

Community Knowledge-Making: The Mold Lady and Solidarity Science

- I. What is “Strong Objectivity”? (5 minutes)
- II. Mold, Health, and Justice: An Overview (5 minutes)
- III. The Making of the Mold Lady: Spoken Word (10 minutes)
- IV. Discussion: Finding Experts in Your Community

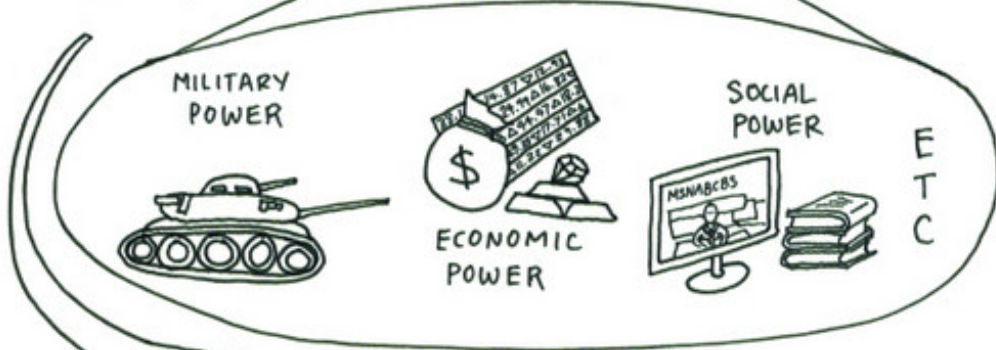
Strong Objectivity

A concept advanced by feminist philosopher of science Sandra Harding

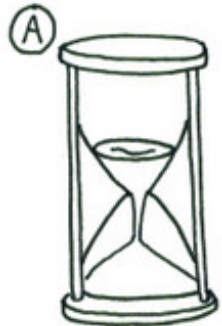
- Everyone has expertise based on their experience
- People with different social experiences have different forms of expertise (“situated knowledge”)
- People with less power in society are often assumed to be without relevant knowledge
- But scientific knowledge is more robust when it includes more people with more diverse experiences and perspectives (“strong objectivity”)



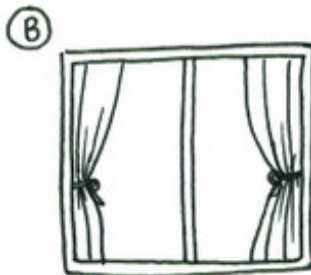
HARDING IS BASICALLY SAYING THAT GROUPS WITH LOTS OF POWER



OFTEN CAN CLAIM (OR HAVE IT BE ASSUMED) THAT THE KNOWLEDGE THEY PRODUCE IS ABSOLUTE TRUTH, IGNORING THE FACT THAT THIS KNOWLEDGE IS STILL FIRMLY TIED TO:



A CERTAIN TIME PERIOD



A CERTAIN PERSPECTIVE



A CERTAIN IMBALANCE OF POWER.

AND THEY GET AWAY WITH IT, BECAUSE OF THAT AFOREMENTIONED LOTS OF POWER.



HOWEVER, IN CONTRAST TO THIS IDEA OF ABSOLUTE TRUTH, EVEN JUST A QUICK GLANCE THROUGH THE HISTORY OF WESTERN SCIENCE SHOWS US THAT

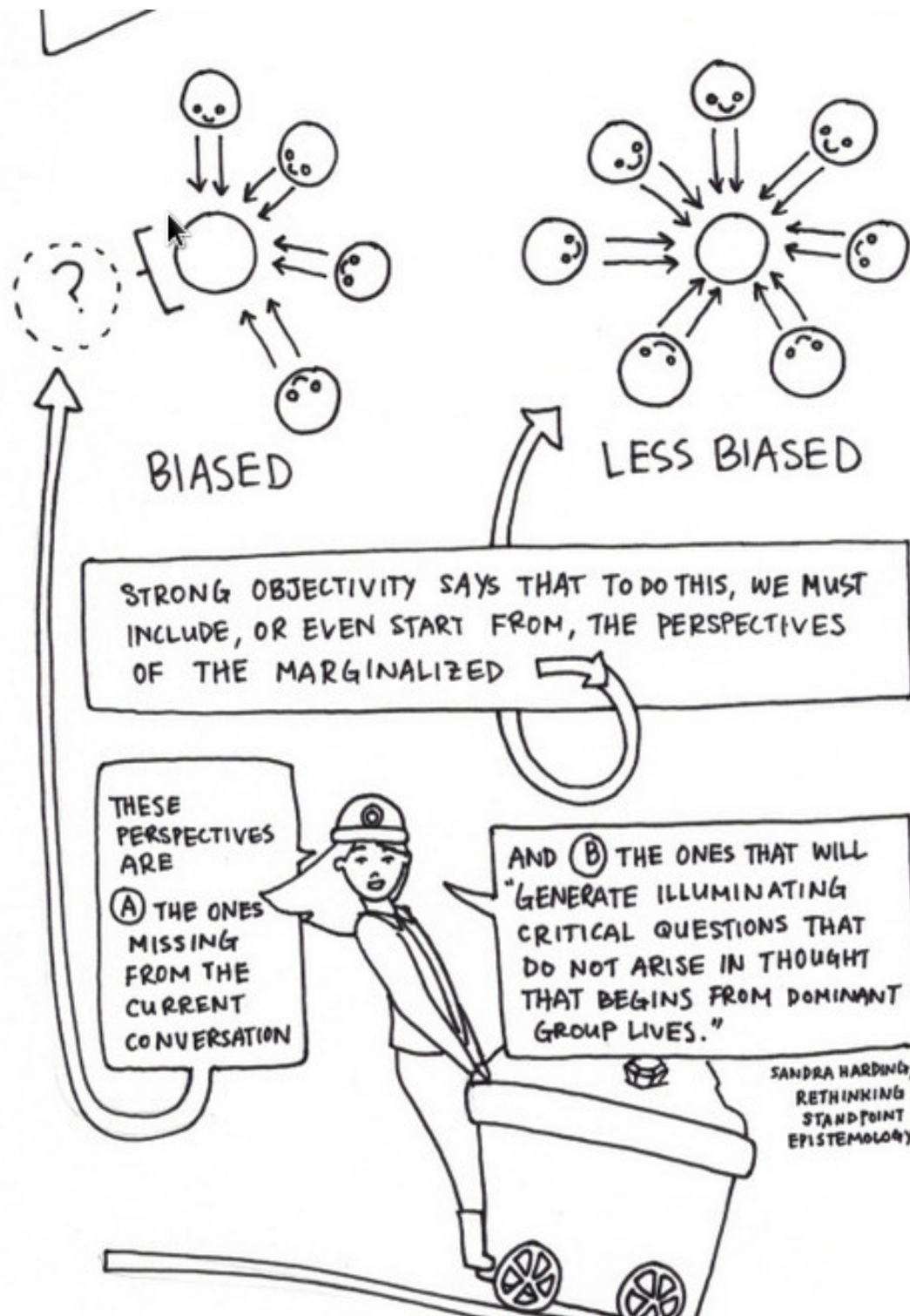
Selections from Sophie Wang's comic, "Science Under the Scope" (published on <http://freerads.org>)

WE CAN AND SHOULD WORK TO SHORE IT UP IN TERMS OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL LOCATEDNESS BY ACTIVELY ENGAGING AND INCLUDING THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITIES WHO LIVE ON THE MARGINS OF OR OUTSIDE OF DOMINANT WESTERN SOCIETY.



THEY SEE QUESTIONS THAT THOSE AT THE CENTER DON'T SEE, QUESTIONS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT THEIR HEALTH, LIVES, AND COMMUNITIES.



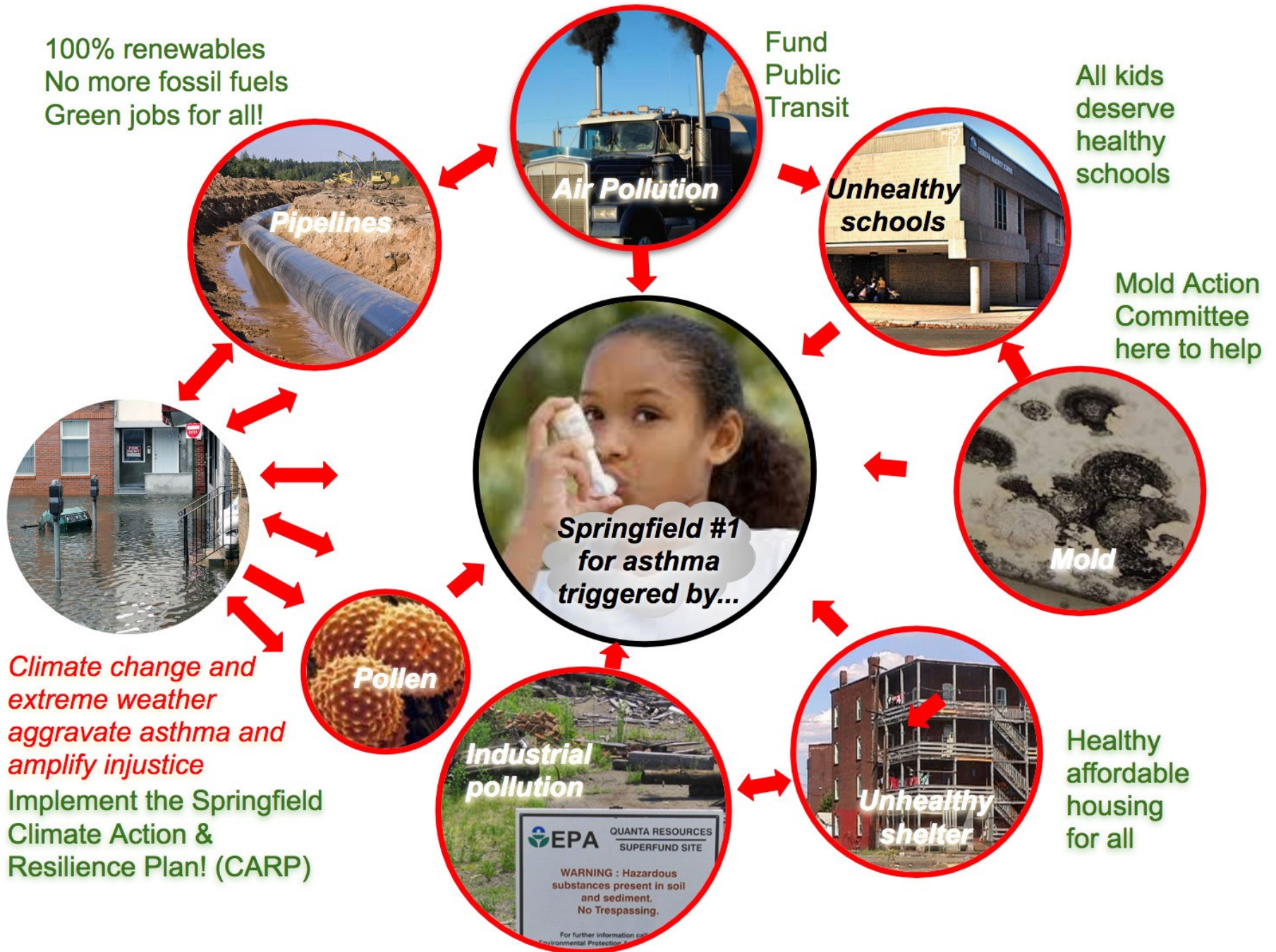


Selections from Sophie Wang's comic, "Science Under the Scope" (published on <http://freerads.org>)

When people come together to share their different forms of expertise in a collective effort to achieve justice, we call that

SOLIDARITY SCIENCE

Mold, Health, and Justice



Mold, Health, and Justice

A complex problem requires many types of experts

- Lab scientists
- Housing law experts
- Community organizers
- Doctors
- People living with mold (maybe especially mothers)

The Making of the Mold Lady: Spoken Word

The Making of the Mold Lady

Known as the “Mold Lady,” Tatiana is a community expert. Her expertise comes from her experience:

- living with mold in her Springfield apartment
- caring for her son with a mold allergy
- fighting her landlord to address the mold issue
- working with lawyers and judges in housing court
- educating community members, and
- working with multiple activist organizations

DISCUSSION:

Finding Experts in Your Community

- What are the issues facing your community?
- What kinds of expertise are needed to develop robust and socially just solutions?
- Who has this expertise? (Can you think of the equivalent of the “Mold Lady” in your community?)
- How could you bring this expertise into your classroom—or bring your students out into the community to find such experts?
- How do you fit lived experience and other kinds of knowledge together in the curriculum?