes—that erodes social relationships as quickly as any other annoying habit—but I will show that we should take uncovering the assumptions latent in our claims as possibly, perhaps even ideally, opened to scrutiny. Thus, although Longino has focused exclusively on scientific knowledge in this work, I agree with her general pronouncement that her account of objectivity or laudable knowledge practices is useful in our knowledge practices more generally.

Longino's critical contextual empiricism faces some challenges addressed in feminist standpoint theory. Standpoint theory shows the relevance of a deeper account of the sociality of knowledge. Moreover, it supplies some argument for why some social positions are more likely to yield better or more knowledge of a situation or subject matter. Finally, it offers some conditions necessary for understanding a social position as an engaged standpoint, which Longino does not address. Nevertheless, there are some concerns about feminist standpoint theory, which suggest that we cannot simply add it to Longino's views.77

It seems that an appropriate epistemology cannot do without some conception of

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77 For this approach, see Whitten (2001, 363).
epistemic subjects. Standpoint theory, as I discussed in the previous chapter, shows why
Longino needs a richer account of epistemic subjects, but does not offer that account.
Longino needs a more detailed account of epistemic subjects because we need to
understand how occupying multiple stances can (only sometimes) act as an epistemic
strength. We need to be able to answer the question of what occurs when someone knows
from their location. This is something that the methods of early phenomenology can help
with.

In this chapter, I looked closely at Longino's critical contextual empiricism, and
drew out its many strengths and some weaknesses. Longino dismantles the sharp
distinction between the rational and social approaches to knowledge. She prises apart
some views which typically go together, offering the possibility that we can be
nonmonists, nonindividualists, without being relativists. We can avoid relativism by
adopting a view of knowledge that sees it resulting from conformation to the world, and
from critical interaction, where the interaction follows the norms of objectivity. I have
been particularly interested in defending Longino's norms of objectivity, namely the
existence of venues for and uptake of criticism, shared standards, and a tempered equality
of epistemic authority.

I showed places where Longino must offer further argument, particularly with
regards to her accounts of individuals and of sociality. This is because the norm of shared
standards is both particularly important, and particularly open to misuse and
misunderstanding. Longino recognizes that these norms are provisional, and I think they
form a fruitful basis from which to develop more robust versions of the norms.
In the next chapter, I will develop the resources needed to offer a more cogent articulation of individuals, communities, and the shared standards that are so central to her account of objectivity. I do this by appealing to the methodological tools of early phenomenology, particularly in the late work of Edmund Husserl. Longino’s work—and indeed, much feminist epistemology—is already deeply phenomenological in spirit, so this next step seems a natural one.
Chapter 4: Resources of Husserl's Phenomenology

"It's going to rain tonight."
"It's raining now," I said.
"The radio said tonight."

... "Look at the windshield," I said. "Is that rain or isn't it?"
"I'm only telling you what they said."
"Just because it's on the radio doesn't mean we have to suspend the evidence of our senses."
"Our senses? Our senses are wrong a lot more often than they're right. This has been proved in the laboratory. Don't you know about all those theorems that say nothing is what it seems? There's no past, present or future outside our own mind. The so-called laws of motion are a big hoax..."
"Is it raining," I said, "or isn't it?"
"I wouldn't want to have to say" (DeLillo 1984, 22-23)

In Don Delillo's postmodern novel, White Noise, professor of Hitler Studies and protagonist Jack Gladney often has conflicts with his fourteen year old son, Heinrich. In the episode quoted in epigraph, Heinrich refuses to agree that he can tell it is raining, preferring to defer to the authority of the radio forecasters, much to his father's perturbation. While this episode relies more on common sense than Edmund Husserl, founder of phenomenology, might accept, it nevertheless highlights one of the insights of his phenomenology: our reservations about the reliability of our first person or authoritative evidence should not lead us to affirming skeptical conclusions. Such skepticism covers over the philosophical work that can yield fruitful insights.

As I hope will become apparent over the course of the chapter, a great deal of feminist epistemology is already largely—if unknowingly—phenomenological.\(^{78}\) In

\(^{78}\) Affinities between phenomenological method and other prominent philosophers have been discussed elsewhere. John McDowell is often discussed (Zahavi 2005, 151). Works by Nagel and Putnam are also thought to have affinities with phenomenology (for Nagel, see 1997, especially chapter 2; for Putnam see Zahavi 2004).
particular, I am interested in developing the insight that philosophical inquiry has to proceed in a "zigzag" fashion as Husserl called for, and that we can expect it to be an endless task. The zigzag and the endlessness are a consequence of constantly uncovering presuppositions in order to re-interrogate them. This may sound like a classical foundationalism, but I will address why this is a misunderstanding of phenomenology. Nevertheless, there are some very apt criticisms of Husserl, and while I read his work charitably, I have no intention of whitewashing it. Husserl can be an ally of feminist epistemology, but by no means an unproblematic one.

The goal of this chapter is to show how subjectivity plays a constituting role in knowledge practices and how this leaves residual problems that require attention to intersubjectivity and to the lifeworld. The goal of this inquiry is to establish the equal starting points of subjectivity, the lifeworld, and intersubjectivity. The goal of establishing this is to address the lacunae in Longino's arguments, particularly the inadequacy of her account of the social, of establishing shared standards on the basis of which to mount criticism, and her relative silence on the issue of the relation between the individual and her community.

In the next section, I address some phenomenological preliminaries to set the stage for a more detailed discussion of relevant aspects of Husserl's phenomenology in the subsequent three sections. There, I address three central notions and their relevance for knowledge. The first of these is Husserl's understanding of the lifeworld, that is, of the everyday world of our living and doing. The second is his account of subjectivity and selfhood and the third is his notion of intersubjectivity. Naturally, each of these topics has
warranted book-length treatments, but we can profitably cull the essential elements synoptically, in order then to pull them together and address the relationship between them. After showing this relationship, I will take a moment to address the thorny issue of Husserl's transcendental move. Though many Husserl scholars are untroubled by it, others and most mainstream analytic philosophers simply reject it.\textsuperscript{79} I think it is worth considering the motivation for the transcendental turn, and seeing if there is a way of making sense of it. Following this, I will begin weaving the phenomenological thread back into the main question of the dissertation, namely the nature of a plausible engaged account of objectivity. After this phenomenological foray, I will turn in chapter five, to showing how the phenomenological framework allows us to address the shortcomings of Longino's view, and develop my positive view, friendly to both Husserlian and Longinian intentions.

\textbf{I. Phenomenological Preliminaries.}

There are four interconnected themes in the background of all considerations of Husserl's phenomenology. These are the study of the sense of experiences, the nature of intentionality, the focus on the first personal perspective, and the phenomenological reduction. Robert Sokolowski offers a lucid and concise description of what phenomenology is. It "is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience" (2000, 3) Dan Zahavi adds the reason for this attention to experience: the aim of phenomenology is to critically consider the

claims and assumptions that are presupposed in the positive sciences, which include the human sciences (2003, 44). As Husserl puts it in the Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, phenomenology addresses "questions of how the object ... stands in relation to all the subjective elements which everywhere have a voice in what is taken for granted in advance" (Husserl 1970, 111). With this articulation of the project of phenomenology, we can reformulate the background issues to be discussed as a series of questions.

What does it mean to have an experience? The point of answering this question is not to dispel scientific explanations of phenomena, but to better understand how they stand in relation to the experience as experienced. In other words, phenomenology is concerned with elucidating the sense of appearances. These aren't mere appearances, as though there was a thing in itself behind the appearance. Rather, one claim of phenomenology is that we get beyond the simple dichotomy of being and seeming, because the object is disclosed in its various appearances. This leaves room for deceptive appearance since there are grades in the adequacy of the conditions under which something appears (Zahavi 2003, 53). Appealing to the conditions under which an object appears in order to evaluate the kind of evidence we have of it bears a great deal in common with the notion of objectivity I have been developing. After all, in our experiences, we see, touch, consider, and judge of objects, feelings, and states of affairs. In phenomenology, we consider the sense of these appearings. Typically, when we think of "sense" we mean something strictly linguistic. There is obviously a linguistic

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80 It is worth remembering, also, that Husserl means all of the human sciences when he speaks of science, i.e., all the Wissenschaften. Thus, it is all of the disciplines that make claims to positive knowledge.
dimension to phenomenology—as well as a great deal of work on Husserl's explicit theory of meaning—but Husserlian phenomenology has resisted the linguistic turn. While we certainly articulate our view in language, and rely on language a great deal in our everyday activities, Husserl also wants to uncover the bit of experience that exceeds or precedes language. In his oft cited phrase, we are to go "back to the things themselves." This raises the immediate concern about the distortive effects of our perceptions and interpretations, such that the drive to go back to the things themselves seems naive at best. I leave this concern aside for the moment, since it will be addressed in my discussion of the lifeworld below.

To understand experience, we need to understand how we are located in relation to the objects of our experience. This involves answering two questions: what is the experience of? and who is having the experience? In other words, we need to consider first the nature of intentionality, and second the emphasis on the first person perspective. To understand an experience as intentional is to understand it as directed towards an object. Husserl argues that while not all of our experiences are intentional—for example, sensations and some feelings don't seem to be object directed, like feeling dizzy or seeing red—many of them are. When I love, I love my beloved; when I touch, I touch something; when I admire, I admire someone or something. Of course, I can admire a fictional character, or admire someone it turns out is not admirable. I could have admired Robert Mugabe as he liberated Zimbabwe, and feel a deep sense of betrayal now that I see the admiration as deeply misplaced. Nevertheless, through all the changes that are imaginatively possible, it is still the case that my admiration is directed away from my
consciousness. This is the essential feature of intentionality, namely that it is not intrametal. Husserl took the discovery of the intentional structure of our consciousness to dispel skepticism about the world and about others. If it is the case that our acts of consciousness just are the kinds of things that reach beyond themselves, as Husserl argues, it is a mistake to spend time worrying about whether they can reach beyond themselves.81

Considering the structure of intentionality brings questions of the first person perspective to the fore. If my experiences are overwhelmingly directed outside my consciousness, it is also true that all these appearances appear to someone, in this case to me. This is what makes the distinction between physical objects and experiences clear: any physical objects can exist whether or not I'm in this room to see them, but this is not true of experiences. While objects can, in some cases and for some purposes, such as in the content of the natural sciences, be accounted for from the third person, phenomenology focuses on the experiential side of appearances. The possibility of third personal knowledge, or universal claims, is a discovery, not an assumption. Experiences are characterized by their subjective givenness, their givenness in the first person (Zahavi 2003, 88).82 What distances Husserl's work from an empirical psychology is that he is not interested in simply claiming a small subspace of inquiry for these subjective

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81 This does not mean that there are no problems with understanding consciousness reaching out beyond itself. We may have a good story to tell for thoughts about fictional characters, or mistaken real referents, but the picture becomes more astonishing when we see that Husserl thinks we can intend impossible objects like square-circles or logical impossibilities. Square circles seem to be a limit case, but if we consider the time spent trying to answer unanswerable questions, like the problem of squaring the circle, it seems clear that the people working on the problem were engaged in intentional activity. Thus, however we're going to characterize the intention of impossible objects, it still seems right that most of our conscious acts have the directedness outside of the mind. I thank Will Britt for bringing these issues to my attention.

82 As Zahavi points out, Nagel and Searle also attend to the first person perspective.
manifestations, as part of the objective sciences. Rather, he thinks all inquiry must attend to its experiential aspect, even when we are considering fields whose stock and trade has been third personal knowledge. Moreover, we can’t make the move to think that all avenues of inquiry require psychology, because this imports assumptions about the possibility that empirical sciences can ground inquiry.83

Because inquiry attends to the experiential aspect of our intentions, the distinctions that are drawn in phenomenology do not claim to be ontological distinctions. When we think of two aspects or views on an object—from the front and from the side, let’s say—we are not claiming that there are two objects. There is the one object upon which our attention is turned. Thus, while it may be cumbersome to pursue the many and varied distinctions phenomenologists are renowned for making, these distinctions do not clutter our ontology.

One distinction which may seem confusing in the context of my work on objectivity is precisely Husserl’s distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. As discussed in the first chapter, there are many senses of objectivity, and the one I am interested in shares little in common with the ones Husserl tends to employ. It is not necessary to attempt a catalog and defense of his various usages, but I do want to draw attention to the main distinction of the Crisí. The pairing is typically objective-subjective. By subjective, Husserl means of or relating to the subject. Whatever is

83 The phenomenological point is well exemplified by the problems with Kohlberg’s experiments on the development of moral psychology in children. The study assumed a certain conception of moral reasoning. There were no girls included in the study, and Gilligan’s subsequent study shows that girls reason differently. As Carol Gilligan has shown (in a way that is problematic in its own right, however insightful in some respects), Kohlberg was assuming an unnecessarily narrow conception of moral development. That is, he was taking a certain aspect of moral development as the whole of it (Gilligan 1982).
deemed subjective is relative, i.e., relative to the subject. Thus, something can be relative, and, when we are not working in our phenomenological mood, be \textit{true}. Relative in this case is not opposed to truth, but simply indicates that it bears a relation to some subjectivity. Objective is the opposite. What is objective is simply whatever is at the end of my intentionality pointer: the object of my intention is objective in the sense that it transcends my current act of consciousness. Thus, the square circle, the virtue of wearing paisley, and the apple over there are objective in Husserl's sense. Also, acts of consciousness can themselves be objective when they are not operative, but thematized, i.e. when instead of living through them, I turn my attention to them. I can look at the apple, or I can consider my looking. In the first case, the apple is the object; in the second, the looking is objective.

The next question concerns \textit{how} we are to draw our attention to these features. Thus we arrive at Husserl's notion of the epochē or bracketing, possibly his most central and contentious contribution to philosophical method. To inquire into the core questions of the nature of experience, and what we experience, means that I cannot simply proceed with the assumptions I already have, since these might prejudice me in some problematic way. In particular, since this inquiry, following Husserl's lead, is into the nature of the sciences, it is not sufficient simply to assume they are entirely right and founded. This is why it is necessary to "effect the epochē" of the "natural attitude," or, in other words, the assumptions of our everyday beliefs have to be bracketed. The natural attitude is the attitude whereby we accept the reality and the validity of the world around us. The epochē, whereby we shake loose of our habitual complacency, is markedly different from
Descartes's spirit of doubt, however. We do not doubt our commitment to evolution, gravity, tool use, loving, and caring. Rather, we take a break from our commitment to them. Husserl sometimes talks of detachment, but I think this is a mistaken view, since the epochē is meant to clear the way for the reduction, which is the process of thematizing or theorizing the relation between the world and the subject. That is, the reduction is the name for what goes on when we turn from the simple appearance of phenomena and consider the nature of their appearing to someone. Since the epochē is effected with the goal of turning to subjectivity, it seems not so much that we distance ourselves from our commitments in the natural attitude, as that we sink into them, while bracketing or holding off on our commitment to them. It is a kind of "now hold on a second" approach to our usual attitudes. As Zahavi puts it, the epochē is "a suspension of the natural attitude's assumptions regarding the mode and manner of the world's existence (a suspension that makes this attitude visible as an attitude" (2001b, 4).

Consider an example, to pull these four strands together. Suppose I'm looking at my garden gnome. I look at his front, with his plump, red-cheeked face, and his green suspenders. The front side is present to me, and I intend it unproblematically, provided my eyesight is fine, and the lighting is adequate. The back of the gnome, of course, is absent to me from here. The only aspect of the gnome I currently see is its front. Nevertheless I intend the back of the gnome, since when we intend or think of an object, we think of the aspects which are present, and the aspects which are absent. As with other phenomenological distinctions, these are as agnostic of ontological commitments as

84 I thank Mark Sentesy for this helpful way of thinking about the epochē. However, see Husserl's discussion of being above the givvenness of the world (1970, 150).
possible. That is to say, when we distinguish between the present profile or aspect of the gnome, and the absent profile, we are not making claims to existence and non-existence of profiles, or even of gnomes.

We don't usually have to think about intending the absent side, but we can notice the intention when we're surprised by what we find. Suppose I move around to the back of the gnome, and find that his back is a different color than I remember. This interrupts my expectation, and can shift my attitude towards the perception of the gnome. Whereas before I was taking the gnome to appear as he always has, now I look at him divorced from my earlier expectations. I turn my attention to what he actually looks like, and not just to what I expected him to look like. I may move back to looking at the front, and notice that I had missed something: I notice a small patch on his front painted as well. I can turn my attention from the perception of the gnome, and consider my perception itself. Thus, the perception itself can become the intentional object of my attention. I can wonder why I hadn't noticed the paint on the gnome before, thinking perhaps that I'm generally not paying attention. In this case, I'm considering myself in my concreteness—i.e., considering how I am actually feeling and perceiving. I can shift my regard in other ways as well. I can consider in what ways perceiving the gnome is like and unlike perceiving other objects, or in what ways seeing the gnome would be like touching or sniffing it (1970, 108). I can shift my regard inwards also, and consider to whom the object is appearing, and think about the subject-side of appearances more broadly. One

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85 It may seem like a regress threatens here. To be sure, phenomenologists will no more be able to offer an indubitable foundation to knowledge than anyone else has. Nevertheless, the regress will be blocked by having three grounding elements to inquiry, namely subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the lifeworld. I discuss this below.
point of interest is how our attention is drawn to absences as well as to the profile that is present. This approach allows us to make possibility central to our investigation, because every perception carries with it the possibility of surprise. When this element of phenomenological analysis is highlighted, it becomes possible to think of affirming a claim as involving denying the incompatible possibilities. For example, when I think “This gnome has been painted!” I am, in some sense, committed to denying other explanations of the change in appearance.

This example shows how the four elements of a phenomenological analysis come together. In considering the present and absent aspects of the gnome, I was not only directed intentionally to the object, but also moved to a phenomenological rather than natural stance. I focused on the object as it appeared, and sought to quiet my expectations in order to see the object as it is in its appearance. When I bracketed my expectations, I was able to turn my regard to a range of questions of relevance to philosophy, including a consideration of what it means for an object to appear to me.

II. Subjectivity

For there to be experiences, there must be experiencers, or first person perspectives. The question is what is the nature of the perceiver? By considering the nature of intentionality, particularly perceptual intentions, I show that the first person perspective Husserl addresses is not the enclosed mind of the cartesian tradition.

Perception and, with it, the body, are of supreme importance. While Husserl sometimes

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86 Though there is dispute as to whether Husserl was a realist, the key insight of phenomenology is that objects themselves appear to us (Zahavi 2003, 53).
thinks it is possible to be an ego (or think of an ego) separately from the lived body, he is
cognizant of the interconnections between the different ways of being a self (1970, 108).
Thus, though it seems at first glance that the empirical (embodied) subject is distinct from
the transcendental, constituting subject, the two must be intertwined in some way. This is
the heart of the difficulty for Husserl's move to transcendental subjectivity.

The empirical, mundane, or worldly subject is on the footing of the world. It is the
subject as conceived within the natural attitude, that is, as subject to causal forces and as
an intentional, willful being (Carr 1999, 89). My empirical self is the one who trips on
sidewalks, who makes plans to meet for lunch, and who occupies identifiable social roles.
In other words, the empirical person belongs to the constituted rather than constituting
world.

Husserl’s notion of constitution is one of his many contested concepts. We can
think of it as the process that allows what is constituted to become manifest and appear in
a meaningful way (Zahavi 2003, 73). Constitution is the articulation of a phenomenon
which makes it comprehensible. The task of a constitutive phenomenology is to address
how the manner in which an object is given correlates to certain ways of being conscious
of it, such as "certain modes of awareness, styles of experiencing, sedimented
assumptions and habitualities, etc." (Behnke 1996, 136). The empirical ego belongs to the
constituted world in the sense of occupying pre-established roles and making choices
among pre-established options. For example, I pursue academic philosophy rather than
being a peripatetic wonderer because the former is a role that is relatively intelligible to
our culture and time. This is even clearer when we think about options that appear to be freely chosen, but which were never regarded as a choice. For example, many people grow up and get married, or follow in their parents’ footsteps not because they have chosen this amongst other highly divergent options, but because it just is what is done—it happens almost as a matter of course. In these cases, it is easy to see how, in our beings and doings, we often move on the ground of the constituted world. Though I have not found it discussed in this way, constitution bears a resemblance to one of the senses of construction that Hacking discusses in *The Social Construction of What?* (1999, 9-10). We can think of an object as constructed, such as something explicitly artifactual like a guitar or a cell phone. We can also think of the idea of something as what is constructed, and which bears a history. Hacking’s example is of "women refugees." Of course it is not the case that prior to the conception of women refugees there were no women fleeing unsafe environments; when we proclaim that it would be better if there were no women refugees, we know we don't mean that women should be unable to flee intolerable situations. Nevertheless, there may be value in articulating the phenomenon of women refugees. For one thing, it is essential for policies that there be a classification. For another, having a way to talk about it may be a way to make intelligible a phenomenon that wasn't previously. With women refugees, adding that classification over and above the identity "refugees" may allow us to see gendered aspects of unlivable conditions in unsafe parts of the world that were hidden over in the absence of this specification. Returning to talk of constitution, it is not exactly that we construct or create anything in

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87 For interesting work on roles that are unintelligible, see Babbitt 1993, Butler 2004.
constituting it. Rather, we aim to show a thing for how it is. But constitution doesn't necessarily leave a thing untouched either: women refugees who move to Canada clearly have a real change in circumstance, and the perception of them by the broader community may have a real impact. When we try to understand the nature of constitution, we are doing transcendental phenomenology, according to Husserl. In the phenomenological tradition, “transcendental” has a meaning that relates to Kant's sense, but acknowledges our embeddedness in a world. Here, transcendental phenomenology indicates the phenomenology that takes looking into the conditions necessary for objects to appear to us as they do as a central task. This is not a traditional, metaphysical transcendental idealism because the objects aren't caused by subjectivity, or intersubjectivity, or any other one notion. Rather, subjectivity is one of the conditions that allows objects to appear as they do.

Husserl's central question is how we can sort out our appearance as subjects and as objects for the world. My example of phenomenological description of the garden gnome illustrated the "ontological way" to the transcendental ego. This route to the "transcendental ego"—that is, the subject taken in its transcendental or constituting role—passes through a phenomenological description of some given object or range of objects. The intentional object acts as a "transcendental clue" to our investigation of subjectivity (1950, 50-53). Our description leads us towards the one to whom the object appears, and encourages us to consider the subjective conditions necessary for the object

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88 This hearkens back to Babbitt's discussion of the DIG project, in chapter 2, section IV.
89 Or at least according to the plausible reading of Husserl Zahavi offers; Husserl is not always clear on this point.
90 Husserl also proposed a much-maligned "cartesian way" in his earlier writings (for discussion of this way, see Zahavi 2003, 47-50).
to appear as it does (Zahavi 2003, 51). With the gnome, I could turn my attention to my perceptual act; with the experience of bereavement, I could think of how I am in relation to the world. We reflect on the one to whom the object appears. For example, we can consider the subjective conditions necessary for a tree to appear as a potential log or as a sacred place, or for the pile of cooked spinach to appear delicious or disgusting. Or else we can consider what has to be the case for the perciever to see anything at all. In the transcendental turn, we are concerned with the conditions on the side of the subject that are necessary rather than on the objective conditions, like there being enough light to see the gnome. Moreover, we are not concerned with the empirical subjective conditions like adequate eyesight or attention span. We're looking to find what is possible if we make no assumptions about the physical world, including about our biology. Thus, subjectivity is disclosed indirectly by passing through our phenomenological description of an intentional object. It is not empirical subjectivity though, since empirical subjectivity, like all other aspects of the natural attitude, requires a grounding subjectivity that enables its appearance. In other words, what on the subjective side makes the empirical subject an "I" who sees? We bracket even the insights of the empirical subject to see what subjective conditions enable those.91 The subjectivity that would be disclosed through this epoché is transcendental subjectivity.

Two questions remain concerning whether the perspective of the transcendental subjectivity.

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91 As always, it is necessary to work at distinguishing Husserl's approach from the introspectionism he so despaired. Bracketing our assumption about the world was Husserl's way of avoiding merely considering how things look on the inside. I find it helpful to think in terms of the imaginative or conceptual possibilities that are possible. There is a very fine line between thinking of these as relative to, and constituted by concrete subjective conditions, and thinking of them as constituting concrete subjective conditions. It is these possibilities that Husserl seeks to uncover.
ego is actually possible, and whether it is desirable. Several commentators address the first question, though few address the second (Carr 1999, Overgaard 2002, Zahavi 2001b); I will address the second, but only once I discuss the lifeworld and intersubjectivity. Husserl is adamant that "this centering Ego is not an empty pole of identity, any more than any object is such"; it is not merely formal. It is the "substrate of habitualities" or the underlying unity of our habitual ways of being in the world, including our commitments (1950, 66). On the other hand, Husserl also claims that there is nothing human to be found in the transcendental ego, even though each transcendental "I" is also a human being (1970, 182-86). It is the subjectivity that has suspended belief in the objects and commitments of the natural attitude, but this is not to say that it has blocked its attention from the objects of the natural attitude. Just as all the objects are there to be noticed but not assented to, the empirical subject is still there as the secondary ego—or, more accurately, the secondary aspect of the ego (Zahavi 2005, Cf. Sokolowski, 2000, 112-113).

This doubling appears paradoxical, or at least presents a tension. In the epochē, we must bracket our commitment to the existence of objects in the world.\footnote{There are other problems with seeming to posit two egos, which Zahavi addresses in detail (2005, 11-30).} Thus, the objects that remain—the intentional objects, or objects as appearances—are relative to the subject and subjective as appearances for this subject. But among these appearances we have the appearance of intersubjectivity, that is, of the community as giving sense to the world. For example, roles are constituted socially or intersubjectively. Whatever else intersubjectivity involves, it involves humankind, which is part of the world, and
commitment to which has been bracketed. I belong to this intersubjectivity, however, so it would seem that my subjectivity, too, must be bracketed. But it would be reduced by *my subjectivity*.

There is something philosophically attractive about this transcendental move. In the first place, it is motivated by a desire to avoid begging the question by assuming the nature of the world or elements within it even as you try to understand them. This is the motivation for seeking the grounding of the world in subjectivity and, as I will show later on, in transcendental intersubjectivity. Yet Husserl is sensitive to the dangers of Cartesian skepticism and Kantian idealism that plague other foundationalist projects. Moreover, there is value in considering and disabling our presuppositions. The point is not necessarily to shed them, but to understand the presuppositions better. I take as clues to this transcendental move those moments of clarity we experience at turning points in our lives, in our moments of epiphany, when we are shaken out of our dogmatic wanderings. These moments are particularly apt clues, because the insight gleaned is fallible. Husserl does not articulate a transcendental *foundation* upon which we can thereafter stand, but tries to clear a "field of work" that invites ever more attention and work.

Husserl insists that the epochē is not a piecemeal affair, but must be a sudden

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93 As Husserl explains it: "Universal intersubjectivity, into which all objectivity, everything that exists at all, is resolved, can obviously be nothing other than mankind; and the latter is undeniably a component part of the world. How can a component part of the world, its human subjectivity, constitute the whole world, namely, constitute is as its intentional formation, one which has always already become what it is and continues to develop, formed by the universal interconnections of intentionally accomplishing subjectivity, while the latter, the subjects accomplishing in cooperation, are themselves only a partial formation within the total accomplishment?" (1970, 179).

94 See Overgaard for further argument concerning motivations for the epochē (2002).

95 Talk of "ground" may give rise to worries about foundationalism. Through the discussion of the relation between the lifeworld, intersubjectivity, and subjectivity, the worry will be dispelled.
overthrow of all our presuppositions, just as I abstain from assenting to claims in one sphere when I am adopting a critical attitude (1970, 149). Nevertheless, it is not that we leap from our breakfast cereal to the transcendental sphere, as Husserl admits was suggested in his earlier approach to the epochē (1970, 154-55; translator's note). Although it is a sudden, wholesale overthrow, this does not change that we must constantly work at resisting relying on the pregiven world, or that once we have effected the epochē, the whole sphere of transcendental phenomenology is automatically opened (1970, 178-183). Husserl admits that, as a beginning attempt to articulate the transcendental field, it is bound to be naive. This does not mean we can turn away from the questions—after all, the question of how the world appears to us has been uncovered—but that we must proceed as best we can; “In the beginning is the deed” Husserl quotes Faust (1970, 156). Husserl likens to move to a conversion: first there is the radical alteration of our view of the world, then there must be the abiding work and commitment (1970, 137). So we seem to have paradox.

The paradox emerges when we consider that subjectivity, including transcendental subjectivity, “is what it is—an ego functioning constitutively—only within intersubjectivity” (1970, 172). As Husserl indicates even early on in his transcendental phenomenology, the transcendental ego involves her habitualities. These habitualities are not generated in a cultural vacuum; rather, our historical prejudices are inculcated from birth (1950, 66). The language we use in phenomenological reflection bears a reference

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96 Husserl also writes "It is of the very essence of such prejudices, drilled into the soul of even of children, that they are concealed in their immediate effect. The abstract general will to be without prejudice changes nothing about them" 1970, 120.
to a community, since we cannot learn meaningful language in the absence of others.\(^{97}\) Husserl acknowledges in the *Crisis* the danger of using words in transcendental reflection that are taken from the natural attitude, though he had gone farther in the *Cartesian Meditations*, where he argued (unconvincingly) that even the sociality of language must be reduced in the solipsistic sphere (1970, 174; 1950, 92).\(^ {98}\)

Do we genuinely have a paradox of subjectivity, or, as Husserl wonders, is it rather a necessary and constant tension "between the power of what is taken for granted in the natural objective attitude (the power of 'common sense') and the opposed attitude of the 'disinterested spectator'"? (1970, 180). Perhaps, but Husserl is not content to settle for a necessary tension until he has probed whether or not it is genuinely necessary. If it is possible to actually achieve the stance of transcendental subjectivity, the tension can be resolved, rather than accepted.

As a final point, let us consider ways of making the transcendental stance plausible, since the question of its possibility looms rather large. David Carr and Zahavi are clear that Husserl intends phenomenological reflection to "zigzag" back and forth between natural and transcendental attitudes. Carr considers whether the transcendental ego is best thought of as a fiction—perhaps model is a better term—like Newton's first law of motion or the average person of statistics. Carr rejects this possibility, because it involves a necessary ontological assumption: that there is no such thing as the

\(^{97}\) This of course is most famously argued in Wittgenstein 1953. For a helpful discussion of Wittgenstein on language, see Cavell 1979, chapter 7, where he writes "human convention is not arbitrary but constitutive of significant speech and activity" (168).

\(^{98}\) The sociality of language cannot be reduced, because language gets its meaning in a social context, and we cannot use words within the transcendental sphere without being committed to their bearing a meaning. Thus, we can't withhold our assent to at least some linguistic presuppositions, which requires the support of our sociality.
transcendental ego. This conclusion is premature, and more can be said about the role of fictional entities.

We could consider it a fiction if that is the best way to understand the transcendental stance, and yet remain agnostic as to its possibility. Perhaps a better way to understand the transcendental ego is as a limit notion, of which we get glimpses at some moments. Ultimately, we will have to reject Husserl's ideal of the entire overthrow, since this is problematic as an ideal, even if we are not making ontological claims. My discussion of the role of oppression in knowledge practices from Chapter 2 shows that the aim to disengage entirely from our worldly commitments, however briefly, and for whatever purposes, is misguided.

Nevertheless, the value in turning to a notion of transcendental subjectivity lies in its radical potential. By keeping the transcendental turn as a moment in our thinking, we preserve the insight that amidst our commitments, moments of distancing or othering are of constitutive value; we preserve the insight that we are able to uncover the correlations between the way things appear to us, and the conscious acts through which they appear. This will not be sufficient on its own, and warrants further discussion, but this discussion must be deferred until we have the two other pieces in place. After all, if the turn to transcendental subjectivity is valuable in the context of social inquiry, we need to articulate a phenomenological sense of community.
III. Intersubjectivity

Husserl addresses two questions concerning intersubjectivity. One question inquires into the nature of constituting intersubjectivity. The other inquires into the constitution of intersubjectivity (that is, how constituted intersubjectivity is possible). This latter question is not trivial: if we cannot constitute intersubjectivity, then we cannot understand intersubjectivity as constituting anything else. If we consider Husserl's focus on answering questions from the first person perspective, it is clear that no third-personal justification for belief in intersubjectivity will be acceptable. This is why Husserl questions how we can understand the experience of others from within the sphere of transcendental subjectivity. I will outline Husserl's approach to the move from subjectivity towards intersubjectivity. Once we have a sense of the way from subjectivity to intersubjectivity, I will turn to constituting intersubjectivity, that is, the way intersubjectivity is necessary for meaningful appearances. The first way is through an examination of the concrete experience of an alter ego and the effect on our constitutive possibilities. The second is through considering the intersubjective sense of our horizon of intentionality. This second sense of constituting intersubjectivity will be reserved for my discussion of the constitution of the lifeworld.

1. Constitution of Intersubjectivity

Husserl's controversial account of the constitution of intersubjectivity occurs in the fifth of the Cartesian Meditations. While Husserl rejected much of his earlier thinking, there is a kernel of the argument which Husserl preserved throughout his later
writings. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, he emphasizes the founding role of subjectivity. Husserl moves from the world of perception inward to subjectivity through a series of epochēs, in meditations I through IV, until he claims to have reduced the sphere of consideration to a (methodological) transcendental solipsism. At that point, he discovers that he has failed to take account of the *appearance* of others. Just as Husserl is critical of "objectivized" approaches to philosophy, which fail to account for the experienced aspect of our knowledge and engagement with the world, Husserl finds that a solipsistic phenomenology fails to take account of the way others appear to me as experiencing subjects. He asks "But what about other egos, who surely are not a mere intending and intended in me, ... but, according to their sense, precisely others?" (1950, 89). At this stage of the argument in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl is trying to make sense of the way that others, even in their appearance as phenomena, are not objects like other objects, but are more like me: both object and subject.

The question is whether this is the end of inquiry into the constitution of intersubjectivity, i.e. whether we can take the appearance of the other as a brute fact. But knowing that others appear in this way is not sufficient to understand how they transcend my intentional act. Husserl addresses this analogy between self and other as between two embodied beings. As discussed above, my body does not appear as just any sort of object—I am not a ghost in a machine—but rather my embodied experience of the world is a manifestation of my constitutive subjectivity. I am given to myself as both internality and externality. When I touch myself, the experience is different from touching anything.

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99 For an enduringly fruitful discussion of the argument in the *Cartesian Meditations*, see Ricoeur (1967).
100 This line of thought is explained in 89ff.
else.\textsuperscript{101} As Zahavi explains, this experience of self and otherness within myself enables my empathic encounter with others (2005, 157). Husserl abandons a radical division between the mind and the body, understanding experience as involving kinesthesia, rather than as purely cognitive. Thus, it is part of my self-understanding that the my behavior is expressive. This is how I identify the appearance of the other as of an expressive, sense-giving being, because she behaves (somewhat) like me. This is how intersubjectivity is constituted from within subjectivity: to the extent that I can make sense of myself as having embodied experience, I must take others as being similarly experiencing, given how they appear to me.

Husserl insists upon an essential distinction between self and other. I appear to myself internally, as a first person, whereas you only ever appear to me externally, as a second person. This asymmetry between the \textit{ego} and \textit{alter ego} has led to the accusation that Husserl subscribes to a metaphysics of presence.\textsuperscript{102} This accusation means that Husserl is thought to rely upon immediate access to a transparent self, rendering the rest of the world external to the subject, and therefore less knowable. To rely upon presence in this way is problematic in the first place because it seems phenomenologically mistaken—we notice that we don't always know ourselves best—and in the second place because it fails to take into consideration the role of absence in our experience of ourselves, and at the heart of language. It is thought to be tied to an imperialistic understanding of knowledge, such that some group occupies the center, and all marginal figures are understood by reference to the center. The concern is not merely that it is imperialistic,

\textsuperscript{101} This is put in sharp relief when we each experience the strangeness of touching our own permanently insensible or temporarily "asleep" limb.

\textsuperscript{102} For some of the key writings on this topic, see Derrida (1967a and 1967b).
but also that it is mistaken since it fails to take into consideration the relations of
dependence of any center on its margins, both conceptually and socially. For example, I
am only able to do philosophy full-time because someone else cleans the library, collects
garbage, and grows most of my food. Thus, if my self-understanding fails to take this into
account, I am not only being imperialistic (if I value doing philosophy as better than
doing tasks of immediate social use), but am mistaken in my understanding of the social
and physical environment.

These charges against Husserl are overblown. They result from a misreading of
his understanding of subjectivity, which is never pure presence but is always a field of
work, that is, it is only ever provisionally a ground for other claims. There is no decisive,
static ego to act as a foundation. Instead, the foundation must again and again be created,
as paradoxes arise and are sorted through (Husserl 1970, 180-181). Husserl admittedly
uses the vocabulary of "mastery" over the natural attitude. This mastery does not involve
the disembodied discipline of the Cartesian tradition, however, but the mastery one hopes
to achieve in learning a particularly difficult philosopher. Mastery of Kant, for example,
is not mastery over anyone. This kind of mastery is very different from the pernicious
power differentials we associate with mastery and requires acknowledging humility in the
face of the work. This can slip into objectionable mastery, of course, if we take this
knowledge as giving us power over others.

Further, though it extends beyond the scope of my discussion, attending to
Husserl's conception of time as essentially involving protention and retention tells against
the static vision of being-in-the-world that is associated with a metaphysics of presence. The self at issue in phenomenology is not standing over and above the stream of experiences, but, at its most basic, involves being conscious of an experience in its first-personal aspect (Zahavi 2005, 106). Thus, Husserl is not advocating a conception of self that would generate a problem of other minds, nor does he deny that I can be mistaken about myself.

One legitimate criticism is the charge of imperialism, though it can be addressed in a Husserlian framework. Husserl makes assumptions regarding a body's abilities, and the appropriateness of relying on the “normal” case. He refers to ungendered bodies moving as expected, and to the ease with which communication occurs. This involves pregnant assumptions that are the result of bodily and social privilege. This is something that Husserl, in one mood, well understood. Husserl the man must have understood this, given the effect of Nazism on his career and social possibilities; he seemed to understand it philosophically where he discusses the self-reference involved in and limited scope of my conception of normality. As Husserl writes late in his career:

> What I generate from out of myself (primally instituting) is mine. But I am a "child of the times"; I am a member of a we-community in the broadest sense—a community that has its tradition and that, for its part, is connected in a novel manner with the generative subjects, the closest and the most distant ancestors. And these have "influenced" me: I am what I am as an heir (quoted in Zahavi 2003, 138).

Thus, although Husserl is aware of the assumptions functioning in his work, phenomenological method explicitly invites these assumptions to be brought to his attention. What the shortcomings of his writings point out is that he may occasionally not

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have taken the intersubjective requirements as seriously as I intend to.

2. Constituting Intersubjectivity

Unlike some approaches to intersubjective relationships that seem to dissolve the
difference between self and other, Husserl respects the transcendence of the other. It may
seem trivial to think that I cannot access the other’s self-givenness or that I cannot
experience her transcendental ego. It is not. It offers a way of thinking about how, if I
could experience this, the other would be reducible to my experience, and thereby
immanent to my experience. Moreover, though I cannot experience her self-givenness, it
is precisely the limit that I experience—I experience that she exceeds my experience of
her. Without this asymmetry between self and other, we would merely have "an
undifferentiated collectivity." (Zahavi 2003, 114). If we emphasize the collectivity to the
exclusion of articulating a conception of individuals, however social, we lose the ability
to clear conceptual and activist ground for change. This is one reason we need to preserve
room for some doxastic autonomy on the part of individuals. For example, if I am
reducible (that is, experience myself as reducible) to objectifications of me, there is no
room for consciousness-raising or resistance. I must at least be able to experience
something dissonant with the vision of me to which I am subjected. By articulating an
asymmetry between self and other, Husserl generates the gap required to be able to make
sense of change. The gap between self and other allows room for change because selves
are not subsumable under others’ conceptions and treatment of them. The threat generated
by the asymmetry, that is, the threat of over-privileging individuality at the expense of
communities, is curbed when we consider intersubjectivity in its constitutive role.

Intersubjectivity, taken in its transcendental or constitutive role, does not detract from transcendental subjectivity but is, in at least one respect, a condition of its possibility. In order even to have a sense of the pairings transcendence-immanence, objectivity-subjectivity, and appearance-reality, we must have a sense of a constitutive other. That I am able to think of phenomena as appearances rather than as accepting their validity, means I have some notion of possibility. If I did not have a concrete experience of another generating views of the world, I would not be able to engage in phenomenological reflection, because I would not have a sense of appearances as possibilities—I would simply accept how things appear.

A potential criticism presents itself. We could wonder if it is really the presence of others that cleaves a gap between how I see things—between my subjective claims about them—and their objective validity, where objective means having the status of public object. The realist reply is that there is a gap between my (possible mis)perception of a thing and reality because the thing just is a certain way. It has nothing to do with collective agreement or disagreement. This criticism emerges particularly forcefully where Husserl considers the implicit reference to intersubjectivity in our perceptual acts, where my perception of the front of the tree is said to imply that while the back of the tree is not visible to me, it would be to someone else. In this example, the realist reply seems more plausible than in the case of our conceptual pairings. I intend the back of the tree because the tree has a back, rather than because there might be someone who could wander by on the other side of the tree. This is clearly not the case with immanence and
its flip side, transcendence. No one will bump into the concepts as they might bump into the unnoticed tree, and so the phenomenological point is easier to make. I think the very thinly realist ontology has got to be right: I intend the back of the tree because I can’t help but think of it as having a back, and I can’t help but think that because the tree really has a back. However, this does not affect the legitimacy of Husserl’s theory of transcendental intersubjectivity, because Husserl is not primarily interested in developing an ontology. Rather, the task of phenomenology is to make sense of experience, and my experience of possibility, which is necessary for experience of the distinction between appearance and reality or between immanence and transcendence, is conditioned by my experience of others.

Though in his otherwise lucid explications of intersubjectivity, Zahavi does not make a great deal of the role of clarification in the argument for concrete constituting intersubjectivity, it seems central to me. Husserl often discusses clarification as one of the central tasks of phenomenology (2002, 68 ff; Sokolowski 2000, 105). He also often discusses this as if it is essentially a solitary task. However, knowing when and how to clarify is something that is not only learned in relation to others, but bears a reference to others in each act. For example, when clarifying philosophical concepts, what I choose to say, or what analogies I choose to offer depends on the audience I understand myself as having. Many of us have delivered papers geared to our allies in rooms of hostile crowds, and wished we had deployed more basic arguments. Perhaps we have also over-compensated at the next conference, and delivered very non-technical arguments to a room of allies. This is not only true of philosophical clarification. I expect my dentist to
explain what's wrong with my teeth differently than she does to her colleagues. I certainly hope my cardiologist understands more details than she conveys to me. Thus, clarification depends on subject- or group-centered goals of communication. That we take our (actual or supposed) interlocutors in their constitutive sense is clear: we bother offering an explanation. This is not something we do to our hamsters and fish. Even our dogs get lost after we say "sit" and before we say "because I'm worried you will run out into the street and get hit by a car." In ideal clarificatory exchanges, both or all parties gain greater insight, and so act mutually in their constitutive roles.104

Constituting intersubjectivity is one of the conditions necessary for me to pursue phenomenological reflection, since we can neither bracket our commitment to objects—i.e. see them as possible rather than actual—nor can we clarify our experiences independently of previous experience of constituting others. It is through transcendental intersubjectivity that we create the conditions necessary for transcendental subjectivity.

This does not exhaust our experience of intersubjectivity. In addition to our concrete experiences with others and their effects, we also inhabit a world whose objects bear intersubjective meanings or significance. For example, seeing a tree as a potential log or as imbued with spirit shows how perceptual objects and our acts of perception bear intersubjective meanings. I will address the constitutive implications of this form of intersubjectivity in my discussion of the lifeworld.105

104 This symmetry can be problematic if it suggests an even footing among interlocutors where the interactions are really characterized by power imbalances. It can also be problematic where mutual gain in insight results in a further advantage to the privileged interlocutor. For example, it seems unfair that I, as a white feminist, get to benefit as much from learning from feminists of color—it sometimes seems like there is no end to the ways privilege reproduces itself. However, there may be ways of dealing with this increased privilege in non-harmful ways. Some of these will be uncovered in the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity in Chapter 4.

105 In this approach, I follow Zahavi 2003.
IV. Lifeworld

The lifeworld is differently characterized in Husserl's various works. He considers it as "the pregiven world in which science and every other life-praxis is engaged," and as "the world constantly given to us as actual in our concrete world-life" (1970, 51; 121). Though he mostly discusses the possibility of multiple lifeworlds in his later writings on intersubjectivity, it follows from considering the lifeworld as imbued with cultural significance since there is no monolithic culture yielding identical meanings to all objects. In this section, I consider the way the lifeworld is constituted and is constitutive. The result of this is that we are invariably led back to intersubjectivity and subjectivity.

1. Constitution of the Lifeworld

Even in the Crisis, we get two notions of the relation of the lifeworld to scientific theory. In one sense, the lifeworld includes the sciences since they are built up on the ground of the lifeworld—they take it for granted, and continuously use elements from it in an uncritical fashion. In another sense, however, the sciences presume a universality that is inimical to the subjective-relative nature of our goal-oriented practices of the lifeworld. For example, when I desire a cold glass of water, I desire a liquid that is characterized by its secondary qualities: I want the water to be cold to me, to be clear rather than muddy, and to be thirst quenching. By contrast, the sciences are more concerned with the properties of water that are not subject-relative, like the composition of water as H₂O.¹⁰⁶ For example, water that is cold enough for me may be considered

¹⁰⁶ This distinction between primary and secondary qualities—quantifiable and subject-relative—was Galileo's great contribution. Husserl devotes the early part of the Crisis to a critique of the consequences of the mathematization of reality (Husserl 1970, 23-59; Gandt 2005).
tepids by my friend; water that is clear enough for me may be suspiciously cloudy for a friend. It is precisely to avoid the vagaries of subjective description—in the aim of describing or explaining the true world—that science forgoes secondary qualities for primary qualities. This presumption of the sciences, while borne out by its successes, is precisely what motivates Husserl to look into the grounding of the sciences in the lifeworld. This grounding is apparent when we consider the nature of scientific experiments, and how they rely on well-functioning equipment (Zahavi 2003, 129). The embeddedness of science in its experimental milieu is clearest when something goes wrong, and the scientists go back to their equipment to seek explanations. In that moment, previously uncritical acceptance is shifted, and the lifeworld as horizon of experience is interrogated. What was accepted (constituted) ground at the background of research is considered in its constitutive role, as generating possibilities.

The accomplishments of some individuals and of different groups become sedimented, and ultimately form an anonymous horizon of what is known and accepted. In order to understand these accepted accomplishments, however, we need to uncover them. This is the sense in which the lifeworld is constituted by a form of transcendental intersubjectivity and subjectivity since the it is characterized by the constitutive accomplishments of previous subjects and communities. As Husserl notes, though, "it is the very essence of such [historical] prejudices, drilled into the souls even of children that they are concealed in their immediate effects. The abstract general will to be without prejudice changes nothing about them" (1970, 120). Thus, we must do the actual work of uncovering the prejudices, and this is the work begun by bracketing our commitment to
the claims of the lifeworld in order to identify them and their workings. When we do this, we are able to detect the intermingling of constituted and constituting lifeworld assumptions. As Husserl describes it, when we become aware of the accepted claims of the lifeworld as presuppositions, we notice them in their role as constitutive forms of meaning, which have themselves been constituted as forms; we have our characteristic movement back and forth from constituted to constitutive functions (1970, 111-112). When we consider the lifeworld as a realm of sedimented meanings, we see that it bears a relation to subjectivity and intersubjectivity. This yields the problem of the lifeworld: it is the ground from which scientific questions arise and in the context of which the scientific questions are addressed, but it is the result of subjective and interesubjective processes of long ago. Thus, the objective third-personal domain is dependent on the first-personal. This is also the way the lifeworld can point towards a new way to the transcendental ego, through the reawakening of the subjective sense of the lifeworld.

2. Lifeworld as Constituting

By thinking of the sense of the lifeworld as resulting from the constitutive function of transcendental subjectivity and intersubjectivity, we begin to see that it is not static in the way the natural world is often taken to be. By turning our attention to the genetic nature of the lifeworld, we also turn our attention to the lifeworld in its constitutive function. We can see this by considering Husserl's notions of normality and tradition. This broadens the transcendental field. As I will discuss in the next section, we
become less able to draw clear boundaries between the transcendental and mundane spheres (Zahavi 2003, 133).

We can think of normality as the expectations of the individual, and tradition as involving anonymous or culture-wide expectations.\textsuperscript{107} Our experiences are tinted by our expectations of normality.\textsuperscript{108} This can be the expectation that the traffic light will go yellow before it goes red, that my partner will become angry at some times or in some circumstances but not others, that I will be picked or passed over for certain jobs. There is no assumption that the normal will be fair or just, or even appear rational to an outsider. For example, it is normal for some to have plentiful food, emotional care and intellectual stimulation. Circumstances may change and alter this expectation. If what we experience clashes with our expectations, we experience anormality. This can lead to a modification of our expectations resulting in and from a change in the perception of what can be expected. This modification bears a reference to an intersubjective world (Zahavi 2003, 134).

The role of normality can be highlighted both in our concrete relations to another and in a tradition. In our concrete relations, coming back to the unfortunately painted garden gnome of section II, I could ask you if the back of the gnome looks different than it did earlier. Perhaps I have a horrible prejudice about the local youth, am constantly looking for instances of defacement, and am often mistaking the effects of time and weather on outdoor ornaments for mischief; perhaps the gnome has only faded in the sun,

\textsuperscript{107} As with the other features that figure in phenomenological description, Husserl aims to use the terms "normal" and "tradition" in a way that is uninflected by value judgments. He often fails quite dramatically at this, as I will discuss in a later section on some shortcomings to Husserl's views. Nevertheless, let us continue this aspiration.

\textsuperscript{108} Zahavi is clear on this (2003, 133ff).
or mud has been splashed up against it from a heavy rain. In this case, my expectations of what I think normally transpires—local teens normally deface my property—may not hold, and you may be instrumental in pointing this out to me. Thus, we can see a role for disagreement in our relation to the lifeworld. I will come back to this, and its place in thinking about multiple lifeworlds.

In terms of the role of tradition in the constitution of the lifeworld, there are assumptions about what "one does" or refrains from doing, or how "one judges" of certain matters that are not traceable to the views of an individual. Perhaps my mistrust of youth is the result of just this kind of prejudice: "one knows" that youth behave badly. While the early sense of normal is explicitly subject-centered, this sense of normal as convention—of tradition—is more diffuse. It is something borne by members of the community that takes the normal as thus-and-so. Nevertheless, it is carried along by particular subjects, who reenact or re-constitute these norms. Though Judith Butler is working with a different aim, her account of gender norms as borne along in the expectations they generate and in our performances of them is helpful for understanding Husserl's point about the relation between individuals and what is normal (2004).

In one respect, however, her critical view is deeply challenging to Husserl's. Husserl takes agreement and disagreement to be relevant and fruitful only when we are taking normal individuals into consideration. In one very trivial sense this is uncontroversial: as Zahavi points out, we add nothing to our consensus or dissensus about the visual beauty of a ship if we ask our (completely) blind friend. Zahavi, with other

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109 Husserl had a sense of this as early as Ideas II. See Zahavi's discussion (2003, 134).
phenomenologists, and Husserl, is of course assuming that the beauty of a ship is
determined visually and from afar. But casting off the "anormals" from our co-
constituting of the lifeworld is not innocent. What counts as unquestionably bizarre or
defective is not easy to determine. Zahavi writes that "we speak of normality when we
are dealing with a mature, healthy, and rational person. Here the anormal will be the
infant, the blind, or the schizophrenic" (2003, 135; cf. 2001, 91). I am not as comfortable
as Zahavi is in excluding those with mental illness or those who are blind from the
"normals"—we thin our population considerably when we begin to do this, and lose
possibly valuable perspectives.

However, Husserl was a man of his times; while he experienced the demonization
of Jews in Europe preceding the war, he perhaps could not have been expected to
transcend other prejudices, such as Eurocentrism. While it is imperative to draw our
attention to these unsavory elements lest they sneak into our views, it has been my claim
that there is a great deal that is worth preserving of Husserl's phenomenology. That these
worrisome elements come explicitly to the fore in an evaluation of his phenomenology
attests in one sense to the thoroughness of phenomenological method. While I think he
occasionally miscasts his notion of presuppositionlessness, by insisting on the overthrow
of all presuppositions, there is potential for insight. If we take presuppositionlessness not
as requiring the abandonment of some views from somewhere, but as requiring that all of
our assumptions face our thematic regard, then we may take Husserl to task for his
offensive views from within the framework of his phenomenology (1970, 108-111).
Moreover, if we take his views, and divorce them briefly from our judging regard, we can
note valuable things about them. For one thing, we continue to reject people's views on
the basis of who we take them to be. We often discount views that are articulated in
uneducated ways, or expressed in strong regional accents because we are accustomed to
sophisticated speech and centralized pronunciation—we ought to notice it about
ourselves, and phenomenological analysis allows us to do this. We should be motivated to
consider our own presuppositions in attending to Husserl's.

3. Multiple Lifeworlds

Who then are the "we" and the "they" I'm referring to? When we do a
phenomenology of Husserl's claims, we move towards the second sense of normality that
Husserl addresses, namely the kind of normality that is restricted in scope to our "world."
What is normal for me—or us—may be "anormal" for another. We notice this whenever
we "travel in other circles" and experience the foreignness of someone else's world, or
when we disagree about important features of the world. We may wonder how many
foreign worlds there are, and how we are to individuate them. I don't think this is a task
that could be completed, nor must it be: when I consider my experiences of home and
away, the lines between different worlds get drawn in different ways at different times.
With a taxi driver, I may be satisfied that we share something if I can find we evaluate the
rainy summer in comparable ways. With my parents, sometimes it feels like we share a
world when we talk about my sister and other family members, but that our worlds
diverge sharply when it comes to domestic economic policy. Though distinguishing
worlds is a question that warrants consideration, we must remember that we are not
making ontological distinctions. Rather, the distinction between home and foreign world is always deployed in some particular context for some particular reason. Just as Husserl's theory of subjectivity and intersubjectivity depend on the transcendence of the other, so does his theory of home and foreign worlds depend on the transcendence of the foreign world from my own. If I could make sense of the other entirely from within my sphere, then they would not be other, but simply a variation on myself. If this was the case, I would have no conception of the distinction between subjective and objective. Similarly, if the others' world was comprehensible entirely from within my own, then their world would not be other, and the experience of foreignness would be resolvable from within my home world. But if this was the case, I would not have a sense of a world in common that is the backdrop to both our accounts of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. There must be at least a thin notion of a world in common in discussions of the appearance of the other. Since it is with the other that I co-constituted the world of perception, there are at least basic points of contact. The claim of a lifeworld common to all is comparable in its effects to Longino's claim that a community at least agrees regarding some observational claims. This is necessary for there to be disagreement, since we need to disagree about something.\footnote{What will be an interesting contribution of liberatory or successor epistemologies is the possibility of living in multiple worlds in some sense simultaneously. This is something Husserl the man must have known: the last decade of his life was spent at the fringes of the academy. He was an academic philosopher with no academy.} Since we do disagree, we need to be able to account for the appearance of disagreeing.

We can see how the lifeworld plays a constitutive role. Husserl used the notion of the lifeworld in different ways. I have been using it in two broad ways. In the first, we
have the lifeworld as the one world which is the source of our basic experience upon
which we can all tend to agree. This notion will be quite thin indeed, and still
presupposes a certain shared vocabulary, but there are some thin perceptual claims which
would be remarkably resistant to cultural variation, such as "the stone wall is harder than
the down cushion." When Husserl talks of the one lifeworld we all have in common, he is
not committing himself to a robust realism, or to any unity-of-science view. Rather, the
claim to a unity at the background of dispute is the thin conclusion that results from his
phenomenological investigations: we have disputes. If we have a dispute, the dispute
must be about something. If we can disagree about anything at all (if anything avoids
incommensurability), then it must be possible to think about a world grounding the
disagreement.

In the second sense of lifeworld, we can think in terms of multiple lifeworlds,
some of which are experienced as home worlds, and others of which are experienced as
foreign worlds. Just as our experience of others is necessary for a conception of self, so
is the presence of foreign worlds necessary to have some thematic sense of the familiar. It
is the experience of foreign lifeworlds which constitutes our sense of the familiar and of
our communities. The notion of lifeworlds is constitutive in this sense because it
generates our cultural notions of normality and abnormality.

It is here that we are led back to transcendental intersubjectivity, which we never
left far behind. Intersubjectivity is constitutive not only in our concrete relations to one
another, but also when we broaden the sphere and think in terms of the lifeworld. By

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111 This is not always true to Husserl’s use, but is a natural move warranted by his discussions of home and foreign worlds.
considering the nature of our relation to others, we see that it is made possible against the backdrop of a world that generates our expectations. This world is the one which undergirds the sciences, as well as the one pregnant with cultural sense. Our expectations are not only interrupted by others who share our cultural assumptions, but also by those who don't. Thus, there are forms of anormality which can be understood as foreign normality. In this sense, there are multiple lifeworlds that result from different cultural understandings. We are led back to transcendental subjectivity, as well, in our consideration of the expectations we each, individually, have. I confront my cultural and social expectations against the background of a lifeworld that supports or confronts them. I certainly have not addressed the entirety of the problem of the lifeworld. We may still wonder how many there can be, what the relationship between the one lifeworld and the multiple lifeworlds is. These are important questions, but are not essential to the current discussion. Some of the issues will be resolved, or at least rendered more tractable by considering the implications of being able to start our phenomenological inquiry from any of the three starting places discussed in this section. However, this discussion of the lifeworld and of multiple lifeworlds points to the difficulty, and perhaps the impossibility, of being able to keep the transcendental and mundane spheres entirely separate.

V. Equiprimordiality and Epistemology.

In these last three sections, I have considered the three core elements of phenomenological method: subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the lifeworld. I have shown how, in an analysis of each element, we are invariably led to the other elements. Thus,
although Husserl's early philosophy overemphasized the constitutive role of subjectivity, he quickly came to see that subjectivity led us to, or presupposed, the world and others.

The world appears to me as transcending my consciousness of it. This figures in the very structure of intentionality, wherein I intend objects as exceeding my perception or characterization of them. Thus, the world appears to me as exceeding subjectivity. This is true not only of the natural world, but of all things in the world of the natural attitude, or the lifeworld. Similarly, others appear to me within my subjectivity as also subjects. That is, I make sense of them as occupying a constitutive role, just like me.

If I start inquiry from a consideration of intersubjectivity, I see that the world can only be constituted from intersubjectivity if we have a community of subjects, that is, if we understand intersubjectivity as differentiated rather than as an undifferentiated mass. This is because the constitutive potential of intersubjectivity involves different perspectives on the world rather than a multiplication of one perspective. When we consider subjectivity from our beginning point of intersubjectivity, we get to the world because what differentiates the subjective standpoints is a differential access to the world. When we think of the intersubjectively constituted world, we see that it only makes sense if we have a multiplicity of subjects.

Starting from the lifeworld, we similarly get to intersubjectivity and subjectivity. The lifeworld has at least two senses. One sense is of the one world underlying all of our perceptions. The other sense admits of multiplication, and can be likened to the worldview of different groups. We get to the second sense of the lifeworld when we look at the way the communities and the subjectivities that make them up constitute the world.
It is by considering these different layers of the lifeworld that we get to subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Subjectivity constitutes the lifeworld, but does not remain unaffected by this constitution; this constitutive processes occurs intersubjectively. As Zahavi expresses it, "[t]he constitution of the world, the unfolding of self, and the establishing of intersubjectivity are all parts in an interrelated and simultaneous process" (2003, 76).

These processes are uncovered or thematized in phenomenological reflection. However, one might worry that this is a fragile foundation to philosophy, particularly since it seems entirely circular. I think this worry can be diffused for two reasons.

In the first place, it is not the aim of phenomenology to build an ontology on the foundations of phenomenological method. I do, however, take phenomenology as being relevant in an epistemology. I will come back to the tension this presents shortly.

In the second place, the charge of circularity can be diffused. Epistemology in the second half of the twentieth century saw a proliferation of arguments as to why we should be satisfied with a certain circularity in our arguments, particularly given the failure of foundationalist epistemologies. Quine's work, as discussed in chapter one, was germinal in the turn in analytic epistemology. The basic point was that we've got knowledge, despite the lack of foundation. We can build our epistemology from here.

This view of epistemology is something Husserl could endorse, in his less aggressively transcendental moments, since he always understands inquirers as beginning in medias res (Pietersma 2000, 36ff). In his early work, where he addresses questions of epistemology most explicitly, Husserl's understanding of knowledge is akin to Longino's
first sense, where knowledge is thought of as active inquiry.\textsuperscript{112} To know is not to have something, but to be doing something. Knowledge is a matter of seeking to fulfill intentions, that is, to justify beliefs by encountering the conditions that would make the beliefs come out true. Thus, Husserl’s epistemology bears a relation to truth, but the possession of truth is the final moment of inquiry rather than being isolated from the pursuit of knowledge. Husserl is not particularly interested in gathering truth, but is more proximately interested in spelling out conditions and degrees of the justification of beliefs.\textsuperscript{113}

However, Husserl’s lack of interest in gather truths may appear to challenge the thought that Husserl is doing epistemology at all. After the transcendental turn, I am neither interested in nor able to make claims to truth, since I will have bracketed such commitments. Without this desire and possibility, there is something deeply missing from our epistemology. Even if the focus is on the justification of belief, would nevertheless be indexed to a desire to believe truly. This concern is misplaced. When we look to the challenges even within Husserl’s phenomenology to keeping the natural and transcendental spheres strictly separated, there seems to be room for bringing phenomenology to mundane concerns. We do not simply pause in our understanding of the world while we do our phenomenological analyses, and return unchanged. This comes across in the requirement of starting from the three different points: proper

\textsuperscript{112} See the sixth of his \textit{Logical Investigations}, where he offers a sustained discussion of knowledge (2001, volume 2).

\textsuperscript{113} Husserl discusses degrees of justification, which one may take this as suggesting that there is an ultimate degree of justification, where we reach ultimate truth. This talk of degrees of justification appears more like a phenomenological version of Peirce’s ideal of truth at the end of inquiry, if given a transcendental twist.
phenomenological method requires that we look from subjectivity, from intersubjectivity, and from the lifeworld to have a good understanding of any phenomenon. This also comes across in Husserl's claims concerning the effect of phenomenology on our “return” to the natural attitude (1970, 210).

1. Critical Phenomenology

Husserl's rejection of traditional projects in epistemology is precisely the insight I want to bring to epistemology, and to understanding objectivity in particular. Husserlian method shows how our claims are only ever provisional, and that this provisionality must itself come to light. His published works were ever newer introductions to phenomenology; at the end of his career he thought of himself as a "radically beginning philosopher". This provisionality is friendly to feminist and other liberatory epistemologies. Yet the provisional quality does not devolve into skepticism. It is the nature of intentionality that we must make claims to then consider them. Thus, we are not stunted in our projects. We need not wait for the final word before we can say something. We say it, and consider it.

There are four specific insights to Husserl's phenomenology that are helpful for developing an engaged account of objectivity, in addition to the insight of the three starting places. The first insight is that Husserl shows us how to do the work of theorizing subjectivity as a necessary correlate to our more object-directed (and classically epistemological) inquiries. Though feminists have been critical of accounts of subjectivity when they are focused on autonomous subjects, Husserl uncovers the many
ways subjects are related to one another and to the shared lifeworld or to different lifeworlds. Moreover, Husserl's account of subjectivity is essentially embodied and though Husserl did not think this, it is a consequence of his later view concerning the interrelation of lifeworld and subjectivity that the transcendental subject can be thought of as gendered. This is because the self of the natural attitude and the transcendental self mutually influence one another. The second fruitful aspect is his understanding of intersubjectivity as constitutive. There is room for multiple overlapping communities because they are not distinguished ontologically, but rather are distinguished by the perspective taken on them, and by them. This leads to the third insight. The lifeworld is both the natural world as grasped in our day to day undertakings, and is also the cultural world, which admits of being understood in terms of power relations. Though Husserl does not include an explicit theory of power, there is room for describing the workings and effects of power in our phenomenological reflections, since layer after layer of consideration is called for.¹¹⁴ Moreover, his understanding of the structure of intentionality helps make sense of the objectification of marginalized groups. Fourth, there is room for including the positive role played by possibility in feminist accounts of knowledge and objectivity. The epoché allows us to disable some of our commitments some of the time for the purposes of inquiry and understanding. As I will show in the next chapter, these insights will help me address the weak points of Longino's position and allow me to develop a more critical account of objectivity that shares much with Longino's view.

¹¹⁴ For an argument drawing close ties between Husserl's later phenomenology and Lukacs, the major influence on contemporary standpoint theory, see Vajda (1983).
VI. Transcendental Phenomenology

Transcendental phenomenology seems unfriendly to naturalized epistemology. The one seeks the constitution of the meaning of objects independently of their grounding in the natural world; the other starts from the assumption that the natural sciences are our best guide to knowledge production. It is my position that the thrust and insight of transcendental phenomenology can be preserved within an appropriately broadened naturalized epistemology, though there is value in retaining Husserl's transcendental move, at least as a heuristic.

In the course of my discussion of Husserl's phenomenology, I traversed a number of problems. The first problem was the so-called paradox of subjectivity. If the subject both constitutes the world, and is—as empirical subject—a part of the constituted world, then the subject seems to constitute itself from nothing. Even Husserl thought this was absurd: "the subjective part of the world swallows up, so to speak, the whole world and thus itself too. What an absurdity!" (1970, 179). Carr considered a few options in order to make sense of this difficulty, including the possibility that the transcendental ego is a fiction, a heuristic to aid our phenomenological inquiry. If the transcendental ego is a fiction, then it is a fiction of the empirical ego, and naturalism might be saved. I say that it might be saved, rather than that it is saved, because the ability of this fiction to generate knowledge, or at least generate a method that warrants adoption, is still in question. A sharply naturalized epistemologist will reject this appeal even to a fictionalized transcendental ego because it is not considered necessary to explain scientific knowledge from within a naturalized epistemology, and could not be tested (Solomon 2001).
Solomon, for example, would not see Husserl's questioning of the ground of science as a live question, and would not consider his method warranted.

Yet it is warranted. It is warranted by the need of an epistemology to contend with its origins, not only historical, but also subjective and intersubjective. These origins have often been denied, and have also often had a very pernicious impact on a great deal of the world and the people in it. My discussion of MacKinnon in Chapter 1 and of the case studies in Chapter 2 showed how the subjective and intersubjective features of inquiry have been ignored to harmful ends. But attention to the social and environmental consequences of oppressive knowledge practices does not capture the entirety of the work an account of objectivity must do. Husserl's method looks like it will give us better knowledge, and it will do that by giving us a more thorough epistemology. Different claims are highlighted in phenomenological analysis, and more questions are asked. This is why the transcendental move of considering the constitution of appearances for one, many, and all experiencers is essential. Instead of restricting the field of epistemology, it broadens it. This is what feminist epistemologists have also been doing, though with a good deal more attention to the relevance of power relations; we are also doing it a good deal later than Husserl.

One of Husserl's insights is that possibilities—tethered to our home world, as all conceiving inevitably is—are of profound relevance. To really understand what is the case, or what appears to be the case, we must also understand what might be the case. This is a broadening of the relation of presence and absence addressed with the garden gnome presenting, with his front, his absent back. In other words, we intend the absence
as well as what is present. In relation to possibility and actuality, to really understand what is the case, we need to think about what could be the case. In phenomenological reflection on perceptions, we consider how another object could appear, or this one could appear differently, and consider the different ways it could appear. The relation between presence and absence and its consequences for understanding possibility will be central to my account of objectivity. Since Husserl argues that every layer of reflection admits of phenomenological attention, even our most basic sense of the world must be interrogated. What if there were feminist science, as Keller wonders? Neither Husserl nor I think we can decide on the ramifications of instituting possible scenarios. The open-endedness is seen as no obstacle to the epistemic relevance of the consideration. After all, it is required in order to understand what it is we think we know.

However, this transcendental thinking can be embedded in a suitably broadened naturalized epistemology. Husserl would not be impressed. It seems to me, though, that he would be compelled by the arguments in the first couple of chapters to acknowledge that we cannot entirely shed our commitment to our empirical selves. Though he sees the concrete and transcendental spheres as more intertwined in his later writings, he still thinks they are separable. What is possible, I think, is to separate out certain regions of our reflection, and effect local epochēs, but this will ultimately be on the footing of some portion of the natural attitude and hence will presume the validity of some of the claims from the natural attitude. Thus, our good knowledge practices—our objective practices—depend on making sense of what we know in the natural attitude. This is compatible with a broadened naturalized epistemology.
VII. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed Husserl’s phenomenology with an eye to producing an account of objectivity that can take into consideration the insights learned in the first three chapters, concerning the social nature of inquiry, the gendered nature of much practice, and the possibilities and shortcomings of critical contextual empiricism. I discussed, in the context of developing phenomenological preliminaries, the nature of phenomenological description. The example of looking at the gnome allowed me to highlight the absence and the possibility that are contained in our perceptual acts. Phenomenological accounts of subjectivity address its constituted and constitutive nature, and lead us to the lifeworld and to intersubjectivity. Similarly, intersubjectivity functions constitutively and as constituted ground of habitualities; the lifeworld constitutes our shared world, and is constituted by subjects and intersubjective communities. The equally essential role of these three starting points does not provide an indubitable foundation to knowledge, but when they are interwoven and pursued as equally important starting points for inquiry, we can see that there is a solidity to phenomenological inquiry that practices with only one starting point do not have. This solidity made up of the three strands of phenomenological inquiry, paired with the ability to incorporate possibility as a positive aspect of our epistemology, will lay the groundwork for the positive view I now turn to.
Chapter 5: Critical Phenomenological Objectivity

Often when the radical voice speaks about domination we are speaking to those who dominate. Their presence changes the nature and direction of our words (hooks 2004, 154).

bell hooks brings to our attention how relations of inequality don't just cause suffering, but they affect the voices of those who are oppressed. The voices are affected because words are misunderstood, and the nature of the discussion is distorted when the oppressed have to speak to or in the presence of those who are oppressors. Many of us have experienced this from relatively disempowered as well as relatively privileged positions. Often oppressors don't believe there is oppression, or have a theory about the nature of the problem, or else refuse to understand that we may not have the resources to readily understand the problem. Taking account of this is important for developing an account of good knowledge practices, because if our interactions help inequalities persist through a lack of understanding, then we fail to know what we could know. If we fail to know, then we are not pursuing knowledge well. What hooks's comments quoted in epigraph suggest is that our epistemology ought to take into consideration the epistemic damage caused by occupying different roles with different powers and privileges attached to them, so that we can mute the effects of these powers. We must mute these powers in order to develop inquiry in ways that enable us and others to learn well.

In this chapter, I develop my positive account of objectivity which builds upon the strengths of Longino's view, and avoids some of the problems with her approach. Over the course of the previous four chapters, I have established that a relevant conception of
objectivity needs to incorporate social features and the effects of power inherent in many social practices, including many epistemic practices, which are the ones of particular interest in this work. Like Longino, I have a fairly broad conception of what counts as an epistemic practice. They are those practices which often involve the amplification of our knowledge. Additionally, a conception of objectivity needs to account for tracking truths or conformation to how the world is (in some respect). Longino proposes one approach: understanding objectivity as constituted by the presence of certain democratic and critical social markers. In chapter 4, I developed a reading of Husserl which I show, in this chapter, allows us to address some of the shortcomings of Longino's critical contextual approach.

The account I develop, critical phenomenological objectivity, explicitly relates to Longino's Critical Contextual Empiricism. It is critical in the sense of requiring self-reflexive criticism of the kind we find both in the clarifications central to phenomenology, and in the critical appraisal of the material conditions of inquiry and justification of standpoint theory, such as in the work of Hartsock and Harding. It is phenomenological in the sense of requiring that we be explicit about the context in which inquiry was conducted, as well as the context of justification, but it does not require that the truth of the knowledge claims be thought dependent on these social contexts. Rather, it is possible for the truth of a claim to float free of the context of its discovery and justification, but this must be shown and the genealogy ought to be kept in mind. In other

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115 Longino isn't quite explicit about what counts as an epistemic practice. However, in understanding epistemic communities as all those communities which orient themselves to the world and therefore have a stake in the world being described accurately, I take it that she would endorse a broad conception of epistemic activity (2001, 146).
words, a social perspectivalism is the starting point, without being the necessary end point. My view is an account of objectivity in the sense of being an account of well-functioning epistemic practices, which includes both practices of structuring inquiry and practices of accounting for the validity of the results of inquiry. This means that, typically, inquiry and validation structured according to the norms I develop will be better able to produce valuable knowledge, or be able to develop and address significant questions, than will inquiry in the absence of these norms. This is certainly not to say that exceptions are impossible: unjust social structures have yielded a great deal of valuable knowledge. Nevertheless, conditions of oppression make it more difficult to see where inquiry is going wrong.

I will develop this chapter in five stages. In the first, I will present an overview of the argument so far. Next, I will address the problems of Longino’s view with the Husserlian insights gathered in chapter 4. This will allow me, in section 3, to articulate the elements of my view. Following this, I will address how well this view stands up to the demands of a feminist account of objectivity. Finally, in chapter 6, I put the guidelines I develop to work on a case study and see how well critical phenomenological objectivity can make sense of early modern accounts of witchcraft. This will allow me to consider possible objections to it.

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116 This is certainly a thorny philosophical issue. Here again I find the phenomenological point of going through our appearances, rather than simply affirming their exhaustiveness or denying their relevance helpful.
I. The Argument Thus Far

In chapter 1, I developed the grounds for a social account of objectivity. I did this in three stages. First, I looked at two sweeping criticisms of the entire endeavor. Susan Haack offered a global criticism of incorporating a social aspect to objectivity since, she claimed, this leads to relativism, which is unacceptable and unwarranted. However, her arguments were found wanting. The second criticism of projects like mine comes from Catharine MacKinnon, who argued that objectivity was inextricably linked with the objectification of women. However, her arguments did not preclude the possibility a non-oppressive account of objectivity. Having set aside both sweeping criticisms of the enterprise of developing a social account of objectivity, in the second stage I identified five points in relation to which social accounts of objectivity need to be oriented: (i) whether to defend a naturalized epistemology, and what kind, (ii) take a stance to the relation between individuals, community, and the world, (iii) address a tension between emphasizing discovery or justification, (iv) defend an emphasis on inclusion or exclusion, and (v) address an emphasis on the pragmatic or on the truth-conducive. In the third stage, I discussed four prominent views of objectivity that incorporate a social element, and discuss their merits and shortcomings. The outcome of this discussion is that the development of significant questions is politically valenced and often closely tied to practices of justification, and value-laden assumptions do not always inhibit knowledge. The broad outcome of this discussion is that objectivity will have a social dimension, sometimes political.

In chapter 2, I addressed specifically feminist considerations, particularly those
relating to the epistemic significance of power relations. I did this by looking at the way cases of domestic violence are sometimes handled in the courts, and at the way visual-spatial ability has been tested. These examples acted as the background of a discussion of the gap between rational authority and credibility, which shows that power inequalities have epistemic consequences. Thus, a sense of objectivity that keeps gender issues in view will be needed to prevent this kind of epistemic injustice. I turned to a few prominent feminist approaches to objectivity. Nancy Hartsock's feminist-Marxist view lays the groundwork for later standpoint theoretical approaches, where she shows that the view from the critical standpoint of the oppressed is often enhanced, because there is a practical need to understand both one's own condition and the condition of the powerful. However, one might worry that she essentializes women and standpoints in an indefensible way; there is the attendant difficulty of sorting out when someone occupies a critical standpoint. Sandra Harding develops views to cope with these problems. Harding aims to avoid essentializing gender by arguing for strong objectivity, which involves occupying an engaged stance, and starting thinking “from below”. This has many strengths, and forms the backdrop of my view. The question emerges as to how we can go about beginning inquiry in the manner Harding calls for, and it is my claim that Longino's practical proposals are able to fill in some of the epistemic and pragmatic gaps in Harding's work. A further feminist consideration, central for developing a responsible account of objectivity, comes from Susan Babbitt's work, in which she theorizes the nature of subjectivity in relation to oppressive practices. Taking the effects of oppression on selfhood seriously, and following the insights of standpoint theory, it becomes
important for ensuring objectivity that we enable something like healthier subjectivity; this means that an account of objectivity needs to incorporate an account of subjectivity.\footnote{Many will bristle at the vagueness of my call for “healthy selves.” I struggle with finding an expression, and do not mean to suggest that we should continue to privilege unified, coherent selves that are the luxurious illusions of the few. I do however stand by the claim that healthier, more livable selfhood is a central concern for objectivity. As long as someone experiences her situation as incomprehensible, or unshareable, it is hard to see how it can be the material for an improved understanding of the world. I think I am able to make this claim, and remain open to ever more sensitive and rich understandings of the rich ways we can help ourselves and others achieve manageably fragmented lives. For one sustained and philosophically insightful approach to these issues, see Brison 2001.}

In chapter 3, I discussed what I took to be the most promising view, the view offered by Helen Longino. Her account of objectivity involves four social features of inquiry: (i) the presence of avenues of criticism, (ii) the uptake of criticism, (iii) shared standards which ground criticism, and (iv) a tempered equality of authority. These four features are ideals, and will be differently realized in different settings. Thus, objectivity is a matter of degree. Her account of objectivity is embedded in a broader project of re-articulating central concerns of epistemology, and so she offers an account of knowledge which she takes to be sensitive both to the insights of social studies of science as well as to philosophers’ desire for a normative conception of knowledge. Whatever the shortcomings of her explicit account of knowledge,\footnote{For example, she ties knowledge to warranted assertability (though she does not express it quite like this), and so she often speaks interchangeably of justification and knowledge. While this is objectionable to some, it is nevertheless fairly common—Fricke’s new work on epistemic injustice does the same—and of considerable use (Fricke 2007). We can accept that we fallibly claim knowledge when the conditions of justification are met. Thus, I do not attack this point in my dissertation, and in fact follow her lead.} critical contextual empiricism has the benefit of understanding our knowledge productive practices as typically social, as requiring social support for a view to gain credence as knowledge, and as incorporating the relevance of individual knowers in their communities. Thus, it meets many of the
expectations I established in the first two chapters.

However, it suffers four significant problems. The first two are that she proposes an insufficiently rich understanding of subjectivity and of intersubjectivity. Offering an adequate account of subjectivity is of epistemic importance since, as I showed with Babbitt, oppression can harm the self-conception of the oppressed and so affect who can know and under what conditions. As was shown with the historical examples, under conditions of oppression, the powerful are also misguided as to who they are as knowers. Thus, if we take perspectives as likely of epistemic salience, we need to understand whose perspectives they are. Relatedly, we need to understand the community of which they are a part. The third problem is that though she is interested in keeping gender central, she fails to explicitly address power relations and their effects on knowledge practices. Feminist accounts of gender conceptualize gender as hierarchical under current conditions. Advocating a democratization of practices is insufficient for taking account of power relations, as work on epistemic injustice indicates. Fourth, Longino fails to address the challenges of developing shared standards. This problem has two aspects. The first is that she fails to address the central role of possibility in understanding divergent standards. Second, developing shared standards requires addressing ways of adopting new beliefs and attitudes.

In the fourth chapter, I developed the phenomenological grounds for addressing these concerns through a Husserlian lens. Husserl theorizes subjectivity and intersubjectivity in endurably fruitful ways. A critical understanding of the lifeworld allows us to address power relations. The structure of his inquiry into presence and
absence allows us to incorporate a positive account of the possibility of envisioning our practices otherwise, and contributes to being able to develop shared standards. Finally, considering the nature of knowledge in phenomenology as activity enables us to understand developing shared standards. Now, I put the phenomenological tools to work, and address these problems with Longino's view.

II. Developing Responses to the Challenges

1. Subjectivity

Recall that a rich account of subjectivity is important in our conceptions of objectivity for two broad reasons. First, we need to account for a certain doxastic autonomy that individuals have vis a vis their communities' beliefs. We are very much influenced by the beliefs of those we admire and hold dear, and by the beliefs that are inculcated from a young age, but there is both ample descriptive evidence that people often do form beliefs that diverge from their communities' beliefs, and normative reasons to want to uphold this possibility: we struggle to account for innovation if we do not have a mechanism for understanding shifts in belief. Second, an adequate understanding of objectivity requires a conception of subjectivity, in the sense of requiring an account of those who are knowers. Since knowers are also believers, desirers, wishers, and doers, and since desires and actions have often had an impact on claims about knowledge, the account of subjectivity that is called for extends beyond the thin account of a generic S who knows that P.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{119} See Code (1993) for a full treatment of the limitations of taking epistemology as accounting mainly for “S knows that P” formulations. I do not pretend here that epistemology—especially epistemologies of science—are restricted to “S knows that P” formulations. I am interested in sorting through what about
Longino’s account of objectivity is sensitive to this. She discusses the need to understand subjects as socially, culturally located, and thus to reject the conception of knowers as unconditioned egos (2001, 107; 1993, 111). She intends her account of objectivity to take this social, historical, and geographical locatedness seriously. Longino proposes that an emphasis on interaction does this, and that “effective critical interactions transform the subjective into the objective, not by canonizing one subjectivity over others, but by assuring that what is ratified as knowledge has survived criticism from multiple points of view” (2001, 129). However, apart from specifying that there must be a diversity of views represented in a climate of intellectual equality of authority, she does not discuss some of the assumptions of promoting interaction rather than, say, sharing, or some other mode of communicating among subjects.

Privileging interaction presupposes that the call to equality of authority is sufficient for ensuring that the effects of power imbalances are not working in the background; it also presupposes articulate interlocutors with psychological integrity who are able to make their concerns appear relevant and well-formed. Relatedly, it presumes that those in less marginalized positions are able to know how to identify a concern as relevant, and how to listen to it. While I agree that this is a goal, Longino does not adequately address the conditions that would enable these presuppositions to be met.

Perhaps the most insightful aspect of a phenomenological understanding of subjectivity is the conception of a subject as both constituted and constituting. Indeed, one of the key issues of phenomenology is working out how to make sense of ourselves

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S is relevant for understanding objectivity.
as both subjects and objects, that is, as constituting our engagement with the world, and taking ourselves in our constituted role. Recall that constitution, in Husserlian phenomenology, involves giving sense to an object, event, or experience rather than constructing it, and it involves making sense from the first person perspective. This is what highlights both the need to foreground subjectivity in epistemology and the peculiarity of the task: when making sense of myself, I am acting as a subject, and I am treating myself both as subject and as object. In focusing on being constituted—socially, historically, and geographically, as Longino stresses—I am constituted both bodily and psychically.\(^{120}\)

For the purposes of developing an understanding of subjectivity able to complement a social account of objectivity, it is necessary first to understand the conditions that enable me to grasp how another's claims could be relevant to a critical discussion, and second to make sense of the work of overcoming the often damaging effects of oppression on selfhood. On a phenomenological understanding of subjectivity, part of what is harmed in systemic oppression is the ability to be and to see oneself as a subject of experience, rather than mainly as someone to whom things are done—this is a phenomenological way of casting the need to respond to objectification with a reaffirmation of being a self, a subject, someone who can talk back or act out. The phenomenological method of approaching subjectivity in its appearance to me as a condition for making sense of other appearances is helpful; it guides me to think about the mystery and vulnerability attendant to seeing subjectivity as constitutive of and

\(^{120}\) We do not need to suppose we can separate the psychical and the bodily, except perhaps for the purposes of analysis.
constituted by self, other, and in the world. This helps make sense of the work of fashioning a self.

Here, I am coming close to emphasizing a more hermeneutic understanding of subjectivity, as we find in Paul Ricoeur's *Soi-même comme un autre*, which grows out of and reacts against the reflective tendency of Husserlian phenomenology (Ricoeur 1990). What in Husserl is the duality of the constituted and constitutive roles of subjectivity appears as the poles of the self as sameness, and the self as pure ipseity—i.e. pure ethical responsibility, in the absence of re-identifiable features—and our experiences typically occupy the space between the poles. Ricoeur's formulation has the advantage of emphasizing the ethical dimension of our existence, and of accepting that the paradox of subjectivity cannot be resolved, which Husserl resists. However, for the purposes of developing my account of objectivity, I am satisfied with emphasizing the more reflective thrust of Husserl's understanding of subjectivity. In any case, we are not restricted to understanding the role of subjectivity in our knowledge practices as the role of some S who knows that P since for Husserl subjectivity is always embodied, though I grant that he sometimes has in mind too thin a notion of embodiment. My knowledge will include my bodily functioning in the world, and it includes my understanding of my particular and cultural experiences.

Emphasizing both the embodied aspect of subjectivity, and the dual understanding of subjectivity as constituting and constituted makes sense of the effects of power differentials on knowledge practices. If my embodied subjectivity has been partly (or largely) constituted by external cultural and social pressures, I may be able to realize this
and begin trying to experience my body—and, with it, myself—in an originary way. This is the experience that seems to be at the basis of the slogan of some disability activists: “nothing about us, without us”; it is also at the basis of the insistence of Harriet Tubman, former slave and Underground Railroad warrior, that she never once cried out when she was being beaten (Lowry 2007). She insisted on preserving some control, some space for her originary self-conception. Whatever was done to her, she remained something more than the act of dehumanization.

This example of course does not necessarily speak to the need for phenomenology as a philosophical enterprise. Some of the best known acts of resistance are clearly unthematized: the unknown man stepping in front of the tanks at Tiananmen Square, Rosa Parks refusing to give up her seat, and Harriet Tubman staring down her “owner” and singing a spiritual about escape shortly before escaping. However, thematizing these acts of resistance and our more mundane acts of refashioning our self-conception in the face of harm and oppression serves a purpose that is important for our account of objectivity. It serves the purpose of making the constitutive role of subjectivity salient and something upon which we can reflect; the constitutive role is made comprehensible and shareable. This is not always important in activism or in resistance, but it is helpful for gaining a better understanding of our knowledge practices so that we can improve them.¹²¹

Reflecting on subjectivity, at least in an applied sense, is in the background of consciousness-raising groups in feminist activism (hooks 2000; MacKinnon 1987). With

¹²¹ It is also important for negotiating the murky ground between good and bad causes, activism and terrorism, and self-interest and justice: where passions are high, moments of reining back and reflecting are often essential.
the non-hierarchical structure enforced by allowing each woman to share her experiences and self-understanding in turn, consciousness-raising circles enabled women to understand first-personal experiences of sexism and confront residual sexist, racist, classist, heterosexist, and ableist assumptions. In chapter 4, I followed Husserl in describing the turn to phenomenology as akin to a conversion: there is the “aha!” moment of realizing that I can seek an understanding of my assumptions and the assumptions I grew up with by inquiring into the structures of appearance; this first moment is followed by a commitment to work through some of the consequences of the conversion. hooks talks about feminist consciousness-raising groups as sites of conversion (2000, 8). It is the site where women can come to understand their own harms, and begin the work of transmuting these into collective action; it is the site where women confront their inner sexism and other forms of oppression (12). hooks is more concerned with activism than with epistemology, but this attention to consciousness-raising resonates with the phenomenological understanding of subjectivity as needing to account for its role in our understanding of and engagement in the world.

The phenomenological understanding of subjectivity offers some of the conditions under which we could begin to make sense of the relation between objectivity as knowledge productive social processes and subjectivity, as Longino’s view requires. This thicker understanding of subjectivity as something that can be taken as an object, but that is taken as an object for some subject leaves room for understanding how including a diversity of voices may not be sufficient for objectivity. By foregrounding the work of understanding and healing subjectivity in the way a phenomenological approach enables,
we can make sense of what needs to be done in a community in order to begin ensuring that the effects of power differentials are undermined. A further advantage of the phenomenological approach is that it does not offer a guarantee that we will reach a foundation of individuality and mutuality that is unshorn. Such a promise would have to be rejected as fanciful and thus as a poor recommendation for structuring our epistemic practices. Finally, I have shown that in offering a richer account of subjectivity as complement to a social account of objectivity is at the same time to call for a richer understanding of intersubjectivity or community.

2. Intersubjectivity

In addition to a richer account of subjectivity, the view of critical contextual empiricism needs a richer understanding of intersubjectivity, like the Husserlian one I developed in chapter 4. Longino maintains that scientific and much other knowledge is the product of a community of individuals interacting in accordance with the four norms of critical contextual empiricism. She acknowledges that the individual knowers are socially, geographically, and historically situated, yet she does not explore how a community and individuals are related such that good knowledge productive practices can be instituted. In fact, she does not think that more is called for than insisting that the communities are composed of interacting members, rather than members who share a world-view. She takes these two possibilities—sharing and interacting—as exhaustive of the relation between epistemic communities and individuals (2001, 148). Longino opts for interaction rather than sharing because it is descriptively problematic to insist that
knowledge productive communities are composed of individuals who share a basic world-view. It is also normatively problematic, since too much shared background could cover up shared assumptions which need to be exposed in order to ensure inquiry and justification are objective, on Longino's view.

The phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity aims to account both for the possibility of intersubjectivity, when we inquire from within our experience, and for the way intersubjectivity helps make sense of individual experience. In a phenomenological analysis of the way others appear to me, I notice that they appear as sense-giving others rather than as mere appearances for me. A Husserlian explanation of this phenomenon appeals to my experience of my own body as tied up in my being a subject: I am someone who sees with my eyes and moves about to grasp the objects of my surrounding; I find others doing the same. This does not amount to a version of the argument for the existence of other minds from analogy since the correlation between my own embodiment and the embodiment of others is not meant as an argument which grounds assertions, but is meant as a way of understanding our empathic responses. It would be stretching “analogy” too far to take it to encompass the kind of embodied experience of others Husserl has in mind.

That is how intersubjectivity is understood as possible. Intersubjectivity plays a constitutive role when we consider how a subject's constitutive acts are dependent on the background of intersubjectivity. I discussed this by appealing to the nature of clarification, which is paradigmatically done in community. A second way of thinking about intersubjectivity as constitutive is to think about how phenomenological analysis,
which is possible to some degree since there are many examples of it, requires experience of others. It requires others because bracketing involves considering that something could be otherwise. To take an experience as an appearance or phenomenon rather than taking it as necessarily being the case involves some notion of possibility. Yet if we did not have experience of others, we would not be able to do this since our understanding of our experiences would not have been shown to be merely one among many.

Understanding intersubjectivity as possible and as serving a constitutive role does not yet specify what concrete epistemic communities are like. However, it does some of the work towards understanding the nature of interaction that can lead to greater understanding; it contributes to understanding how it is that we are epistemically dependent on one another. I address what needs to be shared between members and how it can be shared by discussing the role of the lifeworld in our encounters and by considering the practical uses of the epoché.

3. Lifeworld and Power Relations

Longino’s account of objectivity incorporates diversity as an epistemic norm through her requirement of diverse forms of critique and equality of authority. However, beyond acknowledging that knowers are socially, historically, and geographically located, she does not address the specific problems of power imbalances and the effects of systemic oppression. Since these have effects on knowledge productive practices, accounting for them is essential for an engaged understanding of objectivity.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the Husserlian notion of a lifeworld. The
lifeworld is both constituted and constituting. It is constituted in the sense of being the
sedimented, anonymous cultural expectations that allow us often to go about our business
unreflectively, whether that business is scientific or otherwise. We most readily notice
that the lifeworld is constituted when we are surprised, and reawaken the sedimented role
of earlier subjective and intersubjective choices that contributed to the current world
appearing natural and non-controversial.

We also realize that the lifeworld is constitutive when we reopen the sedimented
meanings; it is not static as it is often taken to be, and our collective grounding is
influenced by shifts in expectations. This is clarified through Husserl’s notions of
normality and tradition. Just as thinking phenomenologically about perceptual
experiences depends on intersubjectivity to generate the notion of possibility, so too is the
anormal necessary for making sense of my reflection on the normal. If I have no
experiences of otherness, of people living and doing differently than I live and do, I
cannot think of my experiences as normal—I cannot shift to the “as if” mode of
phenomenological reflection, and see that my experiences could be otherwise, which is
implicit in thinking my experiences normal or in thinking of my world as my home
world. It is in this context that talk of multiple lifeworlds emerges.\textsuperscript{122} Moreover, for some
people more than others, places and groups will only feel like home in some respects but
not others. This allows us to incorporate intersecting identities without having to make
the problematic appeal—common in early standpoint theory and early radical feminism
—to identity poles which can be prised apart. Appeal to multiple overlapping lifeworlds

\textsuperscript{122} I diffused worries about the ontology and individuation of these multiple lifeworlds by tying our appeal
to them to particular questions and concerns so that they are invoked in and constrained by particular
contexts.
allows us to make sense of this by undermining the expectation that anyone can speak from a pure standpoint, whether it is the standpoint of pure womanhood, Blackness, or disability. With zigzagging back and forth between the natural and transcendental attitudes, a phenomenological analysis structures our understanding of a speaker who adopts a certain point of view, speaks, and interrogates the location from which she is speaking. This allows us to make sense of both the necessity and the provisionality of speaking on behalf of “one's group.” It also allows interlocutors to accept, in the natural attitude, the speaker's word, and critically revisit their subject-position in the phenomenological attitude. This allows power inequities and their epistemic consequences to be brought to attention; it is also a way of making sense of standpoints without requiring that standpoints be exhausted by material relations of production and reproduction, as Longino criticizes them for doing (1993).

Attention to the role of the lifeworld in grounding our epistemic practices helps us uncover the ways in which power relations have affected and continue to affect our knowledge practices, and helps address how power imbalances can actively be resisted. When we understand the element of subjectivity that is hidden in knowledge practices, and which attention to the lifeworld uncovers, we can see how social assumptions have had wide-ranging effects on our understanding both of nature and of our cognitive role in trying to understand nature. An example of how the sedimented history of assumptions in science can be reawakened is clear in both Solomon and Keller's discussions of Baconian science (Keller 1985; Solomon 2001 51-52). Metaphors of domination and independence fostered research programs that privileged hierarchical models of explanation, as well as
preserving man’s dominion over nature. Early work on DNA saw the DNA sequence as immutable and as having a strong causal influence on behavior and disease; more recent work has shown that the relationships between genetic structures and environments are immensely more complex than James Watson envisioned (Keller 2008). Thus, it is meant to show that metaphors of hierarchy were intertwined with research agendas in a way that affected the kind of knowledge that was sought, achieved, and missed. Uncovering these presuppositions—whether through surprising observations, a shift in the political unconscious, or both—involves noticing that some set of structuring metaphors are merely possible rather than necessary. This is what it means to inquire into the lifeworld.

Inquiring into the subjective origins of the lifeworld also allows us to uncover power-laden presuppositions more locally. The lessons we learn in our less-harmful encounters with people with different presuppositions can act as clues for dealing with the more potentially harmful, power-laden situations. I have in mind here our willingness to listen to those we love and respect, and revise our views in light of their choices and projects. Many of us do this: we know it is sometimes more important to support and care for our children, lovers, and friends, than to be right. So we mute the influence of some of our beliefs in order to avoid imposing them on the other. Occasionally, some of these beliefs become more permanently disabled over time. I think this is what we mean when we say to someone “you made me a better person” or “I never would have known that without you.” We may not always think of this phenomenologically, but when we are called upon to draw attention to the changes, it seems that some of the phenomenological

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123 Here, as in my discussion of Husserl, “subjective” means relating to subjectivity, to a first personal perspective.
work has been done: we acknowledge the ways in which we quieted our commitments and took on someone else's, not as a matter of immediately adopting them, but as a result of considering other ways of being, of letting these possibilities act on us.

This is the kind of act that I think can be a clue to productively engaging more fraught, public spaces, where the harm that is being confronted and that needs to be unlearned is systemic, the pains are generations old, and the stakes are high for far more people. This may seem naive, but the works of Maria Lugones and bell hooks attest to their hope that loving kindness and self-recovery are elements of political action and resistance (Lugones 1997; hooks 2005, 1-5). Thus, my hopefulness places me in good company. Moreover, the analogy I draw in no way precludes space for anger or stalwart resistance. Rather, the point is to find clues on how best to proceed where we can. The way of quieting commitments to a particular view in order resist power imbalances points to resources that show how those who occupy relatively central positions can work towards becoming allies. It can also help make sense of the accrued understanding that can attend occupying marginalized positions.

If, on the phenomenological view, understanding the subjective origins of the lifeworld is hastened by exposures to anormalities, those occupying marginalized positions are confronted by a whole social structure based on foreign principles and assumptions. As Babbitt and Butler's work shows, experiencing layered oppression is often harmful—indeed, its harmfulness is principally why we want to undermine such power imbalances, regardless of the epistemic benefits that could accrue on this system—yet there can also be insights gained from having to live in multiple overlapping worlds
(Babbitt 1993, Butler 2004). These insights can be made sense of in terms of the assumptions sedimented in the lifeworld being reawakened. Thus, there is a case to make for people in marginalized positions to have an aptitude for phenomenological analysis that academic philosophers who typically come from privileged groups may not have. While phenomenology proper was a methodological innovation of the academy (and the style of writing attests to this!), it may be no accident that phenomenological resources have been used to challenge the linguistic turn—these challenges have come from philosophers and cultural theorists engaging with issues of overlapping identities and postcolonial concerns.124 Examples of such thinkers are Linda Martin Alcoff, Judith Butler, and Sonia Kruks (Alcoff 2001, 2006; Butler 2004; Kruks 2001). The insight is that attention to the nature of experience, of the first person perspective, and of the way things appear enables us to see how what we took as being the case was only one possibility, which can create space for making seemingly unintelligible experiences intelligible and fully experienceable.125

By attending to the relation between normality and anormality in our expectations, and tying this to an understanding of the lifeworld, we are able to understand how power relations affect our practices, including our knowledge practices. The critical work of uncovering these presuppositions offers some tools for destabilizing these power imbalances so that having diverse epistemic groups can begin to be fruitful.

124 By the linguistic turn, I mean the turn in philosophy to consider all self- and other-understanding as mediated or deferred linguistically. That is to say, there is no immediate access to oneself or another because our understanding is mediated by language.
125 Butler talks about experiences as unintelligible when there are no categories available for making sense of them to oneself or to others (2004). The point is that the experiences are real despite their unintelligibility.
4. Place of Possibility and Shared Standards

In the last few sections, one theme has repeated itself: the theme of possibility as required for phenomenological analysis, since this analysis presupposes the ability to take appearances as appearances rather than as actuality. This emerged in the discussion of subjectivity, of intersubjectivity, and of the lifeworld. It is interesting that centering possibility is important for phenomenology as well as for a feminist understanding of objectivity.

There are problems with leaving too little or too much place for untethered possibility. I addressed the problems of leaving too little room for possibility through my discussion of Babbitt's work, where she addresses the need for epistemology to address not only how to answer questions, but also how to uncover questions. Uncovering questions sometimes requires having a conception of how society might be, rather than only having a grasp of how it currently is. However, Babbitt and others are also sensitive to the ways an emphasis on untethered possibility or an affirmation of the insights gleaned from pure imagination are likely to reproduce oppressions and fail to be accurate (Babbitt 2005, Code 2001). This is because imagination seems in some respects tied to our actual conceptual and experiential resources.

In chapter 4, I addressed a phenomenological account of possibility that makes it an important aspect of inquiry, while at the same time tethering it to first person perspectives, and thus to a home world. Longino does not explicitly address issues of

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126 For a wonderfully rich look at the layers of misunderstanding and harm of colonialism and western feminist rejections of colonialism, see Nkiru Nzegwu's *Family Matters*, which looks at Nigerian Igbo social structures and their relation to post-colonial law (2005). See chapter 4 for an imagined dialogue between three Igbo women and three prominent Northern feminists.
possible methods and approaches beyond insisting on being fallibilist and pluralist (2001, 143-144, 207-208). She ties the provisional quality of knowledge claims to the locality (partiality) of their context of justification. However, I do not think she fully appreciates the need to incorporate imaginative possibility in her account of well-functioning epistemic communities. This is better handled through a phenomenological approach.

These last two topics—developing strategies for dismantling power imbalances and addressing the role of possibility in objective inquiry—lay the groundwork for my approach to developing shared standards, which Longino rightly notes are necessary for objectivity, when objectivity is understood as involving social features. They lay the groundwork because the work we do in uncovering our own privileged and/or marginalized positions situates us better to consider our commitments—each commitment on its own, and sometimes whole regions of commitments—as only some of the possible commitments. By modalizing our own commitments in this way, we are ready to become more open to the commitments of others.

Recall that Longino abandons her discussion of shared standards in more recent work, by preferring the thinner, more procedural appeal to public standards. I argued that, while this may be acceptable in research projects where there is little chance of unacknowledged value-laden assumptions affecting outcomes, this is not sufficient for those knowledge practices where there is a chance that these values may have a greater effect. If there is any doubt, then a knowledge practice or research program should be treated as though values are involved. If this is the case, appeal to non-controversial public standards will not adequately account for the work required to come to an
understanding of another’s perspective.

Thus, I maintain that something stronger must typically be appealed to, and this is better captured with the language of shared standards than thinly public standards. There is a step missing, however, between considering and understanding the standards of others and adopting their standards. I would be unwilling and possibly unable, for example, to adopt the standards of young-earth creationists or of expressly misogynistic researchers, even if I may be able to bracket some of my commitments in order to understand theirs.

We can find a clue as to how to build shared standards in epistemic communities by appeal to examples of political activism. Often, in successful activism, disparate groups of people come together to achieve some specific purpose. There is never a time of completely congruent methods, commitments, and approaches; nevertheless, where sufficient common ground can be developed, action can go forward. The way of achieving the collective goal—or some semblance of the goal, where the precise goal is in dispute—is developed as action is pursued.

Consider the statement of the Combahee River Collective (1977). The Combahee River Collective formed in 1974, following sharp disagreement with the National Black Feminist Organization. Initially, there was no clear focus, and the main emphasis was on consciousness-raising. In 1976, following shifting commitments towards political activism rather than simply consciousness-raising, the group’s focus crystallized, even as the statement documents the tensions that had arisen between 1974 and 1976. Some members who had been away during summers wanted to preserve the focus on
consciousness-raising. The collective writes:

In the fall, when some members returned, we experienced several months of comparative inactivity and internal disagreements which were first conceptualized as a lesbian-straight split, but which were also the result of class and political differences. During the summer those of us who were still meeting had determined the need to do political work and to move beyond consciousness-raising and serving exclusively as an emotional support group. At the beginning of 1976, when some of the women who had not wanted to do political work and who also had voiced disagreements stopped attending of their own accord, we again looked for a focus. We decided at that time, with the addition of new members, to become a study group. We had always shared our reading with each other, and some of us had written papers on Black feminism for group discussion a few months before this decision was made. We began functioning as a study group and also began discussing the possibility of starting a Black feminist publication. We had a retreat in the late spring which provided a time for both political discussion and working out interpersonal issues. Currently, we are planning to gather a collection of Black Feminist Writing. We feel that it is absolutely essential to demonstrate the reality of our politics to other Black women and believe that we can do this through writing and distributing our work. The fact that individual Black feminists are living in isolation all over the country, that our own numbers are small, and that we have some skills in writing, printing, and publishing makes us want to carry out these kinds of projects as a means of organizing Black feminists as we continue to do political work in coalitions with other groups (1977, 268-269).

There are three points I want to highlight in this passage. The first is the tension between needing a focus and wanting to represent the diverse views of members. The second is the way the focus was developed. The third is the justification of the focus, and the acknowledgment that further political activity is called for, done in coalition with different groups. Even though some members who preferred a focus on consciousness-raising ultimately left the collective, this dissolution of a previous group dynamic occurred over time, and with the acknowledgment that consciousness-raising remained an important activity. That is, the claim was not that those who left “of their own accord” had no contribution to make to the shared task of developing Black feminism. Rather, the
claim was that the focus of the group was shifting, such that the emphasis on consciousness-raising prevented political action, which many of the members were ready for, and wanted to center in the collective's self-understanding. Second, the focus was developed in accord with the interests and talents of diverse members of the collective. Some were writers, some had experience in publishing. Thus, they worked out a shared focus which emerged not only from social need, but from the interests and aptitudes of the members. The Combahee River Collective acknowledges the hard work that went into developing the shared focus—a retreat was needed to address personal disagreements and mend hard feelings. Third, the collective stresses the importance of other forms of political activism, and that these diverse forms of activism are pursued in coalition with other groups. This is consonant with their emphasis, in other parts of the statement, on the need to be in contact with progressive Black men. Unlike some White lesbian feminists, who, it was thought, had the luxury of promoting separatism from men as a goal, Black feminists needed and wanted to ally themselves with Black men to combat racism, as well as sexism (270). In acknowledging this explicitly in their statement, the Combahee River Collective stresses the importance of building coalitions across groups.

The example of the Combahee River Collective is an example of a political collective that has a broad epistemic aim, namely increasing the members' and others' understanding of the situation of Black women, in order to ameliorate conditions. Thus, they address epistemic issues in order to cope with political issues. In my work, I am more interested in privileging the epistemic aim, and I address the political and practical contexts needed for this. There is a looping effect: I have been explicit that my work
occurs within the context of feminist epistemology, which means that the aim is not truth
tout court; rather the aim to increase knowledge with an eye to gender and the material
conditions women live in. Thus, the focus on the epistemic side of political activity
occurs under the aegis of an explicitly political project. I don’t take this looping as
particularly problematic, since I gave, in chapters 1 and 2, independent grounds for being
suspicious of research programs that claim to be independent of any political agenda.

Nevertheless, I want to stress with the example of the statement of the Combahee
River Collective that developing shared standards in epistemic communities can take, as
a clue, the development of shared projects and goals that occurs in political activism. In
other words, understanding the activity of coming to a consensus need not be theorized
from a void: we have examples of successful consensus building.

Longino notes that it is constitutive of an epistemic community that there be a
commitment to empirical adequacy. While this forces her to exclude those young-earth
creationists who are not motivated by a belief that the evidence can be reconciled with
biblical literalism but rather deny evidence of evolution on the grounds that the evidence
is a test of faith, most communities seem committed to some degree of empirical
adequacy. For example, acknowledging that there was a mudslide or earthquake, despite
differences in belief about the origin of the disaster, seems to count as a fairly
uncontroversial starting place—this much is contained in Longino’s view. The
phenomenological contribution occurs when we build the resources for communicative
actions of listening and speaking that help structure work towards commonalities upon
this very basic footing. As I discussed in the section on the lifeworld and power relations,
we don't need phenomenology to tell us how to get along; it contributes to making sense of what happens when we succeed or fail in building common ground because it gives methods for making sense of the experiences themselves.

III. Critical Phenomenological Objectivity

In this section, I develop my positive account of objectivity, which I call critical phenomenological objectivity. As it has been throughout this work, my focus is on an account of objectivity that promotes knowledge in the sense of knowledge-productive activity. This sense of knowledge, as is particularly clear in Husserl, and also emerges in Longino's approach, has an eye to truth. In this sense, however, truth is the goal at the end of inquiry, and is not as central as in externalist accounts of knowledge, where the main concern is specifying the external conditions for rightly claiming that someone possesses a truth.\footnote{This is the sense of knowledge as content that Longino discusses (2001, 82-85).}

I also discussed the relation of values to good epistemic methods. While I do not maintain that all claims to knowledge are inextricably enmeshed with social values, I have maintained, with Kitcher, that developing significant questions—the questions with which the sciences in particular and knowledge practices in general are concerned—are elaborated with goals in mind. These goals typically involve substantive orientations to the world, and hence involve value-laden concerns. By contrast to Kitcher, who thinks this view of questions affects the context of inquiry and who maintains that there is no reason to suppose the context of justification is implicated in value-laden assumptions, I
agree with Longino that we cannot make this presumption in advance. She thinks this is because justification has often made use of substantive value-assumptions, and because discovery and justification are inextricably intertwined. I agreed with her first point, but argued that discovery and justification, while very closely related, could at least analytically be separated. The consequence is that I am not committed to finding all justification laden with social values, but am only committed to looking for values in each case. That is, I have argued that in the default approach, we should look for the place of values. One point on which I agree with Longino is that in addressing activity I do not restrict the scope of my claims to the context of inquiry or discovery. Justification is also an activity engaged in by people, and so is covered under my claims concerning objective inquiry. This is put in clear focus when we think of the phenomenological point that affirming a claim involves denying another claim. Thus, justifying belief in one claim rather than another refers to (at least some) of the other claims that are rejected. In order to do this, one must countenance (at least) some alternatives that are rejected. A consequence of this is that research should be structured so that there are alternatives which are brought to attention and which can therefore be rejected.\footnote{I am not saying that we need to foster bizarre research programs just in order to make sure alternatives are sought. However, when questions are “live”, research typically proceeds in more than one direction.}

Longino advances four norms that she argues are constitutive of objectivity. These are avenues for criticism, uptake of criticism, the presence of shared standards, and tempered equality of authority. In the background, though unexpressed in these norms, is the thought that for a community to count as an epistemic community, its members must be committed to empirical adequacy—that is, to accurately describing their (natural)
environment. Consequent on my discussion of some shortcomings of her view, and using
the tools of phenomenology, I come up with the following guidelines for inquiry that
promote objective inquiry:

1. Adopt critical perspectives, in order to foster engaged standpoints.
2. Seek transformative epistemic experiences, in order to destabilize entrenched
   power imbalances.
3. Build coalitions, in order to develop shared standards and commitments.
4. Foster relevant diversity, to enable pursuing 1, 2, and 3.
5. Pursue empirical adequacy without unwarranted reservations.

After discussing the meaning of each guideline and its merits, I will come back to what
feminists are looking for in an account of objectivity, and consider whether my guidelines
meet those expectations. First, however, I want to make it clear that although these norms
are and are meant to be more stringent than Longino's, I do not think they are necessary
or sufficient for knowledge, nor do I think they are sufficient to capture all of good
methods, and hence, to cover all that we might want to capture under objectivity. Given
the diversity and possibilities of conflict of methods in different areas of inquiry, from
history to physics to biology, I do not think there can be a general account of good
technical methods. Nevertheless, in addressing issues of social values and their
relationship to cognitive pursuits, I do think general guidelines are both specifiable and
helpful for offering an account of objectivity as good inquiry. I will give reasons why my
five guidelines are a good candidate for such a set.

1. Adopting Critical Perspectives

   In the context of considering feminist work and Husserlian phenomenology, I've
discussed the centrality to epistemology of taking a critical stance towards our beliefs and
their horizon. In order for individuals and epistemic communities to create avenues for criticism, as Longino calls for, we have to adopt critical perspectives ourselves. By adopting these perspectives, we can work towards understanding what standpoints are relevant for our inquiries, and work towards figuring out who occupies certain standpoints and so can offer particularly fruitful criticisms. Thus, in achieving this guideline we develop context-sensitive answers to the questions levelled against standpoint theory. It is also a way of seeing how, sometimes, the standpoints we most comfortably occupy may not be relevant to inquiry. For example, by taking up my feminist stance critically in particular contexts, I am sometimes able to see how a feminist standpoint is not relevant or is not particularly fruitful.

This guideline incorporates the politicized self-reflexivity that is central to feminist theorizing, whereby I submit my claims and practices to the scrutiny I bring to others' claims and practices. Thus, this guideline incorporates the attention to subjectivity that was lacking in Longino's account. However, it remains a socialized attention to subjectivity, since fostering engaged standpoints is the work of a community, and occurs in conversation and collective action. This guideline is a guideline for objectivity because the aim is epistemic rather than simply inclusive: the aim is to foster a better understanding of a cognitive endeavor, and, when this guideline is privileged, we see that the aim is well served by incorporating an engaged self-reflexivity.

For example, if I am trying to understand the phenomenon of female circumcision, and am inclined to find it incomprehensible, one way of adopting a critical perspective might be to consider social practices I am more familiar with which seem to
function similarly. This is likely best done in community. Considering analogies and
disanalogies may put me in a better position to understand the phenomenon in question,
through adopting a critical attitude to my beliefs. To better understand female
circumcision, I may consider the similarities and differences with two increasingly
popular plastic surgery procedures in North America: labial reconstructions and
hymneoplasty. 129 Drawing this analogy will likely allow me to see both analogous aspects
(surgical alterations of women's genitals with an aim to achieving aesthetic and moral
ideals) and disanalogous aspects (relative safety of procedures in North America versus
elsewhere, prevalence of the practice in some communities over others, presence of a
class dimension to access to the practice). This is helped by talking to others with
relevant experience. Increasing understanding on this issue does not reduce to increasing
the number of true claims I can recite, but involves having a better feel for the issues, and
knowing which true claims are important for understanding. This often happens when we
figure out who to talk to, who to trust on the issues, or when to stop talking. Part of
fostering critical perspectives is to identify the workings of ignorance, particularly
ignorance of privilege. Epistemologies have always tried to account for error, but they
have not always addressed ignorance directly (Tuana and Sullivan 2007). Critical
phenomenological objectivity takes uncovering ignorance seriously as part of fostering
critical perspectives. Increased understanding is facilitated by adopting critical
perspectives, and searching for engaged standpoints.

129 Hymneploasty is the surgical reconstruction of a hymen.
2. Seeking Transformative Epistemic Experiences

Often, the work of adopting critical perspectives will show how my grasp of contexts of inquiry are constrained by my more comfortable perspectives. I may find it hard to understand how someone else could view the situation in a way that is markedly different than my own. In order to then work towards either a predetermined common goal, or in order to generate a common goal, I may seek to understand how the other person could see the world as she does. In adopting a critical perspective, I consider beliefs and their sources. In seeking transformative experiences, I work at becoming open to being invested in a situation which is not my original one. It is easy to find ethical analogues to this: we do this when we become emotionally invested in someone else's well-being, and therefore come to see some situation from a new light. For example, Insite is a pioneering facility in Vancouver, Canada, where people with drug addictions are able to use hard drugs with clean materials under the supervision of nurses, as well ask frank questions. While both the former U.S. President George W. Bush and the current Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper are opposed to the facility, police, health care professionals, neighborhood residents, and family members of drug-addicted people support it. Many of these people had transformative experiences in coming to hold this stance. Some family members have discussed how Insite helps to keep their spouses, children, and siblings alive until they are ready to quit using. This is an experiential claim. This desire and similar kinds of experiences which humanize hard drug users have cleared a certain political and research space to test out hypotheses that facilities like Insite lower the costs and harms associated with drug use. Costs are lowered for
governments; harms are reduced for users and community members. Being open to the possibility that this experiment might be worthwhile followed transformative experiences that made it appear like an option. It has overwhelmingly been successful. These results may trigger further transformative experiences which lead to greater understanding of drug use and abuse.

The example of Insite is an interesting example of the intersection of ethical and epistemic issues. The rhetoric of those who want to close it is strictly ethical—it comes out of a more perfectionist approach to the government's duty. This ethical stance may be defensible—sorting through their ethics is not my main concern—but the problem is that it blinds them to the very measurable benefits of having the site open; the benefits are ones that even governments which proclaim an emphasis on efficiency and unburdening an overwhelmed health care system should acknowledge. Yet it is not simply a question of putting one's values aside and seeing the facts as they are. The point here is that without prior transformative experiences, whereby a sufficient number of people were able to humanize drug users or else had experience as themselves being drug users, there would have been no opportunity even to conduct this trial. Moreover, the value for all of humanizing hard drug users runs through the experiment: our evaluation of the benefits is purely in terms of government savings unless we take into consideration the importance of the reduced incidence of Hepatitis and HIV among the drug using populations, the accrued safety of the police officers, and the increased security of the neighborhood.

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130 Some of the successes include increased uptake into detoxification programs and addiction treatment, crime in the area has not increased and car break-ins have decreased, and there are fewer people injecting in public. These results are collected on the Vancouver Coastal Health website, but come from research in leading medical and psychological journals; the research was collected and evaluated by a third party, the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS research (http://www.vch.ca/sis/research.htm).
These benefits are value-laden. Some of them are more laden than others: we could think that one way to take care of drug users is to let them become infected with life-threatening infections, and refuse them health care. Failing to take this route indicates a value placed on humans lives; hopefully it also indicates a value placed on all particular human lives. These values are thus intertwined with epistemic practices of coming to know and understand parts of the social world.

If we take seriously both Kitcher's point that the significant questions whose answers we seek are tied to our collective goals and projects and the feminist and anti-oppression arguments to the effect that power imbalances operate at many levels of our collective consciousness, the importance of transformative epistemic experiences appears more central. Having the right kinds of experiences is important for objectivity. As we have seen historically, the mere desire to undermine our prejudices and assumptions is insufficient and needs to be supplemented by action towards undermining these assumptions.  

3. Building Coalitions

There needs to be some common ground in terms of shared standards of evaluation or shared goals for inquiry to be fruitful, and for criticism to be made relevant. The common ground cannot be presumed, however, but must often be worked towards. Through the example of the coalition building of the Combahee River Collective, I showed that there are many axes of overlap that can be helpful. Moreover, through the

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131 Of course, tying our virtue—including our epistemic virtue—to habituation rather than merely wanting to produce the right judgments is no newer than Aristotle.
process of coalition building for purposes of responsible activism, insights and conflicts are brought to light. By responsible activism, I mean the kind of activism that has a genuine and self-reflexive desire to improve some particular situation or set of situations. Irresponsible activism, as I understand it, involves pushing one agenda to the exclusion of all others. Eco-terrorism and violent anti-choice activities seem like obvious candidates for irresponsible activism. The former head of the Canadian Auto Workers' Union, Buzz Hargrove, showed his true colors when he came out against environmental standards which would shift automobile production to smaller models, thereby temporarily disadvantaging Canadian auto workers who make parts for large American cars, which would be affected by stronger environmental legislation proposals. Thus, he demonstrated that he was not committed to the long-term well-being of his constituency, or genuinely interested in some range of issues related to large unions—he would not acknowledge that his stance had problematic implications for greenhouse gas emissions. This of course is one of the dangers of activism: to be an activist for some cause involves privileging the importance of that cause, at least because time is spent there rather than elsewhere. However, more responsible activism leaves room for coalition-building. There are many grassroots examples of this, and the activities of the Combahee River Collective discussed above is one such example.

Coalition-building is of obvious relevance when a goal is political. Yet I maintain that it is also of relevance when the goal is epistemic. In building coalitions across epistemic communities, the coalitions are not just political, but also build across methods, approaches, and questions. As in political coalition-building, where differences are
worked through and commonalities articulated over time, which counts as part of the political process, when we have an eye to epistemic communities, this work is also considered part of the process. It is important to build coalitions in order to develop the shared standards and shared commitments that underlie discussion, consensus-building, and disagreement, which are central to producing knowledge. It is also a way of bringing together the privileged standpoints discussed in the first guideline, where we adopt critical perspectives, and in the second, where we seek transformative epistemic experiences.

4. Fostering Relevant Diversity

The guideline of fostering relevant diversity contributes to the achievement of the first three guidelines. Without diversity, there will be very limited possibilities for fostering enduringly critical perspectives. The dangers of exclusion, paternalism, and narrow-mindedness will lurk. There will be limited possibilities for seeking the kind of transformative epistemic experiences that undercut power imbalances, and there will be no coalitions to build across differences if there are no differences.

In support of Longino's call for diversity, I have defended the claim that fostering diversity is a properly epistemic norm, not only a political one. A norm is epistemic to the degree that it fosters our ability to pursue valuable knowledge. That does not mean that there are no counter instances where valuable knowledge was had in the absence of the norm.
Relevant diversity will, of course, be difficult to specify except perhaps in hindsight. This restriction is meant to foreclose some of the concern that I am calling for epistemic anarchy, where we need to include a representative from every brand of conspiracy theory, members of marketing firms, zoologists, and used car salespeople every time we build an epistemic community. Of course that is absurd. This is where the norm of fostering relevant diversity requires assistance from the other three guidelines, where discussions about whom to include could properly take place. This is not foolproof, nor should we expect our epistemology to guarantee that all and only the right people will be included—democratically motivated actions have never been the most efficient. Yet it is more robust than simply appealing to a requirement of shared standards, or equality of authority. By emphasizing the epistemic value of a diverse epistemic community, I mean to highlight the need to consider a diverse range of issues with which different individuals and groups will have differing levels of facility. For example, in the case of organized research, a series of questions will present themselves to those who take diversity seriously. In biomedical research ethics, there has been work on the ethical importance of seeking meaningful consent from study participants, particularly when a study focuses on an oppressed group. The call for diversity is also epistemic: framing the questions to pursue, in the construction of a research project, calls for talking to activists and a wide range of experts. The challenges attendant on medical research highlight this issue particularly well. As I’ve discussed a few times over the course of this work, early research into heart disease was marred by its focus uniquely on men. Mr. Fit, the major study, had no female participants. As it turns out, heart disease
manifests differently in women, and so specialized research is warranted (Schiebinger 1999). However, there may be other cases where to pursue analysis at a gendered level of specificity is discriminatory rather than illuminating. If a study is done on men and women, it may be that differences are expected. Not all differences are innocent of hierarchical valuation. For example, there have been studies into sex differences in intelligence, and into the differences’ genetic, hormonal, or other biophysical foundations. These often depend on polarized, static gender-stereotypes, and so assume the differences they’re trying to show (Wylie 2000, 169).

This example indicates a few things. The first is that it is imperative, at various stages of research, to engage with a diverse group of people. This allows for informed discussion about the epistemic and ethical concerns that arise at the beginning of a project, and as research progresses. For example, consulting with feminist activists (in the absence of or in addition to feminists on the research team) on the warrant for pursuing sex-differentiated research may bring to light concerns that the research group may not have considered. Consulting with those who may be less enamored with the possible explanatory power of a new discovery may help to get interesting research back on track.\textsuperscript{132} Thus, fostering diversity in our epistemic communities is an epistemic good.

While there are very close affinities between guideline 1, which encourages the adoption of critical views to foster engaged standpoints and 4, which encourages us to foster diversity, they are still different guidelines. This is because the first guideline points to a subjective feature, namely the critical attitude of an individual who recognizes

\textsuperscript{132} Keller’s recent work on the ubiquitous equivocation between traits and trait differences in genetic research is relevant (2008). I currently only know this work of hers from a conference talk, and genetics is not an area of expertise of mine, so I currently accept her claims at face value.
the need to seek out engaged standpoints, both by themselves adopting a critical
standpoint, and recognizing the limitations of that standpoint. The fourth guideline
emphasizes features of the group, whereby we recognize that while standpoints do not
necessarily map onto natural perspectives, nevertheless, by diversifying the natural
perspectives we improve our chances of accounting for the relevant standpoints.

5. Pursue Empirical Adequacy Without (Unwarranted) Reservations

Longino is right to emphasize that a criterion for being counted as an epistemic
community requires something like a commitment to accurately describing your
environment. While there may be an initial concern at restricting the scope of accuracy to
the empirical, which would seem to beg the question against naturalism,\(^{133}\) I think it is a
reasonable and not too onerous restriction: there need be no claim that all understanding
is empirical understanding to think that whatever truths we may seek which are not
empirical should also square with the empirical data.

Where I stray from Longino, however, is including this aim to empirical adequacy
as one of the explicit guidelines. This has the pragmatic advantage of helping to undercut
criticisms of exaggerated proceduralism. Where there is no defensible reason to deny
empirical evidence, our claims to knowledge are constrained by them. Incorporating the
aim to empirical adequacy is also true to the phenomenological basis of my account of
objectivity. Since in phenomenology, we seek to account for appearances just as they
appear, adequately capturing appearances is central.

\(^{133}\) This begs the question against naturalized epistemology because it assumes what is trying to be proved,
namely that the scope of any inquiry must be restricted by the limits of the empirical.
The restriction to pursuing empirical adequacy without *unwarranted* reservation is meant to incorporate the feminist insight that some bodies of data are tied to sexist bias of the researcher or research team, and thereby yield biased results. Thus, for example, there is reason to resist so-called empirical evidence that Blacks are less intelligent than Whites, and that women are less capable of doing math than men are. This resistance is not a simple recalcitrance in the face of evidence. Rather, it is motivated by a desire to either redirect research, as Kitcher would have it, or to shift prevailing views so that alternative paths or explanations are made available which may yield different results. Anderson's work on women's well-being following divorce is useful in this regard (2004). When measures only addressing material well-being were used in studies to determine the impact of divorce on women, studies conclusively showed that women were materially worse off, and so it was concluded that divorce was bad for women. When studies were redesigned to incorporate women's sense of well-being, and their feelings of regret or satisfaction in leaving, women were overwhelmingly found to be better off even though they recognized that they were materially worse off. Thus, the aim was not to simply deny empirical data. Rather, the aim was to see what kind of data different methods would yield.

IV. Orienting Critical Phenomenological Objectivity

1. Five Issues

In section 4 of Chapter 1, I addressed five issues about which choices must be made, either explicitly or tacitly. Here, I discuss how critical phenomenological
objectivity is oriented in relation to the issues. The issues are whether or not to adopt a
naturalized epistemology, and what kind, establishing the relationship between
individuals, community, and the world, emphasizing discovery or justification,
emphasizing inclusion or exclusion, and stressing pragmatic considerations or truth.

I understand my conception of objectivity as compatible with a broadly
naturalized epistemology. An epistemology is broadly naturalized when its norms are
constrained by our actual knowledge productive practices, but where these are understood
widely. We know many things in many ways: when our children don’t feel well, that the
chicken is cooked, the velocity of light and the appearance of cancer cells. It is also
broader in the sense that Longino maintains: it is naturalized in the sense of taking
humans as continuous with the natural world, and as situated, embodied beings. This does
not preclude our ability to adopt transcendental stances, where the transcendental move in
Husserl was considered akin to a critical move, and was the result of bracketing our
commitments. By naturalizing transcendental philosophy, I reject Husserl’s claim that we
can bracket all of our commitments at once. However, in rejecting this possible outcome,
I nevertheless preserve the aspiration to and the value of bracketing spheres of influence
at some times and for some purposes.

This naturalism is compatible with the emphasis on imaginative transformative
experiences that Babbitt stresses, and which I incorporate. It is compatible because some
of our knowledge (some self-knowledge and social knowledge) has emerged as a result of
such transformations, and thus there is epistemic ground for considering the different
ways in which such changes would be fruitful. Also, while a strictly naturalized approach
seems to leave little room for the innovation of our norms, by broadening the naturalism, it incorporates innovation in epistemic norms. While this certainly renders the naturalism more vague, it is nevertheless able to offer minimal constraints on the development of guidelines, as well as to stave off a call to foundationalism because naturalized epistemology begins in *medias res*.

My conception of objectivity builds explicitly on the complex interactions between individual, community, and world that I developed in Chapter 4, on Husserlian phenomenology. The guidelines I develop are connected in such a way as to variously highlight the role of subjectivity in its relation to the community and to the world, the role of intersubjectivity and its relations, and the role of the world and its relations to subjectivity and intersubjectivity. It does this through thematizing the different starting points: sometimes, adopting a critical perspective is the first step, which highlights relevant standpoints, clearing the way for offering empirically adequate accounts of phenomena which also undermine power inequalities. Other times it is the subject's pursuit of diversity which is required to begin inquiry. Still other times, we begin with coalitions and shared standards, and pursue the possibilities for individual knowledge claims. By incorporating these diverse elements, critical phenomenological objectivity remains committed to a layered understanding of the role of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the world in our knowledge productive practices.

Though I discussed the impossibility of preserving a sharp distinction between discovery and justification in chapter 1, I did adopt Hoyningen-Huene's analytical (phenomenological) distinction. Those who deny the distinction consider themselves
immune from taking a stance on whether their views are more appropriate to one side than the other. Since I maintain a lean distinction, I must orient myself with relation to discovery versus justification. Like Longino, I consider practices of justification to count as justification. Insofar as justification involves practices, my account of objectivity is applicable to discovery and justification. However, to the extent that justification involves universalized, timeless proof, my conception of objectivity has little to say. Yet, if we consider the ways in which accepted theories are taken back up in discourse over the years, only small regions of our epistemic commitments would remain untouched by the applicability of the guidelines. What I mean is that when theories are re-interrogated—not necessarily in order to doubt them, but in order to consider their fit with other theories or other concerns—their genealogy becomes relevant again, and so they are treated as part of justificatory practices. Thus, I can see how some of the truths of mathematics and of logic seem to tell against the force of my guidelines without thereby thinking that my guidelines lose their normative force. This is because my guidelines are meant to be applicable to practices, including justificatory practices.

Typically, epistemology has been more concerned with ensuring that falsehoods are excluded than ensuring that diverse views are included. Feminist epistemologies often fall on the side of emphasizing inclusion, even if it is to the detriment of their theory's ability to exclude falsehoods. I too fall on the inclusive side of this issue. This is partly for corrective reasons. Since I think we should take a modest stance in relation to the ability of our views—including our claims about theories of knowledge—to

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134 This has been made clear to me given the frequency with which excluding young-earth creationists is considered the first challenge of my view, in question periods at conferences.
withstand the test of time, we should view our theory building as responsive to the errors of past theories, as well as clearing the way for the future. This is not new: for Bacon and in the early days of the Royal Society of science, scientists saw themselves as laying the empirical foundation for the theorizing of later ages. Thus, their recommendations for what practices were and were not scientifically defensible were historicized. Similarly, following centuries of excess attention to exclusion in epistemology, I call for inclusiveness.

Despite this call to inclusiveness, by emphasizing a pragmatic aim of epistemology (rather than a purely truth-amplification aim), I can undercut the risk that powerful but harmful falsehood-mongering will be included. I adopt as my main pragmatic aim the reduction of harm, particularly of epistemic harms. Again, I deny that this practical aim makes my account of objectivity at odds with epistemology: at many points in the history of western philosophy, truth has been allied with utility. Bacon thought we should pursue useful knowledge. I accept this aim, though I deny the aspiration to uncritical power over nature. More recently, feminists have called for an emphasis on knowledge that has broad rather than narrow usefulness. For example, there has been more spending in North America on expensive, high-tech medical equipment and relatively little spending on research into the prevention of disease.

This emphasis on practical concerns does not exclude a concern for truth. Instead, it destabilizes the implicit claim in epistemology that, when we are concerned about knowledge, we are only concerned about producing truths. Since our knowledge productive practices are tied to the significant questions we want answered, and since
these significant questions are determined in social contexts and with social needs in
mind, we cannot promote truth instead of practical concern. By promoting less harmful
knowledge practices, I am still promoting practices that produce truths. I share traditional
epistemologists’ worry that untethered wishful thinking is not a substitute for truth.
However, as I will show with the example of witchcraft studies in the next chapter, our
knowledge productive practices which proceed in accordance with my guidelines both
reduce harm and typically produce knowledge. This may not always be the case, but if it
is sometimes or can be thought as typically the case, I take that as sufficient for now.

2. Feminist Desiderata

In chapter 2, I considered different feminist approaches to issues of objectivity,
and addressed the feminist desiderata that emerged. These include (1) keeping the
epistemic salience of power relations in the foreground, (2) addressing the epistemic
relevance of gendered locations, (3) offering an account of subjectivity to make sense of
objectivity, and (4) working to overcome the bias paradox and with it, relativism. A final
aim (5) was to keep the pragmatic, practice-centered needs of feminist theory at the
foreground, since the aim of all feminist theory is improving the lives of women. Critical
Phenomenological Objectivity meets these various expectations.

All five guidelines work, in different ways, to keep power relations salient
throughout inquiry. In adopting critical perspectives, we acknowledge the need to self-
reflexively address our and others’ assumptions in order to foster engaged standpoints.
Standpoints are, by their nature, explicitly situated with regard to power relations—that is
how they differ from natural perspectives. In seeking transformative epistemic experiences, we acknowledge that what appear as possibilities often so appear only under certain circumstances. In order to work towards just knowledge, we need to be in imaginative spaces where just knowledge appears possible. That means working to undermine assumptions of power imbalance, which often requires transformative experiences to understand. Building coalitions and fostering diversity both keep power imbalances salient by recognizing that the shared standards needed for inquiry and criticism to be fruitful can be achieved through collective action, and that a good way to ensure the first three guidelines are met is by first ensuring diversity of perspective. The fifth guideline, concerning the pursuit of empirical adequacy, builds in a caveat that empirical adequacy be pursued without *unwarranted* reservation. Thus, all five guidelines work to keep the epistemic salience of power visible.

The second consideration for a feminist epistemology, keeping gender salient, is a particular case of the concern to keep power imbalances in view. It is a special case of power because gender is understood as hierarchical. Thus, to be gendered female is already to be disempowered. By privileging the generic requirement of keeping power in view over the particular goal of keeping gender in view, I aim to avoid claiming that there is something essential about gender oppression, or to allow other power imbalances to fade from view, both problems feminists would find unacceptable.

The third feminist requirement, developing an account of subjectivity in order to account for objectivity, is addressed through the first three guidelines. The first guideline of fostering critical perspectives addressed the place of socially located but critically
aware subjects in relation to one another. Allied with the goal of building coalitions across differences, we can understand the first guideline as requiring respectful interaction. It is not only the group that is respected, but the individual. By emphasizing the role of transformative experiences, the guidelines allow us to emphasize the constitutive role of subjectivity, which was central to the phenomenological understanding of inquiry and of subjectivity developed in chapter 3. The constitutive role of subjectivity is socialized by the other guidelines which explicitly refer to community, in fostering diversity, fostering critical perspectives, and building coalitions across interests and needs.

Critical phenomenological objectivity is also able to confront the bias paradox and avoid relativism. Recall that the bias paradox results from deploiring the partiality of patriarchal perspectives, which oppress women, while simultaneously denying the possibility of impartiality. If knowledge is perspectival, there are no independent grounds for evaluating claims. If there are no independent grounds for evaluating claims, then feminists cannot maintain that women really are oppressed under current conditions. As Antony puts it, “if we don’t think it’s good to be impartial, then how can we object to men’s being partial?” (2001, 114). Antony proposes that we avoid the paradox by reaffirming a realist naturalized epistemology, and promoting those biases—that is, those features of our cognitive capacities or social location which incline us in some epistemic direction—that promote truth (2001). Antony thinks we can avoid thick political bias. Solomon disagrees with the need to reaffirm the value of impartiality, and casts the value of biases—what she incorporates among “decision vectors”—entirely in terms of their
truth-productiveness in particular research settings (2001, 138-142). However, neither of these views is able to account for the tenacity of ignorance, which is central to the bias of those with institutional power (Mills 2007). Longino addresses the issue procedurally, supporting those biasing factors which contribute to the satisfaction of the norms of objectivity.

Neither Antony nor Solomon considers the pursuit of truth an aim that involves ethical or political consideration. In other words, to the extent that truth is maximized, epistemic goals are satisfied. In terms of objectivity or good method, those methods that maximize truth count as objective. I have argued throughout that objectivity should be understood in a more robustly ethical and political way. Since significant questions are developed in light of ethically and politically inflected goals, and since the nature of the questions has a bearing on the methods which are subsequently pursued, objectivity properly involves more than the pursuit of truth. That is, not all pursuit of truth will count as objective.

How does this bear on the bias paradox? The solution to the paradox of reaffirming a commitment to truth, and accepting those biases which promote it is insufficient. By contrast, my five norms do not dissolve the paradox but recast it as a problem to address in particular contexts. Consider the simultaneous insistence that we know women are oppressed and that we know impartiality is generally impossible and typically undesirable. My five guidelines are able to address what needs to be the case for us to affirm both those claims or, in other words, to affirm the superiority of the reflexive, engaged view of the feminist stance on the question of the oppression of women.
It is not simply in virtue of being reflexive that critical phenomenological objectivity is able to resolve the bias paradox. Through building coalitions with different groups, fostering critical perspectives, and seeking transformative experiences, it aims to uncover both the biasing features of others’ views and our own, as well as defending or criticizing these features, with an eye to both justice and empirical adequacy. The positions and viewpoints which recommend themselves by meeting the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity are epistemically better in two related respects. In the first, they are better because they are engaged, whereas their rivals are not. They are engaged in the sense of being implicated in the consequences of pursuing certain knowledge productive practices. As with grassroots movements, where the commitment comes from identifying the consequences of failing to act, implementing the guidelines does not allow us to defer responsibility for knowledge. Taking responsibility for the implications, particularly by being yourself critically invested in them, positions you to uncover the tenacious ignorance of positions of institutional power—this is the second respect in which critical phenomenological objectivity undercuts the force of the bias paradox. It enables us to uncover persistent systemic ignorance by explicitly engaging with the epistemic implications of power relations at the individual and communal level—we start from the assumptions of power inequality. This allows us to address the stakes involved in maintaining ignorance, and so identify the problems in the claims of the powerful. It also allows us to avoid dogmatism: critical phenomenological objectivity can lead to identifying that there is no power imbalance, or that it is not distorting knowledge claims.
Developing practices in accordance with the guidelines also positions us better to uncover our own privileged and other distortive lenses, because of the nature of the critical community that was developed. This is how the paradox is lessened to a tension. After this work, we can appeal to the truth of some claims. A hasty appeal to truth, as Antony calls for, may resolve the bias paradox in form, but does so by glossing over other issues. My approach, while it leaves a worry as to how we will grasp these truths in light of disagreement, acts as a needed corrective to the inclination of some epistemologies to underestimate the complexity of knowledge productive practices.

The final feminist requirement of objectivity is that it remain committed to producing pragmatic benefits. That is, it involves rejecting a call to pure theory and continuing to work at improving the condition of women and other oppressed groups. The potential of my guidelines to contribute to practical feminist projects emerges by comparison with the methodology proposed by Li Xiaojiang, a Chinese woman activist and theorist of transnational encounters (in Shu-mei Shih 2005, 22).135 As Shih discusses it, Li calls for

(1) the transposition of gender positions wherein men are also studied and male perspectives are considered; (2) the return of issues to their original contexts, that is, shifting the perspective of one moment and space to that of another moment and space; (3) an analysis of the simultaneity of loss and gain for all ideologies and paradigms in order to 'multidimensionalize' them, that is, to include multiple

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135 Transnational encounters invoke an epistemic dimension since part of what is at stake is understanding who the interlocutor is, and what she is saying. The potential for contact between my view and Li's view is much more complicated than I am able to present here. Li has explicitly rejected Western feminism—which would include mine—on grounds that it either addresses the experience of Chinese women as the same experience Western women have faced, only Chinese feminism is delayed, or it exoticizes Chinese women and thus undermines any obligation to understand the historical and cultural particularities of Chinese women's lives because the experiences are incommensurable. Thus, Li would see my appeal to commonality as a co-optation; I expect she would be partly—but only partly—right. I think I can legitimately appeal to her methodological claims because I am only interested in beginning a dialogue, with the understanding that unequal knowledge and power relations will immediately come into play.
and contradictory perspectives. As can be inferred from these procedures, the key
to transnational communication is the ability and willingness to situate oneself in
both one's own position and the Other's position, whether on the plane of gender,
historical contexts, or discursive paradigms (22).

These elements are compatible with my view. Indeed, I think longer consideration than I
am able to offer here would show that the further specification using my guidelines of
these three elements Li develops could be helpful. The inclusion of male perspectives,
and attempting to adopt their perspectives are covered by my call to incorporating
diversity, fostering critical perspectives, and aspiring to transformative epistemic
experiences. These three guidelines of mine allow us to uncover the possibilities and
limitations of seeing for a different gendered perspective; this involves building coalitions
with men's groups and men's studies programs. Returning issues to their contexts allows
me the re-emphasize the phenomenological thrust of my view, and is an element of
adopting critical perspectives. The call to "multidimensionalizing" ideologies and
paradigms by considering the losses and gains is also addressed in the critical
collaboration of critical phenomenological objectivity. Thus, the elements of a
methodology, which is useful in the context of transnational encounters and their critical
study is compatible with the guidelines I have developed. This is an example of their
potential for yielding pragmatic benefit.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, I developed my positive account of objectivity. This positive
account is motivated by the insight of Longino's four norms of objectivity developed in
her critical contextual empiricism, and by the insights of phenomenological method. My
view, critical phenomenological objectivity, comprises five guidelines for inquiry. These are the call to fostering critical perspectives in order to foster engaged standpoints, aspiring to transformative epistemic experiences in order to uncover the workings of power in our perceptions, building coalitions to develop overlapping standards, fostering diversity to enable the first three guidelines, and pursuing empirical adequacy to avoid endorsing falsehoods. While Longino understands her norms of objectivity as constitutive of objectivity and as required for knowledge, the scope of my project is narrower: these are the guidelines for responsible inquiry, which is what I mean by objectivity. I am therefore better able to countenance counterexamples from the history of sciences where worthwhile knowledge was developed in the absence of these guidelines. However, that weakens my view since it does not show that all knowledge requires these guidelines. I am satisfied with this. The guidelines nevertheless have normative force because what feminists and others have shown we should be interested in is knowledge which is of value to persons, and so it becomes an epistemic task to establish what that knowledge is. This is where the guidelines come in. I addressed how critical phenomenological objectivity is oriented in relation to issues about naturalized epistemology, subjectivity and intersubjectivity, justification and discovery, inclusion, and pragmatic versus truth concerns. Finally, I addressed how well my view meets the requirements of a feminist epistemology which emerged in chapter 2. In the next and final chapter, I will apply the guidelines to a case study to demonstrate their normative force, following which I will address potential criticisms and offer replies.
Chapter 6: Critical Phenomenological Objectivity Tested

The aim of this chapter is to offer further support for the view developed in the last chapter. To this end, I develop a case study, followed by clarifications and responses to some possible criticisms of critical phenomenological objectivity. The case study I develop concerns the epistemic and political context of witchcraft theories in seventeenth century England. I will discuss this historical and philosophical context before situating the history in a contemporary philosophical setting. This will allow me to discuss how the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity yield insight both into the seventeenth century and into the contemporary witchcraft studies. In particular, I show that employing the guidelines makes sense of a gendered analysis of witchcraft. In the clarifications and replies, I address the possible criticisms that my view is insufficiently naturalized, too demanding, and even unwarranted.

I. Case Study: Historical Aspects

1. Women as Scholars

There were three broad camps involved in scholarly witchcraft debates. First, the Royal Society and other High Church theologians and scientists, like Joseph Glanvill and the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, staunchly defended the existence of witchcraft as the only way to explain the preternatural phenomena of hauntings and other mischief.136

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136 The category of preternatural causation is hard to demarcate since its meaning shifted over the centuries, and ultimately disappeared (Daston 1994). It was meant to cover those events which were inexplicable in natural terms, but which did not exhibit a Christian God's ability to effect change without a material medium. This was thought to be the case with genuine miracles, wrought through...
Their motivation involved steering the course between Thomas Hobbes's skepticism and the mysticism of the radical Protestants. The intended consequence was preserving the authority of Anglicanism, both as theology and as politics. Hobbes and other skeptical thinkers like Margaret Cavendish argued against the need to appeal to witchcraft in order to explain the putative preternatural phenomena, and claimed the best explanations were natural.\(^{137}\) The third group was made up of radical protestant alchemical philosophers, such as John Webster. Like Cavendish, Webster maintained that appeals to witches and demon pacts were unnecessary to account for all the wonders of nature. Unlike the more skeptical tone of Cavendish's arguments, Webster appealed to the divine within nature as sufficient to explain what Glanvill and his Royal Society witch-believers wanted to explain.

These scholarly debates concerning witchcraft occurred within the context of early modern Baconian science. By contrast both to Aristotelian science, which understood science as mainly addressing universals and denying the scientific significance of particulars, and to Cartesian science which privileged the demonstrative, Bacon emphasized the experimental character of the new science. In order to avoid theorizing prematurely, researchers ought to attend to peculiar cases which did not easily fit into established categories. This explains the attention to the fantastical (Daston 1994).\(^{138}\)

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137 There may be some tension between Cavendish's experimentalist tendency, and her Hobbesianism, according to which knowledge cannot be produced by experiments.

138 For a discussion of the caution with which seventeenth century scientists treated supernatural fantastical cases, see Shapiro 1983, 200.
Common fantastical events which needed explanation included tales of witches flying through the air to Sabbats, causing death and disease inexplicably, suckling demons on hidden teats, and causing men to become impotent. In the Middle Ages and through the sixteenth century, the emphasis in discussions of witchcraft was on these harmful actions. In the scholarly discussions of the seventeenth century, while particular cases continued to be addressed as part of a properly scientific method, the emphasis of concern was on the heresy involved in making a pact with the devil. While earlier concern was with acting as a witch, the later concern was with *being* a witch, that is, with the compact with the devil itself (Shapiro 1983, 195). The actions therefore become subordinated to the metaphysical and theological issues.

Here I leave Webster aside, and focus on the correspondence between Cavendish and Glanvill. Both adopt the experimental spirit of the age, agreeing that grand hypotheses and theory building will have to be left to future ages (Glanvill, in a letter to Cavendish, cited in Broad 496). In this spirit, both approach knowledge probabilistically, and do not make claims to absolute knowledge. Thus, one may make hypotheses before all the evidence is in, provided one does this in probabilistic terms, and provided it is somehow useful or beneficial to do so.

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139 Sabbats were orgiastic parties with the Devil.
140 The shift in the courts rather than in the academic publications admits of a slightly different analysis. The motivation for looking for signs of a pact were attendant on stricter rules of evidence. In seventeenth century England, diabolical property crimes ceased being pursued; only grave crimes like murder or causing serious illness to humans warranted trials. These trials called for stricter evidence (Holmes 2002).
141 For a discussion of the disagreements between Glanvill and Webster, see Jobe (1981).
142 In the seventeenth century, knowledge was understood as a continuum, ranging from “fictional” and “uncertain”, through “probable”, to the apex of “morally certain” (Shapiro 1983, 4).
Glanvill's express aim is to show that the existence of witches is not improbable. Yet, in a letter to Cavendish, he proclaims that some demonstration of the effects of witchcraft “to be as great demonstrations as matter of Fact can bear” (in Broad 496). Cavendish makes a skeptical claim in her published *Philosophical Letters*, saying that relations of demons, genies, and souls upon leaving our bodies are more “Poetical Fictions, then (sic) Rational Probabilities; containing more Fancy, than Truth and Reason” (1664, 216-217, in Broad, 496). Thus, Cavendish and Glanvill evaluate the probability of there being witches very differently. Glanvill's motivation for affirming their existence is that we often find truths strange until we become accustomed to them by longer acquaintance (in Broad, 496); Cavendish thinks natural phenomena, art and deception are more plausible explanations. Though it is tempting to discount Glanvill's credibility outright, he is pursuing his inquiry in a genuine scientific fashion because he has a great many case-studies and much observational data, whereas Cavendish had neither the extensive training, nor the first hand experience of the phenomena in question. In this respect, though Glanvill draws the wrong conclusions, his scientific methods may well be more laudable than Cavendish's.

However, consider the treatment of one example. The famous case of the “Drummer of Tedworth” was advertised by Glanvill. Broad recounts the events:

A poltergeist haunts the house of the Mompesson family in the English town of Tidworth. The haunting begins in 1662 after John Mompesson, a local militia man, arrests a drummer-vagrant, William Drury, who had been unlawfully requesting money from the locals. When Drury is imprisoned and his drum confiscated, the Mompesson family home is subsequently terrorized...

In 1663, Glanvill himself visited the Mompesson house in order to
investigate reports of the phantom drummer. For half an hour, Glanvill was a first-hand witness to scratching noises in the family beds, strange dog-like panting noises, and the shaking of windows (Broad 497).

There is a wealth of testimony, thousands of “eye and ear-witnesses, and those not of the easily deceivable vulgar only, but of wise and grave discerners, and that when no interest could oblige them to agree together in a common Lie” (Glanvill 1667, in Broad 497). It would be beyond plausibility, Glanvill maintains, to think that every case was explainable by deceit. Thus, the best explanation he thought was that these events result from supernatural agents.

Cavendish is not convinced. She thinks that Glanvill has privileged the senses over Reason, and maintains that these events have a natural cause, even if unknown to wise men, just as ordinary acts of magic and juggling have natural explanations for those who know the tricks. Cavendish is inclined to adopt a promissory naturalism, though she has no reason to suppose a naturalistic account in this case, and so her naturalism is in some respect no better founded than Glanvill's appeal to witchcraft. Nevertheless, she analogizes from natural cases. In her published work, Cavendish notes “that many a good, old honest woman hath been condemned innocently, and suffered death wrongfully, by the sentence of some foolish and cruel Judges, merely upon this suspition of Witchcraft, when as really there hath been no such thing” (Broad 498). Many acts that seem marvelous are really just easy tricks.

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143 The inconsistencies in the spelling of “Tidworth” appear in the works cited.
144 Juggling was a secret art until Reginald Scot devoted thirty pages in his skeptical Discoverie of Witchcraft to explaining how it is done (Broad 498).
Glanvill is appalled at the suggestion:

But yet, Madam, your grace may please to consider, That there are things done by mean and despicable persons, transcending all the Arts of the most knowing and improv’d Virtuosi, and above all the Essays of known and ordinary Nature. So that we either must suppose that a sottish silly old Woman hath more knowledge of the intrigues of Art, and Nature, than the most exercised Artists, and Philosophers, or confess that those strange things they performe, are done by confaederacy with evil Spirits, who, no doubt, act those things by the ways and applications of Nature, though such as are to us unknown (in Broad 498–499).

A more plausible explanation than thinking dull-witted women could dupe a fellow of the Royal Society involves appealing to the forces of the Devil. What is going on in this aspect of Glanvill and Cavendish's disagreement? Given the many things that Cavendish reports on her own sex, and the effects on her scholarly pursuits of being and having been educated as a woman, we may suppose that she more readily feels a certain kinship with accused women, though she has never met them.

There are parallels here with a skeptical Inquisitor in continental Europe, Salazar, who also came to believe that virtually none of the accused witches he encountered throughout the Inquisition were witches. Salazar countered the accusations of his fellow Inquisitors, Becerra and Valle (1980, in Green and Bigelow 1998). In their discussion of the virtues exhibited by Salazar, by contrast to his colleagues, Green and Bigelow attribute something like sympathy to him: he started with the assumption that the people accused were much like him, and attempted to understand the accusations and confessions by imagining himself in the roles occupied by the accused and their immediate accusers (Green and Bigelow 1998, 209). This is in contrast to his colleagues,

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145 He did not necessarily doubt that witches existed, which would have been heretical, but doubted in individual cases.
and to Glanvill, who could not form any sympathy with the accused, and could thereby not understand the phenomena of accusation and confession. Glanvill's trust in the experience of his senses blinded him to the role his reasoning was playing in reaching conclusions on the basis of his observations. Cavendish was not as likely to think women as silly as they were regarded (Broad 2007, 499).146 Cavendish, through sympathy born of her experience, was not compelled by the reports of observational evidence.

Cavendish's skepticism was not particularly thorough: if we are inclined to side wholeheartedly with Cavendish, Broad reminds us that Cavendish was a panpsychist, and that it is not obvious that Cavendish's panpsychism is preferable to Glanvill's spiritualism, where matter was mechanical, though moved by external spiritual forces. Indeed, the views of the Cambridge Platonists and Royal Society members eventually led to an exclusively physical science, which, despite many problems, often affords us great predictive powers.147

Though Glanvill was one of the few to carry on a correspondence with Cavendish, her work was generally ignored or derided (Keller 1997, 449). Yet her criticisms of the institutional uses of the new science are valuable. As Eve Keller writes, her commitment to organic materialism allowed her to offer a “stranger's account” and identify the social situatedness of the increasingly dominant mechanical science; “although the gender-based

146 Though Cavendish became the Duchess of Newcastle, and was the daughter of a propertied gentleman, she was left without a dowry upon his death and never had a philosophical tutor as many other prominent women writers did (O'Neill 2001, xii).
147 I would need to do a great deal more historical work to make evaluative claims about Cavendish's panpsychism. However, given the ecologically fruitful work of some environmental theorists, like the work of Val Plumwood, which is written in a largely vitalist tone makes me hold off on condemning Cavendish's view as silly.
intellectual and institutional constraints she lived under denied her the ability to explore
the uses of experiment, those very constraints gave her the opportunity to consider the
practice and the epistemological claims of experimental science from the intellectual
margins” (451). Thus, Keller notes, Cavendish's criticisms of the new science involve a
“gender-inflected”—which is not to say a thoroughly feminist—analysis (452). In her
exchanges with Glanvill, the main thing to note is Cavendish's sensitivity to gendered
aspects of witchcraft accusations, which Glanvill is unable, because unwilling, to see. The
inability to see the workings of gender at the time of the witchcraft trials and from the
perspective of writing its history is also apparent when we consider women as witnesses.

2. Women as witnesses

Clive Holmes cites Keith Thomas, a prominent witchcraft historian of the
seventies, who wrote “The idea that witch-prosecutions reflected a war between the sexes
must be discounted, not least because the victims [of the so-called witches] and witnesses
were themselves as likely to be women as men.” (Holmes 2002, 303). Thomas's point is
that the social roles associated with witchcraft did not map neatly onto sex, and so a
feminist analysis is uncalled for. In his article, Holmes pursues the question of why there
were so many female witnesses in witchcraft trials, by contrast to trials concerning theft
or other crimes. Instead of accepting that the mere parity in numbers was sufficient to
discount the warrant of a feminist analysis, he considers whether a gendered analysis will
help us better understand the practice of witnessing. That is, he pursues his historical research while open to the possibility that gender plays an explanatory role, and finds that it does. The gendered aspect of witnessing is complex, but two salient points concern the shift in the nature of criminal prosecutions of witchcraft, and the role of physical marks of diabolism.

As long as witchcraft prosecutions were more focused on damage to livestock, as before 1660, men were more frequent witnesses (ibid. 304-306). However, after 1660, the courts were reluctant to pursue charges unless there was mysterious illness leading to death, or evidence of direct involvement in diabolical practices such as marks on the body; property offenses continued to occur and bother neighbors, but they did not typically figure in trials. Because the offenses that were raised in the courts had to do with illness and death, and the sick room and deathbed were women’s spheres, women were more frequently called upon to testify than they had been concerning the outdoor property offenses against livestock. However, Holmes shows, the decision to turn local suspicion into official testimony remained the decision of local men (308). Thus, in terms of being regular witnesses to diabolical illness and death, women were largely passive actors in the prosecutions.

Women also played a more active, if rarer, role as witnesses in witchcraft trials. It was thought that the Devil drew blood from the witch to seal their pact, and left her a demon animal who suckled at this extra teat. Midwives and matrons were commonly

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148 As elsewhere in my work, a gendered analysis is akin to a feminist analysis.
called upon to inspect the accused for the mark of this teat, given their expert knowledge of women's bodies, particularly of their genitals which were considered the most likely locations for an extra teat (313-314). This practice should have fallen into disfavor, following the Lancashire case of 1634, where four women were accused and found to have such marks upon preliminary examination. They were brought to London and inspected by ten midwives, overseen by distinguished physicians. One woman was found to have a mark, explicable in natural ways, and the other three were found to have no such mark. Holmes determines that though women played an active role in the prosecution of witches by being the experts seeking these marks, this does not discount a gendered analysis: the women's testimony was sometimes overriden, or had no abiding effect—as with the testimony of women villagers about sickbed diabolism, we are referred back to male actors. Moreover, the emphasis on women's genitals “reinforces the gender-oriented academic theory of witchcraft, and resonates with the more overt continental discussions of women's insatiable lust as a major element in their compact and relationship with Satan” (314). Holmes concludes that even when we take into consideration the fact that women played a proportionately increasing role in witchcraft prosecutions in the seventeenth century in England, this does not eliminate gender or misogyny as concepts relevant for understanding witchcraft beliefs and phenomena.
3. Women as Witches

Another type of case that is thought to be difficult for a gendered analysis are the cases of voluntary confessions. Louise Jackson discusses confession records from the 1645 Suffolk trials as a way of getting a glimpse into the lives of the women concerned (2002). She acknowledges that there are textual challenges to this focus: none of the documents were produced by the women themselves, but were produced by the court scribe or produced in a pamphlet; many of them are brief, and the circumstances under which they were extracted are not always specified (354). Nevertheless, there is an imperative to attempt an analysis of these documents because it may help us understand “women's subjectivities and experiences” of the time. To ignore the documents is to continue to allow these women to be erased from history. Jackson does not think her desire to write women back into history overruns the evidence: the documents provide hints to what was happening for the women, and constrain conclusions.149

Some confessions occurred in the case of infanticide. In recent psychiatric literature, infanticide has been associated with post-partum psychosis; in seventeenth century England it was seen as the Devil's work, often also associated with suicidal thoughts (359). Prissilla Collit, one of the witches from the Suffolk trials, made the following confession:

In a sickness about 12 years since the devill tempted to make away with her children or else should always continue poor, and he then demanded a covenant of her which she did deny, but she carried one of her children and layed it close to

149 Jackson is not always careful enough, and draws what strike me as unmotivated conclusions in the case of Susanna Smith, another woman who confessed to witchcraft, and whom Jackson reads as resiliently manipulating her jailors (2002, 363-364).
the fire to burne it, and went to bed again and the fire burnt the hare and the head lininge and she heard it cry but cold not have the power to help it, but on other of her children pulled it away (in Jackson 2002, 259).

Most of the women who were accused of diabolical infanticide were unmarried, often domestic servants, and so were particularly vulnerable, both bodily and financially (360). In many of the Suffolk cases, there are veiled references to sexual assault and abuse as well as more explicit references to bad husbands and suicide (364). The language of the confessions conveys temptation to harm, despair, and “unnatural” feelings: mothers were supposed to experience abundant love for their children; its absence was deemed unnatural.

Jackson addresses how the demonological language of the witchcraft confessions framed women's communication of dilemmas, insecurities, or trauma. Their confessions were also connected with self-identity: the form of a confession required a woman to judge herself in her social roles. For many of the women in the Suffolk trials, the feelings of guilt, remorse, and shame at falling short of their “natural” social roles are profoundly negative (364). Jackson's aim in this article is not only to uncover the facts of the confession documents in order to supplement a sweeping social or political understanding of the time of the witch-hunts. Rather, she is interested in developing thoughts of how the women who confessed would have experienced these episodes. In other words, she is seeking a second-personal understanding, rather than third-personal.

Thus, we can see that women played a number of roles in witch-hunts and witchcraft discussions in the seventeenth century; this foray into history sheds some light
on the events and understandings at the time. These three discussions, of women as scholars of, as witnesses to, and as confessors to witchcraft also illuminates contemporary studies of witchcraft, both in history and the reference to this historical work in epistemology.

II. Case Study: Philosophical Context

One way to test whether epistemic guidelines like those offered in the previous chapter are able to include truths and exclude falsehoods is to consider past cases. The issue of witchcraft in seventeenth century England is an interesting case for consideration for a few reasons. For one, it was a period of great social inequality, as well as a period of great scientific and technological innovation. Thus, it seems like a time period that would present challenges to a social and political approach to objectivity that thinks unjust social arrangements obstruct valuable knowledge.

My interest here is whether, when we consider the claims and methods of inquirers in the seventeenth century using the guidelines I developed in chapter 5, we are compelled to say they had knowledge that witches exist. After all, the outcome of following the guidelines I laid out in chapter 5 is typically knowledge. If we are compelled to claim they had knowledge and thereby pick out falsehoods, then there is a problem with the epistemic normative force of the guidelines. However, if we are able

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150 Though I reiterate that the scope of my project is narrower than offering a full epistemology. I focus on knowledge in the sense of knowledge productive practices instead of focusing narrowly on knowledge as content. This places me at one remove from understanding good epistemic practices as all and only those that produce truth. I will come back to this issue in my clarifications.

151 This is the charge that Solomon and Richardson bring against Longino (Solomon and Richardson 2005).
to exclude the claims made by those defending the existence of witchcraft using my guidelines, then the guidelines are vindicated for that case study. I grant that being vindicated once is a modest victory. However, the extent of the vindication is heightened by considering the applicability of the guidelines to the work of contemporary historians. I will proceed by first looking at Longino's careless handling of the witchcraft case and the criticism it generates. This will allow me to highlight the strengths of my view by contrast.

Longino denies that there was knowledge of the existence of witches because she claims that if contemporary commentators had subjected their beliefs to the standards used in other practices they would not have held the beliefs for long (2002, 162). This counterfactual appraisal certainly shows a lack of attention to the complexity of the early-modern period and has an unappealing Whiggish tone, reading history from the perspective of our current point of view, considered as the pinnacle of progress. Solomon and Richardson are right to note in their criticism of Longino that we can't simply claim that the inquirers at the time were wrong because they didn't adhere to the standards we do (2005). Moreover, they note, Longino fails to appreciate the presence of a scholarly community devoted to uncovering the nature of witchcraft. I demonstrated the presence of a scholarly community in my discussion of Cavendish and Glanvill.

Longino claims that a critical community was lacking in early modern societies, and this lack allowed the belief in witchcraft to be perpetuated (162). By contrast,

Since my view shares many affinities with Longino's, I take this criticism as potentially applicable to my view as well.
Solomon and Richardson claim that there was a critical community, as well as a commitment to accurately describing the environment—that is, to producing empirically adequate accounts of phenomena—though they disagree with Longino's restriction that the environment to be described was the physical environment. They are right that Longino too quickly denies the presence of a critical community. Nevertheless, they are wrong to conclude that Longino's norms are met, and that if we accept Longino's norms of objectivity as necessary for knowledge, we ought thereby to think there was knowledge of witches. Recall that these norms are (1) the presence and (2) uptake of critical discussion, (3) shared standards, and (4) a tempered equality of authority. The norm transgressed in the academic witch discussions is not (1) the lack of a critical community, nor do they suffer from a lack of commitment to accuracy, as Longino as well as Solomon and Richardson suppose. Rather the cognitive community of the seventeenth century fell short in terms of (2) the lack of uptake of criticism, resulting from (4) the lack of the kind of equality of authority that would enable the identification of certain views as legitimate criticisms.

Longino stresses the supposed lack of a critical community and the failure of meeting the shared public standard of trying to offer accurate descriptions of the physical environment. Solomon and Richardson claim that there was in fact a critical community, as we can tell by the many works published on the topic, and that there was a commitment to describing the environment, though it is a 21st century conceit to presume the description needed to be physical. Solomon and Richardson write that “it was
generally understood among the disputants that the witch question was much more like the question of alchemical transformations or the evidence of miracles than like agriculture or cooking” (214). Yet, as the exchange between Cavendish and Glanvill indicates, Solomon and Richardson have failed to take account of the presence, at the time, of natural explanations of witchcraft. As the discussion shows, there was an even richer critical community than Solomon and Richardson countenance, and the commitment to accurately describing the environment is secure. However, neither Longino nor Solomon and Richardson address the second norm concerning the uptake of criticism. What the discussion of Cavendish and Glanvill makes apparent is that there were views that denied the existence of witchcraft, using methods of inquiry that should have been acceptable to Glanvill. Yet there is no uptake of Cavendish's views—in fact, her views were widely sidelined until her work gained prominence in the early twenty-first century. Though Longino is mistaken as to which norms are transgressed, we may nevertheless say that the claims supporting knowledge of witches fall short of the norms of critical contextual empiricism because there was no uptake of criticism. Thus, contrary to what Solomon and Richardson claim, Longino is able to maintain that there was no knowledge identifying witches.

However, Longino's own failure to understand why her norms are able to rule out knowledge of witchcraft is problematic. This problem with her view motivates my current discussion of witchcraft, and allows me to show I am better able to account for a deeper understanding of the situation than either Longino or Solomon and Richardson can
because my view is better able to uncover the layers of analysis involved in both our contemporary claims about the seventeenth century, and our understanding of the work of making claims across contexts.

Recall Solomon's naturalist realism: “the whig realist evaluates past theories in terms of their empirical success at the time they were developed; only the explanation of that success is ascertained from a whig perspective” (2001, 42). A strong reading of this informs the criticism of Longino in Solomon's and Richardson's paper. There, they are explicit that Longino's norms—and, they would probably claim, my norms—may not simply exclude knowledge of the existence of early modern witches from our vantage point, but the norms must do it from the perspective of early modern science. While Solomon is right to reject whig history, this should not entail rejecting all historical evaluation of epistemic practices that employ our current conceptual resources. It is important to be able to judge from here, and not merely explain, because this may allow us to better understand both our situation, and the earlier context. Understanding the earlier context is essential for figuring out not only what is true, but also what went wrong. Without using our contemporary understanding, it is unclear how we can explain past phenomena. Thus, the explanatory and evaluative aspects of our engagement with historical case studies are not always so clearly separable. This does not mean that we are committed to doing naive whig history; it means that we acknowledge the relevance and influence of our local conceptual and evaluative resources.
Why did Longino present such an unsatisfying case in confronting witch-hunts in early modern Europe? Cursory scholarship can only explain part of the oversight. It is also partly a result of her norms being so thin that we are not compelled to address the possibility that power relations were epistemically significant. She wants to exclude witchcraft, and thinks that she needs to do that by impugning the community as unscientific in the sense of unconcerned with accuracy and criticism. I showed how she could take a different tack and consider the lack of uptake consequent on a lack of equality. However, I think that clarifying the possibilities of Longino's position as I have done is facilitated by the thicker guidelines I have developed.

III. Critical Phenomenological Objectivity Applied

The five guidelines of my view developed in chapter 5 are (1) develop critical perspectives, (2) seek transformative epistemic experiences, (3) build coalitions, (4) foster diversity, and (5) pursue empirical adequacy. Following my discussion of the case of the witch-hunts in scholarly discussions in the seventeenth century, and possibilities for Longino's treatment of them, I now look at how the critical phenomenological guidelines I developed are better able to make sense of two layers of our understanding of this case. The first or primary layer involves trying to understand the knowledge and ignorance of the seventeenth century actors, focusing on the scholarly debate. The second, or secondary, layer involves interrogating the historical, hermeneutic work which is a precondition to and which is tied up in understanding the historical time period. The
guidelines offer a structure for making sense of both of these, and for showing how the two aspects are related.

1. Excluding Witchcraft

Glanvill and his cognitive community fell short on all the guidelines, except ensuring empirical adequacy. He failed to foster critical perspectives by failing to take seriously diverse standpoints. This was especially clearly established in his failure to seek the merit in Cavendish's arguments, and in his failure to adopt a critical, skeptical perspective on the evidence of his own senses and the confessions and accusations about witchcraft, particularly since such hesitation was at the heart of inquiry for the Royal Society. That this is not simply an anachronistic expectation from a secular or skeptical time period is evidenced in his failure to take Cavendish and other contemporaries seriously. This failure to adopt critical perspectives vis-a-vis the events is tied to his failure to aspire to transformative epistemic experiences. Unlike the Inquisitor Salazar and Cavendish, Glanvill failed to engage sympathetically or in solidarity with the accused, by failing to see them as humans like himself; he also failed to engage sympathetically with Cavendish. Though we may be able to understand this failure, given his context and his philosophical and religious commitments, we may nevertheless judge it mistaken.

These first two guidelines are clearly not met. The third one, concerning building coalitions, also failed to be met, though it is less obvious how. When I introduced the norm of building coalitions, I was addressing the need to develop shared standards that
did not presume a power-free or power-neutral cognitive community, but that called for grappling with power issues. One way to lessen the effects of power imbalances is to find common goals or strategies in common. This guideline grows out of a certain success at incorporating the first two guidelines, because these create a framework where questioning power assumptions becomes relevant. In Glanvill's case, there could have been the possibility of building coalitions with others who were similarly interested in a Baconian approach to science, but who did not see this approach as intertwined with Anglicanism as theology or as political doctrine. I grant that Glanvill would not have shared my concerns; the point here is rather that Glanvill's epistemic practices were the worse for not building such coalitions because he was dogmatically wedded to preserving a dominant power structure, however preferable latitudinarian Anglicanism was to earlier versions of Anglicanism.

The fourth guideline concerning fostering diversity of perspectives failed to be met in a few respects. In the first place, Glanvill rejected many of Cavendish's arguments out of hand because of a failure to allow that the accused witches could fool him. This showed that he failed to take into consideration the views of the witches themselves. Granted, this is a difficult claim since it was precisely because the accused were accused of witchcraft that their testimony (except as to their guilt) was suspect: they were thought to be precisely the kind of beings whose testimony as to their innocence could not be trusted. How does this failure of diversity relate to the failure of the first guideline? We could think that Glanvill's communicative environment succeeded better at diversity than
at adopting critical perspective. There was ample material for an appropriately diverse community: there were popular works on witchcraft, diverse scholarly works from a variety of theoretical and theological convictions, and there were plenty of witches to talk to. In this respect, there was a great deal of diversity. The failure however was a failure of engaging with this diversity because there was a failure of adopting critical stances. This shows how the first and fourth norms go hand in hand. It is easier to take advantage of a diverse environment if one adopts a critical perspective; it is easier to adopt a critical perspective if one takes advantage of a diverse cognitive community.

The fifth guideline, of pursuing empirical adequacy without unwarranted reservations was largely met: Glanvill took into consideration a great number of observational cases and his theory captured those cases. Yet the decline of belief in witchcraft in the decades following Glanvill's work attest to its declining explanatory power.152

This discussion shows that the norms of Critical Phenomenological Objectivity are able to exclude claims to the existence of witchcraft since these claims fall short of the norms of critical engagement and inclusion. However, that is only one way that the norms are helpful in increasing our understanding of what went well and badly in the cognitive communities where witchcraft was a topic of scholarly debate. The discussion of Holmes and Jackson allows me to show how the guidelines I develop are also applicable to the methods of history and social anthropology in two ways. First, explanation and evaluation

152 For an argument that ties this decline to the recognition that there was no real conceptual space for witchcraft and related phenomena, see Daston (1994).
are intertwined, and so to preserve Solomon's whig realism we would need to defend a version of history that allows us to evaluate earlier views from here, however provisional our evaluations would be. Second, the recent work on witchcraft which explicitly incorporates gendered analyses and thereby brings new understandings of witchcraft to light demonstrates the value of my guidelines and so supports the view that I am presenting a broadly naturalized account of objectivity. Unlike Longino and Solomon, who do not discuss the challenges and decisions at the background of understanding distant times, my guidelines lead us to such considerations.

2. Trans-historical Understanding

It is now commonly accepted that we cannot naively export our understanding to past periods, and we cannot blithely fill in the blanks left by deteriorated or absent records. Yet it is also generally understood that addressing only the history of those who left records, and taking their word concerning other groups at face value yields a distorted picture of the time period because it is the history of those with institutional power. This is not particularly controversial. However, what is of epistemic interest in the case of witchcraft theories and witch-hunts in the seventeenth century is considering the ways that incorporating attention to power yields responsible work. There has been a great deal of literature on the place of gender in studying witchcraft, with extreme views presented by both those who want to understand it from a feminist perspective and from those who
want to deny the historical relevance of a gendered analysis.  

Solomon and Richardson as well as Longino fail to explicitly address the challenges of transhistorical understanding. This is particularly clear in the cursory remarks Longino makes. Solomon and Richardson make it clear in their ready acceptance that the exclusive community comprised of Glanvill on one side and Webster on the other was sufficiently broad and critical. While the first portion of my historical discussion focused on the scholarly debates, and the failure to take up Cavendish's views, even this attention remains insufficiently critical: the lack of a critical community extended to a failure to understand the practices of witnessing and the failure to look critically at confession statements. These shortcomings indicate that even in order to make proper claims about the historical time period, we need to critically consider the contemporary work of writing the histories and collecting the primary sources. The guidelines I develop are applicable to this layer of analysis as well.

The first norm, developing critical perspectives, in this case concerns looking at the commitments of the historians. This extends beyond looking for their methodological commitments, to considering the assumptions undergirding those commitments. The motivation for Holmes's work on witnesses in witchcraft trials stems from Thomas's comments, whereby Thomas justified excluding a gendered look at the phenomena on the basis of a cursory analysis of data. Holmes wondered at the reasoning for this exclusion, which provides the context for his research. Jackson's view is even more clearly a reaction

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153 For a feminist analysis where the facts do not stand up to scrutiny, see Ehrenreich and English (1976). For an anti-feminist analysis, see Thomas, mentioned above (1971).
to the exclusion not only of gendered analysis, but also of the exclusion of women's voices consequent on the lack of documentation. She is critical not only of the lack of gendered analyses, but of the exclusion of research into the first personal experience of the accused witches.

Jackson's development of a personal history of the accused is prompted by a desire to understand what happened, but also to understand the subjective experience of what happened, despite the methodological challenges. Jackson seeks to create conditions where we could have transformative epistemic experiences, and feel our way into the issues. This could affect our understanding of oppressive social roles now, but it can also shift the terrain and the priorities for understanding the historical cases.

The viability of the third guideline is, again in this case, a bit harder to establish. However, when we look at the trend in histories of witchcraft to adopt the methods of sociology and social anthropology (Bever 2002, 955), we can see that coalitions have been built across disciplinary boundaries. Witchcraft studies as a discipline is a particularly apt example of multidisciplinary work. Such coalitions are also apparent in the development of feminist analyses of the witch trials. Early feminist work on the issue took a strong line and saw witch-hunting as woman-hunting, and drew a close link between the rise of medical science, the decline of midwifery, and the rise of witchcraft accusations.154 These works shifted foci of analyses in some historical circles. They were deeply flawed in many respects, the most salient being an inattention to the historical data.

154 For a good survey of the various views, see Green and Bigelow (1998, 199-202).
which showed that midwives and doctors both had widely divergent and ambiguous relationships to the witch-hunts (Green and Bigelow 1998, 199n). Thus, more recent feminist work on witchcraft has become both more subtle in its feminism, and more responsible to historical records; moreover, where speculation exceeds the recorded evidence, the reasons for this are discussed and opened to criticism and refinement. The fourth and fifth guidelines are, in this case, closely related to the third. The diverse coalitions built attest to the diversity of perspective that has been fostered. The commitment to empirical adequacy has emerged in a dialectical relationship with the development of the other norms. At times, novelty of interpretation has prevailed over the careful search for data while subsequent work has returned to considering the data.

This discussion of the applicability of my guidelines to the context of historical research into witchcraft has so far been relatively silent on uncovering the workings of power. In my discussion of fostering critical perspectives and attending to gender as axes of interpretation, I do incorporate an analysis of hidden power structures. In historical research, the relatively few artifacts left by the majority population which was typically illiterate and used materials that survived less well, have always generated problems and concerns about misrepresenting and misunderstanding entire groups and movements. Thus, much contemporary history is sensitive to the effects on evidence of historical power relations. Another way of incorporating attention to power includes a critical awareness of the kinds of historical questions that are of interest.
What I have wanted to show in my two-layered discussion of witchcraft is that the
guidelines I develop have epistemic normative force. They are able to show why we
should not conclude that there was knowledge of the existence of witches in seventeenth
century England, without simply claiming that the seventeenth century actors didn't think
the way we do. They are also able to show why a gendered analysis is important, and what
kind of work historians need to do in order to uncover this. I showed that witchcraft
studies are already doing this, and so we can uncover the workings of my guidelines in
their successes.

IV. Potential Criticisms and Replies

1. Critical Phenomenological Objectivity Makes Mistaken Demands

One concern with the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity might
be that my demands are mistaken. I can see three ways in which this might be thought,
which pull in different directions. One could think they are impracticable, that they are
too idealized, that they call for too much theorizing, or that they call for too much
action. I grant that these norms are ambitious, and that realizing them presents layers of
challenge. As ideals, of course, knowledge productive practices may realize them to
greater or lesser degrees and still be counted objective to a certain degree.

Moreover, I think some of the challenges of implementing them are overstated.
Fostering relevant diversity is more feasible than may commonly be thought. Big science

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155 In the sense of political idealism, rather than transcendental or German idealism.
manages to proceed despite having to sort out how many biologists, physicists, biochemists, and information technology people are needed. These are overwhelming challenges when considered in the board room as the project is being designed, but they are issues that eventually get worked out in the fray. It is only a small step to expect scientists in charge of large research projects to be critical thinkers beyond their narrow fields and to communicate with relevant non-scientists. As I have mentioned at other points, I am not sure that adding a non-scientist dimension to project construction immeasurably complicates matters; it strikes me as reasonable, for example, to suppose that including a few Black liberation activists would have saved a great deal of deliberation by ending the Tuskegee Syphilis experiment decades earlier. The challenge is then a lack of political will to ensure the increased funding that may be necessary if more actors are required for a project.

This response addresses the concern that my guidelines are so ambitious as to be impracticable. It does not, however, adequately address the challenge that my view rests on too idealized a conception of communicative action, like we find in Habermas's early work. I do not think this is correct. The guidelines I developed emerge from applied spheres of political action, and so do not rest on an idealized conception of communication because they emerge from actual practices. For example, they inform research in witchcraft studies. In fact, the guidelines incorporate the challenges of communication; these can sometimes be transmuted into strengths. For example, the hard work of learning how to listen is itself incorporated in the norm of fostering critical
perspectives, promoting diversity, and aspiring to transformative epistemic experiences.

The criticism that I call for too much theorizing, or perpetuate a mainstream feminist habit of preferring theory to action, is one criticism that is worth grappling with. This criticism could take two forms. In the first, we would need to accept that epistemology is tainted with its oppressive history, and so we should abandon it in preference for pragmatism, an approach that incorporates a thorough-going enculturation of subjects in communities (e.g. Seigfried 2001). However, the risk of adopting too thorough-going a pragmatism is that it seems to narrow the space for disruptive action, either because it can overly historicize agents so that disruption seems impossible, or because it does not count a call to theory as a disruptive action. For example, Lewontin and Levins examine the short-sighted expectation, in the Nixon era, that infectious disease would be conquered within a generation (2007, 303). They attribute this short-sightedness to many factors, one of which is the failure to study population trends and evolution. They tie this failure to the pragmatism of policy-makers for whom “theory” seemed like a luxury in the context of urgent applied epidemiology. Of course, this is a crude rather than a subtle understanding of pragmatism. However, in order to maintain the thesis that epistemology should be abandoned in favor of pragmatism, as Seigfried does, this is the thesis that needs to be maintained. Otherwise, the distinction between pragmatism and epistemology is terminological, and so the criticism of a view like mine that incorporates enculturated subjects breaks down.
The second aspect of a criticism that I call for too much theory is that we don't necessarily need to stop doing theory, but need to stop engaging with the concept of rationality and thereby stop accepting the oppressive framework such engagement involves (Hoagland 2001). Hoagland picks up on the Wittgensteinian point that concepts only have a meaning from within a form of life. To attempt to refigure rationality and other concepts of epistemology is always already to take on a form of life which has been oppressive. In this case, my project is too ambitious in the sense of trying to use tools of oppression to undermine oppression. It is overly demanding because it is bound to be fruitless. Hoagland's call to conceptual separatism is not a call to retreating to a pure sphere. Rather, she sees it as an activity of disruption and disloyalty (129). However, casting feminist philosophical resistance in terms of separatism presents two dangers I think are more imminent than the threat of my position collapsing into a mainstream oppressive view. These dangers are of failing to acknowledge scientific and epistemological work that can be allied with anti-oppressive practices, and failing to keep up with the changing epistemological and scientific scene such that one fails to develop the resources to counter criticisms. For example, feminists often cite Stephen J. Gould's incisive anti-racist, anti-sexist essays in support of their claims that many scientific research programs have been and are oppressive, as does Hoagland in the article in question (131). This resource can be instrumental in talking back to the so-called mainstream; talking back is essential when the mainstream is involved in developing policy. The second danger is manifest in Code's recent work, in *Ecological Thinking*
(2006). In that book, Code argues against a straw man; the conception of philosophy of science she deploys dates from the fifties, and so she does not develop the resources to argue against more recent work that warrants reply.

The calls to pragmatism or to separatism are not compelling on their own. Though there is something very worthwhile about both moves, I think they are worthwhile as moments of a larger picture. If they are valuable moments, then there is space left for other, somewhat divergent projects. I hope the arguments of the preceding chapters show that there is space for my project.

The concerns that my guidelines call for too much action, at the expense either of theory or of straightforward knowledge production are also misplaced. For one thing, I have shown how Longino establishes that justificatory practices are themselves practices, and that practices involve actions. Thus, a quick way to deal with this criticism is that the dichotomy between action and theory is misguided. A slightly longer way is to consider action as in some respect distinct from reflective moments, at least analytically. Even cast in this way, however, I can show that the two are not opposed. This is one place where an explicitly phenomenological understanding is helpful. In our actions, we always come back and consider the effects on and for our reflection. It is only when action is considered coextensive with political action that there may appear to be a tension between the (valuable) reflection and the (unnecessary) action. However, many of the examples I have used throughout show that there is no tidy distinction between actions which are politically valenced and those which are not. The Combahee River Collective undertook
publishing as a form of political action; a great deal of science research is funded by military or pharmaceutical industries, which encode values. Where the distinctions can be made, it is as the outcome of considerations, not as assumptions.

2. Guidelines Are Not Epistemically Warranted

One possible criticism is that my guidelines are unwarranted. While one may want to acknowledge that a social account of objectivity is called for, perhaps my guidelines are unwarrantedly political or engaged. Since we have been able to uncover a great deal of valuable knowledge under imperfect social conditions, all that is called for is a more democratic process (Anderson 1995), or else more careful attention to our assumptions and naturalized practices (Antony 2001). We don’t need to democratize and criticize and develop coalitions and try to transform ourselves.

As I discussed in my introductory comments, the task of epistemology is not only to provide guidelines or explain successful knowledge practices—that is, it is not sufficient to provide an account of truth. We also need to account for error and, more important when we have an eye to social justice, for ignorance. Work in epistemologies of ignorance has shown that ignorance is not easily remedied by facts (Code 2007, Spelman 2007). Philosophers working on the epistemology of ignorance explore complex phenomena of ignorance, trying to identify how areas of ignorance are produced, what kinds of ignorance there are, and how ignorance can be undermined. While epistemology has always offered ways of avoiding falsehoods and seeking truths, epistemologies that
take the challenges of ignorance seriously cannot simply develop conditions under which we are correctly inclined to affirm a statement.

My work is not an epistemology of ignorance; it is a part of an epistemology that takes ignorance seriously. Good knowledge practices, in light of recent work on epistemologies of ignorance, will have to be hard fought and will have to incorporate some of the tough lessons learned about how to become an ally. It is in light of these considerations that my guidelines are warranted. Moreover, as I discussed in chapter 5, we do not need to conclude that diversity, critical standpoints, coalitions, and transformative experiences are always necessary. Rather, we need to assume only that they might be; that thoroughness requires that we should try to find out whether the different elements of the guidelines are called for in a given situation. Just as scientific experiments have always depended on reproducible results even though results are very rarely reproduced, so too does objectivity depend on these guidelines, though aspiring to these guidelines is not as onerous as reproducing experiments.

3. Guidelines Are Circular

One possible criticism of my view is that it is circular or, worse, begs the question. When I am inclined to talk about “responsible” knowledge productive practices, am I claiming that they are responsible in virtue of conforming to the norms I set out, thereby assuming the value of what I claim to show is epistemically valuable? I do not think so. I will not deny a certain circularity born of adopting a broadly naturalistic method. By a
broadly naturalistic approach, I mean an approach that takes the guidelines as beholden to our actual knowledge practices. A naturalistic approach, as I discussed in chapter one, is not foundational and we must rest satisfied with a certain looping effect: case studies are brought before us because they illustrate something that we are looking for; we generalize from there. However, unlike the stricter naturalized approaches of Solomon, Antony, and Kitcher, I incorporate two features that broaden the scope of epistemology in a way that incorporates more aspects of knowledge productive practices and so the circle is larger.

Moreover, by socializing epistemology and by insisting on the three starting points developed in my discussion of Husserl's phenomenology—subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the world—I preserve opportunities to uncover unthematized commitments in order to submit them to critical scrutiny. Thus, I do not think that the challenge that my view is circular is overly problematic; it is a challenge I think any epistemology that is attentive to actual practices of knowing and to the consequences of these practices will face, and the advantages outweigh this lack of foundation.

V. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tested the guidelines of critical phenomenological objectivity by applying them to the case of witchcraft in seventeenth century England. I showed how the norms enabled us to better understand both the historical phenomena as well as the work of historians. Thus, the norms are applicable to the methods themselves. Moreover, the advantage of considering witchcraft studies was to show how many of the
guidelines I develop are actually used (though, of course, not described as the norms of critical phenomenological objectivity). As witchcraft studies became more self-reflexive, and more attentive to power inequalities in the target community—the early moderns—and in their own community of inquirers, the research became more nuanced and thoughtful; the research of the last several years is profoundly interesting and enlightening.

Having addressed this case study, I turned to addressing some possible criticisms of my view. I considered whether my view is too demanding, by being too idealistic, requiring too much theory, or too much action. I argued that while it is certainly challenging to adhere to the guidelines I developed, it is not really too demanding. Next, I addressed whether the guidelines are epistemically unwarranted, given the success with which we have come to know our world. However, this criticism fails to take seriously the role of ignorance in our knowledge practices and, consequently, in our epistemology. If we take ignorance seriously, I argued, my guidelines are epistemically warranted. Finally, I considered whether my arguments have been problematically circular, since I approve of work that more or less fulfills them and disapprove of work that fails to. I accept that the norms are not foundational, and argued that because of the many features and angles of analysis, they are able to cast the circle wider than other more strictly naturalized epistemologies, and so accept their degree of circularity.
References


