

Cross-cultural epistemic practices

SORAJ HONGLADAROM

1. *Introduction: social epistemology*

In *Libraries and the Organisation of Knowledge*, Jesse Shera discussed the idea of social epistemology. According to him, social epistemology was to be a discipline which

should provide a framework for the effective investigation of the entire complex problem of the intellectual processes of society—a study by which society as a whole seeks a perceptive relation to its total environment. It should lift the study of intellectual life from that of a scrutiny of the individual to an inquiry into the means by which a society, nation, or culture achieves understanding of the totality of stimuli which act upon it. The focus of this new discipline will be upon the production, flow, integration, and consumption of all forms of communicated thought throughout the entire social pattern. From such a discipline should emerge a new body of knowledge about, and a new synthesis of, the interaction between knowledge and social activity. (Shera, 1965, pp. 15–16)

In short, social epistemology for Shera was to be a discipline that examines the role of knowledge in society, as well as how knowledge is received and is distributed throughout society. Moreover, the discipline also has within its domain the examination of how culture and knowledge interact, how cultural attitudes influence and are influenced by the ‘communicated thoughts’ that circulate in society. The purpose of this paper is to investigate an aspect of this relation between culture and knowledge.

My contention in this paper is that social epistemology as envisioned by Shera needs to pay closer attention to how culture and knowledge systems interact, and that the information professional needs to be aware of the cultural milieu of which she is a part. I propose that the epistemic practices performed by information professionals (and others) should be *cross-cultural*. The basic reason is that such a cross-cultural awareness will make it possible for information professionals to have a critical stance toward their own cultures. This stance could lead to the adaptation of some current practices of the culture, which may even realize the values of that culture better. In addition, awareness that other cultures might have other sets of epistemic values should lead to a recognition that one’s epistemic practice is only one among many. Such a recognition does not entail epistemic or cultural relativism; instead it means that reflection on one’s own epistemic practice is always an on-going affair and needs to be adjusted and re-adjusted due to changing circumstances. And the goal of the adjustment and re-adjustment should be tied to what the culture values most.

Author: Soraj Hongladarom is currently Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok 10330, Thailand; e-mail: hsoraj@chula.ac.th.

In the remainder of the paper, I shall outline briefly my arguments in support of the contention stated above. Section 2 will discuss the empirical condition of knowledge practice in Thailand according to Niels Mulder's interpretation. This example shows that there could be a society that values continuity over striving for a larger quantity of accurate information. (The emphasis is on the *possibility* that there is a society that values continuity over truth.) Section 3 will use these findings to defend the claim that epistemic practices should be cross-cultural. Alvin Goldman's recent social veritistic epistemology will be discussed in light of these findings. I will argue that Goldman's social veritistic epistemology is perhaps too thin to be fully able to account for the prominent roles of cultures in social epistemology. Section 4 concludes by drawing some implications of my argument for the work of information professionals.

2. *Brief ethnographical sketch: a culture without truth as the overriding epistemic goal*

It seems to be a common belief that the epistemic maxim 'Seek truth and avoid error' is a universal one. Maffie (1995, especially pp. 225–230) argues that this maxim is present in a large number of epistemological cultures. Trying to provide a naturalistic epistemology, which nonetheless is distinct from science, Maffie cites a large number of anthropological reports purporting to show that these diverse cultures share a common feature in that they recognize the value of truth as their epistemic goal. Studying how these cultures go about the business of producing beliefs and justifying or rejecting them would constitute, for him, a part of epistemology while preserving its autonomy. However, if one could point to a culture that does not value truth as much as other epistemic goals, then Maffie's contention would need to be reconsidered. If there is at least one culture that values something else more than truth, then Maffie's truth-based 'weak reliabilism' would not be true of all cultures.

Dutch anthropologist Niels Mulder (1996) reports that Thai culture seems to be one that does not value truth as the supreme epistemic goal:³

The traditional idea of knowledge is exemplified by the three-tiered *nagtham* [Buddhist teachings] courses that emphasize memorization and rote-learning. It is therefore quite possible to possess all the knowledge that the *nagtham* grades require without having much understanding of Buddhism.

Knowledge is a thing to possess, an arsenal of rules and recipes that are formal and static. The quest for knowledge is not motivated by the desire to understand or by the curiosity to explore; on the contrary, knowledge is a thing to display and, to most recipients, has primarily a social function. To have relatively more knowledge entitles one to equivalently more respect and position, and, correspondingly, people in higher positions are thought to have knowledge—or at least they are expected to behave as if they know. Knowledge is a personal attribute that is beyond research or discussion. It concentrates in positions and being a *phuwajaj* [elder] implies having superior knowledge. Irrespective of wisdom or insight, all kinds of *phuwajaj*, whether academic or even military or administrative, obviously find great satisfaction in dispensing and publicizing their inscrutable wisdom, and these pundits govern their petty realms accordingly. They are not accustomed to seeking advice or discussion because their positions guarantee that they already know. To question that knowledge is not to question ideas but to question or doubt the person who holds them. To criticize is to attack the show of presentation that constitutes public reality. Criticism of any type is therefore a social affront, an insult to the person. (1996, pp. 140–141)

It is quite clear that a culture possessing the conception of knowledge described above seems to value something else more than truth. A culture that values truth

necessarily values openness and willingness to accept that one is wrong if that is satisfactorily shown to be the case. However, in Thai culture, as described by Mulder, truth seems to be subordinate to the hierarchical social system where the *phuuji* or elders are perceived to be superior in knowledge, even though they sometimes are actually quite ignorant. What is important in this case is not that the elder knows more or less than others, but that he does not appear less knowledgeable than his inferiors. To appear so would mean that his status as a *phuuji* is compromised. To appear less knowledgeable would degrade him in the public's eyes and, in the overly status conscious Thai society, such a scenario would be tantamount to character suicide.

Mulder reports that the Thais view knowledge as a finished product or a piece of treasure, which can bring wealth or status to those who possess it. Knowledge for the Thais is indicative of authority and ranks within the hierarchical system of society. The more knowledge one has the higher rank one enjoys in society. Moreover, the emphasis is not on searching for knowledge in order to satisfy curiosity. Mulder writes that Thai academics are 'curiously incurious' (1996, p. 141). Their task is typically not to search for new knowledge, but to maintain the existing hierarchical strata through the perception that they already possess knowledge that they dispense, as a ready-made product, to society (Mulder, 1996, p. 140).

It is thus quite clear that in this kind of society, truth is ranked lower than other values as an epistemic goal. If the epistemic goal of the Thai society is to seek the knowledge that is constituted by rules and procedures rather than substance, then it is hard to believe that in such a society truth is valued above all else. The maxim 'Seek truth and avoid error', which Maffie tries to show is available in many cultures, then might seem to be parochial. The epistemic maxim in Thai society, according to Mulder, seems to be 'Seek truth only to the extent that it does not disrupt social continuity or hierarchy'.

So, what would social epistemology come up with in analysing a society such as the Thai one described by Mulder? It would describe the role of knowledge in maintaining social order and enhancing the social status of those who claim or are perceived to possess it. Since the elders who are perceived to possess knowledge seldom seek it themselves (because to do so would presuppose that they do not know), there are fewer knowledge seeking activities than in other societies that operate under the different maxim of seeking truth and avoiding error. Moreover, since the elders hold positions of power, there are relatively few incentives for younger or less senior members of the culture to pursue active research or other knowledge producing activities because their findings might conflict with what is already held to be knowledge. The end result is a static society bent on preserving its status quo rather than the dynamism that comes with widespread knowledge seeking, truth seeking, error avoiding and ignorance avoiding activities.

Mulder's report, then, shows that it is at least possible for there to be a society that values some other epistemic goals rather than truth. Even if his account is not true, it is coherent, and this should give a pause to any universalistic account of truth as a culture's overriding epistemic goal. The consideration of cultures, then, ought to play a larger role in the task of social epistemology that Shera envisioned. In other words, epistemic practices ought to be cross-cultural. Such practices are premised on an awareness that one's own culture is only one among many in the world, and that the epistemic practices of a culture are tied up with the goals and values of that culture.

3. *Defending cross-cultural epistemic practices*

In this section, I shall argue that cross-cultural epistemic practices are to be preferred over either ‘monocultural’ or ‘acultural’ practices. By ‘*cross-cultural epistemic practices*’, I mean, very roughly and schematically, those practices related to epistemic issues that bear a set of relations to the culture wherein those practices take place as well as to other cultures that are in contact with it. An epistemic practice becomes cross-cultural just in case it is informed by an awareness of the diversity of cultures such that this awareness results in a realization that one’s own epistemic practice is but one possible practice among many. Epistemic practices are ‘*monocultural*’ when they fail to be based on an appreciation or recognition of cultural diversity or on the (chauvinistic) belief that one’s own culture is the best or the most suitable one for all intents and purposes. Lastly, an ‘*acultural*’ epistemic practice is one that does not bear any relation to cultures at all, such as those practices predicated on the belief that any amount of socio-cultural context is irrelevant to epistemology.

Cross-cultural epistemic practices should be preferred, because they promote a critical attitude toward one’s own culture (leading to its possible re-evaluation and revision) and because they lead to the realization that the epistemic maxim at work in a particular culture depends upon the goals valued by that culture. Thus, instead of the relativistic thinking that assumes each maxim to be as good as others, this conception enhances a culture’s attachment to the set of maxims it finds to be effective in realizing the goals valued most by it. The conception also leads to a realization that the goals of a culture (finding truth, seeking continuity, and so on) are contingent. Hence, if members of a culture value one set of goals rather than another, and know that such and such maxim can bring it about, then it is rational for that culture to adopt the maxim. This does not mean that the maxim is as good as any other, but it does imply that adopting it is a contingent historical matter. Since the adopted maxim is efficacious in bringing about the preferred goal, then in this sense it is better than another maxim that is less efficacious. This conception by no means precludes the possibility that members of the culture in question may change their minds regarding what goals they value the most.

Cross-cultural epistemic practices imply that the culture usually has at its disposal various systems of maxim-goal complexes, and is capable of deliberating about which complex it should adopt and how to improve upon the existing complexes. This is so because, being cross-cultural, the epistemic practice in question does not proceed blindly according to only one set of accepted maxims, but the culture is free to decide which complex is most suitable for it depending on external circumstances.

3.1. *Alvin Goldman’s social veritistic epistemology*

In *Knowledge in a Social World*, Alvin Goldman (1999) puts forth a conception of social epistemology whose aim is to increase the number of truths in a given society or community. For Goldman, epistemic practices are correct just in case they increase the number of available truths in a society or a community, and incorrect otherwise. His epistemology is veritistic in that truth functions centrally as the aim of knowledge seeking, and it is social because the reference point of the epistemology is to be found, not within the individual knower, but within a society or a community where true beliefs are to be found (1999, pp. 4–5).

It is quite clear that my earlier account of the epistemic practices of the Thai culture runs counter to Goldman's view. I tried to show that there is at least one culture where truth does not assume the central role. In such a culture (e.g. the Thai one), other values—such as continuity of tradition—are put on a higher level than truth, and trump truth in case of conflicts. However, Goldman, while conceding that there may be such a culture, would say that it fails to be veritistically optimal. He might add that the practices of that culture, while possibly interesting from the perspective of cultural anthropology, nonetheless do not meet the definition of 'epistemic'. That is, the practice of putting more value on continuity rather than truth in matters related to belief and justification just changes it from an epistemic practice to a non-epistemic one. Hence, Thai culture, according to Goldman, either does not have the best epistemic practice or does not have an epistemic practice at all.

Consideration of social and cultural continuity as an epistemic value certainly raises the question whether continuity is actually an *epistemic* goal. Why is it not the case that continuity is simply a non-epistemic value of Thai culture that trumps truth when there is a conflict?

It is certainly possible that a culture might decide to live in blissful ignorance, and might value continuity of its way of life over the need to accumulate any true beliefs, while still valuing truth as the *epistemic* goal. However, this is not an accurate description of the Thai culture.

The issue seems to revolve around which conception of knowledge a culture should adopt. If one conceives of knowledge as interpreted by Mulder in his study of Thai culture, namely as a kind of treasure that enhances the social status of anyone who possesses it, then it does seem correct to say that there could be a culture that values continuity over truth as an epistemic goal. This is so because, according to Mulder, Thai culture views knowledge, not as the end result of truth seeking activities, but as such a treasure. The 'treasure' here may indeed be true, but its being true seems to be irrelevant to whether it is taken to be knowledge by members of the Thai culture. If a set of beliefs and practices brings about the desired results, then members of the Thai culture may take that to be knowledge even though the beliefs may not all be true; this is because the desired results here are not always true beliefs. The above hypothetical culture, by contrast, takes truth to be necessary for knowledge, so the difference between it and Thai culture is actually about how they view knowledge.

When introduced to a culture where truth is not taken as the primary epistemic goal, Goldman might say that, since having true beliefs is the most effective method in helping people to get what they want, true beliefs should be given priority to cultural continuity. In which case, the culture in question would do well to adopt the 'Seek truth and avoid error' maxim rather than its traditional one. However, assuming that all people are rational (as indeed we must, following Davidson's (1984) idea that understanding foreign behaviours requires that we assume that the foreigners think and believe largely the same way we do), it seems that there must be a set of reasons subjectively or dispositionally held by members of the culture in support of their acceptance of continuity over truth.³

Epistemologists can certainly analyse and evaluate these sets of reasons, in the same way as ethicists do in the case of cross-cultural ethical reasonings. Comparison of these reasonings is necessary for criticism of the practices of other cultures. The criticism is very important, and cultures should open themselves up to criticisms from others. If someone finds that the epistemic practices of the Thai culture are deficient, then she should try to point out to members of the Thai culture how their conception is

deficient so that they can change their minds. This can be done, for example, by showing that the goals and values cherished by the Thai culture might be better realized had they followed the ‘Seek truth and avoid error’ maxim rather than their traditional one, or that adhering to continuity in all cases would lead to stagnation and unresponsiveness to the changing world.

Since Goldman assumes that all cultures aim at truth as the goal of their epistemic practices, his social veritistic epistemology is ‘acultural’ (because cultural differences do not play any role in his conception) or ‘monocultural’ (because it presupposes that the practices of his own culture and time are the only correct ones). In either case, Goldman’s account implies that cross-cultural epistemic practices are not possible. However, if cross-cultural epistemic practices are to be preferred over monocultural or acultural ones for the reasons above, then Goldman’s account appears too narrow to provide a workable set of epistemic guidelines for a living culture.

I believe that a broader conception of knowledge, which does not take truth as the only aim of inquiry, would do more justice to the large variety of knowledge practices around the world. Appealing to truth only would diminish that variety of practices, resulting in a kind of homogenization of epistemic practices. So, if a variety of cultural practices is desirable (and certainly epistemic practices are parts of culture), then there is a *prima facie* case against homogenization. A variety of cultural practices should at least be maintained since one never knows for certain that one’s current set of beliefs and practices will always be viable in the future. So, if there were homogenization, or if all epistemic practices were monocultural, then there would be nothing to turn to in a possible scenario when the changing circumstances might render the existing practices ineffectual.

In sum, the difference between myself and Goldman is this: Goldman believes that truth is essential to epistemology; I do not. Some other, pragmatic considerations may get into the picture as the primary goal of justifying beliefs rather than truth. It just seems too narrow to insist that truth only should be the primary goal, and the burden is on Goldman to provide an account of why societies should adopt the epistemic practice that takes truth as the only epistemic value.

3.2. *Contingency of goals and maxims*

The intense rate at which exchanges and evaluations of epistemic practices—made possible by new information and communication technologies, most notably the Internet—is currently taking place means that one needs to be careful of the philosophical import of such exchanges. Ideas and information are now flowing across borders and continents at an unprecedented rate. This naturally enhances a culture’s awareness of practices of other cultures, which may well lead to adaptations or modifications of the culture’s own practices, including its epistemic practices.

I have said earlier that cultures can decide on which sets of goals they should adopt and on the maxims that are efficacious in bringing them about. But what are the criteria by means of which cultures so decide? Are there any criteria which cultures can rely on in order that it chooses the right goals and maxims? If a means-end relation obtains between maxims and goals, then the issue becomes which goals are worthwhile for a culture to pursue. However, to think that there is a certain set of goals that a culture should eventually adopt, or that every culture will in the end adopt the same set anyway, would seem to bring in the kind of metaphysics that is hopelessly out of date. Goals for a culture are usually the result of a long experience that the culture

has had in its dealings with both its physical environments and its neighbours. There is a historical reason why Thai culture prefers continuity over truth in its epistemic dealings. This idea of continuity over truth may change, but then the goals of every culture can change due to external or internal circumstances too.

3.3. *Standpoint epistemologies*

In a series of articles and a recent book, Sandra Harding argues for ‘standpoint’ or ‘borderlands’ epistemologies, which hold that epistemological considerations should be based on ‘standpoints’, namely socio-cultural or hierarchical positions that influence one’s epistemological judgements. For Harding, being a woman enables one to take a certain standpoint, which enables one to possess knowledge that is not directly available to men. The same holds for members of minority groups and those in socially disadvantaged positions. The account presented in this paper naturally has quite a lot in common with standpoint epistemologies.

However, my account of cross-cultural epistemic practices does not assume, nor does it argue, that being a member of a certain culture enables one to take to a position that allows one to know something that one would not have known were one not a member of the culture in question. It is true that being a member of a third world culture, for example, puts one in an inferior position (at least economically and in terms of power) to another in a first world culture, and Harding, relying on Hegel’s account of master/slave relation in the *Phenomenology*, would argue that the former knows something that the latter does not. Nonetheless, the point here is that there is nothing inherent in either culture that enables its members to know something exclusively which those in other cultures cannot. The fact that Mulder, a Dutch person, could write a detailed anthropological report on the Thai system of knowledge shows that it is possible for outsiders to gain an adequate understanding of the belief systems and practices of a foreign culture. Moreover, standpoint epistemologists typically do not mention the fact that cultures do intermingle, especially as a result of the Internet. This implies that boundaries between cultures are not as hard and fast that they seem to presuppose.

4. *Conclusion: implications for information science*

Cross-cultural epistemic practices, therefore, should be preferred over their rivals because they would better allow for a critical stance toward one’s own cultural tradition and such a stance is important in revising and improving one’s tradition. Ironically, this kind of practice serves to enhance a culture’s own traditions, such as that of aiming at more truths, better than its rivals. Goldman’s conception should then be supplemented by an account that tells us that there can be some cultures that do not value truth above all else, and such a possibility points to the realization that the goal of getting at truth is always a contingent one. This realization of contingency of one’s own tradition by no means entails that one’s own tradition is in danger of going away. On the contrary, once one realizes that one’s cherished ideals are contingent, one can choose to make a sustained effort in order to preserve them. This is contrasted with the scenario where one believes that one’s traditional ideas are necessary, which may imply that one does not have to do anything to protect them. Therefore, realizing that cultural ideals are

contingent ironically may serve to strengthen those ideals rather than weakening them.

What, then, are the implications for the information professional? Firstly, cross-cultural epistemic practice for the information professional is constituted by the awareness of the diversity of the world's cultures as well as their knowledge practices. The information professional would thus be in a better position to serve her clients and her community by realizing that there are other cultures whose epistemic practices can diverge quite largely from what she is accustomed to. Social epistemology for Jesse Shera is both an empirical account that describes how knowledge is distributed and organized in society, as well as a normative one searching for the optimal condition of how knowledge should be so distributed and organized. Furthermore, Shera himself acknowledges that cultures play a prominent role in how knowledge is organized and distributed, as we have seen. The idea of cross-cultural epistemic practices is thus not a new one. One only needs to consider how consideration of cultures cannot be avoided when one tries to serve the information needs of one's society.

Secondly, realizing that epistemic practice should be cross-cultural also entails that one of the most urgent tasks facing librarians and other information professionals in today's networked world is to locate, identify, preserve, catalogue and make available the many indigenous knowledge systems that are in existence in many local cultures but are rapidly disappearing due to the effects of globalization. For the epistemic practice to be cross-cultural, one obviously needs to be aware of other cultures, but if it were indeed the case that globalization would result in irretrievable loss of many distinct cultures and their epistemic practices, then there would eventually be nothing left to compare one's own culture with. Another reason is that these indigenous knowledge systems could contain potentially very useful information and ideas that can provide seminal insights for others in the world. The situation is analogous to the need to protect the world's biological diversity. If rain forests continue to be destroyed, then some plant species containing cures for, say, AIDS or cancer might be destroyed forever. If these knowledge systems are allowed to disappear, then the consequences could be very serious. Realizing that each culture has something potentially useful for the world, the librarian should take it as one of his most pressing tasks to catalogue and preserve these extant knowledge systems, which are available in graphic records but are largely neglected.

Lastly, cross-cultural epistemic practices also imply that librarians should form networks with their colleagues in other countries and cultures in order to help one another with their tasks. This will prevent the librarian from being isolated. As librarians and other information professionals are charged with the responsibility of organizing and presenting graphic records to the members of their societies, they need to realize that the clients that they serve do not remain within a cultural or a national boundary only. Instead, they are serving the whole world, and the records that are entrusted in their care are not the properties of some agencies only, but their values belong to the world.

Acknowledgement

This paper is part of a research project funded by the Thailand Research Fund, under Grant no. BRG/14/2544. I would like to thank Prof. Vichai Boonsaeng for his

continual encouragement and support. Preliminary ideas leading to this paper were discussed with Mark Tamthai and Nuangnoi Bunyanate, who provided useful feedback. The anonymous reviewers of *Social Epistemology* gave many helpful comments on the many sketches of this paper. I would like especially to thank Don Fallis for his generous and insightful help with successive drafts of the paper.

Notes

1. According to Shera, the term 'social epistemology' was first coined by Shera's own associate Margaret E. Egan (Shera, 1965, p. 7). The first published mention of the term appeared in Shera and Egan (1952); this article was then included in Shera (1965). Later on, Steve Fuller published a book on *Social Epistemology* (1988), where he defines the fundamental question of the field as:

How should the pursuit of knowledge be organized, given that under normal circumstances knowledge is pursued by many human beings, each working on a more or less well-defined body of knowledge and each equipped with roughly the same imperfect cognitive capacities, albeit with varying degrees of access to one another's activities? (Fuller, 1988: 3)

Thus Fuller's and Shera's account share a common feature in that they both look at the role that knowledge plays in society. Shera, however, focuses more on the descriptive aspect of the inquiry than does Fuller. For Fuller, the question is how individuals each of whom pursues their own knowledge agenda could be connected in such a way that knowledge is best utilized in society. For Shera, the question is more on how knowledge is stored, organized and transmitted within society.

2. Another good account of the Thai epistemic practice is Day and Reynolds (2000).
3. This is the gist of Davidson's famous Principle of Charity (see Davidson, 1984).
4. I am not alone in this. Stephen Stich and Richard Rorty are two well-known philosophers who argue that truth should not be the sole aim of inquiry (see Stich, 1990; Rorty, 1998).
5. The main place for an account of standpoint epistemologies is Sandra Harding (1998); see also Harding (1992a, 1992b, 1996).
6. For works on the role of the Internet on intermingling of cultures, see Hongladarom (2000) and Ess (2001). Castells discussed the role of information technology very extensively (1996, 1997, 1998). For an account of a rather pessimistic view on the impact of the Internet on cultures, see Gorniak (2001).
7. My account thus concurs with Don Fallis's. In Fallis (2000), the author argues that the librarian should follow J. S. Mill's advice of collecting all sorts of knowledge, information and beliefs for the reason that some propositions deemed to be false might in fact turn out to be true. Even graphic records of propositions that are patently false are worth keeping because realizing that they are false would be useful as historical lessons or experiences.
8. See, for example, Susantha Goonatilake (1998) and Sandra Harding (1998).

References

- CASTELLS, M., 1996, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell).
- CASTELLS, M., 1997, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
- CASTELLS, M., 1998, *End of Millennium* (Malden, MA: Blackwell).
- DAVIDSON, D., 1984, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- DAY, T. and REYNOLDS, C. J., 2000, Cosmologies, truth regimes, and the state in Southeast Asia. *Modern Asian Studies*, 34, 1–55.
- ESS, C., (ed.), 2001, *Culture, Technology and Communication* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press).
- FALLIS, D., 2000, Veritistic social epistemology and information science. *Social Epistemology*, 14, 305–316.
- FULLER, S., 1988, *Social Epistemology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).
- GOLDMAN, A. R., 1999, *Knowledge in a Social World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- GOONATILAKE, S., 1998, *Toward a Global Science* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).
- GORNIK-KOCIKOWSKA, K., 2001, Computer technology—an invitation to neo-totalitarianism. *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and Computers*, 00, 62–66.
- HARDING, S., 1992a, After the neutrality ideal: science, politics, and 'Strong Objectivity'. *Social Research*, 59, 567–587.
- HARDING, S., 1992b, Rethinking standpoint epistemologies. In L. Alcoff and E. Potter (ed.) *Feminist Epistemologies* (New York: Routledge).

- HARDING, S., 1996, How social disadvantage creates epistemic advantage. In S. Turner ed., *Social Theory and Sociology* (New York: Blackwell).
- HARDING, S., 1998, *Is Science Multicultural?* (Bloomington: IN: Indiana University Press).
- HONGLADAROM, S., 2000, Negotiating the global and the local: how Thai culture co-opts the Internet. *First Monday*, 5.8, Available online: http://firstmonday.org/issues/issue5_8/hongladarom/index.html
- MAFFIE, J., 1995, Towards an anthropology of epistemology. *The Philosophical Forum*, 26, 218–241.
- MULDER, N., 1996, *Inside Thai Society: Interpretations of Everyday Life* (Amsterdam: Pepin Press).
- REYNOLDS, C. J., 1976, Buddhist cosmography in Thai history with special reference to nineteenth-century culture change. *Journal of Asian Studies*, 35, 203–220.
- RORTY, R., 1998, *Truth and Progress: Philosophical Papers, Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- SHERA, J. H., 1965, *Libraries and the Organization of Knowledge* (London: Crosby Lockwood and Son).
- SHERA, J. H., 1970, *Sociological Foundations of Librarianship* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House).
- STICH, S., 1990, *The Fragmentation of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).