Chapter 7
Epistemological Diversity: A Roundtable

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The following is a lightly edited version of a roundtable discussion held on April 10th, 2010, at the 2010 annual meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society in San Francisco. In addition to the two editors of this volume (Ruitenberg and Phillips), the participants were: Lorraine Code, a philosopher from York University, Toronto, one of whose important essays is reprinted (in part) in this volume; Harvey Siegel, an epistemologist and philosopher of education in the Philosophy Department at the University of Miami, who also has an essay reprinted in the volume; and Lynda Stone, a philosopher of education from the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill), who is one of the editors of the book series in which this volume is published.

In preparation for the roundtable, all participants were sent the following materials:

- The manuscript of Chap. 3 by Jon Levisohn & Denis Phillips
- Chap. 4 by Harvey Siegel
- Chap. 5 by Lorraine Code
- The manuscript of Chap. 6 by Claudia Ruitenberg
- A set of questions to be used as points of departure for the discussion

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In the text that follows, all participants are identified by their initials: Lorraine Code (LC); Denis Phillips (DP); Claudia Ruitenberg (CR); Harvey Siegel (HS); Lynda Stone (LS).

CR: The questions that I sent out were, first: "How should the field of educational research respond to claims about alternative epistemologies?" – which, of course, implies the questions: "Should the field of educational research respond to such claims at all?" and "If so, how should it respond?" Second: "Are claims about different epistemologies integral aspects of different but internally coherent paradigms? If so, how might cross-paradigm communication breakdown be avoided or remedied?" That is, are we really talking about incommensurable paradigms and very different sets of epistemologies that can hardly speak to each other, or can we figure out some way that they might be able to communicate with each other? And the third question is, "Claims about new or different epistemologies are typically made by or on behalf of groups that have traditionally been marginalized. To what extent are claims for the legitimacy of new or alternative epistemologies better understood as claims for the legitimacy of the experiences, views, and presence of members of marginalized groups, rather than as epistemological claims? What is gained and what is lost by this loose or non-traditional use of the term 'epistemology'?"

I wonder if, Lorraine, you would like to start by responding to any or all of these questions?

LC: I have certain hesitations about the terminology. For instance, I really am uncomfortable with the word "alternative." And the reason that I am uncomfortable with the word "alternative" is that it suggests two things to me. First of all, it suggests some kind of failure to recognize that epistemology itself is a term that is time-bound and space-bound. By "time-bound" I mean that it came into existence, as we all know, in the late nineteenth century, perhaps a little earlier, but it wasn't around before that. I also think it is place-bound in the sense that talk about knowledge in continental philosophy is vast and extensive and nuanced and sensitive and not particularly restricted to the post-positivist mode – continental philosophy deals with questions about knowledge quite differently. In ways, actually, that connect somewhat with your paper, Claudia, because there is, for instance, in French, no word for the "knower" that can be translated precisely, and this is actually quite difficult because in Anglo-American epistemology, the knower is positioned – perhaps invisibly, but nonetheless positioned – in certain ways.

So it seems to me, first of all, that to give "epistemology" paradigmatic scope in a Kuhnian sense is perhaps not warranted. And what troubles me about "alternative epistemologies" is the sense that when alternatives are offered, it seems like a box of chocolates that you could pick this flavor or that flavor. I think that the so-called "alternative" epistemologies are meant to contest the hegemony of a single sense of epistemology and are meant to suggest a softening – perhaps softening is a bad word because it plays into certain metaphorical associations – or a blurring of the lines.

In a sense everyone engaged in epistemological endeavors is attempting to work out conditions for knowing well whether they can do it with necessary and sufficient conditions or whether they have to do it with social, practical, historical conditions. I'm not wanting to suggest that feminist epistemology, anti-racist epistemology, and various other attempts to develop something under the label "epistemology" all collapse into one and the same and that you can just homogenize it, but I am saying that talking about them as "alternatives", and also using the phrase "women's ways of knowing," makes me feel a degree of discomfort – even though I want at the same time to say that I practice a form of epistemology.

I think we are living in the midst of contradictory positions right now – a conflicted historical situation, which might resemble something like a Kuhnian paradigm shift, or a time when many of the solidities are giving way (although many people are pulling hard to keep the solidities in place). I don't think it means we are giving up on knowledge or truth or objectivity. I don't think it means a collapse into this dreaded relativism that everyone fears, but I do think there are some troublesome issues with the way the questions are posed.

HS: I am sympathetic to what Lorraine just said about it not being entirely sensible to think in terms of alternative epistemologies. I'm happy with that. However, I don't think that the word epistemology was invented in the eighteenth century; I would think that the field of epistemology is easily recognizable before that, through Descartes, through Sextus, through Plato…

LC: But it is so different in each one of them.

HS: Well, people have different views. Those figures have different views, but that's not to say that what they were doing is not recognizably epistemology. It seems to me that there is rather more clarity about what counts as epistemology than that comment of yours indicated.

I'm not sure what to say about Kuhn; I'd be happy just to leave Kuhn out of this. I'm not sure talking about paradigms helps.

LC: I agree with you there.

HS: Let me say one other thing. Claudia asks: "To what extent are claims for the legitimacy of new or alternative epistemologies better understood as claims for the legitimacy of the experiences, views, and presence of members of marginalized groups?" That seems to me quite right, at least in the literature that I was addressing in my paper; it does seem to me that that is what's going on. That is, they're not about epistemology, they are about justice. And so the follow-up question, "What is gained and what is lost by this loose or non-traditional use of the term 'epistemology'?" It seems to me that what's lost is this: It is already the case that hardly anybody knows what "epistemology" means anymore and that this is not a happy situation. So I think that the cost of talking loosely about epistemology is that the word loses all recognizable meaning. I would like to cling to the idea that there is a recognizable meaning, still.

LS: A couple of things I'll pick up from both of you. One of the things that we want to keep in mind is the audience for this discussion, and for the book. There is

a range within this audience from some who perhaps are a little more technical to some that are not. I was particularly struck by rereading Harvey's and Lorraine's papers when I thought about the kinds of sensitivity and the kinds of things I would want to do with my own graduate students because we happen to have quite a few minority students in our doctoral program and they are clinging to this notion of having their own individual epistemologies and their own culturally determined ways of knowing. My Native American students will say: "this is my knowledge because I believe it," even though they have read numerous other things.

It seems to me that there are a couple of things we want to keep in mind, and there are a lot of things that we can agree about. For example, clearly there is a problem of language confusion, and there is a problem of not studying traditions deeply enough to be able to see, for instance, that there are alternative traditions. I do a lot of work in continental and American social theory, so my language is probably closer to Lorraine's and Claudia's than perhaps to Denis's and Harvey's. I always want my students to see that there are multiple traditions and multiple languages. I don't think "paradigm" works either because it is tied too closely to the kinds of things that Kuhn actually did.

There is the additional issue for me that the nature of knowledge is a political issue. I certainly don't want to make the claim that all knowledge is political but knowledges *can* be political, and they certainly are potentially political, and we have to keep this in mind because it's really an important issue for our researchers. The second issue has to do, then, with our pedagogical purpose in this current book project – which is how do we educate our future researchers? How we do this pedagogically so that we not only are sensitive to cultural beliefs but also begin to give our researchers the kind of language and philosophical distinctions that can be useful. Let me give you an example. I think you, Harvey, are right that many researchers and students misunderstand "methodologies" for "epistemologies." They think there is a distinction between qualitative and quantitative epistemologies, and from what I can tell, they're pretty much running from a fairly standard modernist epistemology that they think is different, but it's not. The more sophisticated of them may get into hermeneutic, interpretive traditions and be able to read through Geertz and others, and go through some alternative European theory, but most of them never get that far because they move right to methodology, and yet they think they are doing something different! And then they fight. I don't know about your programs, but in mine, the students seem to establish camps the first day they come into graduate school and heaven forbid that they should move out of these.

So there are some questions that we want them to explore. For instance, are there distinctions between educational research and scholarship that has a basis in natural sciences (an orientation which I take to come primarily out of the Anglo-American tradition), and more historical, culturally mediated discourse practices that I think you get out of a continental tradition? This kind of distinction, I think, is really important. Those are the kinds of things that I'd like students to have some connection to.

I think we can agree about a whole lot of things that I read in your papers. I think they're very useful, and I can use them and I will; but to get advanced students to see new kinds of language and distinctive kinds of language that can help them (for instance) make a distinction between beliefs and knowledge could be really important. At this point, I don't know how we do that, actually, to fight against the kinds of traditions which they are already embedded in.

DP: I first really became interested in these complex issues when Jim Banks was president of AERA and the theme for the conference that year was "ethnic epistemologies" or something like that. I decided I would attend as many as possible of the special sessions that were on a cultural group's epistemology. It was a horrible experience. The last session I attended was in a hall packed with about 500 people, and instead of sitting on the aisle so that I could escape, I was trapped in the middle. There were 500 education researchers of a particular ethnicity, and someone I didn't know but who was obviously a very important figure in that community was the keynote speaker. She got up and announced that she had been invited to speak about this ethnic/cultural group's epistemology. This is almost an exact transcript of her opening statement: "I didn't know what epistemology meant so yesterday I looked it up in the dictionary." Cheers from the audience. And then she said, "I read the definition and I still didn't understand it but I did note it was on the same page as 'episiotomy'." Upon which there were more cheers. I thought, this is appalling; there is obvious disdain for the field of epistemology, but also a great desire to purloin the word. That really spurred my interest in trying to pin down what was going on.

It seems to me there is a real disjunct between the way philosophers and researchers talk about cultural epistemologies or multiple epistemologies, whether they use the word "alternative" or not. It seems clear that philosophers on the whole know what they are talking about, and they're clearly doing epistemology. Whether I agree or disagree with your position, Lorraine, your paper is clearly an important paper in epistemology. But the way educational researchers use the term seems to me to be very much in the spirit of the third question. They rightly feel that their voices are not heard in shaping research questions, in research funding, that the sorts of issues that are important in their communities are not valued, and so on, and that's what this keynote speaker at AERA was on about, but the mystery was why the language of epistemology is used to express this concern. This is where Claudia and I still disagree. I think these educational theorists and researchers simply do not understand the word and would be better served by phrasing their concerns more straightforwardly, because they are valid concerns. Claudia keeps prodding me that maybe they do understand, so I'm grappling with that. I'm still very puzzled by Asante's quote that music and dance are a form of logic and proof. If he had said that music and dance are ways we express our religious or cultural beliefs or attitudes, or something along those lines, I would understand that, and maybe it should be a research topic, but to say that it's a canon of proof, what does that mean?

LC: I wouldn't dismiss it so lightly.

DP: I still grapple with this. Maybe I don't see their point. That is a real concern.

CR: I come at this mostly from speech act theory. I have a life-long fascination
with how people use language and what they do with it. Obviously I can go
through the logic and read the text closely, and say: This doesn't make any
sense; this is so far removed from what we would traditionally conceive of as
epistemology that it makes no sense that they're using the term "epistemology"
for that. At that level, there doesn't seem to be much disagreement between us.
But I'm dissatisfied with leaving it at that because I wonder what else is going
on. There may be some other political or strategic reasons for choosing that
language and for actually deliberately using that language unfaithfully, if you
will, in order to make a political claim. So what I'm concerned about and why
I keep returning to texts that, on one level, annoy me, is that I keep wondering:
To what extent are marginalized groups, or just groups wanting to make claims
about knowing or thinking about knowing differently, in a "Catch 22"? They
either use the language of epistemology to try to speak back to epistemology
and get told that they are doing it wrong, or they don't use the language of
epistemology and they don't get taken seriously in the academy because
they're not using the language of epistemology! So that is the resignification
exercise that I suspect some of them are engaged in. And as I wrote in my
chapter, I think that some are not engaging in that resignification very well;
they're making enormous leaps, but I don't think it's impossible in principle.

It's easy to find an example of somebody who uses the term "epistemology"
badly: "I looked up epistemology last night in the dictionary, and I didn't
understand it." It's fairly easy to agree that that is not a good way of using
"epistemology," it's not a useful way of doing anything with it, it doesn't speak
back in a really savvy way, but it doesn't mean it's not possible to resignify the
term. I'm more interested in the good examples, the people that really do so in
an intelligent way.

One of the questions that I have concerns Harvey mentioning that episte-
mology is in danger of losing all recognizable meaning. Okay, so to what extent
can the meaning of epistemology change, and how can the boundaries be
stretched so that it remains recognizable? How can it be an incremental kind of
process? I'm particularly interested, through my translational exercise, in
Lorraine's comment that the focus of Western traditional epistemology has been
so much on propositional knowledge that other forms of knowledge such as
knowledge by acquaintance have been pretty much left out of the discussion.
What happens when we try to bring knowledge by acquaintance (or knowledge
with the direct object I think Searle calls it) back into the discussion and how
do we find ways to value that, because some of the claims that I hear graduate
students or my colleagues making about the value of these alternative episte-
mologies or alternative "ways of knowing" (whatever language they choose) is
precisely about this type of knowledge by acquaintance. So is there room for
that or not, and again, what would be lost or gained by including that?

LC: I have two or three comments. First of all, to Harvey's comment that the word loses its meaning: I think its meaning has evolved. Wherever you want to place the history, I don't think the word "epistemology" was there in Descartes and Kant, but I don't want to argue about that. I think its meaning has evolved, and it has actually become narrower so that it becomes increasingly a punctiform exercise focused on demonstrating the way in which one can determine the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing things that are so trivial that, frankly, I don't give a damn about whether I know them or not. And those don't serve as very good examples for more complex knowledge claims. And the fact is that they can't translate simply cumulatively, knowing more and more little discrete facts into knowing something of the complexity that one needs to know – for instance what a social scientist needs to know of a culture with which she or he might be trying to engage, or that a child might need to know in order to know about, let's say, the Vikings or the Egyptians (which are two things that my grandson is very keen to know about right now). That can't be done by accumulation of the kind of propositional knowledge that can be confirmed perhaps by a museum exhibit or by something in a book. The meaning of epistemology seems to me has changed, as we have moved from Russell through to wherever we are now, through Quine to a more elaborated sense of naturalized epistemology, and it seems to me there are perhaps two, maybe more consequences of this. Either what we know in the old "S knows that P" sense has come to represent an increasingly small portion of what we claim to know, so that the meaning of epistemology has shrunk and become very narrow. And I think that's possibly true that we know much less than we thought we did, and I think that's a salutary lesson. Or the meaning of epistemology really has to shift drastically.

I want to respond to a couple of other things. There was a sense in various comments that we were talking about individual epistemologies that claimed first person privileged access. I don't think first person privileged access can be claimed. I don't think it can be claimed almost anywhere, except where Russell got reduced down to the place where he had to say, "this here now." I just don't think it can be claimed. I think *knowing* is a communal project – I don't know about *knowledge*. And I think a whole lot of weight has to be put on Claudia's *savoir/connaître* or *wissen/kennen* distinction (I don't know how to pronounce the Dutch equivalent). I think a whole lot has to be put on that – and I've often thought myself because I've worked in both French and German – that much of the restrictiveness of Anglo-American epistemology has to do with the fact that somehow there is no place for *connaître*; there is no place for *kennen* rather than *wissen*.

One other point I wanted to make has to do with the "alternative tradition," again, and why I object to it. If you call something an alternative tradition, you preserve the mainstream, the hegemonic tradition, and I really don't like that.

CR: How would you propose we talk about it differently? Because the fact of the matter is there is a mainstream, a dominant tradition.

LC: It's not even necessarily dominant in continental philosophy, which is not inaccessible to white educated adults. I don't know how to talk about it differently, but maybe we've got it wrong at the moment. This is probably the most interesting issue we need to talk about. I think we're at something of an impasse, and I think it's a fruitful impasse; I don't think it's a destructive one.

DP: I'm going to raise an editorial question. Lorraine's remarks still raise this tension for me that there are really two conversations going on. I'm just wondering in the book whether we need to address them as two conversations. There's the conversation between philosophers about the nature of epistemology and whether the "traditional" epistemology is outdated and needs to be modified in some way. But then there's the other conversation among people interested in multiculturalism as an educational concern, and their use of the word epistemology. I still think we need to discuss what they could possibly mean, and I still cling to the view that they really don't understand the word because they don't, on the whole, raise such issues as how do we know that these claims that we know another person are true?… Don't they recognize the possibility of error? Those sorts of discussions never occur in this educational literature. So there are these two parallel conversations that we somehow have to grapple with. At the moment I've been focusing on the educational one, but of course, the more fascinating one is the one between us as philosophers.

LC: It's a productive tension, I think, not an aporetic one.

HS: I want to start by conceding the point that the word "epistemology" has evolved. Of course, like all language, I don't want to deny that. But I don't think that says very much.

LC: I think it says a lot.

HS: Well, I disagree with you about that. Plato and Theaetetus and Protagoras, for example, and Sextus Empiricus, all the way up to Lorraine Code, are talking about knowledge…. The cluster of issues at the center of those discussions are, it seems to me, quite clear. I know you disagree, Lorraine, but I'm asserting something contrary to your belief at the moment. I think knowledge by acquaintance is not something that is left out of the contemporary epistemological discussion. It is true that epistemologists in a certain Anglo-American analytic tradition have focused on propositional knowledge and that does have a long history, I would agree with that, but it's not true that that's the only game in epistemology town. Russell introduced the notion, or at least the language, of knowledge by acquaintance and, as Claudia pointed out, so did Searle; so it's there, and to say that contemporary epistemologists of a certain camp concentrate on a particular cluster of questions and don't concentrate on another cluster of questions which some might argue are worthy of pursuit is a perfectly sensible thing to say, but it doesn't suggest anything other than the narrow range of interests of a particular group. It doesn't say anything about the nature of epistemology, that epistemology somehow rules that out of bounds; I think that's not right.

One last thing which I think is also central to our disagreement: the idea that knowledge has a political use or dimension. I don't think contemporary

epistemologists want to deny that or would deny that. I certainly don't want to deny that.

LC: I would like to use "dimension" and not "use."

HS: Yes, fine, let's make it "dimension." I don't myself want to deny that, and I'm pretty sure I acknowledged it in my article. But I think that saying that knowledge has a political dimension leaves open the question: What do we want to do with that fact? And there are certain epistemologists, like Lorraine, who want to pursue that hard – Lynda as well – and that's perfectly fine. I don't see why any epistemologist should disagree with that or should rule that out of bounds or something like that. But at the same time, doing that, pointing out the political power of institutions of knowledge declaration, if that's a legitimate expression, is a different thing from asking questions about, for example, what counts as knowledge and what are the conditions of knowledge, and so on. Similarly, questions about *knowers*, which Lorraine wants to emphasize, are salutary, but they're not the same as questions about *knowledge*. That's another thing we could argue about, of course. So it seems to me that there's a little bit of caricature going on of what contemporary epistemology actually is like and what questions count and what questions don't count. It seems to me that we really should distinguish between claims that certain things don't even count as epistemology… There *are* some things, I would say, that don't even count, but that's one claim. That's different from: Among the things that count, which do we view as the most important things to pursue? And I think that there are legitimate disagreements among epistemologists about which are the ones to pursue. I like my set of questions, you like your set of questions, so let at least those two flowers bloom, that's perfectly okay. It seems to me there are all those things going on here that need to be unpacked.

CR: One of the things that is worth saying, which is one of the things that you're getting at, is that there might well be a caricature of epistemology happening in faculties and departments and schools and colleges of education, precisely because we're not epistemologists as our first orientation. If you look at the way in which epistemology is discussed in many educational research methods courses, it's very cursory, it's very superficial, and I think that some of the dualisms that get set up between western and indigenous or between traditional and non-traditional come out of the fact that there's not a really in-depth study of epistemology, and then you get that caricature. I think that it is worth acknowledging that that is a problem in educational research.

One of the questions I wanted to raise concerns your statement, Harvey, that the question of knowers is different from the question of knowledge. In my cursory reading, more traditional epistemology has focused on questions of justification and warrant than on the knower. You make a claim in your paper, Harvey, that the criteria by which we assess knowledge claims are themselves neutral. You ask, for example, is there ample evidence, what is the nature of the evidence, and so on? So what do you do with the following example?

Imagine that I have a colleague – this is an imaginary colleague, a composite of graduate students and colleagues – who says the following to me: "When

I talk to an elder in my community, when that elder tells me that something is the case, or even when the elder says I know this because I have dreamt it, then that is not just a claim of belief, but it is a claim of knowledge because of the status of the elder, and because of what we know as a community about that elder and about his or her wisdom. That then becomes in itself a warrant to call this knowledge rather than belief." Now for myself – coming from a Dutch upbringing, and an atheist upbringing at that – I might have some issues here; I can't really wrap my head around this type of position. But is this a real challenge, can this truly represent an alternative epistemology that has a different set of criteria for justifying claims as knowledge?

DP: That is, is it an epistemology, whether or not we fully endorse it?

CR: Yes, I might say, that is not the one I endorse because it comes with certain metaphysical assumptions, but is it a separate epistemology?

HS: If the claim is the bold claim: "In our group we take as knowledge what the elder believes to be knowledge," then that seems not to count as knowledge at all. As you expanded it, you said, "well, look, in our community we have a lot of experience with these elders and we recognize that they are often right, that is, that they are repositories of wisdom, so when an elder says something, it has more going for it, other things being equal, than when a non-elder says that same thing." That is perfectly understandable within something like mainstream epistemology, right? You've got evidence for the reliability of an elder, and you bring that to bear when the elder says that p, and you say, the elder is making a knowledge claim that p and on the basis of good evidence I regard the elder as reliable, and so I now claim to know that p.

CR: So you admit evidence about that particular knower rather than evidence about that particular claim. Because the elder might say: In this case I am claiming this because I have dreamt it.

HS: Oh, sure. If I say I take this to be knowledge not because the elder dreamt it but because the elder has an excellent track record, then I'm not appealing to the elder's dream; I'm appealing to the elder's track record.

DP: He has established himself as an epistemic authority.

HS. If he has. Not obviously, I mean, we'd have to look at the case in more detail.

LS: Another way to think about that would be to see what these knowledge claims are *for*. One of the ways we would judge that is, if the group put in practice the decision that the elder offered, and (this is a pragmatist notion about playing out its consequences) we see if it works. So then we have some kind of warrant – we could use that kind of language – for granting epistemic authority to the elder. It seems to me that one of the questions we have to ask is not only what kinds of justification, what kind of reasoning, but what kind of purposes we would use the knowledge for; and I think we could use that kind of language across a lot of communities.

LC: Can I take another example that seems to be very similar to this one, and that goes one step further in the enactment. There was a famous case in southern Australia in 1996 where an aboriginal land claim on the part of women was being contested, because an aboriginal women's sacred site down in Victoria

state (south of Melbourne near the ocean) was being claimed by some
developers who wanted to build a marina or a golf course or whatever it was.
The strength of the claim rested on the sacredness of the site which the women
presumably, given their authority as elders and practitioners in the community,
should know. The claims that they made in court were consistently contested –
and this is another issue that deserves to be folded into the discussion – because
they relied entirely on an oral tradition and on oral testimony. They testified
frequently as a group or a subset of the group, and frequently the testimony
was inconsistent. But often the aboriginal elders or other aboriginal elders
would say, "yes but sometimes it's sacred in this way and sometimes it's sacred
in that way, sometimes the sacredness moves this way and sometimes it moves
that way." So you could say that the courts were having problems because they
couldn't fit the testimony, with its inconsistencies but nevertheless its consis-
tent thread of recognition of sacredness, into the language of a court which
presumably we can, for the sake of the argument, call a mainstream way of
dealing with evidence on which a decision was going to be based. And the
impasse was very difficult. I can't remember how it got resolved, but the fact
of evidence consistently repeated and consistently corroborated but with no
written record in a culture that values and validates written records as evidence
and testimony to rely on in situations of this sort, suggests to me… I don't
want to say that they had a different way of knowing or an alternative way of
knowing, but I want to say that indeed they had knowledge. People were pre-
pared to acknowledge that their knowledge in some way deserved respect,
and indeed deserved to be taken, not exactly at face value (because it wasn't
clear what face value would account for) – but somehow it needed to be
brought to bear as the basis of a legal decision, which is actually crucial. This
knowledge seems incredibly unstable, and if you wanted to talk about their
epistemology, which I'm not sure I would want to do, it would be hard to
formulate it or tabulate it.

HS: Can I ask you a question about this example? Would you regard it as a butcher-
ing of the example or a distortion of the example if you simply removed
knowledge from the picture and talked about the rights of aboriginal women
to their traditions, turning it into a question about justice rather than a question
about knowledge, which it what it seems to me to be?

LC: I wouldn't object to that at all, but that's because I think the scope of what
we – leaving the extension of that word "we" very vague at the moment – the
scope of what we call knowledge and claim as knowledge is actually much
narrower than relying on what (perhaps a caricature of) mainstream epistemol-
ogy allows us to do. But the point is that the court needed to have something
that would stand up as evidence. Now, if anything is going to count as evidence,
does it have to be knowledge?

HS: I would say, no, evidence doesn't have to be knowledge. But my suggestion
was a little bit more extreme than that; I meant that this is not about evidence.
What has to be established is simply that the women's belief about the land is
something they were entitled to, as a matter of justice. That's not about

evidence. If you could establish that they were entitled to it as a matter of justice, then…

LC: … you don't need evidence to do that?

HS: You need evidence to establish that they are entitled to it as a matter of justice, but you don't need evidence for the claim itself because we're not saying that the claim is well justified. This is my suggested re-reading of the example.

LC: It just seems to me that what was at issue there for the court was that it had to have something that it could tabulate and rely on and say, "For these, these, these and these reasons we need to believe these women." And if they are going to believe these women then it seems to me we are entering at least the fringes of epistemological discussion.

HS: To say the court needs evidence, certainly that's right, but the question I was raising is, what do they need evidence about? Do they need evidence about the truth of the women's claim? That seems to me not what they need. What they need is evidence concerning the entitlement of the women as a group of the kind it is, as a matter of justice to their claim. And that seems to me evidence for something else, and not problematic, from an epistemological point of view.

LS: I think you've raised a really interesting issue. What I'm concerned about with this continual reliance on knowledge is that, if I look at the ethical and political ramifications of the society in which we live, knowledge hasn't gotten us very far. We keep saying, if we know the other, we're going to be able to be generous – and I don't know about you – but I don't see it happening a whole lot. It seems to me that a more fruitful direction is to think about the relationship between ethics and politics, and it seems to me that you've raised that, which I like a lot. That is the kind of language we ought to be encouraging in schools because that's where, in a sense, we don't have to rely on this old knowledge thing, which isn't working anyway, and we can give other kinds of criteria for the kind of society in which we wish to live and the kind of ethics and politics that we want to come out of it. We can use knowledge claims for other things, but we don't have to necessarily rely on knowledge to get to politics and ethics in order to achieve justice.

DP: I just wanted to go back to both of the examples, which are very helpful. The issue that is still of concern to me is whether, when folks use the word "epistemology" here, they know what they're talking about. Irrespective of whether it's a good epistemology or whether we have criticisms of it, if they understand claims to know or claims to substantiate beliefs as being true and require some backing, this is epistemology. So, this is the leader of the tribe and he holds a certain position and his word is to be trusted – it may not be a very good epistemology but it would indicate that there is an understanding that claims need to be backed up in some way – so I'd say the group concerned is not misusing the word "epistemology"; and we can now sit down and have a discussion about whose epistemology is more adequate. But in a lot of the literature in education and the social sciences, the authors don't push deeply enough to raise that epistemological concern, so they seem to me to be

misusing the word. And finally, is my concern that these authors are misusing the word epistemology just a case of my carping about the misuse of a word? No, first of all, the authors' concerns are important, and although it is clearer not to use the word epistemology, they can use the word if they need to. But by using the word this way, it distracts attention from the more traditional meaning of the word, which *also* is important because epistemology *is* important and I want both these sets of important concerns to be acknowledged.

CR: There seems to be considerable agreement, that once you start digging down, we can see that a lot of claims really aren't primarily about epistemology, we can see the need to support claims that ought to be made in ethical and political terms, we can see that the term "epistemology" evolves, and we can see that when you really start analyzing it (with the example of the elder, for example), you can actually explain this very well in existing epistemological terms, and so on. So, if a lot of these claims of – I don't know what to say instead of "alternative" – alternative epistemologies can fit very well in existing epistemology, why, then, are there so many claims in my graduate classes and in the seminars I attend about "our or my epistemology doesn't fit" or "my epistemology isn't being recognized"? What is so tempting, what is so seductive about the term "epistemology" that people keep wanting to use it in spite of the confusion that results, in spite of their claims perhaps being made better in ethical and political terms, in spite of the fact that, once you dig down, perhaps you can explain it very well in either neo-positivist or pragmatic epistemological terms?

DP: How much philosophy have these people done?

LS: Not very much.

DP: I remember a dissertation defense at Stanford where the student made a philosophical claim and I questioned it; he got really indignant and said, "I know what I'm talking about, I've taken a course in philosophy!" One course in philosophy!

CR: What is it then, about that term? Is it just academic cachet?

LC: It gives a level of legitimation, I think, that is unwarranted.

LS: It's the modern worldview in which we are situated. I do think this is part of it.

LC: Can I go back to something you said, Lynda? You said something along the lines that it's not about knowing people, and the idea that we would do more justice to them if we know them. But I think that partly there is a kind of moral epistemology that does involve claims to the effect that although we may never know people well enough to do justice by them, it's quite clear that very often we – whoever "we" may be – don't bother to know people well enough to prevent doing gross injustice to them. I want that to stay in.

LS: Nobody is saying that knowledge doesn't help, but if we're talking back to our necessary and sufficient conditions for justice, I don't think it gets us there.

LC: I will be talking in my address to PES this afternoon about needing to know people in their particularity in order to talk and act well. But also, in a completely different register, I want to ask you what your response is to what I think is one of the best books about knowing that has recently appeared, and

that is the *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance* text, co-edited by Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan. It came out of the "Ignorance" conference at Penn State, which was held in 2004. There is a second text called *Agnotology*, which is edited by Robert Proctor and Londa Schiebinger. In both cases the central argument is that, while epistemologists have been deeply concerned to understand the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge (basically the conditions for the possibility of knowledge), in many of the specific cases that are analyzed in both of these texts, there is a concern with the production and maintenance of *ignorance* in various places and in various circumstances. For instance, Proctor and Schiebinger talk about the climate change issues and how knowledge is shaded and fudged to create and maintain a level of not knowing. They do it about cancer surgeries, they do it about smoking, and they do it about classified information. In *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, for instance, one of the best pieces is Shannon Sullivan's "Why I know so little about Puerto Rico." She talks about how the schooling that she received presented a picture of "Porto Rico," constructed and presented and maintained as a colony whose representation that way enabled certain actions and patterns.

   I wondered if you would blanch and fall off your chairs when I talked about "epistemologies of ignorance." But more to the point here is the analysis that goes on there, which I don't think misuses the term "epistemology," although it does use it with a certain tongue in cheek; I think it suggests a way of rethinking knowledge as a product that obliterates ignorance, and ignorance as absence of knowledge. And I think pedagogically it is very interesting for students to know about places where our knowledge comes up against its own limitations or is blocked for certain reasons. For instance, Londa Schiebinger has a very interesting piece in the *Agnotology* book about a plant substance that was discovered by explorers in the South Pacific, that was extremely effective as an abortofacient, and there was a strong prohibition against bringing that back and introducing it into western culture because the prevalent Christian view was that abortion should be extremely difficult to obtain. So there are some very interesting issues there.

HS: Can I ask you a question about that? You say you think they are using the word epistemology correctly there, but tongue in cheek?

LC: Maybe, maybe. What I meant to raise, in a sense, is whether they are using it for its startle effect. Because when you talk about "epistemologies of ignorance," it seems an oxymoron.

CR: In educational literature, one of the people who have been taken up in that vein is Shoshana Felman, who talks about ignorance as an activity. If I can direct us back to Denis's question about, I forget how you phrased it, dance as epistemology…

DP: I think Asante says that "dance, music, art" are canons of proof. It comes in a section of his book that is titled "Epistemological Issue."

CR: So we are dealing with colleagues, and graduate students who sometimes are practicing teachers, and they will want to do research, and they might say things like, "I feel that my emphasis on embodied knowing isn't recognized in the

dominant ways in which we go about education, the dominant ways in which we talk about knowledge, and I really want to work with K-12 students to reconnect them with their bodies because our bodies are sources of knowledge and I don't find that view legitimated here, so I want to claim a different kind of epistemology, one in which the fact that my body tells me so is ground for knowledge."

LC: Tell them to read Iris Marion Young.

CR: The Asante quote that you gave comes from a slightly different context, but these claims about alternative epistemologies are not necessarily from ethnically marginalized groups; they can come from students working in arts-based inquiry. How to respond to this? What's going to be the pedagogical value of this? Rather than lay down the law and say stop using this term this way, to actually say, how can we make less of a caricature of epistemology in colleges, schools, faculties of education, and what can we do pedagogically to have a better conversation about this? I don't want to shut them down, but I do want to get them to come to see that either what they're talking about might not be epistemology or it might fit very well with existing epistemologies out there.

LC: Or epistemology might need to be expanded and changed to accommodate it.

LS: One thing that I was thinking of: We haven't really talked about this notion of "publicly shared." If you take something like a dance, the dancer can explain what he or she did and then it becomes a matter of language. Students can talk about their interpretations and then it takes on a different form, some kind of public sharing, and I've always though that that was at least a reasonable route to talk about beliefs. We can have some form of consensus or we can disagree, and we can locate our various positions. After all, Wittgenstein did it and Vygotsky did it, and all kinds of people who gave us these notions of public, of a publicness, in terms of beliefs. We can have knowledge beliefs, but we can also have political and ethical beliefs. The notion of belief, it seems to me, is really helpful. We can go right back to Quine and Ullian. There are all kinds of things we can do with "belief." I haven't done that with my own students, but I'd like to spend some time trying that one out.

LC: What you've just introduced, which we've neglected (and I'm surprised that we have since it's a hot topic for me, always), is the notion that knowing is mostly communal; it's about talking and interpretation and all kinds of social interaction… I think the idea of the abstract individual really has to go; I don't think you could know anything if you were an abstract individual; you could know nothing.

HS: I'm not sure if I agree or not, but I'd just like to remind us that the claim you just made was not about knowledge, it was about *knowing*. I just want to make sure that that distinction is not trodden over, because it seems to me important. If the targets of critique of traditional epistemology involve epistemology's understanding of knowledge when what the critics are really concerned about is *knowing*, then it seems to me the critique is misplaced in that way or at least it's ambiguous and unclear in that way. So I'm not disagreeing with what you said, I just think it's important to keep those two things separate. I know that there is a tradition that argues that they can't be kept separate…

LC: Knowing sometimes turns into knowledge.

HS: Right, but what's involved in knowing is different from what's involved in knowledge.

LC: Knowing couldn't turn into knowledge if it were radically different.

CR: Can we rephrase Lorraine's claim to something like: It is not possible to reach knowledge as an individual in a vacuum.

HS: Reaching knowledge is different from knowledge. Suppose I pose myself the question for my doctoral dissertation: What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge? If somebody comes to my defense after I've laid out my view and says, "ah, but your view doesn't take account of the fact that it's impossible for any lone individual to reach knowledge," it seems to me I'd be well within my rights to say that my dissertation wasn't about reaching knowledge, it was about knowledge.

CR: So among the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge, you would not count that it must have a communal aspect?

HS: This is a made up example. I don't have an account of knowledge in my head in this example. My point is just, what's involved in reaching knowledge is different from what's involved in some things being knowledge.

DP: In a French restaurant, cooking a perfect soufflé, say, is maybe a communal activity. It necessarily involves the activity of sous-chefs, and so on; but the *criteria* for a perfect soufflé, there's nothing communal about them. It is fluffy, it is a certain height and color, it has particular ingredients….

LC: The soufflé wouldn't be there if people hadn't conceived of it.

CR: Yes, the soufflé didn't come falling out of the clear blue sky! In order for the soufflé to come into being, is it a necessary or sufficient condition that more than one person contributed to it?

DP: That is a different question from: What is a soufflé?

LC: No it's not. It is a human artifact, just as knowledge is a human artifact.

CR: That's an interesting sticking point, because you'll see that discussion going on as well in educational circles.

LS: I'm reminded of Hacking's book, *The Social Construction of What*, which I actually discuss with my doctoral students, and the claim that he makes that rocks aren't made up, but human categories are. If I can get my students to have fun with the examples in that book, that does at least deal with one of the major questions that is part of educational research today. Because all our students talk about social construction, "this is socially constructed," but they haven't thought through the distinctions; and maybe that provides a way to look at the kind of thing that Harvey was talking about. Some things aren't made up.

LC: Like what?

LS: He would argue that rocks aren't made up.

LC: Right.

LS: I'm with you in thinking that this is fairly narrow.

CR: Perhaps this is a way to come back to the very first question. Given all this, and given that there is a lot of consensus – about which I am not entirely surprised, quite frankly, because when Denis and I correspond, we keep finding that our

disagreements are really quite small among a lot of agreement – how should the field of educational research respond to claims about indigenous African women's epistemologies?

LC: But not "alternative" epistemologies.

CR: No, that's why I'm differentiating.

LS: Diverse? Not multiple, but diverse?

DP: I rather like Helen Longino's expression, and not just because she is a colleague! She says something like, it doesn't make sense to talk about multiple epistemologies or alternative epistemologies, but what's important is to do epistemology with a cultural, multicultural sensitivity.

LC: As long as the one dominant category doesn't remain an unmarked category. Because that's the issue. When you put those others in brackets, they become marked, they are marked categories, but you're leaving…

CR: … the "default"

LC: … the "default," you're leaving it untouched as an unmarked category. And I think part of the point of these so-called "other" epistemologies is to demonstrate that if they are marked categories, so too is the one that has claimed hegemonic ascendancy.

LS: And in western thought we can show different traditions, in terms of, at least, the language by which knowledge gets talked about. The other thing we didn't raise too much here is how we take the issue of context and what counts as context. Do we take it as a kind of weak notion of influence, or do we take it in a very strong way – do we look at it as being something like Foucault's notion of epistemes? Those kinds of notions extend our discussion, but they are part of, it seems to me, contemporary concerns.

CR: Granting all that, if we try to figure out a different way of working with our language to decenter the supposedly neutral default option, what do we do in fields of educational research with these claims – whether they're claims about research epistemologies being racially biased, which is the Scheurich and Young claim, whether they are claims about dominant research epistemologies being exclusive, intolerant of either particular ethnic groups' positions or of other "ways of knowing"? What do we *do* with these claims, what do we do with them either in scholarly venues or in classrooms?

LC: One thing that might not seem relevant, but I think it is: I think seeing or knowing (or whatever words you want to use) from a point of view does not necessarily determine the consequent product, whether it's knowledge or knowing, but it influences it. And I think often the idea that diversity plays a part in *shaping* knowledge is too quickly translated into the idea that diversity *determines* knowledge. I think it's very important not to say that being a woman means that you care about the soufflé.

CR: So it's contesting essentialization.

LC: Well, it's contesting single factor determinism, contesting the idea of single factor determinants. One of the other problems with these so-called diverse epistemologies is that several of the marks of diversity are often born by one putative knower. I don't need to spell that out.

HS: You're looking for a grand statement, Claudia, so I'll give you the grand statement: I think we should just call it like it is: They're not epistemologies. If students don't understand that by the end of their graduate education, they haven't been well educated.

DP: Maybe we have to struggle more to understand what the concerns of these individuals and groups are.

LC: Of course, it does have to with politics, and it has to do with listening, which is one of the pieces missing from a lot of attempts to talk across difference.

Epilogue 1

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Reflecting on this discussion, what is outlined sharply in my mind is the question of what we can do pedagogically with the points raised. How can we work with beginning and future educational researchers so that they feel supported in the ethical and political concerns they have about education, while we also, as Lynda Stone suggests, "begin to give them the kind of language and philosophical distinctions that can be useful" in pursuing those ethical and political concerns well?

It strikes me that the problem may be one of recognition, or rather misrecognition. As was raised in the discussion, the vast majority of educational researchers do not learn about epistemology in philosophy courses, but rather in research methodology courses. In these courses and the texts used in them, students learn that an educational researcher has to be able to articulate her or his epistemology. Michael Crotty (1998/2003), for example, in his much-used *The Foundations of Social Research*, distinguishes epistemology from theoretical perspective, methodology, and method, and writes that social researchers "need to describe the epistemology inherent in the theoretical perspective and therefore in the methodology we have chosen" (p. 8). He lists three main epistemologies: *objectivism*, which he discusses in relation to the theoretical perspectives of positivism and post-positivism; *constructionism*, which, according to Crotty, is "the epistemology that qualitative researchers tend to invoke" (p. 9); and *subjectivism*, which he discusses in relation to the theoretical perspectives of structuralism, poststructuralism, and postmodernism.

Philosophically, these terms and categories are quite problematic – the suggestion that poststructuralism relies on a "subjectivist epistemology," for example, strikes me as both odd and unhelpful – but it is important to know that this is how many educational researchers are introduced to epistemology. As Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) points out – and notwithstanding Denis Phillips's experience in the AERA session – "it is not, after all, out of the dictionary that the speaker gets his words" (p. 294).

Rather, Bakhtin argues, the language that we learn "exists in other people's mouths, in other people's concrete contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own" (p. 294). So educational researchers learn about epistemology from research methodology courses, and these are not courses in which epistemology tends to be discussed philosophically.

Denis asserts that educational researchers from marginalized communities "rightly feel that their voices are not being heard in shaping research questions, in research funding, that the sorts of issues that are important in their communities are not valued, and so on." This is an issue of misrecognition. In order to shape a research project that does not replicate these historical wrongs, then, and bearing in mind the lessons of the research methodology course(s), these educational researchers want to ensure that they position themselves in a methodology, theoretical perspective, and epistemology that recognize and honor the kinds of questions they believe need to be asked and that approach their community respectfully. Following the logic that a particular epistemology is inherent in one's theoretical perspective and methodology, it is not surprising that educational researchers do not want to use the epistemology (or epistemologies) that has (have) been inherent in theoretical perspectives and methodologies which have been used for past research that has, at best, been insensitive to marginalized communities and has, at worst, done considerable harm.

Let me elaborate a little on the issue of misrecognition. Harvey Siegel has argued that most of the claims about epistemological diversity are not about epistemology but about justice. Not infrequently, I believe, the perceived injustice is one of misrecognition. From the perspective of Nancy Fraser (1996), misrecognition is indeed a matter of justice, and not just of individual "status injury" because

> it is unjust that some individuals and groups are denied the status of full partners in social interaction simply as a consequence of institutionalized patterns of interpretation and evaluation in whose construction they have not equally participated and that disparage their distinctive characteristics or the distinctive characteristics assigned to them. (p. 24)

The fact that certain groups of people have traditionally been positioned as objects of research and knowledge, rather than as researchers and knowledge producers, is an example of such recognitive injustice. All participants in the roundtable agree that this injustice must be remedied.

Philosophical epistemologists, however, will point out that the blame for this recognitive injustice is not epistemology but politics, so it is important to reiterate that there is a significant gap between the ways philosophers and educational researchers talk about epistemology. One of the pedagogical tasks, then, would be to (re-)introduce philosophical discussions of epistemology in the preparation of future educational researchers. It should be acknowledged that philosophical epistemology is a specialized practice that has its own technical language. Terms such as "warrant" or "propositional knowledge" have a particular and precise meaning – just as any other specialized practice from scuba diving to neurosurgery has its own technical terms that have a particular and precise meaning. The difficulty is that the technical language or "tools" of the practice can become conflated with particular, dominant traditions of that practice. While Harvey is right, of course, that the

particular Anglo-Analytic tradition that has been quite dominant in epistemology "is not the only game in epistemology town," it can be hard, especially for non-specialists, to imagine epistemological tools being used in ways that are, for example, not masculinist, and that do not focus on, as Lorraine Code puts its so poignantly, "knowing things that are so trivial that, frankly, I don't give a damn about whether I know them or not."

The technical language of philosophical epistemology can, therefore – and I use a phrase here that recurs often in students' writing – be perceived as "the master's tools" that "will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 1984, p. 123). The pedagogical task, I would suggest, is to encourage students to see that "there is only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there" (Butler 1990/1999, p. 185). Epistemological tools can and should be taken up in critical ways, so that, as Lorraine has suggested, epistemology can be expanded and changed. In order for this to be done thoughtfully, however, educational researchers should learn to take up the actual tools of philosophical epistemology – its careful distinction of knowledge from belief, its evaluation of warrants for knowledge claims, its explication of different types of knowledge, its discussion of the relation of knowing subjects to knowledge, and so forth. And once the tools have been taken up, perhaps they can be put down in new places.

Epilogue 2

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Reflecting upon the roundtable discussion raised the question, in the mind of my co-editor, of "what to do pedagogically" with the points raised. The same concern was raised within the discussion itself, for example by Lynda Stone. I must join the bandwagon here; rigorous doctoral training has been much on my mind of late, as I recently spent 18 months chairing a task force of academics from eleven prominent schools of education which was charged with reporting on this very issue. The focus of the task force was rather narrow – doctoral students being prepared as empirical researchers – while our concern in this book is the whole range of graduate students, which in addition includes curriculum theorists, teacher-educators, historians and philosophers of education, and many others besides. I must admit that the roundtable discussion brought into focus again for me the difficult issues that need to be resolved here.

The roundtable conversation changed direction a number of times, often before closure had been reached (this of course is a characteristic of oral interaction), but the tradeoff was that many important issues were touched upon. The most central of these was the issue of whether or not those who write in the "multicultural epistemology" tradition are attempting to reform epistemology (Lorraine Code's

suggestion), or are raising issues of justice but doing so using the language of epistemology (Harvey Siegel's suggestion) – or of course, they might be doing both. My own view, based upon the chapters in this book including the transcript of the roundtable, is that it is important to recognize that there are two distinct literatures in this domain that often get run together. On the one hand, there are the writings of epistemologists such as Lorraine Code herself, Helen Longino, and Sandra Harding who are indeed attempting to reform this branch of philosophy from within, raising issues of particular concern to feminist philosophers and those with multicultural concerns. My personal assessment is that they have produced substantive arguments on behalf of their reform efforts, and they have affected my own thinking. The second body of literature is that which was briefly surveyed in Chap. 2 and which forms the main focus of this book; this literature consists of the writings of multiculturalists who are not philosophers, and (on my reading) they do not produce philosophical arguments. This literature, at bottom, is concerned to argue for the just treatment of all cultural groups in matters of curriculum, classroom politics, and so forth. Again my assessment is that their case needs to be taken very seriously – but it has confused the issue by being cast in epistemological language. There is no evidence at all, in my view, that this second group is attempting to reform traditional epistemology.

Another point that occurred to me as I re-read the transcript was the fact that the philosophically able participants occasionally were at cross-purposes and sometimes failed to push their points far enough to expose the underlying, central points of disagreement – if not to reach agreement (probably an impossibility with a group of philosophers). An example from near the end of the discussion can serve as illustration: Harvey Siegel's point that knowledge and knowing are different. Knowledge (and soufflés!) are products (in a sense, are things), while knowing (and cooking a soufflé) are processes (in a sense, are events); the characteristics that identify these different types of entities/events are different, notwithstanding the fact that processes are sometimes characterized by the type of products they produce. I take it that Harvey's point (certainly it was mine) was that when multiculturalists and others talk of "ways of knowing," they are referring to processes, but too often they neglect to discuss epistemologically the features of the products so produced that make them items of knowledge rather than items of belief. Furthermore the processes of "knowing" themselves are rarely if ever assessed in the relevant literature to see if they have the capability to actually produce knowledge rather than belief. (This was illustrated, I believe, by some of the material covered in the literature review in Chap. 2) On the other hand, I suspect that Claudia Ruitenberg and Lorraine Code would want to argue that, for much of the knowledge that is important to discuss in educational circles today, the way in which people have come to hold certain beliefs and have come to know certain things is so important that it does not make much sense to discuss the product of knowledge separately from these processes. The roundtable discussion, however, changed course before these potentially very important points were opened for deeper discussion.

As I studied this portion of the transcript, I naturally was slightly saddened by the failure of this talented group to make headway on what I regard as an interesting philosophical issue, but the realization also struck me that if trained philosophers

can fail to make headway, then there is little, if any, hope that lesser mortals will fare any better. The thought even arose (of course, it has arisen many times before, for example in seminars with doctoral students representing a variety of disciplinary orientations) that what a philosopher finds interesting might leave others stone cold – and it is not the case that even all philosophers will share this interest!

Just as all roads supposedly lead to Rome, these scattered thoughts lead back to the daunting pedagogical challenge: How can doctoral students, who are not philosophers but are facing careers as educational researchers of one stripe or another, be educated so as to be able to maneuver through extremely tricky epistemological terrain? Should this even be an aim of their doctoral work? And if it is (comfortingly, all participants in the roundtable agree that it is), how can this aim be achieved when those who are teaching these students are themselves philosophical neophytes? – for the sad fact of doctoral training life is that most research training programs do not have more than a single philosopher of education (if that), and of course, it is not the case that all faculty members who hold positions as philosophers of education have substantial epistemological training or interests. This is not the place to discuss the vagaries of doctoral training programs, but it is worth commenting that those in which students are encouraged or even required to take courses in the humanities and/or social science departments outside of education, often will have opportunities to have worthwhile discussion of epistemological issues (the social sciences, in particular, perhaps because they have concerns about their status in the academic hierarchy of the sciences, can be quite assiduous in raising epistemological issues in their seminars and colloquia).

The task force mentioned at the outset also endorsed the education – rather than the training – of doctoral research students, and also argued that in order to be prepared for the world of the twenty-first century, they needed at least to have met (as students) some of the epistemological challenges they (and their work) will face as they move into their careers – face in print, face in the form of reports of referees, face in the presentations of respondents at conferences, and so on. Indeed, the members of the task force saw these rhetorically fraught situations as being the key to successful motivation and training; the more that students took the opportunity to publish, to present at conferences, to attend conference sessions that had the promise of prompting deep and exciting debate, the more they would realize the importance of these epistemological issues and the need to do at least a modicum of reading. Speaking personally, being attacked (unjustly) for being a positivist, and (contra-wise) for being too enamored of the epistemology of Karl Popper (who was the self-confessed executioner of positivism), and (justly) for failing to appreciate the important doctrines of postmodernism, have all been important growth experiences. Such good luck needs to bless all nascent educational researchers.

One other aspect of the roundtable served as a challenge to me – the point that came to the fore several times about the politics of knowledge production and dissemination. Our discussion was good-natured but forthright, with disagreements honestly acknowledged; but obviously, dealing with the important and emotionally charged issues here with our students presents another serious pedagogical challenge, even at the doctoral level. Establishing a seminar-room environment

where students (and for that matter, faculty members) from all backgrounds are free to raise issues honestly, and where they are enabled to take a philosophical perspective – that is, engage in careful assessment of their own claims as well as those of others – all without venting or establishing a tone that disenfranchises others within the group, involves a set of skills that I am sure that I and, no doubt, many of my friends and colleagues, have not mastered. And it is not clear where we should turn to get help.

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