

THESIS

EXPLOITATION OF POWER AND THE EXCLUSION OF KNOWERS

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ABSTRACT

EXPLOITATION OF POWER AND THE EXCLUSION OF KNOWERS

I argue that the relatively dominant political cultural and economic order of a given period produces, as a structural feature, relatively dominant epistemic frameworks that exclude certain methods of knowing. These methods of knowledge production are often represented by particular groups of knowers, and I argue that their exclusion is the result of the exploitation of an unjust power differential. The exclusion of particular forms of knowledge production and their representative groups is a problem with both epistemic and moral import. In my first chapter, I focus on presenting the claim that scientific inquiry and the production of knowledge is never neutral and is always embedded within a set of political and cultural conditions. I provide examples of cases in which the influence of relatively dominant groups on frameworks for knowledge has resulted in unjust exclusion of certain knowers, and modes of knowledge production. In my second chapter I focus the connection between specific groups of knowers and specific methods of knowledge production. In particular, I focus on practice-based knowledge possessed by politically or culturally marginalized groups as forms of knowledge which have often been excluded from the dominant framework. I argue that when particular groups of knowers are excluded this is a problem with both epistemic and ethical import. In my third and final chapter, I identify the unjust exploitation of power differentials as the cause of both the epistemic and ethical issue of exclusion.

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CHAPTER 1 POWER, VALUE, AND THE EXCLUSION OF OTHER KNOWERS

Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn noted that “specific regimes of power are underpinned by specific regimes of truth and vice versa”.¹ He suggests that epistemological frameworks are as variable as the regimes of power they underpin. Thus, Kuhn rejects the concept of a single unchanging standard of objectivity or truth. My project builds on the claim that political and economic hegemonies produce frameworks for truth that reflect the hegemonic sociopolitical values of a given period. As Kuhn notes the relationship between hegemonic powers and frameworks for knowledge is not a unidirectional one. Rather, it is one of multiple interactions in which epistemic frameworks are influenced hegemonic sociopolitical values while these same institutions of power are reinforced by standardized frameworks for knowledge. My argument is that relatively dominant or hegemonic groups determine relatively dominant frameworks for truth, and these frameworks function to exclude valuable forms of knowledge. In making this claim my focus is on the fact of exclusion, and throughout my project I provide several examples I take to be paradigmatic of unjust exclusionary practices. My goal is not to provide a comprehensive account of what makes knowledge valid, nor to provide an exact account of what an ideal epistemic framework would look like. I ground my claims by focusing on paradigmatic cases in which the exclusion of knowledge is unjustified. I argue that when power is concentrated and controlled by hegemonic groups, they determine frameworks for knowledge which exclude both certain types of knowledge and certain knowers, resulting in both negative epistemic and ethical consequences. Ultimately, I conclude that the exclusion of both particular forms of knowledge, and particular knowers, from relatively dominant frameworks is at once an epistemic and a moral problem, and is the result of a common cause - the exploitation

¹ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (2nd ed.) (Chicago: University of

of unjust power dynamics.

In this chapter I focus on the ways in which the process of inquiry is always influenced and partially determined by framing conditions rooted in political or cultural values. This initial claim is crucial for my project as I argue that the influence of hegemonic political and cultural values can lead to the unjust exclusion of particular knowers and forms of knowledge. In my second chapter I examine forms of knowledge that are often associated with particular groups, and argue that the exclusion of these groups and their knowledge is a two-fold issue with both ethical and epistemic import. I provide examples of these often-excluded forms and highlight a central point for my argument— the idea that the imposition of epistemic frameworks by relatively dominant groups results in the loss of valuable knowledge. In my third chapter I argue that both the ethical issue concerning the marginalization of cultural groups and the epistemic issue regarding the exclusion of related forms of knowledge both result from the exploitation of unjust power dynamics. This is the final part of my analysis that is intended to point to how these exclusionary paradigms function as a means of moving towards better epistemic frameworks.

In the first section of this chapter I will argue that dominant social and political ideologies set the framework for determining which methods of knowledge production and forms of knowledge are considered valuable. I claim that the imposition of a standard framework by a hegemonic group serves to exclude knowledge that does not fit within it. When a framework for knowledge is determined by the values of a politically and socially dominant group, certain knowledge practitioners and correspondent forms of knowledge may also be excluded as the result of unjust sociopolitical power differentials. This exclusion of knowledge not recognized within the paradigmatic framework makes for bad epistemic practice because it results in the loss of valuable knowledge. It is not necessary to give a general account of knowledge to show that

existing frameworks are insufficient. This insufficiency can be demonstrated by analyzing cases in which useful knowledge has been unjustly excluded as a result of a power differential. Any paradigm that functionally devalues and excludes valid or valuable forms of knowledge serves as an example of this underlying problem. Neoliberalism is a current example of the hegemonic concentration of power and related exclusionary knowledge frameworks I focus on in this project. This relatively dominant ideology is not unique, it is one among many examples of dominant political and economic paradigms which create and enforce exclusionary knowledge frameworks. In this chapter I will highlight an underlying problem with the function of dominant paradigms. The problem, as I will frame it, is that these paradigms work as top-down, externally-imposed, frameworks to marginalize particular types of knowledge and with it particular knowers, often knowers who are already socially or politically marginalized.

I will end the chapter with a section examining some of the ways in which neoliberal ideology shapes institutions of knowledge production (with a specific focus on universities). I do not seek to fully describe or diagnose the functions and forms that neoliberalism takes on. Rather, I offer this discussion as a means to highlight a contemporary expression of the underlying problem, the ways in which dominant frameworks of knowledge continue to shape the forms of knowledge production and function to exclude valuable forms of knowledge.

I spend a lot of time throughout the project describing modes of epistemic exclusion, and the frameworks through which this exclusion operates, as structural in nature, so I seek to offer an initial clarification as to what this means. Iris Marion Young offers a description of structures and how they function.² According to Young, the first observation to make about structures is

² Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility For Justice*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013).

that “they appear as objective, given, and constraining.”³ She argues that social structures do not constrain individuals by means of direct coercion (enacted by some individuals on others) but rather “constrain more indirectly and cumulatively as blocking possibilities.”⁴ Typically, rather than acting by direct force, structures function to shape our experience by constraining alternative possibilities and channeling us along certain routes. This, says Young, is one of the reasons structures are so difficult to see, because we do not always “experience particular institutions particular material facts, or particular rules as themselves the source of constraint; the constraint occurs through the joint action of individuals within institutions and given physical conditions as they affect our possibilities.”⁵ Young draws on an image from Marilyn Frye to illustrate this point.⁶ Frye likens the constraining function of structures to that of a birdcage, “looked at one by one, no wire is capable of preventing a bird from flying. It is the joint relationship of the wires that prevents flight.”⁷ Thus, the constraining function of frameworks of knowledge should not be understood as a clear-cut antagonism between rival groups, or as one set of individuals always operating from the position of oppressor while another always operates from the position of the oppressed. The marginalizing and exclusionary function of these frameworks of knowledge is one that manifests as a result of a number of coinciding factors, actors and histories.

Science, Imperialism, and The History of Exclusion

Now, I will briefly contextualize the current order within a broader history of framework

³ Young, *Responsibility For Justice*, 55.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Marilyn Frye, *Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1993) cited in Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility For Justice*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2013), 55.

⁷ Young, *Responsibility For Justice*, 55.

imposition and knowledge exclusion. In demonstrating the ways in which epistemological frameworks are established and later enforced, I will examine these frameworks in the context of their historical ties to imperialist and colonialist practices. Additionally, I will use this analysis to highlight the claim that knowledge production should always be understood as involving a set of external values. The imposition of a framework by powerful groups has significant historical and conceptual ties to colonialism and imperialism. In these situations, the knowledge of the “other” was either dismissed or treated as a “discovery” to be decontextualized and exploited for whatever means colonizers determined. In her book on indigenous research methodology, Linda Tuhiwai Smith talks about the loaded political meanings of the word “research” itself, especially for a colonized people.⁸ The word, as Smith understands it, is linked to imperialism, and conjures memories of exploitation. Smith argues that scientific research is often implicated in “worst excesses of colonialism” and that this remains “a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized people.”⁹ Smith cites a number of examples pointing to the ethical abuses of research.¹⁰ Crucially, Smith emphasized that the, “pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in multiple layers of imperial and colonial practice.”¹¹ Ultimately, research must not be understood as a politically neutral academic exercise but an activity that “occurs in a set of political and cultural conditions.”¹² In addition to occurring within a set of political and cultural conditions,

⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 2012), 5.

⁹ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1.

¹⁰ The first study Smith cites on page 1 of her book is study done on indigenous peoples in the 19th century in which researchers filled their skulls with millet seeds as a means of measuring their mental faculties. Later in her book she also cites the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study involving black male prisoners in the southern United States, as well as a study done in New Zealand in the 1980’s in which women were unknowingly denied treatment for cervical cancer. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1, 177.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

the legitimacy of knowledge practices is determined by these conditions. The standards for knowledge determined by the dominant political conditions set which research methods (and which research interests) are accepted as legitimate, and exclude or reform those which are not.

According to Smith, science has historically been weaponized to help create and enforce racial hierarchies. Indigenous peoples have been and continue to be identified by imperialist “scientists” as lacking in the civility, reason, and rationality that was said to humanize the European man. These imposed racial and cultural hierarchies serve to justify and reinforce corresponding epistemological hierarchies.

“From the nineteenth century onwards the processes of dehumanization were often hidden behind justifications for imperialism and colonialism, which were clothed within an ideology of humanism and liberalism and the assertion of moral claims that related to a concept of civilized ‘man.’”¹³

Western colonialists were proud to make claims to human ‘rights’ or “the notion of a universal human subject” so long as it was maintained that the populations they colonized were not entirely human.¹⁴ Smith argues that imperialism introduces its own principle of order as providing the underlying structure and connection between things. Smith writes that this principle of order connects the nature of imperial social relations with western scientific activities, establishment of trade, and the establishment of law.¹⁵ Smith refers to Ashis Nandy who claims that imperialism functions along the lines of a code or underlying grammar, this, says Smith, “suggests that there is a deep structure which regulates and legitimates imperial

¹³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 27.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 29.

practice.”¹⁶ As these authors suggest, one part of this larger structure involves a kind of epistemic control. The standardization of knowledge through the imposition of a framework (in this case on sovereign groups with distinct epistemic practices) functions to exclude valid forms of knowledge produced by colonized groups and in doing so appear to reinforce the authority of those in power.

For these reasons, indigenous methods of structuring and ordering the world are deemed insufficient by western epistemic authorities. Though indigenous peoples had and have their own metaphysical and epistemological systems of order, Smith says these were denied by colonialists on several common assumptions: “they were not fully human, they were not civilized enough to have systems, they were not literate, their language and modes of thought were inadequate.”¹⁷ Thus, colonialist frameworks systematically rejected entire cultural groups and the knowledge they held. These groups, which were negatively stereotyped and racialized by imperialist invaders, were denied epistemic input from systems of governance and control which were externally imposed on them. The social and political locations of knowers in relation to power directly informs the kind of agency and control they have in relation to the knowledge they produce. The social and political location of knowers directly informs whether those in power understand their knowledge as legitimate. The colonial insistence that native languages and modes of thought were inadequate is explicitly connected to the establishment of an exogenous standard of knowledge that does not make room for indigenous knowers. Western academic literacy, and the ability to place claims in a standardized literary form were framed as necessary conditions for knowledge to be considered legitimate. In their dehumanization of indigenous

¹⁶ Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Oxford University Press: Dehli, 1989) as cited in Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 29.

¹⁷ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 29.

peoples, colonists denied the possibility that they had their own legitimate frameworks of knowledge and knowledge production. Following from their idea that indigenous frameworks for knowledge were either absent or insufficient, colonizers see themselves as the necessary liberators and sole determiners of knowledge. The technologies, practices, and insights of indigenous peoples only becomes *real* knowledge in the eyes of colonizers after having been decontextualized from their original circumstances and repackaged within a colonialist framework. Thus, colonizers undermine indigenous claims to control over their own knowledge and position themselves at the head of a knowledge monopoly.

In order to examine the creation of knowledge, and how powerful groups impose their standards on other knowers I will look to Smith's discussion of the ways in which western knowledge has sought to position itself as superior to other forms. She claims that within the project of imperialism, the acquisition, control and exploitation of "knowledge and culture" were just as much a part of the imperialist mission as "raw materials and military strength."¹⁸ Like various raw materials knowledge was understood in this framework as something to be "discovered, extracted, appropriated, and distributed."¹⁹

"The production of knowledge, new knowledge and transformed 'old' knowledge, ideas about the nature of knowledge and the validity of specific forms of knowledge, became as much commodities of colonial exploitation as other natural resources."²⁰

Smith says that as imperialist knowledge practices became "organized and systematic" they informed many "disciplines of knowledge and 'regimes of truth.'"²¹ The move towards

¹⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 61.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 61.

standardization of knowledge and the resulting ‘regimes of truth’ produces knowledge frameworks which I argue (here and in later chapters) function to exclude valid forms of knowledge. The increasingly regimented structures of imperialist knowledge frameworks were exported as a part of the ongoing mission of modernity and globalization.

Imperialist research often involved creating systems, “for organizing, classifying and storing new knowledge, and for theorizing the meanings of such discoveries.”²² According to Smith, these systems for framing and valuing knowledge were also used to reinforce systems of political power and domination. The connection between systems of power and domination and those of knowledge is the central focus of this project, and historical context offers a sense of the continuity and pervasiveness of this connection. The constructed systems Smith discusses provide a clear example of the ways in which systems of knowledge are tailored to justify systems of political domination. Smith writes, “the instruments or technologies of research were also instruments of knowledge and instruments for legitimating various colonial practices.”²³ The history of imperialism as it relates to knowledge production is one that I have only just touched on, and one that I will not examine fully. The focus of my project is to highlight the ways in which dominant frameworks for knowledge function to exclude valid forms of knowledge. Colonialist practices are an example of the ways in which the ethical and political exclusion of particular groups and the epistemic exclusion of the forms of knowledge they possess both result from the abuse of power. Therefore, some basic history is significant to my argument as it sets the tone for the ways in which political systems of domination and control determine exclusionary epistemological frameworks. The marginalization and exclusion of various forms of knowledge (and with it specific groups of knowers) is a complex one that involves the

²² Ibid.,63.

²³ Ibid.

relationship between (for starters) epistemological, political, racial, and social hierarchies. Thus, it is helpful to discuss imperialism as a means to highlight some of these complex and ongoing relationships. Highlighting the ways in which knowledge production is and has historically been tied up with cultural and political values and dominant structures of power help demonstrate the ways in which concerns about epistemic power differentials are issues of both epistemic and ethical import. In particular, this issue becomes a major concern when those with the power to enact major political decisions about health or environmental policy (for some examples) without any substantive input by those who will experience the primary effects of said decision. Before I expand on how epistemic exclusion can be understood as a function of power differentials in my third chapter I want to offer a point of clarification on the distinction between moral and epistemic failures.

Knowledge and Power

I claim that there is a clear connection between imbalances in social and political power and imbalances in epistemic power.²⁴ In addition, I argue that there are cases of epistemic failure, as a result of unjust epistemic power dynamics that have ethical import. I argue that these epistemic failures co-occur with a kind of ethical failure and that these failures are connected by a common cause. It is not my intent to argue that the relationship between epistemic failures and moral failures is one of either logical or causal necessity. Though these failures, particularly as I focus on them in this project, are often connected, they are not *necessarily* so and may occur independently. I argue instead that the connection is one of origin, and both the epistemic and moral failures I examine arise from the same genetic cause – that of the unjust exploitation of unequal power dynamics.

²⁴ A claim that is central to the recently burgeoning sub-field of social epistemology.

Marion Hourdequin focuses on the connection between questions of epistemic power and control and those of ethical import, and reflects how both of these issues can be understood as a function of unjust power dynamics.²⁵ Hourdequin provides specific examples of the kind of ongoing knowledge imperialism, and standard imposition that would be easily recognizable to Smith. In Hourdequin's piece regarding climate-engineering justice concerns, she primarily focuses on a responding to an argument for Solar Radiation Management (SRM) research put forth by Joshua Horton and David Keith.²⁶ She claims that their argument is a common one, and argues that in this and similar arguments the focus on distributive justice is too narrow, and ultimately suggests additional justice related concerns. Hourdequin claims that the argument for SRM (which would be designed to function on a global scale to try and curtail the effects of global warming) is problematic for a number of reasons, including its tendency towards paternalism and cultural parochialism.

Hourdequin claims that the exclusion of particular knowers from important public decisions violates various conceptions of justice and thus becomes a moral problem. Hourdequin frames SRM research and deployment as the kind of major public decision she focuses on, and her concerns for justice follow from this. She rightly asserts that, "it is morally problematic for an individual or a small group to select a distributive principle or determine a distributive outcome without taking seriously the need for participatory engagement."²⁷ Hourdequin grounds this claim in what she calls the "all-affected principle," the concept being that, "people should

²⁵ Marion Hourdequin, "Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the 'Global Poor': What does Justice Require," *Ethics, Policy, and Environment* Vol. 22 No. 3 (2018), 3.

²⁶ Joshua Horton and David Keith, "Solar geoengineering and obligations to the global poor." *Climate justice and geoengineering: Ethics and policy in the atmospheric Anthropocene* ed. C.J. Preston, (Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016). 79-92 as cited in Hourdequin "Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the 'Global Poor'", 3.

²⁷ Hourdequin, *Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the 'Global Poor'*, 3.

have opportunities to participate in decisions that significantly affect them.”²⁸ Hourdequin relies on this basic concept to demonstrate that paternalistic modes of exclusion can have dubious moral consequences. But in addition to being bad moral practice it also serves as bad epistemic practice. This connection between the epistemic and moral failures at work is the central point of my thesis. Because epistemic and related decision-making frameworks determined largely by hegemonic groups functions to exclude valuable and valid forms of knowledge we find ourselves at an epistemic disadvantage, having lost significant information. The ways in which unjust and discriminatory social practices can result in negative epistemic consequences, and the ways in which epistemic failures can have ethical import are related questions that are essential to my project here.

The issue of whether to further pursue SRM research is one with global consequences. Therefore it is the kind of public decision-making that should be based on the most and best relevant knowledge available. As Hourdequin notes, “the power to intentionally manipulate the global climate through the deployment of SRM is not inconsiderable, and SRM research thus far has amassed that power primarily within Northern America and Western Europe.”²⁹ Because of this concentration of resources, it is the dominant framework in these locations that sets the standard concerning the discussion around this kind of geoengineering. The economic power that has allowed this type of research to develop strongly in these places, is deeply related to the power that allows these communities of knowers to impose their standards for knowledge on various other groups on a global scale.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 8.

Hourdequin claims that the authors Horton and Keith³⁰ to whom she responds “favor SRM over the other they argue it is the most cost effective way of reducing climate risk in the near future. The language used throughout their argument reflects a consequentialist, cost-benefit frame. Although this frame is widely deployed, it is arguably a culturally parochial one that encodes certain western presuppositions about “the nature and fungibility of value.”³¹ This serves as a clear example of the ways in which relatively dominant frameworks can be imposed on other groups and thus exclude other values and frameworks for knowing. It is a case in which the framework for knowledge and assumptions about value made by a hegemonic group has a monopoly over what input is considered and what information is viewed as legitimate. In addition, this highlights the connection between epistemic exclusion and the ethical import of that exclusion because it involves the political and ethical marginalization of particular groups. The exploitation of vast power differentials thus results in both negative epistemic and ethical consequences. Because this framework acts within a cost-benefit framework and because cost-effectiveness serves as a primary concern (or a value to maximize) it makes other viable options which either do not maximize this value or do not fit within this framework appear obsolete.

One crucial concept emphasized by Hourdequin is that of recognition justice. Recognition justice seeks to enable multiple groups of knowers to be full participants in discussions like those concerning SRM research. Recognition justice is an important part of the solution to the problem I identify in this project. Making sure that the people who feel the primary effects of decisions are involved in forming and evaluating these decisions, particularly those whose methods and forms of knowledge have been excluded as a result of dominant frameworks, is critical. Later in

³⁰ Horton, and Keith, “Solar geoengineering and obligations to the global poor.” As cited in Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering and the ‘Global Poor’”, 10.

³¹ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering and the ‘Global Poor’”, 10.

this project I examine an example concerning the dismissal of early modern midwifery practices in favor of institutionalized obstetrics in which recognition justice would have resulted in better outcomes. Expectant mothers suffered as a result of this transition because of the dismissal of the valuable knowledge possessed by female midwives (who were often mothers themselves). Had these expectant mothers, who were to bear the effects of early modern medical treatment, been properly informed of their care options and had the knowledge of midwives not been dismissed it is likely that much suffering would have been avoided. Hourdequin says:

“recognition justice focuses on these issues of status and standing, rejecting social arrangements and governance structures that silence or denigrate the perspectives of those in particular cultural groups, or with particular gender, race or class identities – or in the case of SRM, those who currently lack dominant voices in the geoengineering debates”³²

Hourdequin presents recognition justice as a means of reckoning with problems of unequal access to epistemic power.³³ Recognition justice’s goals of “rejecting social arrangements and governance structures” which marginalize and silence particular knowers and forms of knowledge are directly connected to the goals of my project. I seek to examine the ways in which limited and sub-optimal epistemic frameworks function as a result of the kinds of structures Hourdequin identifies.³⁴ Examined in this way, recognition justice would involve efforts to increase the epistemic power of unjustly marginalized groups, increase these groups’ agency in relation to the knowledge they produce, and work to ensure that hegemonic frameworks are not unjustly excluding valuable forms of knowledge. To understand the ways in which dominant

³² Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 4

³³ This is an issue that various feminist philosophers including Miranda Fricker have called epistemic injustice.

³⁴ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 4.

frameworks for knowledge function to exclude valuable forms of knowledge one must examine the organizations and governance structures through which these frameworks are reinforced. Recognition justice, in connection with other methods of critical analyzing dominant frameworks, is an important method for addressing concerns of epistemic exclusion and injustice.

Particularly in debates concerning public policy, groups with access to the most economic and political power set the epistemological standard and determine what kind of information is valuable. The conversation surrounding geo-engineering as a response to global climate change is a perfect example of this. In this debate, arguments are made on behalf of “the global poor” without effort to contextualize that terminology or account for the knowledge and concerns of these groups.

Hourdequin asks us to foreground concerns for issues such as paternalism and cultural parochialism by “taking seriously their roles in knowledge production.”³⁵ She turns to Gerald Dworkin³⁶ who defines paternalism as involving either individual or institutional acts which “interferes with the other’s autonomy, is done without consent, and is done with the intent of improving the welfare or advancing the interests of the other.”³⁷ Acting in a paternalistic fashion thus involves a power imbalance in which one group is acting on behalf of the other without their consent or input. Though, in cases of historical imperialism this is likely not done with the kind of benevolent motivations Dworkin suggests. In the example of SRM research that Hourdequin

³⁵ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 13.

³⁶ Gerald Dworkin, “Paternalism”, *The Monist*, 56 (1972): 64–84 as cited in Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering and the ‘Global Poor’”, 13.

³⁷ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 7.

develops, she cites its defenders (Horton and Keith)³⁸ as claiming an obligation to deploy SRM technology and further its research on the behalf of the global poor. However, “they nowhere mention any data or consultation process that supports the idea that ‘the global poor’ share the view that SRM research is in fact the best way to advance their interests in relation to climate change.”³⁹ The ‘global poor’ then are denied epistemic input on a structural level. Those with the power to pursue large-scale research interests with vast global effects have decided, either consciously or unconsciously, that the input of many affected groups (specifically those with limited economic or political power) is not worth noting. This decision-making framework violates the principle of recognition justice, and functions to silence those with less economic power while leaving them with the consequences of decisions they had no hand in making. Thus, not only does this kind of paternalism result from a kind of power imbalance, it also function as a dominant imposition of power which reinforces these same unequal dynamics by virtue of excluding knowers clear stakes in the project in question. This type of Dworkian paternalism then serves as an example of the ways in which dominant and exclusionary frameworks for knowledge are enforced. In addition to providing a clear example of the ways in which dominant frameworks are enforced it also serves as a clear violation of the kind of recognition justice for which Hourdequin advocates. We see this type of paternalism played out in examples I use throughout this project, including the early modern example of the exclusion of midwifery knowledge from medical practice and in other contemporary examples concerning the exclusion of marginalized knowers. A concern for recognition justice is then an important way of engaging with and combatting paternalistic frameworks of justification. Groups with vast amounts of

³⁸ Horton, and Keith, “Solar geoengineering and obligations to the global poor.” As cited in Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering and the ‘Global Poor’”, 9.

³⁹ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 8.

political and economic power may self-justify with an appeal to their positive intentions. However, they employ and enforce epistemic frameworks that often do not make room for input from some of the most affected groups, specifically those without political power. Thus, they are left to make decisions on knowledge bases that are incomplete epistemically compromised.

Hourdequin, like Smith, argues that “like all research, SRM research is not ‘neutral’.”⁴⁰ Decisions about whether to pursue this kind of research will not only determine how it is developed but also “what concerns are taken into account, and what concerns are overlooked.”⁴¹ Hourdequin is correct in claiming that questions about justice in relation to SRM research also involve “questions about the distribution of epistemic power.”⁴² These concerns for epistemic power involve a focus on whose voices are heard and whose are excluded from the dominant scientific discourse. Focusing on the connection between epistemic power and justice involves making sure that those who exert the most influence over which values determine the methods and goals of research (those with the most epistemic power) do not simply do so because they already enjoy positions of relatively high political and social power. Crucially it involves ensuring that those in positions of power do not unfairly exclude valuable methods of research and knowledge. These authors are united in their belief that scientific research involves an interplay of epistemic and non-epistemic values. It is not, as many would suggest, a purely objective form of knowledge production – free from the subjective experiences, biases, values and beliefs of its human practitioners. Thus, questions about values and how they function to frame epistemic practice are crucial to both understanding and optimizing these practices. Hourdequin and Smith in particular raise important questions about the unequal distribution of

⁴⁰ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering, and the ‘Global Poor’”, 13.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

epistemic power among different groups. And it is exactly these sorts of questions that I will explore further. Questions of epistemic power are relevant to understanding structural constraints on knowledge production and, more generally, shape what is considered valid knowledge.

The imposition of a singular standard for knowledge by a hegemonic group functions to exclude valuable forms of knowledge. While the neoliberal hegemony sets the current standard and thus functions to exclude valuable forms of knowledge, it is best understood in the context of a long lineage of exclusionary frameworks. Neoliberalism, and the knowledge systems that underpin and reflect it, is the current instantiation of a long-standing problem in which the imposition of a constraining standard of knowledge by a powerful group results in the exclusion of valuable forms of knowledge. Though neoliberal values now structure and determine the kind of knowledge thought to be valuable, this framework highlights a more general problem – that of unjustifiably restrictive frameworks excluding alternative forms of knowledge. One way relatively dominant frameworks constrain knowledge practices is by offering a seemingly exclusive claim to objectivity or rationality. The imposed standard passes itself off as imminently rational and seeks to limit knower's imaginative possibilities, making it so that the dominant framework seems to be the only one possible for producing knowledge and seeking the truth. These frameworks function in a structural way as a means of constraining our possibilities for knowledge production. Now, I will turn to examining neoliberalism as it functions as a contemporary example of the kind of social and political ideology that results in the exclusionary frameworks with which I am concerned.

Neoliberal Knowledge Politics and University Research: The Limiting and Control of Knowledge Production

In what follows I will examine the current standardizing framework for knowledge and describe some of the ways it functions to exclude valuable forms of knowledge and shape methods of knowledge production. Like many previous political and economic ideologies, neoliberalism has had a profound influence on the types of knowledge and methods of knowledge production that are currently valued and seen as legitimate. Neoliberalizing trends within academia work to erode the autonomy of academics, further excluding types and methods of knowledge that do not fit within its value system. This erosion of academic autonomy functions primarily to limit and constrain forms which resist quantification in market terms. Neoliberalism values information that is quantifiable in terms coherent to its values and information that can be utilized in the name of “progress” and “innovation” to aid in creating new marketable technologies.

In the example of neoliberalism, any form of knowledge or criticism that does not fit within the evidence-based, market-based standard of the neoliberal order is regarded as frivolous and biased, seen as an intellectual curiosity that must be adapted to fit within this paradigm or pushed aside in the name of ‘science’ and ‘progress’.

Current political and economic conditions are providing serious motivation for universities and other institutions to trim what they have identified as their “most extraneous elements.”⁴³ In Michael Silk, Anthony Bush, and David L. Andrews’ critical work on the increased push towards a particular type of evidence-based practice they write:

“the ‘gold’ standard of academic research, the randomized experimental trial, is once again heralded; an aggressive push toward science defined by evidence-based programs, policies, and practices are seemingly the sole avenue for ‘legitimate’ academic

⁴³ Silk et al., “Contingent Intellectual Amateuism,” 106.

survival.”⁴⁴

This problem of constraining research interests to fit within a singular framework, is one of central concern to my argument. The authors identify the connection between some current epistemological standards and the ideologies propagated by the Bush regime. The point of this observation is not to highlight a concern that is limited to this political period, but instead a means of highlighting the ways in which specific political hegemonies function to influence epistemological standards. They write, “one legacy of the Bush regime is a pervasive epistemological and methodical fundamentalism (...) which privileges evidence-based ‘science’ practice, policies, programs, and by inference, progress.”⁴⁵ They identify this methodological fundamentalism as one which “singularly positions the randomized experience as that which ‘counts’ within social research.”⁴⁶ This heralding of evidence-based research as the only legitimate form of research was furthered by the Obama administration, “through a concerted quest for ‘objective’ evidence-based scientific research.”⁴⁷ This systematic exclusion of knowledge involves both an epistemic failure in which valuable information and knowledge practices are lost, but also an ethical one in which only certain communities are accepted as possessing valuable knowledge. Epistemic frameworks that increasingly push for knowledge to be quantifiable in terms most familiar and accessible to politically and economically empowered groups further marginalize knowledge claims from groups with different systems of value.

The authors note that government-sponsored funding for academic research in the United States and the United Kingdom has dropped significantly in recent years, and this has increased

⁴⁴ Silk et al, “Contingent Intellectual Amateurism”, 106.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 107.

the pressure on researchers to secure funding. They assert that as a result, universities have responded by “reinforcing the primacy of ‘high quality science’.”⁴⁸ To those charged with the task of enforcing these new demands, this means reinforcing methods that produce knowledge which fits within the set paradigm, and in this particular case involves increased formalization and the devaluing of more experiential forms of knowledge. Critically examining the framework that defines better or worse science is discouraged. The framing conditions and values which determine knowledge production are often obfuscated or left unexamined the claim that the framework is maximally objective remains intact. Relatively dominant frameworks then often dismiss forms of knowledge and knowledge production for failing to meet the conditions for objectivity that they fail to meet themselves. In academic research, the emphasis is not on examining framing conditions but on reinforcing the current framework for knowledge which seeks to afford primacy “to rationally conceived, objective knowledge, with critical and reflexive forms of intellectualizing coming under increasing pressure.”⁴⁹ According to the authors, knowledge that does not fit within this shifting and increasingly restrictive framework have experienced “concerted backlash” over the past decade.⁵⁰ In particular, knowledge involving methods of “subjectivism interpretive, and constructivist thought” have experienced increasing backlash and marginalization that they argue is “as much economic in its derivation as it is epistemological in its effects.”⁵¹ Due to the influence of the current dominant political and social system, the goals of research and knowledge production now mirror those of economic production. Thus, increased standardization, formalization, and efficiency are now required of knowledge practices for them to be accepted as legitimate.

⁴⁸ Silk et al., “Contingent Intellectual Amateurism”, 107.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The effects of the neoliberal push towards the further standardization of knowledge are worth exploring further. Some of the kinds of knowledge this framework functions to devalue include: first person observational/testimonial knowledge, works in criticism and theory, methods of science and health care that are not based on the strict evidence based model and general types of knowledge that do not fit expressly within the “s knows that p” framework. I will do more to expand on the types of knowledge excluded by hegemonic frameworks in my second chapter, particularly focusing on practice-based and experiential knowledge. Practice-based knowledge that cannot be fully captured in the standard propositional framework serve as paradigmatic examples of the kind of knowledge relatively-dominant frameworks have tended to exclude. Still, it is important to remember that the current neoliberal framework is just the current instantiation of a historically extended problem. And as such it shares in some exclusionary trends that have existed in previous frameworks.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that hegemonic political, cultural, and economic ideals serve to produce relatively dominant epistemic frameworks and that these frameworks often exclude valuable forms of knowledge. I have highlighted the ways in which these relatively-dominant frameworks often obfuscate their framing conditions in order to make unjustified claims to objectivity, claims which are instrumentalized to exclude valuable forms of knowledge. My primary goal for this chapter has been to set my foundational claim that dominant political hegemonies produce relatively dominant frameworks that exclude particular knowers and methods of knowledge production. Later I will demonstrate how this exclusion is a result of the exploitation of power differentials. In doing so, I have sought to demonstrate the ways in which inquiry is shaped by the values and assumptions of inquirers, and the ways in which larger

frameworks for knowledge are relatively determined by political and cultural values. In addition, I have utilized some examples to highlight both the kind of exclusion on which I focus and the ways that these frameworks function to exclude knowledge. My discussion on the ways in which structures function is also intended to highlight the ways in which the frameworks I identify – which I take to be structural features – operate. I have argued that the neoliberal inspired ‘business-style’ model which increasingly guides academic institutions functions to erode academic autonomy and thus compromise the autonomy of knowledge production.⁵² This erosion of academic autonomy as a result of the imposition of new standards of knowledge serves as an example of the ways in which knowledge is excluded and frameworks are epistemically compromised.

In my next chapter, I will focus more specifically on the ways in which certain methods of knowledge production have been understood in relation to particular groups of knowers. In relation to this point, I will focus on the ways in which non-propositional knowledge practiced by particular groups has often been excluded from relatively dominant frameworks. In this second chapter I focus largely on the fact of exclusion and further examine the power imbalances that exist in relation to instances of unjust epistemic exclusion. Thus building towards my concluding chapter in which I demonstrate the ways in which the exclusion of both particular groups and particular forms of knowledge production are a function of the exploitation of unjust power imbalances.

⁵² Mark Olssen and Michael A. Peters “Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: from the free market to knowledge capitalism,” *Journal of Education Policy* 20 no.3 (2005), 313-345.

CHAPTER 2 THE EXCLUSION OF PARTICULAR KNOWERS

In this chapter I will show how the imposition of frameworks of knowledge according to the dominant social and political paradigm functions to exclude certain methods of knowledge production and with it particular groups of knowers. Though dominant paradigms that determine epistemic frameworks are dynamic, and change over time, there are particular groups that often find themselves at the margins. This problem is two-fold, both that these patterns of exclusion reinforce imbalances in epistemic power and that this pattern of exclusion is an unjust one with ethical import. This is not to say that there must always be a group at the margins or that these things always function a strict binary of oppressor and oppressed. Different individual knowers and different groups of knowers find themselves along varying and multiple axes of power, access, and oppression. There is no essential connection between any particular group and any particular form of knowledge, but by examining the connection between particular groups of knowers and particular kinds of epistemic methods we can understand how dominant paradigms have often excluded particular groups (and knowledge) over time.

I will begin by focusing on the ways in which particular groups may be understood in relation to specific methods of knowledge production. It bears repeating that no one group has any inherent claim to any one mode of knowledge production. However, there are significant patterns of knowledge practices that are often delineated along various social and cultural lines. In this chapter I hope to give some insight into forms of knowledge that are often represented by indigenous knowers in particular, and touch on the ways in which these groups of knowers are often marginalized (both as a result of their methodology and their access to power).

In avoiding some of the epistemic vices I seek to criticize I offer as a disclaimer that I write of indigenous knowledge and methodology from an outside perspective (as someone

educated in a western academic tradition) do not purport to capture a full picture of indigenous knowledge or methodology. I cannot capture the fullness of indigenous knowledge practices, but my project does not require it. My goal is only to show the ways in which hegemonic frameworks function to invalidate many types of knowledge (indigenous and otherwise) that do not fit.

In particular, I will explore an example concerning the history of midwifery in which practical and experience-based knowledge was excluded in favor of knowledge codified in a propositional framework. I argue that this case is exemplary of the ways in which practice-based knowledge has been and can be excluded from dominant understanding of what constitutes ‘scientific’ knowledge, and argue that its exclusion constitutes bad epistemic practice. I will also discuss the ways in which some indigenous forms of knowledge and knowledge production have been structurally excluded from the dominant discourse in similar ways.

Early Modern Midwifery and the Loss of Know-How

Practice-based knowledge is a necessarily embodied way of knowing, meaning it is obtained and expressed via physical practices. Often practice-based knowledge is embedded and transmitted within a particular cultural tradition. Because this way of knowing does not fit within the western paradigm of what constitutes knowledge it is discredited within the tradition of Western science and standard Western theories of epistemology. In order to better understand how practice-based, non-propositional knowledge has been devalued I will briefly examine some of the ways in which the privileging of abstracted and propositional forms of knowledge can be understood as a function of the transition to modernity. This transition is significant as it resulted in a focus on more qualitative measures for knowledge. The transition to modernity involved the

elevation of knowledge that could fit neatly into codified propositional forms, as well as an increasingly mechanized understanding of the world, and devalued knowledge that did not fit these molds.⁵³ Thus, I seek to highlight the ways in which the exclusion of practice-based non-propositional knowledge from the hegemonic discourse is a function of frameworks that arose during this transition. The exclusion of particular forms of knowledge from relatively dominant frameworks is an issue with both ethical and epistemic import that involves the imposition of power. In addition, it functions to reinforce the unjust power dynamics that initially led to this kind of exclusion.

Vrinda Dalmiya and Linda Alcoff's offer a critique of the traditional western conception of knowledge as exclusively propositional.⁵⁴ Dalmiya and Alcoff argue that there are many sorts of knowledge that one learns only through observation, participation in collaborative activity, or solo trial and error. The authors use the practice of soothing a newborn child as an example of this type of knowledge. It may be possible to codify some of the knowledge involved in the process of soothing a child into a propositional form, for example you may be able to say you know that the child likes to be rocked back and forth. However, Dalmiya and Alcoff argue that, "the manner in which a newborn needs and prefers to be held can only be learned fully through observation and practice."⁵⁵ The complexity and nuance involved in the practice of soothing a child cannot be reduced or abstracted to propositional rules. There are many other forms of knowledge based in physical practice that simply cannot be adequately transmitted or stored in the propositional form. When one attempts to force these types of knowledge into frameworks

⁵³ Carol Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. (HarperOne 1980), 111.

⁵⁴ Linda Alcoff and Vrinda Dalmiya, "Are 'Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" in *Feminist Epistemologies*. eds. L. Alcoff and E. Potter. (New York: Routledge 1999), 217-244.

⁵⁵ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "Are 'Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" 221.

that are not designed to capture them, something is lost. In the case of midwifery this loss resulted in practices that caused substantive and avoidable harms to expectant mothers.⁵⁶

It is worth noting that modernity, similar to neoliberalism in that it serves as a hegemonic and dominant set of ideologies, is just a particular example of background ideals and framing conditions that are expressed in unjustly exclusionary knowledge frameworks. In any case, I will use tools from within feminist theories of epistemology that distinguish between knowing-that and knowing-how (and argue for the validity of both) to talk about the ways in which entire bodies of knowledge are excluded from relatively dominant frameworks.

Dalmiya and Alcoff argue that a solely propositional understanding of knowledge is too narrow and leads to a kind of epistemic discrimination that excludes important species of knowledge. The propositional framework is one in which knowledge claims are required to be formatted in terms of "S knows that p" in which S represents an "individual cogniser and p stands for a proposition."⁵⁷ This account of knowledge as exclusively in the framework of "knowing that," where "that" refers to a truth-conducive proposition, is not adequate to accommodate other important forms of knowledge.

Dalmiya and Alcoff claim that the "almost exclusive preference for 'knowing that' lies at the root of epistemic discrimination."⁵⁸ It is significant to note that what they call "epistemic discrimination" is intended to imply a "discriminatory effect rather than intention."⁵⁹ Dalmiya and Alcoff use the turn of the 20th century transition from the "traditional women's knowledge"

⁵⁶ The authors list some examples of extreme and harmful medical practices employed by male physicians, including, "such radical techniques as squeezing and trampling on the abdomen to force the baby's decent in a difficult birth or hanging the woman from a tree." Alcoff and Dalmiya, "'Are Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" 222.

⁵⁷ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "'Are Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" 220.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 221.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 220.

of midwifery to the early male-dominated field of obstetrics as a paradigmatic example of the kind of epistemic discrimination they refer to.

The process of codifying knowledge into a standardized written form is something that Alcoff and Dalmiya claim is prerequisite for something to be considered valid knowledge in the mainstream western tradition of epistemology. A tradition formalized and reinforced with the transition to modernity. Linda Tuhiwai Smith claims that the written and linguistic forms like “reading, writing, (and) talking” are aspects that are “as fundamental to academic discourse as science, theories, paradigms.”⁶⁰ And, like the paradigms Kuhn discusses in the opening of this project, they are inextricable from shifting hegemonic ideologies. Smith provides a brief diagnosis of the ways in which the standard written academic discourse functions to marginalize or dismiss indigenous perspectives and indigenous authors. She writes,

“academic writing is a form of selecting, arranging and presenting knowledge. It privileges sets of texts, views about the history of an idea, what issues count as significant; and, by engaging in the same process uncritically, we too render indigenous writers invisible or unimportant while reinforcing the validity of other writers.”⁶¹

Smith argues that the written form as it exists within academia should be understood as potentially harmful because it is the form through which “we reinforce and maintain a style of discourse which is never innocent.”⁶² Objectivity is often stated as the explicit goal of western researchers and research is seen as innocent in the sense that it claims to be free from the bias of human subjectivity. There are structural features that shape knowledge production which include presuppositions about who constitutes a legitimate knower and whose knowledge is superior in

⁶⁰ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 37.

form. Implicit assumptions about the supremacy of particular knowers and forms of knowledge shape the process of inquiry. The prevalence of these assumptions helps enforce frameworks that exclude useful forms of knowledge. Both in cases where the form of knowledge does not fit the current standard and in cases where some feature of the knower's identity does not fit the implicit Western idea of who can possess legitimate knowledge. While Western scientists aim towards objectivity as their explicit goal they do so from within a series of cultural assumptions about the supremacy of Western knowledge. These assumptions about the superiority of western scientific practice coupled with dehumanizing and unaddressed cultural assumptions about the "other" has led to harmful and further dehumanizing scientific practice. One particularly egregious example Smith provides is a case in which a western colonialist researcher attempted to measure the mental faculties of indigenous people by filling their skulls with millet seeds and comparing "the amount of millet seeds to the capacity for mental thought."⁶³ While this method of research itself is dehumanizing and disrespectful it is also clear that the starting point at which this method of inquiry begins is one deeply embedded in bigoted cultural assumptions regarding the mental life of indigenous peoples. When researchers employ a scientific approach that makes a claim to objectivity due to an inattention to framing considerations, dehumanizing research practices are enabled. Thus, these unexamined cultural assumptions coupled with a claim to objectivity can and have resulted in substantive harms for groups with less political and economic power.

The important takeaway from the fact that women's knowledge of midwifery was not written down is not a point concerning women's literacy. This point is significant because the type of knowledge possessed by midwives *could not* be written down. The practice-based

⁶³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 1.

component of midwifery "was not and could not be a matter of following rules codified in conditional propositions."⁶⁴ The fact that crucial practice-based knowledge involved in midwifery could not be written down means that sole recognition of propositional accounts of knowledge resulted in the automatic exclusion and dismissal of crucial practice and experience from early obstetrics. According to Dalmiya and Alcoff, because of this dismissal, women giving birth during the rise of early obstetrics suffered as a result of sub-optimal obstetric practices that could have been avoided by consulting experienced midwives.⁶⁵ Understood more generally, the exclusive recognition of propositional knowledge and the exclusion of knowledge which cannot be captured within a propositional schema results in the loss of crucial information from what we consider knowledge. The exclusion of the practice of midwifery as a legitimate form of knowledge after the rise of obstetrics serves as a perfect example of the ways in which relatively dominant frameworks for knowledge unjustly exclude valid forms of knowledge. The knowledge held by midwives during this transitional period was not excluded because it was not effective, valid or useful, rather it was excluded because it did not fit neatly in the framework for what could be considered valuable knowledge.

In addition to distinguishing midwifery from early obstetrics on the basis of form, Alcoff and Dalmiya emphasize how the experience-based knowledge of midwives led to significant differences in care practices. The authors argue that a crucial aspect of the midwife's skill set was the ability to empathize with the expectant mother and provide emotional support. Midwives at the time were typically mothers themselves and were thus able to identify with the expectant mother as a result of their own first-person knowledge of the birth process. Neither the phenomenological experience of identification with the expectant mother, nor that of empathy,

⁶⁴ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "'Are Old Wives' Tales' Justified?," 224.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 222.

can be properly captured or taught in the propositional format. On the other hand, the knowledge of (mostly male during this period) physicians was not grounded in subjective experience but rather in a "self-conscious quest for 'objectivity'."⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, the significant difference in the experiences of these practitioners resulted in significant differences in their approaches to patient care. Thus, in the early stages of obstetrics, many women suffered at the hands of doctors whose knowledge and values were not shaped by the crucial experiences that many midwives shared with the mothers they assisted. The values shaping practice here are crucial because the shift in what is considered valuable or valid knowledge results directly from shifting hegemonic cultural values. The shifting hegemonic values result in a shifting epistemic framework, and valuable and useful knowledge is often excluded as a result.

Midwives emphasized knowledge gained through personal experience. Dalmiya and Alcoff argue that this emphasis on experiential knowledge "undermines the importance of information transmitted through impersonal propositions."⁶⁷ The value and legitimacy of the kind of experiential and practice-based knowledge held by midwives results in a challenge to theories of knowledge that center around propositional forms of knowledge. Thus, the authors claim that though the contrast between the beliefs found in modern obstetrics and those in midwifery is characterized as one between knowledge and non-knowledge it is "really only a contrast between conformity and non-conformity to the schema 'S knows that p'."⁶⁸ Thus, this serves as a prime example of the ways in which the frameworks put in place to evaluate knowledge can function to exclude (or fail to capture) valuable forms. In the case of the dismissal of midwifery knowledge during the rise of obstetrics the loss is demonstrated in the

⁶⁶ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "'Are Old Wives' Tales' Justified?," 225.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 225.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 225.

rise of infant and birth-related mortality rates, as well as the rise of inhumane medical practices attempted on expectant mothers.

Though Alcoff and Dalmiya's primary analysis focuses on the exclusion of explicitly gendered practical knowledge, they note that this method of delegitimizing knowledge is not uniquely applied to women's knowledge. They make no explicit mention of indigenous practical knowledge but grant that "many men have also had practical knowledge which has been discredited as the 'superstitious' or 'unscientific beliefs' of peasants."⁶⁹ This discrediting of non-propositional knowledge produced outside formal institutions has striking similarities to the ways in which indigenous knowledge practices discussed later in this chapter are excluded from the honorific status of scientific knowledge. These examples both support the primary point of this chapter, the claim that the exclusion of particular groups of knowers is a two-fold problem with both ethical and epistemic consequences.

Codification and the Loss of Indigenous Knowledge

Smith also discusses the western idea that knowledge must be codified into specific and limiting forms (particularly written forms) in order to be understood as knowledge at all. Smith says, "every aspect of the act of producing knowledge has influenced the way indigenous ways of knowing have been represented."⁷⁰ Standardized methods of research, and the codification of claims into a standardized written form, are mechanisms through which knowledge frameworks function to adjudicate between forms of knowledge that are deemed valuable and legitimate and those which are not.

Smith offers a broad critique of research as a mode of knowledge production in general. As

⁶⁹ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "'Are Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" 226.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 36.

I've discussed in the previous chapter, Smith argues that issues of knowledge production are essential to the project of colonization. In particular, Smith says, "research is an important part of the colonizing project because it is concerned with defining legitimate knowledge."⁷¹ This powerful external force appointing itself as the legitimator of knowledge (as colonists have done) functions to limit the power and agency of indigenous knowers in relation to their own forms of knowledge. According to Smith, who is Maori, the process of colonization can be understood in the Maori tradition as "a stripping away of *mana* (our standing in the eyes of others and therefore in our own eyes), and an undermining of *rangatiratanga* (our ability and right to determine our destinies)."⁷² Indigenous people are denied the right to determine their own projects and uses for knowledge, meanwhile the legitimacy of their claims is denied. Knowledge is deemed legitimate only if it fits within the colonialist epistemic framework. Colonizers then approach alternative frameworks and forms of knowledge with the assumption that their grasp of what constitutes legitimate knowledge is authoritative. The assumption of the superiority of propositional western knowledge, has often led to the mischaracterization and misappropriation of much of indigenous knowledge in addition to its frequent dismissal. Smith writes,

"An analysis of research into the lives of Maori people, from a Maori perspective, would seem to indicate that many researchers have not only not found 'truth' or new knowledge; rather, they have missed the point entirely, and, in some cases, drawn conclusions about Maori society from information that has only the most tenuous relationship to how Maori society operates."⁷³

⁷¹ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 175.

⁷² Ibid., 175. Significant to note that the words cited in this quotation are from the Maori language.

⁷³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 176.

Here Smith argues that the very process of validating knowledge from a western perspective often leads to either a full dismissal of indigenous practices and ideas or a gross mischaracterization. These negative epistemic consequences of this mode of validation are a result of the ingrained presuppositions about who constitutes a legitimate knower and what constitutes knowledge that are expressed in western frameworks of knowledge. In the next section I will provide a further characterization of the historical distinctions between western and indigenous methods of knowing and the values that shape these methods. This is intended to demonstrate the ways in which relatively dominant frameworks, in this case western scientific ones, exclude knowledge contextualized in different systems of value. It is also intended to further demonstrate how cultural, political, and economic values shape epistemic practice.

Distinctions in Value and Methodology Between Indigenous and Western Groups

Fikret Berkes focuses on the characterization and understanding of indigenous ecological knowledge. He refers to this knowledge as traditional ecological knowledge a term widely used by those addressing the kind of knowledge on which Berkes focuses. This knowledge can be understood as traditional insofar as it relates to cultural continuity and to practices, beliefs, and behaviors “derived from historical experience.”⁷⁴ Berkes makes a point to note that traditional knowledge should not be understood as solely historical or static in nature. Because of perceived historical connotations of “traditional” some scholars prefer to use the term “indigenous”.⁷⁵ I will use these terms interchangeably for the purposes of my discussion.

Berkes highlights the commonly held distinction between indigenous scientific knowledge and that of the western scientific tradition. According to Berkes, in order to make

⁷⁴ Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, (New York: Routledge, 2018), 4.

⁷⁵ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 4.

sense of the term traditional ecological knowledge we must understand ecological knowledge broadly “to refer to the knowledge, however acquired, of relationships of living being with one another and their environment.”⁷⁶ This definition of ecology does not position itself as necessarily in relation to any particular framework of knowledge evaluation. This definition is significant in that it does not foreground the distinction between subject and object that is heralded in Western scientific practices.

Berkes uses traditional ecological knowledge to refer to both “ways of knowing (knowing, the process), as well as to information (knowledge as the thing known).”⁷⁷ This former understanding of traditional ecological knowledge as referring to particular processes of knowledge formation is crucial. The focus on a particular method of knowledge rather than on propositional content of knowledge is essential to my study here as I maintain that certain dominant frameworks of knowledge wrongfully exclude entire methods of knowledge production. For example, in the case of midwifery I examined earlier, I claim that some forms of knowledge are best understood as based in practice and not in the codified terms through which knowledge is largely understood in the western tradition.

Berkes notes that a common mechanism found in the development of indigenous knowledge is that “there is constant learning from lived experience, the daily observation and monitoring of the environment.”⁷⁸ In addition to being based in observation and lived, practical experience, traditional knowledge is strongly situated in the cultural norms of the people who practice it. Ultimately, Berkes offers a working definition of traditional ecological knowledge as “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive process and handed

⁷⁶ Ibid., 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁸ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 230.

down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and their environment.”⁷⁹ Traditional ecological knowledge is best understood as a culturally embedded way of knowing, involving many practice-based forms. According to Berkes, in the case of traditional ecological knowledge, there is a "culturally correct way in which knowledge can be transmitted, individual competency developed, and observations become part of the accepted, authoritative, knowledge of the group."⁸⁰ In this way, says Berkes, "not only the observation itself, but interpretations and inferences can be folded into an enriched, elaborate system of knowledge and practice."⁸¹ Thus, many indigenous knowledge practices like the ones Berkes discusses can be understood as deeply embedded and connected to a specific cultural context. A cultural context that other frameworks for knowledge often fail to recognize.

Early in the book Berkes offers a brief but informative analysis of the substantive differences between traditional ecological knowledge and western scientific ecological knowledge. His summary is informed by authors Banuri and Apffel Marglin who use a “systems-of-knowledge analysis” with philosophical and anthropological roots.⁸² Berkes writes that according to this analysis:

“indigenous knowledge systems are characterized by embeddedness of knowledge in the local cultural milieu; boundedness of local knowledge in space and time; the importance of community; lack of separation between nature and culture, and between subject and object; commitment or attachment to the local environment as a unique and irreplaceable place; and

⁷⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 231.

⁸¹ Ibid., 231.

⁸² Tariq Banuri and Frederique Apffel Marglin (eds). *Who Will Save the Forests?* (London: United Nations University, Zed books 1993)

a noninstrumental approach to nature. These features contrast with Western scientific knowledge systems, which are characterized respectively, by disembodiedness; universalism; individualism; nature:culture and subject:object dichotomy; mobility; and an instrumental attitude (nature as commodity) toward nature.”⁸³

Here Berkes offers a quick map of some of the conceptual and practical differences that frame indigenous and western knowledge practices. Observing the differences in the ways knowledge is conceptualized provides clues as to the different values that shape knowledge practices, particularly regarding views of the natural world. In this analysis, indigenous knowers are understood as taking a non-instrumental approach to nature, while Western knowers are understood as having an attitude that conceptualizes nature in terms of commodities and resources. Distinct cultural values account for this difference in conceptualizing the natural world, and further accounts for differences in how knowledge of the natural world is formed and valued. The non-instrumental approach to nature allows for a more complex and holistic picture, in which the natural world may be understood as deeply connected with various cultural and epistemic values. Alternatively, the instrumental approach involves a separation between the knower and the thing known. On the instrumental approach, the primary concern is how to operationalize the natural world to best serve individuals rather than how the natural world can be understood as *in relation to* the individual. By conceptualizing nature primarily in terms of resources, the instrumental approach provides further motivation to codify knowledge about the world into explicitly quantifiable terms and move away from understanding it in more experiential and qualitative terms. This analysis includes references to both structural properties of knowledge, (namely those concerning the conceptualization of subject and object) and the

⁸³ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 11.

conceptual values which shape knowledge practices. Fundamental differences in the values that shape knowledge production can result in the systematic and structural exclusion of knowledge that does not maximize the values of the relatively dominant groups (groups with a lot of political, social, or economic power).⁸⁴ This example is significant in that their management techniques indicate a practice-based form of knowledge and, in addition to being highly sustainable, the results of their practices often succeed at reaching the management goals in western fisheries that western practitioners often failed to meet themselves.⁸⁵

Berkes examines Cree fishing practice as an example of an area in which a traditional knowledge system provides unique insights into resource management. The Cree fishery that Berkes specifically examines is the Chisasibi fishery in Quebec, Canada. From Berkes description we can understand Cree knowledge of fishing (and management) as similar in kind to the non-propositional knowledge referred to by Alcott and Dalmiya. Berkes claims that Cree fishers possessed "extensive local knowledge (...) on distributions, behavior, and life cycles of fish."⁸⁶ Fishing practices are determined on a seasonal cycle along with the other harvesting activities the Cree partake in. Fishing seasons "are signaled by biophysical events in the landscape such as the spring ice breakup in the river and the change of color of vegetation in September."⁸⁷ Cree fishers then "know how to recognize and respond to a variety of environmental feedbacks that signal what can be fished where and when."⁸⁸ Berkes makes no reference to whether or not these biophysical signals are recorded into any propositional form.

⁸⁴ The ways in which values play a role in the knowledge production and evaluation is the primary subject of Kevin Elliott's work which I mentioned in chapter one and discuss in more detail in my final chapter.

⁸⁵ This type of exclusion and its consequences is demonstrated in my next example where I focus on Cree fishing practices and management techniques.

⁸⁶ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 156.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 156.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

However, it is clear that knowing how to recognize environmental cues and understand their meaning in terms of fishing is learned and carried out through practice. Thus, this knowledge can be understood as primarily practice-based, a species of *knowing-how* rather than a *knowing-that*.

The practical knowledge concerning when and where to set their nets allowed Cree to exercise "considerable selectivity over their harvest."⁸⁹ In addition to being highly selective these practices were also noted for being highly sustainable. Berkes compared his own Chisasibi fishing data with the results of a survey taken of the same area in 1920 and noted that the results of the 1920's study indicated "exactly the same number of age-classes as mine, and the age-specific sizes were similar."⁹⁰ Berkes claims that the patterns of selectivity employed by Cree fishers "could be documented by comparing the subsistence catch against biological samples, year after year."⁹¹ Berkes argues that if the management of fisheries is defined as "controlling how much fish is harvested, where, when, of what species, and of what sizes," then Chisasibi fishers must be acknowledged as managing their fishery.⁹² In fact, notes Berkes, because western fisheries generally fail to achieve all of the listed objectives, it seemed that "Chisasibi fishers did better than most fishery managers by the very criteria of fishery management science."⁹³ Thus, in this instance, Cree resource management of fisheries may be viewed as representative of the claim from Dalmiya and Alcoff that "skillfull practice can produce epistemic authority, and even superiority, on the part of the agent."⁹⁴ Crucially, both examples demonstrate that when these forms of knowledge are dismissed by dominant frameworks there is vital information being overlooked, and by failing to capture this information these frameworks result in sub-optimal

⁸⁹ Ibid., 161.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 161.

⁹¹ Ibid., 161.

⁹² Ibid., 162.

⁹³ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 162.

⁹⁴ Alcoff and Dalmiya, "Are Old Wives' Tales Justified?", 227.

epistemic practices.

Berkes claims that the "primary mechanism" driving the management practices of the Cree "was the fishers reading of the catch per unit effort."⁹⁵ The catch per unit of effort method of analysis was a crucial environmental indicator tied to the phenomenological experience of the fishers, and served as foundational to "decisions regarding what nets to use, how long to keep fishing, and when to relocate."⁹⁶ This understanding of the effort needed to catch a certain number of fish is an inherently embodied and practice-based way of knowing. Though in principle it may be possible to describe or abstract this function of effort into propositional statements, the phenomenological experience of this value cannot be fully captured in this way. In order to adequately grasp the effort involved in a particular practice one must engage in the practice itself. The favorable results of these practices when compared to those compliant with dominant western frames demonstrate that the dismissal of these practices constitutes an epistemic loss.

Abstracted quantitative principles such as "catch quotas" and "maximum sustainable yield calculations" are part of the contemporary scientific management practices used in commercial western fisheries.⁹⁷ In addition to abstracted models, commercial fisheries also have specific guidelines such as "restrictions on gill-net mesh size, minimum fish size, season closures."⁹⁸ In the Cree fishery, none of these formalized management policies or reductionist usage models are employed. Cree fisheries are managed through the use of "customary practices

⁹⁵ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 168.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹⁷ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 157.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 157.

that, like the policies of management agencies, can change dramatically."⁹⁹ Through experience Cree fishers acquire the ability to recognize and respond to important environmental cues that influence management practices. Berkes notes, "there is no dichotomy between research and management in the Cree system."¹⁰⁰ Instead we find that in the Cree fishery system learning is inextricably tied up with practice and culture, "there is learning-by-doing, a mix of trial-and-error and feedback learning, and social learning with elders and stewards in charge."¹⁰¹ Cree fishery knowledge can then be understood as culturally-situated and practice-based knowledge that is dynamic and highly sensitive to practice-related environmental cues.

Berkes claims that within the tradition of Western science there remains an assumption that indigenous people do not take part in sustainable management of their resources. Rather, Berkes writes, it is conventionally held by western scientists that "if a group of traditional people seemed to be managing their resources sustainably, this can probably be explained on the basis of too few people and too 'primitive' a technology to do damage to the resource."¹⁰² This type of assumption is a perfect example of the dismissal of knowledge that does not fit within the conventional western paradigm. This dismissal of indigenous knowledge on the basis of unjust cultural assumptions is something I will explore further in my next section. And the dismissal of particular knowers as a result of assumptions about the supremacy of knowers operating within the relatively dominant framework is a focal point of this chapter.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith on the Living Status of Imperialism

Smith cites the work of Jerry Mander to help characterize the difference between

⁹⁹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 174.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 174

¹⁰² Ibid., 161

indigenous and western forms of knowledge.¹⁰³ Smith says that in the Mander's view the fundamental clash between Western and Indigenous belief systems "stems from a belief held by indigenous peoples that the earth is a living entity."¹⁰⁴ Indigenous values and practices that are derived from this belief are often in direct conflict with Western views and values. According to Mander, says Smith, governments and corporate entities have set forth an "unrelenting imperative" to promote "technology as a solution to our lives" and it is this same imperative "which suppresses and destroys indigenous alternatives."¹⁰⁵ These imperatives can be understood as part of the values which function to frame accepted knowledge practices. More harmfully, these values can be seen (as Mander and Berkes suggest) in direct conflict with those of indigenous peoples. In these instances, indigenous people often stand to lose both cultural and material resources, including but not limited to: land, languages, and culturally significant methods of knowledge production. Smith writes of this type of conflict that:

"Attempts by governments and companies to flood territories in order to build hydroelectric dams, to destroy rain forests in order to mine the land beneath, and to poison the land, the waterways and the air – these projects bring indigenous groups into direct confrontation with a wide range of Western power blocs that include scientific communities, environmental organizations, local and national governments and their bureaucracies, rich country alliances, multinational corporations and media."¹⁰⁶

I understand Smith's reference to "Western power blocs" as referencing organizations with the

¹⁰³ Jerry Mander, *In the Absence of the Sacred: The failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations*, (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1991) as cited in Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 102.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 102.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 102.

sort of hegemonic power to determine dominant knowledge frameworks I focus on in this project.¹⁰⁷ Smith says, in support of my argument, that “embedded within each of these sectional interests are views about knowledge, more specifically about the inherent dominance of Western Knowledge.”¹⁰⁸ Western institutions like the ones Smith identifies operate from western cultural assumptions and work to reinforce their frameworks of knowledge production. Western knowledge frameworks, as Smith notes, include assumptions about the inherent validity and superiority of western forms of knowledge.

Smith then argues that it is a mistake to characterize the contemporary world as post-colonialist or post-imperialist. Assumptions about western superiority – epistemic and otherwise – are still being enforced through the imposition of power. She claims, “the language of imperialism may have changed, the specific targets of colonization may have shifted and indigenous groups may be better informed, but imperialism still exists.”¹⁰⁹ The tools imperialist projects employ are dynamic and shifting, but the appropriation and dismissal of indigenous forms of knowledge as a part of this project is ongoing. Understanding imperialism as continuous is also important for this project as it demonstrates how externally imposed exclusionary frameworks are an ongoing historical problem. In cases of imperialism, whether historical or contemporary, the hegemonic power of dominant groups shapes what knowledge is considered valuable. In these cases the influence of hegemonic power on knowledge practices often functions as the imposition of power on groups with relatively less political and economic power.

Smith goes on to identify a number of contemporary examples of what she calls

¹⁰⁷ Recall the discussion of the general function of structures in chapter 1.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

“colonizing projects” - projects directed at researching (and further colonizing) indigenous peoples. Though I will not recount all of Smith’s examples here, some of the more striking examples she considers include, “Having your cultural institutions and their rituals patented either by a non-indigenous person for by another indigenous individual” and the “denial of global citizenship” for indigenous peoples.¹¹⁰ In regards to this first example Smith discusses an instance in which “an attempt was made by a non-indigenous New Age male to patent the North American Indian sweat lodge ceremony because the Indians were ‘not performing it correctly’.”¹¹¹ The audacity of this particular example is so outrageous as to be nearly unbelievable. However, the use of indigenous art and designs for profit by non-indigenous people in fashion and other industries is so ubiquitous that it carries on in popular western cultures with hardly a raised eyebrow.¹¹² In this second example, the “denial of global citizenship” Smith emphasize the fact that indigenous people have “already experienced the denial of their humanity and many indigenous peoples have struggled for recognition of their citizenship within the states which colonized them.”¹¹³ According to Smith this mode of denial is reinforced in the contemporary world by the demands of the global marketplace. Smith says “new global political entities being established under such arrangements as GATT¹¹⁴ and other free market zones make participation with these zones dependent on certain sorts of compliances

¹¹⁰ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 104.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹¹² One particularly high-profile example of the mis-appropriation of indigenous cultural imagery happened at the November 2014 Victoria Secret Fashion show in which a model “walked the runway in a floor-length feather headdress, (...) leopard-spotted bikini and turquoise jewelry,” Emanuella Grinberg “Native American Designers fight cultural characatures” *CNN*, June 4, 2014. <https://www.cnn.com/2012/11/30/living/native-american-fashion-appropriation/index.html>.

¹¹³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 107.

¹¹⁴ GATT stands for General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and is an international trade agreement.

such as doing away with any protections of local economies and cultures.”¹¹⁵ Again we see that groups with vast amounts of global political and economic power determine which sets of cultural expressions, including knowledge practices, will be acknowledged and accepted. And while this may not function in the more explicitly adversarial ways colonialism has been understood historically, it still leads to many of the same effects. One example of the shift from explicitly violent and brutal colonial practices to ones focused on ‘cultural assimilation’ (meaning cultural erasure for those at whom these programs were targeted), were the government sponsored off-reservation boarding schools for Native American children which were prominent around the turn of the 20th century in America.¹¹⁶ Often, attendance at these boarding schools was legally mandated. The goal, according to the assimilationist logic of the United States Government was to help Native people “evolve into proper citizens – defined in the mind of government officials as industrious, Christian, self-supporting and patriotic.”¹¹⁷ A goal which implicitly included the erasure of indigenous cultural identities and which was achieved by “altering student’s appearance and changing their social habits through marching drills, chores, and training in Euro-American domestic arts and technical industries” as well as through the copious use of “corporal acts of disciplining.”¹¹⁸ These boarding schools reflected a transition in tactics from the violence aimed at the entire physical erasure of indigenous population at the hands of the government (as in the Indian Wars of the late 19th century) to tactics aimed at entire

¹¹⁵ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 107.

¹¹⁶ Lindsay M. Montgomery “Memories that haunt: layered landscapes of historical trauma on the American plains”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1 (2018). Doi: 10.1080/1352758.2018.1544166.

¹¹⁷ Montgomery, “Memories that haunt”, 4.

¹¹⁸ Montgomery, “Memories that haunt”, 4.

cultural erasure instead.¹¹⁹ The shifting forms and effects of colonialist practice are multiple and complex, but the ongoing appropriation, exclusion, and concerted denial of indigenous forms of knowledge and erasure of indigenous cultural practices by Western hegemonic groups has remained central. The exclusion of indigenous knowers as a function of colonialism is a clear example of the two-fold epistemic and ethical dimensions of this problem. In these cases, the imposition of colonialist western power results in the marginalization and subjugation of particular cultural groups and the dismissal or erasure of the knowledge these groups possess.

In this chapter I have focused on the ways in which exclusionary epistemic practices are often accompanied by an ethical problem regarding the exclusion of particular knowers. I have examined how different standardized frameworks set by comparatively dominant groups have functioned to exclude indigenous knowers, looking at examples from the history of modernization, colonization, and imperialism. In addition, I have discussed practice-based and experiential forms of knowledge are often excluded by these relatively dominant frameworks. I have taken the dismissal of indigenous fishery practices, and the exclusion of midwifery from early modern medical practices to be exemplary of this problem. I argue that these practices are excluded in part because they are experiential and practice-based, and therefore resist quantification in the propositional terms most coherent to dominant frameworks. In addition, the dismissal of these forms of knowledge is related to racial and social hierarchies and the imposition of power. My primary purpose in this chapter has been to argue that when particular groups of knowers are excluded or marginalized by dominant frameworks this is a problem with

¹¹⁹ Montgomery offers a quote from John Wesley Powell, then director of the Bureau of American Ethnology which perfectly exemplifies these methods, In 1893 Powell is quoted as saying, “we may properly conclude that the Indian tribes are not to be extinguished by war and degradation, and that we have already reached the point where we may hope to save the remnant to be absorbed into modern civilization.” Cf. “Memories that haunt”, 1.

both epistemic and ethical dimensions. I argue next, in my final chapter, that these dimensions share a common cause in that both the ethical and epistemic problems can be traced to the exploitation of unjust power dynamics.

CHAPTER 3 EPISTEMIC EXCLUSION, ETHICAL EXCLUSION, AND THEIR COMMON CAUSE

In this chapter I will argue that the exclusion of particular knowers and forms of knowledge from the dominant discourse is a result of the exploitation of unjust power differentials. The ability to impose a standard governing what constitutes knowledge requires a significant amount of control over cultural resources related to knowledge practices, which in turn requires significant power. Thus, the dominant forms of knowledge production in any given organization (institution, dominant political order, etc.) should be understood as closely enmeshed with the workings of power. This means that when valuable forms of knowledge are excluded it is always partially the result of a power differential. And these power differentials are often correlated with the marginalization of particular cultural groups. In this way both the moral and epistemic problems of exclusion can be seen as having the same genetic cause – that of the exploitation of unjust power dynamics.

I begin by discussing the ways in which exclusionary knowledge practices are the result of a power differential. I argue that unjust power differentials at play in a decision making framework propagates a disconnect between decision makers and the effects of their decision. As we saw in the last chapter, this disconnect leads to both negative epistemic consequences and negative moral consequences by excluding relevant knowers. For example, I emphasize the ways in which the current dominant order of neoliberalism conceptualizes power and information in terms of market values. While certain forms of knowledge are increasingly valued as a commodity, other forms of knowledge or methods of production that do not fit easily within this arrangement are excluded.

I will then turn to a contemporary example of epistemic exclusion concerning the substantive exclusion of Maori knowledge (distinct from the examples used in chapter two) from

recent scientific research initiatives funded by the New Zealand government. This case is one that exemplifies many of the central concerns of this project. In particular, it emphasizes how frameworks for knowledge are determined and constrained by groups with hegemonic power. The example I analyze demonstrates that this epistemic exclusion is a function of unequal and unjust power dynamics.

In making the claim that dominant frameworks serve to exclude valuable forms of knowledge I will turn to Sandra Harding to help clarify some important distinctions concerning the interaction of politics and epistemic practice. I will also turn to Harding to offer an examination of the concept of objectivity as understood in western science, and problematize this as a viable goal. This is relevant to my project as relatively dominant frameworks often exclude alternative forms of knowledge based on the claim that these forms do not meet the standard of objectivity that western methods achieve. The cases I examine here will serve as examples of the ways in which standardizing hegemonic frameworks function to exclude valid knowledge, while I hope drawing from Harding's discussion on objectivity will offer more insight into why these frameworks often function in this way. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by providing a synthesis of my main claims throughout this project.

Remoteness and the Logic of Exclusion

Val Plumwood offers a clear articulation of the converging moral and epistemic failures that result from the exploitation of unjust distributions of power.¹²⁰ In particular, Plumwood focuses on a decision-making failure she diagnoses as endemic under, but not exclusive to, the current system of liberal or neoliberal capitalism. Like Hourdequin, Plumwood

¹²⁰ Val Plumwood "Injustice, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality" in *Debating the Earth: An Environmental Politics Reader* eds. John Dryzek and David Schlosberg, eds (Oxford, 2005), 608-632.

problematizes the disconnect between those charged with making public decisions and the effects of the decisions they make. Plumwood calls this disconnect the issue of “remoteness” and presents it as a significant obstacle in the pursuit of just and effective public policy. This problem of remoteness is also significant in that it involves instances in which power is imposed by a relatively dominant group on a relatively marginalized group whose epistemic concerns are not taken into consideration- as in the case of the geo-engineering debate I discuss in the first chapter.

Plumwood begins by positing a hypothetical society she calls the EcoRepublic, which takes the pursuit of rationality as its central aim. In the society Plumwood constructs, there is a governing class appointed by a leading global scientist “designated to generate a global bureaucratic military class of rational decision-makers.”¹²¹ The “EcoGuardians” as they are called are isolated from the people they govern so as to free their judgment from the influence of other humans or subjective attachments. The world of the EcoRepublic, much like our own, is one in which those in power determine the frameworks for what knowledge (and by extension whose knowledge) is considered valuable. Only those deemed to be members of the most rational class are allowed in public decision making. Thus, decisions about epistemic authority are influenced by dominant social and cultural conventions.

Despite their use of rationality as a central guiding principle the EcoRepublic begins to deteriorate. Leaders and decision-makers live increasingly lavish lives, suffer from corruption, and fail to adequately respond to continued ecological deterioration. Plumwood attributes the degeneration of the EcoRepublic to its poor reflexivity (“reflexivity” referring to the government’s adaptability in the face of dynamic challenges) – which she understands as a direct

¹²¹ Plumwood, “Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality”, 608.

result of the Guardian's extreme remoteness from the effects of their decisions and the insights of other knowers. Although the case of the EcoRepublic functions as a hypothetical example, "the poor connectedness and failure of ecological reflexivity and responsiveness to the ecological deterioration it displays may be something it increasingly shares with the contemporary forms of global capitalist society."¹²² The details of Plumwood's hypothetical society are less important than the underlying logic of her example. The main takeaway is that the contemporary hegemony shares with the EcoRepublic a vast power differential that when exploited results in forms of remoteness with epistemic and ethical consequences. This is because the contemporary dominant forms, also suffer from poor reflexivity, and are stuck in flawed and exclusionary frameworks disconnected from valuable forms of knowledge. These flawed epistemic frameworks result in the poor reflexivity that a better and more pluralistic epistemic framework might facilitate. In our world, as in the EcoRepublic, there is often a major disconnect between decision makers and those experiencing the primary effects of said decisions. There is a clear power imbalance between members of the elite ruling class and those on whom decisions are imposed. This power imbalance results in an exclusionary epistemic framework that leads to negative epistemic consequences.

Plumwood focuses her discussion on the ecological crises and diagnoses them as in part a sign of an epistemological failure, saying, "we can see the ecological crises (...) as indicators of rationality failures that bring up for question also our dominant systems of knowledge and decision-making."¹²³ The kind of decision-making failure Plumwood refers to is exemplified by the paternalistic framework Hourdequin criticizes in regards to the geo-engineering debate. The dominant systems for decision making fail to capture relevant knowledge as a result of the

¹²² Plumwood, "Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality", 609-610.

¹²³ Plumwood, "Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality", 612.

exploitation of unequal power dynamics. The problem of remoteness that Plumwood focuses on is clearly at work in the paternalistic decision making framework Hourdequin critiques, and this issue of remoteness can be understood as a theme among many of the examples I use. The dismissal of midwifery from early modern medical practices by male obstetricians can be framed as an issue regarding physician's remoteness from the experience of giving birth, and a subsequent failure to account for this experiential knowledge. These repeated epistemic failures indicates fundamental structural issues in dominant epistemic frameworks. In contemporary global capitalism, as in the EcoRepublic, there are vast power imbalances, and the power to make decisions with major (sometimes global) consequences is reserved for those with the most political and economic power. Thus, Plumwood's critiques concerning the failures of the EcoRepublic hold up just as well against the current hegemony.

Plumwood describes remoteness as a structural feature embedded in the dominant form of decision-making, and emphasizes the ways in which it can lead to negative epistemic and moral consequences. Plumwood presents several types of remoteness as obstacles to the goal of making decisions with public consequences based on the "maximum relevant knowledge and motivation."¹²⁴ She claims that in addition to spatial remoteness there exists "consequential remoteness (where the consequences fall systematically on some other person or group leaving the originator unaffected), communicative and epistemic remoteness (where there is poor or blocked communication with those affected which weakens knowledge and motivation about ecological relationships), and temporal remoteness (from the effect of the decisions on the future)."¹²⁵ The different species of remoteness reflect a common core concern – that of decision makers that are alienated from the effects of their decisions. These concerns are reminiscent of

¹²⁴ Plumwood, "Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality", 615.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 615.

the paternalistic decision-making frameworks that Hourdequin problematizes. Hourdequin, like Plumwood, sees this disconnect as an epistemic problem that results from unjust power differentials. Political remoteness, like paternalism, involves the imposition of power. Groups with more social, political and economic power impose this power in part by making decisions that impact the lives of people who are excluded from the decision-making process.

Plumwood argues that issues of remoteness are only exacerbated by the dominating economic and political order. She says, “remoteness principles are consistently, blatantly and almost maximally violated by the dominant order” and argues that this is “perhaps as much due to its political and other forms of organization as it is to its global scale.”¹²⁶ Thus, she claims that the structural and organizational form of the dominant order is one that contributes to the problem of remoteness, an issue with clear epistemic consequences. The issue of remoteness, in Plumwood’s analysis, is an escalating one. She argues that, “Since laissez-faire market forms permit extreme levels of consequential communicative and epistemic remoteness, and crusading neoliberalism is increasingly successful in maximizing the kind of social areas where this kind of market is used for decision making, global neoliberalism may be close to maximizing (ecological) remoteness.”¹²⁷ In addition, she argues that existing democratic governments fail to provide for the kind of representative framework and subsequent remoteness-reduction for which she advocates. In an ideal democracy, systems of representation and decision-making should look to “maximise the informational base” relevant to public policy decisions.¹²⁸ However, democratic governments are largely failing at this task, and thus violating the concept of recognition justice. She writes, “it is commonly observed that liberal democracies are not

¹²⁶ Ibid., 617.

¹²⁷ Plumwood, “Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality”, 617.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 618.

performing well either in remedying ecological crises or in listening to disadvantaged citizens.”¹²⁹ Certain perspectives are not being heard because they do not fit within the model of information valued by the neoliberal political and economic system, and people suffer as a result. Not only do people suffer, they do so in silence (again, because their perspectives are not substantively acknowledged). This is how issues of epistemic and political remoteness have ethical import. It is not the case that the ethical issue and the epistemic issue are one and the same, but they are connected through their common cause of power differentials and overlap when the exclusion of knowledge also involves the exclusion of entire groups of knowers.

The liberal market system devalues collective goods in favor of individual ones. And this relatively dominant ideological principle is one with epistemic import. Knowledge that does not have obvious economic implications or register by economic measures is missed by frameworks that rely primarily on these terms. One example of the ways in which the systems used to gather information for public decision making are tied closely to the ideals of relatively dominant political and economic groups is the ways in which the market itself functions as an information system. The very fact that the market is used in this capacity speaks to the ways in which economic values, particularly those of the neoliberal order, shape and constrain our epistemic frameworks. Using a market system as a means of assessing public information seems both morally and epistemically dubious for the way it directly converts economic power to epistemic power. Plumwood spells out these concerns, saying, “if the market, considered as an information system about needs, registers information not equally but according to ‘market power’ (income), information about those without ‘market power’ registers very little.”¹³⁰ Thus, in this framework, those with little economic power find themselves with correspondingly little epistemic power.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 618.

¹³⁰ Plumwood, “Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality”, 621.

Plumwood says that the liberal model of decision making, in which the sanctity of the rational individual is venerated above the interests of the collective, results in a system which systematically struggles to address collective issues. This, she says, is in part due to the demand for problems to be quantifiable in terms the dominant framework can understand, in this case economic terms. She writes, “the liberal interest group model faces the collective action problem in which an unquantifiable, highly diffused, generalisable, and perhaps not easily detectable harm is pitted in a political contest against a quantifiable economic benefit.”¹³¹ Thus, things that are not quantifiable in clear market terms are rendered incomprehensible. The framework is unable to capture or quantify information that does not or cannot fit this specific formulation. This failure to capture or account for valuable forms of knowledge demonstrates the insufficiency of this epistemic framework. Further, it demonstrates the ways in which hegemonic frameworks constrain knowledge possibilities.

Plumwood argues that the structural features of liberal capitalism function to generate multiple forms of inequality and remoteness in “systematic, large-scale, and connected ways.”¹³² Liberal democracy is then ill equipped to deal with the needs of the collective, precisely because of the values which frame legitimate inquiry and decision-making processes. She writes that, when taken as an interest group model, liberal democracy produces “radical economic inequality, often in association with ethnic, gender, and other kinds of marginality and cultural subordination, which feeds liberal capitalism’s structural potential and need for the differential distribution of ecoharms.”¹³³

The same power dynamics that result in the marginalization and subordination of various

¹³¹ Ibid., 619.

¹³² Plumwood, “Inequality, Ecojustice, and Ecological Rationality”, 621.

¹³³ Ibid., 619.

groups is similarly responsible for the unequal access to epistemic power. Unequal and exploitative power dynamics result in both the marginalization and material oppression of particular groups, as well as the exclusion of knowledge and methods of knowledge production practiced by these groups. Plumwood writes of this phenomenon, “inequalities which thrive in liberal democracy provide systematic opportunities for consequential and epistemic remoteness in the case of both non-collective and collective goods.”¹³⁴ Remoteness is perhaps an unavoidable by-product of the major power differentials that thrive in liberal and neoliberal society, and the exploitation of these power differentials results negative epistemic consequences.

Next, I will turn to an example of contemporary exclusion that I believe exemplifies many of Plumwood’s central concerns, as well as many of the points I have been articulating throughout my project. I will examine a contemporary example of an exclusionary epistemic framework which functionally dismisses input from Maori knowers. The functional exclusion of Maori knowers by the science initiations put forth by the New Zealand government serves as an example of the kind of remoteness Plumwood discusses as well an example of the related issue of paternalism as discussed by Hourdequin and presented in second chapter. In addition, it recalls Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s argument that colonialism is an ongoing practice. The objectification of Maori knowers is clear in the language of the initiatives and this contributes to the dismissal of their knowledge and knowledge practices.

Contemporary (Neoliberal) Marginalization of Indigenous Knowledge: A Case Study

Erica Prussing and Elizabeth Newbury ran an extensive review of government

¹³⁴ Ibid., 621.

documents in order to analyze contemporary health research in New Zealand.¹³⁵ Specifically, Prussing and Newbury examine the ways in which current policies and ideological frameworks affect how science and knowledge practices are understood. This mode of analysis, in which the validation and production of knowledge is understood in relation to broader governing structures and frameworks, is exactly the kind of analysis I hope to encourage with this project. It is through the examination of the (often obfuscated) ways in which these frameworks guide and constrain knowledge that we may understand how certain forms of knowledge are unjustifiably marginalized or excluded. This is a crucial step in moving towards better epistemic practice overall.

In performing this analysis, the authors conclude that though contemporary neoliberal governing institutions work to offer the appearance of ‘diversity’ and inclusion they do not provide for these values in any substantive ways. Instead, the initiatives they examine encourage the appearance of inclusion while functionally restricting indigenous input. Research initiatives (like the “National Science Challenges”)¹³⁶ have been foregrounded by neoliberal political ideologies and continue to exclude indigenous research and indigenous research methods. In particular, the language of the NSC and related documents can be understood as functioning to otherize indigenous knowers and thus implicitly maintain the supremacy of western frameworks. Smith discusses the function of this sense of “Otherness” as it works within the western concept of history. This “othering” of particular groups amounts to a general objectification and dehumanization. The knowledge practices possessed by the other are then dismissed (or denied

¹³⁵ Erica Prussing and Elizabeth Newbury, “Neoliberalism and indigenous knowledge: Maori health research and the cultural politics of New Zealand’s ‘National Science Challenge’”, *Social Science and Medicine* vol. 150, (2016): 57-66.

¹³⁶ Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, *National Science Challenges* 2014. <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/science-innovation/national-science-challenges>. As cited in Prussing et al., 60.

the honorific of genuine knowledge) *because* the other possesses it. According to Smith, certain groups became formalized as the “Other” during the enlightenment,

“Views about the Other had already existed for centuries in Europe, but during the enlightenment these views became more formalized through science, philosophy and imperialism into explicit systems of classification and ‘regimes of truth.’ The racialization of the human subject and the social order enabled comparisons to be made between the ‘us’ of the West and the ‘them’ of the Other. History was the story of people who were regarded as fully human. Others who were not regarded as human (that is, capable of self-actualization) were prehistoric.”¹³⁷

This ongoing method of othering particular groups functions to dehumanize them through separation, and by virtue of this dehumanization devalue their claims to knowledge. This process of othering is then one through which epistemic harm is done to knowers who do not fit the implicit western definition of who is understood as capable possessing genuine knowledge. The other is dehumanized so as to revoke their status as member of the universal “rational man.” Thus, it is in virtue of who they are (or rather, who they are not) these knowers are made out to be incapable of possessing true knowledge.

Prussing and Newbury pay special attention to the ways in which the “public” is understood in the National Science Challenge (NSC) documents published by the New Zealand government. Noting, significantly, the ways in which Maori peoples are only granted limited inclusion and recognition within this category. They claim that in these documents “‘Maori’ figure as part of New Zealand’s ‘public’ insofar as they have special needs.”¹³⁸ NSC documents do make

¹³⁷ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 33.

¹³⁸ Prussing, et al, “Neoliberalism and indigenous knowledge”, 61.

repeated reference to the highlight disparities for Maori or Maori and Pasifika peoples in “cardiometabolic disease, cancer, child and adolescent health, maternal health, elder health, and quality of care.”¹³⁹ However, with this as the primary emphasis, the authors argue that inclusion is linked to needs alone, “neither speaking in terms of rights to equal health nor recognizing culturally diverse populations as producers of research knowledge, as Maori advocacy has.”¹⁴⁰ Maori peoples are then given a very limited role as members of the public, and are framed as candidates for paternalistic intervention. The language with which they are addressed in these official documents serves to objectify them only as objects of need and thus strips them of other potentials. This framework is a paternalistic one in which the government is presented as having the power and knowledge necessary to remedy the problems they have identified in the population. There is already an implicit assumption that Maori peoples have nothing substantial or valuable to add to the public discourse aside from the expression of their need. The exclusion and structural constraints placed on Maori knowers is at once an ethical problem regarding the exclusion and subjugation of Maori peoples and an epistemic one regarding the failure to account for their knowledge practices. Both the epistemic and ethical dimensions of this issue result from the imposition of power by relatively dominant groups.

Discussing the Maori people only in terms of need functionally separates them from what may be understood as the “general” population and thus characterizes them as deviant. Thus, this emphasis further otherizes Maori peoples and further contributes to the objectification that helps to justify the dismissal of their forms of knowledge as legitimate. In addition, the emphasis on development is reliant on conceptualizing values within a distinctly Western framework. The goals and the language of the NSC project function on the assumption that western frameworks

¹³⁹ Ibid., 61.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 61.

for value and knowledge are superior to alternatives. The language is paternalistic, much like that which Hourdequin addresses in relation to the use of SRM research.¹⁴¹ Maori people are framed as a population in need, specifically in need of assistance from the neoliberal structures and instructions of governance to reach the goals set by these same institutions.

Themes of both paternalistic and colonialist logic arise when analyzing NSC documents. An April 2013 document published by the New Zealand government “underscores ongoing needs to further ‘linkages between the innovation system and Maori enterprises and collective.’”¹⁴² This statement points to the Vision Mātauranga policy as a template for this kind of link. One explicitly noted part of the Vision Mātauranga agenda was to “unlock the innovation potential of Maori knowledge, resources, and people to assist New Zealanders to create a better future”¹⁴³ The phrasing of this mission has some clear indicators of colonialist agendas. While it is not clear whether “New Zealanders” is intended to include Maori peoples, it is clear that the plan to “unlock the innovation potential of Maori knowledge” positions this knowledge “as in need of liberation by and for the nation’s majority population.”¹⁴⁴ Here, knowledge is understood as something that should always serve the interests of the hegemonic and governing class. Maori knowledge is not framed as knowledge proper but rather as a resource with the *potential* to be transformed into something that could serve majority interests. Maori interests and needs are identified externally, and the goals or “potential” of their knowledge is determined for them.

¹⁴¹ Hourdequin, “Climate Change, Climate Engineering and the ‘Global Poor’” See my discussion of this work in chapter 1 for clarification.

¹⁴² Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment, “Outputs from Whaia Te Pae Tawhiti: A National Science Challenge Workshop for Maori Researchers” *National Science Challenges*. April, 2013. <http://www.msi.gov.nz/update-me/major-projects/national-science-challenge/workshops-and-implementation/> as cited in Prussing et al., 61.

¹⁴³ Ministry of Research, Science & Technology, “Vision Mātauranga: Unlocking the Innovation Potential of Maori Knowledge, Resources and People”, (Wellington, NZ; 2007), 2, as cited in Prussing et al, 61.

¹⁴⁴ Prussing, et al., “Neoliberalism and indigenous knowledge”, 61.

Conceptualizing Maori knowers as a population with the *potential* for knowledge and innovation rather than seeking to understand their existing manifestations functions to further otherize and dehumanize Maori knowers. In addition this language conjures images of colonialist practices in which knowledge produced by indigenous peoples is only considered legitimate if it can be stripped of its originating context and forced into a colonialist knowledge framework.

Additionally, this mission of “unlocking” also applies to Maori “resources” in ways meant to lead to the kind of “innovation” that benefits a market economy. This phrasing, the authors argue, “presents neoliberal agendas as undisputed, and charts all-too-familiar pathways toward non-indigenous appropriation of indigenous resources.”¹⁴⁵ The authors argue that while the documents seek to explicitly recognize Maori interests they do so only in restricted and circumscribed ways which function to effectively exclude Maori input. Thus, rather than being in any way substantively inclusive, the language of these documents serves to objectify and otherize Maori peoples, resulting in the dismissal of their status as knowers and the associated epistemic and ethical failures.

The authors note that the increased interest in “evidence-based” policies has occurred alongside an increase in the amount of resources made available for scientific research “by and for indigenous peoples.”¹⁴⁶ The move towards evidence-based policy as the ideal belies a desire for an increased formalism and de-contextualization of knowledge because of its specific characterization of evidence as something far-removed from human observation and experience.¹⁴⁷ Despite movements to diversify scientists and scientific methods it remains that “‘evidence’ is often narrowly construed to privilege Western-centered definitions, reinvigorating

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹⁴⁶ Prussing et al., “Neoliberalism and indigenous knowledge”, 59.

¹⁴⁷ For more on this see my section on Neoliberal knowledge politics and universities in chapter 1.

their cultural authority."¹⁴⁸ Thus, the way in which science is defined in these documents, the goal of which is to guide and generate new research interests, is one which serves to reinscribe Western frameworks for knowledge. As a result, the framing mechanisms for the new research avenues proposed by the NSC generate serious constraints on the types of knowledge projects that are accepted as valid. The authors summarize:

“How the NSC documents define science, and refer to culturally distinctive forms of Maori knowledge, further illustrates how NSC documents appear to actively recognize Maori interests and contributions – but do so on terms that in practice, constrain Maori input and sustain the MBIE’s economic and political goals.”¹⁴⁹

This effective constraint on the kind of knowledge and methods of knowledge production that are deemed acceptable by the NSC is a clear example of how unfairly restrictive knowledge framing conditions function. Thus, while there may not be an *explicit* dismissal of Maori knowledge and research interests on the basis of their being indigenous peoples there are structural features which substantively exclude them. It may be helpful here to recall the discussion of structures in chapter one, in which Iris Marion Young understands structures not as the result of one individual or institution imposing their oppressive will, but rather as a result of many coinciding factors that function to guide our outcomes by constraining alternative possibilities.¹⁵⁰

The substantive exclusion of Maori knowledge via the framing of NSC documents also serves as an example of how the interaction between political and cultural values shapes knowledge practices. The ways in which scientific and other knowledge projects are defined, as I

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 59.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 60.

¹⁵⁰ Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 55.

have argued throughout this project, are shaped by the hegemonic political and cultural ideals of the time. In the case of the example I have just detailed these political and cultural ideals are generally those of neoliberalism, though there are likely other specific cultural forces at play, and other structural arrangements in which there existed a major imbalance of power would generate the same problems. In my next section I will examine a piece by Sandra Harding on the interaction between cultural and political ideals and scientific inquiry. This interaction is a central focus of my project, as I have sought to highlight the negative consequences that result from the expression of dominant cultural ideals through dominant epistemic frameworks. In addition, Harding's discussion here is significant in that she problematizes the western ideal of objectivity that is often used to dismiss other forms of knowledge.

Beyond the Objective Ideal

Sandra Harding begins her argument for a renewed concept of objectivity by describing two modes of interaction between politics and science. In one model, politics and science interact “through consciously chosen and often clearly articulated actions and programs that shape how science gets done, how the results of research are interpreted, and, therefore, scientific and popular images of nature and social relations.”¹⁵¹ This version of interaction, in which political values play an active, explicit, and conscious role in influencing scientific methodology is often viewed as “politicizing” science and acting on the process of “pure,” or neutral, scientific inquiry from the outside. Harding argues that this is the mode against which “the idea of objectivity as neutrality works best,” an idea that she says has been long outmoded.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Sandra Harding “After the Neutrality Ideal: Science, Politics, and ‘Strong Objectivity;’” *Social Research* vol. 59 no. 3, Science and Politics (Fall 1992), 567.

¹⁵² Harding, “After the Neutrality Ideal”, 567.

The alternative version of the relationship between politics and science characterized by Harding describes a power “exercised less visibly, less consciously, and *not on but through* the dominant institutional structures, priorities, practices, and languages of the sciences.”¹⁵³ It is this mode, one in which the mechanisms of power and political values are obfuscated but still very much at work, which has often been understood as a “depoliticized” science.¹⁵⁴ This mode of knowledge production is one I have critiqued throughout this project, because it is through the manifestation of this ideal of political and scientific interaction that the interests of power function silently to exclude valuable knowers and forms of knowledge.

The scientific ideal has often been posited as an objective process of inquiry, free from subjective human values. However, more recently, this view has faced significant criticism. Contemporary philosopher of science Kevin Elliott argues, in agreement with Harding, that the pursuit of knowledge is embedded within a set of external values. According to Elliott, the value-free scientific ideal does not exist. Instead, values always play a significant role in the scientific process including, but not limited to, the kinds of assumptions made and the research questions pursued.¹⁵⁵ Though Elliott argues that values have a legitimate role to play in scientific inquiry, he acknowledges the ways in which certain values (often bigoted and morally condemnable ones) have resulted in harmful scientific practice. Throughout his discussion of the many ways values shape the scientific process, Elliott advocates for “the importance of making value-judgments transparent so they can be subject to scrutiny and deliberation.”¹⁵⁶ When examining knowledge frameworks set forth by those invested in upholding their power this becomes even more important, as these frameworks often include an effort to erase traces of ideological (or

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 567.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 568.

¹⁵⁵ Kevin Elliott, *A Tapestry Of Values*, (Oxford University Press, 2017) 48, 53.

¹⁵⁶ Elliott, *A Tapestry of Values*, 118.

value-laden) framing and pass themselves off as purely objective. Elliott's emphasis on the ways in which epistemic practices are always shaped by subjective values supports my central claim. This claim being that relatively dominant epistemic frameworks are shaped by the values of hegemonic groups. Particularly, his emphasis on exposing these subjective values is a necessary facet of striving toward a better epistemic practice - one of the goals of this project. I hope to have demonstrated so far that many of the dominant frameworks for knowledge (that Elliott agrees are heavily influenced by cultural forces) have failed to capture valuable and important forms of knowledge. I claim that the dominant social and political values that mold relatively dominant epistemic frameworks have resulted in cases of unjust exclusion. Thus, these systems require corrective measures. Elliot's work aims to optimize the ways in which external values function as a part of the process of inquiry. His aims, like mine, are not to eliminate non-epistemic values from the process of knowledge production (a potentially impossible task) but instead to discuss the role values play in science in a way that aims to create knowledge practices that are both epistemically improved and ethically concerned.

Smith, like Elliott, addresses this need to reveal the mechanisms invalidating particular knowers and forms of knowledge. Smith, like Harding, argues that neither scientific nor academic discourse can ever be "innocent."¹⁵⁷ Harding, asserts that "the natural sciences do and must assume histories, sociologies, political economies, and philosophies of science whether or not they explicitly articulate such assumptions."¹⁵⁸ Thus, leaning on the concept of neutrality to ground a claim to objectivity is not a viable claim. Both authors provide independently compelling cases that emphasize the roles that political, economic, and cultural values play in process of inquiry. In addition, they both emphasize the fact that the cultural and political values

¹⁵⁷ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 2.

¹⁵⁸ Harding, "After the Neutrality Ideal", 574.

that frame the process of inquiry are often obfuscated in the name of objectivity.

In response to this issue, Harding offers a strengthened conception of objectivity that aims at transparency rather than neutrality as a solution to this problem. She argues that “an excessively restricted notion of research methods” has resulted in “weak standards of objectivity.”¹⁵⁹ According to Harding, objectivist methods are “designed to identify and eliminate those social and political values and interests that differ between those individuals who constitute a scientific community.”¹⁶⁰ Despite this, these methods run into several problems and ultimately miss their goal of objectivity due to unexamined cultural assumptions. Harding contends that this issue manifests early in the scientific process when “a problem is identified as a scientific one and a hypothesis and testing procedure (...) selected.”¹⁶¹ Thus, says Harding, it is in this context that “culture-wide assumptions which subsequently are among the most difficult to identify make their way into the research process and shape the claims that result.”¹⁶² Scientific problems, research methods, and other framing conditions of inquiry are identified from within a set of broad and subjective cultural assumptions. Therefore, the very seed of inquiry, the place at which it begins, already carries cultural assumptions that frame who is seen as a knower and what may be called knowledge. Ultimately, Harding (like Smith and Elliott) claims that Western scientists fail to approach their own proposed standard – that of objectivity. For the purposes of this project, the important thing to note is that this standard of objectivity cannot be taken as the gold standard of knowledge that serves as a basis for other purported forms.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 577.

¹⁶⁰ Harding, “After the Neutrality Ideal”, 577.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 577.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 578.

Harding argues that the problem in the western scientific community is not the fact that it is a largely Eurocentric, androcentric community but rather that the “normalizing, routine conceptual practices of power are exactly those that are least likely to be detected by individuals who are trained not to question the social location and priorities of the institutions and conceptual schemes within which their research occurs.”¹⁶³ Again, this recalls Young’s claim (presented in chapter one) that structures often appear as given and taken-for-granted, and the constraining function of structures is better understood as the result of a multitude of hard-to-detect factors than as the result of direct coercion.¹⁶⁴ It is the practices that seem so inherently and unquestionably a part of the structure and practice of research that go unexamined. These presuppositions are especially difficult to see from an ‘insider’ perspective, as they may reflect “culture-wide assumptions” which only individuals who do not share these assumptions are equipped to identify. Therefore, it is the kind of large-scale and ubiquitous political and economic ideologies that are part of larger trends (i.e., modernity or neoliberalism) which have substantive and unexamined effects on knowledge practices. Thus, resolves Harding, the problem with objectivism is that its attempts to maximize objectivity are actually too weak, “when its methods can identify only those values and interests that differ within a homogeneous scientific community, and when it has no strategies for gaining causal, critical accounts of the dominant cultural standard.”¹⁶⁵ In reaching for a standard of knowledge that is as disconnected from human subjectivity as possible, they have failed to recognize and adjust for the inevitable cultural assumptions that are built into any knowledge project. In addition, this standard fails to recognize important forms of knowledge that are either captured or expressed through human

¹⁶³ Ibid., 579.

¹⁶⁴ Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ Harding, “After the Neutrality Ideal”, 579.

subjectivity. Meanwhile, they operate on the assumption that their methods of knowledge production—those of the Western tradition—have the most legitimate claim to objectivity. Knowledge that is not standardized or formalized according to the demands of their framework is dismissed, reminiscent of the behavior of imperialists who impose their frameworks on other cultures and dismiss all that does not fit their ideals. In this way, we can also see the ethical dimensions of this problem as the exclusion of these forms of knowledge is often accompanied by an exclusion of whole groups of knowers.

Conclusion

The problem I have articulated throughout this project is a complex one, involving various dynamic and interrelated parts. I have argued that dominant frameworks for knowledge are determined by hegemonic political, economic, and cultural powers. These dominant frameworks for knowledge often fail to capture—or actively dismiss—particular forms of knowledge and knowledge production that do not fit their requirements. Epistemic frameworks, which have been shaped and determined by relatively dominant political and cultural values, serve to exclude the knowledge or knowledge practices of particular groups because of a sociopolitical power differential. I argue that this kind of exclusion is both unjust and bad epistemic practice.

I have argued that social and political values are inherent framing conditions for practices of inquiry. These values determine what questions are pursued, what assumptions are made, and crucially, what is considered knowledge. We have seen that assumptions regarding validity and imbalances of power are reinscribed through paternalistic frameworks, which serve as an imposition of power that excludes relevant knowers. Therein, a theme begins to emerge.

Exclusionary knowledge frameworks are the result of a power differential and these power differentials are further advanced through these practices. The imposition of power leads to successive imbalances, which in turn results in further negative epistemic and moral consequences. Both the morally problematic exclusion of individuals or groups and the epistemic issue of knowledge exclusion are a result of a common cause – the unjust exploitation of power differentials. Epistemic frameworks that effectively exclude and constrain particular knowers function as *structural* features. Thus, exclusionary epistemic frameworks do not always operate by means of direct coercion but perform in such a way as to constrain possibilities for knowledge. The constraining function of these frameworks arises as a result of several coinciding factors and institutions, thereby limiting the potential for differing forms and sources of knowledge.

Though no group has an inherent claim to any particular form of knowledge, there are forms that can be understood as often represented by particular groups of knowers, typically those in a subordinate position of power. We have seen in chapter two that there are particular groups of knowers and, by relation, particular knowledge practices that have been cast to the margins or excluded from access to power and dominant epistemic frameworks. The exclusion and dismissal of indigenous knowledge practices by western and imperialist powers provide a theme throughout my project, though this mode of exclusion is not unique to indigenous groups or to the relationship between colonized and colonizer. The exclusion of early modern midwifery knowledge practices from the medical field during the transition to modernity and the rise of modern institutional obstetrics served as a paradigmatic example of the ways in which shifting epistemic frameworks (as a result of shifting dominant political and cultural values) structurally exclude particular knowers and practices. This demonstrates how propositional knowledge is

elevated in relation to other forms of knowledge. In addition, this example demonstrates how certain groups of knowers are treated as representatives of particular forms of knowledge. In the case of midwives, these women had often given birth themselves and thus had access to knowledge unique to the first-hand experience of motherhood. This problem, the need to quantify knowledge in terms specific to exclusionary frameworks, is one that arises repeatedly throughout the project.

The kind of exclusionary practices and frameworks I have discussed are the result of an unjust power differential and are often part of paternalistic decision making frameworks. I have emphasized how the kind of exclusion that results from remoteness and paternalism leads to bad epistemic practice and potential negative material consequences for excluded groups. Both paternalistic decision-making frameworks and those with large degrees of structural remoteness suffer from the same core problem – there is a disconnect between the decision makers and the effects of their decision. This disconnect presents an epistemic issue as well as a moral one. The exclusion of particular groups of knowers, knowers who are often marginalized politically, socially, or economically, results in the failure to capture or recognize their epistemic input. Thus, remoteness and paternalism lead to negative epistemic consequences by effectively silencing or failing to account for valuable forms of knowledge.

The neoliberal hegemony, which currently influences the dominant frameworks of knowledge, is set up in such a way as to encourage and perpetuate inequality and remoteness. This is done through systems that encourage vastly unequal power differentials, which results in political and epistemic remoteness. In addition, this power differential allows for a kind of paternalistic decision-making model in which groups with more power determine which outcomes are desirable and how they will be achieved without consulting those affected. Though

I maintain that the contemporary dominant order of neoliberalism is not unique in its production of exclusionary frameworks, I would like to see further research done on the ways in which neoliberal policies and ideals function in relation to questions of remoteness and institutional epistemic control. Regardless, the problems of remoteness and paternalism in particular may find some remedy in the concept of recognition justice. Recognition justice focuses on ensuring that knowers who feel the substantial effects of a decision are involved in making the decision, and in a paternalistic decision-making framework this has been compromised in a way that shows both an ethical and epistemic failure.

Now, I believe my central claims bear repeating. My argument is this: The hegemonic political cultural and economic paradigm of a given period serves to produce relatively dominant epistemic frameworks which exclude certain methods of knowing. These methods of knowledge production are often represented by particular groups of knowers, and their exclusion is the result of the exploitation of an unjust power differential. Thus, the exclusion of particular forms of knowledge production and their representative groups is a problem with both epistemic and moral import.

The exploitation of unjust and unequal power dynamics manifest epistemically as well as ethically. And I have argued that unjust power dynamics are only further exacerbated by our current dominant form of governance and ideology, that of neoliberal capitalism. In order to begin to remedy the negative moral and epistemic results of this unjust dynamic it must be addressed on a fundamental level. Because it is the exploitation of these unequal power dynamics, which lead both to the moral problem of the marginalization of particular groups and the epistemic problem of the dismissal of the forms of knowledge held or practiced by particular groups. The ultimate goal, whatever the means, must be to remedy the unjust power dynamic

whose exploitation leads to the exclusion of both particular individuals and important forms of knowledge.

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