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## **Brief Reviews of Books and Products** **Unsettling Knowledge Inequities, Season 1**

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## BRIEF REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND PRODUCTS

## Unsettling Knowledge Inequities, Season 1

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**Knowledge Equity Lab & SPARC.** (n.d.). *Unsettling knowledge inequities* [Audio podcast]. <https://knowledgeequitylab.ca/podcast/>

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The Unsettling Knowledge Inequities podcast, copresented by the Knowledge Equity Lab and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), features a series of wide-ranging conversations about how knowledge is produced, shared, and understood, with particular attention paid to the many inequities that plague our systems of knowledge production. The Knowledge Equity Lab, based in the Department of Global Development Studies at the University of Toronto Scarborough, is a research and practice hub devoted to challenging structural inequities in modern systems of knowledge production. SPARC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the open sharing of research outputs and educational materials. As two organizations with backgrounds in scholarly communication and advocacy work, they make a perfect pair to support, promote, and lend authority to the Unsettling Knowledge Inequities podcast.

Every episode of the first season was unique—covering diverse topics such as knowledge production, indigenous knowledge systems, health inequity, social justice, and art activism. Despite the wide range of these topics, the whole season feels consistent in its underlying themes, and although none of the episodes directly relate to one another, listening to the whole season gives a sense of unity and points to wider issues that go beyond the scope of any one episode. For example, Episode 2 (which discusses Indigenous knowledge systems) and Episode 3 (which concerns global health inequities), despite their disparate topics, both speak to issues with a system of knowledge production that is overly focused on White, Western systems of knowledge and intellectual property, leading to harm for nondominant groups. Of course, the episodic nature of the podcast also makes it easy to listen to only those episodes



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that interest you, and each episode holds up as an individual narrative. The episodes themselves are broken up by guiding questions from the host, followed by the responses of the guest speaker. This simple format makes it easy to follow the topics of conversation while still allowing the speakers the freedom to speak conversationally and craft their own narratives.

The diverse speakers carry with them unique insights from many fields. In addition to more traditional voices in scholarly communication, such as professors, researchers, and industry leaders, the podcast also features community activists and artists, who bring a more nontraditional vision of knowledge production. This gives the podcast unique value in the world of scholarly communication, which is often filled with those working within—and perhaps perpetuating—traditional and unjust systems of knowledge production. Anyone working within scholarly communication could benefit from the ways this podcast challenges traditional thinking, broadens horizons, and inspires action. The diverse range of voices also lends itself to a diverse audience, as many people who may not consider themselves part of the scholarly communication field may find value in these conversations. Maybe you know a medical researcher who could benefit from an understanding of global health inequities, or an art student who needs help understanding their own role in the process of creating meaning and knowledge.

The format of the podcast series lends itself to particular strengths not often seen in other venues of scholarly communication discussion. The podcast format, especially with a full transcript, makes it highly accessible in a variety of ways, allowing potential listeners to engage with the content in a manner and at a time convenient to them. In addition, the conversational tone of the podcast, in contrast to language that might be used in more formal settings, makes it more accessible to a nonacademic audience. The ability for people across the world to record a conversation together further enables the podcast to extend its reach and include diverse voices in the scholarly communication landscape. Indeed, by choosing a podcast format, the Knowledge Equity Lab and SPARC have helped fight back against some of the inequities in the scholarly communication field, rather than perpetuate them.

The series is crafted with professionalism and care. Although audio quality can vary slightly between speakers, every speaker is clear and understandable, and the audio is cut cleanly and concisely in such a way that a conversational tone is kept going without leaving in unnecessary dialogue that goes beyond the scope of the episode. In addition, the podcast can be listened to on the website as well as all major podcast players, making it convenient to work into your existing podcast routine or easily set up for listening on a morning commute. While the podcast makes for a great audio experience, full transcripts of each episode are available on the website as well, making it accessible to those who are hard of hearing or who may simply prefer text. The website contains little else besides the audio and transcripts, but the

Knowledge Equity Lab website has links to a variety of projects relevant to the topics discussed on the podcast, which may serve as helpful resources for those looking for more information on a particular topic.

Overall, the Unsettling Knowledge Inequities Podcast, Season 1, makes for some fantastic listening and is deeply relevant not only to those of us thinking about and working in scholarly communication but also to everyone who is impacted by the processes of knowledge creation and sharing. With its engaging speakers, emotional impact, and focus on inequity, this podcast is a tool not just for professional development but for personal development as well.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

CJ Garcia is a Masters of Library and Information Science student at the University of Arizona and the Scholarly Communication Intern at Arizona State University for the 2021–2022 school year.