Keywords

Justification, Skepticism, Understanding, Objectivism, Testimony, Epistemic Injustice, Situated knowledge, Embodiment, Epistemic Responsibility, Trust.

1. Introduction

The etymology of the word "Epistemology" comes from the conjunction of Greek terms "episteme" (knowledge, science) and "logos" (study): it is the "study of knowledge". In disciplinary terms, "epistemology" or "theory of knowledge" is the branch of philosophy that investigates the possibility of knowing the external world, other minds, oneself, or the past. In its traditional sense, it is a theoretical inquiry into the arguments for or against the distinction between knowledge and mere belief or opinion. The purpose of producing a general theory about what knowledge is, differs from sociological or psychological discussions on the subject.

Philosophical tradition has identified in common sense and our ordinary language at least three kinds of knowledge, or situations in which we claim to know: *"Knowing that"* ("propositional knowledge"), e.g. "Aisha knows that Plato is the author of the Teetetus", "Samar knows that the bus passes by the corner of his house every 10 minutes", "Eleonora knows John Lennon" (in the sense that she knows who he is, his biography); *"Knowing how"* ("procedural knowledge"), e.g. "Federico is a good joke teller", "Zuri knows how to play chess", "Fateh knows infinitesimal calculation" (in the sense of being a good chess player or exercising calculation, not that they merely know the rules or definition of each); and *"Knowing by acquaintance"* ("object knowledge"), e.g. "Cassandra knows Apollo", "Francisco knows Cairo" (he was there, he has had some perceptual contact with a certain entity). It is the conditions of "propositional knowledge" that have been the main focus of philosophical discussion, and that will be relevant to our interest in the possibility of historiographical knowledge of the past. A traditional and widely extended definition of "knowing that" as "true justified belief" gives centrality to the reflection on the very notion of justification. On the one hand, it delves into its foundations by offering two classical positions: Rationalism, according

to which knowledge should ultimately be based on reason (normative principles of thought and its rules of inference), and Empiricism, which places the ultimate foundation in what is "given" directly to ==experience==, without distortions or intermediaries. On the other hand, it investigates the various sources of knowledge, their weight and relative reliability: reason, ==experience==, memory, introspection and testimony. Finally, the answers to the first two points regarding our strategies of justification and the sources of our beliefs, are useful to approach the question of whether they provide us with a foundation for our beliefs. At this point, two issues come to the fore: the "foundationalist account of knowledge" and the "skeptical challenge" (Williams 1996, 2001). It is generally accepted by the philosophical community that René Descartes (1596-1650) led an epistemological turn in modern philosophy. Descartes used a skeptical method, questioning every belief received from authorities in order to identify, by means of his own rational faculties, which of them resisted doubt. Although he was not a skeptic, for his aim was to find indubitable beliefs, his inquiry placed the skeptical challenge at the center of epistemological theory, and epistemic autonomy as its ideal: individual rational agents must be epistemically responsible for the justification of their own beliefs.

Since then, dismantling the Cartesian romantic plot of fall (in total doubt) and rise (access to the indubitable), that is, the heroic journey from skepticism to foundationalism, continues to haunt epistemology. Examples of this anti-Cartesian movement in contemporary epistemology can be found within Anglo-Saxon philosophy, in Social Epistemology, Feminist Epistemology, Epistemology of Testimony, among others. These movements impugn the individualistic, ahistorical, universalizing treatment of the phenomenon of knowledge by modern epistemology, denouncing that a failure to engage with the social aspects of knowledge production will necessarily result in a narrow and epistemically irresponsible account of cognitive processes, actors, relations and products. Nevertheless, reflections on the skeptical challenge and on the different notions of skepticism as a research method, a substantive thesis or an ethical stance, continue to be explored in the contemporary context.

The term "epistemology" also has a narrower meaning, referred to the creation and justification of knowledge in specific research areas of the sciences (natural, formal, social or human). This includes epistemology of history, i.e. the philosophical reflection on the possibility of reaching true beliefs or justified knowledge about the past. In 1951, William H. Walsh (1913-1986) called it "critical philosophy of history" (Walsh 1961), and in 2009 Aviezer Tucker suggested the name "==philosophy of historiography==". The field, which must be distinguished from ==speculative (metaphysical) reflections== on the meaning of events themselves, has seen great development in the 20th and 21st Centuries. In this chapter we will fist offer an overview of its now classic debates referred to topics such as explanation vs. understanding, the possibility of knowing the past, or relativism, and then present some of its main approaches from contemporary Social Epistemology. In our view, these are currently the most promising developments this discipline offers for an epistemically responsible and socially committed historiographical practice.

2. Background

Critical philosophy of history or philosophy of historiography inherits from general epistemology the centrality of the skeptical challenge and its relation to foundationalism. Additionally, until around the 1970s it was governed by epistemology or philosophy of the natural sciences, and its search for logical criteria to distinguish science from non-science. These two perspectives do not necessarily harmonize: it cannot be argued that the skeptical challenge and foundationalism are central to philosophy of science, nor that the

epistemology centered on the skeptical challenge appeals to some ideal of scientific knowledge. Nevertheless, foundationism and scientism are still present in debates on the possibility of knowing the past and on the possibility of a historical science. The well-known debate on explanation vs. understanding is an example of the latter; whereas those on the observation of the past, the reality of the past, and relativism, are examples of the former. We will now present three epistemological debates as they were discussed until approximately the end of the 1970s, at a time when the prevailing model of science was that of the natural sciences. In the subsequent sections of this chapter we will see new approaches to the epistemology of historiography.

i.   *Explanation versus understanding in history.* Although it is complex to make a clear and fair classification of all the positions in this crucial debate, a great divide can be drawn between methodological monists and dualists, depending on whether or not they accept that the method by which the human sciences know their object of study is the same as that of the natural sciences. In this context, "method" must be understood in epistemological terms, that is, as the means to offer "justified" considerations of the past.

An early formulation of Methodological Monism was provided by August Comte (1789-1857) at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He calls it "Positivism" and maintains that positive knowledge must be based on causal laws of phenomena and derived from observation. This conception was immensely influential in his century. Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862), in his *History of Civilization in England* (1857), argues that history is based on the operation of universal laws, which determine things like crime and suicide rates or marriage frequencies in relation to wheat prices. Although in a different form, Marx and Engels also advocated a science of society: discovering the laws of the evolution of society as Darwin did for nature (Outhwaite 1987 and 1975).

At the end of that century and the beginning of the twentieth, claims emerged about the specificity of the social and historical sciences, both for their object of study and for their methods. The concept of understanding or *Verstehen* attracted German-speaking historians and sociologists; the thinkers who contributed most to elucidating understanding in the ==hermeneutic== tradition included Wilhem Dilthey (1833-1911), Max Weber (1864-1920), Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943). Weber was and is influential in sociology; Dilthey, Croce and Collingwood in historiography (all three were historians). What these thinkers have tried to systematize, not always successfully in terms of clarity, is the intuition that the understanding that sociologists and historians try to achieve of the people they study is not very different from the understanding that any human being can achieve of another one in daily life. It is thus assumed that in daily life we understand our fellow humans, their actions, linguistic expressions, and intentions, through certain imaginative acts that allow us to either revive their experiences through ==empathy,== or ==re-enact== their thoughts. In the second half of the 20th century, Peter Winch (1958), inspired by Wittgenstein (1889-1951), and Hans G. Gadamer (2004), inspired by Heidegger (1889-1976), elucidate the understanding of social and historical human action in the realm of the public and social understanding of language. They thus managed to avoid the appeal to psychological faculties such as the revival or recreation in the mind of the historian of the subjective meanings attributed by historical agents to their actions, or their intentions when acting in the past.

The second form of positivism appears in the 1920s in what is known as "Logical Empiricism", formulated by the Vienna circle and the Berlin school. The association between the empiricist ideals of Ernst Mach (1838-1916) and the developments in logic and mathematics of Gottlob Frege (1848-1925) and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) are at the

origins of this program, fundamentally interested in giving an account of the theoretical sophistication of New Physics (Suppe 1974). Theories such as Relativity or Quantum Physics dealt with entities like quarks or black holes, which were inaccessible to experience but extremely important to understand the behavior of observable events. At this stage, the ideal of a unified methodology of science was guided by the possibility of developing logical procedures in order to refute or confirm, with a certain degree of probability, scientific laws and theories. The third variant of positivism, known as the "Standard Conception" of scientific theories, constituted the dominant position in the English-speaking world during the twenty or thirty years surrounding the middle of the 20th century (Hempel 2001). Rudolf Carnap, Karl Hempel and Ernest Nagel, its most conspicuous representatives, contend that theories are hypothetical-deductive systems which will be contrasted through a hypothetical-deductive method, and that the purpose of theories and hypotheses is to explain and predict phenomena (natural, social and historical). In this view, philosophical reflection on science, or philosophy of science, consists of the logical reconstruction of the structure of theories, as well as of justification and scientific explanation.

From this perspective, a scientific explanation is a form of reasoning that has as its conclusion a statement (*explanandum*) that describes the fact to be explained. Its premises (*explanans*), which fulfill the explanatory function, consist of two types of statements: those that express the particular events or initial conditions for the occurrence of the fact to be explained, and those that express the general laws, which can be universal or probabilistic (Hempel 1965). Analytical philosopher of history William Dray (1957) named these models "Covering Law Theory" (CLT). By showing that the event is a case of a law, the occurrence of the event was something to be expected or that could not not happen under the circumstances. The logical structure of an explanation is the same, be it to account for the falling of a meteorite, a massive farmers migration, a popular uprising or the abdication of a king. As Hempel himself pointed out, however, the generalizations of human behavior used by historians, such as "populations tend to migrate in search of better life conditions" or "popular malcontent will probably lead to a revolution", insofar as they are expressed in ordinary language, suffer from vagueness and ambiguity, and therefore lack the explanatory and predictive capacity of the laws in natural sciences. But if we attempt to increase their specificity in order to account for the case under examination, they could lose in generality, which is essential for them to qualify as laws. According to the author, then, for the time being history is handled with sketches of explanations and laws, with a function that is not explanatory nor justifying, but merely heuristic.

Beginning in the 1950s, the development of analytical philosophy of ordinary language, opposed to the "logicism" of Logical Empiricism, gave rise to a prolific analytical philosophy of history which was critical of the CLT and discussed the need for general laws akin to those of the natural sciences, in order to account for historical phenomena. In order to evaluate the structure and adequacy of explanations given in history, the purposes of the concrete practice of historical research must be elucidated, instead of imposing a model of science alien to the purposes of historiographical practice. Evaluation will be context-dependent: the question requiring an explanation is identified, and correction will depend on whether or not it is answered. History books provide plenty of examples of explanations that appear as justified according to the questions that guided the historian's research in some specific context. Dray identifies a kind of explanation that gives us the missing information by which an enigmatic event becomes possible, and Michael Scriven (1966) elucidates the explanations given in history as answers to the question "why did this event happen instead of that other one?". For instance, Weber's explanation of the origins of Modern Capitalism by

referring to the religious beliefs of 17th-century Calvinists in predestination would not be answering the (Hempelian) question regarding the need for the development of Capitalism, but rather the more concrete historical question of why it developed in sectors where Calvinist beliefs predominated over Catholicism or other forms of Protestantism. Finally, the questions that motivate the explanation of individual human action can refer both to whether or not it was the right thing to do according to some principle of reason, or to whether it was the right thing to do according to the ends sought, or even according to the social norms in force. In these cases, it is evident that human action is assumed as contingent. Human beings can act against their own ends or infringe their duties, without it implying a refutation of the principle of reason or of the moral norms in force. Notions such as action, event, reason, cause and function are specifically addressed and expounded (Nagel 1961 chapter XIV, Davidson 1963, Hart and Honoré 1966, Danto 1973, vonWright 1976, Martin, 1977). In this period, William Dray (1954), W. Gallie (1964), Morton White (1965), Arthur Danto (1985), and Louis Mink (1974) defended the explanatory autonomy of historical narration.

As is shown in detail by Danto (1985, ch. X and XI) and von Wright (1971, 1976), the debate resulted in a pragmatic explanatory pluralism.

ii. *Observation of the past and the possibility of historical knowledge.* One of the most common arguments against the possibility of historical knowledge is based on the fact that past events are unobservable because they are gone (Danto 1985: 27-29). A distinction is established between natural scientists, able to observe experimental results for themselves, and historians, who can only access the past through material remains and second-hand considerations as they were experienced and registered by other people (gone as well). According to the empirical conception of scientific research, the observation of events fulfills the function of providing the evidence by which both the statements that describe events and their explanations or interpretations will be tested. Under this perspective, history would be at a disadvantage compared to the factual sciences that deal with present events (natural or social). Still, this consideration of the notion of evidence in terms of experience or direct observation has been criticized by Popper, Collingwood and Danto, among others. Through different paths, they all show that the establishment of what we will use as evidence is the result of inferential procedures. In 1935, Popper (1992, ch. 1 and 5) points out that justification is an objective procedure that cannot depend on subjective experience. Statements describing the occurrence of a singular event (called "basic statements of science") will be evaluated following the same procedure as general (and/or theoretical) statements: they must all be "falsifiable", i.e., it must be possible to derive from them certain other statements that describe other events that would otherwise make the original statement false. And if the test is passed successfully, their acceptance is provisional. Collingwood defines historical knowledge as inferential knowledge given that, as in any other science, it must be justified by exhibiting (through reasoning) the basis for its support (1993). Danto, for his part, addresses this issue through the mental experiment of an ideal chronicle containing the record of everything that happens at the moment when it happens. Danto contends that this would be of no use to the historian, since it fails to establish any type of relationship with previous or subsequent events, relationships that can only be elucidated at a later moment, and on the basis of questions and issues relevant at the time of research (1985, chapter 8).

iii. *The reality of the past and the possibility of historical knowledge.* Arthur Danto (1985) sets out the skeptical challenge in relation to the past in the following terms: it is logically possible that the world as we know it, with our memories and fragments of evidence from remote times, was created only 5 minutes ago (1985: 30). In this case, either a statement such as "Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BC" would be false because it lacks

reference, or the problem of its truth could not be raised. The argument does not in fact require that the world actually begin 5 minutes ago: only that we are able to conceive of this possibility. Whether or not it began 5 minutes ago, whether or not we succeed in saying true things about the past, we cannot know, for all the evidence is compatible with either possibility (30-31).

30 years earlier, George H. Mead (2002: 39) faced the same skeptical challenge. Both Mead and Danto rejected the notion of the instantaneous present: the present or presents are specious (Bergson and Whitehead) and diverse in their time span. To strip the present of its density would lead to instantaneous skepticism.

Against the skeptic, Danto argues as follows. Two objects that satisfy descriptions in terms of Ming porcelain (that is, that are materially and perceptually indiscernible) satisfy a historical sentence referring to a certain past Chinese Empire. However, one is genuine and the other is a reproduction. If we remove historical descriptions of our language, certain objects of the world such as the Ming porcelains in the museum and the reproductions that adorn my house would be indiscernible. This is why Danto calls attention to how our beliefs about the past penetrate the language we use to describe entities in the so-called "present world" by presupposing events in the past, such as in "Banville's has just published his last novel" or "the ex-president is in the ceremony" (1985: 334-5, 348) Now, if this argument is indestructible, its scope is so general that it would no longer be a problem of historical knowledge but of all knowledge, to the point that we cannot doubt history without putting all our beliefs at risk (XV and 110).

Mead, for his part, reframes the skeptical challenge in pragmatist terms: what difference would it make to our research if we accepted not only the reality of the past, but the fact of its irrevocability no matter what happened next? What difference would it make if nothing that happened afterwards could change it? In a sense relative to our own present, the past or the pasts we are faced with are both irrevocable and revocable. They are irrevocable in the sense that even if historians could adequately reconstruct what happened, what happened is irretrievable. But they are revocable as well, since even if the historian provides a discerning reconstruction of what happened, she cannot prevent the future historian's reconstruction from differing from hers. The world of future historians cannot differ from the world as it is today without a rewriting of the past that we now see when we look back**.** The meaning of "what was" belongs to the same present in which this "what was" is explained: "what was" is "what was" for me or for us now, in our present, and will change for another present (2002: 37).

According to Danto, pragmatist positions such as Mead's should be considered "skeptic". But pragmatists do not consider themselves skeptical; rather, they refuse to reflect on epistemological issues centered on the skeptical challenge (Williams 1996). We can attribute and credit that people know the external world, the past, and so on, without presupposing anything like the idea of knowledge itself and reality beyond or independent of any historical context. Thus, a path opens to a social epistemology freed from the skeptical challenge in which the notions of justification, objectivity, truth and rationality are not abandoned but resignified.

3. Importance Today

3.1. Social Epistemology

Social Epistemology is a theoretical approach characterized by a view of knowledge (including, but not limited to, scientific knowledge) as an intrinsically and necessarily social

phenomenon, and as such actively developed and modified according to practical contingencies and social relations, which are in turn transformed by it.

The denomination "Social Epistemology" refers, on the one hand, to a set of substantive approaches to the nature of knowledge in social terms. While philosophy, history and sociology provide long-standing examples of this perspective, it is the sociology of knowledge and the history of post-Kuhnian science that have given a more systematic approach to the subject. Social Epistemology in turn draws on various philosophical traditions including hermeneutics, pragmatism, critical theories, comprehensive sociology (Schütz), feminist theory, as well as philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Foucault (Barnes, Bloor, Lynch, Latour, Shapin, Kusch). This substantive line of Social Epistemology has been profoundly marked by the contributions of Sociology of Knowledge, which also emerged in the 1980s, the Strong Program or Edinburgh School, the School of Wales, and Laboratory Studies.

On the other hand, "Social Epistemology" can also refer to a sub-area of general Epistemology, burgeoning since the 1980s in the Anglo-American context, which deals, among other things, with issues of testimony, disagreement, and group epistemology (Kusch 2011).

The shared premises of Social Epistemology translate into particular notions of epistemic subjects, products, resources, justification, among others. Epistemic subjects are not understood as isolated individuals in a detached pursue of knowledge of an independent reality, nor as passive recipients of information. Rather, knowledge is regarded as active, collective and interested, and agents as socially located individuals and groups, involved in specific activities and roles that result, among other things, in a social division of intellectual labor. Epistemic agents interact from these relative positions regarding their epistemic agency and authority, and are therefore affected by structural social phenomena such as identity-based discrimination (see sub-section Epistemology of Testimony below). Awareness of the social role of knowledge and cognitive agents has led some scholars in this field to argue that cognitive relations should be evaluated in terms of epistemic values, moral values (Froeyman 2012), or an interplay between both (Fuller 2016; see sub-section Virtue Epistemology below). In terms of the products of cognitive pursuits, these are also understood as part of a cultural system transmitted from generation to generation, and as affected by and affecting the social relations among knowledge producers. The notion of "resource" is also central to these perspectives, as it refers to the available knowledge to which epistemic communities turn according to their interests, that is, according to the questions and problems that are relevant to them in a given time. Therefore, when studying cognitive phenomena, including scientific practice, Social Epistemology pays attention to the resources used for knowledge production, their circulation, accessibility, and connection to historical contingencies. Finally, although Social Epistemology tends to be associated with the study of contexts of discovery, justification is also central to its inquiry, and is generally understood as the set of epistemic norms created and agreed upon by a situated, historical community.

In what follows, we will focus on three offshoots of social epistemology that are particularly relevant for reflections on historiography: epistemologies related to marginalized subjects (where we include feminist, postcolonial, decolonial and queer perspectives), epistemology of testimony, and virtue epistemology.

-Marginalized subjects and epistemic challenges. The growth of social epistemology was to a large extent due to the increasing presence in epistemology of (and attention given to) previously marginalized subjects such as women, racialized subjects, peoples from the

global South, and/or those identified with non-normative genders and sexualities. Postcolonial, decolonial, feminist and other perspectives propelled by historically underrepresented subjects shed light on the interplay between knowledge and social location on various fronts. Firstly, by debunking the idea of a "disembodied", "non-emotional" and "unbiased" researcher, and exposing it as the universalization of a specific subject: "abstract universalism" is unveiled as "hegemonic particularism (…) which by presenting itself as 'disembodied' hides the epistemic location of its site of enunciation in the geopolitics and body politics of knowledge" (Grosfoguel 2007: 71). Secondly, by exposing how this ideal restricts access to the production of "formally legitimated objective knowledge" by excluding subjects considered essentially "embodied" and therefore "merely subjective" (Haraway 1997, Stryker 2008) due to a "fundamental and culturally pervasive disavowal of intrinsically diverse modes of bodily being as the lived ground of all knowing and of all knowledge production" (Stryker 2008: 154). Finally, by denouncing and describing how the sciences, including historiography, have actively served to cement oppressive projects such as colonialism, segregation, or the exclusion of non-hegemonic collectives from the public sphere, including knowledge production (Rivera Cusicanqui 2008, Moreno 1986, Haraway 1988, Chakravorty Spivak 1988).

Moving beyond critique, these perspectives have also developed epistemological resources to redistribute epistemic authority, further epistemic responsibility, give due place to emotions and embodiment, and examine the different sciences as sites of performance. One of the main contributions in this respect was the idea of "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988), that is, the overt acknowledgement of social position, embodiment, and relations in research, therefore increasing epistemic accountability by "locating the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter" (Harding 1987: 8). This implied that objectivity and neutrality as key epistemic values had to be subverted, discarded altogether, and/or replaced by new understandings able to account for the researcher's subject position (such as the notion of "strong objectivity" proposed by Harding 1995); the influence of the body, affect and experience at each stage of the knowledge production process also had to be acknowledged, from research questions to the final product and its circulation. This led some theorists, particularly within feminist epistemology, to propose the categories of "epistemic privilege" and "standpoint", opening one of the most important debates within second-wave feminist theory. Building on Marxist perspectives, defendants of epistemic privilege contended that "subjects located at the social margins have an epistemic advantage over those located in the social center" (Bar On 1993: 85) when it comes to understanding the realities of oppression, because "there are some perspectives on society from which, however well-intentioned one may be, the real relations of humans with each other and with the natural world are not visible" (Hartsock 1987: 159). While some perspectives attribute this epistemic privilege to identities (e.g. "women's standpoint"), others find it in a certain political awareness ("feminist standpoint") or the convergence of both with scientific method (for a key contribution to this debate, see Harding 1986). Donna Haraway, for example, acknowledges that underprivileged groups might be "preferred because in principle they are least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretive core of all knowledge" (1988: 584), but simultaneously warns against "innocent 'identity' politics and epistemologies" (585), as "identity, including self- identity, does not produce science; critical positioning does" (586). Other critics have argued that standpoint theory reinstates foundationalism (e.g. Sullivan 2001, Hawkesworth 1989), an accusation that Harding later refuted clarifying that "standpoint theorists are not claiming some kind of transhistorical privilege for research" (1991: 167). In our days, while few would contend that a certain identity makes knowledge more valuable

per se, still there is an agreement that "no voice in the dialog should have the privilege of masking the particularities and specificities of its own speaking position, through which it may claim a false universality or authority" (Stryker 2013: 12).

Although many of these contributions, particularly within feminism, came from the natural sciences, historiography was profoundly influenced by this turn and underwent its own debates and transformations. After an initial impulse to expand the limits of historical representation by including hitherto unattended subjects and spheres in narratives of the past, feminist, postcolonial, decolonial, queer and other historiographies engaged in key debates in epistemology of historiography, including the insights on epistemic authority and situatedness described above, and challenging prevailing notions of the scope, motivation and methodology of historical inquiry (Scott 1999, Harding 1987). In the remainder of this section we will focus on these last three aspects.

Two key expansions of the scope of historiography characterize these lines of inquiry. Firstly, they exposed the ways in which groups such as women and/or colonized subjects had been excluded from historical narratives through an array of silencing mechanisms, at four key stages of the process of historical production: "the moment of fact creation (the making of *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance)" (Trouillot 1995: 26). The inclusion of marginalized subjects required expanding notions of what is historically significant (an initiative that was being developed, albeit from a different analytical perspective, by social history), including realms traditionally scorned as "private", and therefore "not political". Following these incorporations, however, a new awareness probed the reach of historical inquiry: categories such as race, gender and sexuality, which had heretofore been reproduced as unacknowledged premises, needed to be addressed as historiographic topics in and of themselves. Within feminist epistemology (included but not limited to the epistemology of historiography), this debate was particularly fierce when attention began to shift from "women" to "gender" (for a reconstruction of this process see Canning 2006; Gabaccia & Maynes 2012). This turn, reflected in and stimulated by Joan Scott's now-classic essay "Gender: a useful category of historical analysis" (1985), implied moving beyond the historical experiences of women, and focusing "on how that difference was produced discursively as a normative system of knowledge and meaning and how identities of gender were disseminated variously over time" (Morgan 13). The shift to "gender", understood as "a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (Scott 1999: 42), was further enriched by other perspectives, most notably those from the Global South, which foregrounded the need to analyze categories such as gender, race or coloniality in relation to a wide array of intersecting social positions (Lugones 2016, Crenshaw 1989), acknowledging them as not directly translatable to non-hegemonic contexts (Chakrabarty 2008, Oyèwùmí 1997, Boydston 2008, Guha 1983) and even as fictions produced unilaterally by the West to read (and dominate) non-Western contexts (Said 1979). Henceforth such social locations could simultaneously be approached as subject matters, theoretical categories, research questions, and epistemic and methodological tools (Saeidi 2012), provided they were understood not as fixed givens but "as a set of relatively open questions applied to a discrete time and place of inquiry" (Boydston 2008: 559).

The transformations described so far also exposed the urgency to rethink who has epistemic authority to study the past and why undertake this task. These topics became central to epistemology of historiography as the modern ideal of a disembodied, objective and neutral historiographer was eroded and the interests behind the maxim of studying history "for its own sake" debunked (Berkhofer 1995). The study of the past was reclaimed as an occasion

not only to shed light on the historical trajectories of neglected collectives, but also to imagine different futures for them –and realize them. Indeed, historiographies can be understood as "interventions on the materiality of the present" and "performative sites in which meanings are invented" (Bravmann 1997: 97; Pérez 2016, 2017), thus enabling new spaces for agency.

As for methodology, fields such as social and oral history provided useful resources, while raising various difficulties as well (see Boyd 2008, Kim 2008). Methodological explorations also led to unique insights related to the archive, embodiment, and emotions. Archives and sources were among the profoundest challenges to these approaches, since the collectives reclaimed as historical subjects were either absent or misrepresented in traditional sources such as mainstream historical accounts or state and other institutional repositories. Archives were exposed as a vital piece in the "architecture of imperialism" (Buchanan 2007: 44) and other oppressive structures, as "a status" (Mbembe 2002) and the site of specific forms of power and epistemic violence (Pérez 2019), including that of determining what is archivable and what is not (*ibid*., Buchanan 2007, Trouillot 1995). The epistemological project of decolonizing, queering and/or gendering the archive, then, required understanding its biases, selectivity, silences and inaccessibility; questioning the idea of the archive –and history at large– as something belonging (only) to the past (Goldberg & Menon 2005); and including the emotional and embodied experiences of the archive in reflections on the historical profession (Stryker 2008, Harkin 2014). It also meant expanding its meaning and limits by reassessing notions such as evidence, document and source (Shellam and Cruickshank 2019, Halberstam 2011), foregrounding oppositional knowledges and memories traditionally excluded from the archive (Peterson 2002), and asserting its importance as a site of identity building and resistance against the will to forget or discipline (Marshall, Murphy and Tortorici 2014, Da Silva Catela 2002). Finally, it implied bringing affective questions into epistemology, considering how affects and emotional labor taint our relationships with sources, including informants in the case of oral history (Boyd 2008, Saeidi 2012), and inviting historians to "analyze encounters with emotions as evidence and remain open to shifting our positionality and consciousness through this knowledge" (Saedi 2012: 803). The result is a dynamic and multilayered product, in which "the seams by which the story is constructed" are left visible (Lapovsky Kennedy & Davis 1993: 25) and acknowledged as epistemically significant.

-Epistemology of Testimony. Traditionally, the place of testimony in relation to scientific knowledge of the past was determined under the model of the logics of science and law, which in turn were conceived in close relationship (Popper 1959: 92-94). In historiographical literature, witness testimony is often reduced to mere evidence or document; in fact, the terms "testimony" and "evidence" are often used interchangeably (Bloch 1964: 48-60). Satisfying the ideal of epistemic autonomy and distrusting the so-called "authorities" is essential to the process of disciplining historiographic practice, which implies subjecting to strict analysis anything offered as proof of an interpretations of the past (Collingwood 1994).

The 20th century has turned these considerations on their head. Genocides and state terrorism leave behind a special kind of testimony, the testimony of the surviving victim, that challenges its reduction to nothing more than evidence in shaping the representations of recent history. Psychological research (largely from psychoanalysis) into the post-traumatic stress syndrome of war veterans and concentration camp survivors has offered a promising framework for addressing the representation of events such as the Holocaust (Caruth 1995, Felman and Laub 1992, Douglas and Vogler 2003, La Capra 2001, 2004). Based on the testimonies of the victims of the Shoah, its representation should not be limited to making the horror understandable (or rationalizing it) (Friedlander 1992, Lanzman 1992). These

considerations move away from scientific and judicial logics when dealing with such testimonies, and loosen the differences between historiography (construed as scientific research) and memory (understood as moral and political duty) in relation to the recent past. In short, there is a shift from the centrality of epistemological questions to a moral approach to the subject (White 2004, Margalit 2004, Ricoeur 2006). Nevertheless, attention has been called to a kind of sacralization of the victim's testimony that obstructs the historicization of the recent past more than it contributes to it (La Capra 2001) In this respect, the question arises as to the place of the perpetrators' testimonies both for historical research and for judicial and/or truth commissions. In these cases, considering the testimonies in evidential terms is unavoidable, as they could reveal valuable information about the (often clandestine) systems and procedures of perpetration (Kansteiner 2006, Browning 1998, Hayner 2001). However, in the case of disagreement between perpetrator and victim, who should we believe and under which criteria? (See John Demjanjuk's case in the Netflix documentary film *The Devil Next Door* (Bloch and Sivan 2019). Questions of evidence and responsibility also arise in cases where historians have been called as expert witnesses (Evans 2002). In sum, these predicaments raise the need for an approach to testimony that does not pit epistemic and moral issues against each other.

Simultaneously, and partly as an effect of the incidence of feminist epistemologies and social studies of knowledge, the phenomenon of testimony has become a central interest for contemporary Anglo-Saxon epistemology. Contrary to modern epistemology, which placed the primary sources of experience and reason as privileged sources of knowledge (in the sense that the subject acquires knowledge autonomously), the possibility of "learning from the words of the other" (a secondary source) is revalued as a genuine generator of knowledge in every human context: daily life, education and scientific research. Most of what we know about the natural and social world, about the remote and recent past, or about ourselves, result from the words, written or spoken, of other people. We rely on the accounts of others whom we consider to be authorities in the matter. Since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, philosophical interest has increasingly focused on the way in which social relations play a justifying role in the process of belief acquisition and in knowledge formation, giving birth to a specific field: epistemology of testimony. Notions of authority, trust and credibility come to the fore and establish close links between epistemology and ethics. In a seminal work, C. A. J. Coady (1994) attributes the discredit that testimony has met in epistemology to the preponderance of an individualistic ideology in the post-Renaissance West.

Specialists recognize two major positions on testimony: reductionism and anti-reductionism (Gelfert 2014). According to the former, which goes back to John Locke and David Hume, a listener justifies his or her belief in the word of a speaker on a specific topic (i.e., their testimony) through an inference, the initial conditions of which include independent information about the speaker's reliability (Lackey 2008, Tucker 2010). The latter (more in the line of Thomas Reid) asserts that testimony gives the listener a *prima facie* reason to believe something affirmed by the speaker (e.g. that "it rains"), similarly to perception (McMyler 2011). According to the McMyler, knowledge based on inference and knowledge based on perception are forms of first-hand knowledge, and therefore assimilating testimony to either of them would not account for its property of being second-hand, of being characteristically mediated, and the result of an interaction between at least two people. Developing Richard Moran's (2001) contributions, McMyler argues that learning from testimony is an epistemic social capacity, and that its exercise is a cooperative venture between listener and speaker. However, a fundamental condition must be added: acquiring knowledge and belief justified

on the basis of testimony "involves the citing of an authority; a testimonial audience is entitled to defer relevant challenges back to the original speaker" (2011: 73). In fact, he characterizes second-hand or testimonial knowledge in terms of an epistemic right to defer epistemic challenges.

From the perspective of post-Kuhnian social epistemology, Martin Kusch (2002) contends that testimony is created by a communal performative, constituted by references that occur in endless acts of testimony as well as in other forms of speech that claim something as knowledge, or that challenge knowledge, testify to knowledge, question knowledge, and so on. All these expressions are not merely descriptions of a previously constituted external referent, i.e., "Knowledge". Rather, in Kusch's terms, each direct or indirect reference to knowledge creates knowledge as a status, because each reference is a performative act. This is not suggesting that knowledge thereby constituted is an arbitrary invention or a mere construct: knowledge is a social referent.

Performative acts that constitute knowledge are effective in each testimonial utterance and in each speech act whose meaning refers to (is about) knowledge. Thus, knowledge is a status to which testimony can aspire insofar as it is constituted in and through more testimony. But a further consequence, still more relevant to historiography, can be derived from this. In 2009, Kusch raised the question of what is at stake when we accept "another's report." Testifying as a social practice involves honoring the informer, for, in this very act, we can see the tight bond between epistemic and moral dimensions. Knowledge attributions play an important role in the collective interactions that constitute the testimonial institution by honoring informants. Every time we recognize someone as trustworthy, we honor them as well, and encourage others to do likewise. Knowledge is a collective good to which we can freely resort, but which we must also help construct precisely because "the community cannot survive without the institution of testimony" (2009: 20). In contrast, withholding or denying that role is a way of censoring and dishonoring, and will ultimately result in the destruction of the knowledge community.

Miranda Fricker (2007) furthers this line of inquiry by examining what she called "epistemic injustice", the situation of wronging someone "specifically in their capacity as a knower", and distinguishes two cases: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. The first one occurs "when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word", whereas the second, previous, one occurs "when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experience" (2007: 1). Consider the following two cases. In the first, a sex worker reports rape and the judicial system or police do not believe her because of her status as a sex worker. In this case, the injustice results from prejudice in the economy of credibility. In the second, someone suffers sexual harassment in a culture that lacks that critical concept: in this situation, hermeneutical injustice is the result of a structural prejudice affecting the economy of collective hermeneutical resources. Two important consequences follow from this in terms of the traditional modern conception of epistemology as it has been worked out in the 20th century in the context of Anglo-Saxon philosophy. Firstly, it compels us to note the unavoidable ethical dimension of basic everyday epistemic practices: conveying knowledge to others by telling them something, and making sense of our own social experiences. Secondly, it evinces the need to introduce the notion of power in analyses of epistemic trust (Fricker 2009). These shifts have important consequences for key issues such as who and how are subjects entitled to be credible in a court (Kidd, Medina and Pohlhaus 2017) or as witnesses of a groundbreaking event. A clear example of testimonial injustice can be found in Bevernage's study on the commission of inquiry on the rubber

atrocities in the Congo Free State in the beginning of XIX century. Black victims' testimonies were discredited because, according to the commissioners, "they" did not have the same notion of truth as the commissioners had, "they" had a vague notion of time and were incapable of localizing the events of the past (Bevernage 2018: 213). The phenomenon of epistemic injustice (both testimonial and hermeneutical) has become in the contemporary world an epistemological agenda that draws on different philosophical traditions and reaches into various spheres of social life: from daily exchanges to political participation, from scientific research to law.

-Virtue Epistemology. "Virtue epistemology" (VE) englobes an array of theoretical perspectives on knowledge characterized by a normative approach and a focus on epistemic agents and communities, their belief- and knowledge-formation habits and/or skills. It emerged in the early 1980s, when Ernest Sosa proposed settling the foundationalism vs. coherentism debate in epistemology with what he called "an epistemology of intellectual virtues", defining the latter as "stable dispositions for belief acquisition" that could contribute "toward getting us to the truth" (1980: 23). The path opened by Sosa, which in his understanding had to "give due weight not only to the subject and his intrinsic nature but also to his environment and to his epistemic community" (*ibid.*), has proven fruitful for epistemological reflections including, in recent years, epistemology of historiography. In this section, we will lay out the basic tenets in VE, and then turn to its uses for historiography.

Analytic epistemology has generally focused on the products of our cognitive processes and faculties, that is, on beliefs and how they are justified in order to be accepted as knowledge. Unlike this "belief-based epistemology", VE evaluates the agents that produce such outputs, their belief-formation habits and the faculties required to transform belief into knowledge (Battaly 2008, 2019, Valdés 2011, Axtell 1997). It is these "epistemically valuable states of agents" that confer epistemic value to their beliefs (Fairweather 2014: 1); thus, virtue epistemologists are interested in understanding which are the "epistemically valuable states", or "virtues", that help us achieve our cognitive goals, and how they do it. VE is consequently characterized as normative: "all its authors coincide in stressing that the central task of epistemology is examining the concepts that are appropriate to evaluate the epistemic agents' cognitive behavior", rather than merely describing it (Valdés 2011: 182).

What exactly are epistemic virtues is a contested terrain within VE, resulting in what has generally (albeit not unanimously) been characterized as two main orientations: reliabilism (faculty-based VE) and responsibilism (character-based VE). Reliabilists (including Sosa, John Greco, and Alvin Goldman) understand virtues as cognitive abilities or skills, innate faculties or acquired habits that lead us to truth (e.g. a reliable memory, an excellent sight), whereas responsibilists (including Lorraine Code, Linda Zagzebski, and James Montmarquet) see them as acquired character traits, such as open-mindedness or intellectual empathy. Sosa, who inaugurated reliabilism, defined virtue as "a quality bound to help maximize one's surplus of truth over error" (1985: 227) in a reliable way, and included under this notion the pure faculties of reason, introspection, perception and memory (*ibid.*). Shortly after, and following the notion of "epistemic responsibility" laid out by Laurence BonJour (1980) and Hilary Kornblith (1983), virtue responsibilism proposed focusing on responsibility as "a central virtue from which all others radiate" (Code 1984: 34). This allowed for a stronger "emphasis upon the active nature of the knower/believer" and his or her accountability (1984: 39-40; see also Code 1987, Greco 2002): in fact, Linda Zagzebski has recently defined virtue as "a deep and enduring acquired trait that we admire on reflection" precisely because it requires an active effort and "includes a motivational component" (2019: 30). In virtue responsibilism the connection between moral and epistemic virtues tends to be

tighter, to the point that Zagzebski only distinguishes intellectual virtues for their intrinsic epistemic aim (1996: 166) and Montmarquet contends that "ethical and epistemic justification are completely analogous" (1987b: 192). Still, responsibility is not irrelevant for reliabilists either: Greco, for example, contends that reliability is "grounded in responsibility", understood as the fact of conforming to the epistemic norms we countenance (1993: 416, 429). Additionally, both perspectives a) affirm that for something to be an epistemic virtue it must be stable and entrenched in the subject, as opposed to a mere passing inclination, tendency or luck (e.g. Zagzebski 1996, 2019, Montmarquet 1987a); b) observe (to different degrees) that epistemological analysis must account for cognitive activity as a collective process where knowledge seekers depend on each other (Code 1987, Sosa 1980); and c) situate epistemic virtue in context, since traits or faculties can be virtuous in certain conditions (because they lead reliably to truth, or give ==proof== of epistemic conscientiuosness) and useless in others.

As for the conception of truth, reliabilists generally hold that intellectual virtues are such because they are truth-conducive (i.e. because they are "reliable") in a specific circumstance, and define knowledge as a true belief resulting from the use of a cognitive virtue (Greco 1993: 414). Against this, it has been argued that reliabilism might adequately account for low-grade perceptual knowledge, but not higher-grade knowledge such as historiographical inquiry (Baehr 2013, Battaly 2008, Froeyman 2012), and that truth cannot be a necessary requirement for epistemic virtue, or else thinkers who we now know were mistaken in their beliefs could not be considered virtuous. Responsibilists have suggested including other capacities such as understanding, the possibility of advancing human inquiry in general (Zagzebski 1996), or the adherence to habits that an epistemically virtuous subject in a specific context would consider truth-conducive (Montmarquet 1987a; Zagzebski 1996). Zagzebski (2019) and Montmarquet (1987a) have placed value in the will to attain truth ("epistemic conscientiousness"), perhaps regulated by the epistemic virtues of impartiality and intellectual courage (Montmarquet *ibid.*).

Although the empirical adequacy of VE as a normative epistemology has been questioned (Fairweather 2014), in recent years there have been attempts to apply it to various sciences (e.g. Battaly 2019, Fairweather 2014), exploring its implications and analyzing specific virtues and vices relevant for "higher-grade" knowledge and/or for particular disciplines. This turn also brings a welcome addition to the study of historiography: while epistemology of history has effectively demonstrated that historiographical ==representation== is the product of complex and multifaceted processes, contexts and agents, it still seems to dedicate much more attention to the output of that process than to the agents carrying it forward (Froeyman 2012, Paul 2011, 2014). Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a call for "more explicit analyses of research practices prior to textual presentation in historiography" (Simon & Kuukkanen 2015), including the apparently very basic question of "what a good historian is like" (Froeyman 2012: 416). Virtue epistemology may offer valuable categories for such an enterprise, as we hope to show in what follows.

Herman Paul has suggested adopting VE as a powerful instrument to understand the "doings" and "performances" of historians (2011) as well as their "scholarly personae", that is, the models that "specify the kind of abilities, attitudes, and dispositions one has to display in order to be recognized, at a given time and place, as a 'real' historian" (2014: 353). With a conception of epistemic virtues closer to that of responsibilism, Paul contends that the virtues deemed central to historiographical practice (that is, those character traits composing the "scholarly persona" along with skills, desires and other extra-epistemic qualities) will vary according to the historical context and the interplay between genre, research question, and

the state of the literature (2012a: 375); different virtues can be relevant for different lines of research, and the same virtues can be shared across various disciplines (2011, 2012a). Each historian should apply the meta-virtue of *phronesis* to establish a hierarchy of intellectual virtues "in order to discern what it takes, in each of these situations, to make a contribution to a better understanding of the past" (2012a: 379) and how to attain the desired intellectual good. While each epoch endorses its own epistemic goods (and a variety of non-epistemic goods as well), Paul insists that "scholarly research" requires that historians pursue the good of historical understanding (2012a). Still, historians in different "historiographical situations" can all have historical understanding as an intellectual goal, but attain it through different virtues. Paul's insights result in a non-foundationalist, contextual and non-relativist standard of justification, where "desirability and appropriateness" are measured "not in terms of justified knowledge, but in terms of worthwhile contributions to understanding the past" (2012a: 373).

Guy Axtell and Aviezer Tucker have proposed specific ways in which VE can help us understand and settle key issues in historiographical practice. Axtell (2012) has suggested that shifting from a belief-based epistemology to an agent-focused one, and combining it with moderate historicism, can help us with theory under-determination (i.e., the cases in which available evidence is insufficient to choose between theories): in historiography and other fields where "competing theories are routinely under-determined by facts", non-deductive resources are needed to settle the dispute, and "methodological norms such as an accepted list of theory virtues" can be useful (2012: 366). Tucker (2006), on the other hand, adopts the theoretical framework of epistemic virtues and vices to analyze the problem of anachronism or "temporal provincialism", that is, "the inability to comprehend how people distant in space and time thought". Anachronism is sustained by epistemic vices such as wishful thinking, avoiding evidence, laziness, and ignoring alternative, probably more likely takes on available data. Instead, Tucker proposes working on a "temporally global culture", characterized by epistemic virtue and "marked by retrospection, an understanding of change in time (…) curiosity, search for evidence and a culture of debating competing hypotheses by devising methods for distinguishing information bearing reliable evidence from less reliable one" (2006: n/p).

4. In the Future

Several philosophical reflections from the late 60s to 80s can be characterized by a movement beyond objectivism and relativism (Bernstein 1983). There is no need to take sides between either an ultimate grounding of knowledge, science, philosophy, and language, or relativism, skepticism, historicism, and nihilism. Such dichotomy is contingent on having accepted the skeptic challenge. Postempiricist philosophy and history of science (Kuhn, Lakatos, Toulmin, Feyerabend), hermeneutics (Gadamer), and neopragmatism (Rorty) transformed our understanding of science and the workings of rationality in scientific inquiry, by delineating a historically situated notion of rationality and recovering the hermeneutical dimension of the social and natural sciences (Bernstein 1983: xiv). When scientific inquiry is approached in terms of a social and cooperative enterprise carried out by situated epistemic communities, issues related to trust, authority and testimony are inescapably relevant. In fact, Shapin's (1994) extensive historical study of the development of empirical sciences in seventeenth-century England has documented how scientists rely on the testimony of others whom they trust. Perspectives such as these expose the fact that we cannot grasp the production of scientific truth unless we understand how trust is established and maintained, weakened and lost. When discussing Collingwood's defense of the ideal

epistemic autonomy for historical research, Coady (1994) identifies several instances of acceptance of information by testimony in Collingwood's detective story entitled 'Who killed John Doe?' (Collingwood 1994). They are not simple mistakes: they show how, even in a highly artificial piece of fiction deliberately organized to eliminate reliance upon testimony, such reliance persists – even when, under the ideal of epistemic autonomy, the detective could "observe" that information by himself (241).

Once we understand knowledge from a social perspective, many of the classical debates in epistemology of history are resignified from a non-foundationalist and pluralist angle (Tozzi 2012[b]). Following the strict style of analytical philosophy, Gorman (1982) presents a rigorous argument for the rehabilitation of a "poetic" conception of human nature in the spirit of Vico. Roth (2002, 2012) conjoins the now classic works of Danto and Mink and Mead on the unnecessariness of believing in a fixed past as referent of historical interpretation, with the contributions of Nelson Goodman and Ian Hacking, to conclude that the "historical constitution" of events just means that "what events can be said to exist depends on the stock of descriptions or categories available. [Thus,] when the stock changes, by addition or deletion, the extant events at a time do as well" (Roth 2012: 339). Mead is also recovered by Tozzi (2016), who suggests that his answer to the skeptical challenge is useful to dismantle the charge of skepticism against Narrativism. Pihlainen (2012) revisits, in a new way, Danto's classical mental experiment on Ideal chronicler, in order to analyze what would be the consequences of some ideal accessibility to the past. On a different note, Scott (1991) brings forth an epistemic and political critique against the account of "living experience" as a fundament of theoretical knowledge in matters of identity. Kosso (1992, 2001) defends a broad sense of "observation", showing that observational information about the past can be acquired through interaction with written documentation or material remains, just like in the natural sciences observational information about theoretical entities is obtained through interaction with instruments. The philosophical thesis according to which observation is "theory-laden" does not necessarily imply a distortion of reality (Brown 1977). Epistemic pluralism brings new air to rethink the notions historical re-enactment (Stueber 2008), narrative explanation (Carr 2008, Roth 2020), and historical argumentation. Rhetoric is now seen by many theorists as a useful device, rather than a mere instrument of manipulation (Kellner 2013, Kuukkanen 2015).

Lines of inquiry still underexplored in epistemology of historiography, such as Epistemology of testimony or Virtue Epistemology, can have crucial consequences for historical research. On one hand, they belie the presumed opposition between moral and epistemic values (Tozzi 2012[a]); on the other, notions such as epistemic injustice or epistemic vice can call attention to those subjects whose social location excludes them from epistemic communities, and particularly from the possibility of narrating their past. These perspectives, along with epistemologies embedded in feminist, postcolonial, decolonial and/or queer approaches, have afforded a more thorough and nuanced understanding of how power, identity and embodiment shape scientific practices, including historiography, and their epistemic premises. They brought a growing awareness of the profoundly gendered, racialized and colonial nature of historiography, and exposed how analysis both of historical processes and of their modes of production would be incomplete with a mere "add-and-stir" approach, if it is not accompanied by a thorough consideration of the historicity of categories such as gender, race, or coloniality, and by a more reflexive and self-critical commitment on the part of historians.

Social epistemology can offer inestimable resources to reflect on the social role of historians and philosophers of history, a particularly pressing issue in a global context where

phenomena such as "fake news" and the reemergence of right-wing discourses call for a stronger engagement of historians in the public arena. Lorraine Code (1987) had suggested early on that different social roles come with differential epistemic responsibilities. Notions such as "situated knowledge" point in this direction by exposing the risks of allegedly disembodied cognitive endeavors and offering alternative ways to approach the past by placing the researcher under the same scrutiny as the subject matter. Virtue epistemologists have explored this trail as well, by drawing attention to how the historian's scholarly and social personae answer to contemporary public demands (Paul 2014, Munhoz Ohara 2016, Nicolazzi 2018). All of these perspectives invite us to evaluate not only the final output of historiographical endeavors, but also the epistemic practices inherent to its production, its circulation and reception, the relationship of historiographers with their audiences, and their epistemic position towards the present and the future.

5. Conclusion

Although the scope and depth of the contributions of epistemology to historiography cannot be summarized in a few pages, this chapter has aimed at presenting some central lines of inquiry, in the hope that this will offer readers some windows into a rich field that deserves to be explored more extensively.

The "Introduction" offers some terminological clarifications and exposes the main subject matter of epistemological reflection: the conditions of justified and true belief, as raised by Modern philosophy focused on the skeptic challenge. In the last few decades, however, epistemological approaches have put into question the presuppositions of modern epistemology -- foundationism, individualism and epistemic autonomy-- as those responsible for skepticism, and, on the other hand, have suggested how notions such as as "epistemic community", "epistemic virtues", "authority", "testimony" and "embodiment" are essential to comprehend the production of reliable knowledge in ordinary life, as well as in the public sphere and in science.

The "Background" section goes through four epistemological debates on the possibility of historical knowledge originated in the 19th century alongside the development of historiography as an academic discipline, which reached a high degree of sophistication and precision in the context of Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy of history around 1940-1960.

By the mid-60's the ideal of a methodological unity of all sciences had entered into crisis. Many of the traits considered typical of social and historical research, which had initially put them at a disadvantage in comparison to natural siences, were revealed as also characterizing the latter. Thus, methodological pluralism, situated rationality, and the hermeneutic dimension of scientific theories were positively valued as fruitful resources to understand scientific knowledge at large.

Some of the most recent expressions of this shift are outlined in section "Importance today". Here we describe the development of a social account of epistemology interested in marginalized subjects, testimony, and virtue, with the result of deflating traditional distinctions between description and value or between validity and uses of knowledge; ultimately, a complete disconection between epistemological and ethical questions is not longer sustainable. In relation to this point, a last warning should be made regarding the relationship between epistemology and ethics for historiography and scientific practice in general. Epistemology and ethics do not have univocal meanings; each of them directs us to a wide array of scholarly discussions (and animosities) on criteria for cognitive and moral

justification, respectively. Therefore, any interweaving among them will need to deal with such plurality and can always be challenged.

The instability and uncertainty left by the abandonment of foundationalism should not lead us to skepticism or plunge us into despair. On the contrary, it opens up a crucial space for reflection on epistemic communities, their rules, their values, their authorities, their interests and their conflicts, both internal and with society. In this chapter, we hope to have offered some resources to navigate that space.

Further Reading and Online Resources

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