In the fall of 2011, I was one of two respondents on a panel entitled “Speaking with the Voices of Marginalized Communities through Communication Activism Education: Exemplars in Experiential Service-Learning to Promote Social Justice” at the National Communication Association’s annual meeting. The organizers of the panel were at the time working on a book on communication activism pedagogy and service learning, for which I was writing a chapter. As in many disciplines, the presence of service-learning panels at the largest meeting of communication educators in North America has increased in the past decade, despite resistance to courses that integrate some form of service learning. Many faculty members who pursue service-learning courses do so working against institutional norms and without obvious support for this work. At the same time, service learning has attained a high enough level of academic legitimacy to generate its own formal set of awards. Indeed, two of the senior faculty members on the panel to which I responded had been recognized for their service-learning work.

The panel offered explicit attention to service learning’s connection to both activism and social justice. I appreciated that I would have an opportunity to act as a respondent. All three papers discussed typical examples of service-learning efforts. Two presenters discussed their work with graduate and undergraduate students addressing hateful/hurtful speech in public high schools, reducing levels of indifference among students, and analysing expressions of bullying in schools (Cox & Geiger, 2011). Another pair of presenters talked about their efforts with communities in Belize to articulate community priorities in the area of health communication (Walker & Hart, 2011). A final presenter addressed a course in which students produced a video in collaboration
with a non-profit organization serving migrant farm workers for the purposes of community education. This video represented the struggles of Latino/as, their aspirations, and the economic role they played at local and broader levels (Kennerly, 2011).

In their presentations, these educators considered the pedagogical and programmatic components of service learning, as well as social justice. They addressed social justice primarily in relation to individual priorities, rather than at institutional levels. In regard to course outcomes, the most substantive attention was given to student empowerment. Presenters also addressed the enjoyment they experienced in seeing students encounter new subcultures, have conversations with people from backgrounds different from their own, increase their awareness of social issues, and engage in dialogue with individuals they might have previously avoided.

I felt a kind of awkward and uneasy pleasure as a respondent to this panel. On the one hand, my own work was squarely related to the title of the panel. Even as I do not practise service learning in my courses, I do have a strong interest in how pedagogy connects to social justice. I had been in conversation with the panel chair and my co-respondent over the past couple of years about these issues. At the same time, I planned to offer challenges to the papers to which I would respond. I wanted to raise concerns with not only the work of the educators to whose papers I would respond, but with service learning as a body of work. I wanted to know: Where was an analysis or even mention of power and how it works? Why did all of the papers offer a clear focus on individual behaviour and change and no attention to institutions or structures? The faculty members who presented seemed to be quite comfortable with students’ ability to gain access to a variety of settings and experiences, possibly leading to an increased sense of entitlement. I wondered: How can such understandings of service learning have any connection at all to social justice?

This chapter examines the concepts referenced in the title of the panel on which I was a respondent. As articulated in chapter 2, scholars have considered in various ways the question of higher education’s social contract, and they have also attended to what might constitute the central aims of undergraduate education. A third substantive area of scholarship in relation to higher education’s connection with democratic life is that of the scholarship of engagement. This body of work, with origins in community service efforts at the turn of the century,
includes literature addressing service learning, civic engagement, civic education, and democratic outcomes. In addition to a wide and deep literature (Barker, 2004; Brabant & Braid, 2009; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007; Hartley, 2009; Kezar & Rhoads, 2001; Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997; National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012; Peters, 2004; Ruitenberge, 2009; Valloitt, 1997; Wang & Jackson, 2005), civic engagement and service-learning efforts have enjoyed concrete and ongoing support from colleges and universities in North America. From mission statements to university centers to disciplinary initiatives, one can track institutional commitments to service learning and civic engagement across the landscape of research, teaching, and service in higher education settings. Service-learning and civic engagement efforts constitute one of the most sustained and systematic responses to the question of higher education's relationship with public life.

This chapter offers an overview of this work, with careful attention to the ways in which service learning scholarship considers ethical commitments related to justice and power. How have service-learning and civic engagement priorities supported careful attention to the entrenched nature of injustice and to possibilities for justice? In what ways have the same programs made it more likely that students and faculty members will consider the deaths of men like Frank Paul, routine homophobia in schools, or high levels of incarceration of Black and Indigenous men, and the avenues to systemic change that will reduce inequity and oppression? Are faculty members who offer service-learning courses primarily concerned with what students will gain or with the practices of justice in concrete institutional settings? Even as both objectives may seem attainable by faculty members, which priorities are foundational and enduring? Does attention to civic engagement establish clear ethical allegiances in democratic contexts, or does this work leave largely unaddressed possibilities for considering power and negotiating competing social interests? These questions set the framework for this chapter.

An extensive body of work on the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning exists (Bjarnason & Coldstream, 2003; Brabant & Braid, 2009; Calderón, 2007; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007; Kezar & Rhoads, 2001; Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997; Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011b; Sandmann, 2008; Singh, 2003; Speck & Hoppe, 2004). My objective in this chapter is not to offer an exhaustive review or analysis of the history, implementation, or curricular
and pedagogical aspects of this work. Rather, I am centrally concerned with the ways in which service-learning and civic engagement efforts make it possible and even desirable to rigorously consider Cindy and Allison’s ontological and epistemological assertions, the question of what is the subject in democratic contexts, and the material and discursive practices of injustice and possibilities for justice. Inasmuch as civic engagement and service-learning efforts continue to garner institutional and faculty members’ support, how are both able to sustain a set of democratic priorities that habitualize rigorous consideration of power, justice, and systemic change?

I will focus my discussion on the broad term “scholarship of engagement” and two closely aligned areas of work, including civic engagement and service learning. Given the multiple and at times varying uses of terms such as the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, service learning, civic education, political education, and democratic outcomes, a clear conceptual framework regarding these concepts will be useful. The terms the “engaged university” (or the “engaged academy”) and “scholarship of engagement” provide a primary point of entry into the discussion, and foreground the ways in which the work of teaching, research, and service might orient itself towards social needs. Faculty members often use the terms civic engagement and service learning interchangeably. This can be misleading, as the two are not the same. Service learning, very basically, refers to university study that connects course content with structured experiences outside of the classroom. Civic engagement refers to the ways in which universities and faculty members might practice investments in public concerns, with “civic” implying “a set of public, democratic, and political (though not necessarily partisan) dimensions” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a, p. 7).

The concept of engagement carries its own ambiguities. For some scholars, the term civic engagement “as it is currently used ... includes the entirety of public and private goods” (Berger, 2009, p. 335), in some cases constituting a significant dilution of the concept of civic priorities. Others have asserted that “mere activity in a community does not constitute civic engagement” (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011b, p. 17). To a large extent, civic engagement efforts affirm long-standing epistemological assumptions and institutional norms, thus offering few challenges to those in colleges and universities. This acceptance can act to constrain robust critiques of power and justice.

Service learning broadly refers to instructional efforts that “connect ... students’ academic study with public problem-solving experiences in
local community settings” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011c, p. 287). Components of service learning include “service-related activities,” interactions in which students will “encounter community members actively immerse in issues related directly to the course content” and intentional reflection by students “on their service-related observations and experiences” (Mironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999, p. 361). While faculty members that pursue service learning often embrace civic engagement’s concern with public and democratic priorities, one can also practice service learning with little or no attention to civic outcomes. Likewise, faculty members can pursue civic engagement objectives and in no way link concepts with experiences outside of the classroom. As one scholar states, “not all service-learning involves civic engagement, and not all civic engagement involves service-learning” (Exley, 2004, p. 85). In relation to (1) the “scholarship of engagement,” (2) civic engagement, and (3) service learning, I will offer an overview of these concepts and a discussion of the ways in which they are positioned to respond to questions of injustice and possibilities for justice. Before examining these concepts, however, I return to my own investments in civic engagement and service learning, as articulated in my participation on the panel on service-learning initiatives.

Civic Engagement and Service Learning: The Challenges of Practice

What would I do with the uneasy pleasure I felt in acting as a respondent? Where were the gaps between the presenters’ articulations of service learning and a pedagogical commitment to justice? In my role as respondent, when considering the presentations on bullying in schools and the class that produced a video on Latinos, the two papers to which I would most explicitly respond, I was especially interested in how service-learning efforts might support robust consideration of the public good and of moving from too much wrong to less wrong to justice. The papers I read left me with several questions about the primary philosophical and conceptual assumptions on which the courses were based, which I raised in my response. First, attention to power, particularly at systemic and structural levels, was minimal. Beyond references to “empowerment,” none of the three presentations carefully analysed power relationships related to the service-learning work and community settings. On the whole, presenters did not address power generally,
raise questions about positionality or access, consider the institutional components of power, or address how power is connected to both injustice and to justice.

Second, all three service-learning courses the presenters addressed were primarily directed at providing information about and reflecting on individual behaviours rather than effecting change at institutional levels. As noted above, course outcomes were overwhelmingly articulated as related to changed student behaviours. There was little to no in-depth attention to more just relationships or practices in community settings, either among students and community members or in relation to specific institutions in which injustice was present. Again, I understand injustice to be in part connected to institutional practice. Likewise, movement towards justice requires consideration of institutional contributions to injustice. As with many service-learning courses, the institutional component seemed to be left to chance or simply not part of moving towards justice. Presentations implied that as long as the interventions increased awareness of the existence of an issue, or shifted students' understanding related primarily to individual attitudes, this would be sufficient. None of the presentations offered attention to the existence of structural power dynamics. While increasing awareness may certainly lead to justice, on its own, increased awareness will not reduce or eliminate injustice.

At a third level, attention to outcomes was primarily directed at how, in most cases, already privileged students could gain access to information and experiences that they would not otherwise have (i.e., how students with significant levels of privilege could further exercise that privilege and gain increased levels of access to communities other than their own). Attention offered to outcomes for community partners was primarily framed as hoped-for possibilities and secondary to student outcomes. Presentations did make reference to what might be understood as “civic” learning outcomes (as opposed to both “personal” or “social justice” outcomes), and referred to an increased sense of involvement, a stronger sense of empowerment among students, a more complex understanding of the self, and a deepened awareness of social issues. I understand the difficulty of addressing institutional injustice and change within the constraints of a semester-long course. Yet leaving institutional considerations out entirely can give students the impression that justice will be achieved when attitudes change or simply by virtue of students expanding their experiences with those culturally different from themselves.
Finally, even as all three courses explicitly made reference to race or to communities of colour, there was no careful consideration of race scholarship and the ways in which racism plays out through multiple avenues of privilege, power, and discrimination in routine contexts. At a very basic level, references in one presentation to “students” and “members of the Latino/a community,” implying that these groups are mutually exclusive, is problematic, in that such references imply that students are not Latino/a (Kennerly, 2011). Such constructions themselves obscure the importance of one’s location in relation to structures of power when moving towards justice. Service-learning faculty members who do not consider the existing scholarship on race and racism in an intellectually rigorous manner communicate the idea that racism is non-existent and/or irrelevant. Whether or not such oversight is intentional, the lack of such intellectual examination is problematic, given the extensive body of work on racism as pervasive and systemic (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). I am not aware of any systematic study of how service-learning scholarship addresses the racism present within institutions of higher education and among its students and faculty members, and the service-learning literature offers little consideration of these issues.¹

As I stated in my formal response to the panel, one working assumption I have is that “in as much as social injustice exists at individual and institutional levels, efforts at social justice must be articulated and practiced at individual and institutional levels. Efforts focusing only on the individual level will not be sufficient for justice” (Simpson, 2011). I suggested that “change efforts that do not explicitly attend to unjust systems will generally align with a liberal focus on attitudes and beliefs, and will serve to re-center and privilege those already in power.” If power and competing interests are a given, which was the case in all three contexts, what is lost when faculty members fail to ask students to consider these components of the contexts they are examining? Efforts directed towards change that overlook power may offer surface-level alterations to a specific issue, but will fail to bring about lasting transformation. With regard to the significance of race and the prevalence of racism, and given the profound lack of any race analysis in the papers, did these faculty members see themselves and their students as beyond the complications of race? Finally, will social justice be achieved when our students feel better about themselves, as this seemed to be a central priority? Is an enlarged sense of empathy, with little to no knowledge of or concern for the structural conditions that
underlie injustice, a useful outcome for service-learning courses and, if yes, for whom and to what ends?

The presentation offered by the senior faculty members on their work with students in Belize demonstrated all of the above concerns. I was particularly struck by two references that the presenters made to student outcomes, and I point to these with a sense of urgency related to what is at stake in regard to undergraduate education that is responsive to social challenges. While these two references clearly do not represent the entirety of the students’ experiences, they are elements of the course to which these presenters opted to draw attention and, one might thus assume, of value for these faculty members. They pointed to one student’s comment that he “hope[s] to come back there [to Belize] some day.” Students’ ability to return to a country visited in a service-learning course often has more to do with social class and race privilege and little if anything to do with justice. Indeed, service learning in international settings “face[s] ... issues of fit, ethnocentrism, and imperialism [and] ... issues exacerbated by global inequities and colonial histories” (Sutton, 2011, p. 126). The easy assumption that one can travel at will, because one has the resources to do so, points to a political economy of privilege and wholly ignores the supposed reason for the course, which was to consider community health needs in particular settings in Belize. Further, it potentially sets up the course as a kind of service-through-travel-light.

The privilege of access to travel also raises the question of the priorities and interests of the faculty members. I wondered: what had drawn these educators to do research in Belize in the first place? While Hart and Walker identified several components of their “personal and professional interest” related to the course—awareness of injustice, previous travel to “‘developing’ countries,” the lack of practice-based activism in their own and other courses in their department—there was no attention to the reasons for Belize or health issues specifically. Again, the taken-for-granted ability to pick nations and issues at will, largely outside of enduring relational contexts, is problematic. Although Hart and Walker described the process of community building, they also mentioned that “no established relationships” were in place in at least one community in which the class made a stop. This can lead to students primarily inhabiting the role of “educated spectators who observe more than participate from the protection of their privileged positions and assumptions” (Kahn, 2011, p. 116). How does this effect possibilities for reciprocity? What might we learn from a political economy of travel in
relation to service-learning programs, particularly as travel itself is not accessible in equitable ways?

A recent visit to the homepage for the Department of Communication at the University of Louisville, where Hart and Walker teach, revealed: “The Service Learning program offerings are expanding! Professor Joy Hart and Professor Kandi Walker are taking students all over the globe. Students now can go to Africa, Central America, Asia, and soon we will have a trip to Europe! Get in touch with one of them to find out more about these exciting opportunities” (University of Louisville, 2012). Although existing research does not offer careful attention to the conceptual assumptions embedded in such service-learning courses, or to the outcomes for students from North America who travel abroad as part of their educational experience, recent research on semester-long study abroad programs raises the possibilities that such travel may “result in the reproduction of [students’] privilege” (Waters & Brooks, 2010, p. 226), that the “restructuring and re-patterning of international student mobility ... is neither neutral nor random in its effects,” and that mobility becomes a privilege of the “socially powerful, [who are] seeking to add value to their educational experience” (Findlay, King, Stam, & Ruiz-Gelices, 2006, p. 315). Especially when based in courses that profess at least some allegiance to social justice priorities, to simply avoid addressing the political economy of travel is problematic.

I was also struck by a story recounted by one of the presenters during the panel. As Hart and Walker explained, the class visited a community in Belize that was struggling with poverty and substandard housing. Upon arriving in this community, one student commented on the “low quality” of the homes and the cheap materials that individuals used to build them. Shortly before leaving Belize, this same student remembered his observation about housing and stated that even when struggling with persistent poverty, with its attendant effects on survival and resources, those in the community “have it right” in regard to their resourcefulness and generosity which he witnessed and experienced. For the presenters, the fact that the student demonstrated a higher level of compassion for community members, through his statement that community members “had it right,” was clearly a significant learning outcome for this student.

I was plain about my critique of this assessment on the part of the presenters. I stated, “Justice is about adequate housing and the ability of individuals and communities to make decisions about the conditions in which they live. The point is not how privileged students feel
about the conditions in which others are living." In relation to poverty, institutional and faculty members' service-learning efforts aimed at democratic outcomes will be centrally directed towards eradicating poverty at systemic levels. Even as faculty members might see this as "progress" for this student - in effect, "seeing beyond" poverty to a family's resourcefulness - I wonder about the consequences of "seeing beyond" any injustice in service-learning settings. "If we're concerned with social justice, who is service learning for?" I asked.

Scholars have noted the difficulty and perhaps undesirability of narrowly defining the priorities and forms of civic engagement and service learning. Developing compassion for individuals racially different from oneself may be part of a process that moves an individual or those in a course towards more rigorous analysis of systemic injustice. The student did shift his ideas, which is clearly a pedagogical outcome in that course. However, this panel, and many other parallel expressions of civic engagement and service learning, raise significant and pressing questions. What is democratic about service learning? What are the philosophical, ethical, and relational starting points for faculty members who pursue service learning? How do educators who are pursuing service-learning efforts understand power and institutional oppression? With which public concerns and outcomes is service learning centrally aligned? What is the role of institutional critique and attention to power and how are both present in service-learning and civic engagement efforts? To what extent are service-learning efforts that are aimed at increasing empathy and tolerance among students built on conceptual approaches that sustain relationships of privilege, entitlement, and domination? In the next section, I will address these questions through an overview of the literature on the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning.

The Scholarship of Engagement, Civic Engagement, and Service Learning: An Overview

The engaged academy, civic engagement, democratic outcomes, service learning, social justice pedagogy: scholars routinely use these and other terms to describe a range of efforts in higher education that explicitly consider social needs and the work of teaching, research, and service. In this chapter, I organize this literature into three primary areas, including (1) the scholarship of engagement, (2) civic engagement, and
Table 3.1. Brief Snapshot of Scholarship of Engagement, Civic Engagement, and Service Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The term</th>
<th>includes concepts such as ...</th>
<th>is practised related to ...</th>
<th>can be defined as ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scholarship of engagement</td>
<td>the “engaged academy,” the “engaged university”</td>
<td>teaching, research, and service</td>
<td>the ways in which universities, through teaching, research, and service, orient themselves towards social needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civic engagement</td>
<td>citizenship education, civic education, democratic outcomes</td>
<td>primarily teaching; secondarily, service and research</td>
<td>the ways in which universities and faculty members’ practise investments in public concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service learning</td>
<td>democratic outcomes, civic education</td>
<td>teaching</td>
<td>instructional efforts that connect service in community settings with academic study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) service learning. Table 3.1 provides a brief snapshot of these three areas of work.

The Scholarship of Engagement

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, scholars frequently use the terms the “scholarship of engagement,” the “engaged university,” and the “engaged academy” to explicitly invoke the existence of a relationship between higher education and public life. At the same time, a consistent set of priorities essential to the scholarship of engagement is elusive. As with scholarly and institutional commitments to the social contract addressed in chapter 2, the types of “engagement” pursued are wide-ranging, and beyond occasional and broad references to democratic values such as tolerance and inclusion, rarely offer much depth to ethical commitments. In this section, I will address the context out of which this literature has emerged, provide a definition of the terms, discuss tensions within the literature, and offer a critique.

In many ways, the notion of an “engaged academy” or one that “respond[s] to the needs and expectations of society and engage[s] with multiple communities of interest, has become quite commonplace ...
and is therefore not seriously contested at the level of value or principle” (Singh, 2003, p. 273). In the midst of charges that higher education has shown a “lack of responsiveness to public concerns” (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001, 152; see also Bok, 1982; Ehrlich, 1995; Hackney, 1994; Rocheleau, 2004), scholars understand a focus on engagement, with attention to institutional, programmatic, scholarly, and curricular initiatives, as one way to speak to these concerns. More specifically, the scholarship of engagement has largely been a response to issues including the “increasing specialization of academic knowledge into discrete disciplines” (Barker, 2004, p. 125), the rise of “technocratic politics” in higher education, the “domination by experts removed from a common civic life” (Barker & Brown, 2009, p. 42), and disproportionate attentiveness to corporate and economic priorities at the expense of consideration of social outcomes (Barker, 2004; Singh, 2003).

In relation to the increasing specialization of knowledge, especially that which is based on “an objective set of truths, practices, and procedures” (Barker & Brown, 2009, p. 42), scholars have charged that such approaches to knowledge and its uses “idealiz[e] distance from rather than engagement with” social problems (Barker, 2004, p. 125). Further, a range of scholars have claimed that in a context of increasing attention to market-based priorities, the lack of a firm insistence on the public responsibilities of institutions of higher education will lead to the decreased abilities of universities to maintain public relevance (Polster, 2004, 2007; Singh, 2003, Turk, 2000, 2008). The “scholarship of engagement,” then, has served as a primary means to reassert and centre the public purposes of higher education, a way of “holding on to a larger conception of societal values and ideals that affect the lives of large numbers of people” (Singh, 2003, p. 302).

While calls for “engagement” in the context of higher education have been fairly broad, the literature on the “scholarship of engagement” is more specific. Scholars generally agree that this literature rests on “two founding principles”: “(1) mutually beneficial, reciprocal partnerships and (2) [the] integration of teaching, research, and service” (Sandmann, 2008, p. 96; see also Barker, 2004; Bringle, Hatcher, & Clayton, 2006). Scholars have asserted that engagement should go beyond outreach and that university-community partnerships ought to produce knowledge (Sandmann, 2008). In this sense, advocates of the scholarship of engagement have stressed both reciprocal relationships and the potential of these relationships to result in scholarly outcomes, including knowledge production and application (ibid.). Two publications, both
produced in the 1990s, have been central to this understanding of the scholarship of engagement.

In *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Boyer (1990) stressed that in addition to “discovering knowledge,” it was crucial for institutions and faculty members to be committed to “the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching” (p. 16; emphasis in original). A few years later, Boyer (1996) affirmed the importance of universities articulating and pursuing a “larger purpose, a larger sense of mission, a larger clarity of direction” (p. 21). Both of these publications urged universities to “reexamin[e] their roles in extensive and measurable societal change” (Brabanti & Braid, 2009, p. 62). For Boyer and his colleagues, it was crucial that educators “connect the campus to the larger world” and “integrate ideas, connect thought to action, and inspire students” (Boyer, 1990, p. 77). Particularly in “The Scholarship of Engagement” (1996), Boyer’s “emphasis on institutional change” (Saltmarsh, 2011b, p. 346) went beyond his earlier focus on individual faculty member’s work.

“The Scholarship of Engagement” challenged conventional understandings of the relationship of universities and communities.

At the same time, while Boyer’s work certainly drew attention to the social purposes of higher education, it also “buil[t] on established academic epistemology, [and] assume[d] that knowledge [was] generated in the university or college and then applied to external contexts.” In contrast, more recent articulations of the scholarship of engagement “emphasize ... that the learning and teaching be multidirectional and the expertise shared. It represents a basic reconceptualization of faculty involvement in community-based work” (Rice, 2005, pp. 27-28). Traditional knowledge production “decontextualizes problems” from the civic life of communities ... privatizes the world and ... profoundly erodes the subjective experience of mutual respect” (Barker & Brown, 2009, p. 42). Further, in contrast to knowledge in traditional scholarship, which “is perceived to be disciplinary, homogeneous, expert-led, supply-driven, hierarchical, peer-reviewed, and almost exclusively university-based,” engaged knowledge is “applied, problem-centered, transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, hybrid, demand-driven, entrepreneurial, [and] network-embedded” (Sandmann, 2008, p. 97). In sum, in relation to public life, the “scholarship of engagement” professes commitments to reciprocal forms of knowledge integration and application through teaching, research, and service.

Five approaches to the scholarship of engagement include public scholarship, participatory research, community partnerships, public
information networks, and civic skills or civic literacy (Barker, 2004). Public scholarship is focused on the ways in which deliberative practices can contribute to creating a community’s sense of the public good. Participatory research is primarily attentive to the processes of participation. The community partnership approach places an “emphasis ... on social transformation” and is “concerned with power, resources, and building social movements” (p. 130). Public information networks are adept at working with communities to locate and utilize “resources and assets” (p. 131). Finally, a civic skills or literacy approach is committed to identifying and furthering “skills that are relevant to political participation and democratic decision making” (p. 132). While the above taxonomy suggests directions for practices of engagement, it also adopts a loose understanding of engagement.

Even when Barker and other scholars make explicit reference to democratic and public priorities, they for the most part do not thoroughly explore the particulars of these priorities, the ways in which they do or do not require an allegiance to specific values, or whether or not they necessitate the willingness and ability to consider competing interests. In fact, the most common thread in the variety of expressions of the scholarship of engagement may be the “growing acceptance of a problem-driven approach to the epistemology and methodology of contemporary scholarship” (Barker, 2004, p. 133). One can read a great deal about the process of engaged scholarship and far less about desired outcomes, particularly at concrete levels. Further, uses of the term public are various and often conflicting. Most scholars adopt broad understandings of the term public, and thus the term can include any number of concerns, including those that have little connection to democratic values or practices.

The scholarship of engagement may have succeeded in raising a certain set of questions about the production of knowledge, the responsibilities that universities have to public life, and the role of communities in defining and shaping responses to public concerns. However, in the context of articulating democratic commitments and the possibilities for justice, it has not been nearly as successful in (1) defining the specifics of “public” priorities or (2) addressing the ethically laden outcomes of engagement. Attention to engagement does open up the question of the connections and commitments that universities have with and to public life. To a large extent, faculty members have stepped into this opening to examine the processes of knowledge production and to emphasize that knowledge should be accessible and applicable. This focus on
accessibility and applicability in no way ensures justice. Democratic commitments and justice require an interest in and alignment with a specific set of outcomes, a bold claim on what will be materially necessary for justice to occur. In a society in which large numbers of people are wholly unaware of, for example, the state’s complicity in the death of men like Frank Paul, educators must identify the concrete desires of the practices of engagement. In settings in which faculty members choose both “the subject,” and how that subject will be represented, engagement that leads to justice must go far beyond broad commitments to “public” priorities.

Educators increasingly pursue reciprocal partnerships with a range of groups and concerns, including social service organizations; small and large businesses in medical, technological, and other industries; and public institutions like the one complicit in Frank Paul’s death. Concerning the service-learning examples discussed earlier in the chapter, the knowledge pursued may be collaboratively produced and applicable in specific settings. Who is that knowledge designed to serve? What does it aim to achieve? What does it seek to change? What does it choose to leave unexamined? In much of the literature on the scholarship of engagement, the process itself is what qualifies it as “engagement.” In contrast, undergraduate education that opens up possibilities for democratic practices and the public good will need to articulate a relationship to and pursuit of specific priorities. It will concern itself with just ends and practices, and not only with the implementation of processes that espouse loose notions of justice and fairness, often with no attention to power or to the ongoing violence of injustice.

Knowledge always supports specific ends. When individuals and communities use knowledge, it has concrete outcomes that bear on how people live. With regard to the video that the presenters on the panel addressed, and its attention to Latino/a’s families’ “hopes and dreams,” is this knowledge designed to educate whites in the community or to draw critical attention to federal and state immigration and labor policies? All knowledge use and application is ethical. Individuals in an organization or institution can rely on principles of reciprocity, partnership, and problem solving to ensure a wide range of outcomes, including those that might be unjust. All engagement is, in part, an articulation of the future in which we want to live, a set of cognitive and affective investments directed towards one way of living together and not another. Even as the scholarship of engagement may have compelled certain faculty members to acknowledge that knowledge
production and teaching might pursue public commitments, it does not sufficiently explore the ethical components of those commitments, including whom they are serving, and in what ways.

In summary, the scholarship of engagement has been in part a response to overly technical and specialized knowledge that is far removed from public concerns, and it has stressed the importance of grounding knowledge production and application in community-academic partnerships with clear attention to community needs and priorities. While this emphasis on community partnerships opens up possibilities for democratic priorities, it in no way ensures them. Further, in the context of social issues that are profoundly entrenched and complex, the scholarship of engagement does little to sustain even an awareness of these issues, let alone consideration of their resolution. For example, Cindy felt quite justified in turning away from the realities of queer lives. Commitments within the scholarship of engagement literature would not necessarily ensure an educational framework that would habitualize the consideration of these lives with clear attention to power and injustice.

At another level, educators on the service-learning panel noted at the start of this chapter stressed outcomes that in many ways had little to do with changing social conditions and the institutional injustices that led to those conditions. The outcomes identified by the presenters had far more to do with students’ comfort and individual gain and did little to shift their existing views of, for example, the systemic causes of poverty. Even as the scholarship of engagement has achieved discursive prominence and, in some instances, institutional support, such prominence and support in no way ensure any coherence or consistency in regard to what such scholarship looks like and requires. In the next section, I turn to a discussion of civic engagement, a term that more explicitly references the public components of engagement.

*Civic Engagement and the Place of Democratic Commitments*

The civic engagement literature has primarily emerged in the past two and a half decades, and has more directly and explicitly wrestled with the requirements of democratic and civic commitments than the scholarship of engagement. While the authors of one article assert that use of the term “civic” “should ... imply a set of public, democratic, and political (though not necessarily partisan) dimensions” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a, p. 7), a concise definition of the civic components
of engagement is not readily available in the literature. It may be most accurate to claim that scholarship that does discuss the assumptions and trajectories of the civic engagement movement offers far more attention to the difficulties of articulating and applying democratic commitments than to what these commitments actually are. In this section, I will discuss the history, expressions, and internal critique of civic engagement (i.e., critique offered by civic engagement advocates), and will then examine additional points of tension in the civic engagement literature.

Civic Engagement: History and Expressions

The civic engagement movement is closely linked with the “extant service-learning movement” (Brabant & Braid, 2009, 64), with adult education (Saddleton, 2000), and with social justice pedagogical frameworks (Brabant & Braid, 2009; Brabant & Hochman, 2004; Koliba, O’Meara, & Seidel, 2000). Civic engagement draws on the land grant movement from the late 1800s, which stressed the responsibilities of universities and service to society. In the 1980s, there was growing concern that colleges and universities in the United States were “in danger of losing [their] public purpose” (Hartley, 2009, p. 12), which prompted a range of responses focused on the public dimensions of higher education (Boyer, 1990; Ehrlich, 1995; Newman, 1985). In the context of this concern, as well as in regard to economic pressures, an uncertainty about higher education’s social role, young people’s political disengagement, and students’ growing interest in a degree for its money-earning potential, volunteerism and other forms of civic engagement in the 1980s and 1990s increased (Hartley, 2009). In the 1990s, “momentum around academic service-learning and civic engagement in general began to coalesce into a recognizable movement” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011, p. 1).

This movement has resulted in a host of programs and activities. Reports (Boyer, 1990; National Commission on Civic Renewal, 1997; Newman, 1985), organizations and programs (Campus Compact, Learn and Serve American Higher Education), and institutions have all generally affirmed the importance of higher education considering its responsibilities to life beyond the academy. Civic engagement priorities have supported increased attention to service learning, civic learning, civic capacities, democratic and deliberative dialogue, and community service. Civic engagement has also led to university-community
partnerships, the application of scholarly investigation to social concerns, the "integration of community-based activities into courses" so that students address "complex real-world problems," and the "preparation of students to live in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world" (Hartley, 2009, p. 12). While educators' civic engagement work has significantly increased the depth, scope, and range of activities over the past two decades, recent scholarship questions civic engagement's success in changing academic norms (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a) and its alignment with democratic purposes (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, 2011b; Saltmarsh, 2011a; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009).

While the "civic" aspects of the term "civic engagement" point to public and democratic concerns and priorities (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a), "engagement" refers to the participatory nature of all academic work, and especially epistemology and the importance of "relational, contextual, participatory, and localized ways of knowing" (Saltmarsh, 2011b, pp. 346-347). Likewise, civic engagement scholarship and practices have been especially attuned to behaviours and dispositions that connect one to others and encourage a sense of responsibility, to the "establishment of civic engagement projects as a legitimate activity" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, p. 9), and to the role of community organizations in informing both knowledge production and pedagogical practices. The work and consequences of civic engagement have changed higher education. However, civic engagement efforts have not rested on a "concerted action around a set agenda" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, p. 3). Recent literature makes serious and far-reaching charges about what exactly civic engagement has changed and whether or not it can fulfill the democratic commitments that many scholars see as a necessary component of the civic engagement movement.

**Civic Engagement: An Internal Critique**

Recent scholarship on civic engagement has made two important assertions: the "civic engagement agenda ... does not have clear goals or outcomes" (Saltmarsh, 2011a, p. 31) and "the dominant paradigm of civic engagement in higher education does not fulfill a democratic purpose" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, p. 1). Over the past decade, scholars have acknowledged that even as civic engagement efforts and activities have increased, particularly in the 1990s, "engagement" is too often used as a kind of catch-all phrase that "can say everything and nothing at the
same time” (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 5). Concerning the “civic” challenges of engagement, “the question before the movement now is whether an ill-defined and rather conventional – often bland – conception of engagement will be adequate to the task of inspiring people to undertake the difficult transformational change our democracy needs” (Hartley, 2011, p. 44; see also the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). Scholars have further claimed that institutional change related to civic engagement has been insufficient (Saltmarsh, 2011b) and that civic engagement work has “been accommodated to the dominant culture and structures of higher education” (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011b, p. 354).

Major institutional reports on civic engagement make several assertions relevant to questions of how higher education acts on public commitments. These include the claims that “there is considerable evidence that deep engagement is rare” (American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2002, p. 13), that civic engagement has not “been embraced across disciplines, departments, and institutions” (Burkardt, Holland, Percy, & Zimpher, 2004), and that the “civic engagement movement has not reached its full potential” (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, p. 5; emphasis in original). Even as this literature acknowledges the necessity for civic engagement work to challenge institutions and societal norms, to explicitly embrace a democratic agenda, and to demonstrate the capacity to critique the status quo, it also unambiguously claims that most civic engagement efforts have fallen short of these demands. As recently as 2011, more than 20 years after the origins of the civic engagement movement, one of the movement’s key proponents asks a foundational question: “What are the responsibilities of colleges and universities in our democracy?” (Hartley, 2011, p. 44).

Those who have worked at furthering civic engagement continue to grapple with this central issue. Their efforts have “challenged what counts” in higher education (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a, p. 2; emphasis in original) and have drawn attention to higher education’s deep investments in conventional teaching and knowledge production. However, according to scholars central to the field, civic engagement has not succeeded in “changing what counts” (p. 2; emphasis in original). According to these scholars, three important obstacles to more significant shifts include (1) a focus on activity and place rather than purpose and process, (2) a preference among those in higher education for what are often purported to be apolitical or neutral forms of knowledge, and
epistemological approaches that are primarily or exclusively technical and expert-driven. Civic engagement efforts have overwhelmingly focused on carrying out "activities," such as volunteer work, internships, field placements, or a course or research project. Such activities occur in a specific setting or place, nearly always based on broad understandings of "community" that are not necessarily linked to democratic commitments. Further, these activities are commonly supported by centres, offices, or programs, which are frequently although not exclusively distinct from academic disciplines. Such activities demand little to no institutional change and offer scant attention to the "underlying assumptions" that infuse "institutional behaviors, processes, and products" (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 6). In addition, this focus on activity and place rarely, if ever, insists on explicitly democratic objectives or processes.

The focus on activity and place, alongside a lack of attention to process and purpose, is intimately aligned with a firm and largely unremarked insistence among many proponents of civic engagement to "sidestep ... the political dimension of civic engagement" (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011a, p. 6). The routine and consequential existence of power and of "competing ... positions and opposing ideologies" are present in all aspects of public life (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2011b, p. 19), yet civic engagement advocates have long and repeatedly opted to ignore questions of politics and power and to insist on "academic neutrality," as does the 1999 Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education. Without explicit ties to democratic outcomes, civic engagement efforts are "remarkably apolitical" (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 8). Finally, this widespread preference for a supposed neutrality has close ties to technocratic, expert-driven forms of knowledge, "which have robbed the academy of its ability to effectively challenge society and to seek change" (p. 5). For civic engagement scholars, there is wide support in higher education for conventional forms of knowledge production, and their insistence on detachment and the removal of context. This ensures that many scholars continue to perceive conventional forms of knowledge as far superior to forms of knowledge that have a connection to public questions, that rely on community experience and expertise, and that consider the complexities of lived reality.

Given the prevalence of models for epistemological authority that rely on conventional expectations of distance and detachment, introducing and sustaining alternative epistemological models is rarely if ever straightforward. Epistemological norms have important consequences
related to civic engagement; faculty members and students easily and routinely assume that conventional forms of academic knowledge, including the ways in which social issues are identified and defined, are far more legitimate than community-based forms of knowledge; students become experts who provide service to communities and "fix" community problems; and faculty members and students actively deny the significance of power (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). Indeed, when my student Cindy felt justified in suggesting that in a course on gender, it was not necessary to consider queer lives and experiences, she was, in effect, privileging the conventional forms of knowledge that had to date shaped much of her university education.

In response to this weakened and, many would argue, ineffectual model for civic engagement, scholars central to the civic engagement movement have suggested that “democratic engagement” or “democratic civic engagement” might serve as a more appropriate and meaningful framework for institutions and faculty members committed to the democratic and public purposes of higher education. Explicitly attentive to “reciprocity (processes) and ... democratic dimensions (purpose)” (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 11), democratic engagement “seeks the public good with the public and not merely for the public” (p. 9; emphasis in original). Drawing on scholarship on public work (Boye, 2008) and on democratic professionalism (Dzur, 2008), democratic engagement emphasizes democratic values such as “inclusion” and processes that are collaborative, multidirectional, and problem-oriented.

Democratic engagement also draws attention to the necessity of second-order change in pursuing democratic outcomes, a type of change that “reflect[s] major dissatisfaction with present arrangements” and that challenges “underlying assumptions and institutional behaviors, processes, and products” (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 13). The processes noted above—collaborative, multidirectional, and problem-oriented—do not currently shape the majority of educators’ work. Civic engagement efforts most often fit too easily within existing academic structures, which largely prevent what scholars such as Saltmarsh and Hartley call democratic engagement. Civic engagement, in this sense, is not up to the tasks and demands of democracy. In contrast, democratic engagement, which requires significant institutional change in academic settings, can speak to pressing social concerns in relevant and effective ways. In sum, while civic engagement efforts have directed attention to the “civic” aspects of engagement, scholars
have also pointed out that the results of this attention have emphasized activity and place at the expense of process and purpose. These scholars claim that “democratic engagement” is more likely to lead to democratic outcomes.

The Persistence of the Political and the Liabilities of Liberal Norms: Additional Critique of the Civic Engagement Movement

Recent scholarship has suggested that this attention to democratic engagement might be more able than civic engagement to support lasting, systemic, and significant shifts in higher education related to democratic outcomes (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). In considering possibilities for pursuit of the public good and justice, two additional claims are necessary. First, the refusal of civic engagement scholarship to take on the embedded and interest-driven nature of all scholarly work has supported an understanding of mainstream scholarship as neutral and interest-free and made largely invisible its commitments to the status quo and existing social arrangements, including those that are unjust. It has likewise perpetuated the idea that only scholarship that is explicit and transparent about its agenda has one. Second, civic engagement scholarship’s uncritical acceptance of liberal norms and values systematically and thoroughly obscures both the reality of routine injustice and the possibilities for justice. Before addressing the service-learning literature, I examine these two claims.

The Impossibility of “Opting Out” of Engagement: The Necessity of the Political

As discussed earlier in this chapter, work addressing the “scholarship of engagement” and civic engagement has asserted that higher education must “play a role in responding to social challenges” (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 3). This assertion can easily lead to the assumption that one can engage in forms of teaching, research, and service that do not “play a role” or are not a response. On the whole, the civic engagement movement has not made the claim that all educational work plays a role and is a response, albeit with varying priorities. The civic engagement movement has sustained the idea that engagement is optional and that the bulk of teaching and knowledge production is, in fact, disinterested.

All educational practice, whether teaching, research, or service, is
engaged and has consequences that will bear on the social. Educational work grapples with and is committed to a large range of interests and outcomes. Whereas civic engagement scholars have insisted on civic and public outcomes, a lack of transparency among other scholars does not remove the existence of an agenda from the work these scholars perform. Educators who are not explicit about their research and teaching priorities are supporting a host of interests, including maintenance of the status quo, profit-seeking endeavours, an orientation towards increased individualization and privatization, and an acceptance of and support for existing social relationships and structures. Educational work that is outside of social relations and contexts, that is unimplicated, is not possible. Had scholars working in the field of civic engagement drawn attention to this premise, this might have enlarged the conversation and encouraged a broad discussion of the range of ends that we, as faculty members, pursue through our work.

Scholars have claimed, in various ways, that all teaching, research, and service are consequential and go beyond the walls of the academy. In this sense, inasmuch as students use knowledge to affect how people live, engagement is inevitable, and is itself a “default” component of all scholarship and teaching. All universities are inevitably committed to some set of ends, be these ends related to social challenges, the public good, and/or to economic competitiveness. The question is to which assumptions, desires, priorities, and needs faculty members’ work commits itself and not if one commits to specific assumptions, desires, priorities, and needs. As I will discuss in more depth in chapter 4, asserting (explicitly or implicitly) that the functions of teaching, research, and service can be systematically contained and are, in effect, wholly resistant to any form of embeddedness and consequence beyond the academy is a profoundly unsustainable claim. This is far less a question of what one desires (e.g., to continue working with the assumption that educational institutions and practices are neutral) than an issue of what is ontologically and epistemologically possible.

Civic engagement scholarship has opted to not rigorously examine the fault line that arises when scholars assert that “disinterested” scholarship and teaching are possible. This group of scholars engage in a particularly debilitating move when they assert a set of priorities regarding democratic outcomes and then exercise caution in articulating the values inherent in such priorities. Ideally, all academic work will be explicit about its engagements, and faculty members will opt
to be transparent about that to which we imagine our teaching might lead. At its best, education will prepare students to wrestle with the meanings, expressions, and realizations of democratic values. Educators who opt to ignore these questions do not operate as if they are separate from particular priorities and interests. Instead, they are committed to a different set of investments. Education, inevitably, bears on the material. It affirms and challenges norms and moves towards certain futures. All "education has politicity, the quality of being political ... it is never neutral" (Freire, 2001, p. 148). The choice of civic engagement scholars to not rigorously examine the reality that all institutions, departments, and faculties are implicated in some set of value-laden and politically and materially active priorities has had three concrete consequences.

First, it has left the civic engagement movement open to critique from more conventional scholars, who can charge that civic engagement advocates are burdening universities with the inappropriate educational objective of considering how institutions are invested in particular ends. Dismissing the civic engagement agenda as antithetical to the fundamental work of education itself becomes possible and even logical. Second, civic engagement work has been highly cautious in relation to articulating the values central to countries with democratic aspirations and has openly refused to consider the political nature of civic engagement and education in general. Civic engagement scholars may have opted to be cautious in relation to explicit political priorities in order to increase the possibilities of integration into mainstream academic frameworks. The consequences of such a choice, whether consciously pursued or not, in effect, empty out the very core of democratic work, which is to pursue equitable ways of living together.

As a result, the civic engagement movement has not been able to unambiguously address the role of power. Even as it refers to democratic values such as inclusion, respect, tolerance, and dialogue (see, e.g., Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009), the civic engagement movement rarely names concrete priorities, such as the reduction and elimination of state-sanctioned violence against Indigenous and Black Canadian and African American communities, inequitable graduation rates by race, and educational environments that are absent of homophobia. Finally, a third consequence is that conventional forms of scholarship maintain centrality and enjoy high levels of legitimacy in the academy, and they appear as if they transcend interests. Increased attention to the implicatedness of all scholarship would more effectively reveal
that with regard to those institutions and faculty members who claim neutrality or a firm remove from any kind of interests or agenda, "when we try to be neutral ... we support the dominant ideology" (Freire, 2001, p. 148). All of these consequences have limited the effectiveness of civic engagement.

The Problem with Liberal Norms

A second point of critique related to civic engagement work is its routine endorsement of a liberal framework in regard to democratic practices, broadly understood. I make reference to liberal orientations to social, political, and educational projects throughout this book, and in chapters 4 and 5 will present a more extended critique of liberal norms, particularly in educational settings. My objective in this section is to draw attention to the ways in which civic engagement scholarship seemingly effortlessly embraces and affirms what one scholar refers to as the "norms of democratic culture" (Saltmarsh, 2011b, p. 348). Such norms often include values civic engagement scholars reference in their work, such as "inclusiveness" and "an equality of respect" (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009, p. 6). These references are rarely accompanied by any discussion of these values in public life in North America, particularly in relation to the concrete practices of injustice at individual and systemic levels. By largely ignoring or minimizing the existence of injustice, this endorsement of liberal frameworks insistently obscures inequitable power dynamics and ultimately harms the possibilities for justice. Two concrete issues are (1) the civic engagement literature's refusal to identify and name the existence of violence and oppression against subordinate groups, and to offer a parallel analysis of the mechanisms and consequences of injustice, and (2) insufficient consideration of what it means to value democratic practices in a context in which long-standing and supposedly "democratic" structures have been used to anti-democratic and unjust ends.

Naming Injustice. Social change requires that individuals and communities name injustice. Identification of injustice is an obvious requirement of pursuing justice. Such identification informs people who may be unaware of occurrences of injustice, specifies the problem to be addressed, and offers an indication of what might be different once justice is achieved. When civic engagement scholars profess a commitment to justice, and yet largely refuse to name the material practices and consequences of injustice, how can one be certain about what these scholars actually want to change? A great deal of the civic
engagement literature says little to nothing about injustice—where and why it occurs, what it looks like, who it affects, and what will contribute to its undoing. Service-learning literature does often make explicit reference to community settings, and thus might reference specific issues; such as the examples I note at the start of this chapter. Yet, in the scholarship addressing civic engagement as an educational orientation from conceptual and philosophical perspectives, one might assume that injustice, and especially systemic inequity, is simply not present in North America. This turn away from the material and lived reality, a focus on aspirations with little to no attention to the real and urgent harm that injustice does, and a lack of consideration of systems, power, and competing interests are all markers of liberal work, particularly in educational contexts.

Although the use of words such as “inclusiveness,” “transformation,” and “enlightened and productive citizenry” (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton 2009, pp. 6, 3) in a recent critique of civic engagement may be interpreted to point to the broad purposes of civic engagement efforts, only one sentence in the 15-page document invokes the material. This sentence refers to “persistent poverty in our inner cities,” “our failure to have a meaningful dialogue about the war in Iraq and Afghanistan,” and our “fragile economy” (p. 3). These issues are noted as “significant societal challenges” (ibid.). None of these references clearly identifies those responsible for these issues or acknowledges in any clear way the significance or locations of power.

The language scholars use to identify and describe “societal challenges” is crucial. Such naming communicates, in various ways, if these are forms of institutional injustice or individual failures, if they are systemic and ongoing, and if they are isolated and infrequent. Is poverty primarily the fault of individuals, or is poverty connected to institutions? When we refer to the “fragile economy,” do we raise the possibility that business and government leaders have had a role in creating this fragility and that these individuals and institutions thus have responsibility in addressing the consequences of such fragility? In terms of Iraq and Afghanistan, in addition to the goal of dialogue, which in no way necessitates an end to war and violence, do we raise the issue of imperialism? Do institutions have any responsibility in responding to “societal challenges”?

The absence of terms that reference concrete ends and institutional responsibility in the civic engagement literature, unfortunately, renders largely invisible not only the materiality of “significant societal
challenges,” but also the ways in which such challenges may be rooted in institutions. Further, as I commented at a conference on personal and social responsibility in higher education that I attended in 2011, we are not talking about issues that will occur 50 years in the future, or issues concerning which we can afford a kind of comfortable patience. “Significant societal challenges” are bearing on lives now. When a body of scholarship repeatedly refers to the concepts of democracy and to the desirability of justice, yet seems to simultaneously render invisible the lived experience of that injustice, what does this scholarship seek to change? To whom does it speak? Particularly if one assigns any sense of urgency to the day-to-day violence oppressed groups experience, what is there to reassure these communities that the civic engagement scholarship has an awareness of, let alone a concern with, such violence?

“Democratic” Norms. The easy reference to “democratic norms,” “inclusion,” and “respect” constitute a second component of liberal shortcomings in the civic engagement scholarship. The suggestion that “democratic norms” have been beneficial to all in equitable ways represents a dismissal of history and a radical denial of current practices. This acceptance of democratic practices is largely supported by liberal scholarship in political, social, and educational discourse. In fact, it has been well established that liberal and democratic norms have been a significant source of violence in North America (Smith, 2001; Smith, 2006). As one scholar notes, “it has never been against US law to commit genocide against Indigenous peoples—in fact, genocide is the law of the country” (Smith, 2006, p. 70; emphasis in original). In other words, democracy is “actually the alibi for democracy” and “covers up United States control over Indigenous lands” (ibid.).

When considering the most entrenched and harmful of “democracy’s discontents” (Schneider, 2000, p. 107), what do commitments to “inclusion” and “collaborative processes” articulated by those who already have considerable amounts of power offer to marginalized groups, and how will such commitments lead to justice? When I think about students like Cindy and Allison, and preparing them for life in a world in which injustice is routine, deeply rooted, intricate, and messy, I am particularly aware that education that fosters a willingness and ability to address competing interests and move towards justice will require far more than the desire to include, which can be interpreted to mean “inclusion” based on the dominant group’s norms and terms.

On the one hand, Cindy’s call for “streamlined” education was, in some ways, a straightforward rejection of inclusion. In stating, “I thought this
course was going to be streamlined.” Cindy might have been declaring, “I expect this course to address gender, narrowly understood, and to stay away from a discussion of queer lives that in any way challenges the status quo.” In response to Allison’s claim of her disconnect with nation, educators might understand an epistemology of inclusion as an appropriate and sufficient response. In other words, course content might include or recognize racism in North America. Clearly, faculty members can opt to “include” queers and racial minorities as subjects. Indeed, faculty members have relied on political and social frameworks of inclusion to pedagogically and epistemologically “include” bodies that knowledge and course content continue to leave out of educational and public discourse. Yet, the logic of inclusion often rigorously denies power. It also requires those in subordinate groups to fundamentally reject their own humanity and possibilities for sovereignty. Inclusion works if and when those in the subordinate group wholly and without critique accept the norms of the dominant group, which have created and continue to maintain inequity in the first place. In practice, whether implemented politically, socially, pedagogically, or epistemologically, or as is most often the case, from a combination of these modalities, the realities and demands of inclusion can be devastating for subordinate groups and are squarely in opposition to forms of justice that require “determining the conditions of one’s action” (Young, 1990, p. 37).

The concept of inclusion has long been central to liberal political thought. In the context of liberal democracies, “there is a common assumption ... that they are and should be incorporative ... Inclusion implies the state will tackle and resolve problems of, for instance, inequality and access” (Macdonald, 2008, p. 341). Yet, whatever the liberal state’s discursive allegiances to inclusion, there are “ideological limits to liberalism’s incorporation of difference” (p. 342). When considering the capacities of civic engagement to address entrenched forms of injustice, moving towards justice will require possibilities for oppressed groups to, “on their own terms,” interact with and challenge those in power (ibid.). Inclusionary frameworks necessarily preclude such engagement. Indeed, while seldom acknowledged in public discourse, which frequently lauds countries such as Canada for its “forward looking” policies of multicultural inclusion (Mackey, 2002), inclusion “legitimates the status quo” (Preece, 2001, p. 1). Inclusion reflects the “attempt to perfect; to master or make normal (that which is other),” and to ultimately “turn everyone into ... one kind of being, at least at some level” (Dunne, 2009, p. 52).
Although I cannot know, I wonder if Allison’s choice to articulate her understanding of living in Canada as a racial minority woman in a response paper rather than to the class as a whole was, in effect, a strategic move that would reduce the chance that other students in that class would respond with a discourse of inclusion. She was, in effect, refusing to participate on her peers’ terms, which can also be read as insisting on forms of subjecthood which, as least for that moment, were less burdened with liberal contradictions than might have been the case had she made the statement to the class as a whole. Even as I, as the faculty person, might have responded within the logic of inclusion, Allison did not give her classmates such an opportunity. Inasmuch as pedagogical practices always invoke ontological associations, how do educators, in invoking a discourse of inclusion, demand a “form of ‘personhood’” of our students, especially those students who are in subordinate groups, which requires that they “relinquish their own” (Macdonald, 2008, p. 348)? In sum, easy support for inclusion within liberal discourse and within the civic engagement literature may feel familiar, reassuring, and worth defending to many educators. Yet such support ultimately works to “transform the colonized population into subjects who align with [dominant] norms” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 443). Within such norms, “values that challenge the homogenizing force of Western liberalism and free-market capitalism” (Alfred, 1999, p. 60) are rarely if ever present.

In refusing to name injustice, and in uncritically accepting “democratic norms” and discourses of inclusion, the civic engagement scholarship effectively denies, or at least dilutes, the daily reality of oppression of marginalized groups and simultaneously obscures the workings of privilege and power. To name the existence of injustice and the desirability of justice at conceptual levels and, at the same time, to refuse to consider the materiality of oppression, does harm. Such forms of naming remove the reality of oppression from public discourse. “Democratic norms” continue to privilege some and harm others. Frank Paul is dead. Cindy would have liked to ignore queer lives. Allison felt separate from nation. A white man treated boys of colour in a library computer room as less than human. Injustice is everywhere, and it acts on bodies. Whom is civic engagement scholarship serving? What realities and norms does it seek to make public, to bring into both higher education scholarship and other discursive arenas? Whose lives is it designed to change? Even as civic engagement scholars have stressed the importance of democratic purpose, references to this purpose are largely in
the abstract and favour rhetorical over material commitments. Inasmuch as civic engagement efforts are concerned with deeply rooted forms of injustice, the articulation of purposes will need to be much more specific and concrete.

Service Learning

Service learning represents an institutional, curricular, and pedagogical set of efforts to integrate a variety of forms of community service into academic study. While faculty members, staff, and administrators might often use the terms service learning and civic engagement interchangeably, these terms are most accurately viewed, from historical, conceptual, and programmatic perspectives, as parallel yet not necessarily overlapping. As explained earlier in this chapter, endorsements on the part of faculty members or institutions of civic engagement work are most often an acknowledgment of public and democratic priorities. While the classroom is one setting in which to enact these public commitments, research and service can also further civic engagement efforts.

Service learning, in contrast, is nearly exclusively carried out in curricular contexts. Further, early service-learning activities were often aligned with the public and democratic components of civic engagement, and some scholarly discussions of service learning assume the integration of civic outcomes as a priority. At the same time, faculty members can pursue service learning with little or no attention to civic priorities. While faculty members and institutions have made explicit and substantive commitments to service learning, they have not found consensus as to whether or not service learning has significantly altered higher education. Below, I offer an overview and discussion of service learning in higher education.

The term service learning was "coined in the late 1960s" (Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 14). Service learning efforts draw on educational theorists such as Paulo Freire and John Dewey, and on a variety of educational philosophies and programs including community service, volunteerism, experiential learning, social justice movements in education, and student-centred and experiential pedagogies (Rochelleau, 2004; Vartlo, 1997). Scholars have also made strong connections between service learning and pragmatism, even as these connections are "rarely ... directly formulated and attributed" (Saltmarsh, 1996, p. 14). Service learning, routinely understood as one form of experiential education,
has been defined as occurring when “students participate in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Jacoby, 1996, p. 5). The combination of experiential and academic learning is crucial, as is the connection to a specific community setting or organization. In effect, service learning “uses ‘service’ as a text” (Varlotta, 1997, p. 453).

**Philosophical and Historical Underpinnings**

Service learning requires a curricular component focused on “community needs” or “community service.” Thus, one’s approach to “community” is crucial in regard to service learning. According to one article, “the history of what we have come to call community service actually entails three different and continuing cultural responses to the individual and social dilemmas that emerged from the crisis of community at the turn of the last century” (Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997, p. 137). In brief, these three understandings of community include (1) an emphasis on the non-profit and social service sectors, (2) the importance of educated citizens acting as democratic agents paired with “support for a large, powerful state” (p. 138), and (3) an explicit rejection of “most of the assumptions and values underlying both capitalism and democracy” (p. 137). As proponents of each response, Jane Addams, John Dewey, and Dorothy Day all grappled extensively with the challenges of charity, a mode of responding to social issues that “assumes the continued and necessary existence of a dependent and ‘lower’ class to be the recipient of the kindness of their superiors” (Dewey, 1978, p. 348).

Over time, there was a crucial shift in the language on which Addams, Dewey, and Day relied, namely, from terms such as charity and philanthropy to service: “A dominant language of charity and philanthropy was replaced in the popular vernacular and public discourse sometime later in the 20th century with a language of ‘service’” (Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997, p. 146). The tensions surrounding this shift in language explicitly and implicitly align with many of the shortcomings of civic engagement and service-learning work that I identify in this chapter. Morton and Saltmarsh conclude that this shift in language does not represent a “fundamental reframing” (p. 146) in regard to the conceptual underpinnings of service learning. In other words, the current reliance on a service model is significantly tied to long-standing notions of charity. While Morton and Saltmarsh conclude their analysis with the
assertion that community service “does contain an antidote to the crisis of community” (p. 148), they do not fully address how this antidote will be put into practice. I have included attention to the historical and philosophical foundations of the term “service” because these issues are at the heart of what service learning will offer to both students and to public life. Unfortunately, the type of analysis found in Morton and Saltmarsh’s article, which examines the central assumptions and objectives of service learning, is rare. In the 17 years since their article has been published, there has been little to no scholarship produced that offers a thorough conceptual investigation of the deeply rooted underlying assumptions that drive service learning.

While a rigorous conceptual analysis is lacking, there has been some attention to the concrete expressions of service learning from a charity model and how such a model limits considerations of justice. Within the service-learning literature, scholars have asserted that while charity refers to the “provision of help,” social justice “refers to the state of institutional or structural arrangements” (Marullo & Edwards, 2000, p. 899). Others have addressed the ways in which service learning based on notions of charity might encourage victim blaming and a retreat from the consideration of contextual and structural factors (Holli, 2004). As one scholar asserts, service learning for social justice makes significant demands on the instructor. When considering the charity vs. the social justice approach to service learning, “it is important to evaluate which type of service learning has the greater impact on the community and the greater possibility of social transformation in the long run” (Lewis, 2004, p. 107). Consideration of questions of impact, the priorities and objectives of service learning, and the philosophical and ontological foundations from which service-learning work emerges is crucial when engaging questions of social justice. At a broader level, scholars have addressed the limits of charity and approaches to justice that go beyond charity (see, e.g., Shaikh, 2007; Young, 2006). As one public intellectual from the United States succinctly states, “Well, charity ain’t justice. Charity is beautiful, but you ain’t got to be charitable to me if I already got justice” (Dyson, 2005). In sum, the extent to which notions of charity underpin one’s approach to service learning and to justice is critical.

Existing literature has identified specific approaches to service learning, even as the discussion of these approaches, for the most part, does not include in-depth attention to issues of power. These are the philanthropic, civic, communitarian, and social justice approaches. Philanthropic approaches draw on the idea that “service is simply a natural
social responsibility of those who can offer assistance grounded in the context of charity” (Abel & Sementelli, 2004, p. 61). In this model, while social challenges exist, they can best be addressed by those who are sufficiently privileged to be able to offer resources and assistance to those who are “less fortunate.” Philanthropic approaches require little to no critical analysis or reflection concerning the conditions that created the social challenges in the first place. As this model “creates and supports dependency” (p. 61) and discourages partnerships and reciprocal relationships, some believe that it “undermine[s] many of service-learning’s objectives” (p. 65). Another important component of the philanthropic approach is neutrality with regard to social issues (Abel & Sementelli, 2004; Hoppe, 2004). Academic discussions about “the good life,” for example, should be abstract and should not attempt to come to any conclusion in relation to specific social or political positions. Even as many proponents of service learning might agree that a philanthropic approach is “paternalistic and marginalizes those it seeks to help” (Hoppe, 2004, p. 140), one can identify traces of this approach in many service-learning efforts.

In contrast to the philanthropic approach’s emphasis on altruism, the civic approach focuses on mutual responsibility and begins with the premise that “democracy demands equal participation and voice by all citizens” (Battistoni & Hudson, 1997, p. 5). Civic approaches to service learning consider democratic activities (voting, civic participation, etc.), and go beyond these forms of involvement to emphasize the role of higher education in addressing “pressing social problems” through relationships with community stakeholders (Watson, 2004, p. 77). For those who support a civic approach to service learning, ideally, students will learn through participation in community work, and knowledge will be centrally directed at “improving human welfare” (Hoppe, 2004, p. 141). At the same time, civic approaches often fail to encourage “broad social critique” and consideration of systems and power (Westerhuis & Kahne, 2004, p. 261). Building on liberal understandings of public life and social issues, the civic approach seems to suggest that encouraging civic considerations – reciprocity, community building, democratic ideals – will be sufficient to ensure democratic outcomes.

A communitarian approach to service learning emphasizes the social nature of all public life. Directly opposing the civic approach’s affinity for liberalism’s “fixation on the sovereign autonomy of rights-bearing individuals” (McClay, 1998, p. 101), communitarianism shifts the gaze from the individual as autonomous to the individual as a “member of a
larger social fabric” (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, Rosner, & Stephens 2000, p. xxvi). Those who advocate this approach believe that through, with, and in community is where the work of democracy occurs. However, critics have argued that this approach is “much too closely bound to the very liberalism it would correct” and that it downplays the importance of defining what type of community we desire, overstates the existence of shared values, and is naive in its estimation of how community-based dialogue and action will address social challenges (Murphy, 2004, p. 126). Further, communitarian approaches to service learning “tend to romanticize the idea of community and to sentimentalize the idea of the situated self” (Boyte & Farr, 1997, p. 6). On the whole, communitarian approaches also fail to sufficiently address particular and competing interests.

Alongside these three approaches to service learning, the social justice understanding has offered the most explicit attention to oppression, power, and social change. Social justice approaches consider institutional and systemic issues. Likewise, students must learn to consider competing interests, the significance and uses of power, and the ethical priorities a democratic agenda requires. Even as many faculty members link their own service-learning efforts with social justice priorities, the limits of such efforts are often easily visible, particularly when one looks closely. Raising questions about how service learning considers institutional injustice, power, and systemic change can quickly reveal the lack of anything beyond a verbal commitment in service learning to social justice. A study of 600 service-learning programs found that a mere one per cent included a “focus on specifically political concerns and solutions such as creating or working with groups to represent the interests of a community” (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007, p. 5). Indeed, the panel presentations I discuss at the start of this chapter, all of which in some way referenced social justice, point to several conceptual questions about the ways in which service learning orients itself towards social justice outcomes. The philosophical and historical underpinnings of service learning, as reflected in these four approaches, have a direct bearing on the implementation of service-learning efforts.

Purpose, Objectives, and Pedagogical Components

For Brabant and Braid (2009), service learning has a “dual purpose: (1) to stimulate students’ interest in, and ability to digest, course content as they relate to practical experiences beyond the classroom and
(2) to aid in the process of inculcating values we deem essential to the well-being of any civic construct—humility, efficacy, and empathy" (pp. 67–68; emphasis in original). Service-learning outcomes often include an integration of competencies in the disciplines and in civic areas, enhancement of civic responsibility, development of personal and social responsibility, community activism, enhanced academic learning, and intercultural competency (Brabant & Braid, 2009; Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). While much of the attention to service-learning outcomes notes the importance of civic-related learning, prominent scholars in the field have also questioned the ways in which service-learning efforts, over time and across institutions, have maintained a commitment to civic engagement priorities. Beginning in the 1990s, in regard to the combination of service and academic study, instructors focused most consistently on "reflective, community-based pedagogy" and, secondarily, if at all, on civic learning outcomes (Saltmarsh, 2011a, p. 30). Indeed, the focus on "the technical aspects of a discipline" resulted in even the "most exemplary models of service-learning" offering no attention to civic dimensions (p. 30). While educators have been able to adapt civic content to service-learning courses, ensuring civic learning outcomes is less common. In regard to this analysis, then, service learning may or may not foreground or even consider civic, public, or democratic outcomes. Indeed, it is possible to shape service learning around conventional disciplinary norms, as long as the course includes a community component.

Faculty members incorporating service learning into their courses have long considered both pedagogical components and desired outcomes. Pedagogically, service learning, to some extent, shifts the space of learning from being primarily or exclusively the classroom to occurring in both the community and on campus. Other aspects of teaching change as well. Faculty members must increase their knowledge of community networks and stakeholders; offer considerable attention to the process of learning as it occurs while linked to a community setting, which often involves shifting time frames and revisiting assignments and expectations; and balance between discipline- and civic-based knowledge, inasmuch as service-learning faculty members are interested in the public and democratic aspects of service learning (Peters, 2004). In sum, service learning rests on pedagogies that are centred on "connecting structured student activities in community work with academic study, decentering the teacher as the singular source of knowledge, incorporating a reflective teaching methodology, and shifting the
model of education, to use Paulo Freire's distinction, from 'banking' to 'dialogue'" (Saltmarsh, Zlotkowski, & Hollander, 2011c, p. 288).

The pull between disciplinary knowledge and content vs. civic knowledge, content, and capacities is one of two tensions that are acknowledged by proponents of service learning. Further, service learning is always positioned within university structures. In the context of faculty members' and departmental understandings of service learning as problematic or a threat to disciplinary learning, service-learning advocates must consider whether to align with traditional academic structures or to find support elsewhere in the university. Ideally, institutions and faculty members will "position service learning as a core academic effort ... an activity belonging to the primary systems and structures of higher education -- departments, curricula, and activities that constitute the faculty domain" (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a, p. 3). When faculty members and institutions situate service learning as a necessary part of disciplinary knowledge, rather than as an optional or even undesirable addition to it, service-learning efforts will usually be more sustainable.

At the same time, such an approach has been rare. Even as service learning has prioritized the importance of becoming recognized as a "legitimate form of scholarship ... for some the very idea of organizing in a way that recognized the legitimacy of disciplinary units and cultures was inherently problematic ... the disciplines themselves were a large part of the problem" (Saltmarsh & Zlotkowski, 2011a, p. 3). While this tension is at first glance primarily a structural question -- i.e., where to "house" service-learning programs -- it simultaneously raises questions about outcomes and how and to what extent service learning becomes an integral part of students' education. When a department prioritizes service learning within its curriculum, this will significantly bear on the education of students in that department. In contrast, for students who take service-learning courses outside of their department (courses housed either in other departments or in non-departmentally based programs on campus), service learning may be, proportionately, a very small component of one's education.

In relation to all three presentations discussed at the beginning of this chapter, I wondered how the faculty members were defining social justice. As all of the papers primarily addressed individuals, attitudes, and behaviours, rather than institutions, power, and systemic patterns and practices, did the presenters assume that social justice might be accomplished in the absence of attention to the latter group of concepts? In the
case of the course that designed a film that portrayed Latino/as as having "hopes and dreams" and the "important part [Latino/as] play in the local and state economy." I can see how this might, for non-Latino/as, slightly shift their understanding of individual Latino/as. As the educators stated, they hoped to interrupt stereotypes, offer a critique of anti-immigrant rhetoric, and portray Latino/as more positively. These goals are clearly components of moving towards justice and point to the possibility of awareness of the complexities of injustice and how it works, as well as the workings of power, specifically in the context of students and their relationship to migrant workers.

This course, which closely aligns with the social justice approach to service learning, raises questions we might ask of all service-learning courses. To what extent does the class focus on discursive and rhetorical vs. material realities? A film positioned as an educational tool that is directed towards reducing stereotypes is addressing injustice at a representational level. Where is the material, or change focused on living conditions for Latino/a workers? Is power analyzed primarily in relationship to students, in broader contexts, or not at all? To what extent do service-learning courses pursue increased dialogue, tolerance, and inclusion, rather than the elimination of "institutional conditions which inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions" (Young, 1990, p. 38)? Dialogue, especially in the absence of a clear set of priorities for change at material levels, may be primarily successful at easing the consciences of the dominant group and offering to faculty members a sense of "making a difference." Particularly when commitments to empathy, tolerance, and inclusion are emphasized, this can set up a framework in which the dominant group sets the terms. To offer inclusion into unjust systems seems a questionable and destructive objective, particularly when one is in the subordinate group.

Two aspects of service learning that limit its ability to contribute to democratic practices and to justice are (1) a lack of institutional analysis and an insufficient language for power and (2) service learning that is constructed as "application" vs. "implication" (Britzman, 1995, p. 163). Apart from service-learning scholarship that explicitly addresses social justice, the service-learning literature offers little attention to institutional injustice and change. Further, faculty members can make verbal and conceptual commitments to social justice, and might simultaneously pursue pedagogical practices and learning outcomes that are largely aligned with a philanthropic approach to service-learning and
charity-based approaches to justice and equity. For faculty members who do attempt through service-learning courses to integrate careful attention to systemic injustice, a multitude of social and institutional constraints make such goals particularly challenging to achieve. Service-learning courses often reduce democratic practices to individual actions, draw attention away from power relationships, and give visibility and priority to concepts such as dialogue, inclusion, and tolerance. They also simultaneously render invisible systemic practices of injustice and the inevitability and complexity of competing interests and power. Courses that do either or both are, in fact, reducing the capacity for the students in these courses to understand and analyse the requirements of democratic practices.

Inasmuch as students learn that democratic values and possibilities for justice are achieved solely or primarily through attention to individual behaviours and require no consideration of power, they will very likely be opposed to ideas that insist on the primacy of the relational and the role of institutions. When students repeatedly learn that responding to social needs and considering justice and the public good are matters of attitudes and individual behaviour, they can be quite confident in rejecting course content that challenges this approach. Thus, service-learning courses, especially those that focus on the individual and lack attention to power, can, in effect, support a vigorous resistance to instructors who offer content that questions the role of institutions. Particularly in educational and social frameworks that routinely affirm “a sense of being individual, disconnected from older social ties and able to pursue one’s own particular dreams and aspirations ... [and] individuals are affirmed for their human capital ... [and the] freedom to choose and consume” (Seddon, 2011, p. 176), normalizing a critique of institutions is challenging and can easily be overlooked in the interests of what seems possible in a term.

To pose a second set of questions related to service learning, I will borrow from Britzman’s idea of education as “application” vs. “implication” (1995, p. 163). In the context of considering undergraduate education and civic outcomes, we are all positioned as ethical agents, as people who are situated within a complex set of relationships and who are always choosing how to live within those relationships. In this sense, we are always and everywhere implicated. “Application” privileges a separation between “the interpreter and the interpreted” (Britzman, 1995, p. 163). I would claim that, on the whole, service-learning courses are based on a model of “application.” Though the courses might lead to
a sense of implication, they are conceptually and programmatically set up as “applications.” As a form of engaging the social, service-learning programs privilege application. This has a couple of concrete and problematic results that are highly relevant. To a large extent, service-learning courses are constructed as curricular programs that should meet the interests of the faculty person, who within the context of the course has the most power. Within the framework for the course (duration, desired outcomes, level of course, etc.), student and community organizations are expected to fit within faculty members’ expectations, even when faculty members can and do make serious attempts to offer something of value to the community organization.

At the same time, the structural model for all service-learning courses, regardless of the faculty member offering the class, raises several questions and risks. It potentially furthers the idea of democratic work as charity, repositions educators and students as the primary beneficiaries of civic or social justice service-learning work, locates relationships with community organizations as secondary to pedagogical and curricular objectives, and rearticulates and normalizes problematic power relationships. As Walker and Hart’s (2011) account of their service-learning course that involved community work in Belize demonstrates, at times such courses place multiple demands on a community with which the educators and students have no long-term or even recently formed relationships. Despite calls for partnerships, reciprocity, and mutuality, the reality of most service-learning efforts is that the educators and students have significantly higher levels of power, access, and control than the community organization. These limits are inherent to nearly all service-learning efforts. As a model for education, service learning runs a high risk of furthering such dynamics, often with the participating faculty members offering no critical assessment of the foundations and consequences of these dynamics.

In contrast, entering a course with the goal of grappling with the idea of implication sets up a radically different set of objectives and a different process for learning. Admittedly, a model of education as “implication” is, in many ways, more time-consuming and elusive and places different demands on faculty members than a model of education as “application.” Within a context of democratic engagement, relying on a model of implication begins with assessing, reflecting on, and critiquing the relationships in which students are already situated, rather than constructing a course in which they are placed into a specific setting. Students are always already variously implicated: at work, in campus
organizations, as members of a community, as constituents of political representatives, in housing/rental infrastructures, and as students. How might they consider power, injustice, and possibilities for justice from one of these locations, from “their own spaces” (Boyte & Farr, 1997; p. 7)? Organizing a course around students coming to a critical understanding of their own existing locations, which will be complex and related to power, may lead to concrete work with a community or other organization. As I will discuss further in chapter 7, starting from one’s own implicatedness, rather than from a position of application, has significant consequences related to considering democratic practices, the public good, and justice.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined philosophical and pedagogical components of the scholarship of engagement, civic education, and service learning in order to better understand the ways in which all three might potentially limit consideration of undergraduate education, democratic practices, the public good, and justice. As asserted in chapter 2, literature has claimed that institutions of higher education have an obligation to consider social needs. Within a focus on civic engagement, colleges and universities in North America have explicitly acknowledged that institutions of higher learning “are among the nation’s most valuable laboratories for civic learning and democratic engagement” (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p. 2). A recent report boldly “call[s] on the higher education community – and all of its stakeholders – to embrace civic learning and democratic engagement as an undisputed educational priority” (p. 6). The report goes on to assert that “there is a civic dimension to every field of study” (p. 16), and that education will ideally prepare students “with knowledge and for action” (p. 10; emphasis in original). Such reports, part of a wide body of scholarly work, firmly establish civic engagement as a concern central to higher education at a broad level.

Such robust support for careful attention to the public good and “democratic purposes” (p. 83) in the context of undergraduate education points to larger questions. How do existing philosophical and epistemological frameworks set up norms and possibilities for understanding self and other, for naming injustice, and for moving towards justice? How can educators ensure that ideas about civic engagement
and democratic practices fully acknowledge the embodied, urgent, and often violent consequences of routine injustice? As I argued in chapter 1, we reveal the most about ourselves as a society in terms of how we repeatedly turn towards "too much wrong." Similarly, how do the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning unambiguously urge us to turn toward "too much wrong," or to consider and act against state-sanctioned violence directed at Black and Indigenous men, differential graduation rates by race, and the removal of queer lives from public spaces? In what ways are the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning embedded within liberal norms, and how do such norms themselves impose constraints on how civic engagement and service learning might name injustice and imagine justice? For educators disturbed by a white man's communication in a library computer room, by the deaths of men like Amadou Diallo and Frank Paul, and by our students' refusal to consider injustice against queer communities on our campuses, what do the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning offer?

In this chapter, I have claimed that these three bodies of work carry a set of assumptions and conceptual legacies that, on the whole, negate the very analysis and practice that attention to democratic practices, the public good, and justice require. More than a matter of "not going far enough," I would argue that these three bodies of work, paired with liberal norms, are far too invested in maintaining allegiances to the individual as primary, to the illusion of neutrality, and to existing power arrangements to effectively take up questions of injustice and pursue the possibility of justice. Further, even as the scholarship of engagement, civic engagement, and service learning represent the most institutionally affirmed responses to the question of democratic practices and undergraduate education, numerous faculty members and departments pursue their work with little to no consideration of this scholarship and its relevance for undergraduate education. In the next chapter, I continue to examine the reach of liberal norms, and the ways in which these norms bear on educators' work more broadly. In many ways, the first component of moving towards a different set of practices is ensuring a full understanding of the ways in which existing assumptions move and breathe just under our skin.