THE EPISTEMIC VALIDITY OF EMPATHY

THE EPISTEMIC VALIDITY OF EMPATHIC KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS

BY SHIVANI SETH, B.A

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

McMaster University MASTER OF ARTS (2020) Hamilton, Ontario (Philosophy)

TITLE: The Epistemic Validity of Empathic Knowledge Claims AUTHOR: Shivani Seth, B.A.

(McMaster University) SUPERVISOR: Professor N. Doubleday NUMBER OF PAGES: iv, 67

LAY ABSTRACT

Obama once spoke of his desire to see empathetic individuals appointed to the position of Supreme Court Justices of the United States. His desire was met by many with resistance as people voiced concerns regarding the unreliability of beliefs founded on empathy and possible negative consequences that may come about. In my thesis I wish to address these concerns by acknowledging that most useful sources of knowledge have similar risks associated with them, and yet via the establishment of best practices and diligent communities we are able to minimize the dissemination of false knowledge claims and their respective harms. In my paper I acknowledge this and explain how empathy can be dealt with in a similar fashion, while also reducing potential harms to others and allowing us to take advantage of the many benefits empathic knowledge has to offer.

ABSTRACT

Obama once spoke of his desire to see empathetic individuals appointed to the position of Supreme Court Justice of the United States. His desire was met by many with resistance as people voiced concerns regarding the unreliability of beliefs founded on empathy and possible negative consequences that may come about. Concerns regarding unreliability are the product of our inability to access the 'privileged information' or the actual thoughts and perspectives of those we intend to empathize with. Attempts to form empathic beliefs, in the absence of this information, could lead to various harms to the very groups we intend to empathize with. Stereotyping, bias, and claims of sincerely 'knowing' the unique circumstances of those very different from ourselves can all lead to the justification of actions with harmful consequences.

In my thesis I wish to address these concerns by acknowledging that most practical sources of knowledge (those we make use of and depend on regularly), such as those predicated on notions of cause and effect, have similar risks associated with them. Theories such as gravity and evolution remain theories and yet via the establishment of best practices and diligent communities, we are able to minimize the dissemination of false knowledge claims and their respective harms. In my paper I acknowledge this and explain how empathy can be dealt with in a similar fashion, while also reducing potential harms to others and allowing us to take advantage of the many benefits empathic knowledge has to offer. In the same way that we still continue to make use of our understanding of gravity to improve our lives and society by building aircrafts, we can make use of empathy to improve the ability of individual social and moral agents, as well as society as a whole. Under this pragmatic approach even the legal system can reap the benefits of empathic knowledge claims, so long as we, moving forward, work to collectively discern how to best ensure the validity of empathic knowledge claims.

Thank you, Professor Nancy Doubleday, for all the opportunities you have given me to learn and grow.

Special Note:

This paper is written in special acknowledgement and recognition of oppressed minority groups including, but not limited to, those of Black, Indigenous, and Asian persons. All lives do not matter until Black, Red, and Yellow lives matter.

In solidarity – Shivani Seth

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Barrack Obama once shared with the general public what he was looking for in his new United States Supreme Court Justice nominations, stating, "I will seek someone who understands that justice isn't about some abstract legal theory or a footnote in a casebook, it is also about how laws affect the daily realities of people's lives" (Decety & Cowell 1; Lee 170). The ability to understand the daily lives of others, in Obama's view, requires judges to possess empathy and thereby the ability to, "recognize ourselves in another" such that they will be able to, "recognize what it's like to be a young teenage mom, the empathy to understand what it's like to be poor, or African-American, or gay, or disabled, or old" (Decety & Cowell 1; Lee 170).

While at face-value Obama's claims may seem more than reasonable many were quick to voice their concerns (Decety & Cowell 1; Lee 146-147). Concerns of favouritism and bias, irrational rulings based on emotion, and a lack of desire to adhere to the rule of law, were all voiced (Lee 146-147, 171). Unfortunately, these concerns are not unfounded either. When Obama speaks of the ability to know what it is like to be another via empathy, he speaks of the ability to make knowledge claims via the implementation of empathy; knowledge claims that, as he recognizes it, would have the ability to influence the quality of people's day to day lives at the hands of the law. But our ability to rely on knowledge claims gained via empathy, or empathic knowledge, is one that remains controversial.

In this paper I intend to provide justification as to why empathic knowledge claims ought to be pursued. In order to do so I will first outline what the term empathy means. In doing so I will provide definitions for two different types of empathy, affective and cognitive empathy, which denote our empathic ability to 'feel with', and 'put ourselves in the shoes of' another respectively

(Campelia 533; Decety & Cowell 3-6; Decety & Yoder 2-3; Peterson 233-234; Masto 77). Our corresponding empathic capacities, such as our ability improve our empathic abilities with time and practice, and its classification as an act, will be addressed by acknowledging the ongoing debate regarding whether or not empathy ought to be viewed as a skill or virtue (Peterson 233-246; Simmons 107-108). Lastly, I will introduce the term empathy proper to represent instances wherein an individual engages in both cognitive and affective empathy (Peterson 233-235).

In the following chapter I will address some of the arguments made in opposition to empathic knowledge claims. To do this I will first outline a commonly accepted criteria by which epistemologists determine whether or not a given statement ought to be classified as a knowledge claim (Feldman 17; Gettier 121). I will not be defending my usage of this criteria – justified true belief (JTB) – but will make use of it to help contextualize aspects of the epistemic debate regarding whether or not we can claim to possess empathic knowledge (Feldman 17; Gettier 121).

The usage of JTB helps demonstrate why philosophers take issue with our inability to access the 'privileged' information possessed by those we intend to empathize with, propositions only they themselves have access to (Campelia 531; Goldie 303). Attempts to compensate for said lack of information by making use of information we believe to know leaves us susceptible to justifying false conclusions (Campelia 531; Cowell & Decety 9-10; Masto 77-79; Peterson 236-237). Some of these conclusions, if premised on prejudice, stereotypes, and/or bias, can lead to harmful conclusions that threaten to undermine some of the most vulnerable in society (Campelia 530-532). The potential negative repercussions of false empathic claims have led proponents in opposition to the usage of empathic claims to argue that the potential harms of

making use of 'empathic knowledge' render its usage morally problematic (Campelia 530-532). This is especially so when individuals truly hold to 'know' the circumstances of those they claim to empathize with (Campelia 530-532; Segal 270).

Despite this I argue in my third chapter that, given our inability to access similarly relevant premises when establishing other knowledge claims premised on cause and effect, such as the notion of gravity, we should be willing to make use of empathic knowledge. Within the domain of science we often observe different 'degrees of knowing' which provide us with some understanding as to the amount of rigor required to accept a given claim as being a knowledge claim. We are all comfortable claiming we know how gravity works when we go about our day to day lives, but when given the opportunity to apply our knowledge by constructing a plane, I think many of us (those who would not be viewed as 'qualified') would quickly redact that statement. Our inability to meet the degree of knowledge required to claim to know how to build a plane prevents us from doing as such. In light of these different degrees of justification required for establishing respective degrees of knowledge we can develop and implement appropriate standards of best practice and requirements. In the same way that an engineer would have to possess a certain capacity and understanding to repair a plane, so too could a judge who would make use of empathy.

Of course, concerns of potential harm still remain. In the same way that an individual engineer can fail at their job, despite all their qualifications, so could a judge intending to implement empathy as a means of acquiring knowledge claims. In chapter 4 I address this concern by acknowledging that while potential for error remains, particularly amongst individuals, collective efforts to monitor and assess conclusions reached provides us with a solution. Afterall

the collective efforts of the scientific community have been successful, we – as a general public –

trust the results produced and their respective risks. That's why we are comfortable allowing

doctors to treat us with radiation, and pilots to fly us around the world. Via the collective efforts

of those communities studying and making use of empathic knowledge claims we can collectively

work to prevent the dissemination of false information.

Empathy in and of itself is another way by which we can prevent harm from resulting to

others. It gives us the capacity to recognize that the sum of what we know of others is not the

sum of who they are as a person. The pursuit of empathic knowledge claims, in and of itself,

forces us to confront its limitations, and by extension acknowledge how little we know about

others. In doing so it helps prevent the reification of others, and therefore acts as its own

safeguard against harm.

Lastly, there is little to no point in arguing in favor of empathy unless we can acknowledge

that it provides us with some unique information that would prove helpful when applied. In my

last chapter I use psychopaths and autistics to demonstrate that in the absence of empathy

proper we would struggle to function as both moral and social agents. The presence of empathy,

however, can serve to positively impact not only individuals, but the societies in which they

reside. As a result, I conclude on the question of whether or not we ought to provide citizens with

the tools and skills required to develop their respective empathic capacities and accuracy.[1]

---

[1] Disclaimer: Throughout this paper I intend to make use of publications acknowledging Obama's commentary, such as those of Rebecca Lee, in order to demonstrate the potential remedies and benefits empathy can prove. As a result, much of the legal analysis in this paper will be addressing circumstances surrounding the United States legal system. That being said the ability to transfer the use of empathic knowledge claims to help promote justice and prevent bias/prejudice remain largely transferrable to other legal systems – but I will not be addressing/demonstrating-this in my paper.

Chapter 1: Defining Empathy

Empathy can generally be defined as the act of feeling for another (Simmons 98-100). Unlike sympathy, which is experienced from the third-person perspective, empathy asks us to imagine experiencing things from the perspective of the individual we are attempting to empathize with (Simmons 100). This is accomplished by experiencing similar emotions to that of the individual being empathized with, and/or by imagining what it means to be in their shoes (Simmons 99).

In this chapter I intend to outline a general definition of empathy for use in this paper. I will do this by first defining two different kinds of empathy: affective empathy and cognitive empathy. I will then address the ongoing debate as to whether or not empathy ought to be classified as a virtue or skill. In doing so I intend to highlight common features between the two so as to further classify how we ought to understand the capacities of empathy. Lastly, I will propose an overall definition for empathy, or empathy proper, that outlines how we ought to think of empathy applied. It is important to note that this definition is by no means meant to be conclusive, but rather sufficient for the purposes of this paper.

Affective Empathy

When we think of what it means to 'feel for another' we are generally thinking of what it means to experience affective empathy for another. Affective empathy, also known as emotional empathy, is the act of detecting the motivational and/or emotional state of an individual being empathized with (Decety & Cowell 4). When engaging in affective empathy, or the act of affective sharing, one becomes emotionally aroused, on some level, by the individual they are empathizing with (Decety & Yoder 2).

For this reason affective empathy is often mislabeled as emotional contagion, the act of mimicking and synchronizing facial experiences, vocalizations, and postures, with those of another individual (Decety & Cowell 4). This largely unconscious process leads to us experiencing emotions without recognizing their source (Simmons 99). For example, when you make eye-contact with a smiling person, and reflexively smile back, you are experiencing a form of emotional contagion. When a baby hears someone cry, and then bursts into tears despite experiencing no reason to be sad, they too are exhibiting a form of emotional contagion. No one is experiencing an emotion elicited by another while also recognizing the respective person who is the source of that emotion (Campelia 533). Instead, in the case where someone is smiling at you, you might acknowledge that someone else is happy while mirroring their happiness, but you are not feeling 'with' them – experiencing a similar emotion while acknowledging them as the cause (Campelia 533).

Some claim that emotional contagion is a very low form of affective empathy that is non-representative of all possible instances of affective empathy (Smith 4). Others, such as Meghan Masto and Gregory Peterson, argue that emotional contagion ought not to qualify as a form of empathy as the process of empathy is meant to be a conscious relational act (Masto 76, Peterson 235). Regardless there are two points of consensus/consistency between the stances within literature:

1) there is a strong correlation between the ability to experience emotional contagion and the ability to experience affective empathy (Masto 76);
2) emotional contagion is either only a facet of affective empathy or a contributing condition towards it, but it is not synonymous in use of all that one can experience via affective empathy (Simmons 99-100; Smith 4; Masto 76).

Expanding on the second point, the act of engaging in affective empathy does not require us to experience the exact same emotions as the individual we are empathizing with (Cowell & Decety 4). Rather affective empathy is meant to illicit emotions in 'the same neighbourhood' as the individual you are attempting to empathize with (Masto 77).

Imagine witnessing someone get horribly injured in a car crash. The victim is brutally injured, in extreme amounts of pain, and is begging for someone to kill them. You would likely be panicked, worried, and scared as you processed the scene before you and the extreme amount of pain the victim must be experiencing in order to utter those words. Confronted with their life-threatening injuries you would (hopefully) feel motivated to do whatever you can to help them, and so you – out of concern for their well-being – do whatever you can to save their life.

Under this account you would not be experiencing emotional contagion because you are not experiencing the same, physically painful, emotions as the victim. Furthermore, while your motivations to help may stem from the same source, the car crash, it is clear that your actions have different motivations than that of the injured party. Despite this it is hard to accept the idea that you are not acting as a result of affective empathy.

This is because all of the emotions/motives you are experiencing are strong emotional responses indicative of the negativity and seriousness of the other individual's feelings. These emotions/motives of a similar positive-negative classification allow us to claim that you have engaged in the act of affective sharing and therefore affective empathy (Decety & Cowell 4; Peterson 235). In response to an individual experiencing some negative emotion (pain), you too experienced some negative emotion (panic). Your actions are motivated by the negative emotion of your concern for the injured party, while the injured party is motivated by the negative

emotion of pain. The reverse can also apply in situations describing positive emotions, where affectively empathizing for another would lead to the formation of a 'positive' emotion or motivation (Peterson 235-236).

Affective sharing, in some instances like the car crash example above, can trigger an adaptive response known as empathic concern (Decety & Cowell 3-6; Decety & Yoder 2). Empathic concern is a product of emotions that are elicited via affective sharing and indicate that the person being empathized with is 'in need' (Decety & Cowell 6). These emotions, in conjunction with an ability to value the person you are empathizing with, can lead to the motivation to help (Decety & Cowell 6).

In summary, while experiencing emotional contagion may or may not qualify as having engaged in an act of affective empathy, the presence of emotional arousal of a similar valence and/or classification is sufficient for having been said to have engaged in the act of affective sharing, and thereby affective empathy. Affective empathy can result in empathic concern, a state wherein one recognizes that another is in need of care and feels incentivized to provide it.

COGNITIVE EMPATHY

Cognitive empathy can be thought of as the act of 'perspective-taking', putting one's self in another person's shoes, or 'mind-reading' (Cowell & Decety 3-7; Decert & Yoder 2). We can engage in this act of consciously attempting to understand another by mentally re-enacting or imitating the thought process of another (Cowell & Decety 7; Masto 75; Peterson 234). This can occur by either:

1) imagining what It is like to be in another person's 'shoes' from *your own* perspective (Masto 75; Peterson 234);

2) imagining what it is like to be in another person's 'shoes' *from their* perspective (Masto 75; Peterson 234).

The former asks you to consider the thoughts, motivations, and feelings you would have if you were in the scenario of the person you are taking the perspective of (Peterson 234). For example, say I were attempting to empathize with Shanthi, someone who recently lost their job. When imagining myself being in Shanthi's shoes I would likely imagine experiencing anxiety, and immediate incentive to look for new employment. This is because I am currently a student living paycheck to paycheck. If I were to adopt the perspective of the individual I am attempting to empathize with, as is described in the second bullet, I may come to a different conclusion.

Suppose Shanthi is someone who has few financial concerns – as they are someone who has accrued savings over the years and has no dependents – and has been looking to leave the company to start their own business. Shanthi has also been awarded a large severance package as a result of her termination. Adopting her perspective, I may come to recognize that Shanthi is likely not experiencing anxiety, but rather is fairly happy at having received a severance package for employment she intended to leave anyways.

Under this latter account I considered a scenario from the perspective of another by taking into account their unique circumstances, experiences, and emotional states (Cowell & Decety 7-8).This form of cognitive-empathy, largely associated with social competence and reasoning, requires the capacity to think about the thoughts and feelings of others (Cowell & Decety 7-8; Peterson 234). Consideration of these factors, in relation to the individual being empathized with, leads to very different insights than those we would have had if we had considered things from our own perspective (Masto 75).

The act of adopting a first-person perspective during cognitive empathy requires a significant amount of critical thinking (Decety & Cowell 8). The case of adopting the perspective of another can be especially mentally taxing given number of considerations (regarding the other person) that have to be taken into account (Peterson 234). Nevertheless, both acts of perspective taking qualify as instances of cognitive empathy and, when implemented successfully, will cause the empathizer to form relevant, but not necessarily true, beliefs (Masto 75; Peterson 234).

EMPATHY – A VIRTUE OR A SKILL?

So far empathy, as outlined in the previous two definitions, is some form of action or capacity for action. A question still remains as to whether or not empathy ought to be viewed as a moral virtue or a skill. In order to understand the meaning of the term empathy and its capacities it is important to address the ongoing debate as to whether or not empathy ought to be regarded as a virtue or a skill (Simmons 107).

Moral virtues are character traits that are morally good for a person to possess (Simmons 107). In order for an act to qualify as a morally virtuous we often feel that it must be a voluntary one (Simmons 107). For example, if I – completely of my own volition – decide to volunteer at a foodbank, then we would acknowledge my actions as being morally praiseworthy. This differs greatly from a scenario where I was forced to work at a foodbank because of a need to fulfill some public service requirement. Similarly, one is typically condemned for immoral actions in proportion to the degree of freedom they possess. If someone were to steal, for no reason other than they wanted something, we would blame them for their self-centered behaviour. Said blame would likely lessen if we believed they were forced to steal due to being in a place of vulnerability that left them little to no choice. We do acknowledge that stealing because someone with gun to

your head mandates you do, largely differs from stealing because you wanted a taste of luxury. This proves problematic to the view that empathy is a virtue if we accept that empathy is a largely involuntary process – i.e. one done unconsciously (Simmons 107).

If we do accept that empathy is involuntary then empathy ought to be regarded as a skill. Whether or not a skill is executed with free will is irrelevant to it qualifying as a skill, as all we care for is the ability of the person executing said skill (Simmons 108). If one instinctively dodges an object, with little to no thought, we acknowledge them to be skillful at dodging, even if the act was not intentional. The same applies when being forced to do something; if I am being forced to write a paper at gun point (I am not) it does not change the fact that I am a skillful writer (I am).

A possible counterargument to consider is the claim that, given virtues are a practiced behaviour it logically follows that, with time, we would begin to act on them unconsciously (Peterson 233, 246). After all it is not unfathomable that in a crisis one would act courageously with little to no thought, and yet we would still claim they had indeed acted in accordance with the virtue of courage. This counterargument is also consistent with the view that actions motivated by virtues are dispositional actions automatically taken under all relevant circumstances (Simmons 107-108; Peterson 233, 246). Acceptance of this view would allow for empathy to be categorized as a virtue.

The classification of virtues as a dispositional act, however, can present another challenge to the view of empathy as a virtue (Simmons 107; Peterson 233,246). This means that, for a moral agent to possess a virtue, they must consistently act in accordance with said virtue (Simmons 108). Any instance of failure to act in accordance with said disposition immediately translates to a loss of said virtue (Simmons 108). In order to possess the virtue of courage you must be brave in

all instances that require you to act courageously. If you fail, you are merely a coward. Under this account for someone to possess the virtue empathy they must continually act in accordance with empathy in order to possess it (Simmons 108). Failure to do so would mean accepting that one is unempathetic (Simmons 108). Skills have no such requirement as they are classified as abilities rather than dispositions; they demonstrate what one is able to do (Simmons 108). If I am hit while playing dodgeball one would claim that, in that instance, I failed to dodge. Despite that, if I am a good dodgeball player –typically displaying an exceptional ability to dodge dodgeballs – then I remain a good dodgeball player with an exceptional ability to dodge dodgeballs, despite that instance. Similarly, if I am having a bad day, and decide to write a sub-par paper simply to get the task done, I am not suddenly a bad writer. If we treat empathy as a skill we can continue to acknowledge ourselves as empathetic – even if in some instances we fail to display empathy (Simmons 108).

One means of arguing that empathy ought to be viewed as a virtue, rather than a skill, is by acknowledging that no moral agent, beyond theoretical moral agents, can consistently abide by the actions necessitated by virtues. It is hard to think of an individual who consistently displays courage without fail because even the bravest of us have experienced cowardice. Despite this we still acknowledge courage as being a virtue worth striving for, something the ideal moral agent ought to possess (Peterson 246). Empathy could be viewed similarly. We could admonish apathy and acknowledge that empathy is a virtue we ought to strive to possess.

Lastly, virtues and skills differ in their motivations (Simmons 108). Moral virtues are acted upon for the sole reason that the good mandates it (Simons 108). For example, we may courageously rescue a kitten for the sake of the good in and of itself. (Simmons 108). If we

subscribe to the notion that one can engage in the act of perspective taking for the purposes of gaining insight on how to manipulate someone, then we cannot hold empathy to be a virtue under this view. This strongly differs from skills, which can be exercised for any motive – even personal gain (Simmons 108).

It could be argued to be unreasonable to hold virtuous actions must be motivated solely by, and consistently for, the good. Afterall one could generously donate with *some* desire to gain praise, courageously work while *needing* to make a living, and yet we might still want to argue that courage is indeed a virtue, and that they behaved virtuously. While the ideal moral agent may have no other ulterior motive for their moral actions, it is hard to claim that individuals are solely acting out of motivation for the good. Similarly we can acknowledge that ulterior motives may exist in instances involving empathy, and yet still classify empathy as being a virtue.

Needless to say, the stringency of the definitions we work with has a large bearing on how empathy ought to be classified. This paper does not aim to address or resolve whether or not empathy should be classified as a virtue or skill. Instead, it looks to make use of these concepts to determine the capacities of empathy and how it can be applied in an epistemically valid manner. For this reason, I do not intend to further explore said debate. Instead I want to highlight what both skills and virtues have in common for the purposes establishing relatively non-controversial claims regarding the capacities of empathy.

A major similarity between skills and virtues is that, regardless of what is being attained, dispositions or abilities, these behaviors are learned over time (Peterson 245). To quote Gregory Peterson:

"Skills themselves are dispositions, or at least abilities, that are learned over time; being an expert carpenter or woodworker takes much time, often requiring the instruction and example of a mentor and the development of an intuitive knowledge of the craft that is not easily put into a textbook. Likewise Aristotle argued that virtues are themselves the result of a process of character formation impacted by moral exemplars who both teach and provide an example of the virtues that the learner is eventually to emulate (245)."

This means that individuals have the capacity to further acquire and develop empathy over time, through repeated practice and learning. As a virtue empathy would be practiced in order to cultivate its disposition, whereas as a skill empathy would be practiced in order for one to further attain that ability (Peterson 245) This implies that one can become increasingly empathetic, or empathetically capable, over time, and one's execution of empathy further refined (Peterson 233-246).

If viewed as a virtue, moral agents can work to learn the difference between being empathetic in excess [hyper-empathetic] versus being empathetic in deficiency [apathetic], in accordance with the ideal moral agent (Peterson 245). This also correlates with the development of skill, as those practicing empathy will also look to someone skillful at empathizing in order to set some standard as to how empathy ought to be executed (Peterson 245-246).

Lastly, while it remains uncertain as to what motivates moral action (morality, ulterior motives, or some combination thereof), or the degree to which one can voluntarily engage in empathy, we can conclude that – irrespective of whether or not empathy is a skill or virtue – it does constitute some action/response on the agent's part (Peterson 233). This action, whether it be a physical one or simply a change in mental state, is one that, by definition, results from another (Masto 76)

EMPATHY PROPER

The term empathy proper will be used to denote instances wherein an agent both cognitively and affectively empathizes with someone else (Peterson 235). Despite our ability to distinguish between the two forms of empathy we rarely engage in one without the other (Peterson 233). Referring back to Shanthi, we have already established that I can imagine taking her perspective and coming to understand that she is likely excited to have received a large severance package. I may also feel excited on her behalf upon realizing why this would be good news for her. The usage of both cognitive empathy to provide relevant context, and affective empathy to experience the appropriate emotional response, denote an instance of empathy proper. Throughout my paper the significance of empathy proper as a means of attaining and validating information will be addressed.

In summary there are two different classifications of empathy: cognitive and affective. The former speaks to one's ability to imagine themselves in another's shoes, or the circumstances of the other themselves. The latter speaks to emotional response incited by the other. In general, one's capacity to be empathetic can be further attained, and refined, whereas empathy itself remains a form of action. Empathy proper is a term used to address instances wherein which an agent both cognitively and affectively empathizes with the someone else. Please refer to the Figure 1. For further clarification on the relationship between the terms mentioned in this chapter.
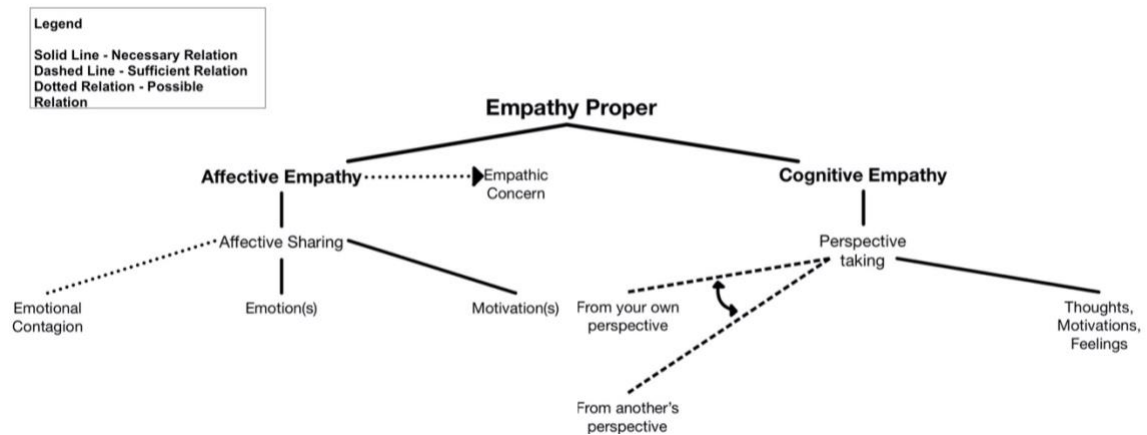
Figure 1. A Diagram of Key Terms Associated with Empathy and Their Relationship.

CHAPTER 2: THE INVALIDITY OF EPISTEMIC KNOWLEDGE GAINED VIA EMPATHY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In order to assess the epistemic validity of empathy it is necessary to understand what makes a knowledge claim valid. For this reason I first outline three commonly accepted criteria used to determine whether or not one ought to be viewed as possessing propositional knowledge: justification, truth, and belief (Feldman 17; Gettier 121). I then briefly summarize why those in opposition to the use of empathy as a means of gaining knowledge believe that, due to an inability to access privileged information, as well as the influence of stereotypes and in-group bias, knowledge gained via empathy is largely unreliable. Lastly, I explain why the consequences of this invalid information are viewed as so harmful, both to individuals and entire demographics, that some regard the usage of empathic knowledge to be unjustifiable.

It is important to note that this chapter is not meant provide an exhaustive list of all the reasons why empathic beliefs ought not to be viewed as knowledge claims nor treated as such (Decety & Yoder 10). Rather it aims to establish a general summary of why empathic knowledge

claims are not viewed as being epistemically valid and acknowledge the respective

social/relational consequences that may arise.

JUSTIFIED TRUE BELIEF (JTB)

Empathetic knowledge claims are a form of propositional knowledge; they are claims

meant to express certain thoughts or ideas we deem true (Feldman 17). In order for us to accept

that someone knows a given proposition claim three commonly accepted criteria within the

domain of epistemology are used (Gettier 121). In order for us to hold that someone knows a

given proposition:

1) said statement must be *true,*
2) the individual making said claim must *believe* the statement to be true,
3) and the individual must be *justified* in believing said claim (Gettier 121).

Alternatively phrased, one is deemed as possessing propositional knowledge if and only if they

possess (meet the criteria of) *justified true belief* (JTB) (Gettier 121).

The first criteria mandates that the statement adhere to the *correspondence theory of*

truth, which holds that a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to all facts (Feldman 17).

For example, for the statement "Ramsay is sad" to be true, the statement must prove consistent

with the world at large. This could mean that Ramsay is crying just as one would when they are

sad, frowning, communicating a desire for comfort etcetera, all of which support the claim that

Ramsay is sad. There are also no conflicting facts, or disqualifying propositions, present; Ramsay is

not smiling, laughing, or pretending to be sad (Feldman 17; Klein 475).

In order for one to possess a belief and fulfill the second criteria they must accept some

stance in relation to the proposition formed (Feldman 17). Referring to Ramsay again, for me to

believe I know Ramsay is sad I must subscribe to the notion that I do indeed understand how

Ramsay is feeling (Feldman 16-17). Conversely, I can accept a negative stance to the statement

and accept that Ramsay is *not* sad, while having still fulfilled the second criteria of JTB (Feldman

17).

These two criteria on their own, while necessary, are not sufficient for possessing

knowledge (Klein 472). We generally would not accept beliefs that coincidentally happen to be

true to qualify as knowledge possessed (Klein 472). Referring back to Ramsay, if I believe Ramsay

is sad solely because of a 'gut-feeling' and that statement is true (all facts are consistent), we

would not want to claim that I knew Ramsay was sad just because my claim happened to be true.

Furthermore, if there exist claims that would render my logic inconsistent that I failed to take into

account, we would also not want to qualify my claim as a knowledge claim (Klein 475). If Ramsay

is sad and I witness him crying, vocalizing how miserable he is, and looking generally distressed, I

could claim to know that Ramsay is sad as all premises remain consistent. Both the criteria of

truth and belief would have been met. However, if I fail to take into account that Ramsay is an

actor, currently rehearsing his monologue, we would not agree with the claim that I knew Ramsay

was sad, as I was simply correct due to luck. In this instance I have failed to take into account a

proposition that renders my account inconsistent, a *disqualifying proposition*, and as such my

correct conclusion was due to coincidence (Klein 475).

The previous two examples fail to demonstrate instances of knowledge claims because in

said instances I lacked justification for my claim (Feldman 22). In order to have been justified, I

would have needed all the information supporting my statement to have been true, with no

reason remaining to believe otherwise (Klein 473). Under this account we would dismiss

accidental and/or co-incidentally true instances of belief (Klein 474). This requires the presence of *sufficient* evidence supporting one's belief in a claim, and the existence of *no abnormal-circumstances*.

In terms of sufficiency we can acknowledge that what qualifies as sufficient is a largely relative term (Feldman 21). For example, it is very different to claim that one knows vaccines work because: a doctor told them they do, they themselves are a doctor, or they themselves have researched the very information doctors use to learn about vaccines. This is because of varying degrees of justification being present (Klein 473). While all three instances provide some kind of justification for a true belief, the following belief possesses more justification than the previous one. This may raise the question, "when can we claim to have sufficient justification for making a knowledge claim?". This is a largely practical question that will be addressed in my third chapter as it applies to empathy.

EPISTEMIC INABILITIES – SUFFICIENCY AND CONTENT

Proponents in opposition to the view that we can gain epistemically valid knowledge via empathy often argue that individuals lack sufficient justification for their empathic beliefs. This is because we do not have access to all the propositions necessary to make such a claim, namely those possessed by the individual we are attempting to empathize with (Campelia 531). These propositions include an individual's beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences (Campelia 531). In the absence of these propositions it is arguably impossible to justifiably claim we know the thoughts of another, as we may be unaware of disqualifying propositions or unique circumstances the individual may possess. Referring back to Ramsay in the previous section, we can see that – assuming Ramsay has not disclosed to anyone that he is presently rehearsing – we

lack access to a proposition that would otherwise disqualify our 'justified' belief that Ramsay is sad. This abnormal circumstance is one only he is aware of. That being said, if Ramsay is indeed sad – despite the presence of disqualifying propositions and abnormal circumstances that would indicate otherwise, only he himself could justifiably claim to know this. This is because only he can access his current feelings of sadness.

If we accept this claim we can acknowledge that "only the agent *himself* can take *his* stance towards his own thoughts, decisions, and intentions" (Goldie 303). In other words, only the agent themselves can form a JTB in regards to their own thoughts, decisions and intentions (Goldie 303).

One could argue that they could attempt to consider potential propositions or abnormal circumstances in order supplement content they do not have access to and thereby bridge gaps in knowledge and draw some form of JTB. This solution, while intuitive, poses major challenges to forming JTB when we acknowledge just how susceptible human beings are to stereotyping and bias (Campelia 531; Decety & Cowell 9; Masto 77-79; Peterson 236-237, 242). Stereotypes are often used as a means of filling gaps in our understanding and, when used as a proposition to build on, can provide further information supporting our conclusion (Campelia 531; Peterson 236-237). A common problem of using stereotypes as a means of further justifying our conclusions, however, is their ability to create content justifying a false conclusion.

Chimamanda Adichie provides a strong example of this in her Ted Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story", when she describes what it was like to leave Nigeria and meet her new roommate at an American university (Adichie). Adichie's roommate began to ask Adichie questions - largely

based around conclusions arrived at via the application of stereotype - and was shocked to learn just how wrong her beliefs were (Adichie). Adichie recounted this event, stating:

"She asked where I had learned to speak English so well and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my 'tribal music' and was consequently very disappointed when I produced a tape of Mariah Carey" (Adichie).

It is clear that Adichie's Nigerian background had largely influenced the content of many of her roommate's beliefs to yield false conclusions. Adichie's roommate would have been justifiably correct in claiming that Adichie spoke English well (Adichie). The additional consideration of stereotypes surrounding Africans and their 'native language', however, led her to the false conclusion that there must have been a unique reason as to why Adichie could speak English so well (Adichie). A similar pattern of thought can be applied to Adichie's roommate's conclusion that Adichie must listen-to/possess some kind of 'tribal music' (Adichie).

Another major concern is the influence of group bias on our conclusions (Cowell & Decety 9-10; Masto 77-78; Peterson 236-237). Group bias is the product of our ability to categorize individuals as "belonging" to various groups (Decety & Cowell 9; Masto 77-78). In the previous example we talked about stereotypes associated with groups which could be used to make assumptions about group members. Unlike stereotypes, which look to apply generalizations to groups, group-bias is concerned with the value individuals place on group membership – particularly as it concerns favouritism towards those viewed as belonging to the same group (Cowell & Decety 9; Masto 78-79). This means that, when attempting to empathize with another, we may run the risk of assuming more or less favourable premises on the basis of group membership, thus leading us to an incorrect conclusion.

One worry with the current judicial system is the influence of empathy and group bias on judicial decision making (Johnson 407-408; Lee 146-148). The judicial system strives to reach objectively sound, impartial, conclusions (Lee 146-149). If judges, in their attempts to act empathetically, make favourable assumptions when evaluating those who they perceive as being an 'in-group' member, then they run the risk of accidently reaching a non-objective conclusion (Johnson 407-408, 455; Lee 146-149).

One case which highlights this concern is the 1982 State v Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz case, also referred to as the "Murder of Vincent Chin" (Hwang 30). At the time Michigan's automotive industry was largely suffering due to the rising popularity of Japanese auto imports (Johnson 400). On June 19 both Ebens and Nitz began hurling racial expletives at an Asian-American stranger, Vincent Chin, blaming him for the current state of the automotive industry (Johnson 400-401). Chin then challenged both Ebens and Nitz to a fight, however when Ebens pulled out a baseball bat Chin ran (Johnson 400-401). Nitz eventually caught Chin and proceeded to hold him down as Ebens beat Chin multiple times with a baseball bat, eventually striking him over the head (Johnson 401). Police eventually broke up the fight however by that point Chin was unconscious (Johnson 401). He slipped into a coma and was pronounced dead on June 23rd (Johnson 401).

In March 1983 Judge Charles Kuafman charged both Ebens and Nitz with manslaughter, sentenced them with three years' probation, and fined them $3780 (Johnson 455). Kaufman, in response to criticism, justified his claim stating:

"The victim lingered for four days, which again, based upon everything was indicative to me that they attempted to administer a punishment. They did this too severely, in careless disregard of

human life, which is what manslaughter is. … Had it been a brutal murder of course these fellas would be in jail now" (Johnson 417).

Despite this response Kaufman's sentence remains largely concerning, especially in regards to his classification of 'brutal murder' (Johnson 457). Many worry that Kuafman acted in a manner biased in favour of both Ebens and Nitz, making assumptions in their favour as a result of a perceived sense of group membership (Johnson 456-457, 459). This is largely supported by Kaufman's claim that Ebens and Nitz, men who were employed and had no criminal records, "weren't the kind of people you send to jail" (Johnson 457).

There is little question that assumptions informed via stereotypes and/or bias can lead to vastly incorrect conclusions. How we ought to circumvent their usage, given our inability to access privileged information held by the individual we are attempting to empathize with, still remains a concern if we intend to make any form of knowledge claim via empathy.

CONSEQUENCES OF 'FALSE EMPATHY' AND 'MISTAKEN STATEMENTS'

The previous section explained how a lack of access to privileged information, and the import of stereotypes and bias, can lead to largely incorrect empathetically gained conclusions. In this section I intend to explain why those in opposition to the use of empathetically gained knowledge claims believe that these conclusions cause unjustifiable harm – on the basis of false empathy and un-intentional oppression – and should therefore not be used (Campelia 530-532)

If we choose to ignore our very real inability to attain, with certainty, all the privileged information possessed by another, then we run the risk of engaging in the act of *false empathy* (Campelia 530). False empathy can be defined as instances "where an attempt at empathizing might ignore the very real differences that exist in how we experience the world" (Campelia 531). To put it simply, given that I do not have access to the privileged first-person information

possessed by the individual I am attempting to empathize with, I cannot truly claim to know what they are going through (Campelia 531).

Concerns regarding false empathy can become especially apparent in instances where someone claims that they 'know' how another feels, or what they would do given they were in another's shoes, despite the significant differences between them (Campelia 531). If a cis-gendered heterosexual were to approach a member of the LGBTQ community and state 'I know what it feels like to worry about how your family will respond to your gender preferences' [as a result of empathy], it would likely come across as tone-deaf and insincere. Similarly, if an heir were to give financial 'advice' on financial situations that they themselves had never experienced, such as how to handle instances of extreme poverty, it could come across as somewhat offensive. Afterall not everyone has the option to purchase coffee, forget choose to 'opt-out' in order to save up for little luxuries they 'otherwise would not afford'. It is clear that, depending on how the receiver of false empathy interprets the claims of another, they could end up harmed as a result of the insensitive conversation (Campelia 531-532).

When used to convey the preferences of individuals or groups false empathy can also prevent the acknowledgement of real circumstances, motivations, and preferences surrounding those we falsely empathize with. After-all, if I am denying my inability to know how x feels, and truly believe I am justified in claiming I know how x feels, why do I need to ask x what they want when I could simply act accordingly? In said instances false empathy can lead to individuals speaking on behalf of others, indicating their wants and preferences, without any acknowledgement of the very real possibility that none of this is desired. We see this often when we observe those who recognize their privilege and, in an attempt to benefit those less well-off,

attempt to speak on their behalf without any real confirmation as to whether their assumptions are correct. This is deeply problematic as it can largely contribute to a group's inability to voice their own concerns and perpetuate an overly simplistic view regarding the lives of others.

Adichie acknowledges just how harmful well-meaning assumptions, even empathetic ones, can be when they perpetuate these simplistic views of other people's lives. She recounts her interactions with her roommate and states,

"She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning, pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa … In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her, in any way... No possibility of a connection as human equals" (Adichie).

This statement effectively highlights the harm that can be done to individuals when false empathy occurs, but what of the specific instances wherein we make use of stereotypes and/or bias to inform our understanding?

Systemic oppression can result in even the most well-meaning institutions, including that of the legal system, as a result of stereotyping and bias. Currently there exists a large amount of racial, ethnic, social, and economic homogeneity amongst judges (Lee 177-178), which supports the notion that in-group bias could have a drastic impact on those not falling within said demographic (Campelia 531; Segal 270). Studies have shown the socio-demographic characteristics can influence what is perceived as a suitable criminal sanction, supporting the notion that stereotypes do indeed have an impact on judicial rulings (Johnson 458; Segal 270). Given the impact stereotyping and in-group bias can present it is not shocking to learn that minorities tend to be given 'the short end of the stick', often receiving less favourable sentences than those of their white counterparts (Johnson 455-456, Lee 178-178). Referring back to the

controversial sentence in the State v Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz case, it is not surprising to

realize that Ebens and Nitz were indeed white, employed, 'non-criminals' (Johnson 352, 457).

None of this necessarily suggests that anyone within the judicial system is actively oppressive, but

rather that – as things stand – practices of empathy that allow for in-group bias and stereotyping

can largely, continually, and systematically harm underprivileged groups.

Given the negative impact mistaken empathetic conclusions can have on both individuals,

and entire groups, it is understandable why those in opposition to epistemic practices of empathy

may believe that said practices are hard to ethically justify.

CHAPTER 3: THE VALIDITY OF EMPATHIC KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PURSUIT
DEGREES OF KNOWING

In this section I explain why our inability to access privileged knowledge claims should not

stop us from pursuing empathetic sources of knowledge, despite the uncertainty that seems to

surround them (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 67-68; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 11 & 12). We already

disregard the need to access all relevant propositions needed for justification, particularly in our

day to day lives, and yet still hold self-evident beliefs to qualify as knowledge claims or treat them

as such while qualifying their uncertainty (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 11 &

12). Those in opposition to the usage of empathic knowledge hold that, because of our inability to

access privileged information, we should not view empathy as a reliable source of information.

This is because, in the absence of privileged information, we cannot be certain that no

disqualifying propositions exist and, as such, cannot justify our belief. The problem with adopting

such a stance is that, if we were to apply a similar standard of justification to other beliefs, we

would be unable to make many well-accepted knowledge claims. In this chapter I will expand on

why we ought to accept such claims as knowledge claims, how our standards of justification may

vary depending on their application, and what we can do, as individuals, to help improve the

accuracy of our claims and reduce potential error.

HUME'S CAUSE AND EFFECT VS. EMPATHY

When we attempt to acquire empathic knowledge, we do our best to accurately apply

our own contextual knowledge to come to a true conclusion. Our inability to access all relevant

information, as it pertains to empathy, makes us question the epistemic validity of this process.

Given the possibility of error it is reasonable to feel hesitant about forming empathic knowledge

claims. This concern or criticism, however, begins to feel unjustified once we acknowledge that

other methods of knowledge acquisition, premised on the notion of cause and effect, possess

similar problems and yet we still accept them as knowledge claims.

According to Hume our present reasons for believing in cause and effect stem from a

cocktail of impressions, constant conjunctions, past-experiences, and imagination (Hume, *Treatise*

of Human Nature 40-48; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 1-6). The process begins when we first gain some

impression via experience (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 48; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 5). This

impression could be my noticing that a pencil, once released from my hand, falls to the floor. I

note a spatial relation change – after all the pencil is no longer in the air where I released it – and

proceed to investigate it by picking up the pencil and releasing it once more (Hume, *Treatise of*

Human Nature 42-48; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 2-5). I repeat this process many times and note that the

same events, consistently and seemingly without failure, occur (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*

44; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 2). As a result of these experiences I begin to form an idea that Hume calls a

constant conjunction – these two events are consistently associated with each other such that *when I let go of the pencil it falls onto the floor* (*Treatise of Human Nature* 50-51; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 6). Via this seemingly necessary connection I may further infer that in future instances, if I release my pencil, then the pencil will fall (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 52; bk.1, pt. iii., sec. 6).

While this conclusion is exciting in and of itself, I may further expand my predictive abilities by making note of other instances of constant conjunction (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 50-52; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 6). For example, I know in the past that when I have let go of a book, a toy, a pen, essentially anything thing I have picked up and released, it has fallen to the ground. From this I can imagine that anything I pick up and leave freestanding will fall towards the ground – including those objects that I have yet to see this occur with (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 52-53; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 6). Via a combination of past experience and imagination I have stumbled upon a general belief that many comfortably claim to know: when an object is freestanding *something* will cause it to descend to the ground (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 52-53; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 6). Using this principle, I can, going forward, predict the behaviour of objects via this cause we call gravity.

When empathizing with another my thoughts follow a similar line of belief. I hold that certain events lead to certain responses. Good news is constantly conjoined with smiles or happy commentary. Bad news is consistently met with tears, anger, grief. Given sufficient past experience I can become confident in my ability to predict reactions without even realizing it. In the same way we unconsciously presume that something dropped will fall, we tend to become apprehensive about delivering bad news for fear of the anticipated reaction. Conversely, we also tend to assume that given that bad news is consistently accompanied by emotions of sadness,

that emotions of sadness are the product of some 'negatively' classified event. This is because "when we are accustomed to see two impressions conjoined, the appearance of one idea immediately carries us to the idea of another" (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 60; bk. 1, pt. iii, sec. 8).

Hume's problem with knowledge claims predicated on cause and effect is our inability to access 'all relevant information' regarding their respective causes (Hume, *Enquiry Into Human Understanding* 30-31; bk. 1, sec. 7, pt. 1). For example, when we refer to objects falling, we make sense of it via the concept of gravity – a force that we use to explain how an object went from being in the air to on the ground, but we have no proof of such a force existing. The concept of gravity, while consistent with past experience and a means by which we make sense of current and future experiences, is not something we can be certain even exists. In our eyes it *probably* exists as a cause for things falling, but we cannot definitively know that (Hume, *Enquiry Into Human Understanding 28-31*; bk. 1, sec. 7, Pt. 1). Further, even if we grant gravity's existence, we cannot claim to know all relevant premises associated with its behavior, and therefore our ability to correctly predict how gravity would behave. In other words, if we accept that beliefs are justified as knowledge if and only if we have access to all relevant premises informing our claims, then beliefs as self-evident as something released will fall, are beyond our ability to know.

Despite this we would find it ludicrous to treat gravity as something we do not know to be a thing, as if all our prior encounters of things falling do not indicate that things in the future will fall (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 67-68; bk. 1, sec. iii, pt. 10-11). To live life in such a way, denying such a basic, self-evident, knowledge claims on the basis of our inability to access all premises goes against our everyday nature (Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 67-68; bk. 1, sec. iii,

pt. 10-11). Similarly, when we find someone crying we assume a cause – bad news – but again, we cannot definitively know that. We are again basing our claim on probability rather than something we can definitively know. But if we are willing to accept gravity as day to day knowledge why ought we to exclude conclusions as self-evident as 'something bad happened to make this individual cry?'

I propose that both claims ought to be treated the same by acknowledging just how much our standards of justification can vary depending on the complexity of the belief being put forward.

ACKNOWLEDGING VARYING THRESHOLDS FOR JUSTIFICATION

When going about our lives we regularly hold that we are justified in our beliefs, claiming to know things despite our awareness that many other premises might exist that could undermine the consistency of our belief, and therefore its truth. Despite this we wish to acknowledge that, to some degree, we have justified our beliefs and can claim to learn things via the application of theories such as gravity. As stated previously, it would seem absurd to claim that – because gravity is simply a theory – we cannot know that an item released will fall. I wish to propose that the degree of justification required for many acquired knowledge claims is, at least in part, informed by the level of attention placed on the means by which it is acquired and how it is applied. In order to explain what I mean by this I intend to compare the significance of knowledge claims attained via the application of principles governing gravity, as it applies to: day-to-day life, mechanical design, and the study of theoretical physics.

When we look at how one goes about day-to-day life, we observe that they apply the basic principle of gravity, 'all that is released – unsupported – will fall', with little concern about its

theoretical status. For example, when we pour ingredients into a bowl, the fundamental truth of gravity is not of concern, so long as we can manage to get all our ingredients into the bowl. If we pour some honey and notice that we are struggling to get it out of our measuring cup, we may stop and grab a spoon – realizing that the honey is sticky and therefore not falling – and will likely continue onwards, not questioning our understanding of gravity. This explanation, though not vastly thorough, is sufficient for our purposes as our current mode of inquiry is regarding our ability to bake and not the nature of gravity in and of itself. So long as we are talking about our understanding of gravity, as it relates baking, we remain confident that ingredients poured will fall.

While this application of the theory of gravity is sufficient to feel that one can make knowledge claims regarding baking, we would not hold that to be the case for engineering. It is natural to assume that, when constructing something, an engineer would encounter much more complex challenges as it pertains to gravity. These problems will likely be less intuitive to solve than that of those confronted when baking. When designing something an engineer would also have to anticipate possible future behaviours of gravity, which requires that they know and consider a far greater number of premises than that of 'all that is released – unsupported – will fall'. For example, engineers designing a plane would need to consider gravity's rate of acceleration, the impact of altitude on its force, how it interacts with forces such as air resistance, and other concepts far beyond my knowledge. Given the need to clearly address and confront the role gravity plays the average individual would likely not be able to claim that they know enough about the causal effect of gravity to design a plane. It is clear that when doing a task that requires critical consideration of gravity many of us cannot claim to truly understand how gravity works or

predict how it will behave. As such, many of us would not feel justified in making claims about gravity as it applies to the construction of planes.

Lastly, those operating at a highly theoretical level, such as theoretical physicists, have to be more wary as their aims are focused on knowledge claims. Their goals are directly linked to the pursuit of knowledge, and so the degree of justification required for them to claim that they know something is, none too shockingly, higher. This is demonstrated by gravity's categorization as a theory, despite how much evidence there is available supporting it. Their work seeks to expand our predictive capacity with questions such as, 'how would the theory of gravity apply in a black hole?'. The high degree of justification associated with researchers, such as theoretical physicists, is in acknowledgment that knowledge is being pursued as an ends in and of itself. This strongly differs from the previous two instances described, wherein knowledge was being used as a means to an end and remains justified in so far as it is sufficient to meet said end (Campelia 534).

Just as different thresholds of justification exist for knowledge claims acquired based on gravity, different thresholds of justification could be said to exist for different knowledge claims acquired via empathy (Campelia 530). When we look at our day-to-day applications of empathy we do not hesitate to think that someone is sad if they are frowning. In the rare case where something does not seem consistent we ask for clarification regarding the circumstances at hand and simply move forward. For those who have jobs where empathy is required to resolve unique scenarios as they arise, and anticipate future ones, a higher level of justification is required for them to make knowledge claims. For example a therapist would likely have to spend a lot of time developing their cognitive empathy skills in order to both understand their client and prepare for their client's needs. If their client is going through a severe loss it is important that they both

understand how a patient feels now and take into account the likely stages of grief that would follow, in order to provide the best possible care for their patient.

Of course, a healthy amount of reason to question such knowledge claims remains. After all a patient does not necessarily have to abide by the seven stages of grief, a frown does not have to mean someone is sad and disqualifying premises could exist amongst the privileged information that we – ourselves – cannot access. If, however, we consistently condone such a high level of skepticism we would be unable make use of even some of the most seemingly self-evident concepts – including gravity – in our day to day lives. But, given that we are willing to make use of correlation in other aspects of our lives, in order to gain an understanding-of and learn about things around us, we should also be willing to make use of empathy. In the same way that we are willing to apply theories such as the theory of evolution, kinetic theory of perfect gases, climate change theory, atomic theory, and the like, all to gain information and make sense of the world around us, we should also be willing to do so with empathy.

In order to accomplish this we need to acknowledge that, just as other means of knowledge acquisition have their own necessary skills and corresponding procedures in place for ensuring sufficient reliability, and thereby justification, so too would practices pertaining to empathy.

CORRESPONDING DEVELOPMENT AND PROCEDURE

When we look at other areas of information acquisition we note that a high level of focus is placed on skill development and corresponding accuracy. For example, in a chemistry lab the ability to correctly measure solutions is important for ensuring that the result will match what was originally predicted. If we want to confirm whether or not a reaction will occur such that a 1:2

33

ratio of both solutions mixed together results in a pure solution – with no remainder of either of

the original two solutions – then our initial measurements have to be accurate. If we fail to

maintain this ratio, *accidentally* measuring 10 ml to 20.5 ml of solution, then the solution would

test as impure irrespective of the validity of the original theory used to predict that the reaction

would occur in a 1:2 ratio. The reliability of a theory is irrelevant insofar as one is unable to

reliably execute it. For this reason skill development is a necessary part of making use of most any

theory; it improves our ability to successfully make use of it as a means of knowledge acquisition.

Afterall, it is hard for a chemist to produce a pure substance if they cannot even measure

solutions in an accurate 1:2 ratio.

This comparison between applied practices of chemistry and empathy is only applicable if

we accept that empathy is something that, with practice, we can improve on (Peterson 238). So

long as we can improve on our affective empathy skills to ensure that we can control, recognize,

and regulate our emotions, then many of the arguments presented in opposition to the usage of

empathic knowledge claims fail to apply to affective empathy (Peterson 238, Segal 267). Similarly,

if we can improve in our ability accurately take on the perspective of others, then many of the

arguments in opposition to the usage of cognitive empathy as a means of knowledge acquisition

fail (Peterson 238).

Referring back to the first chapter it was established that irrespective of empathy's status

as a moral virtue or a skill, our ability to act empathetically can be improved. Moral virtues require

we become good at discerning the most suitable course of action, to ensure that we act in neither

excess [hyper-empathetic] nor deficiency [apathetic], as well as develop a disposition towards

virtuous action (Peterson 243, 246). Empathy as a skill requires that we improve in our ability to

understand others accurately via practice and be able to make use of it to reach our desired ends (knowledge). In general, the pursuit of empathy proper proves essential, as studies indicate that, "normal cognition relies on emotional processing and that deficits in the latter can impair the former" (Peterson 235). Conversely the ability to cognitively make sense of a given situation can help ensure appropriate emotional processing – ensuring that affective emotions experienced accurately represent their corresponding contexts.

Studies exist that support the conclusion that one can improve both in their cognitive and affective empathy abilities via repetition and practice. A number of established educational tools and intervention plans have already been shown to increase the accuracy of cognitive empathic knowledge claims and help regulate/ensure appropriate affective response. For the purposes of my paper I have only provided a few examples in order to demonstrate that such methods do exist. There are numerous other interventions that will not be addressed in this paper.

Role-playing has been used as a means of practicing perspective taking since as early as 1982 and is still currently being used as a way to help train professionals to be empathetic towards those they care for (Eisenburg et al. 6; Forlin 84-87). Pre-service professionals such as medical students are often made to roleplay the perspectives of hypothetical patients in order to gain insight into what their future patients may go through (Forlin 86). Such methods have proven so successful that technology is currently being used to make the experience more immersive and participation focused, so that one can 'truly' experience scenarios from the patient's perspective (Forlin 86-87). In doing so the medical student becomes more capable of understanding the potential real-life struggles of their patients and develops a corresponding array of new insights that may positively contribute to their perspective taking accuracy. (Forlin 87). It also allows for

questioning and critical reflection to change and inform the future physician's perspective of others (Forlin 87). This method allows for direct exposure to considerations physicians may otherwise have overlooked, and an overall increased ability to cognitively empathize with their patient (Forlin 87; Peterson 244).

While this example may be a much less accessible means of practicing cognitive empathy, reading is an option that remains largely available. Many of us, when we are reading, attempt to predict what will occur within a story (Mar et al. 421-422; Peterson 243-244). In doing so we begin making use of whatever information is presently available to us to predict how characters will behave or how they feel (Mar et al. 421-422; Peterson 243-244). Strong correlations between empathy, reading, and overall social competence support the idea that reading narratives improves one's ability understand the mental states, feelings, and perspectives of others (Decety & Yoder 10; Mar et al. 421-422; Peterson 243-244).

Studies have also demonstrated that the use of life skills training interventions developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) can significantly increase the affective empathy capacities of children and adolescents (Ghasemian & Kumar 177; Weisen et al. 1). The WHO defines life skills as, "abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life" (Weisen et al.1). One of the core skills identified within these life skills is empathy (Weisen et al. 1). The life skills education program design consists of three steps: introduce the basic components of life skills, practice applying said skills to relevant problems, and apply these skills to 'risk' situations that can give rise to problems (Weisen et al. 21). A potential education plan for empathy could resemble the following: 1) understanding

and appreciating the similarities and differences between people, 2) avoiding

prejudice/discrimination, and 3) caring for individuals with AIDS[2] (Weisen et al. 22).

In a study conducted by Ayub Ghasemian and G. Venkatesh Kumar students who

demonstrated low capacities for affective empathy were identified and placed into two groups

(Ghasemian & Kumar 1). One group was given 8 life skills training sessions, each consisting of 120

minutes, over the span of two months (Ghasemian & Kumar 1). The other group was simply

monitored and used as a control (Ghasemian & Kumar 1). After the intervention it was found that

the group that had received training tested significantly higher on the Multi-Dimensional

Emotional Empathy Scale (MDEES), indicating increased affective responsiveness, and overall

improved emotion regulation (Ghasemian & Kumar 1).

All of this is meant to demonstrate that, in the same way that a chemist can improve their

accuracy when measuring through repetition and practice, so too can those who wish to excel at

forming empathic knowledge claims. That being said it is clear that the scientific community does

not rely solely on their ability to act skillfully to prevent error. Afterall, even those who train for

years believe that certain steps ought to be taken in order to ensure that their results are indeed

accurate.

This could mean making sure the equipment is suited (calibrated) for the current

temperatures they are being used in, reapplying the theory or performing a 'proof' to ensure they

made correct use of theory, and/or repeated implementation of the theory in order to ensure

recreate-able results. For someone practicing empathy an equivalent set of steps could be

---

[2] This example is taken directly from the WHO's *Life Skills For Children and Adolescents In Schools* document.

ensuring consistency given the circumstances surrounding the situation, re-evaluating – or 'spelling' out – your logic to confirm validity, making note of consistencies and inconsistencies going forward, and questioning whether or not the magnitude of your affective response is accurate given current circumstances.

For example, if you witness someone sobbing, you may want to pause and consider that they currently are standing on a stage before jumping to the conclusion that he is indeed sad. While his tears, by all accounts, indicate sadness, these can reasonably be explained away via the high likelihood that he is indeed acting. Similarly your feelings of concern can be explained away by amazing acting, and as such you may even start to feel excited on their behalf – impressed by such an amazing performance. But suppose you later become friends with this actor, Ramsay, and later learn that Ramsay struggles to cry when acting – and rarely ever manages to sob in the manner that he did on the day you first met him. On the basis of this you are likely to reconsider your original stance that Ramsay was merely acting that day and was in reality likely sad. Going through all these steps when attempting to empathize with another helps ensure that you, as an individual, are going to reach a much more justified conclusion.

Engaging in empathy proper and ensuring both emotional and cognitive empathy claims are consistent could prove helpful as a means of confirmation and further provide justification for a belief. Emotional empathy can often help us acknowledge instances wherein we should reframe our perspective for cognitive empathy. Afterall, if I experience a sense of uneasiness while talking to someone, I may begin to question why and then respectively notice that they are not reacting in the manner that I perceived they ought to be, causing me to re-evaluate my current beliefs.

Conversely the process of cognitive empathy has been shown to help facilitate emotional response (Peterson 235; Segal 267). Cognitive empathy plays an essential role in helping us recognize when our emotions are the product shared affect, stemming from another (Peterson 235). In order for you to recognize you are sharing affect you would likely first have to recognize that affect in another person (Peterson 235). Using cognitive empathy to recognize similarities between yourself and others will also help elicit appropriate affective response (Decety & Yoder 10; Peterson 240).

The corrective value of cognitive empathy is evident when we imagine the opposite of the previous example, wherein we are smiling while talking to someone and, upon realizing the perspective of another person via cognitive empathy, experience horror instead (a negative emotion in response to their negative emotion) and truly empathize.

Of course, while scientists make use of these individual procedures as a means of justifying their own beliefs the scientific community rarely views this as sufficient. In fact a whole new means of procedure and validation is exposed once we begin to share our beliefs with others. In the next chapter I will expand on what I mean by this and why this is necessary in order to ensure that the process of knowledge acquisition poses no harm to others.

CHAPTER 4: THE VALIDITY OF EMPATHIC KNOWLEDGE AND ITS PURSUIT

RESOLVING HARM TO OTHERS

As stated previously, many who oppose the idea that empathetically gained beliefs ought to be treated as valid knowledge claims are quick to point out just how negatively mistaken claims

can impact people. Their unique ability to perpetuate stereotypes and biases, as well as foster instances of false empathy, all under the guise of knowledge, makes them a threat to the well-being of others. Especially given how it seems to justify the reification of others. Yet we still continue to make use of said claims. In fact, it would prove quite challenging to avoid making sense of situations, and responding to others, in the absence of empathic beliefs. Further, we regularly accept and make use of other knowledge claims that potentially pose a threat to the well-being of others. We allow surgeons to perform invasive procedures, rely on geologists to tell us if we need to evacuate, have psychiatrists diagnose us with stigmatized conditions, and rely on auto-manufacturers to ensure our cars are not simply extremely mobile death traps. This is, of course, all done within margins of error. In this section I intend to explain how the pursuit of empathy, as a source of knowledge, will help prevent the perpetuation of harm to others by forcing us to acknowledge the inherent margin of error present when making empathic claims, as well as just how immensely complex other people are.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE MARGIN OF ERROR

For many of our knowledge claims there exists a margin of error, after all there is a reason why the theory of gravity is still referred to as a theory, despite our seemingly absolute confidence in it. Previously the development of pertinent skills was suggested as a potential means of minimizing this margin of error, however we still continue to acknowledge that even if we – as individuals – take all due care potential for error remains. The scientific community is largely aware of this and in response works to collectively validate knowledge claims, produce standards of best practice, and acknowledge the uncertain nature of knowledge claims produced via notions of cause and effect. These principles effectively acknowledge and act to minimize the

margin of error and can be transferred, or related to, processes of knowledge acquisition via empathy.

When it comes to verifying newly proposed beliefs scientists not only rely on their skill set but the scientific community – as a collective – to ensure said beliefs are truly justified knowledge claims (*Confidence in Science* 144-146). This process, referred to as research synthesis, heavily emphasizes the criteria of the coherence theory of truth in order to ensure that any proposed beliefs have no clear contradictions (*Confidence in Science* 144). This is done by amalgamating all known information and relevant studies on the topic being assessed, across a wide variety of fields, and seeing whether the inclusion of this new belief remains consistent with what we hold to already know (*Confidence in Science* 144). This powerful method of confirming JTB allows scientists, and researchers in general, to spot a wide array of errors, including those that are the product of stereotypes and in-group bias (*Confidence in Science* 145).

One example of such was the usage of research synthesis to debunk a series of studies by Arthur Jensen claiming that African Americans possessed a lower overall IQ, and by extension less intelligence, than their White American counterparts (Cronin et al. 46). The amalgamation of research, post-publication of these studies, was used to demonstrate the numerous flaws in the research methods used and data interpreted (Cronin et al. 51-61). Studies conducted after also heavily contradicted Jensen's result, all of which demonstrated that the conclusions of Jensen's study did not meet the criteria of JTB (Cronin et al. 62-119). While the claims in the publication did not prove consistent with current research, it did prove fairly consistent with the researcher's potential personal motivations, racial stereotypes at the given time period, and group-bias (Cronin et al. 113-125).

This process has also already been used for long periods of time to evaluate claims informed by empathy. Referring back to cases such as those of Vincent Chin, we often see that the validity of conclusions reached by even judges comes under scrutiny (Johnson 455-461; Hwang 30). The claims of state judge Kaufman were eventually investigated by the FBI and evaluated by both federal judge Anna Diggs Taylor and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals (Hwang 30-31). Referral to precedent, the stances of other qualified public-servants – such as politicians, and higher levels of court systems, all acted as a means of preventing false claims from perpetuating further harm. The community of those evaluating Kauffman's claim, however, extends far beyond that of just the government (Hwang 30). Journalists, automotive engineers, lawyers, Asian-Americans, psychologists, and countless others have all come forward to point out various consistencies and inconsistencies with the conclusion reached (Hwang 30-31; Johnson 468). Each group provided unique but relevant considerations to help yield a more complete picture of the truth.

The use of a wide variety of relevant sources of information as a means of confirming consistency is again also one we can view in science. Afterall, to confirm a biological claim is consistent with other well-established claims in the domains of neuroscience, physics, mathematics, social psychology, all positively contributes to verifying JTB.

Of course, this still leaves cause for concern as, this process – referred to as retrospective research – does not prevent claims from being made (146 *Confidence in Science*). If the goal is to minimize harm, then any delay in acknowledging these false claims gives rise for concern.

A more active way of preventing the dissemination and usage of false claims is by engaging in the prospective formulation of evidence (146 *Confidence in Science*). This process

involves having people monitor conclusion development, conducting periodic reviews on your

logic before you arrive at your final conclusion, to help prevent biased conclusions from being

reached (146 *Confidence in Science*). An example of this might be the role of a judge when they

direct the jury to either regard or disregard statements that ought not contribute to their final

conclusion reached. A more relatable example may be the role that teachers play in ensuring

their students recognize how their peers feel, mediating dispute resolutions and challenging

children to consider their very own biases that they themselves have yet to even acknowledge.

Whether it be explaining to a young boy why his belief that it is 'weird for girls to play with trucks'

is unjustified, or encouraging discussion and therefore properly informed conclusions, it's clear

that teachers have often helped prevent us from reaching false empathetic conclusions. In doing

so they prevent their respective harms from coming about – no one will make fun of a young girl

for playing with a truck because they have never concluded that it is indeed weird.

These examples are largely focused on what we currently do to prevent ourselves from

arriving at false conclusions via empathy, but we can acknowledge that many institutions fail to

incorporate the usage of retrospective and prospective processes. The Vincent Chin case

demonstrates the severity of failing to instate such processes, as the initial lack of perceived

justification from Kauffman has led to unmeasurable anger and pain that could have been

otherwise avoided (Hwang 30-31). While insufficient prospective testing is one major concern it

speaks to a larger problem within these institutions: a lack of, or poorly developed, sets of

standardized best practices.

By best practices I mean those practices that a community believes ought to be

standardized in order to prevent the dissemination of false information (*Confidence in Science*

143-149). These practices are meant to speak to what the community collectively feels ought to be necessary and sufficient procedure for ensuring that knowledge claims formed provide the level of justification required for one to make claims within their respective institution, field, or environment (Confidence in Science 143-149). In doing so a respective degree, or standard, of knowing is established, as well as various safeguards and considerations that have to be respected.

Within the legal sphere we do already have some practices meant to help ensure a sufficient degree of justification is attained with respect to empathic knowledge claims. One such practice is the need for a judge and jury to recuse themselves if there exists any conflict of interest, a clear means of preventing false conclusions from being perpetuated within a court room. While there are likely many others, concerns regarding Kauffman's final conclusions point to the current standardized procedures being inadequate within the legal sphere (Decety & Cowell 13-14; Decety & Yoder 3). In other words the issue is not empathic knowledge claims, but a lack of adequate procedure in light of the large potential for harm that could come about (Decety & Cowell 13-14; Decety & Yoder 3). In the same way that we expect rigorous tests, evidence, and skill to be present in the manufacturing of a car, given the immense amount of potential harm that failure could give rise to, so too should we expect the same of the legal system. The degree of effort required by a procedure should be reflective of the margin of error we reasonably ought to permit given said harm.

I have no intention of explaining the entirety of the practices that should be adopted by the legal community, especially given the acknowledgement that this is meant to be a collective endeavour. Rather, I wish to call to light the inherent concerns present in structuring institutions,

such as the legal system, in a manner reliant on the capacity of individuals to remain impartial/apathetic and not import their "inherent a priori, implicit, value-based attitudes" (Decety & Cowell 5). That being said the next section on *the recognition of human complexity via empathy*, will address – in part – necessary considerations in regard to what ought reasonably to be done when confirming empathic knowledge claims. For the remainder of this current section, however, I will briefly explain why we can justify the particular use of empathic knowledge claims, despite existing margins of error.

Many of our knowledge claims necessarily mandate some margin of error, especially given that we are assuming causation from correlation. Even if we mandate that one possess a sufficient degree of skill, abide by incredibly thorough procedure, and allow for the community at large to 'test' their conclusions for coherence, a margin of error still exists. Given that we accept the need to condone some margin of error, it does raise the question of whether some sources of knowledge ought to be viewed as less reliable than others, and therefore invalid.

For example, those who study geoscience are unable to use replication as a means of verifying their predictions (*Confidence in Science* 147). Given the unique nature of complex natural systems, wherein no two events are identical, they cannot recreate the exact events they wish to be able to predict, and instead rely on statistical models to predict what will probably happen (*Confidence in Science* 147). To draw a comparison, there exists a difference between believing that the pencil you have dropped repeatedly will fall to the ground again when released, and believing that, based on this observation, some foreign, light-weight, ball-like object attached to a string will fall when released (a balloon). This observed concern translates very well to concerns pertaining to human behaviour as every individual and every interaction is completely

unique. No two are the same and so the possibility for exact replication remans impossible. This concern is especially highlighted within the field of psychology, wherein many studies are replicated only to produce very different results (*Confidence in Science* 152).

Despite this we continue to claim that both fields produce valid knowledge claims, for the reason that they both have great explanatory and predictive power *(*Campelia 534; *Confidence in Science* 150-155). Our ability to create 'ballpark' predictions regarding natural disasters has allowed us to continue to live in various regions plagued with sandstorms, tsunamis, twisters, hurricanes, and earthquakes, with reassurance that – irrespective of whether or not the exact magnitude of said events will be accurately predicted, or will even occur at all – there exists a strong likelihood that we will be forewarned of their occurrence. Furthermore, due to the active pursuit of this knowledge, and collective consistent refinement of procedure within said community, the accuracy of such predictions is only improving (*Confidence in Science* 153)*.* The same can be said for the field of psychology, especially given its ever present use within the medical field (*Confidence in Science* 153*)*.

This explanation also tracks well with why we ought to feel justified in continuing to make use of empathic knowledge claims. The ability to explain and predict the behaviour, feelings, reactions, motivations and perspectives of others is incredibly useful (Campelia 534). In the next chapter I will be focusing on just how useful cognitive and affective empathy is, and just how little information we would possess in the absence of either one. For the purposes of this section, so long as we can acknowledge that there exists a high degree of usefulness in empathic claims, there exists sufficient reason (relative to other research-based endeavours) to continue their pursuit despite their margin of error.

Some may want to argue that the perceived usefulness of empathic knowledge claims ought to be rendered negligible given a 'high' margin of error. This is an argument that, again, tracks very well with the domain of psychology (*Confidence in Science* 150). Many are quick in their desire to claim that psychology is more prone to error, and ought to be dismissed as a source of knowledge as a result, however this raises the question of 'more prone to error relative to what?' (*Confidence in Science* 151-153). Relative to other areas of study? Problematic studies and conclusions exist within each field and no one statistic exists to dictate the margin of error of relative fields (*Confidence in Science* 152-153). This is especially true given the ambitious nature of research, which is consistently looking to establish new knowledge claims (*Confidence in Science* 153). In the same way that there may be a large margin of error in ambitious projects that speak to theoretical physics, there will be a large margin of error involved in ambitious new theories being tested within the domain of psychology, or empathetic knowledge (*Confidence in Science* 152-155).

Afterall, psychology attempts to continually make new observations and knowledge claims, and some error will naturally result (*Confidence in Science* 152-153). The very existence of such error, however, contributes to determining whether the criteria of the coherence theory of truth are met, and in turn still makes a positive contribution to our knowledge and our ability to retrospectively test new claims *(Confidence in Science* 152-154). So long as these studies are conducted in a manner consistent with the community's standards in respect to skill, procedure, and testing, the potential for harm will be appropriately minimized. Similarly, when it comes to empathic knowledge claims, we should acknowledge there do exist some fundamental claims that have relatively low error rates – such as the likelihood of someone crying from sadness – while

others will continue to remain much more ambitious and possess respective margins of error. Irrespective of the margin of error, the potential to take this new information into consideration when assessing other knowledge claims – to demonstrate coherence – still remains present and a powerful tool to help us refine our predictive accuracy.

RECOGNITION OF HUMAN COMPLEXITY

Another means of combating harm to individuals – stemming from stereotypes, in-group bias, false empathy, and a lack of access to privileged information – is by making use of empathy proper to acknowledge the full extent of human complexity and to motivate us to validate our knowledge claim at its source.

When we make use of stereotypes or acts of group recognition, we are effectively demonstrating that we hold, with confidence, that these persons are more or less a sum of our associations with said group. When we engage in false-empathy we sincerely subscribe to the idea that we understand what another has gone through – via empathy – because the sum of every consideration we have taken into account is equal to that of their actual experience. For comparison, in the same way that we might define an apple by the sum of its parts, ascribing its red color and sweet flesh to its being, so too might we ascribe intelligence, athleticism, emotion, to someone's race. Some may wish to argue that this is not quite accurate, as we only make vague assumptions when prescribing these traits to others based on race, but similar can be said of the apple. Sometimes they are yellow or green, sometimes sour or flavorless, but nevertheless I have simplified its existence to a collection of a few specific traits, with little room for variation.

This notion, that we as humans have a tendency of reducing our view of others to a list of 'defining' traits in the same way we would an object, is not a new one (Buber 78-79). Buber, in *I or*

thou, refers to it as an I-It relationship, wherein we fail to engage with others in an authentic manner, indicative of their being a person equally complex as ourselves (78-79).

Our ability to reduce others, however, greatly diminishes when we truly attempt to get to know others via empathy (Decety & Cowell 7-8; Peterson 252). While some simplistic claims will remain inherently obvious there is no question that as we attempt to get more ambitious in our empathic knowledge claims, we will learn just how wrong we can be and just how truly complex other people are. If we keep attempting to make use of cognitive empathy to predict the actions of others, and find ourselves – at times – incorrect, we have to accept that there are a breadth of considerations we failed to take into account. When affective empathy leads us to experience confusion or concern in response to someone else's emotions we realize just how restricted we are in terms of the range of feelings we have experienced. Whether it be because they are laughing while crying, or because they experience happiness when we feel we should be reacting to a feeling of sorrow, it is clear that we have no clue what to make of the emotions that lay before us.

These errors and inabilities could be due to us having lived different lives than those we attempt to empathize with (Segal 269). It could be due to the invalidity of the stereotypes or bias that impacted our beliefs and final conclusion (Decety & Cowell 8). Or it could simply be due to people being something too complex to understand in entirety. Nevertheless, it is clear that anyone who intends to successfully make use of empathic knowledge will become aware of the need to acknowledge that people are more than the sum of what we attribute to them. Successful use of empathy proper will require that we acknowledge the I-thou relationship,

wherein the empathizer acknowledges that the individual they are empathizing with is just as complex as themselves (Buber 78-79).

Doing this also stresses the need for affirmation, to look for further support from the source of our knowledge claims, from the other person themselves. This acute awareness stemming from empathy proper, stressing the unique emotional and cognitive stance respective to each individual, allows us to acknowledge that the best means of verifying empathic claims is by interacting with, and learning about, those we empathize with (Campelia 533-534 & 540-541).

A challenge to the usage of empathy is the acknowledgement that we, as human beings, do tend to be partial in favor of those we recognize as being 'in-group' members (Decety & Cowell 14, Peterson 248). The Vincent Chin case clearly demonstrates the negative consequences that can come about due to this favouritism and why the judicial system is so heavily focused on emphasizing impartiality. Despite this there remains instances of impartiality however – hence the concerns stemming from the Vincent Chin case and the lack of diversity within the legal system. The reality is, realistically speaking, demanding impartiality will not prevent one from importing their own personal biases and filtering through information via their-own perspective and experiences (Lee 149-157; Segal 269). Kaufman, as a judge, was aware of his duty to be impartial, as are many other judges, and yet statistics support the presence of less favourable sentences for those belonging to a minority demographic (Lee 178) Further the processing of legal events, aspects of intent and guilt, all require context on the perspectives of others, and as such, some form of empathetic consideration (Lee 153 & 159).

Since we cannot reasonably expect judges to be 'impartial' while assessing cases, a shift in expectations to make effective use of empathic beliefs and acknowledge deficits in empathy

towards various demographics ought to be considered (Lee 147 & 159-161). If the problem of invalid conclusions within the judicial system necessarily results due to a narrow perspective and an inclination towards categorizing people in terms of group membership, then it makes sense to approach the problem by addressing these two facets (Decety & Cowell 14). Maybe the concern regarding the Vincent Chin case should not be placed on Kaufman's empathy towards Nitz and Ebens, rather maybe we should be concerned about a lack of empathy directed towards Vincent Chin. Maybe our concern should not be the judge's understanding of the actions of two white employed men, with no criminal history, but the judge's lack of understanding towards Vincent Chin's circumstances. This speaks to a need to build empathy between groups via some of the interventions previously mentioned and, by extension, broaden our own perspective about the lives of others (Decety & Yoder 10; Lee 162-163; Peterson 252; Segal 266-269).

Many of our concerns pertaining to the validity of empathic knowledge claims also result from the concern that the empathizer does not possess the privileged information possessed by those they intend to empathize with. This concern is only truly relevant, however, if we do not, or cannot, attempt to expand or verify what we believe to know with the possessor of said privileged information, the person we are empathizing with (Campleia 533, 538). This intuitive solution is one we already note regularly. When we feel that someone is upset we often ask if they are okay, if they are comfortable sharing what is wrong, if there is anything we can do to help rectify the situation. We verify our knowledge claims where possible, or at the very least use these claims to inform our own lines of questioning that can be verified by the person we correspond with (Campelia 533). We have also, over the years, learned to acknowledge that even if we have a general understanding of situation, asking open-ended questions is a good way of ensuring that

our own personal beliefs do not restrict the information we attain. This is common practice in interviews and ensures the individual we are attempting to empathize with can give us an accurate understanding of what ought to be of importance.

Referring back to Adichie's roommate it was clear that vague attempts at acknowledging the differences between them were made, possibly in an attempt to be empathetic. But if her roommate had been more aware of just how little she knew, she might have been more open ended in her questioning, possibly simply asking if Adichie would be willing to share stories of her life in Africa and how it differed from the United States. If Adichie's roommate, from a place of empathy, became concerned about potential homesickness she could have simply confirmed her concern and asked if there was anything she could do.

This is an instance with an easy resolution, but of course there will be instances wherein we cannot confirm our beliefs. A common example is that of historical events, wherein we often appeal to empathy as a means of understanding just why we should never allow such atrocities to happen again. In instances wherein we cannot confirm our beliefs we still work to further justify our understanding, with the knowledge that *our* frame of reference may not be the exact same as *their* frame of reference. In order to help resolve this we often seek to learn about things like different cultures, circumstances, and lifestyles (Campelia 534). Personal accounts or claims are given special acknowledgement when possible, all with the understanding that given we can never know everything, feel everything, we will never truly understand what they went through (Campelia 534). But referring to history again, it takes no stretch of the imagination to believe – quite justifiably – the pain, terror, fear, anxiety, or heartbreak caused by said atrocities. As we delve deeper to understand specific accounts we acknowledge that our understanding is less

complete and more speculative, but nevertheless we hold to possess some understanding. We know better than to claim, given our lack of experience and exposure, exactly what many of these people went through – we simply know it was bad.

While I seem to have expanded on the limitations of empathic knowledge claims, in the next and final chapter, I intend to explore the significance of the pursuit of empathic knowledge, and what we can learn from it.

CHAPTER 5: SIGNIFICANCE OF ACCEPTING EMPATHIC KNOWLEDGE

In the previous chapters I claimed that empathy is a source of practical knowledge claims with significant explanatory and predictive power. That being said it may be hard to grasp why empathic information ought to be viewed as uniquely significant relative to other forms of factual statements. Empathy may provide us with unique information closer to first person experience than that of a true or false statement, but how this content positively contributes practically to our day-to-day lives still needs to be addressed (Campelia 535).

In this chapter intend to provide some further justification/evidence for the claim that empathy is a source of practical knowledge, as I explain just how hard it would be to function as a member of society and/or a moral agent in the absence of either/both cognitive and affective empathy. To do this I will be making use of first-person accounts of, as well as research conducted on, both autistics and psychopaths. It is important to note that when discussing the experiences and challenges faced by autistics and psychopaths, I will be referring to the experiences of those on the extreme sides of the spectrum. Not all individuals who have been diagnosed with autism

or psychopathy will experience the respective empathic capacities, or lack-thereof, described in this chapter.

I will also go on to explain that, while empathic knowledge claims positively impact the individuals who make use of them, they also offer the potential to positively impact societies who act on this knowledge. As a result, the question of whether or not there exists a social obligation to provide citizens with the skills and opportunities to further their empathic capacities and accuracy becomes a relevant consideration going forward.

OPTIMALLY FUNCTIONING IN SOCIETY

One demographic that has been shown to possess a strong affinity for affective empathy are those with autism (Masto 87). Tending to score above average for affective empathy (on the Davis multidimensional test for empathy) many autistics tend to show concern for others due to their ability to experience – to some degree – the affect of those they empathize with (Masto 85-87).

In contrast to their high capacity to 'feel for others', autistics typically struggle to attribute different mental states to others accurately (Masto 86). This inability to make use of cognitive empathy during social interactions can lead to frustration and uncertainty, as deficits in information hinder their ability to make informed decisions. For example, many of us who are not 'on the extremes of the spectrum' intuitively respond to subtle social cues, with little to no prompting or consideration required. We simply have enough of an understanding of others, both as unique individuals and members of society, to make sense of what is implied and act accordingly. This is due to our ability to make use of cognitive empathy as a means of accurately discerning the mental states of others (Masto 88).

Meghan Masto, in her journal article *Empathy and Its Role In Morality*, provides first-hand accounts of autistics in order to demonstrate just how challenging it can be to make informed social decisions without making use of, or relying on, cognitive empathy (86-88). One such autistic, Jim Sinclair, makes an active effort to develop a 'separate translation code' for every person that he meets in order to ensure that he can understand what each individual's particular social cues may mean (Masto 86). Even with these translation codes in place, however, he still struggles to discern just how he ought to respond (Masto 86). This is because this translation code, for all the information that it offers, is not sufficient enough to compensate for the capacity of cognitive empathy to inform decision making.

This lack of insight into others can be so extreme that some autistics, such as Wendy Lawson, have described the perspectives of anyone other than themselves as being, "foreign and alien" (Masto 86-87). Attempts at applying 'traditional logic', alternatively thought of as non-empathic attempts at reasoning through the perspectives of others, often still leaves autistics lacking practical knowledge that would prove helpful for social engagement (Masto 86-87). Gunilla Gerland provides an example, stating that at times she is, "unable to discern whether people mean [her] well or ill" (Masto 86-87). Irrespective of her attempts to "calculate with [her] intellect" whether people wish her harm or not remains a conclusion she cannot reach (Masto 86-87). All of this goes to suggest that, in the absence of the capacity to make accurate use of cognitive empathy, one would not possess the ability to make practical knowledge claims regarding the states of others, and accordingly, the ability to provide an informed response to others.

None of this is, of course, meant to suggest that affective empathy does not play an equally important role in providing the practical knowledge required for informed social interactions. Psychopaths provide a strong example of such, as they possess a high capacity for cognitive empathy, with a strong ability to accurately determine the mental states of others, but lack the capacity to make use of affective empathy. Psychopaths are those who experience shallow affect and, as a result, experience little to no affective empathy. (Masto 80).

Their inability to experience emotions makes them less likely to recognize the emotions of others (Masto 85). We often see this idea depicted in movies or TV shows when psychopaths react to the facial expressions of others and proclaim that they never 'understood that' emotion. This phrasing is even suggestive of just how theoretical their knowledge of emotions can be, making no mention of experiences or lack thereof. It makes no suggestion of the possibility of knowing what it feels like. By comparison non-psychopathic individuals rapidly and readily process emotions such as grief, joy, rage, with little thought. The process is seemingly instantaneous and is often times automatic, providing us with immediate information to make use of.

This ability to immediately draw our attention towards the feelings of others helps us remain aware of circumstances we may need to respond to. Whether it be the frown we notice on someone's face as we skim a room at a party, or the pained face of a child unable to focus in class, we see emotions and recognize something out of place that might require a call to action.

All of this is to say that empathy proper, both cognitive and affective empathy, plays an important role in providing the practical knowledge required for optimal social functioning. The recognition of unanticipated emotions in others can alert us to a need to reassess the current situation, ask questions, and act to change the situation. Making sense of the current situation,

determining what questions to ask, and discerning what to do next in regards to another person, requires understanding the perspective of that other person. The harmonious usage of cognitive and affective empathy helps to ensure that we remain aware and informed of the social situations we attempt to navigate, positively contributing to our ability to be competent social agents.

OPTIMALLY FUNCTIONING AS MORAL AGENTS

Empathy proper not only positively contributes to social functioning, but moral functioning for similar reasons to those stated above. Scholars such as Gregory Peterson and Meghan Masto have argued that cognitive and emotional empathy is an epistemic requirement for moral action, and a key contributor for ensuring one lives a moral life (Peterson 245-247; Masto 84-88).

When we consider the competencies of the ideal moral agent a very basic requirement seems to be the ability to recognize instances where moral action is a necessity. Affective empathy can play an important role, providing an important 'shortcut' for us to recognize instances wherein we must act (Peterson 249-250). For example, if I see someone seemingly sad, I can acknowledge this emotion – even if I do not why they are sad – and begin to discern whether or not I have a moral obligation present to provide care. If their reasons for sadness are relevant to me such that I have a moral obligation to act, I will now know to do so. Conversely if I recognize no moral obligation to respond to their sadness, or even a moral obligation not to intervene, I can respond accordingly. My ability to recognize a situation that may be morally relevant, under this account, is prompted by affective empathy and the intuitive ability to feel for another with minimal effort (Peterson 249-250). In the absence of such an ability recognizing morally relevant scenarios would require much more vigilance and active effort. We could

constantly analyze everything we witness, but this would likely prove largely impractical –

requiring an immense amount of time and cognitive effort. For day to day recognition of morally

relevant scenarios affective empathy provides a practical means of knowing when we ought to

pause and assess the significance of what we have just become aware of.

Initiating the 'correct' response, or lack thereof, seems to require both affective empathy

and cognitive empathy (Masto 74). While an awareness of another's emotions helps us recognize

potential situations of moral relevance, often times we need access to more specific information

to take action (Masto 74). When discerning how one generally ought to act in a moral manner,

affective empathy has been suggested as essential in order to understand how to be good to

others (Masto 88; Peterson 250). To be able to recognize the emotions of another, and to what

extent they feel those emotions, helps us build an understanding of how we ought to act if we

recognize various moral obligations such as, but not limited to, principles of justice, beneficence,

non-maleficence, utility, and autonomy (Masto 88; Peterson 250). For example, if I can recognize

the magnitude of the anger, pain, or strife, faced by the Asian-American community in response

to the death of Vincent Chin, I can begin to gain some understanding of the injustice present.

Further I may observe that responses of acknowledgment and support towards the stance of the

Asian-American community seems to generate a response of relief, gratitude, and positivity.

Given this I can conclude that one possible course of action I may undertake as a moral agent is to

continue to validate the concerns of that community.

One issue with relying on solely affective empathy in order to arrive at a solution is that it

requires us to be part of experiencing a solution, forget the best solution, in action. In the

previous example I learned of a potential solution to a problem because I already witnessed a

positive response to a solution in play. But it is likely that many of us will, at some point in our lives, find ourselves in a position where we may have to come up with the first solution, or propose a better solution, when interacting with others. If this is the case then affective empathy will not prove sufficient, and we will have to make use of cognitive empathy as under this account "taking on the perspective of another is the only way that we could have come upon morally relevant information" (Masto 84). This is because affect will not prove sufficient for determining an appropriate response under said situations. This is largely supported by Lawson's claim that, as someone who's autistic, he is often placed in scenarios where he knows something has to be done but is often unsure of what that something ought to be (Masto 86). A robust understanding of the scenario, however, may help one arrive at fairly optimal solutions.

This is particularly relevant when we acknowledge that most moral dilemmas require addressing multiple possible solutions, a lot of critical thinking, and practical knowledge, to resolve (Masto 87; Peterson 247). Instances where moral requirements are seemingly in conflict, or require balancing obligations, require us to have an accurate understanding of how our actions impact others and what moral weight we ought to assign to them respectively (Peterson 248). One such concern might be trying to differentiate instances of care from those of bias. It is not hard to imagine scenarios wherein a parent might have to balance their special obligation of care towards their child, against that of the need to treat all children equally. In that given scenario any additional information on just how these children may be uniquely impacted, as a result of their unique mental states, may prove helpful.

Lastly, as addressed previously, empathy proper can contribute positively to help ensure we address and deal with misinformation stemming from stereotypes, in-group bias, and false

empathy (Decety & Cowell 7-8). If we acknowledge that many of these harms result from a lack of empathy, a deficiency in understanding the perspectives and feelings of others, then we can accept that empathy – rather than a problem – functions as a solution (Peterson 248). If we work to understand the circumstances of Chimamanda Adichie via empathy and recognize her frustration or pain at being prescribed a false narrative, we can begin to correct our actions based on this information. If we strive to make sure we are just as empathetic towards individuals such as Vincent Chin as we are towards those we identify with, then we can make sure we have some of the necessary practical knowledge required to arrive at justified conclusions. The capacity to do so speaks to both cognitive and affective empathy. Affective empathy provides us with empathic concern, and thereby motivation, to care for others (Decety & Cowell 4). Cognitive empathy gives us the ability to take on the perspectives of out-group members and, by extension, develop a more positive evaluation of demographics outside of our own (Decety & Cowell 4-8). As indicated in the previous chapter, sincerely engaging in empathy proper helps prevent the reification of others, and by extension encourages prosocial and caregiving behaviours, inhibits aggression and violence, and facilitates cooperation (Decety & Cowell 1; Peterson 248).

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Empathy, for many of the reasons outlined above, can provide a powerful framework for addressing injustice (Segal 268). So long as we make progress to improve our methodology and develop best practices to prevent the dissemination of false information, empathic knowledge can serve to largely benefit not only those individuals that make use of it but society at large (Peterson 238). When shaping effective social policy the ability to examine "groups and cultures through the eyes of members of other groups and cultures", and gain relevant contextual information on their social conditions, is indispensable (Segal 268). To do so accurately requires

us to foster empathy between social groups but the results speak for themselves. Acknowledging women's rights, establishing child labour laws, and creating civil rights legislation all represent social movements that required a level of intergroup empathy in order to be accepted (Segal 273). The admission that women ought to have the same rights as men, for example, required men to not only acknowledge how similar their lives were to those of their female counterparts, but also the harm that necessarily resulted from denying their rights.

This is not to say that 'radical' new discoveries have to result from applying empathy in order for empathy to be helpful. Even the more nuanced information that has come about from the application of empathy has proven indispensable when dealing with ongoing issues. For example, when Robert Kennedy visited impoverished families in the 1960s, the war against poverty had already started in America and people acknowledged the immense harm experienced by the lower class (Segal 268). Despite this America's food stamp program was not born until after those visits had occurred and Kennedy had, empathetically, reflected on what he had seen (Segal 268). The conclusion here being that not only is empathy required in order to acknowledge concepts as general as the need to protect the rights of others, but to identify and develop creative solutions for society's most relevant problems.

The ability for empathic knowledge to positively contribute to society does not stop at the development of effective social policy as it appears even institutions have a lot to gain. Incorporating empathic knowledge within the health-care system would positively contribute to the ability of health-care providers to address relevant concerns of patients, in light of their unique circumstances, and thereby provide more effective care (Campelia 540). Examining the education system, empathic knowledge could be similarly used to understand the unique

struggles students face when home, and with-it potential solutions to facilitate a more successful academic experience. Acknowledging mental-health issues and providing students with resources, recognizing that some students are too hungry to focus and establishing a breakfast program, or even recognizing just how discouraged students may feel and reassuring them, are all practical examples of the positive consequences that result from making use of empathy in schools.

The case of Vincent Chin makes it clear that the justice system could benefit from acknowledging the epistemic value of empathy. Concerns of the negative impact stemming from unconscious biases, stereotyping, and false empathy all serve to undermine the validity of the conclusions reached (*Confidence in Science* 155-156). Addressing empathic challenges that result from the inability of a judge to remain impartial, and the corresponding failure to address relevant contexts, only serves to further justify the validity of beliefs held by a judge and the respective confidence the general public has towards them (*Confidence in Science* 155-156). Of course, concerns may remain regarding the capacity for empathy to lead to invalid or even harmful conclusions. But, as stressed in the previous section, the development of relevant skills and a community to collectively provide continual guidance can help us make responsible use of empathy and optimize our ability to do corresponding jobs effectively.

The ability for empathy to positively contribute to justice related decision making and action, and by extension the legal system, has been well supported by the findings of psychologists; highlighting a strong correlation between justice sensitivity and dimensions of empathy (Decety & Yoder 1-2). This can be explained by the ability for one to monitor their own behaviour, as a result of a contextual awareness on how their actions may impact others, as well as the creation of affect that could serve as motivation to 'do the right thing' (Lee 161-162).

This does lead to the general question of what ought to be done in order to make effective epistemic use of empathy. The previous chapter highlighted that certain aspects of empathy could be further developed. Within fields heavily focused on care we have, as previously stated, seen a focus on further developing empathy and refining empathetic accuracy. Whether it be through role-playing, reading, relationships, dialogue, or foreign exchange, a general theme of exposure to others, learning to understand their mental states in light of their unique circumstances, and finding ways to relate experiences, remains constant (Segal 274). In addition to further developing one's empathetic capacities and refining accuracy, the opportunity to develop suitable methodologies respective to each field is already one being embraced within institutions. Whether it be establishing an ethics committee, requiring the approval of more than one individual (including external parties), recognize a need for diversity (particularly amongst those in positions of power), setting systems in place to allow individuals to appeal conclusions reached, requiring a certain level of transparency with the public, and providing mandatory sensitivity training, many possible courses of action exist.

EARLY EDUCATION AND SOCIETAL CHANGE

If practices of empathy and the acquisition of empathic knowledge claims positively contributes to social competence, moral reasoning, and social progress, then it makes sense that promoting a culture of empathy would improve societal well-being (Peterson 238). In my paper I have largely focused on practical applications in respect to particular jobs, institutions, or scenarios but, more generally speaking, all of these benefits remain largely transferrable to any and everyone who is part of some social group or community. Whether it be for the purposes of maintaining good relationships with others, or inciting social change, every individual can make positive use of empathy.

In the years since Vincent Chin's passing many positive changes have been made (Hwang 30-31). Some of these changes may have occurred within, and as a result of, institutions such as the legal system (Hwang 30-31). Other positive changes may have resulted from those doing their job effectively, such as reporters calling attention to the potential miscarriages of justice in the Vincent Chin trial (Johnson 471; Hwang 30-31). The actions of the general public in response to Vincent Chin, however, has remained particularly noteworthy (Hwang 30-31). As individuals with no 'professional' reasons or institutions in place to cause them to recognize the wrongs conducted against Vincent Chin, their ability to assemble and act to hold the legal system accountable for the harms that occurred remain impressive (Johnson 418; Hwang 30-31). Despite the years that have passed since the murder of Vincent Chin they continue to work to make sure the story of Vincent Chin is not forgotten, and to prevent such events from re-occurring (Hwang 30-31). In doing so they have since given rise to the American Citizens for Justice (ACJ) group, all exists to positively contribute to society (Hwang 30-31).

The Vincent Chin case provides us with a strong example of empathy's ability foster involvement in social change and civic involvement (Segal 271).The ability of the general public to make use of empathic reasoning and knowledge claims demonstrates the benefits of providing members of society with the tools they need to further develop their capacities for empathy and refine its accuracy. This raises the question: given that empathy and the ability to accurately pursue and acquire empathic knowledge claims positively impacts both individuals and society as a whole, should we seek to ensure that everyone is given the tools and the education to do so? I do not intend to answer this question in this paper but will highlight what I feel to be some key considerations.

We begin developing empathic concern, the motivation to care for others, at a young age (Decety & Cowell 7). Interventions implemented early on in life, for this reason, would likely prove largely successful in ensuring children are motivated to develop the skills needed to acquire epistemically valid knowledge claims (Decety & Cowell 7). In conjunction with the some of the considerations mentioned in the previous two chapters a heavy emphasis ought to be placed on pushing children to empathize with out-group members so as to help them 'widen' their empathy and learn to apply their skills to a wide variety of demographic groups accurately (Decety & Yoder 10). This includes learning how to be receptive to the emotions and unique circumstances of others (Campelia 537).

This kind of education could take the form of social exchanges and volunteer projects in other communities, however – depending on the demographic of those being educated – we may find this an unreasonable solution (Segal 275). For particularly young demographics, or those without the resources to implement these projects, other more tenable options remain. Some of the previous interventions discussed, like reading, have proven very successful so long as relevant themes are addressed (Peterson 244). For example, studies have found that reading Harry Potter – which deals with ingroup and outgroup mentalities as it impacts witches/wizards, muggles, and different houses (Gryfindor, Hupplepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin) – positively impacts children's attitudes towards real world stigmatized groups (Peterson 244)[3]. So long as children are placed in a position where they actively aim to: know how others feel, focus on these others, maintain a distinction between themselves and others, and be receptive to the feelings of others, both cognitively and affectively, then positive results ought to be reached (Campelia 537). Over time

---

[3] The term muggle is used in the Harry Potter series to denote those individuals who do not possess/practice magic, and are often subject to discrimination or prejudice.

the goal would be to ensure that children are eventually able to gain real world exposure to others, opportunities to attempt to make sense of the lives and feelings of others, as well as develop their own unique experiences in relation to others (Segal 274).

CONCLUSION

When Obama spoke of the empathy deficit amongst the Supreme Court Justices in the United States he was met with concerns of bias and deviations from the law. It was hard for many to comprehend how empathy could be used without perpetuating harms and preventing acts of justice. But, as mentioned previously, concerns regarding such injustices already exist. Judges do not cease to be partial simply because the job demands as such, and unconscious biases remain.

Empathy, on the other hand, when used with standards of best practice and monitored by the collective, can serve as a resolution. Empathy can provide a means to help us learn about, and acknowledge, the lives of out-group members and thereby ensure that minorities are not unintentionally excluded or harmed. The very pursuit of empathic knowledge claims, in and of itself, requires that we acknowledge others as being equally as complex as ourselves, and by extension forces us to confront and acknowledge just how little we know. In doing so empathy can combat the concerns of stereotypes, in-group bias, and false empathy that are meant to discourage its pursuit.

Given all that empathy has to offer in terms of practical knowledge it is not hard to envision what Obama sought from future Supreme Court Justices. Individuals possessing a strong ability to make sense of the moral and social situations painted before them, who would be able to rule in accordance with the reality of the circumstances at hand. People who would recognize

not only the story and surrounding circumstances of Ebens and Nitz, but also those of Vincent

Chin. But in order to create a society wherein Justices like this, people like this, can exist we need

to provide people with the skills and tools required to both increase their empathic capacities and

refine their empathic accuracy – enabling them to make valid use of empathic knowledge claims

going into the future.

WORKS CITED

Adichie, Chimamanda. *The Danger of a Single Story*. TED Conferences LLC., 2009, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en.

Altmann, Ulrike, et al. "The Power of Emotional Valence—from Cognitive to Affective Processes in Reading." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, vol. 6, June, 2012, pp. 1–15, doi:10.3389/fnhum.2012.00192.

Buber, Martin. "I and Thou." *The Continental Ethics Reader*, edited by Matthew Calarco and Peter Atterton, Routledge, 2003, pp. 74–86.

Campelia, Georgina D. "Empathic Knowledge: The Import of Empathy's Social Epistemology." *Social Epistemology*, vol. 31, no. 6, Routledge, Nov. 2017, pp. 530–44, doi:10.1080/02691728.2017.1383528.

"Confidence in Science." *Reproducibility and Replicability in Science*, National Academy of Sciences, 2019, pp. 143–61.

Cronin, James, et al. "Race, Class, and Intelligence: A Critical Look At The IQ Controversy." *International Journal of Mental Health*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2014, pp. 46–132, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41344019.

Decety, Jean, and Jason M. Cowell. "Empathy, Justice, and Moral Behavior." *AJOB Neuroscience*, vol. 6, no. 3, Taylor & Francis, July 2015, pp. 3–14, doi:10.1080/21507740.2015.1047055.

Decety, Jean, and Keith J. Yoder. "Empathy and Motivation for Justice: Cognitive Empathy and Concern, but Not Emotional Empathy, Predict Sensitivity to Injustice for Others." *Social Neuroscience*, vol. 11, no. 1, Routledge, Jan. 2016, pp. 1–14, doi:10.1080/17470919.2015.1029593.

Eisenberg, Nancy, et al. "Empathy-Related Responding: Associations with Prosocial Behavior, Aggression, and Intergroup Relations." *Social Issues and Policy Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2010, pp. 143–80, doi:10.1111/j.1751-2409.2010.01020.x.

Feldman, Richard. "The Traditional Analysis of Knowledge." *Epistemology*, Prentice Hall, 2003, pp. 8–23.

Forlin, Chris. "Teacher Education for Inclusion: Changing Paradigms and Innovative Approaches." *Teacher Education for Inclusion: Changing Paradigms and Innovative Approaches*, 2010, doi:10.4324/9780203850879.

Gettier, Edmund L. "Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?" *Oxford University Press*, vol. 23, no. 6, 2016, pp. 121–23, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3326922.

Ghasemian, Ayub, and G. Venkatesh Kumar. "Enhancement of Emotional Empathy through Life Skills Training among Adolescents Students–A Comparative Study." *Journal of Psychosocial Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2017, p. 177.

Hume, David. "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding." *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 2004, pp. 1–76, doi:10.4324/9781912281893.

Hume, David. *Treatise of Human Nature, Book 1*. Edited by Jonathan Bennett, 1739, https://books.google.co.kr/books?id=QPGpQAAACAAJ.

Hwang, Roland. "Killing Spawned Asian American Civil Rights Movement: 34th Milestone to Highlight Vincent Chin Case." *Michigan Bar Journal*, May, 2009, pp. 30–31.

Johnson, Paula. "The Social Construction of Identity in Criminal Cases: Cinema Verité and the Pedagogy of Vincent Chin." *Michigan Journal of Race and Law*, vol. 1, 1996, pp. 347–71, https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjrl/vol1/iss2/2.

Kirkham, Richard L. "Mind Association Does the Gettier Problem Rest on a Mistake?" *Oxford Journals*, vol. 93, no. 372, 1984, pp. 501–13, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2254258.

Klein, Peter D. "A Proposed Definition of Propositional Knowledge." *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 68, no. 16, 2017, pp. 471–82, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2024845.

Lee, Rebecca K. "Judging Judges: Empathy as the Litmus Test for Impartiality." *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, vol. 82, no. 1, 2014, pp. 145–204, http://scholarship.law.uc.edu/uclr/vol82/iss1/4.

Mar, Raymond A., et al. "Exploring the Link between Reading Fiction and Empathy: Ruling out Individual Differences and Examining Outcomes." *Communications*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2009, pp. 407–28, doi:10.1515/COMM.2009.025.

Masto, Meghan. "Empathy and Its Role in Morality." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2015, pp. 74–96, doi:10.1111/sjp.12097.

Peterson, Gregory R. "Is Empathy Immoral?" *Zygon*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2017, pp. 232–57.

Segal, Elizabeth A. "Social Empathy: A Model Built on Empathy, Contextual Understanding, and Social Responsibility That Promotes Social Justice." *Journal of*

Social Service Research, vol. 37, no. 3, Routledge, 2011, pp. 266–77, doi:10.1080/01488376.2011.564040.

Simmons, Aaron. *In Defense of the Moral Significance of Empathy*. 2013, 2014, pp. 97–111, doi:10.1007/s10677-013-9417-4.

The National Academies of Science Engineering Medicine. "Confidence in Science." *Reproducibility and Replicability in Science*, The National Academies Press., 2019, pp. 143–61, doi:10.17226/25303.

Weisen, RB, et al. *Life Skills Education for Children and Adolescents in Schools. Introduction and Guidelines to Facilitate the Development and Implementation of Life Skills Programmes*. World Health Organization, 1994, pp. 1–54.