Get Good: Self-Regulation, Education, and Epistemic Agency

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I defend a unified account of knowledge and use it to articulate and resolve a number of problems in social epistemology. I argue that to know how to Φ is to have a self-regulated ability to live up to the norms that govern Φ-ing, and I argue that propositional knowledge is success through cognitive know how. I next address the kinds of social relations that sustain or undermine good epistemic practice. First, I focus on the problem of hermeneutical injustice, which occurs when members of a social group are unjustly prevented from developing or spreading new conceptual skills for making sense of the world. Second, I explore the empirical literature on what’s known as the Dunning-Kruger effect, which explains the tendency of unskilled individuals to over-estimate their abilities, to describe a novel form of skepticism. If you lack the conceptual skills to make sense of some feature of the world, that very lack can, to some extent, prevent you from recognizing your ignorance. In response to both problems, I develop a theory of educational practices. I argue that we develop new conceptual skills and come to recognize gaps in our epistemic resources by coming together in joint practices of self-regulation.
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Introduction: “Get Good, Scrub!”

“Git Gud”

-Contemporary Internet Meme

Newcomers to a competitive online gaming community (known as “newbies”, “newbs”, or “noobs”, sometimes stylized as “n00bs”) are sometimes helpfully advised to “get good” (sometimes stylized “Git Gud”) after losing to more experienced players. This advice is of course offered tongue-in-cheek, and usually it’s intended as a taunt. Part of the joke is that the advice is too general, not to mention too obvious, to be of any use. After all, in order to improve the new player needs a specific curriculum tailored to their individual needs and the challenges of the task. At the same time, this advice may be a way of signaling something about cluelessness of the novice. In offering it, the expert treats the novice as a mere hobbyist, as a “scrub” or “filthy casual”, someone who doesn’t even realize that there is a deep and challenging game to play. In this context, “game” might refer to the game itself or it might refer to what gamers call the “metagame”, the game of figuring out how to play the game well.\footnote{The term “metagame” has several meanings in the videogame community. Often, for example, this term is used to refer to the strategies or methods devised through the collective learning process. This use of the term and the one adopted here are most prominent, as far as I know, in the competitive Super Smash Bros. community (see https://www.ssbwiki.com/Metagame).} The filthy causal may play the game, but they don’t play the metagame. They may not even be aware that there is one to be played—let alone that it is a deep, challenging and rewarding game. As a
result, they are, from the perspective of more serious and somewhat insecure players, worthy of abuse.

This dissertation is about how we “Git Gud” at games by playing the metagame. While I am interested in a general account of getting good, I’m more specifically interested in how we get good at *epistemic games* or games of coming to know features of the world. Epistemic games include everything from the ordinary practices of claim-making, belief formation and reason giving to the more rarified practices of scientific investigation or philosophical reflection. To participate in a game is to be a player. To participate in an epistemic game or, as I will prefer to say, an *epistemic practice* is to be an *epistemic agent*. Because I’m interested in how we get good as knowers, I am interested in drawing an analogy between games and epistemic practices as well as players and epistemic agents.

1. The Game Metaphor

I am not the first to make the comparison. Pittsburgh philosophers model epistemic practices and epistemic agents on games and game players respectively (see, e.g., Sellars 1954; Brandom 1998; Haugeland 1998). While the metaphor is useful for thinking about the nature of epistemic practices from the word go, it can be misleading if not properly qualified. As Wilfrid Sellars points out, the point of a model is to aide us in moving our thought from a familiar domain to an unfamiliar one (1956, §13). As he also points out, the model must be accompanied by a commentary which, he adds, "qualifies or limits—but not precisely nor in all respects—the analogy" (Sellars 1956, §13). The game metaphor has its strengths and weakness.

Here are four strengths. First, like games, epistemic practices are norm-governed (Sellars 1954: Brandom 1998; Haugeland 1998). Broadly speaking, there are correct and incorrect ways of playing games and correct and incorrect ways of participating in epistemic practices. The
norms governing these activities determine what counts as a permissible or impermissible move, and game players and epistemic agents qua role players in their respective activities are entitled to make certain moves and not others. Second, like game players, epistemic agents are aware of the norms that constrain their activities and can play according to the norms in light of this awareness. If they can’t, then they don’t count as epistemic agents. If you cannot play with at least an implicit awareness of the norms, you don’t count as participating in a norm-governed activity of any kind. Lastly, just as the norms of games are developed by and sustained by players, the norms of epistemic practices are developed by and sustained by epistemic agents.

Here are three quick points of disanalogy. Unlike games, epistemic practices are world disclosive; they have objective purport (Haugeland 1998; Kukla & Lance 2014). Games do not. If the goal of an epistemic practice is to get the world right, the (ultimate) goal of a (typical) game is to reach an end state, which usually determines winners and losers. This is the first major place where the analogy breaks down, and it leads to at least a couple major disparities that are closely related. I mentioned that games and practices were analogous in that epistemic norms are developed and sustained by agents. However, the norms constitutive of a game are not constrained by the world in the same way the norms of epistemic practices are. There is a sense in which we are free to determine the norms of games like chess as we wish. The norms may not be totally arbitrary. They may be constrained by, for example, what makes for a fair game, a challenging game, a deep game or a competitive game, and we cannot determine by fiat what such a game looks like. Some games may also be constrained in various ways by what our bodies and the game paraphernalia can do, but still there is a sense in which the rules of games are up to us in a way the norms of epistemic practices are not. This leads to a related point about the non-optionality of epistemic games (Kukla and Lance 2014). If you aren't committed to playing
chess, then you are not doing anything impermissible when you move a rook diagonally across the board. You can opt in or out of the game at any time for any reason or for no reason at all. Not so with epistemic agents. An epistemic agent cannot arbitrarily decide whether or not to be bound by epistemic norms, and this is precisely because epistemic practices have objective purport. Since how things are with the world isn't up to us, it is not up to us what the right way to disclose the world is either.

There are further disanalogies that suggest the game metaphor might not be particularly apt. For example, it might be argued that epistemic agents are essentially embodied, but not so with game players (Lance 1998). A game like chess doesn’t require the development and exercise of bodily skills involved in perception and empirical investigation. After all, you can play chess without any physical game pieces whatsoever. While there might be ways of salvaging the game metaphor from some of these problems by moving away from chess as a paradigm or by making the comparisons more course or more fine, I'm not interested in doing so. At some point when we find intuitive disanalogies mounting, the comparative exercise loses touch with its original purpose. The point of the model is to take our imaginations from a familiar domain to an unfamiliar one. To get a foot in the door. To get a better sense of my project, it will help to think a little more deeply about epistemic practices and epistemic agency on their own terms.

One natural way to start, although I don’t claim any methodological superiority for this approach, is by considering the capacities required to participate in social epistemic practices. Consider the following: in a laboratory at CERN, scientists blast particles through a bubble chamber and analyze the results. During a seminar on human nature, philosophers debate the evolutionary case for gender differences. Driving past a tree, a backseat argument erupts over
whether it was an oak or an elm. At a local concert venue, someone tries to find out where the bathrooms are. This is a small sample of the various ways we participate in epistemic practices from the mundane activities of everyday life to the more specialized activities of the science lab and philosophy seminar. By “practices” I mean a more or less well-defined way of doing things. Practices can be more or less localized (my way, your way, our way their way), more or less context specific, more or less elaborate, more or less contested, and may be described at courser or finer levels of detail or generality. When articulated, practices are defined in terms of the norms governing them. To say they are norm-governed is to say that one's performances within the practice are subject to normative assessment (compare Haugeland 2002). There is a right and wrong way to use your soup spoon, a right and wrong way to brush your teeth, and a right and wrong way to inbound the ball in a basketball game. When you don't follow the norms, you open yourself up to criticism. Epistemic practices are norm-governed ways of disclosing the world, and when you fail to follow the norms of the practice, say, for performing an experiment or engaging in an argument, you open yourself up to criticism. For example, there are correct and incorrect ways of performing a scientific experiment or engaging in a philosophical argument, and when you fail to perform correctly you open yourself up to criticism.

This suggests a different way of investigating the nature of epistemic agency and epistemic practices that doesn’t rely on the game metaphor. The core connection between games and epistemic practices is that both are norm-governed. As with any norm-governed activity, participation in epistemic practices requires know how, roughly, the ability to live up to the norms of the task. What is helpful about making the connection is that both game players and epistemic agents know how to perform in their respective practices. If we want a non-
metaphorical treatment of this idea, the best strategy is to address what is common to both: we need an account of know how.

2. Chapter Overview

In the first chapter, I provide such an account. There has recently been some debate over this kind of knowledge. Gilbert Ryle’s anti-intellectualist view, which associates knowing how with possessing an ability, has been challenged by new intellectualists, who argue that know how is a species of propositional knowledge (Stanley and Williamson 2001; Stanley 2011). I rely on Ryle’s original ideas to develop a novel anti-intellectualist account of know how and respond to intellectualist’s worries. The account I provide places special emphasis on Ryle’s own theory of how we “Git Gud” through practices of self-regulation. To participate in practices of self-regulation is to develop or maintain an ability through intelligently guided processes of trial and error. This idea captures in the broadest terms what it is to “play the metagame”. On the view that results, there is a close connection between being a game player and being a metagame player. Simply put, to know how to Φ is to have a self-regulated ability to live up to the norms that govern Φ-ing. Given my earlier discussion, this may appear to rule out the filthy causal from having any kind of know how at all, and this seems uncharitable. I will address these and other worries in due time.

In the second chapter, I rely on my novel account of know how to develop a novel account of propositional knowledge. As it happens, a number of promising approaches to propositional knowledge now begin with what is sometimes called the ability intuition (Palermos 2015; Pritchard 2012). Informally put, the idea is that propositional knowledge is a kind of success through cognitive ability (Greco 2007). Although the ability intuition is clearly at work in the debate over know how, there has been surprisingly little conversation between the two
kinds of ability theorist. In chapter 2, I rely on the ability intuition to explore the possibility of a unified treatment of knowledge how and knowledge that from an anti-intellectualist perspective. On the view that emerges, knowledge of either kind is a sort of success through ability—and, even more strongly, propositional knowledge is success through cognitive know how. It would be fairly underwhelming if this claim were merely an affirmation of an anti-intellectualist view that equates knowing how with having an ability. In contrast, I think exploring the connection between recent views of anti-intellectualism, which are substantively more robust than the simple ability view often attributed to Ryle, and recent ability accounts of propositional knowledge can be mutually beneficial. As it turns out, the problems that simple versions of both proposals face are deeply related, and this affinity serves as a basis for a unified account of knowing how and knowing that.

In the third chapter, I synthesize the results from the first two chapters into a novel account of epistemic agency. In the first two chapters, I argue that there are a couple of ways to participate in epistemic practices: playing the game and playing the metagame. In the third chapter, I use these ideas to describe what it means to treat someone as an epistemic agent and provide an account of successful epistemic practice. To treat someone as an epistemic agent is to call them into epistemic practices in one of two ways: to call on them to play the game or play the metagame. Such calls are appropriate when they are felicitously performed, and I draw on work on second-personal speech to make sense of this idea (most notably, Kukla & Lance 2009). The result is that successful epistemic practice, in one sense of the term, consists in epistemic agents mutually recognizing each other’s agency while uncovering features of the world. This gives us a benchmark for what counts as good epistemic practice.
In the final two chapters that follow, I explore how individuals and communities may fail to live up to this standard and how they might do better. In the fourth chapter specifically, I expand on two further disanalogies between games and epistemic practices. First of all, each epistemic agent has a unique and finite epistemic perspective. Since each agent has a finite and unique perspective, every epistemic agent always has more to learn. Their education—a practice of perspective sharing—is always ongoing. Of course, there is a sense in which there may always be more to learn in a game, but learning practices are not typically internal to games themselves. Figuring out how to play chess, for example, isn’t part of playing chess (though it may be part of chess playing practices more generally). The second point is that what moves one is treated as authorized to make in an epistemic practice is in part determined by one’s social group and its relationship with the broader epistemic community. I argue that cases of hermeneutical injustice arise when a group or member of a group is treated as unauthorized to make certain moves in the epistemic game. Specifically, it occurs when they are treated to some extent and in some contexts as prohibited from practices of norm criticism, revision, and development or from robustly participating in practices of perspective sharing. In light of the view developed in chapter 3, this means that hermeneutical injustice involves treating members of a certain group as partial or deficient epistemic agents. This leaves us with another prima facie disanalogy between games and epistemic practices. Although one may be prohibited from playing certain games because of one's social group membership (e.g. “chess is a boy’s game!”) if others do take you as entitled to play the game, then they tend to take you to be entitled to make any of the moves permissible according to the norms of the game. But in cases of hermeneutical injustice, one may be prohibited from making only certain kinds of moves, only in certain contexts, and only to a certain extent.
In the fifth chapter, I address some additional challenges that epistemic agents face. An agent’s perspective is one’s basis for making sense of the world, but one’s perspective can also limit one’s ability to access the kind of feedback that drives perspective revision. I’m specifically interested in what I call the problem of epistemic echo-chamber construction. The problem is roughly as follows. If one’s perspective determines what reasons one can access from others and the world, one will only have ready access to evidence and reasons that more or less jive with that perspective. This can create a sort of feedback loop. One's background commitments make intelligible certain aspects of the world and claims from others that then reinforce those background commitments. If you are for the most part surrounded by others who merely reflect your own perspective back to you, the sort of conflicts that need to show up to motivate perspective-revision will not be readily available.

If you are in an echo chamber you are unaware of the lack of a critical perspective on your own perspective. After all, once you know you are in an epistemic echo chamber, the reverberations that sustain it will start to break down. My project is to make sense of this possibility, and to make the idea more precise along the way. To that end, I explore what in the empirical literature on meta-ignorance has come to be called the Dunning-Kruger effect. The eponymous David Dunning and Justin Kruger put forward this idea in order to explain data that shows that unskilled individuals consistently overestimate their abilities. By relying on the theory of conceptual skills I develop in chapters 2 and 3, I explore how the Dunning-Kruger effect may create and sustain the feedback loops which lead to epistemic echo chambers. Finally, I explore some potential strategies or interventions for breaking out of the loop. To this end, I adapt Christina Bicchieri’s model of social normative change to make sense of epistemic practices.
Chapter 1: Self-Regulation and Knowledge How

Most contemporary epistemologists recognize a distinction between knowing how and knowing that. The sentence “James knows how to ride a bike” suggests that he is able to ride a bike. The sentence “James knows that the sky is blue” does not obviously suggest a corresponding ability, but a relationship between James and a true proposition. If we take these suggestions at face value, knowledge how and knowledge that seem to be distinct and independent kinds of knowledge. To have knowledge that is to believe a true proposition, and to have knowledge how is to have an ability. This reflects the received anti-intellectualist view of know how originally defended by Gilbert Ryle in the 1940s. Ryle argued that anti-intellectualism not only appeals to common sense but also that the alternative intellectualism, the view that knowing how either reduces to or at least requires prior propositional knowledge, leads to a vicious infinite regress and therefore must be rejected (2009a).

The canonical status of Ryle’s arguments has recently come up for critical review. Jason Stanley and Timothy Williamson argue that Ryle assumed an implausible conception of propositional guidance and so failed to undermine intellectualism properly understood (Stanley and Williamson 2001; Stanley 2011). This has opened the door to new intellectualist accounts of know how, but doesn’t tell conclusively in favor of intellectualism. If Ryleans can specify conditions invoking an agent’s abilities that are necessary and sufficient for knowing how, anti-intellectualism will still be the presumptive favorite (Fantl 2008). Unfortunately, new intellectualists also put forward numerous counter-examples that show that having an ability is neither necessary nor sufficient for knowing how, and in the ensuing debate Ryleans appear to be on their back foot.

Contributors on both sides of the recent debate, however, tend to relegate Ryle’s own
positive account of know how to the background. Jennifer Hornsby goes so far as to claim that Ryle didn’t even have a positive account of knowing how (2011). Others suggest in passing that his view was actually quite sophisticated, but most treat him as subscribing to a *simple ability view* subject to glaring counter-example. On this view, S knows how to Φ iff S has an ability to Φ. In this chapter, I develop two aspects of Ryle’s positive account of knowing how that have been overlooked. For Ryle, S knows-how to Φ iff

1. S is able to reliably live up to the normative standards governing Φ-ing, and
2. S self-regulates their ability.

In the first half of the chapter, I argue that these conditions rule out the various counter-examples to the simple ability view. Ryle not only had a positive account of know how, his view is both sophisticated and relevant to contemporary interests.

My goal, however, is not primarily exegetical. I aim to respond to recent worries about anti-intellectualism using Rylean resources. In the second half of the chapter, I argue that the particular promise of Ryle’s view is that it allows us to clarify the relationship between know how and warrant. To have know how is not merely to have an ability to perform well but also to self-regulate one’s performances. If we take Katherine Hawley’s (2003) challenge to develop a sense of warrant related to know how seriously, Ryle’s second condition suggests a solution. Roughly, to possess a warranted ability is to possess a self-regulated ability. To make good on the promise of this suggestion, we need to understand the nature of self-regulated performance

\[\text{See especially Stanley and Williamson (2001) and Stanley (2011). Fantl (2008) suggests Ryle had a sophisticated view, but he doesn’t develop it.}\]
and its relationship to warrant. Self-regulation is equivalent for Ryle to self-teaching, and so to understand Ryle’s account of warrant we will have to wade into his theory of education.

1. Ryle’s Positive Account of Know How

Ryle lays out the two conditions in his initial characterization of know how in *The Concept of Mind*. Following a preliminary comparison of knowledge how and knowledge that ascriptions, Ryle writes:

> What is involved in our descriptions of people as knowing how to make and appreciate jokes, to talk grammatically, to play chess, to fish, or to argue? Part of what is meant is that, when they perform these operations, they tend to perform them well, i.e. correctly or efficiently or successfully. Their performances come up to certain standards, or satisfy certain criteria. (Ryle 2009a, 17)

In saying that they “tend to perform them well”, Ryle claims that the knowers performances reliably live up to normative standards. This is the first condition on knowing how. Ryle continues:

> But this is not enough. The well-regulated clock keeps good time and the well-drilled circus seal performs its tricks flawlessly, yet we do not call them ‘intelligent’. (Ryle 2009a, 17)

One can satisfy the first condition and be merely well-regulated. This provides reason for taking Ryle’s first condition to make important use of the concept of reliability. A well-regulated seal doesn’t only sometimes perform well, and a well-regulated clock doesn’t only occasionally keep good time. If they are well-regulated, they reliably perform well. Ryle flags that the first condition is insufficient for know how by itself. Although they perform reliably well, the clock and seal lack know how. Ryle treats “know how” as an honorific term:
We reserve this title for the persons responsible for their performances. To be intelligent is not merely to satisfy criteria, but to apply them; *to regulate one’s actions and not merely to be well-regulated.* (Ryle 2009a, 17, emphasis added)

Someone who knows how to perform a task also regulates their performances. Therefore, S knows how to Φ iff

(1) S is able to reliably live up to the normative standards governing Φ-ing, and

(2) S self-regulates their ability

So, we can say that to have know how is to be both well-regulated, given (1), and self-regulated, given (2). Even before unpacking the two conditions, it should be obvious that Ryle maintained a sophisticated ability view of know how. It must be said, however, that Ryle’s comments on (1) and (2) are sparse and indirect, and they will have to be creatively pieced together.

2. The Reliability Condition

Ryle doesn’t have much to say about the reliability condition except that it is invoked when we describe someone as knowing how to play chess, argue or make jokes. To make the condition intuitive, consider the conditions under which we’d say that someone knows how to move a knight in a game of chess. We don’t say this of someone who, for example, consistently fails to move a knight in the correct L-shaped pattern or moves the piece into a space occupied by one of their other pieces. We do, however, ascribe such know how to someone who moves the piece correctly or in accordance with the norms—at least so long as they do so reliably and intelligently (but I’ll ignore the latter for now).

The reliability condition rules out fluke performances as exercises of know how. A squirrel may stumble across a chess board in the park and move a knight to an unoccupied square two squares forward and one to the right, but we wouldn’t on that basis say it knows how to
move the knight. Consider instead the child who proudly demonstrates her burgeoning chess prowess by moving the knight consistently in accordance with the norms throughout the game. Unlike the squirrel, she moves the piece in the right way reliably, and partly on this basis we attribute know how to her. Reliability, however, should not be confused with perfect conformity. A seasoned chess player may know how to move a knight, but nevertheless, due to inattention or clumsiness, move the piece incorrectly on some occasion. Relatedly, the reliability condition only requires reliable performance across some relevant range of circumstances. It doesn’t require counterfactually robust success. I can know how to drive, for example, without knowing how to drive a stick or without being able to handle particularly adverse weather conditions. This is important because any account that requires counterfactually robust success would risk setting the standards too high (Hawley 2003, 20-22).

The reliability condition automatically rules out various counter-examples to the simple ability view discussed in the recent literature. Take David Carr’s novitiate trampolinist, who miraculously performs a difficult somersault on his first try (Carr 1981, 53). Intuitively, the trampolinist doesn’t know how to perform the somersault, but we can hardly deny that he was able to do it. After all, he did it. This appears to be a problem for a view that says merely having an ability is sufficient for knowing how, but for Ryle knowing how requires a reliable ability to live up to the norms of a task. Ask the trampolinist to perform the stunt again and he will likely fail. After all, his first success was only a matter of luck. Since he lacks a reliable ability, he lacks know how on Ryle’s view.³

³ Some have responded by distinguishing stronger and weaker senses of ability. See Fantl (2008, 456). The reliability condition achieves the same effect while retaining a simple notion of ability.
The first condition also helps with another case that is supposed to trouble ability accounts:

Consider the difference between someone who can bench press a maximum of 100 pounds and someone who can bench-press 150 pounds. We may suppose that both employ the same technique; only brute strength makes the difference between them. Both are equally skilled, but clearly have different abilities. (Stanley and Williamson 2016, 15)

This would be a problem if reliably living up to the norms of pumping iron were simply a matter of successfully lifting the weights. Correct performance would consist in lifting the weight, and incorrect performance would consist in failing to lift the weight. But this doesn’t fully capture what it means to say the task is norm-governed. First of all, to say that performances are norm-governed is not necessarily to say that there are well-defined rules written down somewhere or that the practitioners or active spectators can recite them on command or even put them in words. At the very least, it is to say that performances are subject to normative assessment (see Haugeland 1982). There is a correct and incorrect way to use your soup spoon, brush your teeth or inbound the ball in a basketball game. When you don’t follow the norms governing these tasks, you open yourself up to criticism.

This suggests that when we think of tasks as norm-governed, the accompanying image should be that of a skilled critic evaluating someone’s performance. Think of the kind of criticism a burly but incompetent weight-lifter opens himself up to when he muscles the barbell up back-arched, veins popping. A skilled observer will presumably be able to detect many failures in his performance related to his breathing, posture, attack and so on. He may lift it up through brute force, but on the view defended here, strength, speed and stamina are not themselves skills and to deploy them is not necessarily to exhibit know how. To exercise know
how or skill is to reliably live up to the norms of the practice or, in other words, to reliably avoid criticism. To say that the two lifters are equally skilled and employ the same technique is therefore to say that they both reliably live up to the norms governing the task in the same way. What the one does reliably right, the other does reliably right as well. Since they do not differ in their ability to live up to the norms of the task, we can still say they are equally skilled on Ryle’s view.

The claim that someone who knows how to Φ reliably avoids criticism is not meant to imply that they reliably perform optimally or beyond criticism. Notice that this is slightly different than saying that they don’t have to perform with perfect reliability. The point is that someone can reliably perform more or less competently and still count as knowing how. Katherine Hawley argues that the standards for knowing how vary with the context of the knowledge attribution:

- a child might be said to know how to cook if she knows how to use the stove safely, whilst we would set standards higher (have a different task in mind) for an ordinary adult’s “knowing how to cook,” and set them higher still when discussing a chef in training. (Hawley 2003, 21)

The child who knows how to move the chess pieces but perhaps doesn’t know about certain rules, like capturing en passant, still knows how to play chess. To say that the child knows how to play chess is to say, in part, that he reliably lives up to certain norms that we have in mind in the context of the attribution. The same goes for the professional, but in her case we invoke
higher standards.\textsuperscript{4}

3. The Self-Regulation Condition

The clock and seal don’t count as knowing how to perform their respective tasks because they do not regulate their performances, but it’s not immediately obvious what self-regulation involves. In a later section of chapter 2 called “Intelligent Capacities Versus Habits”, Ryle distinguishes rote performance from intelligent performance. The abilities one exhibits in undertaking performances of either kind are both “second natures or acquired dispositions”, but habits are “mindless” or “automatic” and intelligent behavior involves “care, vigilance and criticism” (Ryle 2009a, 30). Ryle writes:

It is of the essence of merely habitual practices that one performance is a replica of its predecessors. It is of the essence of intelligent practices that one performance is modified by its predecessors. The agent is still learning. (Ryle 2009a, 30)

The mountaineer, for example, doesn’t navigate a tricky route on autopilot. Colloquially, we would say that he “thinks about what he is doing”, he exercises judgment, or that he attends to and learns from his mistakes. In Ryle’s words, he is “concomitantly walking and teaching himself how to walk in conditions of this sort” (Ryle 2009a, 30). In his initial characterization of know how, Ryle offers the following gloss on self-regulation:

\textsuperscript{4} As the example suggests, when I speak of living up to norms I have constitutive norms (norms that one must follow to count as playing a game or participating in a practice at all) rather than regulative norms (norms that specify, for example, how to perform well) in mind (see Haugeland 1998, 318-322).
A person’s performance is described as careful or skillful, if in his operations he is ready to detect and correct lapses, to repeat and improve upon successes, to profit from the examples of others and so forth. He applies criteria in performing critically, this is, in trying to get things right. (Ryle 2009a, 17)

Think of how clocks and seals come to be well-regulated. They are well-regulated because they are each in the care of an agent, who is able detect and correct poor performance. Perhaps Ryle’s idea is that in the case of the self-regulating agent, the agents who apply criteria and the subjects to whom the criteria are applied are one and the same. The self-regulator would be aware of the standards that govern the task, monitoring their performances for errors and adjusting as needed. This suggests that self-regulation is a form of what Peter Railton calls “normative guidance” (2006).

This interpretation captures the idea that the self-regulator is ready to detect and correct lapses and repeat successes, but it doesn’t seem to capture the idea that they are prepared to “improve upon successes” or “profit from the examples of others”. For Ryle, self-regulation isn’t merely a matter normative self-maintenance. It is a matter of learning what the norms of performance are. This makes sense when we take seriously the dual role of the self-regulator. The seal and clock don’t need to apply criteria, to detect and correct lapses, because that is the job of their caretakers. But if the self-regulator is both performer and self-trainer at the same time, they need to learn both how to perform well and how to assess their own performances.

5 This seems to be confirmed when Ryle describes the learner as someone who comes to “double the roles of instructor and pupil…to coach himself and heed his own coaching” (Ryle 2009a, 130).
This means that the self-regulator is an autonomous performer: unlike subjects who are merely well-regulated, they are engaged in the practice of figuring out the norms for themselves.

4. Self-Regulation as Self-Teaching

In *Concept*, Ryle makes these commitments clear with his comments on the difference between know how and mere habit. Know how is acquired through *training*, and habits are acquired through *drilling* (Ryle 2009a, 30-31). In a brief but illuminating essay called “Teaching and Training” Ryle expands on the concept of training in an explicitly pedagogical context (Ryle, 2009b). He argues that the goal of a teacher is to teach their pupil to be self-teaching. Although he doesn’t frame the article as an extension of his thoughts about self-regulation in *Concept*, it’s clear that he is picking up on the same themes and in fact returns to some of the examples. For this reason, I take “self-teaching” to be equivalent to “self-regulating” for Ryle.

If the goal of the teacher is to teach their students to be self-teaching, then the goal is to guide their practices of self-regulation. Ryle says that it “ought to be one main business of a teacher precisely to get his pupils to advance beyond their instructions and to *discover new things for themselves*, that is, to get them to think for themselves” (Ryle 2009b, 466, emphasis added). Education as a process of discovery through training contrasts with education as a direct transfer of knowledge from teacher to student through drilling. We are often misled into the latter image of the teacher/student relationship because we often conflate education with developing habitual responses, inculcating rote or automatic behaviors, or getting our students to parrot facts back to us. For Ryle, the role of the teacher is not to drill in behavior that meets predesigned, fixed standards but to guide the student’s exploration of a given subject matter. Their goal is to facilitate or create an environment where a student can approach and solve problems suitable to their present knowledge and capabilities for themselves. The sort of teaching that interests Ryle
results in pupils who make their own moves, come up with novel solutions to problem or develop new methods or strategies for investigating the world or refining some practice or skill. Education as a process of discovery is therefore indirect in the sense that passing on knowledge is environment mediated.

The distinction between direct and indirect knowledge transmission relates to a difference in the transmission of propositional knowledge and know how. Propositional knowledge can usually be acquired directly via testimony, but often know how can only be acquired indirectly through training. This is not to deny that it is possible to pass on know how directly in some cases. Imagine the novice chess player who knows how to play a passible game of chess but has never heard of capturing en passant. Describing the rule to them may be sufficient for them to gain the relevant know how. However, Ryle was more interested those cases where the learner does not possess the relevant background skills and a mere description of a rule is not enough for skill acquisition (Ryle 2009a, 46). He was more interested in coming to learn how to play any games at all or how to play radically different games—in how to teach someone to play chess, not how to teach someone to capture en passant (compare Small 2014, 86-87). In such cases, know how is passed on indirectly. The teacher guides the student’s interactions with the task environment and gets them to self-regulate their own performances.

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6 Testimony is direct in that given that the relevant conditions obtain, a speaker saying “P” is sufficient for a hearer to be in a position to know that P. See Hawley (2010) for a general account of testimony and know how.
5. The Structure of Self-Regulation

The basic structure of self-regulation or self-teaching is suggested by Ryle in a brief vignette about three young brothers who each attempt to canoe for the first time. Each has no prior experience, and they each try to teach themselves without any aid from a more knowledgeable instructor or fellow novice. The first brother is a self-regulator; the second two are not. Ryle says of the first brother:

at first he tries a lot of random things, and nearly all of them end in immersion or collision; but he does after a time find out some ways of managing his craft….But it is because he had previously learned by practice, coaching and imitation the ‘hows’ of lots of other things such as tree-climbing, spelling and skating that he now takes it for granted that canoeing has its ‘hows’ as well, which similarly can be learned by practice, trial and error, and looking for ways of avoiding the repetition of errors. Here, as elsewhere, he has to study in order to improve; but this time he has nothing to study save his own unsucesses and successes (Ryle 2009b, 476).

The other two brothers each lack one of the two necessary components that make the first successful. Ryle says of the second brother:

His more reckless and impatient brother, though full of go, just makes a dash at it, and then another quite different dash at it, and learns nothing or almost nothing from the failures which generally result, or even from the successes which sometimes just happened to result. He is not a self-trainer (Ryle 2009b, 476).

The third-brother is not a self-teacher either:
The third brother is uninterested, slow in the uptake, scared or idle. He never chances his arm. He tries nothing, and so initiates nothing either successfully or unsuccessfully. So he never learns to canoe (Ryle 2009b, 476).

The example is designed to pinpoint the basic features of self-regulation that make the acquisition of know how possible. What’s important about the third brother’s failure is not that he is too timid or that he is uninterested per se, but that as a result he undertakes no trials, performs no experiments in managing his craft. The second brother is too reckless, inattentive and so on, but the essential point is that he doesn’t respond to feedback on his performances and adjust his performance accordingly. The first brother, on the other hand, has already learned the “hows” of other practices and so presumes that canoeing has its own “hows”. In other words, he has a sense that there are norms governing canoeing practice, he has the goal of living up to the norms, and he has a sense that the correct performance can be distinguished from incorrect performance by:

(a) varying his performances in a variety of circumstances (which the third brother fails to do) and

(b) responding to feedback on those performances (which the second brother fails to do).

We can first clarify this Rylean account of self-regulation by asking what it is to have a “sense” that there is a wrong and right way to perform a task and that these ways can be distinguished through performing operations (a) and (b). Ryle doesn’t give us any explicit answers, but a broadly Rylean answer is not hard to imagine. We can say that at a minimum someone has such a sense if they are in fact disposed to vary their performances across a variety of circumstances and respond to feedback when they put themselves to some task. They may make the experimental procedure explicit to themselves, but it is reasonable to suppose that this
is not necessary for an (implicit) sense of their being a correct way of performing a task and how it is learned. If this is right, then the self-regulator will simply be, at a minimum, someone disposed to do (a) and (b), and this is the core feature of an agent that makes acquiring know how possible. A few comments on (a) and (b) are in order:

\textit{(a) Making Trials}

The self-regulator’s performances can be described as trials or experiments, which test their hypotheses about how to engage successfully in the task. In saying this I do not mean to over-intellectualize the learning process. As I’ve already intimated, the learner may explicitly think of himself as engaged in the business of hypotheses testing and try to proceed deliberately and systematically, but he needn’t proceed this way. He may simply be absorbed in the world in which he performs and make his trials as part of his attempt to achieve his goal. Although I don’t wish to over-intellectualize self-regulation, I don’t wish to under-intellectualize it either. I think it is at least misleading to describe self-regulation as a process of “random” trial

\footnote{7 Compare Daniel Dennett's claim that explanations of human behavior must at some level of analysis invoke some form of the law of effect (1975).}

\footnote{8 The trials one undertakes won’t be completely random or arbitrary but influenced by one’s background knowledge and capacities. This essentially narrows down the pool of possible performances from the start. Nevertheless, since the circumstances of application for any skill are varied, one must make performances across a wide variety of circumstances. Since there are many possible performances one could make in any given circumstance and the novice doesn’t know which among them are most appropriate, one must make a variety of performances in like circumstances and respond to feedback to figure out what is most conducive to success.}
and error. Our canoe boy will probably not try to manage the craft by banging his head against the haul of the boat or by stuffing pine cones in his ears and barking like a seal. Instead, the trials he makes will be influenced by his background knowledge and capacities.

(b) Responding to Feedback

To respond to feedback on one’s performances is to treat them as trials. In making trial performances, the self-regulator tests his (implicit or explicit) hypotheses about how to perform some task and evaluates his performances in terms of whether or not they contribute to his goal. Those that tend to contribute positively are confirmed, although perhaps only tentatively, and those that don’t are falsified, though perhaps not conclusively. In light of his evaluation, the self-regulator makes the relevant adjustments and thereby develops or refines his method. A strategy, method or “how” of a practice takes on the form of a conditional: in C, perform Φ. For example, the canoe boy will quickly realize that when you want to turn left, you paddle on the right-hand side of the boat. Strategies may be made more or less explicit by the performer during the learning process, but they needn’t be, and often one finds that the strategies one deploys are difficult to make fully explicit after the fact. Nevertheless, methods are relatively stable and subject to revision. It is through continually undertaking performances and responding to feedback that the self-regulator develops, tests and refines their strategies.

One’s background knowledge and capacities (including new knowledge and abilities gained during the learning process) also determine in part how one responds to feedback. That this is so should be obvious given that background knowledge and capacities impact the
formation of hypotheses and making an adjustment is nothing other than undertaking a new trial or testing a new hypothesis.\textsuperscript{9}

6. Trying to Get Things Right

In light of these considerations, consider a self-regulated view of know how according to which S knows how to $\Phi$ iff:

(1) S has a reliable ability to live up to the normative standards governing $\Phi$-ing.

(2) S is disposed to self-regulate their ability.

To return to Ryle’s example: if the mountaineer knows how to climb mountains, he is prepared to try scale cliff faces he has never encountered before, make his way through novel trails, and, in short, adapt to new conditions, new perils and so on. This is not to say that he can conquer every terrain. Just as reliability should not be conflated with perfect conformity, a disposition to self-regulate doesn’t imply unfailing adaptability. I may not be able to successfully describe my friend to you when you are being particularly thick-headed or tie my shoes while being attacked by a flock of speckled pigeons, but I still may have (more or less) resilient know how with respect to those tasks. The self-regulation condition does not rule out routine performances as expressions of know how either. The condition in (2) specifies what someone

\textsuperscript{9} The influence of background knowledge on future experimentation also means that improvisation can be described as either a process of putting methods together in new ways or revising or departing from them on the fly—both being a matter of experimentation in performance (as opposed to experimentation in training), which like any experimentation will be guided by prior knowledge and capacities.
does when they encounter resistance, problems or breakdown situations, not how they respond when things are going well.

It’s also worth stressing that this condition does not imply that knowing how requires counterfactually robust success. If it did, it would risk setting the standards for know how too high. I take it for granted, following Hawley (2003), that one can know how to Φ only in a limited range of circumstances, and that when we say that S knows how to Φ features of the context determine what the relevant circumstances are. To be a self-regulator is to try to live up to the norms of the task, and this implies trying to adapt in novel circumstances (though I don’t take it to require unrelenting perseverance). Often one will adapt to new circumstances, but often one will try and fail. The condition in (2) assures us that rote performance or mere habitual behavior doesn’t count as an expression of know how, but unfailing adaptability or counterfactually robust success is not required to rule out rote performance. The idea of trying to perform and trying to adapt is enough.

The self-regulation condition helps with another case due to David Carr, as well as a variety of similar cases that have been discussed in the literature. A dancer performs a choreographed routine that just happens to resemble a semaphore version of Gray’s “Elegy”. According to Carr, the dancer is able to perform a semaphore version of the poem but doesn’t know how to perform it. Notice that Ryle’s first condition on knowing how doesn’t obviously

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11 Some anti-intellectualists might be inclined to say that the dancer knows how to perform the semaphore poem, but they don’t know that they know how to do it. I would argue that this
rule this case out. The dancer lives up to the norms of the semaphore performance whenever she performs her intended dance, so there is a sense in which she is able to reliably live up to the norms of the performance. The reliability condition rules out the trampolinist case, and what the trampolinist lacks in ability is clearly different from what the dancer lacks. On the other hand, the self-regulation condition implies that when someone exhibits know how in undertaking a task, they try to perform the task according to the norms governing it. In Ryle’s words, the self-regulator “tr[ies] to get things right” (Ryle 2009a, 17). The dancer may be able to perform the semaphore poem, but they don’t try to live up to the norms governing that particular performance. They merely happen to live up them while trying to live up to the norms of the routine they intended to perform. Cases like this one illustrate how know how attributions create opaque referential contexts. One can know how to Φ and Φ-ing may be coextensional with Ψ-ing, but it doesn’t follow one knows how to Ψ (Hawley 2003, 26). The self-regulation condition ensures that this feature of know how attributions is preserved.

A further advantage of the self-regulation condition is that it helps distinguish between know how and knacks. Sometimes we use the word “knack” to describe a special skill or aptitude, especially one involving some sort or clever trick. We also use the word to describe an ability that is, from a certain point of view, unaccountable or unexpected. For example, you might struggle to deal with a tricky door lock, but your friend is successful on her first attempt and subsequent attempts thereafter. When prompted, she can only say that “there’s a knack to

response fails to take seriously Hawley’s injunction to develop an account of know how that rules out epistemic luck. See section 5.
that; you have to jiggle it”. These senses of knack are related but distinct from the sense that interests me.

The relevant sense of knack is clearly identified by Julia Annas, who argues that the knack/knowledge problem tells in favor of intellectualism:

Either “knowing how” involves “knowing that” or it does not. If it does not, then what we think of as practical knowledge is being construed as a kind of inarticulate practical knack, an ability to manipulate the world which is not at a sufficiently rational level to be judged epistemically (2001, 248).

Bengson and Moffett capture the same idea by saying that knacks don’t involve the same type of “rational, epistemic achievement” as know how (2011a, 34). Annas has identified a clear challenge for anti-intellectualists. Not all abilities are on the same epistemic footing. Some have the status of rational, epistemic achievements and thereby count as knowledge, and some don’t. Her reasoning may be summarized as follows. Knowledge of any kind is an epistemic achievement. Anti-intellectualism equates knowing how with success through ability, but not all successes through ability are epistemic achievements. Therefore, anti-intellectualism must be rejected. On the other hand, abilities or successes that are grounded in propositional knowledge are sufficiently sophisticated to count as achievements, and so the knowledge/knack problem comes out in favor of intellectualism.

An anti-intellectualist proposal that only incorporated (1) would fail because to have a knack is at least in part to have a reliable ability. If I have a knack for baking, diffusing awkward situations or arranging furniture in a pleasing way, then I am reliably able to perform such tasks. Therefore, if knowing how is merely a matter of having a reliable ability, anti-intellectualism apparently fails to differentiate know how from knacks. The present proposal solves this problem.
in part by including the self-regulation condition, which assures that know how requires intelligent performance. This goes some way to assuring that one’s success are achievements, attributable to one’s agency. However, to fully account for the difference between know how and knacks, the account will also have to include the idea that one’s successes are because of one’s self-regulated ability, which I will discuss in section 8.

7. First and Second-Order Know How

The reliability and self-regulation conditions handle cases which show that having an ability is not sufficient for knowing how. What about cases that show that having an ability isn’t necessary? Consider the following pair of cases:

a ski instructor may know how to perform a certain complex stunt, without being able to perform it herself. Similarly, a master pianist who loses both of her arms in a tragic car accident still knows how to play the piano. But she has lost her ability to do so (Stanley and Williamson 2001, 416).

If the ski instructor and pianist both know how to perform their respective tasks, then having an ability, even a reliable and self-regulated ability, is apparently not necessary for knowing how. After all, they both lack the relevant abilities.

Several recent commenters point out that Ryle’s view is not obviously subject to counter-examples of this sort (e.g., Fantl 2008, 468). Recall that Ryle thinks that “[t]o be intelligent is not merely to satisfy criteria, but to apply them”. The clock satisfies criteria; the self-regulator applies criteria. Someone who applies criteria not only performs well but also discriminates correct from incorrect performance. Ryle stresses the importance the latter capacity throughout the second chapter of Concept. Consider the following passage:
If I am competent to judge your performance, then in witnessing it I am on the alert to
detect mistakes and muddles in it, but so are you in executing it; I am ready to notice the
advantages you might take of pieces of luck, but so are you…. The intelligent performer
operates critically, the intelligent spectator follows critically. Roughly, execution and
understanding are merely different exercises of knowledge of the tricks of the same trade
(Ryle 2009a, 42).

For Ryle, Φ-ing is not the only way to exhibit one’s knowledge how to Φ. It is also manifest in
the skillful assessment of performances. There are a number of ways one could take this
suggestion, but again I find the most promising approach in Haugeland’s positive account of
know how. In what follows, I develop a distinction between first-order know how and second-
order know how, based on a similar distinction made by Haugeland (1998, 322-325). Once the
distinction is on the table, I will use it to address the counter-examples.

First-order know how or skill is a reliable and self-regulated ability to perform a task,
participate in a practice or activity. Specifically, first-order skills are the reliable and self-
regulated abilities to recognize and cope with phenomena in accordance with governing norms.
In solo engagements these include, for example, the abilities to recognize aspects of the material
world and manage, predict or otherwise react to their behavior. These can include the skills
required to hypothesize, imagine alternatives, plan, strategize as well as the abilities required to
test a hypothesis or execute plan, improvise and so on. In cooperative engagements, these
include also the abilities to recognize, predict and interpret others’ performances and coordinate
one’s performances with theirs. In short, the category includes any and all (reliable and self-
regulated) abilities implicated in performing a task as opposed to abilities implicated in assessing
the performance of a task.
Second-order know how or skill is a reliable and self-regulated ability to tell whether phenomena are in accord with the normative standards governing them. They are evaluative skills or skills of assessment. “Phenomena” includes agent’s performances, material features of the world and the paraphernalia related to the task. For example, someone with the second-order know how required to play a passable game of chess can distinguish legal from illegal moves (made by her hand or another’s) and can also tell when the game paraphernalia themselves are well behaved. That is, she can tell whether the objects are suitable to their roles within the task. A sparrow makes a poor king because the moment you put it on a square it wanders off. For a piece to play the role of king, it must stay in its square unless it is moved by a player and it must be amendable to the player’s legal moves. Someone with the second-order skills required to play chess can tell when both players and pieces are well-behaved. The reliable and self-regulated ability to recognize performances as in accord with governing norms (as opposed to other phenomena) is most important for the following discussion. When I speak of second-order skills, this is primarily what I’ll have in mind.

Few epistemologists explicitly recognize the importance of evaluative skills in the recent debate, so a few additional comments are necessary. First, second-order skills are skills of appraising norm-governed phenomena, but to exercise second-order skill is to engage in norm-governed activity as well. It is the norm-governed activity of assessing norm-governed activity, and to have this skill is to know how to assess know how. Relatedly, the norms governing the deployment of second-order skills are different than the norms governing the activity being appraised. Recognizing a chess move as permissible is different from making a permissible move, and the standards governing the appraisals are different than the standards governing the moves. Second, there can be third-order skills, skills of telling whether second-order skills are
exercised according to the norms governing them, just as there can be fourth-order and fifth-order skills and so on. Plausibly, the possession of skills of a higher order is parasitic on the possession of second-order skills, and they are presumably difficult to deploy given constraints on working memory. Third, notice that as defined, the possession of second-order skills doesn’t require the ability to describe or codify the norms of the relevant practice. One can have the second-order skills required to play a game of chess (or spectate in the sense of the term that requires knowing what’s going on) and indeed be able to sanction others’ performances without being able to describe the norms of the game.

Finally, second-order skills are often deployed as *perceptual skills*. A perceptual skill is a reliable and self-regulated ability to give uptake to aspects of the world. It seems natural to describe receptive encounters with the world in terms of skill or know how (Kukla 2006). The surfer possesses a *skill* of recognizing good waves that I don’t have. The socially attentive agent *knows how* to recognize sexist behavior. Cognitive scientists also routinely couch their research into specialize perceptual abilities in the language of perceptual skill. Think of a radiologist’s ability to read an MRI, the forensic scientists ability to detect signs of a struggle, the bird watcher’s ability to recognize various species, or the chick sexers ability to distinguish cockerel from pullet. In each case, the expert is reliably and resiliently responsive to features of the world. Radiologists know how to detect features of the image—distinguish noise from signal, normality from abnormality—and make perceptual judgments about their significance. This suggests that what is common to perceptual skills is that they involve detecting features of the world and arriving at noninferential, perceptual judgments (see McDowell 2008). When second-order skills
are deployed as perceptual skills, the sort of judgment arrived at is a normative judgment. In response to features of a performance, you noninferentially judge whether it was executed in accordance with the norms. Someone who knows how to do this does it reliably and resiliently well.

The ski instructor knows how to perform the complex stunt without being able to do it. As the tired saying goes, “those who can’t do, teach”, to which we might add “but those who teach, know how to do.” But the saying is misleading when applied to this case. Describing him as a ski instructor suggests that he can articulate his knowledge, but merely saying that he knows how to perform the stunt does not. To teach someone how to do something is to exercise a bit of know how itself, and not all experts are skilled teachers. Imagine instead an inarticulate skier who is no longer able to perform. He may make a competent judge without making a competent teacher or color commentator for televised ski jump competitions. Although he cannot articulate his knowledge or pass it on, it still sounds right to say that he knows how to perform the trick. This suggests that the minimal requirement for knowing how to perform without in fact being able to perform is being able to recognize when someone lives up to the norms of a given task. In my view, when we say that the ski instructor and the pianist know how to perform their tasks, we

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12 I don’t identify second-order skills with normative perceptual skills because I take second-order skills to have two modes of expression. Either one noninferentially judges a performance to be correct or incorrect or one’s normative judgment has an inferential basis (see McDowell (2010, 141) on the difference between inferential and noninferential judgments). To deploy second-order skills is to make evaluative judgments in either case, but it doesn’t matter how you make them so long as you make them reliably and resiliently in accordance with the norms.
attribute second-order skill to them. Since second-order skills are compatible with anti-intellectualism—indeed, to have one is to have a reliable and self-regulated ability—these cases pose no problem to the anti-intellectualist.

One might object along the following lines. Suppose someone acquired first-order piano playing skills without ever gaining the complementary second-order skill. When they suffer some tragedy and have their arms amputated, don’t they still in some sense know how to play the piano? Isn’t what matters that they still have some residual connection to first order-skills they are now unable to deploy? First of all, from the armchair I find this scenario psychologically implausible. Human beings simply don’t tend to acquire first-order skill without acquiring some second-order skill. Second, whether or not the scenario is conceptually possible is an open question. Third, I am simply inclined to say that the individual in question does not know how to play the piano. Ask them to play, and (unfortunately) they cannot. Ask them for advice, they have none. Ask them to judge a recital, and they are no more help than the causal listener. Finally, if there is any residual intuition that they know how to play the piano, Alva Noë’s

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13 To be clear, my view is that know how ascriptions ordinarily attribute both first and second-order skills. When someone tells you that Sue knows how to play the piano, it’s reasonable to expect that she has the first order-skills and the second-order skills. It’s only when we know the pianist is not able to play the piano that we don’t take the attribution to imply the possession of first-order skills. In these cases, I would argue that the unqualified attribution of knowledge (“she knows how to play piano”) is shorthand for a qualified attribution (“she has the relevant second-order skills”). Our intuition that the pianist has know how is thereby explained by the fact that they have second-order know how.
distinction between having an ability to Φ and being able to Φ should help. The amputee pianist would have an ability to Φ, but tragically would be unable to Φ (Noë 2005, 283).

8. Gettier Problems for Knowing How

While the current proposal has clear advantages over simple views of know how, it is still subject to counter-examples involving lucky success. I argue here that the present proposal allows us to appreciate these as Gettier cases for knowing how. Hawley offers a relevant case:

Consider Shelley, who attempts to make a cake by throwing together the ingredients she discovers on opening the kitchen cabinet. Luckily for her, the cupboard contains flour, sugar, butter, and eggs, and she makes a passable cake. Yet it seems that Shelley does not know how to make a passable cake….If she notices her success, and recalls her method, she may come to know how to make a cake. But the mere fact of her lucky success does not initially qualify her as knowing how to make a cake (Hawley 2003, 27).

Shelley has a reliable ability. Presumably, she won’t successfully bake a cake in many other circumstances, but recall that the reliability condition does not entail a counterfactually robust ability to live up to the norms of a task. It just describes the knower as reliable across some relevant range of circumstances. Shelley is able to successfully bake a cake when, for example, she happens upon the right ingredients or when a more experienced baker scaffolds her performance. That is enough for having a reliable ability. To strengthen the case further in light of any lingering doubts, suppose also that there are some benevolent pastry sprites hiding in the kitchen. These creatures’ primary aim is to assure that whenever Shelley attempts to bake a cake the required ingredients and other paraphernalia will be present to assure her success. This means Shelley will have reliably ability to bake cakes, but intuitively she will still lack know how.
We may suppose that Shelley also has a self-regulated ability. To say that someone self-regulates is to say that they try to live up the norms of the practice, and this is taken to imply that they will vary their approach in response to recalcitrance. Often this means they will be able to perform across a variety of circumstances, but it’s no guarantee. It’s perfectly coherent to imagine that Shelley tries to get the norms of cake making right and that she is disposed to vary her approach in response to negative feedback. It appears then that Shelley has a reliable and self-regulated ability to make cakes. Intuitively, however, she lacks know how. Therefore, Ryle’s two conditions, on their present interpretation, are insufficient for knowing how.14

Although Gettier cases aren’t widely discussed in the know how literature, one relevant exception comes from Ted Poston. Poston argues, in contrast to the above, that know how isn’t susceptible to Gettier cases at all (2009). Revealing Poston’s mistake will not only establish the Gettier problem for know how but also indicate how to resolve it. His argument relies on two central premises:

P1) Gettier cases for know how require that one intelligently and successfully Φ

P2) One knows how to Φ, if one can intelligently and successfully Φ.

Premise one is based on a comparison with propositional knowledge similar to Hawley’s. The intelligence and success conditions for know how are analogous to the truth and justification conditions for propositional knowledge respectively. A Gettier case would then be a situation

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14 Why not simply strengthen the two conditions so that they imply counterfactually robust success? Perhaps this move could work, but I suspect it would set the standards for knowing how too high. Moreover, the solution I offer does a better job of addressing the intuitive problem with the Shelley case.
where these conditions are met, but one lacks know how. According to premise two, however, to have know how is simply a matter of meeting these conditions, and so Gettier cases are not possible.

Both premises of Poston’s argument are under-described. If properly formulated, the argument collapses. Poston himself states that a Gettier case for knowing how would be a case where the “intelligence base the subject uses doesn't connect to success in the right way to yield knowledge-how” (Poston 2009, 744). Poston therefore recognizes that what matters for knowledge is success because of (or through the exercise of) one’s intelligence, but he fails to integrate this fact into his premises.15 If he did, he would get something like the following:

P1*) Gettier cases for know how require that one intelligently and successfully Φ where one’s success is not because of (or through the exercise of) one’s intelligence
P2*) One knows how to Φ, if one can intelligently and successfully Φ because of (or through the exercise of) one’s intelligence.

The conditions described in the revised first premise are no longer the same as the conditions described in the second, and this leaves the door open for Gettier problems like the Shelley

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15 Although it would be a somewhat strained interpretation, perhaps Poston’s idea in (P2) is that one intelligently Φ’s only if one’s success is credible to one’s intelligence. If this was his intent, (P2) would be true. In short, this move would build the “because of” clause into the definition of intelligence. But if he intends to load the “because of” clause into intelligence, then intelligence for know how will not analogous to justification for propositional knowledge, thereby undermining his argument for (P1).
One reason Poston may have overlooked cases like these is that his discussion, along with most other treatments of knowing how and the Gettier problem, focuses on evaluating reductive intellectualist proposals about know how (see also, Stanley and Williamson 2001; Stanley 2011; Cath 2011, 2015; Carter and Pritchard 2015a, 2015b). The kinds of cases discussed largely center around examples originally devised by Stanley and Williamson, which don’t clearly bring out the importance of the “because of” in the same way as the Shelley case.

Identifying Poston’s mistake not only shows how Gettier problems are possible for know how, it also suggests a solution. A revised account of know how that avoids Gettier problems can be expressed as follows. S knows how to Φ iff:

1. S has a reliable ability to live up to the normative standards governing Φ-ing.
2. S’s success is because of (or through the exercise of) their self-regulated ability.

Although Shelly is successful, her success is not because of her self-regulated ability. Intuitively, she is successful because of the fortuitous presence of the right ingredients. Therefore, adding the “because of” clause solves the Gettier problem for knowing how.

This addition also helps account for the achievement intuition. For one’s successes to be an achievement attributable to one’s agency, one must not only possess a reliable self-regulated

Carter and Pritchard (2015a) also recognize that Poston’s premises are under-described insofar as they omit the “because of” clause, but they do not seem to realize how this leaves the door open for Gettier problems of the kind described here. Plausibly this is because they assume the “because of” clause will have to feature into any satisfactory account of knowing how at the outset.
ability. One’s successes must also be because of that ability. The viability of this proposal, however, hinges on whether we can produce a satisfying analysis of the “because of” clause. Notice that Shelley’s abilities do play some causal role in her eventual success, and so a simple causal interpretation won’t work. Since the Gettier problem gets more play in the literature on propositional knowledge, I will address this problem while seeking a unified account of know how and propositional knowledge in the next chapter.

17 My account of know how is therefore closely related to the account offered by Carter and Pritchard (2015a), who also argue that know is success through ability. The central difference is that they do not include a role for self-regulation and therefore fail to distinguish know how from knacks.

18 One final comment to ward off potential misunderstanding. The self-regulation account of warrant may appear to be especially useful for thinking about sophisticated skills or expert performance, but it is intended to apply to mundane know how as well. I know how to open a cardboard box, untangle electrical wires, and open a typical door. I can usually do all these quite effortlessly, but I nevertheless implicitly deploy methods for each task, methods that are not, for example, available to a toddler. This comparison is instructive. To gain know how within these domains, the toddler will have to regulate her performances while, for example, opening birthday presents, untangling headphones, and entering buildings. I suspect that the present account will appear to have narrow scope only if one loses sight of the fact that much of what one knows how to do, like much of one’s propositional knowledge, was hard won during one’s upbringing.
9. Conclusion

My goal in this chapter was twofold. First, I distinguished Ryle’s positive account from the simple ability view. Second, I used Ryle’s comments on self-regulation to construct an account of warrant. There is certainly more to say about the concept of self-regulation, but I want to end with some reflections on the problem of epistemic luck.19 As I have argued, the Gettier problem as it applies to knowing how is the same Gettier problem that applies to knowing that. In both cases, the epistemologists goal is to find a relationship between warrant and other knowledge conditions that rules out epistemic luck. So, ruling out cases of epistemic luck is not a

19 One might worry that self-regulation sneaks intellectualist commitments through the backdoor. The self-regulator is in the continual process of undertaking new experiments in performance. The trials one undertakes are in part determined by one’s background knowledge, and this will arguably often include a lot of propositional knowledge. But according to the anti-intellectualist, know how neither reduces to nor requires prior propositional knowledge (Fantl 2008, 452). Doesn’t this give ground to the intellectualist? I don’t think so. First of all, I am inclined to say that whether know how requires propositional knowledge or not is an empirical question, and I take it as a strength of the view that it leaves this question open. One potential avenue to pursue for the anti-intellectualist is suggested by Seligman et al (2013) and Railton (2014). It might be argued using these resources that the learning process is primarily driven by system-1 processes that implement forms of error-driven learning that apparently don’t make use of propositional knowledge. Secondly, even Ryle accepts that performances exhibiting know how are occasionally guided by propositional knowledge, so admitting this should not undermine a commitment to anti-intellectualism (Ryle 2009a, 18).
special problem for the anti-intellectualist, and the anti-intellectualist is on at least as firm a footing as the intellectualists. In the next chapter, I argue for a much stronger claim which turns the intellectualists proposal on its head. Relying on the ability intuition about propositional knowledge, I argue that both propositional knowledge and know how are kinds of success through ability and, more specifically, that propositional knowledge is success through cognitive know how.
Chapter 2: Knowing How to Know That

A number of promising approaches to propositional knowledge begin with the *ability intuition*, the idea that knowledge is a kind of success through cognitive ability (Greco 2010; Sosa 2007; Palermos 2015; Pritchard 2012). The ability intuition is closely related to the *achievement intuition*, the idea that knowledge is an achievement for which the knower deserves credit. Bringing the two intuitions together, John Greco claims that to attribute knowledge to someone is to ‘imply that it is to his credit that he got things right’ and that “[i]t is not because the person is lucky that he believes the truth—it is because of his own cognitive abilities.” (2003, 103). One advantage of the ability approach is that it allows the epistemologist to avoid the skeptical pitfalls of epistemic internalism without accepting an overly permissive version of process reliabilism (Greco 1999). One can successfully exercise one’s cognitive abilities without reflective access to reasons, and, because cognitive abilities are stable aspects of one’s cognitive character, strange and fleeting processes don’t count as cognitive abilities and so don’t result in knowledge (Greco 1999; 2003; 2010; Breyer and Greco 2008).

Although the ability intuition and achievement intuition are clearly at work in the debate over know how, there has been surprisingly little conversation between ability theorists about propositional knowledge and anti-intellectualists. In this chapter, I rely on this pair of intuitions to explore the possibility of a unified treatment of knowledge how and knowledge that from an anti-intellectualist perspective. On the view that emerges, knowledge of either kind is a sort of

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20 To be clear, when virtue epistemologists talk about the ability intuition and achievement intuition, they are explicitly talking about a proposal about propositional knowledge and not about know how. However, for a notable exception, see Carter and Pritchard (2015a).
success through ability—and, even more strongly, propositional knowledge is success through
cognitive know how. It would be fairly underwhelming if this proposal were merely an
affirmation of an anti-intellectualist view that equates knowing how with having an ability. In
contrast, it turns out the problems that simple ability accounts of propositional knowledge face
are deeply related to the problems addressed in the last chapter. As a result, ability theorists make
many analogous moves, and these parallels will be the primary basis for my unified account.

To motivate this perspective, I use it to respond to a couple outstanding criticisms of the
ability approach. First, Jennifer Lackey argues that ability views suffer from a fatal flaw:
knowledge is not always something for which a subject deserves credit or, in other words,
knowledge isn’t always an achievement (2007; 2008). The cases Lackey has in mind are cases of
easy knowledge. She is particularly interested in testimonial cases where the most salient
explanation for a hearer knowing P isn’t the hearer’s cognitive virtue, but the speaker’s cognitive
virtue. Second, Sven Bernecker argues that ability views fail to accommodate subjectivist
intuitions about clairvoyance cases within an externalist framework, and the response from
ability theorists is not very convincing (Bernecker 2008; Breyer and Greco 2008). With regard to
the first problem, I believe that exploring the nature of skillfully deployed cognitive abilities
should help shift explanatory salience back to the receiver of testimony. This move should also
afford us a perspective that makes the response to clairvoyance problems a bit clearer. I’ll start
by addressing the clairvoyance problem.

1. Reliablism and Self-Regulation

On a simple account of process reliablism, knowledge is true belief acquired through a
reliable belief-forming process, and a reliable belief forming process is one that produces more
true beliefs than false beliefs (Goldman 1979). Laurence Bonjour originally developed
clairvoyance cases to expose the inadequacy of simple versions of process reliablism. Consider the following:

Norman, under certain conditions that usually obtain, is a completely reliable clairvoyant with respect to certain kinds of subject matter. He possesses no evidence or reasons of any kind for or against the general possibility of such a cognitive power, or for or against the thesis that he possesses it. One day Norman comes to believe that the President is in New York City, though he has no evidence either for or against this belief. In fact the belief is true and results from his clairvoyant power, under circumstances in which it is completely reliable. (Bonjour 1980, 62)

Internalists are inclined to say that Norman lacks knowledge even though he has a reliable belief forming process, and so reliablism must be rejected. Defenders of reliablism have been quick to point out a defect with the case (Breckner 2008, 166). Since clairvoyant powers are presumably unreliable in the real world and most scientifically minded individuals associate clairvoyance with quackery, our intuitions may be prejudicially skewed towards the judgment that the clairvoyant lacks knowledge. To gain some traction on the present case then, consider a structurally similar case also frequently discussed in the literature on reliablism. Let’s consider chick sexing.

A chick-sexer is someone who distinguishes cockerels (male chicks) from pullets (female chicks). Chick-sexer cases are often used to vet our intuitions about internalism and externalism about knowledge. Here’s a simple rendition from Alvin Goldman:

A professional chicken-sexer looks at a chick and forms the true belief that it is male. The chicken-sexer is unaware of the process by which he tells the sex of the chick, but, as always, he is correct in his judgment. (Goldman 1975, 114)
By hypothesis, Goldman’s chick-sexer always arrives at the correct judgment about the sex of baby chicks, and in this case he correctly identifies the chick as male. However, if you were to ask him, he would be unable to identify a justificatory basis for his judgment. The problem isn’t that he is inarticulate. As Goldman intends the case, the sexer is not reflectively aware of any reason for arriving at the judgment he made. The origin of his belief is entirely mysterious from his point of view—it’s as if it just “came out of the blue”. He might describe it as based on “intuition”, as a “hunch” or “gut-feeling”.

Contrast this character with someone who always forms correct beliefs about whether a given piece of waste is recyclable. We might suppose that she accomplishes this task only because she has reflective access to features of the waste product which indicate recyclability. For example, she may believe that this particular piece of waste is recyclable because she is aware of the fact that it is made of a certain kind of cardboard. Having reflective access to the reasons that support her beliefs does seem to put the recycler in an epistemically superior position in comparison with the chick-sexer. Without access to a justificatory basis, the chick-sexer’s belief seems arbitrary (even though it comes from an objectively reliable process), whereas the recycler’s beliefs are both reliable and appropriate from a first-person point of view.

Unfortunately, if the externalists are right, the internalist response to such cases is not on the table. According to externalists, internalism, despite its initial attractiveness, either leads to a vicious infinite regress or, at the very least, sets the standards for knowledge implausibly high (Greco 1999; Kornblith 2012). On the other hand, some may have the intuition that the chick sexer has knowledge anyway, and this appears to lend some support to reliablism. The chick sexer is reliable, in this case, perfectly so. One might wonder what more it could possibly take for the chick sexer to have knowledge about the sex of the chicks. Given the way that the
problem is traditionally presented, it may seem that we are stuck with either an overly simple process reliablistism where knowledge is cheap or an overly demanding internalism where knowledge is unobtainable. In contrast, I suggest that there might be more driving our intuitions than a simple presentation of the case makes apparent. Goldman describes the chick sexer as a *professional*, as a *skilled performer*. I suggest that we are inclined to say that the chick sexer has knowledge because we assume he satisfies the ordinary description of a professional as someone who has a responsibly acquired or exercised ability. To elaborate, it will help to think about how chick sexers actually acquire their expertise. It is worth dwelling on the case at some length, as it will help clarify my response to the clairvoyance case and the problem of easy testimonial knowledge.

The chick-sexing profession has taken on a legendary status in the hands of epistemologists and is subject to some distortion. The chick sexers of epistemic lore are said to rely solely on intuition, a sort of “sixth sense” for sorting baby chicks, as if there were never any features of the chick’s anatomy that they can consciously track, describe, or use as a basis for perceptual judgment. It is even sometimes suggested that they may, without realizing it themselves, use olfaction as the basis for discrimination instead of visual perception. 21

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21 Some philosophers have even claimed, usually without citation, that there have in fact been scientific studies to confirm this. I have not found the purported evidence, and it isn’t mentioned in any of the book-length treatments I’ve examined (Masui and Hashimoto 1933; Gibbs 1935; Martin 1994). Moreover, the claim is prima facie quite implausible given the conditions under which sexers do their work and the amount of time spent on each chick. There may be
most of this information is usually couched in hypothetical terms, one is still liable to get the impression that a sexers reliable success is wholly miraculous from their point of view.

As a matter of fact, the vent method for sexing day-old chicks was developed after the discovery of visually perceptible sex-typical features of newborn chicks’ anatomy by Dr. Masui in the 1920s (Masui and Hashimoto 1933). There are other methods of sexing “sex-link” cross-breeds, so called “feather sexing”, for example, but for pure breeds (e.g. white leghorns) only vent sexing is possible. After squeezing the excrement out of the chick, the sexer applies delectate pressure to expose the inner portion of the chicks “vent” or cloaca (an all-in-one orifice that serves digestive, urinary and reproductive functions) so the internal sex-typical features can be observed. The most prominent indicator is a small bump or protuberance called an “eminence” or sometimes a “process” or “bead”. The typical eminence is described as a small, round pimple about the size of a pin-head: the largest being 0.6 to 1.0mm along the long axis and less than 0.75mm along the short axis (Masui and Hashimoto 1933, 70). If the chick has no eminence, it is very likely a pullet. If it has large eminence (as described), then it is very likely a cockerel, and if the eminence is small it is probably a pullet. With repetition and practice, the novice may reach an accuracy of 90% based on this knowledge alone (Gibbs 1935, 37). There are, however, in-between cases that spell trouble for the novice, accounting for roughly 5% of chicks in a sample of 100 (Gibbs 1935, 37).22

something, however, to the claim that sexers also rely on touch to arrive at their judgments (see Martin 1994, 224).

22 To aide discrimination at a finer level, Dr. Masui and Dr. Hashimoto distinguish six types of male eminence and three types of female eminence (1933, 67-75). Masui and Hashimoto note
The chick sexer gains expertise by sexing many thousands of chicks and checking on the results, by relying on descriptions of process types found in books like Masui and Hashimoto (1933) or Gibbs (1935) or, more typically, by relying on the guidance of an instructor. Gibbs writes: “to give an idea of what practice is necessary to attain a satisfactory degree of proficiency for commercial purposes, 5,000 chicks is none too many for the beginner to have handled, sexed, and check for accuracy” (Gibbs 1935, 58). Master chick sexers are able to achieve success rates of roughly 98% and spend less than a second looking at each chick once the cloaca is opened (Biderman and Shiffrar 1987; see also Martin 1994, 227-228). This means they have a handle on those in-between cases that plague novices. Here they are said to rely on their intuitive judgment insofar as there is nothing in the perceptual field that they can articulate as the bases for the discrimination (Gibbs 1935, 37), and this is probably what funds the image of chick sexers bandied about by epistemologists.

It’s worth noting on this point that when expert performers sex chicks, they often don’t consciously engage in the process of matching eminence to eminence-type. One sexer remarked that “[s]oon accuracy and speed increased: it either had an eminence—it was a cockerel—or had

that it is very difficult to distinguish what they call male type B from female type B chicks (the second most common types relative to each respective sex) and relatedly female type B from female type D and female type D from male type A. If one could fully grasp the difference in practice, they say, one would approach perfect success rates. Experts may also rely on distinguishing features of the folds of the mucous membrane surrounding the eminence. These folds are generally ‘more uniform and distinct’ and are separated more clearly from the eminence in the male (Gibbs 1935, 57).
no eminence—it was a pullet. At 800 to 1200 chicks an hour, it is there or it is not there” (Martin 1994, 222). Many master chick sexers emphasize the importance of intuition (Martin 1994, 229-230). Commenting on his record-breaking performance in 1937, Frank Evans remarked:

When I sat for that examination I just looked at the vent. It either had a cockerel eminence or not, and that was it. I was like an athlete, I was at my peak, I had sexed over a million chickens. (Martin 1994, 116).

In light of these reflections, the case does seem to fit what process reliablists are after. At the same time, however, expert sexers emphasize a deep commitment to the learning process (Martin 1994, 41, 127, 141, 204, 206). Sexers are highly conscious of their performance and desireous of improvement. In the 1960s one hatchery paid sexers 5¢ per accurately sexed bird and charged 35¢ per error (Biederman and Schifrar 1987, 643). Reportedly, when a seasoned professional encountered a difficult bird it would be examined by multiple professional sexers and disagreements would be settled by dissecting the bird (Biederman and Schifrar 1987, 643).

Martin remarks that all the experts he interviewed possessed their own photos and sketches of eminence types as they “saw and interpreted them from their early learning stage” (1994, 221).

As another expert remarked:

All chicks are different. At different hatcheries there are different types. A commercial chick sexer still needs to kill an odd chick to hold a postmortem. You are always learning. I learned a lot after passing the chick-sexing exam. (Martin 1994, 127)

To capture the basic idea, we can say that chick sexers acquire their cognitive abilities through practices of self-regulation: by trying out various intuitive, perhaps provisional, judgments about the sex of the chick and making adjustments when they get things wrong.

In light of this discussion, we might distinguish two hypothetical chick-sexers:
(a) A is a reliable chick-sexer. For any chick you place in front of her, she will be able to correctly identify its sex with 98% reliability. A is only reliable because she has gained her expertise through the conscientious application of methods such as those described above or, in other words, through practices of self-regulation. In the present case, a chick is placed in front of A and she determines that it is male. Although she is correct, there is no perceptual basis for the judgment A can identify through reflection or introspection alone. When prompted, she says that she “just knows”, that she has a “hunch” or “gut feeling”. We may also suppose that she doesn’t believe that she is in general reliable about cases like these.

(b) B is a reliable chick-sexer. For any chick you place in front of her, she will be able to correctly identify its sex with 98% reliability. B, however, has never tried her hand at chick-sexing before. She in fact has a (rather miraculous) innate disposition towards the craft. In this case, a chick is placed in front of B and she determines that it is male. Although she is correct, there is no perceptual basis for the judgment that B can identify through reflection or introspection alone. When prompted, she says that he “just knows”, that she has a “hunch” or “gut feeling”. We may also suppose that she doesn’t believe that she is in general reliable about cases like these.

Since neither A nor B have reflective access to any reasons for thinking the chick is male, the hardline internalist is forced to say that neither knows the sex of the chick. Since they are equally reliable, the hardline process reliabilist is forced to say that they both know. Intuitively, however, there is a significant epistemic difference between the two individuals. Although they both have a mere gut feeling or hunch about the sex of the chick, A’s hunch carries more weight or authority. The prima facie reason why is that A’s judgment is backed up by her prior responsible
efforts to learn the practice, even if A is (probably unlike the normal chick sexer) unsure of her abilities in this case. She doesn’t just reliably get things right, she reliably gets things right because she is *trying to get things right* (Ryle 2009a, 17).

2. Clairvoyance Cases

The above considerations suggest that it might be helpful to further distinguish two kinds of clairvoyant. First, however, consider the following piece of science fiction. Suppose we occupy a world where the clairvoyant power is reliable and operates much like perception does in the real world. A chick sexer, recall, discriminates the sex of baby chicks by identifying visually perceptible features of their anatomy and arriving at a judgment. This requires understanding not only what features are correlated with which sex but also an understanding of the conditions that are conducive to making the correct judgment, i.e., the conditions where the features the chick appears to have actually correspond to sex-identifying features. Our fictional clairvoyants might operate in a similar manner. Suppose that most individuals in this fictional universe have a faculty for receiving “c-waves”, which carry information about distal states of affairs and events. C-waves are experienced as some sort of internal, bodily feeling or perhaps as abstract visual sensations in the “mind’s eye”, but they are typically hard to notice or make sense of without training. Now consider the following two kinds of clairvoyant:

(c) Norman is a perfectly reliable clairvoyant. For any c-waves he receives, he can accurately judge the significance of the signal. Norman is only reliable because he worked on his clairvoyant powers. He has acquired the ability to accurately judge his experiences through a process of trial and error where he was motivated to get things right. In this case, Norman receives some c-waves and judges that the president is in NYC. Although he is correct, there is no sensory basis for the judgment Norman can identify through
reflection or introspection alone. When prompted, he says that he “just knows”, that he has a “hunch” or “gut feeling”. We may also suppose that he doesn’t believe that he is in general reliable about cases like these.

(d) Norman is a perfectly reliable clairvoyant. For any c-waves he receives, he can accurately judge the significance of the signal. Norman has not acquired his ability through a process of trial and error where he was motivated to get things right. His gift is, we may suppose, either innate or passively acquired. In this case, Norman receives some c-waves and judges that the president is in NYC. Although he is correct, there is no sensory basis for the judgment Norman can identify through reflection or introspection alone. When prompted, he says that he “just knows”, that he has a “hunch” or “gut feeling”. We may also suppose that he doesn’t believe that he is in general reliable about cases like these.

As with the second chick-sexer, the second clairvoyant’s judgments lack the weight or authority of prior experience, and this appears to put him in an epistemically inferior position. I would suggest that there is nothing, baring a general bias against clairvoyance, to prevent the intuition that the Norman in (c) knows that the President is in NYC. I would suggest that this intuition should hold even if the case was modified in such a way that the clairvoyant power lacked a more or less naturalistic explanation.

3. **Minimal Conditions for Knowing**

   It may be incorrect, however, to dismiss the second chick sexer or the second clairvoyant out of hand. Their more practiced counterparts may be in an epistemically superior position than them, but perhaps there is a way of seeing them as passing the minimal requirements for knowing. Suppose we have a chick sexer with an innate disposition towards the craft and they are also conscientious about how they exercise it. To successfully sex chicks requires
concentration and sensitivity to what conditions are favorable to making a judgment. The sexer is constantly making micro-adjustments to the way they hold the chick to get good exposure of the cloaca and detect the relevant features. It seems right to say that if an individual acquires a true belief through exercising their cognitive abilities and they are prepared to improve their reliability by making adjustments of this sort as needed, then they gain knowledge. On the revised view, knowledge would be true belief acquired through reliable self-regulated abilities.

To make such a concession isn’t necessarily to slide back into a simple process reliablism. Instead, this move suggests a view of the minimal conditions on knowledge acquisition similar to the view defended by John Greco (2010). It will help to take a moment to consider Greco’s view. According to Greco’s proposal:

S’s belief that p has knowledge-relevant normative status if and only if S believes the truth because S’s belief is epistemically virtuous, where an epistemically virtuous belief is one that results from the cognitive abilities S manifests when conscientious or motivated to believe the truth. (see Greco 1999, 289; 2010, 43-44)

For Greco, cognitive abilities are both reliable and stable aspects of S’s cognitive character. To say they are stable aspects of one’s cognitive character is to say that they are integrated with one’s other cognitive processes. On this matter, Greco writes:

One aspect of cognitive integration concerns the range of outputs – if the products of a disposition are few and far between, and if they have little relation to other beliefs in the system, then the disposition is less well integrated on that account. Another aspect of cognitive integration is sensitivity to counterevidence, or to defeating evidence. If the beliefs in question are insensitive to reasons that count against them, then this too speaks against cognitive integration. (2010, 152)
The idea of cognitive integration captures what is deficient about the cognitive abilities involved, for example, in Plantinga’s brain lesion case or Lehrer’s Mr. Truetemp case and, on some interpretations, the case of Norman the clairvoyant (Breyer and Greco 2008). Because these abilities aren’t integrated with one’s other cognitive processes, they show up as sub-personal mechanisms rather than agent powers (Breyer and Greco 2008, 175). The belief forming mechanism may be reliable, but the agent is not.

The account of cognitive integration also fits nicely with Greco’s account of conscientiousness. According to Greco ‘most people are [conscientious] as a kind of default mode’ (1999, 289). To be conscientious is to be in the state of “trying to form one's beliefs accurately” which contrasts with the state of “trying to comfort oneself, trying to get attention, and being pig-headed” (Greco 1999, 289). When one tries to believe conscientiously one is disposed to respond to indications that one is getting things wrong. Knowledge requires knowers who are not only reliable but also “somehow sensitive to the reliability of their evidence” (Greco 1999, 273). By building in the requirement that knowers are conscientious, Greco assures us that knowers are sensitive to the reliability of their evidence by being disposed to respond and adjust when they find that their cognitive processes are unreliable. The idea of cognitive integration is simply the idea one’s cognitive abilities must be such that in cases where they are improperly attuned to one’s environment, one is in a position to notice and make the relevant adjustments (presumably not always, but at least in some cases). If I’ve correctly identified the core features of Greco’s view, it would appear that to be conscientious is to be a self-regulator. Recall that someone who self-regulates is someone who is “trying to get things right” (Ryle 2009a, 17). Someone who tries to get things varies their attempts and responds to indications that they are getting things wrong.
Now consider the second chick sexer B. Suppose that B’s ability is cognitively integrated and that B is conscientious. This means, in effect, that B is trying to sex chicks accurately and were B to encounter any evidence that suggests that he is sexing poorly, he will be able to recognize that this is so and make an adjustment. Cases like this one represent the minimal conditions required for knowledge, and knowledge is still true belief acquired through self-regulated cognitive abilities. In the case of innate or passively acquired abilities, the knower is sensitive to the reliability of their belief forming processes going forward. In the ordinary case, however, one has already been sensitive to the reliability of one’s abilities, and, moreover, it is only because one has attended to the project of attuning the deliverances of one’s cognitive processes to the world that one’s abilities are reliable in the first place.

4. Gettier Cases for Propositional Knowledge

Before addressing Lackey’s case of easy testimonial knowledge, which puts pressure on the idea that knowledge is an achievement, it will help to finally address the “because of” clause. According to ability accounts, knowledge is success because of one’s cognitive abilities, and the “because of” clause is intended to do significant philosophical work. The idea is that successes that arise accidentally don’t count as knowledge. We can also put the point in terms of the achievement intuition. If your success is due to luck, then your success isn’t an achievement. Another way of putting the idea is that virtue theorists deploy the “because of” clause to rule out Gettier problems (Sosa 2007; Zagzebski 1999; Greco 2010). In the last chapter, I deployed this same maneuver to address Gettier problems for know how, but never offered and analysis of the “because of” clause. Before returning to know how, let’s first see how this problem is handled in the literature on propositional knowledge. Consider a standard Gettier case:
On the basis of excellent reasons, S believes that her co-worker Mr. Nogot owns a Ford: Nogot testifies that he owns a Ford, and this is confirmed by S’s own relevant observations. From this S infers that someone in her office owns a Ford. As it turns out, S’s evidence is misleading and Nogot does not in fact own a Ford. However, another person in S’s office, Mr. Havit, does own a Ford, although S has no reason for believing this (Greco 2010, 73; see also, Lehrer 1965 and Gettier 1963).

In this case, S has a true justified belief, but S does not arrive at the truth because of or through their cognitive virtue. There just happens to be someone else in the company who owns a ford, and so S believes the truth because of luck. The “because of” clause therefore appears to handle the standard Gettier case.

Greco claims that the “because of” marks causal explanation, but he offers a sophisticated causal account (2010, 2012). In offering a causal explanation we typically focus on salient explanatory features, where salience is a function of (1) our interests and purposes as well as (2) what is normal or usual in a given explanatory setting (Greco 2010, 74). For an example of the former, to explain why they fell behind in the second quarter, the basketball coach may cite a lack of discipline resulting in turnovers. There may be a number of other causal factors that jointly brought about the scoring deficit, but this one is particularly salient for the purpose of making adjustments in the second half. For an example of the latter, to explain why the welding shop burn down, we won’t cite the presence of sparks. We will cite something unusual, like an infraction of standard safety procedures (Greco 2010, 74-75). Because sparks are an ordinary feature in such a setting, only the latter is explanatorily salient.

Related also to (2), consider cases involving deviant causal chains. Greco refers to a familiar case where the archer fires and arrow and hits the target only because of a fortuitous pair
of countervailing winds. The first blows the arrow massively off course and the second sets it back on the right path. The archer’s skill is part of the total set of causal factors that result in the bull’s eye, but in such cases “salience goes to what is deviant” (Greco, 2010, 75). We would explain the success in terms of the pair of countervailing winds rather than the archer’s ability. In Gettier cases, something similar happens. Given our interests, intellectual virtues have a sort of default salience in explanations of true belief. But in Gettier cases, salience goes to what is unusual about how we get to true beliefs in those cases. In the Mr. Nogot case, S’s intellectual abilities are part of the total set of causal factors that result in a true belief, but in the particular circumstance what is salient is the coincidence of their being another person in the office who owns a Ford. This means S doesn’t arrive at the truth because of their intellectual abilities in the relevant sense of “because of”, and so the Gettier case fails.

Greco’s account also works for the Gettier problem for know how from the last chapter. Recall that Shelley has a self-regulated reliable ability to bake a cake, but her success is not primarily creditable to her ability. It is primarily creditable to the presence of the appropriate ingredients, as provided by the beneficent baking sprites. This case fits the specific interpretation of the clause Greco offers. Although her ability may play a causal role in the present case, salience goes to what is deviant, i.e., the fortuitous presence of the ingredients. Therefore, we have an analysis of the “because of” clause the handles Gettier problems for both knowing that and knowing how.
5. Easy Knowledge

Lackey makes trouble for this solution, at least in the case of propositional knowledge. Lackey focuses on testimonial cases where the most salient explanation for a hearer knowing P isn’t the hearer’s cognitive virtue but the speaker’s cognitive virtue:

CHICAGO VISITOR: Having just arrived at the train station in Chicago, Morris wishes to obtain directions to the Sears Tower. He looks around, approaches the first adult passerby that he sees, and asks how to get to his desired destination. The passerby, who happens to be a lifelong resident of Chicago and knows the city extraordinarily well, provides Morris with impeccable directions to the Sears Tower by telling him that it is located two blocks east of the train station. Morris unhesitatingly forms the corresponding true belief. (Lackey 2008, 29)

Lackey argues that Greco faces a dilemma in light of this case. Any account of knowledge as an achievement must operate with a notion of achievement that is strong enough to rule out

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23 Whether a parallel counter-example for know how is possible is an interesting question I won’t pursue here. My inclination is to say that such a case is not possible, however. It would have to be a case where you satisfy the conditions for knowing how, but your success is primarily creditable to someone else. However, in the case of know how, this result doesn’t seem worrying. The reason is that one may know how to do something without exercising one’s know how. To have know how simply requires that you are able to succeed because of your self-regulated ability. So, the case would have to be one where you satisfy all the conditions for knowing how, but you can only succeed through the epistemic work of someone else. The problem is that if that is the case, it’s not obvious that you have know how.
individuals in Gettier cases from knowing and weak enough to include cases like the one above. For Greco, knowledge is an achievement insofar as it is the result of one’s cognitive abilities, and, more specifically, hitting on a true belief is creditable when one’s cognitive virtues are the most salient explanatory cause of one’s success. This means that individuals in Gettier cases don’t have knowledge, because in those cases salience goes to what is abnormal or deviant. However, according to Lackey, Morris’s cognitive virtues are not the most salient causal factor for explaining his knowledge. Instead, it is the “passer-by’s experience with and knowledge of the city of Chicago that explains why Morris ended up with a true belief rather than a false belief” (Lackey 2007, 352). In a sense, the hearer is lucky in that he hits on a reliable testifier, but intuitively this doesn’t undermine his knowledge. Sometimes knowledge is easy. The ability view apparently avoids Gettier problems, but only by setting the standards for knowing too high.

6. Testimony and Self-Regulation

In response Greco ultimately admits that “a concession is in order” and that “in these cases and others we must rely on our intuitions about when S’s abilities are ‘importantly enough' involved in an explanation of success” and further points out that there are “no clear [or universally compelling] counterexamples” (2010, 83-84). This response is not very satisfying.

24 Greco’s full response has two parts (2010, 80-84). First, he insists that a virtue-theoretic perspective on testimony would emphasize the reliable capacities of the receiver of testimony, and not just the reliability of the source. The second part of his strategy is to draw an analogy with other kinds of achievement. Suppose that in playing a game of soccer, you receive a ‘brilliant, almost impossible pass, and then [score] an easy goal as a result’ (Greco 2010, 82). Even though the abilities of the passer stand out in such a case, you still deserve credit for the
Although I do not attempt to provide a well-defined account of explanatory salience here, I will at least offer a perspective from which the receiver’s contribution appears to be intuitively the most salient explanatory feature.

Whether or not the receiver’s capacities are most salient depends on how we think about testimony and how we think about the different ways knowledge might count as an achievement. Starting with the latter, both Greco and Lackey appear to operate with the assumption that for knowledge to count as an achievement it must involve a suitable amount of effort in the exercise of the ability. General considerations show this assumption to be mistaken. After extended practice, I may find engaging in some activities or exercising some skills to be relatively effortless, but that doesn’t mean that my success is not an achievement appropriately attributable to my agency.\textsuperscript{25} In the normal case, it is only because I have participated in a conscientious goal. In response, Lackey argues, first of all, that insisting on the reliability of receivers of testimony is not unique to virtue-theoretic approaches and, more to the present point, doesn’t clearly help with the present problem. Lackey doesn’t deny that the receiver of testimony must be reliable, it’s just that his cognitive abilities are not the most salient causal factor. She further insists that her criticism doesn’t in any way depend on the notion that credit for an achievement cannot be shared. The problem is that Greco must tread a fine line between Gettier cases and cases of easy knowledge as in the case above. Morris may in some sense make a contribution to the knowledge producing practice, but his contribution is not what’s most salient for explaining why he has knowledge.

\textsuperscript{25} To say that some expert performance is easy is not to commit to a view that equates expertise with performance under the control of fully automatic processes (see Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1980).
learning process that my current performance is reliable. This lesson is clearly in operation in the earlier discussion of chick sexing. When the practiced chick sexer exercises her skill it may be, in some cases, fairly effortless, but that does not diminish its status as an achievement.

Of course, these considerations are only compelling if they have analogues in the case of receiving testimony. To that end, consider the view of testimony defended by Miranda Fricker (2003; 2007). Her view is best situated in response to a false dichotomy about testimonial knowledge:

It can seem as if we must either endorse the idea that the hearer gains knowledge just by being uncritically receptive to the speaker’s word, so long as there are not explicit signals that skepticism is in order, or else endorse the idea that the hearer gains knowledge only in virtue of rehearsing an appropriate inference—an argument whose conclusion licenses believing what he has been told. (Fricker 2003, 155)

The problem with the former is that it doesn’t appear to involve one’s rational faculties in a way that seems necessary for knowledge. While the latter solves this problem by insisting on the conscious evaluation of a speaker’s reliability, it ends up setting the standards for testimonial knowledge implausibly high. The via media Fricker identifies makes use of the idea of a *testimonial sensibility*, or an educable faculty for receiving testimonial knowledge (2003, 159-164). Someone with a well-trained sensibility is sensitive to the surrounding reasons for accepting a proposition in a way that doesn’t necessarily involve rehearsing the relevant inferences or arguments. A testimonial sensibility is a quasi-perceptual capacity. It is like

While some expert performance is like this, much of expert performance involves consciously thinking about what you are doing (see Montero 2010).
perception both in that it is a source of non-inferential knowledge and also in that it is trainable (see, also, McDowell 1994). Fricker thinks of testimonial sensibilities as educable in much the same way perceptual capacities are. At first one’s testimonial sensibility is inherited more or less passively from one’s discursive community. However, once on has a suitably robust sensibility one will start to notice that “sometimes [one’s] experiences of testimonial exchange will be in tension with the deliverances of the sensibility [one] has passively taken on, in which case responsibility requires that [one’s] sensibility adjust itself to accommodate the new experience” (Fricker 2003, 162). For example, the teenager who believes that old people have nothing important to say will undergo a miniature revolution when their grandfather relates a compelling story about his experiences in the war (Fricker 2003, 162). Fricker notes that sometimes these adjustments happen more or less automatically and implicitly, and sometimes they will involve explicit, conscious deliberation. In either case, however, the learning process Fricker has in mind fits the account of self-regulation developed earlier. Just as the responsible chick sexer develops

26 The empirical literature on the phylogenetic and ontogenetic development of human capacities for vetting trustworthy sources of information may put some pressure on this part of Fricker’s account. Dan Sperber and co-authors, for example, offer ample evidence of the various ways young children and even infants exercise ‘epistemic vigilance’ to the quality of testimony and testifiers (Sperber et al 2010; see, also, Clément 2010; Stephens et al 2015). This evidence doesn’t, however, undermine the major features of Fricker’s view. Moreover, the empirical literature on epistemic vigilance arguably supports the idea that a successful receiver of testimony is primarily someone who is sensitive to the sort of conflicts that motivate adjustments of one’s testimonial sensibility.
and refines one’s perceptual capacities through practices of self-regulation, the responsible
receiver of testimony develops her testimonial sensibility by undertaking trial commitments in
light of the word of others and making adjustments when conflicts result.

Fricker offers us a perspective from which even trivial cases of knowledge through
testimony can show up as achievements. In the first instance, they do so not by involving the
hearer’s efforts in the moment of receiving testimony but in developing the abilities to
responsibly give uptake to testimony. We might then, as we did with the chick-sexer and
clairvoyance cases, view innately reliable testimonial sensibilities as a sort of limit case, so long
as they are well-integrated and the hearer exercises them responsibly. Whether or not this
response would be fully satisfying to Lackey is unclear. The following passage is, however,
suggestive:

One feature of [the Chicago visitor case] that is crucial to its ability to function as such a
clear counter example to the [achievement view of knowledge] is that the knowledge in
question is testimonial. For even in the simplest and most effortless cases of perceptual
knowledge, the knower in question can be said to deserve at least minimal credit for her
true belief since it is her reliable perceptual faculties that carry the explanatory burden of
why she acquired it. But testimonial knowledge is different. There isn't a specific
testimonial faculty to which we can turn to shoulder the explanatory burden of why the
subject holds the true belief in question. (Lackey 2007, 356, emphasis added)

On Fricker’s view, there is a faculty involved in the reception of testimony that functions, in the
relevant respects, analogously to perceptual faculties in cases of easy perception. If she is willing
to admit that exercising such capacities is an achievement in the perceptual case, then, assuming
Fricker is correct, she should be willing to admit as much in the testimonial case. Lackey may
object on the basis of her own work developing a positive account of testimonial knowledge, but I take it that this nevertheless succeeds in weakening her point. As Greco claims, there are no “clear counterexamples” in the offing from Lackey’s critique (2010, 84). Whether or not her counterexample works depends on your specific view of testimony, and what sort of view you find plausible will depend on your broader commitments about the nature of knowledge and justification. Lackey therefore fails to deliver a theory-neutral counter-example.

7. Weak and Strong Anti-Intellectualism

With this defense in place, I have now laid the groundwork for a unified account. At the outset, I made two claims about the relationship between know how and propositional knowledge. The first is that knowledge of either kind is a sort of success through ability. The second, stronger claim, is that propositional knowledge is success through cognitive know how. Before explaining how the preceding arguments support these claims, it will help to situate them against other views. Intellectualists, recall, argue that know how reduces to or is a species of propositional knowledge or, at the very least, that the former in some way substantively depends on the latter. Stanley and Williamson are notable defenders of the view that know how is a species of propositional knowledge (2001; Stanley 2011). They argue specifically that S knows how to Φ if and only if there is some contextually relevant way w and S knows that w is a way for S to Φ under a practical mode of presentation (Stanley and Williamson 2001, 430). Bengson and Moffitt are notable defenders of the view that know how is at least importantly grounded in propositional knowledge. They call their view “objectualist intellectualism”, according to which, roughly put, knowing how to Φ requires that S both know that w is a way to Φ and that S understands the concepts involved in her attitude (Bengson and Moffitt 2011b). Anti-intellectualism is traditionally defined as the denial of intellectualism, but this expresses only a
minimal or weak anti-intellectualism. Jeremy Fantl defines strong anti-intellectualism as the view that “knowing-that reduces to or is a species of knowing-how; at the very least, knowing that something is the case importantly requires a prior bit of know-how” (2008, 452). Some anti-intellectualists have defended the view that knowing that reduces to know how. John Hartland-Swann, for example, argued that to know that P is to know how to correctly answer the question whether P, and Stephen Hetherington recently defends a similar view (Hartland-Swann 1957; Hetherington 2006). Fantl points out that Ryle arguably thought that propositional knowledge at least requires prior know how, and, more recently, Michael Kremer argues that Ryle viewed know how and propositional knowledge as mutually dependent (2016).

I do not argue that propositional knowledge reduces to or counts as a species of know how. Instead, my approach is to see them both as species of a further common kind. According to the present perspective, know how and propositional knowledge are both different kinds of success through reliable, self-regulated ability. They are both ways of “getting things right”, as Ryle says, because one is trying to get things right. The view is nevertheless strongly anti-intellectualist in that propositional knowledge ends up requiring a prior bit of cognitive know how. This commitment simply falls out of the analyses of know how and propositional knowledge I’ve developed. If propositional knowledge is success through reliable, self-regulated cognitive abilities and to possess such an ability is just to know how to do something, then propositional knowledge is success through cognitive know how. The present proposal therefore reverses the intellectualist proposal.

8. Conclusion

This may strike some as an unusual way of arguing for a dependency thesis, and, in comparison with the current literature on know how, it is. The debate is not usually approached
in a way that requires committing to a particular view of propositional knowledge, and this is perhaps for good reason. It would seem more prudent, therefore, to defend an anti-intellectualist view of know how without taking on any additional commitments that may prove controversial. I have a couple of points to offer in response to this worry. First of all, it may be that we can only get traction on the debate over know how by bringing forward the resources developed in our accounts of propositional knowledge. At the very least, it seems to me that our commitments in one area will be deeply related to our commitments in the other, and I take it that I have demonstrated that point through the course of this chapter. Second, the ability intuition about propositional knowledge is quite pervasive and represents one of the more promising of current approaches to the topic. I have spelled the intuition out in Greco’s terms because his view most clearly resonates with recent anti-intellectualist views of know how. Perhaps the present proposal will make room for other kinds of interventions and comparisons of a similar kind.

At the very least, I hope to have shown that the problems that plague the simple ability view of know how parallel certain problems for a simple ability view of propositional knowledge. Even if it turns out that the recommended approach to the Gettier problems for anti-intellectualism fail, it will fail alongside the same solutions to the Gettier problems that plague accounts of propositional knowledge. This means that what would otherwise appear to be special problems for anti-intellectualism, and thereby lend support to intellectualism, show up as problems that plague our general efforts to construct an account of knowledge that excludes epistemic luck.
Chapter 3: Normative Agency

So far, my focus has been on individual practices of self-regulation and knowledge acquisition. In the remaining pages of this dissertation, I focus on the social relations that sustain or undermine good epistemic practice, where “good practice” is understood as knowledge conducive for individuals as well as communities. My primary focus will be on the problem of epistemic echo chambers. Specifically, I’m interested in how our epistemic skills create feedback-loops that sustain and reinforce our epistemic perspectives primarily by excluding the critical feedback from individuals with differing perspectives. Social relations that sustain good epistemic practice, where critical feedback flows between individuals, involve treating other epistemic agents as epistemic agents. For this reason, in this chapter I ask the rather abstract question of what it means to treat someone as an epistemic agent. My primary purpose is to build a bridge between the account of knowledge I offered in the first half of this dissertation and the problems addressed in the second half. The theory I develop in this chapter is therefore not intended to be wholly original or groundbreaking. Its purpose is rather to integrate familiar concepts into the framework I developed and set the stage for the remaining project.

My goal, more concretely, is to situate both practical and epistemic agency on the terrain of normative agency—to develop an account of practical and theoretical agency that treats them as distinct but contiguous structures. To this end, I adopt a stance approach. A stance account is fleshed out by specifying the relevant sense of treatment involved in adopting a stance and the

27 The stance approach is most closely associated with Daniel Dennett’s work in the philosophy of mind (see Dennett 1987, especially “True Believers” and “Three kinds of Intentional Psychology”).

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conditions under which such treatment is appropriate. My central contention is that the stance account of agency is most perspicuously developed in terms of second-personal speech. The central way to treat you as an agent is by addressing you with a particular kind of speech act—one that calls on you to give uptake to norms or act out of recognition of a norm—and the conditions under which this treatment is appropriate are the conditions under which such speech is felicitous. In slogan form: to be appropriately treatable as an agent is to be felicitiously speakable as an agent. With this account in hand, I preserve the unity and distinctness of the practical and epistemic dimensions of normative agency. Treating you as an agent in either case is calling on you to normative self-determination. The epistemic agent is anyone we can appropriately address with reasons for belief. The practical agent is anyone we can appropriately address with reasons for action.\textsuperscript{28}

1. The Stance Template

First, we need to understand the idea of a stance. I find the following template to be the most perspicuous and useful for my purposes:

When S takes up a stance towards X (something or someone), S—usually without conscious reflection or effort—modifies (1) what aspects or properties of X show up as salient to S, activates (2) background interpretive schemas for making sense of X (for interpreting, explaining or evaluating X’s behavior in the broadest sense), and (on some

\textsuperscript{28} Compare the view defended by Philip Pettit and Micheal Smith (1996).
stance accounts) modulates (3) her behavioral dispositions and (4) emotional propensities towards X.²⁹

Daniel Dennett language popularized the stance language in the philosophy of mind (see Dennett, 1987). For Dennett, to treat something as having a mind or as an "intentional system" is to take up the intentional stance towards it. To take up the intentional stance is to activate certain background interpretive-cum-evaluative schemas in order to predict and explain its behavior—specifically by ascribing beliefs and desires to it and the capacity to act rationally in light of those intentional states—and to track patterns of behavior that facilitate or inhibit this interpretation as an ongoing means of making sense of the system. Thus Dennett, focuses on (1) and (2), the modification of salience patterns and the activation of interpretive schemas respectively.³⁰

I include (3) and (4) as parts of the stance template to accommodate stance views like P.F. Strawson's in “Freedom and Resentment” (1974). Although he never deployed the stance language explicitly, Strawson is sometimes credited with describing the participant stance (see, e.g., Macnamera 2009). To take up the participant stance is treat someone as a free and responsible agent by becoming disposed to (1) attend to their morally salient conduct, (2) interpret them as either capacitated or incapacitated, their behavior as either intentional or unintentional and as done knowingly or unknowingly, (3) express to them blame or praise for

²⁹ See Macnamera (2009, 83) for a similar gloss on what it means to take up a stance. See Kukla (2018), who argues that one engagement in (1) through (4) is essentially an embodied practice.

³⁰ But see Kukla (2018) not only a different take on the intentional stance but also a useful discussion of the general features of stances and their philosophical usefulness.
their conduct or enter into reason-giving about their behavior and (4) take up reactive attitudes of resentment and approbation towards them or their behavior. Strawson focuses on how the participant stance modulates our emotional propensities, and this is what most centrally distinguishes the participant stance from the *objective stance*. When we take up the participant stance towards someone or something, we become disposed to react to its behavior with feelings of sympathy, gratitude, hurt feelings, disappointment, resentment, indignation, approval, disapproval and so on. On the other hand, when we take up the objective stance towards something we treat the target of the stance as something to be used, managed or avoided. We may take up attitudes of repulsion, fear, pity or love towards the object, but not the full range of reactive attitudes.\(^{31}\)

### 2 The Normative Stance

In describing the intentional stance, Dennett places emphasis on the interpretive schema one brings to bear on a subject when one takes up the stance. In describing the participant stance, Strawson places emphasis on the adjustment of one’s emotional propensities. The normative stance I wish to develop places emphasis on the third component of the stance template: the modification of behavioral dispositions. To treat someone as a normative agent is to critically

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\(^{31}\) Schematically put, we treat something as an object by (1) making salient various features of the object that facilitate (2) taking up any interpretive schema for making sense of the objects behavior (e.g., the design stance, physical stance or even intentional stance) for the purposes of (3) managing, handling, curing, training or avoiding the object and (4) perhaps taking up attitudes of repulsion, fear, pity or love towards the object, but not the full range of reactive attitudes.
attend to their performances and to become disposed to perform speech acts that call them into normative practices. When a personal trainer takes a normative stance towards their clients weightlifting performances, they critically attend to the aspects of their performance that are relevant for performing well and become disposed to direct speech towards them designed to get their performances to better line up with the standards governing the task. Whether this is accomplished through verbal advice, demonstration, by guiding their movements by hand, or even through subtle nudges, the trainer calls on their client to live up to the norms of the practice. The epistemic and practical stances will be sub-species of the normative stance. To treat someone as an epistemic agent will be to critically attend to the way in which they participate in epistemic practices and to become disposed to perform speech acts that call on them to participate in knowledge seeking practices out of the implicit recognition of epistemic norms. The idea may seem quite grand when it is put in these terms, but the phenomenon is

32 Schematically put, to take up the normative stance towards X is to: (1) attend to X’s performances within a norm-governed practice in a way that facilitates, (2) the evaluation of X’s performances as in line with the norms governing the practice or not, (3) to become disposed to direct speech to X that calls on X into the practice with you.

33 Schematically put, to take up the epistemic stance towards X is to: (1) attend to X’s performances in an epistemic practice in a way that facilitates (2) the evaluation of X’s performances as entitled or unentitled—as in line with the norms governing the practice or not, and (3) to become disposed to direct speech to X that calls on X into epistemic practices with you.
commonplace. We call each other into epistemic practices whenever we offer each other reasons for belief or, in the terms of this dissertation, call on one another to exercise cognitive skills.

3. Two Dimensions of Normative Agency

Although we have already encountered Strawson’s description of a practical stance in the form of the participant stance, Dennett’s own account of free and responsible practical agency, especially as developed by Carol Rovane, offers a more useful point of departure (Dennett 1976; Rovane 1994; 1998). Strictly speaking, Rovane develops a stance-based account of personhood, but for Rovane a person just is a normative agent. Since her focus is largely on the practical dimensions of normative agency, I will treat her as narrowly describing practical agency and develop my account of epistemic agency in tandem with hers. Once both views are fleshed out, we will be able to see that together they provide a fuller view of normative agency.

3.1 Normative Self-determination in Practical Agency

In "Conditions of Personhood", Dennett claims that free and responsible agents are those who "participate ...in the question-and-answer game of giving reasons for [their] actions" (Dennett 1976, 191). To treat someone as free is to treat them as reason-responsive. The free agent is subject to rational influence. Following up on this idea, Rovane writes:

For as rational, and also social beings, persons do have a certain distinctive ethical-as opposed to moral-significance. This ethical significance has to do with the fact that persons, and persons alone, can treat one another as persons. There are of course many ways in which persons may be said to treat one another as persons. Many of these ways, e.g., various forms of address, courtship, familial ties, legal recognition, etc., rest on specific and local social conventions and traditions. But I mean to invoke something that
is constant across social settings, namely, the ability of persons to influence one another by reasoning with one another. (Rovane 1994, 358)

Rovane illustrates the idea of “rational influence” by contrasting it with what she calls “Humean influence” (Rovane 1994, 370-373). According to Rovane, one is disposed to influence others in one way or other depending on whether one takes up the “normative perspective” or “Humean perspective”. The Humean perspective might just as well be called the Humean stance. The idea seems very similar to Strawson’s objective stance only Rovane puts more emphasis on behavioral rather than emotional responses. One takes up a Humean stance towards X by observing causal regularities in the world and using them as a basis for predicting, navigating and manipulating one’s environment, and by becoming disposed to influence X’s behavior in a Humean sense. Rovane offers the example of a dog who tricks his master into giving up her seat by feigning a desire to go outside. The dog is aware (in some sense) of a causal regularity obtaining between begging at the door and his master dropping what she is doing to let him out, and he capitalizes on this. The point is that the dog makes his master move through Humean, non-rational influence. Notice, however, that there is a perfectly intelligible sense in which the dog gives his master a reason to go to the door. We might call this the causal sense of reason giving, a type of Humean influence.

Causal Reason Giving: A gives B a reason to ψ by φing iff A causes B to have a reason to ψ by φing.

The dog gives his master a reason to let him out by going to the door insofar as his going to the door causes his master to have a reason to let him out. Now contrast the following case described by Rovane:
At the theater someone says, "You're mistaken, that's my seat."...in this case, the aim is to get the intended result by appealing to your own sense of what you ought to do. That is, it is presumed that you have a normative commitment to doing the right thing in such situations, and the aim is to show you that it follows from your commitment that you ought to relinquish the seat. Thus the intended result is that you relinquish the seat of your own free will. (Rovane 1994, 371-372)

This is for Rovane a paradigm example of reason-giving, and the causal sense of giving a reason doesn’t seem to capture the sense of reason-giving illustrated here. Unlike the dog, the theater patron attempts to influence the mistaken party's behavior in a specific normative way. As Rovane puts it, they direct the other to a norm of action which they are presumed to be committed to following and call on them to act on it. If the call is successful, the misplaced theater goer then acts out of recognition of their normative commitment by getting out of the seat. This gives us a normative sense of reason giving:

**Normative Reason Giving:** A gives B a reason to ψ by φing iff A’s φing functions to call on B to give uptake to a normative status β by ψing out of awareness of β.

The theater goer gives the misplaced party a reason to get out of the seat by uttering “You’re mistaken, that’s my seat”. Her speech act calls on the mistaken party to give uptake to his obligation to remove himself from the seat by acting in light of his awareness of the obligation.

In the language of contemporary speech act theory, *calls* such as these are described in terms of *second-personal speech*. Second-personal speech, according to the analysis offered by Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance, is speech that calls on you to give uptake to a normative status by determining yourself or acting (in the broadest sense) out of your awareness of that status (Kukla and Lance 2009). Take imperative speech acts as an example. Imperatives, e.g. “drop and
give me twenty!”, are second-personal calls. The imperative calls on “you” (or “you all”, if the imperative has multiple targets) to give uptake to the obligation it imparts by acting out of your awareness of it. Imperatives—as well as (non-rhetorical) questions, requests and invitations—are second-personal as such. In the present case, the theater goer calls on the mistaken party to get out of the seat by directing them to a norm of action. The call is successful if the mistaken party recognizes the propriety of the action by getting out of the seat.34 So, we’ve specified the speech

34 As I’ve mentioned, there are many different forms of second-personal speech. I can invite, request, hail and I can also issue a second-personal assertion or second-personal prescriptive. I can treat you as a practical agent by directing any of these forms of second-personal speech at you. It’s not immediately obvious what kind of speech act “you’re mistaken, that’s my seat” is in the given context. This is in part because the surface grammar of a speech act is not sufficient to determine the type. I can, for example, request that you shut the window by uttering “it’s cold in here”. This takes on the form of a declarative, but functions as a request in the given context. What determines what kind of speech act is on offer is a cocktail of social conventions and features of the material context in which the speech act is made. In this case, most prominently, it is norms of etiquette governing the situation, the relationship between the speaker and hearer and indeed the fact that the window is open and apparently causing the speaker to feel cold that determine the speech act as a request. Of course, speaker intentions have some role to play in determining the speech act. If the other party proceeds to shut the window and the speaker objects “what are you doing? I like the cold!” we might be disposed to reinterpret the speech act as an assertion.
act that characterizes treating someone as free for Rovane as second-personal. Now Humean influence can be negatively defined in terms of second-personal address. I influence your behavior in the Humean sense if I cause you to \( \psi \) by \( \phi \)ing where my \( \phi \)ing doesn’t function to call on you to norm guided action.\(^{35}\)

As I mentioned, if the theater goers call is successful, the misplaced party then act out of recognition of their normative commitment by simply getting out of the seat. There is an important and familiar point lurking here that is worth emphasizing. To act with an awareness of a norm doesn't require that the norm follower “do a bit of theory and then do a bit of practice”—

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Although the reason offered “You’re mistaken, that’s my seat” takes the form of a declarative, it doesn’t naturally read as an assertion. Perhaps, if the misplaced party responded with “well, so I am!” and both proceeded to laugh it off as the other party takes the seat next to him, then we might interpret the speech act as a second-personal assertion. Nevertheless, the speech act in the example most naturally reads as either an imperative, request or a second-personal prescriptive (see Kukla and Lance 2009).

\(^{35}\) The Humean stance, with it emphasis on the modulation of behavioral dispositions makes for a good contrast to the normative stance, similar to Strawson’s contrast between the participant and objective stances. To take up the Humean stance towards X is to:

1. Make salient various features of the X that facilitate
2. The adoption of any interpretive schema for making sense of the objects behavior (e.g., the design stance, physical stance or even intentional stance) and to become disposed to
3. influence X’s behavior in a Humean sense.
as Ryle would say (Ryle, 2009, p. 18). For the misplaced theater patron to count as giving uptake to reason, he doesn't have rehearse an argument such as:

(1) I am sitting in this man’s seat.
(2) One shouldn't take someone else theater seat.
(3) Therefore, I should move.

Nor does he have to simply rehearse the relevant norm to himself "I ought not sit in another person’s seat" as if it were some mantra. In fact he needn’t explicitly or overtly represented the norm to himself at any point. As Sellars emphasized, there is a sense of "acting with an awareness of norms" that straddles the line between explicit recognition of a norm and mere conformity with the norm (Sellars 1954). This is implicit awareness of norms in terms of what you do. In giving uptake to a reason, the reason responder needn’t explicitly formulate the norm they act on. Moreover, although addressing someone is a bit of norm-governed conduct as well, we can still say that in directing the other to the norm by offering them a reason the reason-giver needn’t explicitly formulate the norm to themselves either.

Someone who follows practical norms such as these has a practical perspective. A full account of what a practical perspective consists in would be too much of a digression; but roughly, this would be a perspective on how they ought to act in various circumstances, which will probably incorporate a lot of cognitive skills. When the theater goer is called upon, he is directed to act out of recognition of a norm of action. The pathway between rational influence and action is, if the call is successful, mediated by his perspective. Reason-giving that interests Rovane calls on you precisely in such a perspective mediated way. It directs you to act from (metaphorically speaking) the vantage point of your own perspective rather than seeking a
response that bypasses your perspective. Reason-giving in the causal sense, for example, is perspective-bypassing, or at least doesn’t call for perspective mediation.

3.2 Normative Self-determination in Epistemic Agency

For a parallel account of epistemic agency, we must think about how someone might call you into epistemic practices. One way we do this is by calling on you to exercise your inferential skills. Take the following example. John and Mary have passed a tree by the side of the road. John thinks the tree was an elm. Mary thinks it was an oak:

John: It was an elm, I tell you. It had serrated leaves!

Mary: Yes, but it had acorns too. And, actually, some oaks have serrated leaves.

John: Ah! I didn't know that, and I guess I didn't see the acorns...maybe it was an oak.

John and Mary treat each other as having an epistemic perspective on the world by directing second-personal speech to one another. In this case, they treat each other as being more or less aware of the inferential proprieties that govern botanical discourse. In asserting, “it had serrated leaves” John entitles Mary to the claim that the tree had serrated leaves and calls on her to give uptake to this entitlement by inferring and explicitly acknowledging that it was an elm. In doing so he treats her as aware of an inferential propriety between “this tree has serrated leaves” to “this is an elm”. In asserting “it had acorns too”, Mary treats John as aware of an inferential propriety between “this tree has acorns” and “this is an oak” and calls on him draw on his entitlement to the former by expressing commitment to the latter.

Again, to be aware of inferential proprieties does not require making the norms of inference explicit. In order to act out of recognition of Mary’s call, John doesn’t have to rehearse the argument:

(1) The tree had acorns.
(2) If a tree has acorns, then it is an oak.

(3) Therefore, the tree was an oak.

where the conditional (2) makes explicit the permissibility of moving from (1) to (3). Nor does he have to mutter “If a tree has acorns then it is an oak” under his breath or in any way explicitly represent the norm to himself. Assuming that the speech act is entitled and felicitous, the call is fully successful when the target recognizes it as a second-personal assertion directed at him, takes on the entitlement it imparts, and acts out of implicit recognition of the entitlement such that the goal of the speech act is satisfied. In this case, John is called on to give uptake to his entitlement to “the tree had acorns” by overtly accepting that it was an oak.

Someone who is responsive to such calls has an epistemic perspective. An epistemic perspective in the vernacular used here does not refer to a set of beliefs about the world. Although that is a perfectly intelligible sense of “perspective”, I use perspective to refer to the point of view one’s cognitive abilities make available (and I will elaborate on this idea further in the next chapter). When I call on you to give uptake to my assertion, I treat you as able to form beliefs out of the implicit recognition of inferential norms as part of a world-disclosing practice. In this way, my call directs you to feely settle on a particular outlook on the world in a perspective-mediated way.

3.3 Normative Authorship in Practical Agency

We not only implicitly follow norms but we also make them explicit and thereby bring them into the game of giving and asking for reasons (Brandom 1994). We can use this idea to make sense of normative self-authorship. According to Dennett, we treat you as free not just by giving you reasons to act in accordance with normative commitments that you already hold. We also treat you as free by entering into reason-giving practices about what normative
commitments you ought to undertake. In other words, we give you reasons for or against taking on commitments to follow norms of action. Dennett locates the freedom distinctive of persons in his final of six conditions on personhood: self-consciousness. As Rovane points out, for Dennett this not only involves “reflexive self-awareness” but also “the essentially normative activity of reflective self-evaluation” (Rovane 1994, 363). Essentially, the self-conscious being not only takes up the intentional stance towards itself, interpreting itself as an intentional system, it also takes an evaluative stance towards itself, taking control of the system (compare McGeer and Pettit 2009; McGeer 2007). Rovane writes of Dennett’s view:

In his conception, reflective self-evaluation involves higher-order attitudes that function very much like Frankfurt's “second-order desires.” Such higher-order attitudes provide for the possibility of self-change at the level of lower-order attitudes. In so doing they provide for a significant kind and degree of freedom within determinism. (Rovane 1994, 363)

Speaking in the stance mode, we would say that to treat you as free is to treat you as someone who is able to critically reflect on and revise your attitudes, especially, your desires and intentions. This idea can be given treatment in terms of second-personal address by thinking about how we make norms of action explicit to one another.

Back to the movie theater. Suppose the misplaced theater goer, when asked to move, responds indignantly “well, why should I?” and his long-suffering companion joins in “well, because you shouldn't take someone else's theater seat!”. In doing so, his friend calls on him to give uptake to a further norm of action by moving. Not only that, in making the claim, the norm of action that he was implicitly called to act on has been made explicit, and they can debate the
issue. In offering a reason, like, "you should try to be civil to other people" or "you shouldn't take what isn't rightfully yours" or "others have a right to take what is theirs" their companion directs them to act out of awareness of norms again. Suppose he says something like “you should try to be civil to other people”. Here they call on him to give uptake to the entitlement to this claim that their speech act passes on. Full success in this case requires recognizing the claim as a second-personal prescription, taking on the entitlement and acting out of recognition of it. In this particular instance, taking on the entitlement requires inferring that one shouldn’t take the seat

I don’t suppose that it is necessary that the prescriptive be made completely explicit in the sense of literally spoken for such a debate to take place. In some cases, it may be enough to leave the norm unspoken. After being addressed with “You’re mistaken, that’s my seat”, the misplaced individual may have launched straight into an argument against the practice of reserving seats. What really facilitates debate over the norms governing a practice is not making norms of a practice explicit in normative vocabulary, but bringing them explicit by in any way by ostending to them, and prescriptive speech is precisely the means by which this is done. All the same, the more complex the debate becomes, the greater the need will be to make norms fully explicit just to keep each other in the loop. I also don’t suppose that debating a norm of action is solely a matter of trading prescriptions. In the course of a normal argument, one asks questions, brings up relevant matters of fact, invites the other to share one’s point of view and so on. My point is simply that prescriptive speech makes norms of action more or less explicit for the purposes of debate, and trying to settle on what one ought to do is a matter of settling on a prescription for action.
from the entitled claim and acting out of recognition of this requires, at a minimum, removing oneself from the seat.

Calling on someone to endorse a prescription is again calling on them to act in a perspective-mediated way. In giving you a reason to endorse the norm of not sitting in someone else's seat, I call on you to give uptake to the entitlement the speech passes on by accepting that you should get out of the seat. In this way, I call on you to form beliefs out of implicit recognition of inferential norms. For example, by uttering “you should be civil to other people”, I treat you as having a perspective on how one should act towards other people and call on you to act from the standpoint of that perspective. In directing the reason “you shouldn’t take what’s not rightfully yours” to you, I presume that you are at least implicitly aware of an inferential norm permitting the move from "you shouldn't take what is not rightfully yours" to "you shouldn't take someone else's theater seat!", and in doing so I treat you as someone who can reason about what you ought to do.

3.4 Normative Self-Authorship in Epistemic Agency

Second-personal speech has two roles in epistemic practice that interest me related to norm-authorship. It plays a role in developing our shared epistemic perspectives, and it plays a role in bringing others into our shared epistemic perspectives. In the context of the former, second-personal prescriptions play a role in epistemic practices when we find our vocabulary for making sense of the world is in some way deficient. These are epistemic breakdown cases, where we find that we cannot go on using the same epistemic perspective without running into conflicts or epistemic friction. Think for example of Thomas Kuhn’s description of a science in a state of crisis, but also think of all the local breakdown cases that occur on a small scale in our everyday dealings with the world (Kuhn, 1970). These can be fairly minor, as when a chick sexer revises
her understanding of how to sex chicks in light of critical feedback, or quite major, like a religious conversion, where one has to make systematic adjustments in light of sustained conflicts with the world. In such cases, we must bring up the norms governing the problematic discourse up for debate and revision. The latter case refers to the role of prescription in education. Here, second-personal prescriptions play a role in epistemic practices when we find that your perspective is out of line with our perspective, which we find to be more or less workable. In the next chapter, we will see some of the ways in which these two kinds of projects intermesh with one another, but I will ignore such complexities for the sake of simplicity. For now, let’s look at the role of second-personal speech in the context of revising shared aspects of our epistemic perspectives.

Our perspectives will always differ in various ways. Some differences will be subtle and won’t show up easily in the course of ordinary discourse. Some will be more severe. But for individuals navigating similar environments there will inevitably be a lot of overlap. Revision of shared aspects of our epistemic perspectives occurs when we find that our shared perspective conflicts with the world. In those cases, what we must do is bring aspects of our shared perspective up for revision. Let’s take a highly contrived and overly simple example for starters. Suppose that at this point in botanical science it is thought that only oaks have acorns and only elms have serrated leaves. One day Mary, the botanist, discovers an anomaly: a tree with serrated leaves that produces acorns. John will of course be skeptical when she informs him. Perhaps he will argue that Mary made some observational error or that the tree is some sort of genetic anomaly. Suppose that they both eventually become assured that it is not and that no error has been made. Now they are confronted with a problem. Their current botanical perspective is no longer workable and must be revised.
Prima facie there are a number of revisions they could make. For example, they could modify their use of the term oak such that they recognize a compatibility between “this has serrated leaves” and “this is an oak”. This would have the advantage of allowing them to preserve the inference from “this tree has acorns” and “this tree is an oak”. Alternatively, they could give up this inference latter and recognize a compatibility between “this has acorns” and “this is an elm”. Lastly, they could invent a new category of tree, one characterized by acorns and serrated leaves that is neither an oak or elm. To say that there are a number of options available to them is not to say they are faced with an arbitrary choice. The case as I’ve presented it is too vague and under-described to give us a clue as to what the better option is or what sort of grounds Mary and John would have for choosing one over the other. Perhaps at this point in the budding science there is no clearly superior option.

None of this matters for present purposes. My point is simply that the linguistic tool of such a debate is second-personal speech that calls you to revise your perspective. Suppose Mary adopts the view that some oaks have serrated leaves. She is then disposed to assert “some oaks have serrated leaves”. Suppose that John takes up the view that some Elms have acorns. He is then disposed to assert “some Elms have acorns”. If either asserts their claim and calls on the other to give uptake to it, their call will be less than successful. Suppose John asserts that some elms have acorns. Mary will not accept the offered entitlement. If she responds appropriately, the result will be a debate over how we ought to describe the world. What Mary will likely do is present her alternative. Now Mary and John are in a position to debate the issue. If they stick to their guns, Mary will prescribe adopting her perspective and John his.

Notice that epistemic perspective revision is a case where second-personal address calls on you to form beliefs in a perspective-mediated way. Perspective revision is a norm-governed
practice and there are better or worse reasons for going one way rather than another. There are
correct and incorrect ways of engaging in the practice. Take the above example of our intrepid
botanists. In pushing for her view, Mary will offer reasons like “my view preserves the
inferences from “this tree has acorns” to ‘this is an oak”. In doing so, she calls on John to
endorse her prescription on the basis of a norm he implicitly recognizes: something like “one
ought to preserve the inference from having acorns to being an oak”. Of course, that norm can be
brought up and debated as well and bringing it up for critique would be an appropriate response
to Mary’s call. If he does challenge this norm, Mary can again call on him to endorse the latter
norm in a perspective-mediated way. The goal of the debate is to settle on a perspective, and to
call on you to revise your perspective is to issue a second-personal prescription.

4. Appropriateness Conditions as Felicity Conditions

That should give us a fair sense of what it is to treat someone as a normative agent in
general and as an epistemic agent in particular in terms of second-personal address. The second
half of the stance account, specifying the appropriateness conditions for such treatment, is done
in terms of felicity conditions. The language of felicity was introduced in Austin’s path-breaking
treatment of speech acts (1962). Austin used the term in way that perhaps more closely tracks my
use of “success conditions”. Here, following Kukla and Lance, I use “felicity conditions” in a
somewhat narrower sense (2013). One can appreciate the idea in more depth by first thinking
about the conditions under which a call is fully successful. The speech act is fully successful
when it is entitled and achieves its internal goal. For example, an assertion is successful when the
speaker is entitled to issue it and it has achieved its internal goal of passing on entitlement to a
claim. Because second-personal address also calls on someone to act out of awareness of a norm,
the success conditions are more elaborate. According to Lance and Kukla, a call is fully
successful when (a) the speaker is entitled to issue it, (b) the speech act is felicitous in the sense that it doesn't misfire, the (c) target(s) recognize the speech act as the sort of speech act it is (e.g. as an imperative or as a second-personal assertion), (e) the target(s) take on the normative statuses it passes on and (f) the target(s) act out of recognition of those statuses (Lance and Kukla 2013, 465-468).

For illustration, think of the conditions under which my imperative “give me $20!” might fail corresponding to each of the success conditions Lance and Kukla lay out.

(fail-a) If I approach a stranger on the street and demand twenty dollars from them, my speech act is defective because I am not entitled to issue that imperative to that individual.

(fail-b) If instead I demand a twenty from a stuffed pidgin or a bowl of rusty nails with tufts of goat hair glued on, my call fails (or misfires as Austin would say) because these aren’t the sort of things that can give uptake to the call.

(fail-c) If I direct my imperative to Frank, to whom I lent twenty dollars a week ago, I am entitled to the money. Still, Frank might misunderstand me or simply not hear me. Here, the speech act fails because it is not recognized as the sort of speech act it is. Perhaps it’s not recognized by Frank as targeting him or perhaps it isn’t noticed at all.

(fail-e) If Frank does recognize the imperative as addressed to him, it can still fail if he points out that he already paid me back or that I never lent him the money or if he rejects the norms that I take to characterize such transactions. Here the speech fails because he doesn’t recognize the obligation my speech act seeks to impute to him.
Lastly, if Frank recognizes his obligation, he may fail to act on it because he doesn’t have the money, or he may be weak willed or a scalawag. Here, it would fail because he does not act so as to satisfy the internal aim of the speech act. If the speech act fails in any of these ways, it is less than fully successful. I will call a second-personal speech act felicitous if and only if conditions are such that the addressee can satisfy the other success conditions (c)-(f): i.e., the target must be able to recognize the speech act as the sort of speech act it is, take on the normative statuses it imputes and act out of recognition of them. Say I demand twenty dollars from you. If you can recognize my speech as a demand on you, take on the obligation it imputes and act on it, then the speech is felicitous. If you are capable of fulfilling the internal goal of the call, then it is felicitous. To be clear a speech act can be felicitous in this sense even if it in fact fails in any of the ways outlined in fail-c through fail-e. What matters is what you can do and not what you in fact do. Another way of describing the felicity conditions is in terms first and second-order skills. For the speech to be felicitous, the one called upon must have the second-order skills for recognizing the normative status the speech imparts and the first-order skills required to act out of this awareness.

5. Second-Personal Calls and Mutual Recognition

Through second-personal address one enters into a relationship of mutual recognition. By addressing you, I recognize you as free, as someone capable of acting out of recognition of a normative status. In other words, I recognize you as someone for whom such calls can be felicitously made. In responding to the call, you recognize me as free in turn. You recognize me as someone with the authority or entitlement to make a call, and such a being is someone capable of normative action. This is because the very act of calling is a bit of norm governed activity.
Recognizing me as capable of such activity is thus recognizing me as someone to whom calls can be felicitously directed as well.

We can enter into such a relationship even if the call isn’t fully successful or doesn’t fulfill its internal aim. To appreciate the point, it will help to reflect on the sorts of responses one can give to a call, following the distinctions made by Lance and Kukla (2013, 468-470). We can start out by imagining the space of possible responses. If I request from you a loan of twenty dollars, you might ignore me, politely refuse my request, or give me twenty dollars, among other things. All of these responses, and many others besides, fall within the space of possible responses. Next, within the space of possible responses to a call we can distinguish the set of responses that are appropriate (notice that here we are talking about the appropriateness of response to a speech act, not the appropriateness of the speech act itself which I specified in terms of felicity conditions). Both politely refusing the request and complying with it are appropriate responses. Ignoring me is not. Lastly, within the set of appropriate responses, we can further distinguish the set of responses that satisfy the internal goal of the call. Only giving me the money falls within this latter category. Refusing me does not. Using Kukla and Lance’s framework, we can reject what Coleen Macnamera calls a “disjunctive treatment” of the success conditions on second-personal speech (2013, 898-901). When I request twenty dollars from you I am not requesting that you give me twenty dollars or politely decline. I do grant that there is a perfectly intelligible sense in which a denied request is successful. It’s clearly more successful than a request that is, for example, flatly ignored. Nevertheless, when I request a twenty from you, I am requesting that you give me twenty dollars plain and simple. If you don’t give it to me, my request has failed to be fully successful.
Any lingering intuition that the internal goal of the call should be given a disjunctive treatment should be placated by treating such responses as within the space of appropriate responses and by saying that it is therefore partially successful. Politely declining is an appropriate response that does not fulfill the internal aim of the call. Describing it as appropriate is enough to distinguish it from a request that is ignored. As to the latter sort of response, ignoring me outright is a possible, but inappropriate response. When you ignore me, you do not respond to my call as a call. It’s worth noting that appropriately responding to a call can involve, for example, asking for clarification (“are you demanding a twenty or asking?”) or disputing the norms my speech imparts and calls on you to recognize (“why should I give you the money?”) or disputing my entitlement to the speech act. But if you do not eventually respond by refusing or denying my request, you are ignoring it. Mutual recognition thus occurs whenever a call receives an appropriate response.

Let’s look at how this works in epistemic practices by thinking about how we might call on each other to exercise perceptual skills. If you call on someone to recognize that P, your call is not fully successful when, for example, the one called upon offers reasons against P. Similarly, the internal aim of the call embedded in asserting “John is at the party” is not that you either undertake a commitment to the claim or offer reasons against undertaking it. This is again to reject a disjunctive treatment of the success conditions of the second-personal call. Nevertheless, by offering reasons against undertaking the commitment, the one called upon has recognized the caller as someone with the standing to make calls in an epistemic game. In other words, she has made a response within the space of appropriate responses. In that sense, the call is partially successful. We might even say that the performances within this exchange are partially successful in the sense that we have a case of mutual recognition. My second-personal assertion
has nevertheless failed to achieve its aim even though it was recognized and received an appropriate response. Less than fully successful calls, however, can take place in productive epistemic practices.

What the above account suggests is that we productively engage in shared epistemic practices when we treat each other as epistemic agents. In part, this is to treat one another as in possession of an epistemic perspective or a take on how one ought to participate in epistemic practices. An epistemic agent has a take on, for example, what counts as a good or bad reason for belief, what counts as good or bad evidence for a given hypothesis, what procedures one ought to follow to gain good evidence and so on. Joint participation in an epistemic practice involves the triangulation of each participant’s perspective with each other and with the world. As such it involves the mutual recognition of each participant as someone who can not only participate in epistemic practices in accordance with their epistemic perspective but also as someone who can participate in practices of epistemic perspective revision. This is because we often will find that either our perspectives are out of sync with one another or that our shared perspective is out of sync with the world. So, to treat someone as an epistemic agent in shared epistemic practice is not only to treat them as in possession of an epistemic perspective but also to treat them as someone who can revise their perspective and call on you to revise yours as well.

6. Conclusion: Merits of the Stance Approach

In this chapter I argued that to treat someone as an epistemic agent is to enter into a relationship of mutual recognition with them. In the next chapter, we will see that this allows me to articulate the harm of various forms of epistemic injustice. Epistemic injustice occurs when one group is unjustly refused admission in to relationships of mutual recognition. As José Medina argues, there are at least a couple ways a speaker might be “epistemically objectified”
(2013, 92-94). They may be undermined in their capacity as a giver of knowledge or they may be undermined in their capacity as an inquirer. In terms of the framework offered here, the former would be a case of failing to recognize someone as a norm follower and the latter failing to recognize them as a norm producer. In the next chapter, I will be especially interested in how the latter failure leads to gaps in our collective knowledge through what is known in the literature as “hermeneutical injustice”.
Chapter 4: Hermeneutical Injustice and Liberatory Education

In *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Miranda Fricker introduces and develops a concept of hermeneutical injustice. Hermeneutical injustice occurs when (i) there is a widespread gap in the interpretive resources available to members of a society for making sense of a significant aspect of an individual’s experience and (ii) this gap results from the systematic, prejudicial marginalization of members of the social group to which the individual belongs from communal sense-making practices (2009, 147-161). Fricker and commentators following her tend to focus on two sorts of questions about hermeneutical injustice:

1. "What is the nature of hermeneutical injustice?" and related questions such as "what are the primary and secondary harms?", "is it a structural or transactional sort of injustice?", and
2. "How do we create a more hermeneutically just society?" and related questions such as "what virtues need to be inculcated?", "how might we restructure our institutions so as to reduce this form of injustice?"37

I intend to supplement Fricker’s treatment of (1) and (2) by addressing two closely related questions about hermeneutical injustice that are under-theorized in the recent literature. According to Fricker, hermeneutical injustice occurs when there is a widespread gap in the interpretive resources for making sense of an individual’s experience. Although the notion of a “hermeneutical gap” is central to her analysis, Fricker and other commentators following her tend to introduce this idea by example and leave it more or less intuitive what such gaps leave

37 See, in addition to Fricker, e.g., Medina (2013); Anderson (2012); Pohlhaus (2012); Dotson (2012, 2014).
out and how they are filled in (but see Dotson 2012; 2014). For example, Fricker claims that women in the U.S. experienced a hermeneutical gap whenever they were the targets of sexual harassment before the phenomenon was given wide coverage during the women’s liberation movement in the 1970s (Fricker 2009, 149-152). According to Fricker, filling in the gap required “hermeneutical resources”, but she never offers a theoretical account of what hermeneutical resources are or a model of how they are developed and made socially widespread. My questions are therefore:

(3) “what do we mean when we say that members of a society lack the hermeneutical resources for making sense of an experience?”, and
(4) “how do we develop these resources and make them widely available to members of a society?”

Fricker's first question focuses on the injustice of the hermeneutical gap. My first question focuses on the gap itself—what it is to experience a gap and what it leaves out. Fricker's second question concerns what sort of virtues need to be inculcated or how social structures need change in order to build shared hermeneutical resources. Mine concerns the nature of this constructive process itself—what it is we are building and how we build it. Nevertheless, Fricker's questions and mine are deeply related. Since mine arise in the context of discussion of epistemic injustice, I take it that whatever hermeneutical gaps leave out must be significant enough for its absence to count as an injustice and that to make up for this lack is to create a more epistemically just society.

My particular strategy for responding to (3) and (4) is to place these questions in an educational context. In response to (3), I argue that to lack interpretive resources is to lack the *conceptual know how* that makes adopting a certain epistemic perspective possible. Specifically,
I argue that someone who knows how to use a concept is able to reliably and resiliently live up to the normative standards governing its use. This means that someone who knows how to use the concept of sexual harassment, for example, will be able to recognize sexual harassment when it occurs and successfully make sense of it to themselves and, in favorable conditions, to others as well. The conceptual skills thereby afford them an epistemic perspective on the world not available to those who lack the skills. If this response to (3) is right, one can respond to (4) by providing an account or model of how marginalized individuals develop the relevant conceptual skills. I argue that these skills are developed when marginalized individuals come together to give a name to their shared experience and use it as a tool for developing the concept in what I call “co-educational” practices. Naming the experience gives them an opportunity to develop the concept by trying out various uses and responding to evaluative feedback as a shared social project. Through this process, they develop the standards for deploying the nascent concept and come to gain skill in using it at the same time. I conclude by commenting on how the response I offer here, which focuses on individual and interpersonal practices, ultimately helps reveal important features of hermeneutical injustice and the nature of epistemic agency.

1. Case Study

To keep the discussion simple, I take the development of the resources for making sense of sexual harassment as a paradigm case. According to Fricker, at one point in time, women and members of the broader society in some significant sense lacked the interpretive resources for making sense of sexual harassment. Through the practices of the US women's liberation movement, especially through the organization of consciousness raising groups and speak outs in the early 70s, feminists developed these resources. In focusing on this example, I do not wish to deny that some women might have had ways of rendering the phenomena intelligible to
themselves and certain others in particular contexts before the emergence of a large-scale social movement. But like Fricker, I take the story of Carmita Wood to be instructive:

Wood did not know why she had been singled out, or indeed if she had been singled out, but a distinguished professor seemed unable to keep his hands off her. As Wood told the story, the eminent man would jiggle his crotch when he stood near her desk and looked at his mail, or he’d deliberately brush against her breasts while reaching for some papers. One night as the lab workers were leaving their annual Christmas party, he cornered her in the elevator and planted some unwanted kisses on her mouth. [After leaving her job] she applied for unemployment insurance. When the claims investigator asked why she had left her job after eight years, Wood was at a loss to describe the hateful episodes. She was ashamed and embarrassed. Under prodding—the blank on the form needed to be filled in—she answered that her reasons had been personal. …‘Lin’s students had been talking in her seminar about the unwanted sexual advances they’d encountered on their summer jobs,’ Sauvigne relates. ‘And then Carmita Wood comes in and tells Lin her story. We realized that to a person, every one of us—the women on staff, Carmita, the students—had had an experience like this at some point, you know? And none of us had ever told anyone before. It was one of those click, aha! moments, a profound revelation.’ The women had their issue. Meyer located two feminist lawyers in Syracuse, Susan Horn and Maurie Heins, to take on Carmita Wood’s unemployment insurance appeal. ‘And then…,’ Sauvigne reports, ‘we decided that we also had to hold a speak-out in order to break the silence about this.’ The ‘this’ they were going to break the silence about had no name. ‘Eight of us were sitting in an office of Human Affairs,’ Sauvigne remembers, ‘brainstorming about what we were going to write on the posters for our speak-out. We
were referring to it as ‘‘sexual intimidation,’’ ‘‘sexual coercion,’’ ‘‘sexual exploitation on
the job.’’ None of those names seemed quite right. We wanted something that embraced a
whole range of subtle and unsubtle persistent behaviors. Somebody came up with
‘‘harassment.’’ Sexual harassment! Instantly we agreed. That’s what it was (Brownmiller

Wood's story touches on both the lack of interpretive resources and their development
and so bears on (3) and (4) respectively. I'll focus on the former first. I take from this story that
the lack of shared interpretive resources for making sense of sexual harassment meant that
women like Wood were in some sense unable to (a) render their own experience intelligible to
themselves, (b) communicate their experience to others, but that (c) they were tacitly aware of
sexual harassment through their experience of it and also aware of the lack of interpretive
resources for making sense of it. Women like Wood were aware of sexual harassment as
something they could demonstratively ostend to as a bare "this", but it "had no name". It had not
yet been put into language so that they could smoothly and reliably recognize it and make sense
of its significance.

It's worth reemphasizing that I focus on this episode in order to develop a general model of
how hermeneutical injustice is overcome. I don’t deny that women had already come together at
various times in U.S. history to make sense of the phenomena in both formal and informal
contexts (see, e.g., Siegel 2004 for an overview). To avoid misunderstanding, it may help to
dwell on this point for a moment. In a valuable and constructive critique of Fricker’s account,
José Medina stresses that we shouldn’t underestimate the ability of marginalized individuals to
make sense of their experiences prior to the development of a large-scale social movement which
makes the phenomena well known to the broader society and provides standardized terminology
for describing it (Medina 2013, 90-118). For example, someone might be able to make sense of sexual harassment to themselves and discover ways of talking about it with certain people (but not certain others) before the official terminology is developed. In general, he emphasizes the need for a more pluralistic and contextual treatment of hermeneutical gaps. For my own part, I don’t wish to deny that there were pockets of resistance or critical consciousness before the women’s liberation movement or that some women might have had some ways of rendering the experience intelligible to each other. I also don’t deny that an important form of hermeneutical injustice occurs when members of epistemically oppressed groups are unable communicate their experience to the broader epistemic community because of the willful hermeneutical ignorance of those with epistemic power (Pohlhaus 2012; Dotson 2012; 2014). I focus on this case because its general features are fairly clear and well-documented, and so it is a good place to start. After drawing out the central features of the case, I will explain how it serves as a model for practices of concept development in a variety of other (perhaps looser and more informal) contexts and return to the topic of willful hermeneutical ignorance in section 8.

2. Conceptual Resources

To identify the relevant sense in which many women were unable to render their experience intelligible to themselves and others, perhaps it will help to make use of the “experience as” locution. In philosophical parlance, to say that someone experiences x as F implies that they have a concept of F.38 For example, to experience an object as a coffee cup requires possession of the concept of a coffee cup. When my dog and I look at a mug on the

38 However, the received wisdom about experiencing-as is not without its critics. See, e.g., Orlandi (2011) and Brewer (2011)
coffee table, only I experience it as a coffee cup because presumably only I have the relevant concept. One might claim that before the interpretive resources for making sense of sexual harassment were developed, victims couldn’t experience sexual harassment as sexual harassment because they lacked the concept. This would apparently equate interpretive resources with conceptual resources.

Fricker herself never offers a theory of what hermeneutical gaps leave out, but she speaks interchangeably of “interpretive resources” and “conceptual resources”. Perhaps the latter better captures what we should have in mind. In response to (a) through (c) laid out above, we might say the following. Before the experience of sexual harassment was named, women and members of the broader society lacked the concept and hence were unable to experience sexual harassment as sexual harassment or categorize it as such so as to render it intelligible to themselves or others. Women’s incipient awareness of the phenomena before it was named might be explained in terms of the possession of related concepts like that of harassment, exploitation, coercion and of sexual behavior in general. When they tried to articulate their experience, they found that they could put it into words in a rough fashion, but that there was no name that covered what they were trying to articulate. There was no language ready-made to cover the kind of experience they were describing and no reliable or smooth way of communicating their experience to others.

Fricker seems to endorse this specific interpretation of what hermeneutical gaps leave out when she discusses the concept of workplace bullying:

A man being ‘bullied’ in the workplace by a female boss may now [once the concept is developed] use that concept to describe his experience and expect his grievance to be understood and taken seriously (at least in many workplaces), whereas once upon a time he would simply have been laughed at if he’d tried to protest his misery. He could not
have used the term ‘bullying’ with any communicative success, and would have
doubtless felt confused and upset not only by the experiences he was putting up with but
also by the cognitive and communicative frustrations caused by the mismatch between
his experience and the collective hermeneutical resources available to render it intelligible….This, however, does not entail that he was having an experience of
workplace bullying before there were any conceptual resources to frame its meaning. On
the contrary, we can picture his social consciousness as drawing implicitly on existing meanings (the concepts perhaps of school-bullying, scape-goating, humiliation, together
with an awareness of recognized norms governing workplace behaviour such as
professionalism, respect between colleagues, and so on) without reflective awareness on his part. The conceptual resources for understanding workplace bullying for what it is were immanent in our collective hermeneutical resources long before we succeeded in rendering them explicit by coining the succinct label ‘workplace bullying’ (Fricker 2010, 168).

Although he couldn’t experience workplace bullying as such prior to the development of the concept, the possession of related conceptual resources allowed the hermeneutical gap to show up. He experienced workplace bullying as something like school-bullying, but he found that the concept doesn’t quite apply. Moreover, when he tried to make sense of the experience to himself or communicate, he became acutely aware of the lack of conceptual and linguistic resources. Once he has the concept of workplace bullying he can experience bullying as bullying, successfully articulate his experience to himself and communicate it to others.

In a similar vein, Kristie Dotson identifies hermeneutical resources with “cognitive schemata”, which she defines metaphorically as “templates that, when pressed against
experience, give it form and meaning” (Dotson 2014, 3; see also, Bartunek and Moch 1987; Pohlhaus 2010, 718). Like Fricker, she emphasizes how cognitive schemata allow one to notice and make sense of features of the environment and, when they are encoded in public language, share one’s experiences with others. I think Fricker and Dotson put us on the right track for answering (3) and the component questions (a) through (c), but having interpretive resources in the relevant sense seems to require more than just concept or schema possession. It’s clear from the passage above that having interpretive resources involves also being able to deploy them for a variety of social and political ends and to do so with reliable success. If this is right, then to possess interpretive resources is not only to have conceptual resources but also to know how to use them. Of course, according to some theories of concepts, conceptual know how or “concept mastery” is necessary for concept possession (see, e.g., Sellars 1954, 1974; Brandom 1994). If these views are correct, then one might simply say to have interpretive resources is to possess the relevant concepts. Either way it will still be appropriate to say that hermeneutical gaps are filled in only when members of a society (or at least, in the present case, most members of the workforce) have the relevant concepts and know how to use them. So, regardless of what our theory of concepts is, we will still need to look at what it means to know how to use a concept in order to flesh out the response to (3).

3. Conceptual Know How

The account of conceptual know how I prefer puts emphasis on two basic sorts of conceptual skill: inferential skills and perceptual skills. To possess inferential skill is to know

39 Compare Sellars’s distinction between “language-entry moves” and “language-exit moves” (1974, 423-424).
how to make moves between assertions or, their inner analogues, judgments. To make an inferential move is to take one deontic commitment to give a (pro tanto) reason for undertaking another deontic commitment.\textsuperscript{40} John infers “this tree is an elm” from “this tree has serrated leaves”. In doing so, he takes his commitment to the latter as a reason for undertaking a commitment to the former. To reliably live up to the norms governing inferential moves is to reliably make good inferences. This requires understanding the conditions under which inferences are good. There may be conditions under which the move from “this tree has serrated leaves” to “this tree is an elm” is a good one, for example if the only trees with serrated leaves in the region are elms. Someone who can more reliably make good material inferences will grasp the conditions under which the inference is undermined and the conditions under which it’s good. That the concept of resilience applies can be seen by recognizing the fact that the potential moves possible in a language game are infinite and a language-user who knows her way around a discourse is continuously entering into conversations she has never participated in before and deploying inferential skills in novel ways. Successful performance will require trying to adapt to novel circumstances.

I introduced the concept of perceptual skill back in chapter 1 while discussing the nature of second-order skills. To possess perceptual skill is to know how to track features of the world and arrive at a perceptual judgment of the form “x is F” (compare Kukla 2006 on “recognitive skills”). When the concept was introduced in chapter 1, I said that to possess perceptual skill is to know how to take aspects of the world as providing reasons for belief. Recognizing aspects of the world is also a norm-governed task that can be performed reliably and resiliently. Think of a

\textsuperscript{40} Compare Sellars on the concept of “material inference” (1953).
radiologist’s ability to read an MRI, the forensic scientist’s ability to detect signs of a struggle, the trainspotter’s ability to discriminate trains, the bird watcher’s ability to recognize various species, the musician’s ability to recognize different intervals or the wine taster’s ability to detect different flavors and textures. While this and the other cases mentioned above are all examples of specialized perceptual skills, our ordinary, everyday abilities to arrive at accurate perceptual judgments can be described in the same terms. Someone who knows how to recognize recyclable from non-recyclable materials, see whether their friend is in a sulky mood, or tell the time on an analogue clock is reliably and resiliently able to judge such matters based on features of the perceptual scene they’re familiar with. In short, each task requires understanding what conditions are favorable for arriving at a judgment, detecting the relevant features and arriving at the correct judgment.41

41 What makes perceptual skills different from inferential skills is precisely that they are skills for arriving at judgments noninferentially. There are a couple ways one can construe the inferential/noninferential distinction. One is epistemic. On this interpretation, “knowledge is inferential if the only way to vindicate its status as knowledge is to invoke the goodness of an inference to what is known from something independently within the knower’s epistemic reach” (McDowell 2010, 141). The other is psychological. On this interpretation, inferential knowledge and noninferential knowledge are distinguished “according to whether or not a knower reaches a bit of knowledge by inference” (McDowell 2010, 141). Both interpretations have their uses, but I will adopt the epistemic interpretation here. When the birdwatcher confirms that the bird is a cardinal by consulting his field guide, what justifies this judgment is his belief that the bird observed matches the sample. When an experienced bird watcher sees the bird on the other hand,
4. Recognizing and Making Sense of Sexual Harassment

If to know how to use a concept is to possess the relevant inferential and perceptual skills, then someone who knows how to use the concept of sexual harassment will be able to reliably and resiliently recognize sexual harassment when it occurs and make correct inferences about its significance. The latter allows them to engage in personally and politically important projects like connecting sexual harassment with workplace discrimination and gender-based oppression and so on. Someone who experiences sexual harassment and doesn’t know how to use the concept will be unable to experience sexual harassment as sexual harassment, reason out that they are a victim of sexual harassment and so on or make inferential connections between sexual harassment, being wronged, job discrimination and broader patterns of oppression. Moreover, if they are embedded in a community where these conceptual skills are undeveloped, they will be unable to smoothly or successfully communicate their experience to others. Of course, they may know how to use other relevant concepts, but the situation they find themselves in is rather like the breakdown case that occurs when a carpenter approaches a novel job without the requisite tool. Attempting to use tools at hand unsuitable to the job results in poor performance and frustration.

My theory of perceptual skills is particularly useful for making sense of some difficulties with perspective sharing. Thinking about this will help us appreciate how the lack of conceptual skills leads to significant hermeneutical gaps and how having the skills allows one to take up a

he gains noninferential knowledge. What justifies his belief that it is a cardinal is that he saw that it was a cardinal. In order to vindicate his beliefs status as knowledge it is not necessary to cite a further judgment as a premise.
different perspective on the world. Suppose John is not particularly socially attentive and in particular lacks the perceptual skills required to see cases of sexual harassment (or at least that his skills are not very counterfactually robust). Javi on the other hand has the perceptual skills John lacks. When they both witness the inappropriate behavior of a fellow colleague toward another, Javi may see sexual harassment where John only sees friendliness, harmless flirting, joking or otherwise trivial workplace behavior. When Javi vocalizes his recognition to John, he gives expression to an experience that was quite literally unavailable to John. Assuming John has other relevant inferential and perceptual skills he may be able to determine that he’s witnessed a case of sexual harassment when Javi directs his attention in the right way. In general, having the inferential skills will give him the ability to reason out that sexual harassment occurred based on the evidence, argue with someone (or oneself) over whether sexual harassment occurred or simply to think through the significance of calling something sexual harassment. But without the perceptual skills he will not be able to see sexual harassment when it occurs. Despite being exposed to the same perceptual scene, Javi is able to take up a perspective on the situation that is unavailable to John.

The idea here is that having conceptual skills allows one to take up a perspective on the world not available to someone lacking the skills. A perspective is a point of view (broadly construed) from which features of the world show up in a particular way that is only available from that point of view, but literally occupying different locations in space such that objects can show up in experience in different ways (or not at all) doesn’t count as having a different epistemic perspective in the sense deployed here. The relevant difference is a difference in reason-responsive capacities. To have a different epistemic perspective is to be able to give uptake to different reasons in response to the same causal inputs (see Kukla 2006). In the case of
Javi and John, both parties are exposed to the same causal inputs and both have the same basic visual capacities, but Javi is able to access reasons that are quite literally unavailable to John.

One may reasonably wonder whether there aren’t other senses of “hermeneutical” or “interpretive” resources that are substantially weaker or less cognitively sophisticated than this. For example, might there be some non-conceptual, affective or at least less than fully discursive way of understanding sexual harassment, perhaps one that is available before the concept of sexual harassment is developed? While there very well may be an alternative notion, my project here is not to develop an analysis of “hermeneutical resources” in general. What I’m after is an account of whatever specific sort of sense-making resources are left out in cases of hermeneutical injustice. Whatever hermeneutical resources amount to in this case, they cannot be some non-discursive form of understanding that was available to hermeneutically marginalized individuals before the concept is more or less explicitly developed and the injustice was (to some extent) overcome. Since the question of how the concept was developed is the topic of my question (4), it may help to address it now.

5. Self-Regulation and Hermeneutical Injustice

So far, I have argued that someone experiences a hermeneutical gap when they lack certain conceptual skills or know how. If this is the correct way to answer (3), then to understand (4), how we develop hermeneutical resources and make them widely available, we need a theory of conceptual skill development. In chapter 1, I developed the basic contours of a general account of skill acquisition based on Ryle’s treatment of self-regulation. A self-regulator has a sense that there are correct and incorrect ways to perform some task, has the goal of performing correctly, and the sense that the right way can be distinguished from the wrong way by: (a) varying performances in a wide variety of circumstances and (b) responding to feedback on those
performances. If this general account of skill acquisition is correct, then someone who regulates their conceptual skills comes to live up to the normative standards governing the use of a concept by experimenting with it. They may or may not make features of this experimental procedure explicit to themselves, but at a minimum they will be disposed to try out the concept and adjust to feedback on their performances in some way or other.

Let’s think about how this model of learning applies to some concrete perceptual and inferential skills. On this view, to learn to recognize the difference between a major and minor third, a dark or bright tone or the difference between recyclable and non-recyclable materials will involve the performance of trials and response to feedback. Notice that recognizing an interval is a complex business. The same interval can be played in different octaves in the same key or in a different key altogether, on different instruments, at different tempos, descending or ascending, with variations in the dynamics and so on. Someone may be able to recognize the difference in one context but not in others. Recognizing recyclables is similarly complex. Imagine the task from the perspective of the child and it’s easy to see that the task is quite daunting and the know how to be gained quite sophisticated. There are a wide variety of products that can be recycled, they can all come in various forms with the features that indicate recyclability not often transparent, and often recyclable products share many features in common with non-recyclables. To really get it down, you need to engage in the self-regulatory process.

The same goes for gaining inferential skills. To take an imperfect but familiar example, think of how undergraduates come to learn how to have a conversation about a philosophical topic like the free will debate. The teacher will probably outfit them with relevant definitions of terms, but they will learn how to relate the concepts together only by trying to use them while in engaging in some form of dialogue. The same points can be made about ordinary discourse
involving everyday concepts we use to make sense of the world around us. Deploying everyday concepts may be second nature to an adult, but it is unexplored terrain for the child. To get a hang of it, the child tries to use concepts as much as he can and responds to corrective feedback when necessary.

6. Co-Education and Hermeneutical Injustice

If we again take our cues from Carmita Wood’s story, we see that developing the socially shared hermeneutical resources for making sense of sexual harassment involved putting the experience into words, giving that experience a name, and making the description of the experience socially widespread. My claim is that the concept was developed through practices of self-regulation in the sense laid out above. At the same time, political and social changes are required for practices of self-regulation to take place on a grand enough scale to receive uptake and help overcome the injustice. According to Fricker:

Women’s position at the time of second wave feminism was still one of marked social powerlessness in relation to men; and, specifically, the unequal relations of power prevented women from participating on equal terms with men in those practices by which collective social meanings are generated. Most obvious among such practices are those sustained by professions such as journalism, politics, academia, and law…(Fricker 2009, 152).

As Kristie Dotson notes, the major resistance to hermeneutical justice “follows from epistemic power or epistemic structures of privilege and underprivilege” (2014, 14). My current focus, however, is on how practices of self-regulation make concept development possible in the first place, and I will return to the problem of epistemic power in section 8.

First, let’s consider how the basic contours of the concept might have been developed
through co-educational practices, where hermeneutically marginalized individuals come together to share their perspectives and develop new conceptual resources for themselves. Recall that a self-regulator is someone who has a sense that the norms of a task can be determined by undertaking trial performances and responding to corrective feedback. In the current case, women were interested in discovering the norms for the use of a novel concept, and they discovered them experimenting with it. In other words, they began to determine the basic contours of the concept by bringing up cases where the concept might apply and trying to relate the concept to other ideas. Any proposed usage can then be accepted or rejected through individual reflection and further group discussion. I don’t intend to give the impression that the project must have taken on any very specific form in the historical case at issue. At a minimum, developing the skills involves, in some way or other, testing out the concept in various ways.

In describing this model of conceptual skill development in terms of co-educational practices, I mean to convey the idea that marginalized individuals develop conceptual skills by teaching each other how to deploy a novel concept or, in Rylean terms, by guiding each other’s self-regulatory practices. Recall that Ryle rejects the idea that a student should be treated as a passive recorder of behavioral dispositions: where their task is to parrot back the sorts of behaviors approved by the instructor. On this direct model of education, the teacher regulates the behavior of the student; the student is merely well-regulated. On the indirect model of education that Ryle prefers, the student is treated as an active learner engaged with the world. The student is treated as a self-regulator: someone who takes part in figuring out how to participate in the practice by exploring the task environment or domain of knowledge for herself. This form of education is indirect in that the teacher’s goal is to guide the student in their practices of self-regulation. Their goal is to help them develop and test their ideas about how to execute the task.
In co-educational practices, individuals play both the role of the teacher and of the student. As students, they are trying to figure out the right way to think about the world by testing out new ideas, making mistakes, listening to others and so on. As teachers, they are helping others develop original ideas, imagine alternatives, and formulate questions. Of course, these two roles overlap in practice. The basic idea is that of a dialogue between individuals engaged in a joint project of trying to figure out the right way to think about some topic.

For this reason, I prefer to describe co-educational practices as practices of “perspective sharing” or “perspective triangulation”, where we develop a new perspective by triangulating our current perspectives against the world. Recall that self-regulation is a process of *intelligently guided* trial and error. The self-regulators trial performances will be influenced by their particular set of prior knowledge, capacities and experiences. In developing the hermeneutical resources for making sense of sexual harassment, for example, women relied on the socially available concepts and linguistic materials already in their possession. More specifically, Gaile Pohlhaus argues that the detection of hermeneutical gaps is the result of the interplay between the *situatedness* and *interdependence* of epistemic agents (Pohlhaus 2012, 715-723). To say that knowers are situated is to say they are repeatedly exposed to certain features of the world as a result of the social and political position they occupy. Women’s situatedness, for example, made the experience of sexual harassment more readily available, and so they were in a better place to recognize a gap in shared epistemic resources. To say that knowers are interdependent is to say that they (at least causally) depend on others for the possession of those resources. Women already had the vocabulary to describe such behavior as persistent, threatening and sexual in nature, and this is in part what allowed them to recognize the conceptual lacuna. Part of the project was then taking these descriptions and grouping them together under a new category.
This also involved giving the new category a new name, and it is worth noting that the expression "sexual harassment" itself relied on and reflects their prior ability to put the experience into words.

7. Language as a Tool for Developing Conceptual Skills

This last point focuses on the linguistic side of the story of how the hermeneutical resources were developed. But if the women's movement also changed the nature of women's experience, then part of the story is also the invention of a new concept. It should be made clear that developing the term "sexual harassment" and grouping a set of descriptions under it is not the same as developing the concept of sexual harassment strictly speaking. The concept of red or redness is not the same as the term "red". One can have the concept without the term as, for example, a German speaker may lack the English term "red" but retain the concept (and on many theories of concept possession, one can have a concept without possessing any term to express it). Nevertheless, in this case the invention of the term and the development of the concept appear to be deeply related. On the face of it, it was through the process of grouping prior linguistic materials together and prescribing new uses for them that changed women's conceptual repertoire and thereby changed their experience.42

42 This is not to claim, however, that there is anything special about the term “sexual harassment”, and, in fact, it’s well known that the basic concept of sexual harassment has been more or less explicitly developed a number of times in U.S. history in different terms. On the present model, in any such case, social practices of developing the concept could be scaffolded by whatever terminology was deployed.
I submit that the invention of this new linguistic package allowed for concept change in two ways. First of all, it gave women the opportunity to develop the inferential and perceptual skills for recognizing cases of sexual harassment, making sense of it and communicating it to others as discussed in the last section. Secondly, this linguistic package could be used to develop the concept. These two aspects of the change are deeply related: the project of developing the skills and fleshing out the contours of the concept are in some sense one and the same (more specifically, they are at least co-extensional practices).

Andy Clark provides some of the theoretical framework for making sense of how creating a label aids concept learning and development (see Clark 2002; 2005; 2006a; 2006b). Clark argues that language plays a role in cognitive niche construction. In other words, language is, as Daniel Dennett puts it, a tool for thinking—for anchoring, directing, modifying and (in part) constituting thought (see Dennett 2000). Clark contrasts his view of language with the “translation view of language” (2006a). On this view, the impact public language has on thought is a translation process that maps public language sentences onto a private, language-like code. Language merely activates inner processes, which do all the real cognitive work. On Clarks’ view, however, language plays an irreducible role in complementing ongoing cognitive processes:

Compare now the use of a standard tool. When I use a spade to dig the garden, the spade makes an ongoing and complementary contribution to that made by my biological body. There is, in such a case, no obvious sense in which I biologically replicate the essence of the spade’s activity. Instead, the digging power resides in the larger coupled system. (Clark 2006a, 292)
Two analogous ways language complements cognitive processes are by directing attention in discriminatory tasks and aiding meta-cognition. Focusing on the former, Clark argues that labeling aspects of the world simplifies perceptual tasks by focusing our attention and allowing us to rely on simply statistical and associative learning mechanisms to tune up to features of the environment (Clark 2005, 257-259; Lupyan 2006). Moreover, once a perceptual category is learned, the label can serve as a perceptual cue that primes categorization by activating top-down expectations about the perceptual environment (Lupyan 2012). The basic point is that labels can help us learn to perceive features of the world that would otherwise go unnoticed. In other words, naming the world helps us develop perceptual skills.

Focusing on the latter, linguistic tokens aid meta-cognition by “freez[ing] specific contents for subsequent reencounter and further reflection” (Clark 2002, 681). This means that language can provide a stable resource for thinking about the adequacy of our conceptual skills and how they might be improved. Because language is a public resource, linguistic tokens can be used to coordinate attention on our conceptual skills and is therefore useful for developing our skills as a joint project. In the case of sexual harassment, once the term is introduced women can take their new vocabulary to the world and ask what sort of patterns of behavior it covers. They can now point to new candidate instances and enter into debates about whether or not it counts as sexual harassment and attempt to explain why or why not. It allows them to ask questions that they couldn't ask before so as to delimit their understanding of the boundaries of the concept and to draw connections with other concepts already in their possession. In other words, it helps them develop new inferential skills. It allows them to ask questions like “can sexual harassment only occur between a boss and a subordinate or between co-workers as well?” “can a man be a victim?” “what is the difference between sexual harassment and harmless flirting or a grand
romantic gesture?” “how does sexual harassment relate to other forms of gender specific harms like stalking or sexual assault?” or “how does it relate to patriarchal systems of oppression generally?” By engaging in this project, they at the same time refine their conceptual skills. They come to recognize new cases of sexual harassment they had not before and link it up with other concepts in novel ways as well through a process of social self-regulation.\textsuperscript{43}

8. Education and Hermeneutical Injustice

So far, I’ve been exploring how conceptual resources are developed through co-educational practices where hermeneutically marginalized individuals come together to share their perspectives and develop new conceptual resources for themselves. However, if overcoming hermeneutical injustice also requires making these conceptual resources widely available, then the project will involve \textit{educational}, in addition to co-educational, practices. While the theory of education as perspective triangulation blurs the student/teacher distinction, there is nevertheless a clear distinction to be made between education and co-education. Although the student is treated as in some sense an equal partner in the process of discovery, the teacher knows her subject matter and knows how to guide the student through the learning

\textsuperscript{43} The view I’ve sketched so far of hermeneutically marginalized individuals coming together, sharing their perspectives, and using labels to develop novel concepts is strongly reminiscent of Paulo Freire’s view of the role of education in overcoming oppressive conditions in \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed}. This suggests that embedding the Rylean theory of self-regulation within Freire’s framework might give us a plausible model of the sort of educational practices that make overcoming hermeneutical injustice possible. Though I lack space to expand on the historical details, this is more or less what I have tried to achieve here.
process. Since she has a better grasp of the subject matter, her claims carry more weight. At the same time, she respects the student’s efforts and takes her ideas seriously. The more the student participates in the practice, the more she develops a robust perspective (i.e. she develops and refines her conceptual skills). This means that she comes to have a more robust perspective from which to evaluate claims about how the practice should be carried out. This suggests that a key difference between student and teacher is that the student can provide comparatively little resistance to the teacher’s point of view. They are less able to induce the sort of epistemic conflicts that drive perspective revision in their teacher than their teacher is able to induce in them. The more the student can provide epistemic friction, the more they count as full participants in the practice, and eventually the line between student and teacher breaks down.

The distinction between education and co-education is useful because hermeneutical injustice is overcome both through education involving participants with equally robust perspectives and participants who do not have equally robust perspectives. Although I have so far only focused on a small portion of the story, the development of the concept of sexual harassment was something that happened over long a period of time and was carried out by many differently situated people coming to terms with the concept in different public and private forums. These projects include the consciousness raising workshops and public speak outs, the practices of feminist academics connecting the phenomena to broader patterns of oppression and gender based-harm, the activities of the courts and legal scholars, the work of the human resource representative in the office as well as the efforts of everyday people coming to understand the concept in their own ways. Through organizing consciousness raising workshops and organized speak outs women essentially embarked on a marketing campaign for the concept of sexual harassment, but that was only part of the story. The rest is a story of continuous
discovery (or rediscovery) and potentially ongoing reshaping of the concept, and there is no reason to think that once somebody is educated they cannot then take on the role of co-educator in ongoing practices of conceptual skill development. It may be worth pointing out again that the episode I’ve focused on represents a remaking and refining of the concept, and, moreover, one facilitated by the efforts of women earlier in U.S. history who tackled the issue (see, e.g., Siegel 2004).44

When I speak of differently situated knowers coming to grips with the concept, I include the education of those with resistant perspectives, and here is where the problem of willful hermeneutical injustice arises. According to Gaile Pohlhaus, this form of hermeneutical injustice occurs when “dominantly situated knowers refuse to acknowledge epistemic tools developed from the experienced world of those situated marginally” (Pohlhaus 2012, 715; see also Dotson 2014). Just as the situatedness of marginal knowers puts them in a position to recognize gaps in collective resources, the situatedness of dominate knowers ensures that the gaps are unlikely to show up from their privileged point of view. It also may not benefit dominantly situated knowers to recognize the gap, and they may actually benefit from living in a society where this form of ignorance is common.

44 It’s also worth pointing out that the view of educational practices as a response to hermeneutical injustice places emphasis on developing new perspectives rather than on developing a unified, communal perspective. This means that the present account is perfectly compatible with a view of hermeneutical injustice that emphasizes multiple perspectives and context bound modes of speaking and thinking about a phenomenon (see, most prominently, Medina 2013).
To make the problem of willful ignorance concrete, return to the example of John and Javi. I claimed that John lacks the conceptual skills for recognizing and making sense of sexual harassment, and so he fails to see sexual harassment as Javi does. Perhaps this description of the case is somewhat misleading. John cannot reliably and resiliently recognize sexual harassment when it occurs, but he will presumably have the conceptual skills required to recognize the incident as a case of “harassment” of a “sexual nature”. In other words, he will presumably have the same conceptual resources that women used to recognize a hermeneutical gap and develop the concept of sexual harassment through social practices of self-regulation in the first place. Plausibly then, the problem with John is that he refuses to bring these concepts together and begin the process that leads to reliable and resilient seeing. In general, what I want to suggest is that willful hermeneutical ignorance occurs when dominantly situated individuals refuse, for whatever reason, to engage in the learning process. Pohlhaus recognizes a similar point when she claims that the “attention of [dominantly situated individuals] needs some training” (2012, 722). To train someone’s attention, on the theory offered here, is to help them self-regulate their conceptual skills through practices of education.

Pohlhuas points out that training someone’s attention is no easy task. They may, for example, refuse the requisite education from the outset, using the lack of shared conceptual resources within the society as evidence that there is nothing to learn (2012, 722). I would add that the initial refusal learn has the unfortunate and dangerous side effect of further reinforcing the ignorance of the dominantly situated knower further down the road. The problem is that of a self-insulating feedback loop. By refusing to gain the relevant conceptual skills, the dominantly situated individual assures that further evidence of a conceptual gap will continue to be unavailable, which they can then use to further justify their refusal to learn the skills. Although a
full account of how dominantly situated knowers break out of the loop and recognize gaps in their conceptual skills is beyond the scope of this chapter, I can make one general point. I have argued that hermeneutical injustice is overcome through practices of education, where individuals develop new skills by teaching each other. But if teaching is itself a skill, then one becomes a better teacher through practices of self-regulation involving intelligently guided practices of trial and error as well. The point is fairly broad, but it is still illuminating. Rather than recommend something like a general, one-size-fits-all, rule to cover all cases of willful ignorance, it suggests that those interested in interventions designed to break individuals out of the loop take an exploratory approach and tailor a specific curriculum responsive to the unique demands of each situation.

9. Resilience and Self-Regulation

Before concluding with some brief reflections on the benefits of the view and opening up avenues for further research, I would like to return to (3) and ward off some potential misunderstandings. I argued that to have hermeneutical resources is to possess relevant concepts and know how to use them, but in a way this response makes the language of “having” resources somewhat misleading. Talking about “having resources” suggests passivity or the possession of static capacities deployed in a fixed way in familiar circumstance. In contrast, the theory of conceptual skills I’ve developed places emphasis on active, flexible abilities to respond to novel circumstances. Knowing how to use a concept requires resilience—being prepared to apply the concept in new ways and connect it to new ideas. This doesn’t mean that knowing how to do something always requires continuous deep engagement in the learning process. It does however require being prepared to engage in the learning process to some extent. In a sense then, to have the conceptual skills is to be in the process of figuring out how to use them.
10. Epistemic Agency, Confidence, and Corrective Virtue

The present account not only helps us think about how hermeneutical injustice is overcome. It also helps us think about the nature of hermeneutical marginalization and other matters related to Fricker’s questions (1) and (2). According to Fricker: “when there is unequal *hermeneutical participation* [emphasis added] with respect to some significant area(s) of social experience, members of the disadvantaged group are *hermeneutically marginalized*” (2009, 153), but she never develops an account of what hermeneutical participation involves. Now we are in a position to say that to be hermeneutically marginalized is to be (in some way, to some extent and perhaps only in some contexts) prevented from participating in self-regulatory practices. It is to be prevented from deploying concepts in new ways or developing new concepts. Since developing conceptual skills essentially involves making claims about how we ought to deploy our concepts, we can say that it is to be prevented from making a normative claim. It’s to be prevented from making claim about which conceptual skills are worth having and which epistemic perspectives track objective features of the world. It is to be prevented from calling on others to refine their cognitive capacities or exercise them in different ways and thereby entering into relationships of mutual recognition. If we view participation in such practices as important features of fully developed epistemic agency as I argued in the last chapter, we can say that to be hermeneutically marginalized is to be treated as a partial or deficient epistemic agent.

Understanding the situation from this perspective may help us further understand some of the additional harms of hermeneutical marginalization Fricker mentions. According to Fricker, hermeneutical marginalization can result in a loss of *epistemic confidence*, which she describes as your “faith in your own ability to make sense of the world”, and may “prevent one from gaining new knowledge” and gaining important epistemic virtues (Fricker 2009, 163). From the
present perspective, to lack epistemic confidence is to lack a sense of one’s ability or standing to make a normative claim or enter into practices involving mutual recognition, and thereby operates as a form of internalized oppression and a further roadblock to the full expression of one’s agency. Finally, the present account may also help us think about the role of corrective virtues in overcoming hermeneutical injustice. Fricker argues epistemic agents must develop a “capacity for indefinitely context-sensitive judgment” about how and when a speaker’s struggling to make sense of a phenomena is due to unjust conditions and is not simply a personal failing (Fricker 2009, 171). On the present account, the virtue of hermeneutical justice helps scaffold a marginalized individual’s practices of self-regulation by bringing them into practices of education. I’ve already explored how this might have occurred in organized consciousness raising groups, but there is no reason to think that co-educational and educational practices can’t take place on a smaller scale in less structured environments as well. If it’s right to say that hermeneutical marginalization undermines or limits one’s epistemic agency, then we can say that it is through educational practices such as these that one’s full epistemic agency is developed or restored. By exercising one’s ability to resiliently deploy conceptual resources or perhaps develop new ones, one achieves a fuller expression of one’s agency and this may also help repair one’s sense of epistemic confidence. Although I’ve only offered a sketch, this proposal is intuitive. If one’s epistemic agency is initially developed through educational practices, then it should come as no surprise that conditions that undermine one’s agency are overcome through further participation in educational practices.

11. Conclusion

My goal in this chapter was to develop an account of hermeneutical resources and provide a model of how they are developed and made widely available to members of society. In the next
chapter, I expand on this account while addressing the problem of conceptual echo chambers. Differently situated knowers struggle to understand each other’s perspectives, and this is one of the major obstacles to hermeneutical justice. The idea that different knowers may be in an echo chamber captures this problem in metaphorical terms. My goal will be to unpack the metaphor by exploring a particular kind of echo chamber and explore how individuals and communities break out of the loop.
Chapter 5: Conceptual Echo Chambers and the Dunning-Kruger Effect

In the wake of the 2016 EU referendum in the U.K. and the presidential election shortly following in the U.S., some media outlets explained the surprise that many liberals felt at the results in terms of “echo chambers” (see, e.g., Hosanagar 2016; Emba 2016; Hooten 2016; Khalid 2017; Chater 2016). The idea behind the metaphor is that most of us live in an epistemic environment which supports and reinforces our own views to the exclusion of conflicting viewpoints, largely by keeping them out of sight. The major focus was on how personalization algorithms on websites like Facebook, Twitter and Google, create what is sometimes called a “filter bubble” by predicting what media you would like to consume in the future based on what you’ve consumed in the past. Assuming others are exposed to similar information, the sheltered liberal confidently predicts an outcome consistent with liberal narratives. Little does she know that her confidence is the product of feedback loops which ensure conflicting trends are suppressed. Whether or not the online filter bubble is significant enough to have such effects is a matter of debate, but few would deny that human beings are frequently subject to the problem of echo chambers. Moreover, it takes only a little humility to acknowledge that one’s own perspective may be the product self-reinforcing feedback loops as well.

My goal here is to explain how such effects may indeed be present and be present without our noticing them. In a sense, I’m interested in defending a moderate form of skepticism about our beliefs in light of a certain kind of epistemic echo chamber. In the last chapter, I introduced the concept of an epistemic perspective. I have a different epistemic perspective from you when I am able to access different reasons in response to the same causal inputs. John and Javi may witness the same workplace behavior, but where John only sees playful flirting Javi sees harassment. I argued that a difference in epistemic perspective is the result of a difference in
conceptual skill. In this chapter I am interested in how our conceptual skills can create epistemic environments that sustain feedback loops that reinforce our current viewpoint. The basic skeptical worry is that revision of our conceptual skills is driven by epistemic conflicts, but for epistemic conflicts to show up, one needs certain conceptual skills. This suggests that one could be in a scenario where one’s conceptual skills are limited in such a way that they prevent the sort of conflicts that would improve them from showing up in the first place, even if the evidence is otherwise available in your environment (i.e., in such a way that you could access it if you had the relevant skills). The result is a feedback-loop that confirms and reinforces one’s current point of view, and this is precisely the sort of echo-chamber that interests me.

I have two major sub-tasks. The first is to describe the problem of these conceptual echo-chambers alongside the general sorts of obstacles to receiving the sort of critical feedback that motivates perspective revision. The second is to explore ways of breaking out of the loop. My primary strategy for accomplishing the former is to draw on what is known as the Dunning-Kruger effect, which explains the failure of unskilled individuals to recognize their own lack of skill (Kruger and Dunning 1999). My strategy for accomplishing the latter is to adapt Christina Bicchieri’s model of social normative change and explain how individuals break out of the loop in terms of the broader evolution of social epistemic practices.

1. Contingent Histories and Perspective Sharing

To see how problems for perspective sharing emerge, consider how an agent’s epistemic perspective is developed through a history of encounters with their environment and other members of their community. This history involves repeated exposure to particular claims and patterns of reasoning, exposure to certain aspects of the world, and participation in reason giving exchanges. The particular combination of such influences makes up one’s contingent epistemic
history (Kukla and Ruetsche 2002). Different individuals will have different epistemic histories, and so each agent will have a different perspective on the world. Nevertheless, if your epistemic perspective is developed through interactions with agents in your environment, then it is reasonable to suppose that you will more or less share the perspective of those around you. After all, you receive an education from and eventually engage in reason giving practices with those in your environment. Agents in similar environments will tend to have similar perspectives. Agents in dissimilar environments will tend to have differing perspectives. This leads to problems for fully discursive forms of perspective sharing because discursive forms of perspective sharing require considerable overlap in conceptual skill.

In her discussion of deliberative forms of democracy, Iris Marion Young captures the basic shape of the problem as follows:

In some formulations of the model of deliberative democracy argument constitutes the primary form of political communication. By argument I mean the construction of an orderly chain of reasoning from premises to conclusion. While argument is an important contributor to political discussion, there are reasons to be suspicious of privileging argument, and especially certain interpretations of what good argument means, over other forms of communication. On these accounts, deliberation cannot proceed unless there are some premises that all the discussants accept, and a generally accepted conceptual and normative framework for framing the issues. Discussion should proceed, this interpretation assumes, by identifying such mutually accepted premises and frameworks, and should aim to base arguments on them. Given the heterogeneity of human life and the complexity of social structures and interaction, however, the effort to shape arguments according to shared premises within shared discursive frameworks sometimes excludes
the expression of some needs, interests, and suffering of injustice, because these cannot
be voiced with the operative premises and frameworks. (2002, 37)
Young locates the problem with discursive forms of communication in the absence of shared
premises and “discursive frameworks”. The account of conceptual skills I developed in earlier
chapters helps us make sense of this claim in non-metaphorical terms. The problem is that when
two individuals lack significant overlap in their conceptual skills, the second-personal calls made
on one another will often fail.

This problem is perhaps familiar to any educator. The inexperienced teacher attempts to
bring their subject matter to their pupils by speaking in the esoteric language of the professional
or insider: someone who has already been initiated into some sub-culture and knows their way
around the relevant idiolect. A striking example of the failure of discursive communication is
recounted by Myles Horton in his recollections of his attempts to engage with poor marginalized
people in the early days of the Highlander school—an adult education center mostly remembered
for its role in the civil rights movement in the 1960s:

…We were going to bring democracy to the people, I mean bring it to them like a
missionary and dump it on them whether they liked it or not. We thought we were going
to make them world citizens. All of us had traveled, we'd been around, abroad, and we'd
read all this stuff, and we were going to bring all this enlightenment to the people. We
knew how to do it-organize unions and cooperatives and political action and have
educational programs. We knew about how to do those things. Some of us had done some
of it before. All of us had some experience before. We were further along in our political
thinking than most people in the United States at that time. So we thought we were pretty
good, but the people didn't pay any attention to anything we were doing. Nothing we
were doing they reacted to. We couldn't even talk a language they understood. A lot of their language was nonverbal. We were verbal. We were all certified as verbal, but we couldn't communicate! (Horton and Freire 1990, 43-44).

In many cases, a more effective strategy is to engage with one’s pupils in such a way that a new way of speaking is developed about a common subject matter. In the same way, in everyday contexts, different individuals will often bring different idiolects to a common subject matter and the same problem results. Communication is fostered not by unidirectional forms of education where one individual tries to replicate the conceptual skills of the other, putatively authoritative individual through drilling. Instead communication is achieved through developing a new shared vocabulary.

The problems for perspective sharing result from and at the same time reinforce the problem of conceptual echo chambers. The general idea can be described as follows. If one's perspective determines what reasons one can access from others and the world, one will only have ready access to evidence and reasons that more or less jive with that perspective. This can create a sort of feedback loop. One's background commitments make intelligible certain aspects of the world and claims from others that then reinforce those background commitments. If you are for the most part surrounded by others who merely reflect your own perspective back to you, the sort of conflicts that need to show up to motivate rule-revision will not be readily available. This means that it will be more difficult to motivate critical reflection and revision of the inferential commitments that fall nearer to the center (to borrow a Quinian image) of your worldview. Not only will the sort of epistemic conflicts that motivate rule-revision not be available to you, but often times even if they are they will not be able to show up as conflicts.

This is especially problematic since in most instances you probably aren't motivated to
subject your perspective to criticism even when normative conflicts show up. For one, epistemic echo chamber construction provides you with a robust epistemic perspective and repeated assurance that it is really tracking how things are with the world. Not only that, sharing a perspective with members of a community may help you to succeed in that community, and it may matter to you and others that you stick with it. It’s also worth noting that these problems can be compounded if epistemic communities are sometimes divided along the lines of gender, class, race and so on. This can make accessing certain epistemic perspectives particularly difficult when our ability to give uptake to their perspective may be tainted by various biases. The result can be that what from an outside perspective looks like irresponsible epistemic behavior can show up as perfectly responsible from the subject’s own point of view.

2. Meta-Ignorance and the Dunning-Kruger Effect

A central feature of conceptual echo chambers in general is that they go unnoticed by those occupying them. To be in an echo chamber is to find oneself in a situation where the kind of feedback one needs to take a critical stance towards one’s perspective is unavailable. If one knows one is in an echo chamber, then one has taken up a critical stance towards one’s perspective. This means that one is no longer in an echo chamber or, at the very least, the kind of reverberations that sustain it have started to break down. This means that echo chambers are fundamentally tied to what is sometimes called meta-ignorance or ignorance of the gaps in one’s knowledge. If you are in an echo chamber, you are unaware of the lack of a critical perspective on your own perspective. To make sense of this possibility and to make the idea more precise along the way, I explore what has in the empirical literature on meta-ignorance come to be called the Dunning-Kruger effect (Dunning and Kruger 1999).
The eponymous David Dunning and Justin Kruger put forward the Dunning-Kruger effect to explain data showing that lower-skilled individuals are more likely to overestimate their abilities than skilled individuals. Dunning and Kruger explain the data in terms of a “double burden” that poor performers face:

First, deficits in their expertise would lead them to make many mistakes. Second, those exact same deficits would lead them to be unable to recognize when they were making mistakes and when other people were choosing more wisely. (Dunning 2011, 260-261)

In terms of the vocabulary developed in chapter 1, poor performers lack both the first-order skills required to perform the task well and also lack the complementary second-order skills for evaluating such performances. I remarked that first and second-order skills tend to go together, and Dunning draws the same conclusion from empirical data:

This double-curse arises because, in many life domains, the act of evaluating the correctness of one’s (or anyone else’s) response draws upon the exact same expertise that is necessary in choosing the correct response in the first place. That is, in the parlance of psychological research, the skills needed to execute the meta-cognitive task of judging the accuracy of a response are precisely the same as those [necessary] for the cognitive task of producing an accurate response. Need to judge whether one (or someone else) has written a grammatically correct sentence? That act of judgment relies on the same set of skills as the act of forming a grammatically correct sentence in the first place. (Dunning 2011, 261)

Although Dunning doesn’t deploy the vocabulary of first and second-order skills, he clearly makes use of the distinction. Dunning explains the connection between first and second-order skills in terms of what we might call the core skills upon which both depend. For example, first
and second-order grammatical skills may depend on some core cognitive ability for parsing sentences into their syntactical components.\textsuperscript{45} The tightness of the connection between first and second-order skills depends on the nature of the area of expertise (Dunning 2011, 288). There may be a tight connection between first and second-order grammar skills, but the connection between first and second-order free throw shooting skills in basketball will be considerably looser. A coach, for example, may be an excellent critic of shooting technique, but have little ability to shoot the ball herself.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45} Some of Dunning’s language suggests that there is no distinction between first and second-order skills. For example, he states that “often the expertise needed to evaluate knowledge is exactly the same expertise needed to act expertly” (Dunning 2011, 288) The framework deployed by anti-intellectualists allows us to appreciate first and second-order skills as conceptually separate, but still causally connected in important ways (Elzinga 2016, 7-10; compare, Löwenstein 2017, 50-52).

\textsuperscript{46} Specifically, Dunning notes that

When it comes to athletic tasks, for example, the correlation between perception and reality of performance tends to hover around 0.47. However, as one moves to domains that are more knowledge based, the correlation tends to dissolve—to 0.33 for skilled technical knowledge, 0.17 for medical related tasks, 0.28 for job interview skills, 0.20 for general mechanical expertise, 0.17 for interpersonal ability, and 0.04 for managerial skills. In one illustrative study, varsity college football players did not differ from their coaches in how they evaluated their strength, speed, and size—arguably because the manner in which players evaluated those qualities differed from the way that strength,
The Dunning-Kruger effect is meant to explain a certain form of meta-ignorance, cases where one lacks knowledge and doesn’t know it, but there are many forms that meta-ignorance can take. When Donald Rumsfeld spoke in 2002 of the “unknown unknowns” that plague the Department of Defense, it’s natural to interpret him as speaking of cases where one lacks propositional knowledge about gaps in one’s propositional knowledge. In the case of Dunning-Kruger phenomena, however, we are concerned with cases where one lacks propositional knowledge about gaps in one’s know how. In other words, the meta-ignorance in this case is that you don’t know that you lack know how. In order to tell whether your first order performances live up to the norms governing them, you need the second order skills for reliably making such judgments. If having the relevant first-order skills goes with having the relevant second-order skills, then someone who lacks the first order skills won’t be in a position to know that they lack the relevant know how.

At the same time, novices will also be confronted with a lot of positive (but misleading) evidence of their competence. Much of this evidence is indirect. First, judgment speed and task familiarity increase confidence in one’s accuracy and ability, but both can be positively manipulated without corresponding improvements in task performance (Dunning 2011, 276). Second, people tend to be more confident in their abilities to the extent that they follow a general rule or strategy, even if it is the incorrect one (Dunning 2011, 277). Third, people often carry

speed, and size were produced. However, when it came to traits in which one could argue that the same skills were needed to produce and evaluate performance—such as mental toughness, coordination, and “football sense”—varsity players tended to rate themselves more favorably than did their coaches. (Dunning 2011, 288)
with them preconceived notions about their level of competence caused by erroneous stereotypes (e.g. that only men are good at math) or by “massed training” educational practices, which frequently bolster confidence without raising skill or a particular history of personal experiences. These preconceived notions then create top-down expectations, which misleadingly color their perception of the feedback they receive during performance (Dunning, Heath and Suls 2004, 86-87). Finally, one way we learn, it might be suggested, is by observing the performance of more skilled individuals and mimicking their performance. Unfortunately for unskilled performers, observation and comparison with more skilled individuals is often unhelpful. Lacking second-order skills means that one will fail to make sense of not only of what’s bad about one’s own performances but also of what’s good about other people’s performance, and this point has some empirical support as well (Dunning 2011, 272-274).

There are a number of other problems which confront the novice worth mentioning. First, for many domains the standards for competent performance may not be clear (e.g., poem composition, abstract jazz, etc., as opposed to basic algebra). Second, feedback is often ambiguous or leaves the correct adjustment underdetermined even when one is trying one’s best to be a conscientious performer (Dunning, Heath and Suls 2004, 73-75). Finally, although Dunning doesn’t offer this point, the very fact that novices lack negative feedback may be taken as positive evidence of competence. Performing under the delusion of expertise, the novice assumes they can also recognize evidence of incompetence. In other words, since they take themselves to possess the first-order skills, they may implicitly assume they have the second-order skills as well. Given that they lack the second-order skills, however, they in fact won’t encounter negative feedback during performance. They may then take this as a positive indication that they are competent after all. As a result, so long as they lack skill, they will
continually acquire positive evidence indicating the contrary, and this self-sustaining feedback-loop constitutes an echo chamber.

3. Conceptual Echo Chambers and the Dunning-Kruger Effect

The Dunning-Kruger effect inhibits one’s abilities to apprise one’s own skills. I argue that when the skills in question are conceptual skills, the result is a conceptual echo chamber. To see how the Dunning-Kruger effect might make sense of conceptual echo chambers, consider again the case of Javi and John. John is not particularly socially attentive and in particular lacks the perceptual skills required to see cases of sexual harassment (or at least that his skills are not very counterfactually robust). Javi has the perceptual skills John lacks. When Javi and John witness the inappropriate behavior of a fellow colleague toward another, Javi may see sexual harassment where John only sees friendliness, harmless flirting, joking or otherwise trivial workplace behavior. Suppose also that John understands sexual harassment to roughly consist in what is normally called “sexual coercion”, a form of sexual harassment that takes place between a male superior and female employee, and he also understands it to only take on a more or less overtly aggressive and physical form. In other words, he has the inferential skills for making sense of this form of sexual harassment to some extent. This means that he probably won’t be in a position to realize that, for example, the persistent flirtatious behavior of one employee towards another is a case of sexual harassment. There may be numerous reasons why John may be resistant or closed off to the idea that sexual harassment has occurred, but let us suppose that he is reasonably open to the idea. Although he is somewhat inclined like other’s in his reference network to see it as harmless, he is reasonably open to learning, and the possibility of being
wrong in this case doesn’t strongly conflict with his worldview or self-image.\textsuperscript{47} In contrast to the
description I offered in the last chapter, suppose that although John is ignorant, perhaps culpably so, he is not willfully or intentionally ignorant.

While willful ignorance is often the most significant barrier to accessing new ways of thinking, I’m interested in isolating a different problem here. I want to explore how simply lacking the relevant conceptual skills can close off access to the corrective feedback that makes developing new conceptual skills possible. Assuming that the second-order skills required to evaluate perceptual judgements of sexual harassment go along with the complementary first-order skills required to make judgements of sexual harassment, John will be unable to immediately see that his original perceptual judgement was erroneous. Recall also that John only possess the inferential skills for making sense of sexual coercion. Assuming that the second-order inferential skills for making sense of sexual harassment go with the first-order skills, he will not be able to formulate a chain of reasons to readily convince himself that harassment occurred. In other words, John faces a problem of meta-ignorance of the kind described by the Dunning-Kruger effect.

It is reasonable to presume that the first and second-order skills for making sense of sexual harassment will go together, and Dunning notes that this is usually the case for largely cognitive tasks (2011, 288). Both first and second-order conceptual skills fundamentally rely on an ability

\textsuperscript{47} I borrow the idea of a “reference network” from Cristina Bicchieri, who offers the following definition: “I call the range of people whom we care about when making particular decisions our reference network because they may be spread around and not be physically present” (2017, Ch. 1).
to discriminate conditions under which a response is appropriate: recognizing an aspect of the world or making an inferential move in the case of first-order skills and taking such performances to be correct or incorrect in the case of second-order skills. The difference is merely that of making the performance or making an evaluative meta-performance. I don’t deny that these skills can come apart to some extent (think of the familiar adage that it’s easier to criticize than create), but for creatures who habitually engage in practices of sanctioning one another’s behavior, having one sort of cognitive skill will largely go with having the other. In the present case, one can recognize a judgment of a behavior as a case of sexual harassment as correct only if one can also make the first-order judgment oneself. So, if one lacks the first-order skill, one will lack the second-order skill as well.

John may also be resistant to changing his perspective because he interprets Javi as “over-sensitive” about such matters. It may often be the case that the exercise of a genuine perceptual skill often shows up this way to individuals lacking the skill themselves. The problem is that for many conceptual skills it is hard to come up with an independent check that would demonstrate competence. Compare chicken sexing. In the early days of this practice, Japanese chick-sexers, who originally developed the technique, made demonstrations of their competence to skeptical poultry farmers abroad in order to market the practice (Martin 1994). Demonstrating competence is fairly straightforward. Sex a hundred or so chicks, then dissect them to check the results. What makes the independent check possible is that skeptics possess an alternative set of perceptual skills for confirming the sex of the chick. The problem is that this kind of independent check isn’t always readily available in all domains. In John’s case in particular, there aren’t any alternative perceptual skills he can rely on, and an independent check won’t be available until he gains the relevant conceptual skills. This is precisely the Dunning-Kruger effect.
Are there other reasons to think John might be subject to meta-ignorance other than the Dunning-Kruger effect? A number of the other problems that plague novices mentioned in the last section may be present as well. First, notice that this may be a domain where the standards for competence aren’t clear. Reasonable people may well disagree about what sort of behaviors count as sexual harassment and how the concept relates to other ideas. There may, in other words, be sincere debate between individuals with different epistemic histories about the norms governing our conceptual skills on the matter. One may rightly object that John still clearly misunderstands the scope of the concept at a very basic level. Although there may be disagreements about some cases, it seems right to say that sexual harassment can occur, for example, between co-workers who aren’t in a boss/subordinate relationship, which John fails to recognize. Even so, it’s the sort of topic for which many individuals, whether men or women, will have to negotiate a number of competing perspectives and hitting on the right one is a non-trivial achievement.

It’s also not hard to imagine how indirect positive feedback might also be present to bolster John’s confidence in his perspective. I mentioned earlier that confidence in one’s abilities may come from one’s preconceived notions of competence, which might be influenced by, for example, massed training sessions. In massed training, students are quickly brought to a high-level of competence through a few intense training sessions. While massed training is effective for gaining competence fast, it is well known that it is ineffective for retaining skill over a longer period of time when compared with spaced or distributed forms of training, where learning is slow, difficult, and presents students with more variation (Dunning, Heath and Suls 2004, 86-87). It is probably not a stretch to imagine that sexual harassment training, through mandatory weekend seminars, workshops, online courses and so on, fit the bill of typical massed training
sessions. Suppose that John has at some time taken such a course. He may well retain a sense of his ability to deploy the concept of sexual harassment without actually retaining the skills. This means that when he is confronted with the behavior in question and readily identifies it as unproblematic, he will be confident in his response. Similarly, if he is confronted with behavior that better fits the description of sexual coercion, he will find the case familiar and the relevant concepts swiftly deployable. This is a speculative description of a hypothetical character, but the case is plausible, and probably quite typical. There is evidence that strongly suggests that men in the United States tend to deploy a narrower concept of sexual harassment than women (Rotundo, Nguyen, Sackett 2001; Robinson 2008). Moreover, Dunning-Kruger type effects tend to be more prevalent for skills that are considered commonplace or skills that aren’t associated with specialized training. Most unskilled individuals won’t overestimate their ability to read an MRI or create fine art, but they may overestimate their ability (relative to other performers) to parallel park or make ordinary perceptual judgments (Kruger 1999). Combined with the general assumption that ordinary perceptual tasks aren’t skill involving at all, it’s not hard to imagine that John takes his conceptual skills for deploying the concept of sexual harassment to be at least as good as anyone else’s.

Since one lacks the second-order skills required to recognize when one’s performances fail to live up to standards, one lacks the sensitivity to corrective feedback required for propositional knowledge of one’s lack of know how. It may be objected, however, that this only poses a problem for gaining knowledge of one’s particular failings or inadequacies. It makes it hard to know the precise way in which one is unskilled and use this knowledge to fund further hypotheses about how to improve. But won’t it be possible in many cases to know that one has much to learn without knowing exactly what one is lacking? Consider the case of a novice
canoer. They may not have the second-order skill required to tell what exactly is wrong with their performance, but if they are banging into the riverbank, capsizing or making only marginal progress with maximum effort, they will know that they lack know how of some kind. They don’t know in any precise detail what it is they don’t know how to do, but even imprecise knowledge such as this may serve as a starting point for the learning process.

While there is no denying that in many cases there may be course indicators of inability accessible to the novice, in some cases they won’t be available. As Dunning points out, meta-ignorance is more common among novices in some domains and not others:

In athletics, where feedback tends to be constant, immediate, and objective, the typical correlation [between self-perception and objective performance] was .47. In the realm of complex social skills, where feedback might be occasional and is often delayed and ambiguous, it tended to be much lower (e.g., .04 for managerial competence and .17 for interpersonal skills). (Dunning, Heath and Suls 2004, 71)

The problem is that knowing how to use the concept of sexual harassment is plausibly a complex social skill where feedback is “occasional” and “often delayed and ambiguous”. When John misrecognizes problematic behavior as harmless flirting, he is crashing into the riverbank without realizing it. This is the kind of skill one may smoothly and consistently deploy poorly without noticing.

4. Breaking Out of the Loop

So far, I have focused on the individual factors that sustain echo chambers. This may create the impression that in order to explain how someone gets into an echo-chamber, we need only refer to features of their individual psychology. The basic idea would be that the sorts of conflicts that would undermine meta-ignorance are sustained by a lack of first-order conceptual
skills which co-varies with a lack in the second-order skills required to appreciate the lack. This suggests a correspondingly individual focused solution. In order to overcome meta-ignorance, the individual needs an education tailored toward providing the sort of epistemic friction required to break out of the loop.

While there is nothing wrong about this way of framing the problem and solution per se, it leaves us with a fairly myopic and somewhat unhelpful picture. A deeper account of epistemic echo chambers will take into account both the social and individual factors that sustain them and the individual and social changes that it takes to break out of them. Whether the conceptual resources for making sense of sexual harassment will be available to John will depend on how widespread they have become in (for example) U.S. society, and they won’t be “spread out” evenly. Individuals with different conceptual skills, social positions and social networks, interests and so on will have better or worse access, and certain individuals will be able to access them only in certain ways. There not only has to be corrective feedback available in one’s epistemic environment, it also has to be available in a way that makes uptake possible.

The fact that epistemic agents have different access to aspects of the world may provide the key to making sense of how individuals get out of epistemic echo chambers. When we looked at the historical development of the contemporary concept of sexual harassment, we saw that it involved consciousness raising workshops and public speak outs, the practices of feminist academics connecting the phenomena to broader patterns of oppression and gender based-harm, the activities of the courts and legal scholars, the work of the human resource representative in the office as well as the efforts of everyday people coming to understand the concept in their own ways. Through organizing a media campaign, women embarked on a marketing campaign for the concept of sexual harassment, and in contemporary U.S. society the concept is familiar to
most people at least in name. In fact, focusing on the example of John may be downright misleading. John finds himself in an echo chamber in large part because, oversimplifying a bit perhaps, he doesn’t need to know how to recognize sexual harassment (compare Pohlhaus 2012, 719). It may not provide him with any immediate benefit to know how to do so, and he may even profit from living in a society where this form of ignorance is common. The victims of sexual harassment or those who care about their interests, on the other hand, will have stronger reasons to make sense of the phenomena, and the sorts of impediments to developing the conceptual skills may be different for them.

In order to develop a more pluralistic account of how individuals belonging to various social groups break out of epistemic echo chambers, I borrow from Christina Bicchieri’s general account of social normative change (Bicchieri and Mercier 2014; Bicchieri 2016; Bicchieri 2005). Although Bicchieri is not interested in the epistemic dimensions of normative change in particular, exploring some of her key ideas should offer a useful model of the kind of change dampens epistemic echo chambers. For the sake of simplicity, I will skip over some of the nuances of her view and focus on three major ideas: (1) normative change requires adequate reasons, (2) normative change requires a change in group (empirical and normative) expectations (3) normative change is initiated by first-movers.

Bicchieri first points out that normative change is motivated by reasons, which are recognized and taken as reasons by (at least some) members of a society undergoing social change. What counts as a reason may be highly variable and Bicchieri intends the term in a wide sense: “[r]easons may be personal, be they factual or normative, and they may be social (i.e., social expectations)” (2015, ch. 3). In a community where open defecation is commonly practiced, individuals have reason (whether they recognize it or not) to switch to latrines, and in
this case these are reasons related to maintaining the health of community members. In a community where a high-status woman starts breast feeding, other women in a community may thereby acquire social reasons to switch to breast-feeding. In many cases, of course, reasons will come in a variety of forms and there may be a number of pro tanto reasons available for changing a social practice.

In order to see how this idea applies to the case of epistemic normative change, consider the kinds of reasons available to women in the workplace during the women’s liberation movement for developing new epistemic norms and correlative skills. Women (and members of the broader society at large) presumably had a wide variety of different reasons and perhaps different kinds of reasons to develop new skills. It was through, for example, consciousness raising, speak outs, media attention and so on that those reasons were first (explicitly) recognized and subsequently acted on. In earlier chapters, I explored the ways in which changes in epistemic skills and thereby epistemic norms is motivated by epistemic conflicts. Another way of putting Bicchieri’s point then is that for normative change to be possible, there must be the seeds of epistemic conflicts present in one’s environment. But now it would appear that we must confront the very same problems with perspective revision canvassed in the first part of this chapter. If gaining new conceptual skills requires the ability to give uptake to reasons that only show up if one possesses those conceptual skills already, how does the process start? It may be, however, that I’ve somewhat overstated the nature of the skeptical problem novices face. By putting the problem in a social context, the answer, or at least the right question, should become clearer. As I will show, different novices will be differently situated in epistemic space (compare Pohlhaus 2012). This will give some, in some contexts, access to reasons that would otherwise not show up or, perhaps, show up only dimly. As we’ll see when I address Bicchieri’s third point, these
individuals can then act as first-movers who are able to induce the sort of epistemic conflicts in other individuals which will drive broader social-normative change.

Before I get to that, it will help to explore the second point. According to Bicchieri, social normative change requires a change in group expectations. Bicchieri puts the point this way:

Now suppose we all have good reasons to change or abandon a practice and that we are even aware of these reasons. We know it would be beneficial to behave differently. Yet to change behavior we must be reasonably sure we are not acting alone. The reason is simple. When behaviors are interdependent, acting alone is dicey. How strong are the negative consequences of deviating from a shared norm alone? (2016, ch. 3)

Here it is important to emphasize that social norms are sustained not only through empirical expectations (about what people will do) but also normative expectations (about what they ought to do). We expect deviations from a shared social norm to incur sanctions, and this expectation (sometimes even if it is inaccurate) is a powerful motive for compliance. One striking illustration of the power of normative expectations involves pluralistic ignorance. For example, while most members of a community may be personally opposed to a harmful practice (like FGC) shared normative expectations may be enough to ensure that the practice remains relatively stable given that most people are also ignorant of each other’s undisclosed opposition. Often in such cases there are also taboos against openly discussing such matters, which may further exacerbate the problem.

\[48\] Pluralistic ignorance is specifically defined as “a cognitive state in which each member of a group believes her personal normative beliefs and preferences are different from those of similarly situated others, even if public behavior is identical” (Bicchieri 2016, ch. 1).
Bicchieri explores the role of small-scale group deliberation, media campaigns, economic incentives and legal interventions in promoting changes in shared normative expectations (2016, ch.4). In many cases, the interventions that successfully promote normative change target shared normative expectations indirectly. For example, a soap opera may change social expectations about women’s roles within a community by portraying an otherwise prototypical woman who in some way successfully departs from normative expectations. The apparent purpose of the drama is entertainment, but it subtly changes normative expectations by providing a new model for a social role and attendant social scripts. Community deliberation can help remove pluralistic ignorance and indirectly target problematic behavior by, for example, exposing community members to new information and “drawing attention to implicit core values and their consequences as well as potential inconsistencies between those values and certain practices” (Bicchieri 2016, ch. 4). In other words, deliberation provides groups with an opportunity to deploy their rich set of conceptual capacities to expose latent epistemic conflicts or use new information to create new ones, which motivate further deliberation in order to resolve them.

There are, as Bicchieri notes, a number of problems with group deliberation as a tool of normative change. Groups where individuals have similar views tend to polarize, or gain more confidence in their original views, due to the fact that they lack a significant source of epistemic friction. Even in groups where an individual possesses relevant critical information, that individual will be ignored if that information is not widely shared beforehand (Wieber, Thürmer and Gollwitzer 2012).

While these and the other sorts of interventions Bicchieri mentions, like top-down legislation or economic incentives, may not be sufficient on their own to promote normative change, together they can be quite productive once the ball is rolling, and this is the job of
trendsetters or “first movers”. The idea that normative change requires a change in group normative expectations seems to make sense of the epistemic changes involved in the case of sexual harassment. Recall that feminists developed the conceptual skills required to overcome epistemic injustice in this case though the sustained intellectual labor of those involved in the media, law and so on. One might wonder at this point whether the change in normative expectations that drives conceptual change is merely causally relevant or whether it in some way justifies conceptual readjustment. One may relatedly wonder about the suitability of Bicchieri’s framework, which focuses on social norms sustained primarily through social normative expectations, to the epistemic realm. We presumably don’t participate in epistemic practices in the way we do solely because others in our environment do the same.

I will return to these worries after I address the role of first movers. According to Bicchieri, first movers will typically have considerably stronger reasons to deviate, less sensitivity to the relevant norms, a higher sense of self-efficacy and autonomy, and will be less risk averse and perceive less risk in norm-deviation (2016, ch. 5). The problem that first movers solve, recall, is that even when there are reasons to deviate from a shared norm, deviation is prevented by the currently prevailing normative system. The basic idea is that deviation from the norm comes more easily to those how have the sorts of features just described. This can lead then to a sort of cascade effect whereby those with more norm sensitivity and higher risk aversion become more and more likely to act on the nascent reasons for change as the growing force of the movement lowers the perceived risk of deviation. Bicchieri puts special emphasis on the role of groups as trendsetters. One important feature of groups is that they can create their own reference network of like-minded individuals where the relevant deviant behavior does not call for immediate sanction:
These initially small groups might need to recruit other cohorts in order to diffuse and sustain novel behavior. We may think of the starting group as a sort of collective trendsetter that wants to spread its new ideas to other networks. But how does the “collective trendsetter” successfully reach these other networks? Mackie and LeJeune (2009) discuss how diffusion of deliberation out of what they call the “core group” gets organized and, depending on the local culture, how this diffusion may work through local and more general networks. There are several possible channels of diffusion that may be employed: discussion with family and friends, meeting with elders, religious leaders, women groups, community meetings and discussions with nearby communities, or inter-village meetings with delegates from surrounding communities. All these interventions aim to secure a collective shift of personal beliefs (factual and normative) that could eventually facilitate a change in social expectations. Changing personal beliefs is not equivalent to changing social expectations, especially empirical ones. Changing the latter means either directly observing or trusting that a practice is being abandoned and that a new one is emerging. (Bicchieri 2016, ch. 5)

It’s not hard to appreciate again how Bicchieri’s account fits the story of overcoming hermeneutical injustice in the case of sexual harassment, but the disanalogies may also be more acute. The biggest obstacle to change for cases that interest Bicchieri are the shared normative expectations and the threat of sanctions for deviant behavior. Is it really right to think that the fear of sanctions is the biggest obstacle to epistemic change?

5. Social Norms

The worry can be made more precise by examining Bicchieri’s definition of social norms.

Bicchieri is interested in social norms, and normative change, of a particular kind:
A [social] norm is a behavioral rule that 1. is known to exist and apply to a class of situations, 2. is followed by individuals in a population on condition that a. it is believed that sufficiently many others follow it (empirical expectations), and b. it is believed that sufficiently many others believe the rule should be followed, and/or may be willing to sanction deviations from it (normative expectations). (Bicchieri 2016, ch. 2)

What distinguishes social norms in the intended sense from other sorts of norms is that norm adherence is contingent on one’s empirical and normative expectations. In other words, in some counterfactually robust sense, if one didn’t have such expectations, one wouldn’t follow the norm. This prima facie distinguishes social norms from other sorts of norms like prudential, moral or religious norms (which Bicchieri describes as social in a “weak sense”) (Bicchieri 2016, ch. 2). While there may be some sense in which the latter are socially dependent (e.g. if you didn’t grow up in a certain religious community, you wouldn’t adhere to its norms) they aren’t socially dependent such that manipulating empirical and normative expectations will (given other conditions obtain to be discussed shortly) straightforwardly lead to change in behavior. This point is somewhat sketchy in Bicchieri’s work, but the basic idea isn’t hard to appreciate. For some normative practices, what matters most for inducing normative change is altering our empirical and normative expectations, and those are the sorts of norms that interest her.  

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49 I glean this interpretation from passages such as the following:

Condition 2 (the conditional preference condition) marks an important distinction between social and personal norms, whether they are habits or have moral force. Take the habit of brushing my teeth every morning. I find it sanitary, and I like the taste of mint toothpaste. Even if I came to realize that most people stopped brushing their teeth, I
Given her particular interest in social norms in a strong sense, it’s not immediately clear how the model Bicchieri provides for normative change might apply to the case of developing new epistemic norms. While I don’t intend to develop a full theory of the nature of epistemic norms, it may be possible with a few assumptions to fit them into Bicchieri’s framework. Bicchieri maps out the normative landscape in causal terms. Social norms are developed and sustained through our empirical and normative expectations. In the sense laid out above, moral and prudential norms are not, at least if Bicchieri is right. What about epistemic norms? In other words, do we subscribe to the epistemic norms we subscribe to only on the condition that others around us do so as well and enforce conformity? On first blush, it would appear that we can distinguish epistemic norms from social norms (in the strong sense) in parallel fashion. Just as I have independent reasons for subscribing to a moral norm or a system of moral norms, I may have independent reasons for subscribing to a system of epistemic norms. If I am a professional chick sexer with a solid track record, I will not be inclined to change my way of chick sexing just because those around me do. I might, for example, want to first gain some assurance that there is

would continue to do so, because I have independent reasons for doing it. It is likewise with moral norms: I have good, independent reasons to avoid killing people I deeply dislike. Even if I were to find myself in a Hobbesian state of nature, without rules or rights, I would still feel repugnance and anguish at the idea of taking a life. With this I do not mean to suggest that moral norms are a world apart from other rules. Instead, by their very nature, moral norms demand (at least in principle) an unconditional commitment.

(Bicchieri 2005, 20)
an advantage to the new alternative. In other words, I will only change my ways when I’ve discovered for myself through practices of self-regulation that the alternative is superior.

There are nevertheless a couple reasons to think social change is an important factor in epistemic normative change. For one, it still plays a significant causal role in change, and, second, it can also play a significant epistemic role. It bears mentioning that deploying a deviant epistemological system often does carry social risk. Epistemological change is often political moral change as well, and departure from political norms often will meet with opposition. Moreover, even if we think of intellectual change as apolitical, deviance still requires intellectual confidence. Those with less confidence will be less likely to deviate from conceptual norms simply because they are the prevailing norms and deviation risks sanctions of some kind.

Finally, social epistemic change can simply prompt one to explore alternative ways of thinking. Epistemologists working on the nature of epistemic dependence typically distinguish causal from epistemic forms of dependence (Lackey 2006, 2010). When testimony is successful, the hearer’s belief depends on the speaker’s testimony for its status as knowledge. The sort of dependence involved is distinct from mere causal dependence. Consider, for example, how a speaker might offer testimony that nevertheless fails to result in testimonial knowledge on the part of the hearer. A speaker’s telling me that P may result in knowledge only because their testimony prompts me to consider the merits of P for myself. In such a case, I causally depend on the speaker for knowledge—I wouldn’t have considered the matter otherwise—but I don’t epistemically depend on them. In other words, I depend on the speaker for prompting me to deploy my rational capacities, but the status of my knowledge in no way depends on “passing the epistemic buck” or “taking their word for it”. This doesn’t mean that causal dependence isn’t
important form of dependence for making sense of epistemic change. Someone may begin to acquire certain conceptual skills simply because those around her are acquiring them as well.

6. Epistemic Dependence

There is also good reason to think that the changing epistemic landscape might also epistemically justify the development of new conceptual skills. This point connects the current discussion with the question of how we break out of epistemic echo chambers resulting from a Dunning-Kruger type effect. This question can be broken into two further questions: (1) how can one come to know that there is a significant gap in one’s conceptual know how? and (2) how can one gain the conceptual know how? There are plausibly two possible sources of knowledge in each case. One will either acquire the knowledge on one’s own or by relying on the knowledge of someone else. For (1), the former would be a case of (a) propositional knowledge through experience and the latter of (b) knowledge through testimony. For (2), the former would be a matter of (a) know how through self-regulation as a solo enterprise and the latter (b) know how through self-regulating as a social practice involving perspective triangulation. Let’s explore each possibility in turn and then apply Bicchieri’s model:

(1a) Propositional Knowledge through Experience

In this case, one discovers gaps in one’s conceptual know how on one’s own. Presumably, this requires some evidence of one’s inability. This is, however, precisely what is hard to find in a conceptual echo chamber. Since one lacks the second-order skills required to recognize when one’s performances fail to live up to standards, one lacks the sensitivity to corrective feedback required for propositional knowledge. It may be objected, however, that this only poses a problem for gaining knowledge of one’s particular failings or inadequacies. It makes it hard to know the precise way in which one is unskilled and use this knowledge to fund further
hypotheses about how to better participate in the practice. Won’t it be possible in many cases to know on one’s own that one is not particularly skilled or that one has much to learn? Consider again the case of a novice canoer. They may not have the second-order skill required to tell what exactly is wrong with their performance, but if they are banging into the riverbank, capsizing or making only marginal progress with maximum effort, they will know that they lack know how of some kind. They just don’t know in any precise detail what it is they don’t know how to do. Moreover, knowledge of even an imprecise kind may well be important because it can serve as a starting point for the learning process.

(1b) Propositional Knowledge through Testimony

In some cases, it may be possible to know that one lacks conceptual know how by being told that one lacks such know how. Again, without committing to a specific view of testimonial knowledge, it is not hard to imagine an ideal circumstance under which such knowledge is possible. Suppose that A is widely recognized as an expert on sexual harassment litigation, has a past track record of competent performance, indirectly signals competence by deploying the concept swiftly, smoothly and consistently in conversation, is free of confidence undermining ulterior motives and so on. If B is aware of these features of A, then presumably A can know that he doesn’t know how to use the concept of sexual harassment (or that he only partially knows how) through being told.

There may be, however, a number of obstacles standing in the way of knowledge through testimony in this case that are worth reviewing. In order to appreciate them, it will help to consider a minimal account of testimonial knowledge. According to a minimal “no defeaters” account of testimonial knowledge, hearer H has testimonial knowledge that P just in case H hears P from some speaker S and H has no evidence against P or the reliability of S with respect to
matters such as P. This represents a fairly minimal account of testimonial knowledge. That is, most epistemologists will agree that testimonial knowledge requires at least something like a no defeaters condition in order to set some standards on the reception of testimonial knowledge.

It is not hard to imagine a how number of defeaters may be present when H is told that one lacks know how both regarding P and the reliability of S. I’ve already explored some possible sources of defeaters. If H is swift and consistent in how he deploys the concept, if he feels familiar with the concept because he has taken a mandatory course, and underestimates the complexity of the task or how much it requires departing from familiar patterns of thought, he will have a lot of positive (mostly indirect) evidence against P. Finally, if he is in a Dunning-Kruger type scenario, he will lack access to feedback indicating a lack of skill. If he knows that he lacks such evidence he may be confident that he is performing well. After all, if he were skilled he would be able to recognize indicators suggesting that he is not, since first and second-order skills tend to go together. On the assumption that he has the know how, the fact that he lacks negative feedback shows up as positive evidence of competence. Finally, it may be the case that P in some way goes against aspects of H’s worldview or self-image. H may, with some supporting evidence, take himself to be a generally conscientious social agent, for example. That H may also possess defeating evidence against the reliability of S’s testimony is not hard to imagine either. The fact that S generally espouses a different worldview than H may make S show up as an unreliable informant to H, for example.

(2a) Know How and the Autodidact

In this case one obtains conceptual know how on one’s own. There are a few ways of interpreting this case. According to Ryle, all know how acquisition involves self-regulation or “self-teaching”. In a sense then, know how is always acquired on one’s own or through one’s
own efforts. Ryle makes it clear however that by self-teaching he does not mean to refer to what he calls the “self-taught man”:

Normally when we describe someone as a self-taught man we think of a man who, having been depraved of tuition from other teachers, tries to make himself an historian, say, or a linguist or an astronomer, without criticism, advice or stimulation from anyone else, save from the authors of such textbooks, encyclopaedia articles and linguaphone records as he may happen to hit on. (Ryle 2009b, 464)

There is a difference between the autodidact who acquires know how through self-regulation “on their own” and the student who self-regulates under the guidance of a teacher. The autodidact is, in this case, not interpreted as some sort of feral child who literally and completely learns on their own. Instead, keeping with ordinary usage, it refers to a learner who lacks real-time, high-bandwidth feedback from a more knowledgeable teacher. The difference then is not that they don’t in some sense receive critical feedback or some way of refining their conceptual hypotheses, but in the quality and quantity of relevant feedback. In the present case, it is not hard to imagine a case where someone either acquires a concept of sexual harassment by reading about the history of the concept on their own or perhaps by reinventing the concept on their own through reflection on their personal experience. The latter may be more difficult and perhaps not always meet with great success, but both are, I take it, non-trivial epistemic achievements. If philosophers are in the business of not only of codifying past concept usage but also developing new conceptual skill or refining old ones, then philosophical practice stands out as a (hyper-self-reflective) instance of this practice (often, but perhaps not always).

In light of (1a) and (1b), it may help to distinguish two kinds of case where someone obtains conceptual know how on their own. In the first scenario, one knows that one lacks know
how and seeks it out on one’s own. In the second, one doesn’t know that one lacks know how but 
acquires it anyway, in some sense, without realizing what conceptual lacuna one is filling in. It 
might be suggested that the account of know how acquisition I offered in chapters 1 and 2 cannot 
accommodate the latter case. If one doesn’t know that one lacks certain conceptual skills, then 
 isn’t it an accident when one acquires them and isn’t lucky success on the present account 
incompatible with knowing? If the answer must be “yes”, then we are committed to a view of 
know how where knowing how requires a prior bit of propositional knowledge, specifically, that 
one lacks know how. There is no reason that the answer should be yes, however. The present 
account only requires that know how is acquired through practices where the agent is “trying to 
get things right”. It may be that one is trying to get things right and achieve success as a result 
without knowing that one doesn’t already know how to perform some task or even while 
thinking one already knows how to perform it.

(2b) Know How through Perspective Triangulation

In this case, one acquires know how through self-regulation under the guidance of a more 
knowledgeable teacher or through practices of co-education. This is the more ordinary teaching 
scenario that was discussed at length in chapter 3. In light of the above, we may further 
distinguish the case where one gains conceptual know how through perspective triangulation 
with the knowledge that one lacks conceptual skill from the case where one does not. The 
former represents a typical teaching scenario in formal contexts. The students know that they 
lack some conceptual know how and seek out the tutelage of a more knowledgeable individual 
for the express purpose of acquiring it. The latter is arguably also quite common in normal 
teaching scenarios, formal or not. Often by exploring a topic with someone else, you can acquire 
new conceptual skills for a concept you didn’t know you lacked.
The latter sort of case is an indirect means of overcoming meta-ignorance. In this context, Dunning describes as the “paradox of gaining expertise”:

If [bottom performers] misjudge themselves because they do not have the intellectual resources to judge superior versus inferior performance, one has merely to provide them with those resources. Of course, this procedure leads to a paradox, in that it renders bottom performers no longer ignorant or incompetent. (Dunning 2011, 274)

If one lacks knowledge that one lacks know how, one way to overcome that meta-ignorance is by gaining the relevant skill. Dunning describes a case where participants are asked to complete a number of Wason selection tasks, a sort of logical puzzle which novices often confidently fail to perform well (Dunning 2011, 274-275). Bottom performers grossly overestimated their competence, but when they were given a 20-minute training session on how to solve the task they re-rated their past performance more negatively and became more pessimistic about their overall logical competence. In some ways it represents the most valuable way to overcome meta-ignorance insofar as it allows the agent a deeper appreciation of their meta-ignorance. To be clear, overcoming meta-ignorance in this way, in the way that involves coming to recognize one’s ignorance oneself, in principle only requires gaining the relevant second-order skills. In other words, it only requires becoming a meta-expert. Only in those cases where there is a tight connection between first and second-order skills does it also require gaining the first-order competence.

These are possible ways one might overcome meta-ignorance of the relevant kind, but in practice they typically have to work together. It may be possible in principle for someone to break out the loop “on their own” in the sense laid out in (1a) and (2a), but most of us don’t have, at the very least, the time, energy or resourcefulness. As Bicchieri points out, normative
change is typically a social affair even when we consider the first movers who get the ball rolling. First movers will typically be in a better position to break out the loop by (1a) gaining propositional knowledge of their ignorance through experience and (2a) gaining the relevant know how as an autodidact, but as the example of hermeneutical injustice illustrates breaking out loop for first moves will also involve (1b) gaining propositional knowledge or additional support for one’s knowledge through receiving other’s testimony and (2b) developing new conceptual resources through perspective triangulation. For someone like John, on the other hand, who lacks (1a) the experiences that lead to propositional knowledge and therefore lacks reason to (2a) develop the skills on his own, he will have to rely primarily on (2a) the word of others to discover that he lacks propositional knowledge and perhaps (2b) rely on them to help him develop the skills as well.

7. Conclusion: Two Lingerling Anxieties

Combined with Bicchieri’s idea of a cascade effect starting with first movers, the above provides a plausible model for how differently situated individuals break out of the loop. First movers will have special reason to break out and when situated in the proper environment will gain ample evidence that they are heading in a viable direction. Those who are differently situated will gain more and more reason to follow suite the more they see other around them doing so. But there may be a couple lingering anxieties the present account leaves unresolved. First of all, consider the hardest sort of case—an individual who is so “set in their ways” that apparently no intervention will get them to recognize their meta-ignorance. Does the above account give us any strategies for reaching such individuals or explaining how they break out of the loop? Second consider the conscientious epistemic agent who is concerned about the
possibility that they might be in a conceptual echo chamber. What tools does the above account provide this individual with to allay their skeptical anxieties?

The short answer to both is that my account is not specifically designed to address these worries. With respect to the first anxiety, there are a few additional points. For one, my primary interest was not in the epistemic agent who is simply irresponsible, who ignores or disregards epistemic friction and actively insulates their perspective from critical feedback. Second, it’s worth pointing out that although some people won’t be reached, social change is nevertheless possible. As the younger generation of first-movers opens up new perspectival possibilities for those who are more open-minded, the stubborn members of the older generation will slowly die off. Finally, the typical goal when addressing a skeptical problem is to describe the problem and then show how in principle it might be overcome. At the same time, I have tried to also provide a practical model of how the problem is overcome in the real world. While it might be nice to supplement that account with tools for addressing the hardest cases, that is a project best left for another time.

One may naturally argue, however, that if my primary aim was to solve a skeptical problem, then part of my goal be to allay the skeptical anxieties of the conscientious agent. Moreover, some argue that skeptical problems only make sense within an internalist/first-person approach to justification or knowledge (Klein 2015). The view of knowledge developed here (especially in chapter 2), however, has been externalist and asks what it takes to have knowledge from a third-person perspective. In this chapter, I have articulated reasons for doubting the reliability of our epistemic perspectives and then gone on to show how knowledge is possible, but I haven’t endeavored to show how, for example, knowing that one knows is possible by internalist standards. For this reason, some may be inclined to say that I have not resolved the
skeptical problem at all. This is an interesting claim that may require further investigation, for now I will limit myself to one reason for valuing the present solution. The classic approach to skeptical issues is to formulate reasons for doubting the epistemic standing of our beliefs and then hopefully allaying our anxieties by showing a way that they might be in good standing after all. This suggests that the proper way to respond to the anxiety is not to change or improve our current perspective, but to gain assurance that we are already on the right track. Like the skeptical problem described by Jennifer Saul in response to the phenomenon of implicit bias, however, the skeptical problem addressed here suggests a more practical solution (Saul 2013). The proper response to the skeptical scenario is not to figure whether or not you are in it, but to continually strive to get out of it. The solution I’ve offered here at least shows one how to do that, at least in abstract terms, by being sensitive to feedback and continuously trying to break out of the loop by gaining new conceptual skills.
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