FREEDOMS OF SPEECH

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Introduction: Anthropologies of Free Speech

MATEI CANDEA, TARAS FEDIRKO, PAOLO HEYWOOD, AND FIONA WRIGHT

Introduction

A core tenet of liberal political philosophy, and a criterion frequently invoked to distinguish liberal democracies from their political "Others," freedom of speech has in recent years become a focus of extensive and embittered debates within the US and Europe. Critics fear the rise of a "cancel culture" and accuse proponents of "safe spaces," "trigger warnings," and "no-platforming" of challenging freedom of speech. The latter in turn accuse their critics of invoking freedom of speech disingenuously in order to protect established interests. Yet the notion of free speech tends to operate more as an idiom of accusation in these debates than as a focus of sustained analysis in its own right. However much they might disagree about the rights and wrongs of specific cases, participants in these debates tend to assume that, for better or worse, an unlimited aspiration to individual freedom of speech is a distinctive feature of "modern Western liberalism." For some this makes freedom of speech an avatar of a cherished way of life perceived as being under threat. For others this makes appeals to such freedom potentially suspect, insufficiently socially conscious, and culturally parochial – if not an outright ally of neo-liberalism or a reactionary Eurocentrism.

This is where anthropologists can make a distinctive contribution by putting these Euro-American debates about freedom of speech into a broader and richer comparative frame. As Webb Keane (2007, 6) has shown, free speech debates are one instance of a much more widespread phenomenon – that of struggles entailing "moral questions about semiotic form" (see also Keane in this volume). From that perspective, as we shall see below, liberal concerns with freedom of speech emerge as distinctive, but not unique. As philosopher Richard Sorabji (2021) has recently demonstrated, it is possible to construct a much richer and more diverse genealogy for freedom of speech that goes beyond the usual reference points of contemporary Euro-American legal and

philosophical discussion – classical Athens, Milton, John Stuart Mill, the First Amendment of the US Constitution, and resistance to official censorship under twentieth-century state socialism. Sorabji's account revisits these standard references, but in light of precursor and parallel visions of the benefits of freedom of speech, religious dialogue, and philosophical critique, including the edicts of Indian ruler Ashoka in 300 BCE, defences of religious and philosophical freedom in sixth-century Persia and tenth-century Baghdad, the Levellers in seventeenth-century England, Shakespeare's struggles with censorship, and the thought of twentieth-century anti-colonial political figures such as Gandhi.

Crucially, the imaginaries of freedom of speech in this broader landscape are not hermetically sealed from each other but rather intersect and recombine in multiple ways, as Sorabji makes clear. Historian Christopher Bayly (2011, 73) has also shown how, for nineteenth-century Indian liberals arguing for a free press, "Mughal exemplars of free access to authority were invoked to root ideas which were appropriated from European and American debates." The chapters in this volume can be seen as an exploration of the contemporary echoes and traces of this much broader and richly entangled genealogy. As such, they also trouble the idea that concerns about free speech across the world are necessarily a "derivative discourse" (Chatterjee 1986) of Euro-American political thought and ideology, liberal or otherwise. Chapters in part one explore a range of different yet often recombinant traditions: Islamic notions of advice and reasoned criticism, early twentieth-century Vietnamese rethinking of Confucian language norms, Mormon truth-speaking in the contemporary American right, and subversive plays with grammar and vocabulary in contemporary Russia. At the same time, this comparative outlook reminds us that visions of freedom of speech, in Western liberal settings as elsewhere, are not mere philosophical abstractions but rather thickly rooted in understandings of the person and ideologies of language, grounded and contested in daily practices, institutions, and ongoing historical power struggles (Fedirko 2021; Fedirko, Samanani, and Williamson 2021). This in turn means that celebrations of freedom of speech can and often do entail, enable, or accompany forms of silencing and oppression.

If anthropology can help us reframe the topic of freedom of speech, the converse is also true. Reflecting on freedom of speech poses a productive challenge for anthropology itself as currently constituted. It is striking, for instance, that the single most prominent anthropological text with free speech in its title, Asad et al.'s *Is Critique Secular? Blasphemy, Injury and Free Speech* (2013), in practice ends up focusing on the multiple ways in which speech is limited and curtailed, even in "liberal" settings. This is an important point, of course, echoed in a number of contributions to this volume, and we explore its ramifications at some length below. Yet by itself, the conclusion that free speech is far from unlimited even in putatively liberal settings falls short of that book's stated goal of exploring "the shape that free speech takes at different times and in different places" (19).

The authors in fact provide us with a comparative anthropology of silencing rather than with a comparative anthropology of free speech.

This failure, we argue, is not idiosyncratic – it reflects something structural about anthropology. Indeed the discipline has a much stronger record and toolkit for thinking of the impossibility of free speech than for thinking about freedom of speech itself (cf. Laidlaw 2002). Anthropologists have demonstrated the extensive determinations, from grammar through sociolinguistics and into language ideologies, that are entailed in any speech act; they have pointed to the pervasive and sometimes productive nature of silencing in social life; and they have shown the multiple ways in which authoritative speech is entangled in and produced by controls and limitations of other kinds of expression. Anthropology has given us many reasons, in other words, for challenging the idea that speech can ever be "free." This also reflects many anthropologists' opposition to the perceived hegemony of liberalism in their home societies, and the Romantic and republican sources of much anthropological thought. It thus requires a particular effort of the anthropological imagination and ethnographic sensibility to attend to the persistent fact that many of the people anthropologists work with value, desire, or imagine something like freedom of speech as a particular goal and mourn, fear, or protest its absence. This is the challenge taken up by this volume: to consider freedom of speech, in its many forms, as something more than a mere ideology or a mirage, while remaining critically attuned to the distinctive assumptions it entails about the nature of language, and about speaking subjects and the polities they inhabit.

This is another way of saying that an anthropology of freedom of speech remains to be built. As the title of this volume suggests, this would in our view need to be an anthropology of *freedoms* of speech – plural. In this, we are following the lead of James Laidlaw's (2002, 2014) efforts to pluralize anthropological understandings of freedom. Taking the counterpoint of reductive critiques of "Western liberal freedom," Laidlaw begins by laying out the variety of kinds and types of freedom in Western philosophical sources: some scholars understand freedom as a negative absence of constraint, or, quite differently, as a positive characterization of the capacities of a fully free human subject (Berlin 1969); others link it to a vision of collective political independence and non-domination (Q. Skinner 2016); others still cast freedom in terms of a reflective attitude towards the self (Foucault 1984). There are further multiplicities within these multiplicities: where freedom is characterized as autonomy, this in turn can take many forms, both in the degree of autonomy that is required (from total autarchy to merely partial detachment) and in the way the limits to autonomy are understood – are they linked to external conditions or to the incomplete integration of the self? (Laidlaw 2014, 165–6). Through his exploration, Laidlaw reminds us that not all kinds of freedom are, strictly speaking, liberal; nor is liberalism tantamount to "the Western ideology," as is often

implied (Fedirko, Samanani, and Williamson 2021). As Taras Fedirko (2021, 471) has argued, liberalism has been too often assumed to be a shared "background of 'Western culture' against which ethnographers examine the world of ethnographic difference." This has stood as an obstacle to ethnographic exploration of the multiplicity of liberalisms, and to ethnographic appreciation of the relation between liberal and non-liberal political ideologies and social formations in and beyond Euro-America.

Keeping this multiplicity in view matters for comparative purposes. Having multiplied "freedom" internally, Laidlaw begins to suggest how this might enable us in turn to expand our comparative imaginary in relation to non–Euro-American understandings of freedom. Russian visions of freedom as collective unity (Humphrey 2007), the hierarchical and gendered autonomy of the honourable Bedouin self (Abu-Lughod 1986), sensitivity about ascribing thoughts to others among the Korowai (Stasch 2008a), material independence achieved through "deliberate dependencies" in Malawi (Englund 2006), the complex symbolic and material strategies Hungarian Rom deploy to produce a collective space of disengagement from wider society (M. Stewart 1997) – these and other ethnographic instances can all be considered alongside each other in an expansive lateral comparative exploration of freedom.

If we cast each of the cases above as the Other of a putatively unitary liberal or "Western freedom," they will eventually collapse into one another as instances of the same. But if we begin, as Laidlaw does, by highlighting the multiplicities internal to such visions of freedom, this also allows non-Western instances to be more than a mere counterprojection of some single Western form. Consequently, this also allows us to comprehend the varieties of liberal freedom in their parochial particularity. It is true that some of the anthropologists cited in the previous paragraph do deploy a frontal comparative device (cf. Candea in this volume) to cast their ethnography as some kind of alternative to "the" liberal vision of freedom. But Laidlaw observes that in each case the key elements identified as characteristic of liberal freedom are slightly different. As a result, the emphasis in the counterpoint ethnographic accounts is slightly different too. We begin to envisage the possibility of multiple kinds of freedom, beyond a liberal/non-liberal, Western/non-Western contrast. In particular, the various Western visions of freedom surveyed by Laidlaw do not all hinge on the familiar contrast between individual freedom and its social constraints. In certain versions of positive liberty, of freedom as non-domination, or indeed as a reflective relation to the self, freedom is achieved through, not against, relations and limits. The same is true beyond nominally "Western" settings. Some of the examples Laidlaw evokes could be described as dissolving the individual/society binary, while others rely on it substantively. Venkatesan (2023), in her useful recent review of the anthropology of freedom, exemplifies Laidlaw's point by showing how differently invocations of freedom can

animate political and ethical projects in three contemporary Euro-American settings: among right-wing free-market libertarians, "freegan" dumpster divers, and adepts of Free/Open Source Software. As Candea discusses at greater length in chapter 1 (see also Candea, forthcoming), such lateral expansions of our comparative imaginary take us beyond the us/them contrasts and the tired polarities between individual and society, abstraction and concreteness, freedom and its limits.

In this spirit, the present volume brings together leading anthropologists and fresh new voices in the discipline to consider freedom of speech in a wide comparative lens. From Ireland to India, from Palestine to West Papua, from contemporary Java to early twentieth-century Britain, and from colonial Vietnam to the contemporary United States, the volume's broad comparative frame interrogates the classic vision of a singular "Western liberal tradition" of freedom of speech, exploring both its internal multiplicities and paying attention to alternative understandings of the relationship between speech, freedom, and constraint in other times and places. The chapters engage with but also radically expand the register of topics that are habitually associated with discussions of freedom of speech. Familiar topics, such as campus speech codes, defamation, and press freedom, emerge in a strikingly new light, while unexpected ones, such as therapy, gift-giving, and martyrdom, provide surprising insights into what freedom of speech might be.

The volume is divided into four parts. Part one frames the discussion through a comparative consideration of the very idea of "traditions" of freedom of speech. Chapters in this section provide a number of concrete ethnographic and historical cases that highlight the internal diversity of the so-called liberal tradition of free speech and consider its historical interweaving with and differentiation from a range of other religious and secular visions: ancient Greek *parrhesia* and its various historical reinventions, Islamic piety, Confucian and anti-Confucian visions of the self, and Mormon spirituality. Parts two, three, and four each then take on a key theme in relation to which visions and practices of freedom of speech are deployed. Part two explores the diverse ways in which publics and counter-publics are constituted, challenged, and unmade in and around discussions of freedom of speech. Chapters in part three examine the intersection of concerns with freedom of speech and questions of history, haunting, and memorialization. Finally, part four pinpoints the unexpected ways in which theories and practices of freedom of speech intersect with therapeutic imaginaries, aimed both at suffering persons and at somehow misaligned collectives. This introduction follows the structure of these four parts, bringing the contributions into dialogue before drawing some broader conclusions about the anthropology of freedom of speech. As a preliminary to this discussion, however, the next section provides a synthetic guide to some of the main genres of existing literature on freedom of speech and explores the

existing conceptual and empirical resources anthropologists have in order to examine the varied ways in which free speech is imagined, valued, and practised as a lived ideal in necessarily compromised and imperfect conditions.

The Story So Far …

While anthropologists may not have had a great deal to say about freedom of speech, much has been written on the topic in adjacent fields. Popular and academic writing on freedom of speech has proliferated exponentially over the past decades, such that even the task of giving a broad-brush overview of the shape of this literature is daunting. Nevertheless – braving the dangers of simplification in order to help orient the reader – one might suggest that there are two broad yet overlapping genres in contemporary academic writing on freedom of speech: the first sits at the intersection of history, the humanities, and cultural studies and examines specific practices of free speaking and censorship in particular contexts; the second spans legal theory, philosophy, and political science and engages free speech as a political, moral, or judicial principle, often in dialogue, critical or otherwise, with the liberal philosophical canon. They are distinct yet not mutually exclusive. For instance, Stanley Fish's famous book, *There's No Such Thing as Free Speech, and It's a Good Thing, Too* (1994), belongs squarely to both genres, while another foundational work, Robert Post's (2006) collection on *Censorship and Silencing*, self-consciously brings them into conversation with each other. These two overlapping academic genres in turn shade into and provide the more systematic underpinnings for a range of more self-consciously polemical public arguments for and against restrictions on speech, often commenting on specific cases or "scandals" and seeking to document and address a broader perceived crisis. These have come from various points on the political spectrum and range from tweets, to op-eds, to full-length books.

One Path through the Literature: History and Cultural Studies of Free Speech and Censorship in Context

In the first academic genre, historical studies of censorship, publication, and freedom of speech (Colclough 2005; Darnton 2015; Gilbert 2013) rub shoulders with the body of critique Matthew Bunn (2015) has dubbed "new censorship theory" (see Candea 2019b; Fedirko 2020; Heywood 2019). Associated with a range of scholars at the intersection of philosophy and the social sciences, such as Michel Foucault (1976), Pierre Bourdieu (1991), and Judith Butler (1997),

> New Censorship Theory has overturned a paradigmatic model in which censorship constitutes an extraordinary, repressive intervention into the default norm of

> "free speech," a violation of a natural freedom usually, if not exclusively, undertaken by agents of the state. In place of the dichotomy of free speech and censorship, New Censorship Theory offers a conception of censorship as a ubiquitous, even necessary part of communication. (Bunn 2015, 27)

Rooted in post-structuralism, new censorship theory nevertheless builds, as Bunn perceptively notes, on a much older tradition within Western political theory, namely Marxist critiques of the liberal public sphere. Marx and his followers, such as Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, have long critiqued the liberal claim that the lifting of state censorship opens up a zone of free and unimpeded communication. Many, they noted, are still de facto excluded from this public sphere mainly, but not only, along lines of class, education, and wealth; nor is this supposedly free "marketplace of ideas" without its own subtler determinations, silences, and exclusions. The formal equality of the bourgeois civil society, Marxists argued, conceals exploitation; state censorship is exercised "not at the *expense* of civil society but rather at its *behest*" (Bunn 2015, 34; original emphasis). New censorship theory builds on these insights to articulate a more general sense that censorship is pervasive and indeed (like power more generally in the Foucauldian view) inherently productive and fundamentally necessary to any act of meaning-making. Bunn makes the interesting observation that what unites these authors is less a specific vision of censorship (the hyperextension of the term in this literature is precisely the point) than a shared scepticism over free speech. "From this perspective," Bunn (2015, 28) notes, "the intellectual development from Marxism to the post-structuralism of New Censorship Theory appears much more gradual, even linear, than has hitherto been fully appreciated."

These arguments are broadly familiar to anthropologists, and we will find elements of them deployed throughout these pages. Indeed, while some of these arguments – such as Fish's (1994) claim that there is "no such thing as free speech," because all speech is made possible by silencing, which is itself a matter of power and politics – may still seem counterintuitive or perhaps even shocking to an uninitiated readership, they have become, as we argued above, broadly part of the anthropological subconscious. Convincing contemporary anthropologists that "free speech" is not a simple reality out there is hardly difficult. The real challenge for the discipline at this point is to figure out what, given that speech is clearly never "free" in any simple sense, people might mean by that term in the first place.

In addressing this challenge, some of the contributors to our volume draw on one author in particular: Michel Foucault. Though a prime mover of new censorship theory, Foucault also explicitly sought to explore the genealogy of "free speech" as a virtue. Foucault's late work on classical self-cultivation investigates how people work to make themselves into particular kinds of

virtuous subjects. Despite its individualist overtones, self-cultivation does not occur in isolation. It is something done in a particular cultural and historical context, and in relation to others. In his final two lecture series at the Collège de France, Foucault (2010, 2011) sought to clarify this relationship between subject and context by turning to a very specific aspect of self-cultivation in the ancient world. He believed that then – as now – there was a "necessary other person" involved in work on the self. These are types of people whose role it is to help us decipher and establish the "truth" of our selves (e.g., teachers, doctors, psychoanalysts, jurists, policemen). In the classical world, unlike ours, however, Foucault thought that this "necessary other" was not an institutionally defined position. Rather, it was predicated on the possession of a particular virtue, namely *parrhesia*, translated in the title of one of the lecture series as "the courage of truth." To be the right sort of person to help others work on themselves, one had to possess the ability to speak freely and frankly, regardless of risk or consequence.

The history of this particular virtue in the ancient world is varied. For instance, there is what we might think of as "political" *parrhesia*, characteristic of pre-Socratic Athens. This is "free speech" in which what is at stake are questions of the government of others. Later, and exemplified most obviously in Socrates, we find a virtuous "free speech" that is much more concerned with "ethics" and with the government of the self. Socrates eschews the political field to focus instead on the conduct of individuals and to measure the gap between the way they think they ought to live and the way they actually do. Later still we find these modalities combined in the philosophy of the Cynics, who sought both to live their own lives as bare truth (naked and in the open) and to missionize this life to those around them, to make their lives speak as examples to others (Foucault 2011).

Like any concept, *parrhesia* is situated in a particular context. While Foucault's own account ends, broadly speaking, in the classical period, tracing the later history of *parrhesia* gives us some insights into the ways in which later liberal visions of freedom of speech have cannibalized and reinvented their supposed "classical roots." As Candea discusses in chapter 1, historian David Colclough (2005) argues, for instance, that classical *parrhesia* served as one of the sources for imagining freedom of speech in seventeenth-century England – the period that also gave us some of the classic sources of liberal defences of freedom of speech, such as Milton's *Areopagitica*, or the works of John Locke. Somewhat ironically, however, Colclough notes that *parrhesia* by this point was primarily a figure of rhetoric. Rhetorical manuals drew on examples from speeches by classical Greek and Roman orators that consisted of prefacing one's speech by warning that one's position was controversial, daring, and likely to offend. For seventeenth-century English commentators, "*parrhesia*" as a rhetorical figure therefore posed an inherent problem of sincerity. It could be a genuine warning and apology for speech that was necessary but might offend. Equally, it could be merely a cynical way to flatter an audience by

delivering, as if they were surprising or extreme, views that the speaker knew were perfectly conventional and likely to gain broad assent in any case.

Colclough notes that the debates around *parrhesia* were only one among the cultural sources of seventeenth-century English discussions of the value of free speech. Others included stories from the lives of Christian martyrs who had continued to speak the truth of their faith in the face of torture and death, and the legal prerogatives of unrestricted speech that applied (in principle at least) to parliamentary discussions. Colclough's and Foucault's accounts point to the complex, diverse, and contested genealogy of liberal visions of freedom of speech – a point further developed in part one of this volume.

Anthropologists have used Foucault's discussion of *parrhesia* to ask comparative questions about the ways in which freedom of speech is understood and valued in various contexts today. Dominic Boyer (2013), for instance, has suggested that some contemporary political movements based on satire, such as Iceland's iconoclastic "Best Party" – a joke political party that eventually achieved electoral success – may resemble aspects of ancient *parrhesia*. On the other hand, Harri Englund (2018) has pointed to the dangers of assuming that *parrhesia* is portable beyond its own specific context. In Finnish talk radio, he argues, what might look like "parrhesiastic" speech on the part of individual callers is in fact a process carefully cultivated by the show's hosts, an arrangement of multiple voices, rather than any individual "speaking truth to power" (see also Englund in this volume). As with many concepts, there is probably little to be gained by arguing over exactly how transposable the precise details of classical *parrhesia* are or are not. The point is rather that one can ask of any context questions similar to those Foucault was asking about ancient Greece, or Colclough about early Stuart England: What is it about "free" or "direct" speech that people value when they value it? To what ends is it directed? What role does it play in relation to the broader system of ethics in which it exists? How is speaking freely supposed to affect one's relationship to oneself and to others? Who is assumed to have the right or duty to do so? And what does it take to be heard (cf. Lempert in this volume)?[1] As we shall see below, these questions are at the heart of many of the chapters in this volume.

1 From this perspective, if *parrhesia* serves as a useful concept for exploring the ways in which people value free speech in relation to themselves and to others, it may be worth returning to another classical Greek term to highlight the setting, context, and audience that make it possible to be heard. In the works of Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Xenophon, *isegoria* signified "freedom of speech" in the sense of the possibility opened up by Athenian democracy for any citizen to come forward and be heard (Foucault 2010; Bejan 2020; Rathnam 2023). By contrast to the tyrant's reduction of other speakers to silence, *isegoria* established what one might think of as an equality of opportunity to speak, albeit an equality that was of course radically limited since Athenian citizens were exclusively free men (but not women or slaves).

Another Path through the Literature: Freedom of Speech as a Principle in Legal and Philosophical Scholarship

The second academic genre may be less familiar to many readers of this book. Situated at the intersection of legal scholarship, philosophy, and political science, this genre seeks to elucidate core justifications (and establish proper limits) for freedom of speech. In this literature, much of which remains primarily focused on the US context and the First Amendment, arguments for free speech stemming from a particular Euro-American canon (Milton, Mill, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., etc.) are confronted with critiques by feminist and antiracist scholars against the background of a consideration of concrete legal cases and hypothetical "trolley problems." It is beyond the scope of this introduction to map out all of the arguments and controversies in this extensive literature (MacKinnon and Dworkin 1997; Passavant 2002; interested readers might also begin to pull the threads of these debates in Stone and Schauer 2021b; Waldron 2014). From the perspective of an anthropology of freedom of speech, however, one of the most interesting aspects of this literature can be cast as an ethnographic observation: it highlights the diversity of normative arguments for freedom of speech already present in the Euro-American, "liberal" canon. This literature distinguishes at least three canonical ways of arguing for freedom of speech in the liberal tradition (Barendt 2005; see also Schauer 1982; Stone and Schauer 2021b).

The argument from truth – popularly associated with John Stuart Mill – turns on the idea that protections from the imposition of orthodoxy by the state or other social pressures are the most effective means of ensuring that truth can be collectively discovered through debate and error eliminated. This much-caricatured vision of a "marketplace of ideas" is often imagined as the main or only argument in the liberal tradition, but there are two equally if not more influential arguments that have also been made for freedom of speech in the same tradition. Arguments from democracy link freedom of speech – including the right to critique and protest one's government – to the possibility for and legitimacy of democratic self-government, and arguments from autonomy see in freedom of speech a crucial means of self-development for individual persons and collectives and a fundamental aspect of their (individual and collective) dignity. These different justifications of freedom of speech rely on different versions or visions of what persons, polities, and language are, what matters about them, and the proper relation between them. Furthermore, each of these justifications has been substantively countered and debated, leading to a host of countervisions and counterproposals (Hornsby et al. 2011; Langton 1993; MacKinnon 1985; Waldron 2014).

This diversity is a useful reminder for anthropologists, who as we noted above have too often tended to treat "liberal freedom" as a singular form, a

convenient foil for accounts of "other" forms of freedom (e.g., Mahmood 2005; cf. Fedirko, Samanani, and Williamson 2021). The failure to register the range and variety of visions and versions of freedom within liberal traditions is also an impediment to proper comparative consideration of alternatives elsewhere. This point is explored at greater length by Matei Candea in chapter 1. For the sake of this introduction, however, one key distinction is worth outlining: namely, Isaiah Berlin's contrast between negative freedom – a "freedom from" – characterized as an absence of external constraint, and positive freedom – a "freedom to" – characterized as an actual capacity to undertake certain actions (Berlin 1969; and see Humphrey in this volume). Much of the legal and philosophical scholarship above focuses on negative freedom from legal or other constraints. Some of it, however, particularly arguments centring on the importance of autonomy, dignity, and human flourishing, open up onto the question of a positive freedom to speak. The latter is a rather more ambitious, expansive, and perhaps problematic notion – it does, however, open up a range of fascinating comparative questions by linking freedom of speech to a potentially unlimited variety of visions of human flourishing, as we shall see particularly in the discussion of part three of this volume.

Another important axis of diversity highlighted by this body of legal-philosophical literature concerns the nature and meaning of speech. This literature shows that while representationalist ideology (see Keane 2007, 2009, and in this volume) is indeed an important resource in liberal defences of freedom of speech, it is not the only one. Debates over hate speech and pornography in particular attest to the extent to which the performative and social aspects of language, far from being invisible in these liberal discussions, are front and centre in them. The thought that liberal defences of freedom of speech rely on the strange idea that words are not really actions (Fish 1994) is a crude oversimplification (see Candea, forthcoming). In fact, as Frederick Schauer (1982) perceptively notes, it is precisely *because* speech is understood to have real and harmful effects that a distinctive argument can or needs to be made about its protection under law. More broadly, Schauer has noted how far the word "speech" in discussions of freedom of speech differs from ordinary uses of the word, such that participants in the above discussions often implicitly accept that some instances of verbal behaviour (such as promises, advertisements, or witness statements) do not count as "speech" for the purposes of these discussions, while some instances of non-verbal behaviour (writing, obviously, but also drawing, hand gestures, or flag burning) do. The "speech" in free speech thus sometimes seems to evoke communication, at other times expression, or even something as broad as semiosis – yet, in each case with some quite specific exceptions. Philosophers such as Schauer feel the need to resolve such definitional questions from the outset. From an anthropological perspective, however, this variety and uncertainty is an ethnographic datum: the diversity

of visions and versions covered by the word "speech" (and indeed "freedom") is, for us, not a definitional issue to be resolved but the starting point of further investigation.

In sum, even within the limited frame of liberal legal and philosophical discourse around freedom of speech, an anthropologically informed exploration can identify a variety of implicit and explicit understandings of how persons, knowledge, and politics are made and unmade through speech. This diversity highlights all the more clearly what this literature does share, however, including most obviously perhaps a primary focus on individuals as the main units of analysis and ethical concern – an area in which anthropologists are likely to be able to make some productive comparative disruptions. Nevertheless, the internal variety of this literature reminds us that an anthropology of freedom of speech can already be a comparative project even before it leaves the "familiar" spectrum of liberal Euro-American imaginaries.

Language, Traditions, and Comparisons

Anthropologists have already begun to make some contributions to the discussions above, and part one of this book picks up and draws together existing threads of anthropological discussions on freedom of speech to map new perspectives and directions.

The main sustained anthropological explorations of the question of freedom of speech to date have all focused on recent debates around religious and secular representation and, more specifically, the case of the "Danish cartoon controversy" (Asad et al. 2013; Favret-Saada 2016; Keane 2009; Candea, forthcoming). This controversy, in which satirical representations of the Prophet Muhammad sparked outrage and violence, was a natural entry point into the subject of freedom of speech for anthropologists because of the wealth of material in the anthropology of religion focusing on comparable disputes about the morality and politics of speaking, silencing others, or staying silent oneself, or of representing and stopping others from representing. Such disputes arose, for instance, in the struggles of seventeenth-century Quakers in England to separate out the word of God from everyday language as a "thing of the flesh" (Bauman 1983). The Quakers' project included a wholesale repudiation of accepted forms of politeness and honorific titles as insincere words that glorify the earthly person – a practice that exposed Quakers to violence from offended interlocutors (see also Sidnell in this volume). The moral and political stakes of speech were similarly high in missionary encounters in non-Western contexts. For instance, Webb Keane (2007, 176–9) details the struggles between Calvinist missionaries and followers of *marapu* (Sumbanese ancestral ritual) in the Dutch East Indies (modern Indonesia) about how to address spiritual entities. The Calvinists condemned the *marapu* followers' uses of traditional ritual

formulae as a violation of the "proper" norm of speaking sincerely to God in one's own words. Conversely, *marapu* followers decried a form of hubris in Calvinist prayer aimed directly from the individual to the godhead without the mediation of ancestral formulae.

Considering liberal debates and concerns over freedom of speech alongside these cases points to the deep cultural assumptions about the nature and effects of language and representation that inform all of these moral struggles over semiotic form – "language ideologies" (Silverstein 1976), or more broadly, "semiotic ideologies" (Keane 2007). This in turn allowed anthropologists to gain a distinctive vantage point on what was at stake in debates such as the Danish cartoon controversy. Keane, for instance, argued that

> the classic [liberal] defence of freedom of expression draws, in part, on a semiotic ideology that takes words and pictures to be vehicles for the transmission of opinion or information among otherwise autonomous and unengaged parties and the information they bear to be itself so much inert content more or less independent of the activity of representation. (2009, 58)

While we have argued above that anthropologists may wish to nuance this characterization (see also Candea in this volume; Candea, forthcoming), it remains a powerful way of framing liberal contextualizations. The semiotic ideology identified by Keane is what enables liberal commentators to dismiss Muslims offended by cartoons of the Prophet as committing a category error, and one that designates them, furthermore, as insufficiently "modern" in their continued attachment to the transcendent power of "mere" images (Brown, Butler, and Mahmood 2013, xiii). But as anthropologists such as Talal Asad (2013) have been at pains to point out, liberal freedom of speech also has well-defined limits, for instance in respect of patents, copyright, or pornography. These "liberal" limits point to the extent to which liberal freedom of speech is premised on and limited by notions of property and ownership – ownership of one's texts, ideas, or body. One might add that hate speech laws show that modern liberals do seem quite concerned with the capacity of words to do harm, at least in some contexts (Butler 1997; Heywood 2019). And that contemporary laws of libel or insult in places like France and Germany have a genealogy that links them to honour codes, which many sociologists imagined to be extinct in "modernity" (Candea 2019a; Whitman 2000). While such comparisons may occasionally sound as if they are trying to score points by showing that liberals are not as liberal as they think, at its best this work provides a more subtle understanding, rather than a mere deconstruction, of aspirations to freedom of speech, liberal or otherwise. The point, as Asad (2013, 29) puts it, is that "the shape that free speech takes at different times and in different places [reflects] different structures of power and subjectivity."

That being said stark contrasts between "Western/liberal" and "Muslim" language ideologies, while providing a useful critical intervention on the Danish cartoon controversy, downplay the diversity of understandings within each of these ensembles and the connections across them (see, in this volume, Bhojani and Clarke; Candea). While this diversity is explicitly acknowledged by the anthropologists who draw these contrasts (Brown, Butler, and Mahmood 2013, viii; Keane 2009, 57), there is nevertheless a tendency for characterizations cast in binary form to run away with themselves, despite the best efforts of their authors to prevent this (see Candea in this volume). As we noted above, a distinctive aspect of the present collection, in this regard, is the way its contributions collectively unpick the purported singularity of liberal ideas of freedom of speech and their implied difference from what lies elsewhere.

Matei Candea's opening contribution in this volume sets the tone for this endeavour by calling on anthropologists to go beyond this binary or "frontal" form of contrast. Pointing to the fractal and iterative nature of such distinctions between "us" and "them," Candea shows how easy it is for even the most complex varieties of such arguments to fall back on some variant of the simple and unpersuasive idea that "the West" is dominated by an impoverished linguistic ideology of abstract individualism, while "the rest" understand the reality of the relational, affective, and contextual ties that bind people together in communities (an understanding, happily, that anthropologists share; see Heywood in this volume). Taking the notion of "liberal free speech" as his foil, Candea shows that far from being a monolithic and homogenous "ideology," appeals to freedom of speech in European and American settings are in fact enormously heterogenous and internally diverse, both historically and ethnographically. Ancient Athenian notions of *parrhesia* were different in crucial and fundamental ways from those of early Stuart England (Colclough 2005), just as they are different from imaginaries of free speech at work in a contemporary Finnish radio show (Englund 2018a). These "lateral" comparisons, which are not built on an underlying opposition between "liberal" and "non-liberal" freedom, not only allow for a more realistic and fine-grained account of what passes as the former but also allow what passes as the latter to become more than just a counterposition to whatever are taken to be "our" ideas about free speech.

Webb Keane's contribution in chapter 2 is similarly wide-ranging in scale and focus, examining instances of semiotic transgression from name taboos to blasphemy and pornography. Keane shows how attention to the pragmatics and metapragmatics of such cases reveals them to be far more complex than any simple struggle over "freedom" or "censorship," often involving clashing linguistic or semiotic ideologies, yet in a far more nuanced and subtle sense than any simple contrast between "us" and "them." Keane shows how debates about what can or cannot be said are usually not simply reducible to the dichotomy of "society" or "context" versus "the individual," but are very often precisely

about what is and is not the context at issue, and who does or does not get to decide that question.

Jack Sidnell's contribution (chapter 3) zooms in on the very particular context of early twentieth-century Vietnamese arguments over language reform. Yet out of this very particular context Sidnell manages to accomplish the feat of bringing to ethnographic life what many might see as the "abstract" or "context-free" liberal ideology of free speech. He achieves this by showing how a specific understanding of "freedom," as articulated by poet and journalist Phan Khôi, among others, relied on the idea that the Confucian language norms then dominant – such as, for example, name taboos – inhibited the moral development of the autonomous person. What we see here, in other words, is not a "liberal freedom of speech" that *assumes* the existence of autonomous individuals using signs simply to express and represent their ideas, but a variant of one that seeks precisely to *create* such individuals by modifying the ways in which language works. Like Keane's chapter, in other words, Sidnell's shows how the acceptance or rejection of linguistic forms has real and ontological effects; and like Candea's, it takes us beyond debates over whether or not freedom of speech "exists" by showing how people sought to produce it in one particular linguistic context, and sought to do so precisely by transforming that context itself.

In chapter 6, Paolo Heywood takes us to a different setting in which actors seek a measure of freedom from a certain sort of linguistic context. The inhabitants of the Italian town of Predappio have to contend with the fact that their town is known and reviled across Italy as Mussolini's birthplace, that it became and remains a showcase of fascist architecture under the rule of the Duce, and that it more recently has become a centre of annual pilgrimage for neo-fascists from across Italy and beyond. Navigating past the obvious – the ways in which neo-fascists claim to be expressing their "freedom of speech" when they congregate in Predappio – Heywood focuses on the more subtle and ambivalent ways in which Predappio's full-time residents seek to negotiate some freedom from the oppressive burden of living in *that* town. Whereas the association between Predappio and Fascism seems blindingly obvious to outsiders, Heywood traces the ways in which Predappiesi insert a measure of scepticism into their everyday talk about Fascism. Many historical Fascists in Predappio – even unto the originator of Fascism, Mussolini himself – can be recast as self-serving opportunists, as can the shopkeepers selling fascist souvenirs today. Others are seen to have been motivated by family loyalty rather than ideology. As for the visitors, they are described in Predappio as "nostalgics," their Fascism thereby recast as somewhat risible, or reduced and scaled down to mere paraphernalia and costume. In describing such "everyday scepticism," Heywood returns to Ludwig Wittgenstein's influential critiques of sceptical speech as "language on holiday" – "language that is 'free' … in

the sense of being somehow unmoored or divorced from its proper context, not doing the job it usually does" (Heywood, this volume, p. 133). Language on holiday, for Wittgenstein, is the polar opposite of "ordinary language," and this contrast casts a long shadow also on anthropological commitments to the everyday. These are the very commitments that, as we argued at the outset of this introduction, make talk of "freedom of speech" seem like an abstract and uninteresting fiction to so many anthropologists, whose gaze is fixed on the many ways in which "real, everyday" speech is structured, framed, and determined. By showing how Predappiesi work to make scepticism ordinary, to insert a measure of freedom into their everyday speech by "untether[ing] Fascism from any real world referent" (p. 146), Heywood self-consciously seeks to unsettle these Wittgensteinian and anthropological distinctions, and to make a space for another kind of "freedom of speech" within the everyday.

If in Sidnell's and Heywood's chapters we find instances of the heterogeneity of liberal ideas of free speech (and one in a non-Western context), in Ali-Reza Bhojani and Morgan Clarke's contribution (chapter 4) we find a very similar point made about Islamic ideas of orthodoxy, speech, and critique. Drawing on a more comparative essay of Asad's (1993) than that cited in Candea's chapter, they point to the crucial role "advice" or "reasoned criticism" plays in some version of Islamic theology, and they note that while Asad does emphasize the differences between this and a "Western," Kantian version of critique, there are in fact many classical assumptions shared between them, particularly with regard to notions of speech as a tool of moral instruction (as in the idea of *parrhesia*). Echoing Keane's chapter, Bhojani and Clarke suggest that it is increasingly untenable to imagine linguistic ideologies as mapping on to distinct forms of public space, whether "liberal" or "Islamic."

Extending these reflections on secular versus religious forms of free speech, chapter 5 sketches out the possibility that a faith-based commitment to the importance of speaking the truth has inflected the responses of some Mormon American politicians to the presidency of Donald Trump. Noting that several of Trump's staunchest critics in Congress are Mormon, Fenella Cannell emphasizes the importance that individual choice has to Mormon understandings of responsibility and salvation and therefore suggests that in the Mormon case, far from constituting an authoritarian or censorious obstacle to expression, organized religion can generate a commitment to forms of what we might see as parrhesiastic speech.

Concluding this first part of the book, Caroline Humphrey's contribution (chapter 7) returns us to the theme of language, focussing, like Sidnell's chapter, on a particular linguistic context, this time Russia. Humphrey argues that while "freedom of speech" in the straightforward sense of the term is virtually at the point of extinction in contemporary Russia, Russians, like Phan Khôi in Sidnell's account, are nevertheless able to exert some agency within the sphere

of language itself. Following Ingunn Lunde (2009; but see also Keane in this volume), Humphrey refers to a "performative metalanguage" – oblique and indirect speech that plays with the meanings of signs and the rules of grammar and writing, breaking certain linguistic taboos and so on – through which Russians are able to express controversial ideas, or simply to signal their opposition to conformism. Here, the "freedom" of "freedom of speech" is not the "negative freedom" of absence of censorship, but a certain delimited "positive freedom" of the ability to express thoughts and ideas from an independent subject position.

Taken together, the contributions to this first part of the book open up some of the most fundamental questions about freedom of speech in relation to language, context, and the individual, and they show how fruitful an anthropological approach to such questions can be by exploring them in relation to particular religious and national contexts. Once we move beyond the idea that our task is to situate any given instance on a scale in which individually autonomous free speech forms one pole and collective or contextual censoriousness forms the other, we see just how widely varied are people's own reflections on that very distinction.

Rethinking the Political Economy of Free Speech

Chapters in part two continue to "provincialize" and multiply freedom of speech (Chakrabarty 2008; Fedirko, Samanani, and Williamson 2021, 382) by focusing in particular on the relationship between the value of speech and its imagined freedom across a range of polities, liberal-democratic and otherwise. Collectively, these chapters demonstrate that what people take "expression" to mean, how they understand what "expression" is, does, and is worth – morally, politically, or economically – has consequences for their understandings and practices of expressive freedom. The five contributors to this section examine how people – from West Papua to Ireland, from Zambia to Hungary – seek to render their speech effective in eliciting a desired transactional response from economically powerful others (Rupert Stasch); deal with their social critique of neo-liberal urban development being incorporated into the very forces of value creation it seeks to challenge (Natalie Morningstar); find value in "bullshit" radio testimonies (Harri Englund); and challenge the Israeli state's attempts to devalue or otherwise incapacitate their critical expression on Palestine (Amahl Bishara). Each chapter highlights a different aspect of speech's valuation to suggest that the meaning of freedom in relation to speech, even in societies that have hitherto had little encounter with liberal models of communicative freedom, often depends on what speech can achieve socially.

The section begins, however, with a consideration of how such struggles over the meaning and value of freedom of speech take place within broader

institutional contexts that are both a frame and crucial stake of such struggles. In chapter 8, Susan Gal focuses on three different cases in which freedom of speech has recently been at issue in Viktor Orbán's Hungary: a controversy over a comment made by Orbán himself in a public speech, a court case against a satirist, and the systemic shift towards unification of the press landscape. The difference in scale between these cases is precisely the point: building on the comparative explorations of part one (Candea, Keane) and on her own previous work on comparison and scale (Gal 2016), Gal highlights how the political stakes of freedom of speech weave in and out of the personal and the systemic in ways that are often both elusive and powerful. Her three cases take readers through the ways in which supposedly impersonal market forces, legal formalisms, and personal networks of influence can be made to shape and constrain what is and is not sayable, without any explicit challenge to formal commitments to freedom of speech. In so doing, Gal extends Keane's call (in this volume) for anthropologists to attend to broader metapragmatic struggles that go beyond and frame single face-to-face events of communication. This outlook enables her to unpick and highlight what she terms "design": planned intentional intervention in the institutional arrangements for regulating public speech that evoke what Andrew Graan (2022) calls "discursive engineering." Beyond the Hungarian case, Gal's chapter provides a powerful guide for rethinking the political stakes and mechanisms surrounding freedom of speech by attending to the subtle yet powerful ways in which institutional arrangements can be inflected and set up, in plain view yet often just out of sight.

Institutional arrangements come in many forms. In chapter 9, Rupert Stasch puts forth a bold and richly detailed analysis of the changing understandings and practices of freedom among the Korowai of Indonesian-controlled Papua. Fiercely egalitarian, until the late twentieth century the Korowai "were not involved with any state and had no tradition of conflict or conviction around 'free speech'" (Stasch, this volume, p. 188). Nevertheless, their politics was defined through "configuration of speech roles" (p. 207), and central to their complex understandings of freedom were "images of speaking" and listening (p. 188). Noting that the old Korowai name for family feud was "big talk," Stasch describes three main modalities of freedom: freedom from subordination (from "being told what to do"), freedom as aggressive impingement on others (understood as "anger" or "asking"), and freedom as solicitous self-lowering (encapsulated in the image of "hearing" or "fulfilling the talk"). Over the last thirty years, the balance between these different modalities of communicative freedom has shifted. Stasch argues that this happened for a number of reasons.

Most Korowai went from living in small familial groups in forests at large distances from their neighbours to living in villages, coming into contact with state and market-based social arrangements from which they now understand

themselves as excluded. Yearning to be more like the city dwellers whose domination they resent, many Korowai have embraced new forms of state-based domination and hierarchy rather than rejecting them as they might have done before. Stasch argues that this process follows the basic pattern of Korowai's self-lowering mode of freedom, in which wilful subordination inherent in "fulfilling the talk" of others is meant to elevate the "hearer." He demonstrates that the Korowai accept one relation of subordination – to new village heads and regents – "in order to ease the larger, more painful one of collective exclusion from urban consumer prosperity" (p. 207). These changes have in turn reorganized old and complex Korowai understandings of freedom and introduced a new, non–speech-based form of political relation based on access to material wealth. Overall, Stasch paints a troubling picture of Korowai's freedoms profoundly transformed through their gradual incorporation into the Indonesian state and capitalism.

Developing the theme of the relation between speech's social consequences and speech's freedom, Natalie Morningstar turns to young artists in post-recession Ireland in chapter 10. Morningstar asks: "How should we make sense of the fact that in liberal democracies, public criticism, even when it appears risky or provocative, can function to consolidate the critic's prestige, cement social hierarchies, and energize the elites nominally targeted with criticism?" (p. 212). Against the backdrop of a crisis of social reproduction in Ireland, Morningstar's artists are painfully aware that their work is frequently made possible by policies that seek to "revitalize" marginalized communities and neighbourhoods abandoned by their erstwhile industrial residents. These policies commission artistic works and provide artists with space for studios and gatherings. They promote the very kind of economic growth that also socially displaces the artists to as yet not redeveloped neighbourhoods and towns. Morningstar argues that artistic critique's unwilling complicity with capitalist value creation makes it not only ineffective in challenging power but also an instrument in the expansion of the ruling elite. Her ethnography's focus on the social production of unfreedom among a generation of Irish youth dependent on, but resentful of how their expression – their creative labour – is valued by, the powers-that-be hints at a broader problematization of the plight of the global middle-class and explains why her subjects have the bitter experience of expressive freedom that they do.

One of the lessons of Morningstar's chapter for the comparative enterprise of this volume is that in liberal democracies artistic expression can become morally devalued by the inconsistency between its intent and its effects, especially when expressive acts are co-opted into the circuits of economic value. In chapter 11, which takes off from Harry Frankfurt's famous exploration of "bullshit" as a sideways-on attitude to truth and lying, Harri Englund examines the problem from the opposite direction. Englund compares how *vox populi*

program hosts on Finnish and Zambian public radio deal with callers whose testimonies are neither true nor false and indeed disregard truth altogether. The radio hosts nevertheless engage the callers to incorporate their accounts into the broader moral community of "the people," whose voice the programs are meant to construct and project. Why is "bullshit" compatible with the pursuit of *vox populi* on the airways? England asks. The chapter suggests several answers, yet finds all of them of limited use. Enumerating the similarities and differences between the two contrasting examples, in particular with regard to the different ways that the Finnish and Zambian hosts construct their moral authority and project a vocal polyphony by skilfully editing their vox pops, the chapter resists calls to embrace "critical anthropology's own preferred genre of exposé" (Englund, this volume, pp. 237–8). Instead, Englund's "modest comparison" brings forth the different ways that, in contrast to rather narrow understandings of populism in political anthropology, the radio genre of *vox populi* elicits an idea of the people and imbues it with sonic and social qualities.

One might read Englund's account as describing the work of determining and assigning value to public speech on the airwaves. As the Finnish Kansanradio's hosts subscribed to a professional ethos that refrained from giving anyone advice and avoided interfering in the broadcast, they sought to project through the broadcasts' vocal polyphony a sense of a public of individuals united by mutual recognition and respect. From this perspective, a "bullshit" caller's performance of a particular social type, even if inauthentic with regard to the caller's identity, nevertheless added to the overall value of the program – indeed could be re-evaluated and included as part of a communicative public. In the case of Gogo Breeze, the Zambian Breeze FM's host who cultivated a media persona of a wise grandfather dispensing moral guidance to his listeners, the community of the people was brought together exactly through the host's criticism of such callers. In both cases, this happened through a dynamic alignment of communicative roles that brought out a larger, collective truth from the callers' free-form "bullshit."

Morningstar's and Englund's chapters decentre the question of *freedom* of speech, demonstrating how practices typically associated with free speaking might in fact acquire other kinds of value and worth that make the questions of freedom per se fade into the background. In contrast, Amahl Bishara's contribution (chapter 12) brings us back to a familiar liberal frame of freedom of speech as understood through individual rights, restrictions, and censorship. It does so through an analysis of global environments of expression. Bishara proposes this concept to capture how "states can influence what is sayable beyond their boundaries ... because of the ways in which people move and because of the interdependence writers and speakers have with one another" (Bishara, this volume, p. 239). Bishara seeks to explain why what can be said about Palestinians, and the Israeli state's violence towards them, differs so significantly across

locations. Building on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, she draws on numerous examples from Israel, the European Union, and North America to analyze how the Israeli state seeks to influence critical discourse by designating speakers as "terrorists," making arrests, hindering cross-border movement, and collaborating with organizations that undermine credentials of foreign critics of Israel. Her crucial example is Israel's reliance on global anti-terror legislation, passed in the aftermath of 9/11, for silencing and discrediting Palestinian activists or anyone who seeks to collaborate with them. Beyond immediate damage to the activists, this has far-reaching repercussions across multiple contexts of knowledge production and administration where activists' findings are used – from European funding bodies to US and Canadian universities who fear losing funding or being confronted with legal challenges for sponsoring critical research. Translocal actors, infrastructures, and discourses that make expression relevant and valuable in one place and worthless in another stitch together disparate social spaces into uneven environments of expression. On the one hand, these amplify critical speech beyond its immediate publics, but on the other, magnify the state's attempts to silence such critics.

In sum, the chapters in part two offer various routes for rethinking the political economies of free speech, at some remove from the rather repetitive debates between the right and left over "cancel culture" and the role of political and economic power in enabling acts of expression and censorship. Here we find more challenging comparative explorations (Stasch, Englund), insights into the self-defeating dynamics of critique under "late liberalism" (Morningstar), the multifarious ways in which public speech can be managed by design (Gal), and the materiality of the transnational politics of silencing (Bishara). Each of these chapters suggests new positions from which the sense in which freedom of speech is political might be expanded and rethought.

Free Speech and Historical Narration: On Witnessing and Troubling

This introduction began with the entangled historical trajectories of concerns with freedom of speech. Part three, by contrast, examines the converse question: How are understandings and practices of free speech entailed in the writing and rewriting of history, and more broadly in the production of historical experience? One of the persistent modes in which freedom of speech is invoked in contemporary debates relates to what Adam Reed in his chapter describes as "the right to speak frankly and freely about what *really* happened" (Reed, this volume, p. 270). This is often envisaged as a "negative freedom" in Isaiah Berlin's terms, a freedom *from*, asserted through a struggle against official censorship or the pervasive power of dominant narratives. Decolonial critiques of racist bias in memorializations of the First and Second World Wars (Reed in this volume) are often cast in this oppositional vein, as are, on the

other end of the political spectrum, neo-fascist "nostalgics" attempts to rewrite the stakes of Italian history (Heywood in this volume). While touching on this way of articulating free speech and history, the chapters in this section seek to open up different ways of imagining this relationship.

One strand, most evident in chapter 13 by Heonik Kwon and chapter 14 by Adam Reed, enquires into the "positive" – again in Berlin's sense – valence of freedom of speech in relation to history. Both chapters explore a freedom *to* speak the truth of history, not as an abstract right or entitlement but as the effect of particular forms of witnessing, genealogical continuities, and forms of transmission. Kwon's contribution focuses on one such instance of speaking out about the past. In 1989, after the end of four decades of military rule, a group of islanders of Jeju in South Korea published a collection of eyewitness accounts of an episode of state violence in 1947–9. Echoing other contributors (cf. Candea and Humphrey in this volume), Kwon's account highlights the tensions between different visions of freedom entailed in such instances of speaking out. Such struggles over the meaning of freedom are perhaps to be expected when memorializing the complex intersection of postcoloniality and the Cold War, but Kwon's story starts from a more surprising point: the first account in the collection published by the islanders is actually by a Jeju shaman, recalling and invoking the testimony of the dead on both sides in the uprising. This initial invocation opens up a broader question of the freedom of spirits to speak in the public sphere – a cosmopolitical question that exceeds yet at the same time colours the geopolitical struggles over the freedom to give witness to historical events.

Reed's chapter evokes another haunting. It traces the ways in which contemporary English – mostly white, middle-class – members of the Henry Williamson Society seek to experience the truth of war through forms of "uncritical reading" of their favourite author's First World War novels. Immersing themselves in Williamson's vivid descriptions of the battlefield, these readers seek to live aspects of the experience of war, channelling – the reader, fresh from Kwon's chapter, might almost say shamanically – those who experienced the war first hand. In the process, some of these readers arrive at what they feel are profound realizations not only about the historical experience of the First World War but also about the nature of courage and fear, measuring themselves up to those they think of as their forebears in ways that can be challenging and uncomfortable. These readers, Reed points out, are also in a small way contributing to the collective production of a broader national narrative and memory. Reed deploys this material as a way to inform contemporary debates about modes of public remembrance in the UK that have been marked by parrhesiastic critiques of the exclusive, racist, and classist aspects of the national narrative. Williamson readers' "uncritical" experience of the truth of war might form a rather more formidable counterpoint

than some revisionist historians imagine when they set out to critique traditional modes of memorialization. At the same time, revisionist Marxist and decolonial accounts that seek to render vivid the bravery of soldiers in the face of discrimination, and to re-weave ties of community and kinship across time, may actually share some key features with the types of truth-telling experienced by Williamson's readers. In sum, Kwon's and Reed's chapters give a sense of the richness and thickness of witnessing as it travels through people and back and forth across the boundaries of life and death, memory, and imagination. Here are instances in which the abstract contours of a negative freedom from dominant narratives are filled in by substantive kinds of positive freedom to speak an experiential truth of history.

Andreas Bandak's contribution (chapter 15) provides a pivot point between these themes and a second set of concerns that animate this section. On the one hand, Bandak's chapter continues the theme of witnessing, focusing on the work of exiled Syrian documentarists producing narratives of the 2011 uprising and its tragic aftermath. He shows, echoing the previous two contributors, how the historical and the personal, event and memory, the collective and the singular are interwoven through "the narrative efforts placed in keeping particular pasts alive in order to make way for the future" (Bandak, this volume, p. 287). Yet, at the same time, Bandak's chapter opens up onto another kind of freedom of speech in relation to historical truth – a freedom to "take liberties" with the very idea of a singular, starkly factual, and morally clear-cut narrative. In Bandak's chapter, this freedom is indexed by the locution "as it were," which Bandak counterposes both to the "as if" of out-and-out fiction and the "as it was" of unchallengeable factuality. As Syrian documentarists keep reweaving their narratives to keep track of a changing set of stakes and shifting forms of remembrance, "the 'as it were' operates as a particular form of freedom of speech that opens up the personal and private registers and continuously attempts engaging what happened, without the fixity of an official form of narrative, and perhaps even allows for a certain playfulness" (p. 299).

Bandak thus introduces us to a different kind of freedom of speech in relation to history. This is not simply the freedom – be it negative or positive – to speak the truth of the past, but rather a freedom from certain kinds of fixities of discourse, which is also, simultaneously, a freedom to articulate and rearticulate memory otherwise. Lotte Hoek's contribution (chapter 16) extends and expands this insight. Hoek focuses on an exhibition entitled *Age of Saturn* by Bangladeshi "trickster artist-historian" Omar A. Chowdhury. In a context of increasingly violent policing of official narratives of Bengali history, *Age of Saturn* presented a meticulously documented account of the life and times of a Dr. Shahidul Zaman as he and his family traversed the history of twentieth-century Bengal. Photographs, published papers, maps, and documents alternated with

visceral images and live installations. Except that, confusingly, Dr. Shahidul Zaman himself seems to be a fictional composite – his photo at the entrance of the exhibition was actually that of contemporary Bangladeshi artist Dhali Al Mamun. Rather than a simple parafictional critique of historical realism, however, *Age of Saturn*, Hoek argues, produced a more subtly disorienting feeling of the simultaneous elusiveness and visceral presence of the past. Just days after opening, the exhibition was shut down, the curator resigned, and Chowdhury himself fled to the countryside before moving to Europe. Yet the nature, source, and cause of the pressures that led to this silencing remain unclear and nebulous, matching the disconcertingly nebulous factuality of the exhibition itself. In its evocative and precise writing, Hoek's chapter shares with the reader these overlapping disorientations.

In sum, the chapters in part three seek to enrich and complicate the standard vision of freedom of speech as a right to puncture established historical narratives – "the right to speak frankly and freely about what *really* happened" (Reed, this volume, p. 270). They point, on the one hand, to the substantive engagements with historical experience, transmission, and creativity that are required in order to exercise such a freedom to speak the truth of what was. On the other hand, they open up the question of the freedom of speech in relation to a particular vision of history as settled and determined factual narrative. The two points are in productive tension. If speaking freely about history is imagined purely as an "as if" storytelling unmoored from any realist constraints, it would lose the ability to make a difference to settled historical narratives. But conversely, there would be little hope of ever unsettling history "as it was" without the minute ordinary freedoms of scepticism, elusiveness, and evocation.

Therapies, Individual and Collective

If the chapters in part three spotlighted the often complex and ambivalent ways in which collective historical narration is rooted in personal forms of experience, those in part four approach this relationship from the opposite end, by asking about the ways in which personal, therapeutic imaginaries and practices of free speaking can be situated within broader socio-historical assemblages.

Since Freud's systematization of the "talking cure," and his "free association" method in particular, therapeutic approaches to psychological distress have placed the speaking subject at the centre of ideas about pathology and healing. Within and outside of therapeutic spaces, the idea that traumatic experiences are buried within the mind and body, and that they must be excavated through encounters based on speaking and response, has shaped and challenged cultural notions of the self and its relation to

others. Whether by pivoting around cathartic practices of verbally working through what is censored by the unconscious, or by pointedly positioning themselves against psychoanalytic notions, trajectories of psychological and psychiatric practices have been profoundly influenced by such ideas since the early twentieth century. Yet in this section, therapeutic speech provides a pivot around which the chapters' authors explore and unsettle Freudian ideas and the ways they dovetail with broader cultural assumptions about the kinds of freedom associated with speaking and listening, and concealment of supposed inner states and their disclosure. In different ways, each of the chapters here suggests that speech that is intended to facilitate psychological healing, however that is construed, at the very least points to, if not actively calls forth, ideologies of communication and the (individual and collective) subjects upon which they are premised.

In chapter 17, Michael Lempert helpfully places what he describes as the therapeutically inflected speech practices of American feminist consciousness-raising circles of the 1960s and 1970s within a broader trajectory of ways in which Americans have aspired to or contested democratic and liberal ideals in the Cold War era and beyond. His chapter outlines an "ecological" approach to ideals and practices of speaking freely, which, crucially, reminds us of the importance of the reception of speech as well as its voicing. Taking three flashpoints in post-war America's political history, Lempert considers the centrality of listening practices in ideologies of free speech and suggests this oft-neglected aspect of semiotic ideology is an important element in ideals and struggles around liberal democratic ideals. As becomes clear in his consideration of the examples of Kurt Lewin's "small group science," feminist consciousness-raising circles, and post-2016 student debates about speech on campus, it is not only what is said or how it is said that matters in assessments of free speech, but also what kind of listening is at play: who, when, and how people listen are all part of various notions of what liberal and democratic communication should look like. Providing an initial typology of "deliberative," "validational," and "interventionist" listening, Lempert draws our attention to the role played by those who listen and the listening they choose to enact on whether communication is understood as harmful or healing, authoritarian or liberatory. Lempert takes care, however, not to suggest that these are ideal types that are practised with rigid separation or purity, demonstrating how contestation within and among differently identified and politicized groups can play out when, for example, one or more of these styles of listening is in play, or when people disagree about the extent to which others are listening, and thus communicating, in the correct way. A useful corrective to the focus in public debates around campus politics, free speech, and, in particular, modes of expression (who speaks, with whom, how, and when), the chapter brings linguistic anthropology's tools to bear on

the semiotic ideologies of reception that are a key part in how a politics of free speech has unfolded and continues to do so.

E. Summerson Carr's contribution (chapter 18) to the section focuses in on one particular part of the story Lempert has outlined in broader strokes, examining the debate between Carl Rogers's person-centred therapy and B.F. Skinner's behaviourism that, as Carr shows, reveal how American therapies are one key site where ideals of free speech, and their underlying semiotic ideologies, have been thrashed out. For it is not only the health of individual persons that psychotherapies have aspired to promote but also that of communities and collectives. Nowhere was this more the case than in Cold War America, where the perceived enemy threat to practices of freedom of thought and expression was at the forefront of the concerns of both therapists and politicians. Carr's insightful reading of a public debate between Rogers and Skinner demonstrates, though, that notions of freedom, and how they relate to the intervention of the professionals, the therapists, are as varied and contested in the therapy room as they have been outside of it. The reflective listening of Rogers's person-centred therapy, intended to be non-interventionist, leaving the client free to express their inner thoughts and feelings, was subject to Skinner's critique, as the latter suggested that the words of reinforcement and affirmation, as well as the silences, of the therapist in fact direct the client's speech as much as any other form of talking therapy would. For Skinner, "freedom" of therapeutic speech was only a result of the conditions of its production, as with other forms of speech or behaviour. Carr shows how an alternative ideal of freedom – that of reflective self-control within socially conditioned environments – was held up by Skinner in his proposal of ethical speech, whether in therapeutic or political contexts. In doing so, she traces a struggle around the dominance of a semiotic ideology of inner reference in American free speech ideals, showing how contemporary debates around the conditions that enable or limit free speech, as well as what kinds of freedom are valued or disavowed in them, were prefigured in this earlier instance of political questions being worked though in psychological terms.

Lempert and Carr, in sum, show how American therapeutic practices have both been spaces where political struggles have played out, and have come to inform assumptions about speaking and listening subjects in political spaces. This is echoed and extended in Fiona Wright's contribution (chapter 19) on dialogical therapy and its evocations of a global reparative politics. Based on her ethnographic work with practitioners of a dialogical therapy in the UK, Wright demonstrates the similarities between this therapy's performative ritualization of group dialogues with practices of testimony and witnessing common to attempts at facilitating reparative politics in post-conflict settings, such as with truth and reconciliation commissions. What

both share is an embodied mode of public speech considered to enable a reckoning with harms considered past, as well as an invitation to speakers to identify as victims of, or complicit with the doing of, those harms. Ideals of collective repair through these modes of affective, public truth-telling and listening run through this dialogical therapy, which Wright shows to have political as well as interpersonal aspirations. Some of the democratic ideals of American therapeutic speech, highlighted in Carr's and Lempert's chapters, can be seen here to have been very effectively globalized, as attention to, for example, how one listens to a speaker, the proper forms of response, and how people should place and move their bodies in the therapeutic space are also understood in this ethnographic context to be key in this therapy's capacity to manifest a desired form of political community. As in Carr's reading of Skinner's behaviourism, or Lempert's of Lewin's small group science, here speaking freely involves cultivating the right conditions for certain truths to be spoken, heard, and taken on board as the basis of the transformation of polity as well as person.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of attention in this section, in the chapters by Carr, Lempert, and Wright, is paid to therapeutic ways of speaking freely in Euro-American contexts. As Sarah Pinto's contribution (chapter 20) also makes clear, however, psychotherapeutic imaginaries are embedded in global and post-colonial knowledge economies, which have never been one-way, as reductive analyses of Western therapies being "imported" into contexts depicted as radically different would suggest. Rather, in juxtaposing and reading together an array of different kinds of texts (academic, literary, filmic, legal) that variously locate representations of homosexuality and non-binary gender definitions vis-a-vis a hermeneutics of secrecy and revelation, and whose authors and readers are variously located in both time and place, Pinto raises the notion of a subject speaking freely against repressed desires as one that has travelled back and forth among authors, editors, and readers, all variously emplaced within imperial contexts. Resisting a culturalist analysis that would map Freudian psychologies onto a (geo)politics of liberal ideals of freedom (in speech, as in sexuality), Pinto traces a hermeneutic of concealment and exposure in her readings of films, literature, and academic work in and about India that addresses questions of gender and sexuality as issues assumed to be subject to diagnosis and revelation as well as secrecy and censorship. Freedom of speech, here, is complicated as a liberal ideal. Pinto demonstrates how notions of the expression of inner truths, or their repression, are straightforward neither in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century psychoanalytic thinking that seemed to align repressed speech with repressed desire, nor in the Indian texts that have recursively reframed such repressions. In this reframing, repressions evade the psychiatrists whose repeated appearances in their dramas somehow undercut

a formulation of the talking cure as something as straightforward as recovery through the speaking of truths that reveal what has been hidden.

Importantly, Pinto invites us to interrogate how particular texts in queer theory have been framed as Euro-American, or Western, placing Eve K. Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) as one of those works that cannot be extricated from what Pinto describes as a "history of entangled texts." What would it mean, Pinto asks, to think about the closet as an imperial assemblage, reconsidering the sexual politics of freedom as one that has travelled back and forth, writing and rewriting notions of authenticity and inner truths, secrets and curses, in therapeutic languages that unsettle as well as underpin liberal conceptualizations of freedom and selfhood? In this sense, Pinto's chapter complements, but also challenges, one of the recurrent conclusions of this section, in which freedom in therapeutic speech involves the transfiguration of individual but also collective selves – polities and communities whose well-being is thought to depend in some way on the possibility of healing transformation through particular speech practices. As Pinto concludes, sometimes the therapeutic appears as that which does not reveal, but which rather resists the compulsion to transform, or be transformed, through speaking freely. Irreconcilable difference and ambiguity may be what remains in the wake of such freedom, a possibility yet ill accounted for in the kinds of therapeutic speech practices otherwise considered in part four, limited as they are by very particular transpositions of ideologies of interpersonal communication onto collective and political encounters.

Parting Thoughts

Taken together, the chapters in this volume pose and answer a range of questions destined to expand understandings of freedom of speech: What notions of the self and selflessness, what forms and understandings of will, intention, and action underlie different imaginaries and practices of free speech? How do failure, inconsistency and the inability to live up to ideals feature? How are imaginaries of freedom of speech scaffolded, enabled, and constrained by different techniques and technologies, be they material, legal, linguistic, social, or spiritual? What bodily techniques, what skills and educated feelings underpin such practices? What epistemologies are embedded or contested in different visions of freedom of speech? How, if at all, are these premised on a commitment to truth, a concern with the substance in relation to the effect of language? What is the role of critique, revelation, indirection, irony, humour, evasiveness, and partiality? What pedagogical assumptions are built into ways of enabling, and also ways of blocking or silencing, speech across these various contexts? What geographies, collectives, and temporalities are imagined, hoped for, or disavowed in the name of freedom of speech? How do particular

physical spaces (the classroom, the town hall, the courtroom, the street, the museum) enable, require, or prohibit particular forms of speech? Which histories are revealed, occluded, or made in the process?

These questions are not meant to be exhaustive – no such collection could be. Taken together, however, they map a set of openings, a problem space for an anthropology of freedoms of speech, and a preliminary conversation that is set to grow and expand. Internally diverse and multivocal, this conversation, at the intersection of ethnography, comparison, and contextualization, emerges nevertheless as a distinctively anthropological contribution to a broad and urgent set of contemporary debates.

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