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*Drawing on ancient and contemporary connections between rhetoric—an art of public deliberation and communication—and democracy, this chapter argues for creating “a common space of public scholarship across and beyond disciplines” to help ensure the future of sustainable publics and participatory democracy.*

## Rhetorics of Public Scholarship: Democracy, *Doxa*, and the Human Barnyard

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Ὅπως ἂν οἱ νεώτεροι παιδευθῶσιν,  
οὕτω τὴν πόλιν πράττουσαν διατελεῖν.

As is the education of our youth, so from generation  
to generation will be the fortune of the state.

—Isocrates, “Antidosis,” 353 B.C.E.

When a conversation about methodology breaks out during a faculty meeting, it can make for an exciting day. One day a few years ago, in a faculty meeting in one of my departments—a department in which humanists and social scientists find themselves trying to share a discipline called communication arts and sciences—a colleague who studies geriatric communication through survey research and experimental methods surprised the assembled with a critique of the methods of survey research. He made the case that what quantitative surveys measure has no necessary referential relationship to any reality outside the survey—regardless of the type of method, the type of instrument, or the design of the study. On a seven-point Likert-type scale, he said, “Five means five. That’s all. It means five.”

Such undressing of the emperor is rare. As academics, each of us must operate within a disciplinary discourse community that not only limits our choices of method and our sense of what counts as knowledge but also



restricts our ability to see the various kinds of work we do as parts of a coherent whole called *scholarship*. In most departments and colleges, the three enterprises of the academic—research, teaching, and service—are isolated from each other at best; at worst they are allowed to become structural antagonists. Our necessary but narrow focus on discipline—and our institutions’ disciplining of research from teaching and both of those from service—avert our eyes, individually and collectively, from the shared, common, and public goods we have to offer. In this chapter I will use recent debates from the pages of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to point to problems in higher education that keep academics from having productive conversations about our shared work, that keep us from seeing our work as part of a coherent, common whole called scholarship. Then I’ll sketch an interdisciplinary body of work that might help us better understand not only what is “public” about public scholarship but also how public scholarship can provide important points of departure for beginning a conversation—academic *and* public—about connecting scholarship with various publics, inside and outside the academy, toward the goal of a sustainable democracy.

### **Epistemic Humility**

Just as the rare conversation about ideas and methods that breaks out at a faculty meeting can offer an index of how local academic communities view the work we do—and offer a starting point for further conversations, if we take the time to have them—such interdisciplinary publications as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* can offer an index of wide academic opinion on comparative methods as well as on the relationship among research, teaching, and service. Two articles published within a week of each other in the *Chronicle* in the summer of 2004, for instance, and letters to the editor printed in response to each of them, offer additional evidence about the methodological, definitional, and policy problems facing higher education, problems that can prevent colleges and universities from playing a more central role in addressing public issues and sustaining democratic culture.

“No Classroom Left Unstudied,” a news article in the May 28, 2004, *Chronicle* by staff writer David Glenn, reported on “the new experimental ethos” (p. 12) in education research, whereby randomized studies modeled on controlled experiments in economics and medicine are increasingly replacing education research that balances methodological rigor with local and individual difference. Colleges of education across the United States are feeling pressure from the federal government and other funding sources, Glenn reported, to change their research methods from “less quantifiable kinds of knowledge about how schools operate” (2004, p. 12) to solely quantitative and randomized studies that generate theory independent of context. “It’s not just about methodological rigor,” said Deborah J. Stipek, dean of the Stanford University School of Education, one of the academics whom Glenn

interviewed. “Even if you achieve that, it’s not always clear how your results will affect classroom practice. That’s the question that the feds won’t even touch” (2004, p. 12). External validity is, indeed, at the heart of educational researchers’ worries about the emerging “gold standard” of randomized studies of education. “The randomized double-blind test is probably the best test of pharmaceuticals that could ever be designed,” said Yvonna S. Lincoln, a professor of education at Texas A&M University, in the Glenn article. “But we’re in deep trouble if we try to use that method in education” (2004, p. 13).

Although the letters to the editors in response to Glenn’s article reinforced the issues introduced in the article, they also introduced several additional points that provide a snapshot of educational research as a public issue. Paul Rowland, a professor of curriculum and instruction and dean of the College of Education at the University of Montana, worried that randomized trials limit notions of what can be studied as outcomes: “Although there is agreement that young people should be developing basic skills, there is also strong support for the development of more abstract-thinking skills, vocational skills and attitudes, and citizenship, as well as personal fulfillment. The problem with focusing on a single outcome is that we lose sight of the effects on other desired outcomes. . . . If we are going to look to the sciences for a model, we ought to look at ecology, a field where models are messy, findings dependent on context, and grand theories have fallen by the wayside” (2004, p. B4). Another letter, written by Michael Poteat, director of institutional effectiveness at East Carolina University, expressed concerns not only about individual differences but also about “the difficulty of doing experimental research in applied settings” (2004, p. B4). Finally, Glenn Graber, a professor of philosophy at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, concluded that “it would be ironic if, just at a time when qualitative studies are proliferating in the health-care fields, education abandoned the methods that have yielded important insights in the past in favor of a lock-step quest for scientific rigor. Randomized clinical trials are great for studying the effectiveness of drugs, but they are not well suited for learning about many important aspects of the healing process” (2004, p. B4). Analogies between the processes of healing and the processes of learning, questions about the transportability of methods across disciplines, and the always-thorny issue of the relationship between theory and practice suggest that there are valid arguments to be made against transforming all educational research into randomized quantitative studies. In the face of imperatives from funding agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, and many deans and department heads, however, how much choice do educational researchers actually have?

The second article, “In Praise of Passionate, Opinionated Teaching,” written by religious studies scholar Mark Oppenheimer, argued that “college and graduate-school teaching is quite bad, and bad in a particular way.” Oppenheimer noted that while “pedagogical matters dominate debates

about elementary and secondary education, . . . discussions of pedagogy are relatively rare in higher education” (2004, p. B7). Talking about teaching, Oppenheimer observed, is “considered beneath the dignity of the academy, for two reasons” (2004, p. B7). The first reason, according to Oppenheimer, is the promotion and tenure process, which makes firm, sometimes absolute, distinctions between teaching and research. The second reason is that, as practiced, teaching in higher education does not encourage strong disagreements, “whether between students and professor or among students themselves.” Disagreement, he argued, “is a prime engine for advancing human knowledge. . . . For the college professor, the proper pedagogic role is not as facilitator, coaxing children into thinking, but as role model, showing young men and women what a thinking mind looks like” (2004, p. B8). Oppenheimer observed that too many professors draw firm, sometimes absolute, distinctions between their lives as researchers and their lives as teachers: “While professors may get contrary at conferences and in journal articles, those same professors are often profoundly milquetoast in their classrooms” (2004, p. B8). Oppenheimer ended by proposing, as his article title suggested, passionate and opinionated teaching as a means of modeling the life of the mind for students: “Saying what we believe to be right does not preclude the epistemic humility to accept that we might be wrong” (2004, p. B9).

Like Glenn’s article, Oppenheimer’s commentary generated letters to the editor. One, by Bruce W. Speck, vice president for academic affairs at Austin Peay State University, questioned the ability of professors to be the kinds of role models Oppenheimer wants without indoctrinating students: “Isn’t it a bit idealistic (perhaps even wrongheaded) to think that professors who are deeply, perhaps irrevocably, committed to a particular principle also possess ‘epistemic humility’? . . . I applaud Oppenheimer for revealing a thinking mind at work. But however enticing the aroma of his pedagogy of opinionated teaching—a supposed recipe for intellectual growth—too many questions about the substance of his concoction remain for it to be palatable, or nourishing” (2004, p. B6). Significantly, a second letter was written by a school district administrator. Patrick C. Saunders of the Luxemburg-Casco School District in Luxemburg, Wisconsin, wrote that Oppenheimer’s essay “is a penetrating perspective on a fundamental element of our democracy. . . . Regrettably, our culture often fails to recognize the inherent value in responsible academic debate. . . . Students are ill served by educational systems in which a homogenized ‘can’t we all get along’ delivery is the pedagogy. . . . Thank you, Mark Oppenheimer, for challenging us to embrace our responsibility to think critically, debate vigorously, and live passionately” (2004, p. B6).

These articles and letters addressed two of higher education’s greatest challenges in the early twenty-first century: the move away from methodological and epistemological pluralism and toward an absolute

“gold standard” for academic research that privileges randomized, controlled studies at the expense of other ways of knowing, and the related disciplining of research from teaching and service rather than a coherent view of the three as complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of scholarship. These articles and letters also addressed long-standing issues from the history of rhetoric and philosophy, issues that I’ll touch upon later. The next section of the chapter offers some historical and theoretical alternatives for moving beyond epistemological and methodological gold standards and for creating a common space of public scholarship across and beyond disciplines.

### The “Pis” in Epistemology

Although epistemology functions well for interdisciplinary scholars as a means of comparing various theories of knowledge, stepping back into history and etymology reveals not only a strange creature lurking at the heart of “epistemology” but also an alternative to the word itself. Arguably the first scientist in the Western tradition, Aristotle was also the first to write systematically about rhetoric—which he defined as the power of observing the available means of persuasion in any public situation—in his *Art of Rhetoric*. Among the issues he discussed in the lecture notes compiled into the *Art of Rhetoric* are the means of persuasion, the *pisteis* in Greek. Although the claim that persuasion and knowledge partake of the same etymological substance might be enough of a shock to deliver in one essay, undoing the disciplinary and methodological impasses of twenty-first-century higher education requires a few additional moves.

First, what for Aristotle in ancient Greek was “persuasion” or “reasoning”—the etymological root is *pis*—was for the writers of the New Testament a few centuries later not just “persuasion” or “reasoning” but “faith.” Thus this etymological exercise might well remind us—regardless of our preferred methods or our normalized theories of knowledge—that there is always some leap of faith in moving from research design to the study itself, or from results of a study to recommendations for policy, or from a teaching philosophy to specific classroom practices . . . and back again. Twentieth-century rhetorician Kenneth Burke distinguished between laboratory conditions and what he called “the human barnyard” ([1945] 1969, p. xvii) to underscore the idea that knowledge yielded in controlled conditions can never be transferred seamlessly into other, more complicated and contingent contexts. Regardless of what discipline we are in, what methods we use, there is always *pis* in epistemology. All the more reason—as Stephen Jay Gould argued in his *The Hedgehog, the Fox, and the Magister’s Pox: Mending the Gap Between Science and the Humanities*, published posthumously in 2003—to attempt to find a common space in the academy, a space to become methodological and epistemological pluralists.

Second, pluralism requires a sense of what is common or shared, or in the context of what follows, general. Pluralism of ideas and methods—and rhetoric—were at the center of both Richard McKeon’s and Wayne Booth’s careers at The University of Chicago. In his edited collection *The Knowledge Most Worth Having*, Booth summarized McKeon’s views as follows: “McKeon distinguishes four ways in which education can be general. . . . General education can be the search for a common learning to be shared by all men [sic]; the search for principles or structures underlying all knowledge; the search for a learning appropriate to or useful for all experience; and the search for a learning derived from or applicable to all cultures” (1967, p. vi). What McKeon and Booth articulate here as general education provides a pluralistic point of departure for understanding public scholarship as a common place—a shared space of “invention and intervention” (Atwill, 1998, p. 48) for all of us—in the multiversity that is the contemporary academy.

Third, looking across the history of ideas—from philosophy’s origins among Plato and his rivals to contemporary philosophers who sing the end of philosophy—powerful alternatives arise to gold standards for ideas and methods, alternatives that allow for common knowledge and public deliberation. Starting with contemporary critiques of epistemology, feminist social theorists Linda Nicholson and Nancy Fraser (1990; see also Fraser, 1992) stake out space for knowledge-making that avoids both the over-determination of master narratives and the limitation of mere anecdotes. As alternatives to master narratives on the one hand and anecdotes on the other, Nicholson and Fraser argue for contingent, medium-sized, practice-based, and probabilistic accounts of knowledge. This end-of-philosophy pragmatism offers a productive alternative to the emerging hegemony of random trials and other epistemological absolutes. Along with an anthropological view that rejects absolute knowledge and master narratives for the thick descriptions of practice-based knowing in local communities—especially Clifford Geertz’s account in *Local Knowledge* (1983)—probabilistic and contingent ways of knowing offer alternatives to totalizing epistemologies that leave no common space for interdisciplinarity or deliberation of ideas and methods. Local knowledge and fallibilistic theories allow for a ground-up deliberative democratization of knowledge rather than a top-down epistemological tyranny.

Finally, back at the origin of philosophy sits Plato, writing his diatribes against writing and arguing, in a vein quite different from McKeon and Booth, that the knowledge most worth having is knowledge entirely divorced from earthly experience. Perhaps known best for his allegory of the cave in *The Republic*, or his myth of the charioteer in *Phaedrus*, it is Plato’s *Gorgias* that tells us most about the antipathies of totalizing philosophies and rigidly disciplined sciences—of contextless theory—to public knowledge and democratic practice. It is not hyperbole to argue that Platonic distinctions and

hierarchies are with us still, particularly when combined with the remnants of Cartesian logic, which necessitates that disagreement be understood, *de facto*, as a sign of error. Since Descartes declared in the seventeenth century that any difference of opinion signified an error by one party or another, science and logic have seen as necessarily false those things that are contingent—only probable or possible. Arguably, this view of knowledge can be traced back to Plato, who distrusted human opinion because of its changing nature. For Plato, true knowledge was unarguable, and definitions were absolute and unchanging.

In *Gorgias*, Plato dramatized a discussion among Socrates, Gorgias, a rhetorician on embassy to Athens from Leontini in Sicily, and several minor characters about the nature of rhetoric and the nature of knowledge. Indeed, it is from this dialogue that the idea originated of rhetoric as empty verbiage separated from, if not void of, content or truth. In the dialogue, Plato's Socrates argues for a distinction between absolute, unchanging, expert, or disciplined knowledge (*episteme*) and fallible, probabilistic, public, or common knowledge (*doxa*).

Plato's less famous rival Isocrates saw the relationship between specialized knowledge and public knowledge in a very different light; better, Isocrates saw knowledge from the earthly vantage point of the polis rather than the heavenly realm of the forms. Though he inspired not only the rhetorical theories and practices of Cicero but also the educational structure of Milton in *Of Education* and the celebration of freedom of speech (the Greek is *parrhesia*) in Milton's *Areopagitica*, Isocrates—to the extent that he is read at all—is usually studied either as one of the ten Attic orators or as the inventor of the periodic sentence. Nonetheless, in his many discourses, Isocrates, who can be read as a protopragmatist and pluralist, created a way of understanding the connection between democracy and probabilistic, rather than absolute, knowledge: *doxa* rather than *episteme*. The clearest formulation of Isocrates' theory of knowledge-in-practice comes in his treatise "Antidosis," written in 353 B.C.E.: "For since it is not in the nature of man [sic] to attain a science by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say, I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course" (p. 335). Isocrates' formulation not only troubled the connection between theory and practice—knowing and doing—but also replaced specific, disciplinary expertise with a more general, interdisciplinary practical wisdom, in this case, *doxa*.

This Isocratean account of knowing in the service of doing shares a great deal with Aristotelian *phronesis*, particularly as articulated by Bent Flyvbjerg in *Making Social Science Matter* (2001) and as Flyvbjerg's ideas are connected to public scholarship in a *Higher Education Exchange* review by Laura Grattan (2002). Yet Aristotle's disciplinary distinctions—he was Plato's student, after all—more often than not work against interdisciplinary or public knowledge



and toward the reification of expertise. Rhetoric, the public art of discourse, was taught in the afternoons at Aristotle's Lyceum to *hoi polloi* ("the people" or "the masses"); Aristotle's mornings were reserved for lecturing to the *kalon k'agathon* (the beautiful and good aristocrats, an inner circle of advanced students) about the more important subjects of disciplinary expertise.

In "Antidosis," when Isocrates discussed the changes in Athens since the Peloponnesian War, he made an additional distinction that serves as a foundation for understanding the common space of scholarship: he distinguished public (*koinos*) from private (*idios*) issues (p. 277). Public or common or civic issues are those that are shared by everyone in a polis; private or *idios* concerns are those specific to individuals, or later, specific disciplines of knowledge or art. It was precisely Isocrates' concern with what is common or public that prompted him to formulate his *paideia* or liberal arts curriculum, a course of study that formed the basis for humanistic study in antiquity and throughout the Renaissance, a curriculum that focused on shared or common concerns as central to the sustainability of the polis. Although Athenian democracy can and should be critiqued for its relatively limited conception and practice of citizenship—the great majority of Athenians were not citizens, and neither slaves nor women could function as citizens in Athens—the connection of ancient democracy with common and probabilistic ways of knowing offers an important historical means of understanding the need to reclaim common, interdisciplinary spaces in contemporary universities for public scholarship. "As is the education [*paideia*] of our youth," Isocrates argued in "Antidosis," "so from generation to generation will be the fortune of the state [*polis*]" (p. 285).

Without a curriculum of consequence that connects learning to the common problems of a shared democracy, no clear means of sustaining democracy's values and practices emerge. Distinctions between *episteme* and *doxa* on the one hand, and *koinos* and *idios* on the other, serve us well as we move on to an overview of contemporary public theories and their relationship to the commonplaces of democracy.

### ***Doxa*, Publics, and the Commonplaces of Democracy**

Two scholars writing just after the mid-twentieth century, Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, began a sustained study of the category "public"—a study that has spawned a steady stream of work that has grown with each decade and has become a robust interdisciplinary source for academics across the disciplinary spectrum at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In what follows, I'll briefly treat Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958) and then Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) and a few works among the reams of subsequent work Habermas's book has generated as a means of providing a common body of issues through which public



scholarship might find not only definitional warrants but also intellectual, institutional, and political energies.

Arendt finished writing *The Human Condition* in 1957, when the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik* “into the universe,” where, “for a time,” it “dwelt and moved in the proximity of heavenly bodies as though it had been admitted tentatively to their sublime company” (p. 1). Arendt opened by focusing on *Sputnik* as a symptom of humans’ wish to escape “the human condition,” a condition defined first and foremost by humans’ earth-boundedness and time-boundedness. Also much in her mind—though only briefly discussed in this book—were the revelations and tragedies of the atomic age: “The modern world, in which we live today, was born with the first atomic explosions” (p. 6). Arendt’s concern in *The Human Condition* was the extent to which alienation from our shared world might drive us to escape either into the wider universe (through theory or technology) or into our selves (through philosophy or narcissism, a concern similar to one expressed two decades later, in 1974, by social psychologist Richard Sennett in *The Fall of Public Man*). Arendt’s concerns focused on the rise of scientific expertise and on the eclipse of rhetoric as a common language of public knowing and public doing:

[The sciences today] have been forced to adopt a “language” of mathematical symbols which, though it was originally meant only as an abbreviation for spoken statements, now contains statements that in no way can be translated back into speech. The reason why it may be wise to distrust the political judgment of scientists qua scientists is not primarily their lack of “character”—that they did not refuse to develop atomic weapons—or their naivete—that they did not understand that once these weapons were developed they would be the last to be consulted about their use—but precisely the fact that they move in a world where speech has lost its power. And whatever men [sic] do or know or experience can make sense only to the extent that it can be spoken about. There may be truths beyond speech, and they may be of great relevance to man in the singular, that is, to man in so far as he is not a political being, whatever else he may be. Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in the world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves. [p. 4]

Arendt’s diagnosis in *The Human Condition* was that humans are losing the ability to make sense to one another in shared language about their shared concerns—quotidian concerns as well as the concerns of life and death. Her remedy was a historical and theoretical reaccounting of the place of rhetoric, *doxa*, and the public realm in the human condition.

In distinguishing the public from the private, Arendt argued that human life is possible only because of “the presence of other human beings”

(p. 22). Returning to the ancient Greeks, she noted two realms: the *polis*, or public realm, and the *oikos*, or private realm. This echoed Isocrates' concerns. Drawing on Werner Jaeger (1944), Arendt distinguished what is one's own (*idion*) from what is communal (*koinon*). The private realm, or the realm of necessity, was contrasted with the public realm, the realm of freedom. In contrast to these ancient distinctions, Arendt found the modern conception of social life particularly troubling because it blurs the distinctions between the public and the private. Social life, she argued, is limited by particular ends, "an alliance between people for a specific purpose, as when men [sic] organize in order to rule others or to commit a crime" (p. 23). Social life—life according to affiliation—is a condition of animals as well as humans, she argued. But political life—public life—is the *sine qua non* of the human condition.

Finally, Arendt offered two definitions of public that can serve as warrants for constructing a common space for discussions of public scholarship. First, public means "seen and heard by everybody. . . . Appearance—something that is being seen and heard by others as well as ourselves—constitutes reality. . . . The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and of ourselves" (1958, p. 50). Second, "the term 'public' signifies the world itself, in so far as it is common to all of us and distinguished from our privately owned place in it. . . . This world, however, is not identical with the earth or with nature. . . . It is related, rather, to the human artifact, the fabrication of human hands, as well as to affairs which go on among those who inhabit the man-made world together" (p. 52). Arendt's two definitions of public—a space for reality to appear and an understanding of the common world—offer ways of moving beyond the privatizing discourses of society, property, and propriety and toward a shared sense of place- and time-bound collaborative experience.

Though his *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* was not translated into English until 1989, Jurgen Habermas published his *habilitationsschrift* in 1962 after parting company with his professors in the Frankfurt School. Unlike his later universal pragmatics and his high-theory conceptions of "the ideal speech situation" and human social action more generally, Habermas's earliest work combined empirical and critical methods to make a counterfactual yet normative argument about the publics and the public sphere. Briefly, Habermas's narrative of structural transformation suggests that the bourgeois public sphere grew out of the eighteenth-century public sphere in the world of letters, where reading and writing practices of individuals at home—writing letters and reading novels aloud to each other—allowed people to form what he called "audience-oriented subjectivities." That literary public sphere, Habermas argued, was the structural predecessor to the bourgeois public sphere: "The public sphere in the political realm evolved from the public sphere in the world of letters; through the vehicle of public opinion it put the state

in touch with the needs of society” (pp. 30–31). The public sphere, for Habermas, consisted of “public discussion among private individuals” (p. 55), or “private people engaged in public rational-critical debate” (p. 160). Although Habermas’s account is a rich starting point for a variety of interdisciplinary scholarly practices, and although his account has been roundly and productively critiqued by scholars from across the ideological and methodological spectrum, including my own work (Eberly, 2000), what I want to focus on here are his definitions of *public* in order to generate additional common places for academics interested in thinking about their scholarship as public scholarship.

It is significant to note that Habermas uses two methods to uncover the various definitions with which he opened *Structural Transformation*: a German dictionary and Greek etymologies. In any case, he ended up with the following seven definitions—what he describes as a “syndrome of meanings”: (1) “We call events and occasions ‘public’ when they are open to all, in contrast to closed or exclusive affairs—as when we speak of public places or public houses” (p. 1); (2) “‘public buildings’ simply house state institutions and as such are ‘public’” (p. 2); (3) such occasions when “a powerful display of representation is staged whose ‘publicity’ contains an element of public recognition” (p. 2); (4) “when we say someone has made a name for himself, has a public reputation” (p. 2); (5) what Habermas calls the most common usage, “the public as carrier of public opinion; its function as a critical judge is precisely what makes the public character of proceedings—in court, for instance—meaningful” (p. 2); (6) “the public sphere itself appears as a separate domain—the public domain versus the private” (p. 2); and (7) “Sometimes the public appears simply as that sector of public opinion that happens to be opposed to the authorities” (p. 2). Then, with a brief citation of Arendt, he noted that “notions of what is ‘public’ and what is not—that is, what is ‘private’—however, can be traced much further back into the past” (p. 3). Habermas then proceeded to distinguish the *polis* and the category of “what is common” (*koine*) from the *oikos* and what is not common, what is particular to each individual (*idia*). He added that “since the Renaissance this model of the Hellenic public sphere, as handed down to us in the stylized form of Greek self-interpretation, has shared with everything else considered ‘classical’ a peculiarly normative power” (p. 4).

This comment points to a fundamental but often overlooked aspect of Habermas’s work: that the public sphere—and arguably, participatory democracy itself—is counterfactual yet normative. That is to say, although they have yet to be fully realized empirically, publicness and democracy are powerful normative constructs. In his words, “Tendencies pointing to the collapse of the public sphere are unmistakable, for while its scope is expanding impressively, its function has become progressively insignificant. Still, publicity continues to be an organizational principle of our political order. It is apparently more and other than a mere scrap of liberal ideology that a

social democracy could discard without harm” (p. 4). Habermas’s project of giving a critical-empirical history of the structural transformation of the public sphere is an attempt to preserve the power of the norm while—more or less successfully, depending on which of his critics one reads—preserving the normative power of the constructs of publicness, publicity, and the public sphere.

The power of the notion of public as applied to public scholarship comes from the structural place of the public sphere between other realms of practice: state (or other institutional authority), on the one hand, and privatized spaces of conjugal and social relations and commodity exchange, on the other. Between these realms, even in what Habermas calls *late capitalism*, spaces can open up, through shared discourses, to form *intraorganizational public spheres* within institutions.

I take particular hope from this part of Habermas’s analysis: that because public spheres do not preexist either spatially or temporally, but rather come into being as individuals engage in rational-critical debate about matters of common concern, colleges and universities can—under conditions that are better built from within than decreed from without—come to function as spaces for critical publicity and common purpose.

There is no one correct theory for conceiving public scholarship; there is no one right method or model for doing it. Moving beyond *episteme* through epistemic humility to fallibilistic accounts of what works and what does not in particular institutional and community settings, allowing for collaborative and deliberative knowledge-building rather than preordaining public scholarship from on high, and allowing for practice-based accounts of successful interventions against students’ self-understandings as mere consumers and spectators seem to be good places to start. Habermas’s account, particularly when enriched with Arendt’s view of public spaces as places for reality to appear among the presence of others, can provide a common place for academics interested in understanding their work—and the common enterprises they engage in with students and other members of specific communities of practice—as working toward rebuilding and sustaining the possibilities of participatory democracy.

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