Germany sent Einstein packing, without realizing that it was a much greater crime to kill little Hans Cohn from around the corner, even though he was no genius."[8] In our effort to build an inclusive community in academic philosophy, we must commit to the right of all children to live dignified and flourishing lives, with access to quality public schools at all levels and basic resources, regardless of the beneficial effect it will have downstream on enriching academic philosophy, which it inevitably will. At the very least, it cannot remain a matter of a random draw that a child is fated to attend a local public school district that will teach her how to read. Whatever obstacles I faced, I am somehow left feeling lucky. In fact, I am in awe of my good fortune that even as I drifted after high school, reading was my first love, one that would make it so sweet and empowering to later welcome philosophy into my life.

NOTES

1. Alana Semuels, "The Never-Ending Foreclosure: How Can the Country Survive the Next Economic Crash if Millions of Families Still Haven't Recovered from the Last One?" *The Atlantic* December 1, 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/12/the-neverending-foreclosure/547181/.
2. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 43-44.
3. Toni Morrison, *Source of Self-Regard* (New York: Knopf, 2019), 324.
4. Ibid. Emphasis added.
5. Amanda Sherwin, "Could CUNY Be Tuition Free Again?" *Gotham Gazette*, July 20, 2020, https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/6444-could-cuny-be-tuition-free-again.
6. Dana Goldstein, "Detroit Students Have a Constitutional Right to Literacy, Court Rules," *The New York Times*, April 27, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/27/us/detroit-literacy-lawsuit-schools.html.
7. Ibid.
8. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 134.

Knowing What to Order at the Conference Dinner

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Here's a story about a familiar scene. A group of philosophers in a restaurant at the end-of-the-first-day conference dinner. One of them, I notice, is clearly uncomfortable. During earlier sessions, they'd been confident and cheerful. Now, they're anxious and quiet. Sitting by them, I asked if they were okay. Hesitantly, they explained they'd never eaten at a restaurant before. Everything about the experience was unfamiliar—the place was pulsing with uncertainties. Where to sit. Who the water on the table is for. Whether you ask to get up and go to the bathroom. How long the meal lasts. When you pay. Whether there are speeches.

Alongside this uncertainty about the rules and format of the evening, the philosopher was deeply struck by how *obviously comfortable* everyone else seemed. Folks were relaxed—jackets off, pouring wine, laughing away at favourite stories and old jokes. Everyone else, they said, was so obviously at home in this environment. They were utterly competent in all these little actions—clearly rehearsed in hailing a waiter, perusing a menu, knowing which glass was theirs. Speaking phenomenologically, what struck the philosopher was that everyone else was embedded in a space of possibilities they were able to navigate with unruffled spontaneity. It was an environment in which they felt *at home*. By contrast, the philosopher lamented, they lacked the most elementary knowledge and understanding. How do you call a waiter? What can I ask them for? Is there a charge if I ask for more water?

I offered to help, and, after a pause, they held out their menu to me.

"What do I order?"

That question totally threw me. I was so familiar with restaurants; it hadn't occurred to me someone might not know that you can *choose* what you *like*. My parents took my sister and I to restaurants when we were little. Since we couldn't always afford holidays, it was one way to give us nice experiences my parents had never had. None of them were Michelin-star places—my post-industrial hometown had none of those. But I knew enough to know how to act in restaurants. I'd read a menu, asked my parents to explain the words, and seen people picking out their glass from the array of options. I knew that specials are usually pricier, knew how to act when someone was serving me, knew not to stack and carry the plates at the end of the meal. By contrast, said the philosopher, they'd never even *entered* a restaurant.

When they asked what they should order, I realised they'd assumed that there was an item they were supposed to select—as if all conferences attendees had been *assigned* a meal. They thought they'd missed that bit of information (was it in the conference pack?) and were feeling that hot fear of not knowing what to say, like an actor forgetting their lines. It wasn't clear to them that they could choose anything they liked. Obviously, once I explained, things became tougher in a different way. Your choices depend on your wallet. Moreover, you need to find some dish you understood enough to be confident in choosing. Like many restaurants selected for conference dinners, this one was fancy—the cheapest main was about twenty dollars and the mark-up on drinks was steep.

Unfortunately, the rest of the table went for three-courses—which, I explained, meant starter, mains, and a dessert. Automatically totting up prices, the philosopher was then aghast when I warned that there was the risk of someone suggesting splitting the bill "equally." Their carefully constructed $27.85 bill could inflate into a cross-subsidising $100 bill. (Luckily, the conference organisers later passed around to advise against splitting—a crucial intervention, since power dynamics make it hard to resist by saying, "Actually, could we not. . .")

I tell this story because, a few days later, on returning home, I happened to tell it to a colleague.

They burst out laughing.

"Ha ha ha! How can you not know how to order at a restaurant!"

Years later, I'm still struck by the stupidity of this statement. Stupid in the sense of a culpable failure to exercise one's intelligence. For a start, it's perfectly obvious why a person might not know the myriad norms, rules, and micropractices relevant to restaurants. You may be from a family too poor to enjoy the luxury of paying professionals to prepare and serve you food. You may have always lived in socioeconomically impoverished areas that don't *have* restaurants. You may not have the luxury of regarding food as an opportunity for outsourcing your culinary labour and enjoying an evening of recreational consumption. If you're poor, you wait tables, you don't sit at them.

Since none of these possibilities is difficult to generate intellectually, my colleague's failure lay somewhere else. If stupidity is a culpable failure to exercise one's intelligence, then we ought to ask what *motivates* those failures. Some obvious candidates are the epistemic limitations built into the structured pathways of experience and activity characteristic of socially and materially privileged people. From my colleague's perspective, those possibilities really were just *possibilities*—abstract options, generated by imagination, not drawn from painful memory.

If my colleague's earlier life afforded the consistent possibility of fun meals out, that's a good thing. From experience, I know that being poor and hungry *sucks*, not an experience that I'd wish on anyone. But that sets up the challenge—to maintain an empathic understanding of realities of life that lie outside the particular course of one's own experience, to resist the stupidification that poverty of experience breeds, to constantly act to resist the ossifying patterns of obliviousness to the heterogeneity of human life sustained by one's privileges. It is the challenge—moral as much as epistemic—to inhabit a particular style of life without it gradually narrowing our receptivity to other kinds of life, to the wider realities of how our fellow humans live, or try to. It's easy for our imaginations to become dampened, leading to contemptuous snorts of laughter at the fumbling uncertainties of others. (The Britpop band, Pulp, put it well in their song "Common People," which describes a wealthy girl who "wants to live like common people." Upon being taken to a supermarket, "I said 'Pretend you've got no money' / She just laughed and said, 'You're so funny'"). It may seem hard to imagine someone getting to their twenties without having eaten in a restaurant—but it's not, really.

Back to the philosopher in the restaurant. I didn't laugh at their uncertainty and their ignorance because, thanks to the forethought and determination of my parents, I'd had some experience of restaurants. They were poor for a lot of my early life, but hid it very well. Even now, the economic precarity that structured my earlier life remains well-concealed, as I half-remember bags of 'hand-me-downs' and assurances on Christmas Day that my parents spent the same amount on my sister and I. Such experiences help me do the work to avoid the fault of that colleague who guffawed at the sad ignorance of someone who didn't know how *menus* work.

Obviously, we can make it easier for philosophers to exercise their intelligence and imagination, not least diversifying our disciplinary demographics. If departments are staffed by those from wealthier backgrounds, that sustains expectations about what sorts of social experiences and activities can be taken as the norm. A wine reception—never one with beers. A conference dinner at a smart restaurant—never something informal in someone's home. Upon describing a typical conference dinner to a friend, they said it'd be more fun to have a few beers in someone's garden with homecooked food. He regarded visits to restaurants as complexly demanding trials, course after course of class-coded challenges with constant risk of subtle normative censure.

I'm not urging abandonment of the swanky conference dinner, nor suggesting first-generation philosophers from socioeconomically underprivileged backgrounds are incapable of enjoying them and mastering their nuances. That would be invidious snobbery, of a sort liable to mutate into horrible contemptuousness. What can help, though, are changes to our social practices in specific contexts like restaurants. Some of the changes are obvious. Don't choose pricier restaurants, unless you have budget to pay for all the attendees (and beware well-meant systems that require people to reveal that they need financial assistance). Sometimes, there are collegial delegates who offer to subsidise the unfunded and underfunded. That's a nice practice, albeit too dependent on the generosity of attendees to be any real solution. Proscribe the practice of 'splitting the bill', which really forces the involuntarily abstemious to subsidise those who enjoyed three courses and expensive wine. Choose restaurants that offer special deals—"$30 dollars for two courses if you order between 5 and 7!" If they don't, try to negotiate a deal, or else take your fifty-person party elsewhere.

Crucially, communicate all these costs to attendees in advance. Some will have to save up in advance for conferences. Being told three months in advance that the conference dinner will cost thirty dollars total including your first drink helps them to budget. Moreover, if you're the organiser, provide information on hidden costs, like the tip at the restaurant and the cost of a taxi: when I was a postgrad, my heart sank when someone suggested sharing a taxi, since I could never afford one, unless I gave up on having an alcoholic drink over dinner. If you can, cover costs of taxis to and from the restaurant. Provide information on public transport—too many conference organisers forget about buses. Conference packs, in my experience, rarely include bus schedules. If you're a financially privileged delegate, consider inviting those who need a ride to join your taxi. Be clear you're not expecting them to chip in for the fare.

A conference dinner at a restaurant represents a whole structure of socially, culturally, and materially complicated relationships. Some people are comfortable in those structures, since they'll be as effortlessly able to pay the bill as navigate the menu. They'll have a lovely evening. But for

others, those structures impose anxiety, uncertainty, and a bill that can't be allayed with a wave of a credit card or the keeping of receipts for reimbursement—a privilege that can also be co-opted, of course, by delegates inclined to support their fellow diners who use their financial privileges to help others. And remember that some can't afford the upfront costs in the way assumed by the reimbursement model.

Some of this is the work of the organiser, some is the work of the attendees. Some of the work is rewarding. Many enjoy their generosity and public acts of magnanimity. Some of the work is dull or demanding. Some delegates get grumpy if told they can't water down their own bill. Arranging taxis is more work than just expecting people to call an Uber. Telephoning the restaurant to negotiate a deal is more work than not. But taking such measures are ways of trying to make the social and financial experience of a conference easier for low-income and first-generation philosophers—indeed, for anyone whose experiences and resources don't automatically make a conference dinner the chilled, enjoyable experience it is for so many. That young philosopher had a rough time at that restaurant. A lot of their discomfort could have been allayed—but not by someone, like my colleague, inclined to laugh at the very idea of not knowing how a *restaurant* works.

A conference dinner at a restaurant is a good place for considering the interactions of class, race, economic privilege, professional comportment, and the culturally coded forms of sophistication that have been built into the discipline. Much needs to be changed and a really good place to start is by appreciating these realities—to grasp that when you're happily sitting choosing a starter from the menu, the person sitting opposite may be wondering if the acute uncertainty they're feeling at that moment means they chose the wrong profession.

Epistemic Shame as a First-Generation Scholar

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Once, during my time as a graduate student at Cornell University, I was reading in its iconic "Big Red Barn" when a few undergraduate students sat down at the table beside me. They were discussing the various ways their parents had protected them from bits of information that were deemed *too burdensome for them to bear* as busy college students. The examples ranged. One family hid a large-scale home renovation so their child would not worry about their life without a fully functional kitchen. Another set of parents kept the fact that their child's ex-partner had moved on to another while the child was away in Ithaca. The students shared their feelings about these omissions with humor and lightheartedness. The overall mood seemed to be one of mild annoyance, colored with understanding. I gathered my book and set off for my shared TA office down the hill. My mind veered towards the question, "What is *my* family keeping from me?"

Three years prior, when I left Barrio Hollywood in Tucson, AZ for New York state, I knew there would be information kept from me. I was leaving at the onset of big things in my family: my parents took on a restructuring of debt earlier that year and each of my three younger siblings welcomed their first child, which I knew would raise financial and emotional stress given that my siblings ranged in age from 19 to 23 and only two of them had a high school degree. Although it was safe to assume that difficulties similar to the ones we faced while I was growing up would arise, weekend calls regularly failed to mention those things. My family did not divulge their worries about the cost of childcare. They did not discuss their difficulty getting the correct amount of peanut butter through WIC (i.e., Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), the status of my parents' bankruptcy, whether there were any broken-down vehicles, whether any of my siblings were stuck waiting for public transit in the scorching Southwest sun while carrying a cranky toddler, or anything like that. When I asked how things were on those fronts, the topic quickly changed. On that short walk, I began to identify what I was feeling by the omissions I knew were present in my life: *shame*. I now take this experience to be one of *epistemic shame*.

Here, I sketch a short rationale for this claim. I briefly summarize recent accounts of "epistemic shame," highlighting two features of them: (1) epistemic shame is an affective state that necessarily has a false belief as its object and (2) the intensity of an experience of epistemic shame is a function of the judgments other people make about one for holding a false belief. I suggest that the experience of epistemic shame described above is some motivation to reject both (1) and (2). As I hope to show, epistemic shame does not require a false belief as its object. Nor does it require one to hold any specific belief at all. Epistemic shame may occur when any feature of one's epistemic life is shameworthy. This is because holding true beliefs is not the only quality one might strive for in an epistemic life. Here, I highlight how sometimes one may strive to share epistemic burdens with those they love because doing so is the basis upon which meaningful bonds with them are sown and strengthened. When one fails to do this, an experience of epistemic shame may follow. Further, I show that the intensity of one's feeling of epistemic shame can also be a function of the importance one places on certain features of their epistemic life. It is not always the case that external observers influence how this epistemic emotion is felt.

Current work in philosophy and psychology takes epistemic shame to be the shame that one feels as a result of holding a belief that leads to contradiction or holding a false belief. Of course, the specifics are put forth using different theoretical tools and concepts special to the relevant disciplines. For instance, Ancient Greek theorist Laura Candiotto offers an account of epistemic shame based on the role it played in the process of belief purification in Plato's Socratic dialogues. Candiotto shows that shame, captured by the Greek terms *aidôs* and sometimes *aischynê*, was an affective state that some of Socrates's interlocutors would enter upon finding themselves in the unpleasant state of *aporia* (i.e., finding themselves lost