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ARTICLE

What are Hermeneutical Resources? Nondiscursive Self-Interpretation and Gendered Embodiment

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Abstract

The study of hermeneutical injustice tends to restrict the category of "hermeneutical resources" to discursive resources: words, concepts, and expressive styles. This article foregrounds a diverse set of nondiscursive hermeneutical resources, including embodied skills, habits, comportments, and dispositions, and argues that such resources are vitally important for theorizing self-interpretative dysfunction. I reconstruct four accounts of gendered embodiment from Nancy Tuana, Bat-Ami Bar On, Iris Marion Young, and Simone de Beauvoir, and I argue that each implicitly treats embodied practices, comportments, and dispositions as hermeneutical resources. I also consider several implications of and objections to incorporating nondiscursive hermeneutical resources into the study of hermeneutical injustice, and argue that doing so complicates standard accounts of the relationship between hermeneutical injustice and epistemic injustice.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to foreground a diverse set of hermeneutical resources—embodied skills, habits, comportments, and dispositions—that are vitally important for self-interpretation and can perpetuate (and interrupt) hermeneutical oppression, but that do not fit the standard mold for how hermeneutical resources are typically discussed in the study of epistemic injustice.

A great deal of social epistemological scholarship over the past 20 years refers to "hermeneutical resources," which are typically understood to be shared and circulated interpretive/expressive resources that facilitate epistemic exchange, communicative uptake, and self-interpretation. It is not always clear, however, what is and is not a hermeneutical resource, and for what reasons. Given that "hermeneutical resource" is sometimes used interchangeably with "epistemic resource," it is safe to assume that

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hermeneutical resources are involved in the achievement and/or communication of knowledge. Still, there are myriad mechanisms and constitutive elements at play in knowledge-formation, communication, and interpretation, so noting that hermeneutical resources are involved in these projects does little to specify what is "hermeneutical" about hermeneutical resources, or in what sense they are "resources."

I will argue that the category of hermeneutical resources includes a greater diversity of kind than is typically acknowledged. In addition to words, concepts, and styles of expression—what I will call "discursive" resources—there are also "nondiscursive" resources such as embodied skills, habits, practices, dispositions, and comportments.[1] Nondiscursive resources, like discursive resources, enable and constrain self- and social interpretation, and can even modulate one's recourse to discursive resources. This gives us good reason to incorporate nondiscursive resources into the study of hermeneutical injustice. There are both ethical and scholarly stakes to doing so. The ethical stakes are that some instances of hermeneutical injustice might not be recognized as such if they primarily involve dysfunctions at the level of nondiscursive resources. The scholarly stakes are that expanding the category to include nondiscursive hermeneutical resources has implications for theorizing hermeneutical injustice vis-à-vis epistemic injustice, since it would break from existing taxonomies by suggesting that not all hermeneutical injustice is "epistemic" (construed narrowly).

Here is the structure of the argument. In the next section, I give evidence that scholarship on hermeneutical injustice tends to focus primarily on discursive hermeneutical resources and contexts of discursive exchange. I also note several voices in the social epistemological literature that have emphasized the importance of non-discursive hermeneutical resources. In section 3 I reconstruct four accounts of gendered embodiment from Nancy Tuana, Bat-Ami Bar On, Simone de Beauvoir, and Iris Marion Young. I argue that each of these authors implicitly treats embodied practices, comportments, and dispositions as hermeneutical resources.[2] Finally, in section 4 I consider several implications of incorporating nondiscursive hermeneutical resources into the study of hermeneutical injustice, and I respond to possible objections.

2. Discursive hermeneutical resources

The wrongs of hermeneutical injustice are typically understood to concern two loci: (1) an individual's efforts to *communicate* their experiences coherently and accurately, and (2) an individual's efforts to *interpret* their experiences and selves coherently and accurately.[3] Though these two endeavors are closely interrelated, is it the case that the hermeneutical resources that enable communication exhaust the hermeneutical resources that enable self-interpretation? Even if it is the case that hermeneutical injustice "will normally make itself apparent in discursive exchanges between individuals," is hermeneutical injustice fundamentally discursive (Fricker 2007, 7)?

Scholarly discussions of hermeneutical resources often focus on words, concepts, and communicative styles.[4] As Alexis Shotwell notes, "[f]or the most part, the people thinking about epistemic resources ... focus on concepts and the availability of good or better concepts for adequate knowing" (Shotwell 2017, 86). To give only a few of many possible examples, Charles Mills uses the terms "concepts" and "hermeneutical resources" interchangeably (Mills 2017, 108); Trystan Goetze restricts their analysis of "local hermeneutical economies" to concepts and terms (Goetze 2018, 74); Kidd and Carel's examples of hermeneutical resources are "appropriate language, metaphors, and images" (Kidd and Carel 2018, 219); and Veronica Ivy defines hermeneutical resources

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as "concepts that are sufficiently socially shared such that we can use them to communicate with others" (Ivy 2019, 297).

In keeping with this approach, hermeneutical lacunae are most commonly treated as absent words, concepts, or styles, or "blanks where there should be a name for an experience" (Fricker 2007, 160). Consider the widely cited case of Carmita Wood's experiences with the phenomenon that we now call "sexual harassment," and her subsequent participation in efforts to coin and promulgate the term and concept (Fricker 2007, 149–50). The lacuna in this case is the absence of a label attached to the experience of sexual harassment. The term "sexual harassment" is a resource in the sense that it provides a linguistic and conceptual referent by which victims of sexual harassment might recognize and communicate their experiences to others without relying upon ill-fitting and misleading concepts and terms. This is an example of what José Medina calls a "semantically produced" hermeneutical injustice, because it is a case "in which hermeneutical disadvantages and harms result from the unavailability of labels; [a case] in which understanding fails because words are lacking" (Medina 2017, 45).

Beyond words and concepts, many social epistemologists also note that "expressive style[s]" (Fricker 2007, 160) or "styles of speech" (Hookway 2010, 159) can be hermeneutical resources, which is to say that hermeneutical injustices can be "performatively produced" (Medina 2017, 46). Styles of expression are resources in the sense that they structure the "shape" of a communicative expression (as opposed to its semantic content), and performatively produced hermeneutical injustices, like their semantically produced counterparts, tend to assume contexts of social communication and/or expression. A similar focus on discursive resources and contexts can also be found in scholarship on contributory injustice (Dotson 2012). In cases of contributory injustice, the "blank" in question is not a sheer absence of extant hermeneutical resources. Instead, a gap of uptake is created by what Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. calls "willful hermeneutical ignorance"—that is, a listener's refusal to admit the intelligibility of hermeneutical resources from nondominant epistemic communities (Pohlhaus Jr. 2012, 716). The implicit context of this refusal, once again, is that of communicative exchange between individuals, such as encounters between psychiatric healthcare professionals and patients (Miller Tate 2019).

A common thread across these diverse analyses is the tendency to conceptualize hermeneutical resources as discursive tools. I will use the term "discursive hermeneutical resources" to refer to the set of hermeneutical resources that includes words, concepts, and styles that serve as semantic or performative components of linguistic communication and/or social expression. My reason for grouping these resources together under this label is simply to make the following claim: not all hermeneutical resources are discursive.

Before elaborating on this claim, it is worth highlighting a growing movement within the field of social epistemology to recognize social-epistemic dysfunctions that do not exclusively concern words and/or concepts (Hookway 2010; Giladi 2017; Shotwell 2017; Lobb 2018; Goguen 2019; Hutchison 2019; Catala 2020). In an early response to Fricker's 2007 book, for example, Christopher Hookway identifies an "informational perspective" at work in the theorization of epistemic injustice that, in his view, does not fully capture the way that "our engagement with the epistemic involves participation in goal directed activities, not just making assertions, communicating information, or using our conceptual resources to formulate problems and propositions" (Hookway 2010, 155–56). Granting that linguistic and conceptual lacunae yield distinctively epistemic

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injustices, Hookway asserts that "the resources we make use of in exercising our epistemic agency are richer and more varied than is often supposed" (2010, 153). To illustrate this point, he raises the example of a student's shyness and reluctance to ask questions. When instilled habits of shyness interfere with the acquisition or exchange of knowledge, Hookway argues, an injustice occurs that is not fully articulable from a purely informational perspective.

In keeping with Hookway's critique, Andrea Lobb argues that the tendency to "equat[e] the figure of the knower with the figure of the speaker or linguistic 'informant'" (Lobb 2018, 4) risks covering over a "complex myriad of preverbal cues, expressive gestures, and implicit and embodied knowledge that make up a significant volume of how one functions in the world as a knower" (2018, 4), which leads Lobb to propose a distinctive form of epistemic injustice called "prediscursive epistemic injury" (2018, 4). Similarly, Shotwell argues that it is important for scholars of epistemic injustice "to account for forms of knowing that do not take propositional or conceptual form" and the "significant epistemic resources" associated with them (2017, 86). To develop this wider framework, Shotwell draws from Dotson's concept of an "epistemological system," which refers broadly to "operative, instituted social imaginaries, habits of cognition, attitudes towards knowers and/or any relevant sensibilities that encourage or hinder the production of knowledge" (Dotson 2014, 121). On this picture, the resources used in the pursuit, production, and circulation of knowledge range widely in kind, and include "skills, affect, implicit knowledge, and socially-situated embodiment" (Shotwell 2017, 86).

Hookway, Lobb, and Shotwell each argue for the relevance of "embodied ways of knowing [that] exceed or precede propositional, conceptual, and discursive knowledge" for the study of hermeneutical injustice (Lobb 2018, 18). The next section reconstructs several ways in which embodied knowledges, practices, skills, dispositions, and forms of knowledge-how can function as hermeneutical resources. It is worth underscoring that these accounts of gendered embodiment are by no means exhaustive or generalizable, and (at least as reconstructed here) fail to capture many relevant spheres of embodiment that interact in complicated ways with gender, and that have significant bearing on hermeneutical oppression. If part of what is at issue in the study of hermeneutical injustice is a concern about the limitations of one's inherited resources, traditions, and archives, then it is surely not a neutral fact that these four accounts are drawn from white and white-passing[5] theorists; or that, as Sara Ahmed argues, much of the historical tradition of phenomenology has concerned itself more with what Frantz Fanon describes as the "tactile, vestibular, kinaesthetic, and visual character of embodied reality," while overlooking the "historic-racial schema" that undergirds it (Ahmed 2007, 153).[6] Far from constructing a comprehensive or adequately intersectional picture of gendered oppression, my focus in the following section will be on these four thinkers' attentiveness to nondiscursive stages of self-interpretation. Further below I will suggest avenues for drawing these accounts into productive dialogue with other situated analyses of nondiscursive hermeneutical oppression.

In the order that they appear below (which is not historical): (1) Tuana describes the hermeneutical achievement of developing interpretive authority over one's own body; (2) Bar On argues that overcoming inculcated non-violence grants access to new ways of moving through the world; (3) Beauvoir connects embodied comportments of femininity with epistemic dispositions of timidity; and (4) Young explores how scripts of feminine motility bear on the perceived ineluctability of the world.

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3. Nondiscursive hermeneutical resources

Consider the following accounts of how nondiscursive resources play into self-understanding:

Tuana: Cervical self-examination and embodied knowledge

In "The speculum of ignorance: The women's health movement and epistemologies of ignorance," Tuana argues that the women's health movement disrupted entrenched ignorance regarding women's bodies by encouraging the practice of cervical self-examination with speculums. Practices of self-examination responded to more than a dearth of anatomical terms or concepts (even though one could locate linguistic or conceptual lacunae related to institutional and cultural refusals to study women's sexuality and health). Part of what is at stake in the propagation of cervical self-examination is what Tuana calls "embodied knowledge." "Women not only learned about and from their own bodies," she writes, "they also learned to trust their cognitive authority and resist the authority of the medical profession" (2006, 14). The techniques and skills of self-examination relayed in texts such as *Our bodies, ourselves* and *A new view of woman's body* enabled many women to resist the reduction of their genitalia to their reproductive functions, and equipped them "to become embodied knowers" by cultivating an authoritative relationship to their own body (2006, 14). For Tuana, this self-disposition is a hermeneutical achievement that is distinct from improvements in the circulation of knowledge about, for example, women's sexual pleasure.

The promulgation of techniques of self-examination contributed toward the unsettling of oppressive self-interpretative dispositions. These techniques operated much like crucial neologisms, in that they opened new, truthful, and urgent self-interpretive possibilities. But the hermeneutical transformation that they wrought is not reducible to an increased availability of fitting concepts, terms, or expressive styles. One of the hermeneutical lacunae that proponents of self-examination sought to counter was the absence of a certain authoritative, autonomous, and liberatory comportment toward one's own body, the absence of which undermined some women's capacities as knowers, communicators, and self-interpreters. We tell an incomplete story if we reduce the hermeneutical injustice of institutionalized, androcentric medical biases about women's bodies to a narrative about absent discursive resources.

Bar On: Ready-to-fight bodies and feminist martial arts

In *The subject of violence*, Bar On argues that martial arts and fitness training can contribute to the construction of what she calls a "ready-to-fight body" (Bar On 2002, 151). Undertaking the "maintenance and reproduction of a ready-to-fight body" under certain social conditions is a transgressive political gesture that renders masculine-coded knowledge, skills, self-authority, and assertiveness accessible to individuals with identities that have been historically deprived of those resources (2002, 151). Ready-to-fight bodies, according to Bar On, "break a taboo and are as a result disobedient and transgressive because, as implements of violence, they are skilled and competent in ways that are usually reserved for men" (2002, 159).

There are multiple hermeneutical lacunae in the background of Bar On's analysis, but they are not solely (or even primarily) conceptual, linguistic, or expressive. First, there are knowledge gaps concerning techniques, strategies, and skills that build precision, coordination, power, speed, and the like. If one is taught to regard ready-to-fight bodies

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as reserved for men exclusively, then one is likely to miss out on these forms of knowledge and knowledge-how. But a separate hermeneutical injustice can also be said to occur when one's self-interpretive capacities are constrained by conditioned comportments of passivity. The lacuna here is not an absence of knowledge or discursive resources, nor a refusal by others to take up one's deployment of resources (as in contributory injustice), but rather an absence of a predoxastic, prediscursive interpretive disposition. This dearth renders whole swaths of knowledge inaccessible by undermining pathways by which one might otherwise come to understand and inhabit oneself as capable, curious, adventurous, and confident, all of which have stakes for the sort of epistemic agent one takes oneself to be.[7]

The point here is not that ready-to-fight bodies are always desirable, or that we should encourage everyone to undergo martial arts training. Rather, it is that some women in sexist milieus are consistently discouraged from entire sectors of embodied knowledges, skills, and social practices with which they might otherwise construct and maintain a sense of self that is empowered and self-efficacious. Taking oneself up as ready-to-fight need not have much to do with actual martial capacities. (One might, for example, overestimate one's coordination, skills, or strength, but nevertheless carry oneself as if one were capable of self-defense and/or violence.) All the same, such a disposition affects the knowledge that one seeks out, the contexts in which one seeks it, and the tenor of one's engagement with others. As such, a ready-to-fight comportment is, itself, a hermeneutical resource that has implications for the (potentially valuable and liberatory) knowledges that one is liable to encounter and lay claim to.

Beauvoir: Conditioned timidity

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir draws a direct connection between the conditioned nonviolence of gendered subjects and what she calls "a more general timidity" that shapes one's sense of agency:

> [The adolescent girl] only submits to [the given world]; the world is defined without her, and its face is immutable. This lack of physical power expresses itself as a more general timidity: she does not believe in a force she has not felt in her body, she does not dare to be enterprising, to revolt, to invent; doomed to docility, to resignation, she can only accept a place that society has already made for her. She accepts the order of things as a given. (Beauvoir 2009, 355)

Here, Beauvoir describes a continuum between one's cultivated sense of inhabiting a body and one's inclination to engage in discovery. For Beauvoir, the fact that "[t]he sportswoman never feels the conqueror's pride of the boy who pins down his comrade" contributes to the tendency for women to find themselves "banned from exploring, daring, pushing back the limits of the possible" (2009, 354). As implicit and explicit prohibitions become physically internalized, they lead to a "physical weakness [that] disposes her to passivity" (2009, 765)—in other words, a learned disposition of resignation—instead of an "attitude of defiance, so important for boys, [but] unknown to [adolescent girls]" (2009, 354). Note that "passivity" and "defiance" can both be read with a specifically epistemic valence. Both are dispositions that shift the tenor of one's inclination and (self-perceived) capacity to seek out knowledge, speak authoritatively, and generally participate in the "economy" of hermeneutical exchange. Insofar as some people are conditioned toward embodied passivity, they are primed to understand

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themselves as recipients of "need-to-know" information, and not inquisitive, authoritative knowers.

Embodied passivity and defiance function as second-order hermeneutical resources that modulate a subject's self-perceived access to physical, social, and political projects. I am borrowing the language of "first-" and "second-order" capacities from Lorenzo Simpson, who distinguishes between "first-order" agency, which concerns "the capacity to produce an effect or to bring about a state of affairs," and "second-order" agency, which concerns "the awareness of and the ability to produce, acquire, or to avail oneself of the facilitating conditions of agency in the first-order sense" (Simpson 2021, 19). Second-order agency is the enabling, self-interpretive condition for first-order agency. One might enjoy first-order agency—e.g., be able, in principle, to successfully apply to selective colleges—without enjoying second-order agency—e.g., possessing an understanding of self in which applying to selective colleges is an actionable and coherent course of action. Simpson's point is that, without the latter, a student's first-order capacity to apply to college and the availability of material resources, mentors, and scholarships are effectively rendered moot.

This distinction is helpful for importing Beauvoir's account of embodied dispositions to discussions of "hermeneutical resources." Gendered scripts of embodiment filter one's access to epistemic resources insofar as they make it (in)coherent for one to inquire after, acquire, and deploy those resources. Beauvoir emphasizes that young girls are consistently are habituated away from interpreting themselves as capable of curiosity: "The girl today can certainly go out alone, stroll in Tuileries; but I have already said how hostile the street is … if she goes to the cinema alone, an unpleasant incident can quickly occur. … [T]his concern rivets her to the ground and to self. 'Her wings are clipped'" (2009, 765). Here, (first-order) hermeneutical resources within the young girl's reach are rendered moot due to (second-order) dispositions. Beauvoir's insistence upon the connection between embodiment and epistemic agency illustrates how nondiscursive hermeneutical resources can render discursive hermeneutical resources (ir)relevant, (in)coherent, and (un)attainable.

At times, Beauvoir entertains the possibility that bodily skills and practices can disrupt oppressive gender norms. "If she could swim, scale rocks, pilot a plane, battle the elements, take risks and venture out," she writes, "she would not feel the timidity towards the world that I spoke about" (2009, 357). Beauvoir even goes so far in an interview to assert that "[y]oung girls must learn karate at school, we must support a Tour de France for women" (Shusterman 2003, 133).[8] These proposed strategies for disrupting conditioned passivity amount to what Richard Shusterman calls "a somaesthetic program aimed at developing women's general sense of strength" (2003, 120). More recently, the idea that skillful, somatic activities can yield self-empowering epistemic outcomes has been endorsed by Stacey Goguen, who argues that "once one achieves a certain level of competence or mastery with an embodied skill, going through the motions of that skill can instill feelings of self-confidence that spur further activity, creating a positive feedback loop" (Goguen 2019, 42). Here, as in Beauvoir's account, practices and dispositions function as hermeneutical resources that can amplify or deflate one's epistemic self-efficacy.

Young: Inhibited motility as self-perception

In her celebrated essay "Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comportment motility and spatiality," Young argues that many women experience an

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array of physical inhibitions, including the "failure to make full use of the body's spatial and lateral possibilities" and "perceive [oneself] as capable of lifting and carrying heavy things, pushing and shoving with significant force, pulling, squeezing, grasping, or twisting with force" (Young 1980, 142). Far from an essentialist claim about women's physical capacities, Young's point is that within patriarchal social milieus large portions of the population are conditioned to wield their bodies unfluently, as in the titular reference to the distinctive technique of throwing a ball "like a girl."

Young does not maintain that women consciously hold negative beliefs about their physical capacities. Instead, she describes a host of processes by which young girls are habituated into a mode of perception in which certain objects and projects appear recalcitrant, ineluctable, immovable, or burdensome. This failure to realize the full range of one's physical capacities—an undeniably hermeneutical failure—can occur prediscursively and predoxastically. For Young, the ball in the schoolyard is perceived from the get-go as the site of a struggle against one's own body, and the act of throwing the ball becomes a laden task in which the subject simultaneously attempts to throw while bracing against self-perceived limits of coordination and strength. Attention is unproductively divided between task and body "rather than paying attention to what we want to do *through* our bodies" (1980, 144).

Inhibited and discontinuous embodied comportments have hermeneutical stakes. For Young, constrictive styles of movement establish "a space . . . in imagination which we are not free to move beyond" (1980, 143). Put figuratively, constricted embodied comportments prediscursively "tint" one's perception of self and world by illuminating certain resources and ventures as relevant and within reach, and relegating others to the dimly lit background of one's epistemic horizon. In this way, bodily comportment can operate anteriorly to language, concepts, and communicative styles; or, as Young puts it more strongly, it is "the body in its orientation toward and action upon and within its surroundings which constitutes the initial meaning giving act" (Young 1980, 145).[9]

When the continuity between one's projected aims and the corporeal pursuit of those aims is undermined, it forecloses self-interpretive possibilities and the acquisition and communication of certain knowledges. Put differently, the way that one takes oneself up as an embodied being through gendered scripts of motility shifts the perceived relevance of terms, concepts, practices, objects, and projects. For Young, the feminized body is not only Merleau-Ponty's "center-point of the 'intentional threads' that link him to the given objects" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 108), but also "an *inhibited intentionality*, which simultaneously reaches toward a projected end with an 'I can' and withholds its full bodily commitments to that end in a self-imposed 'I cannot'" (Young 1980, 146). With this shift of emphasis from "I can" to "I cannot," Young underscores that feminized bodies are often nondiscursively conditioned towards restricted fields of possibility and perception.

4. The relationship between hermeneutical injustice and epistemic injustice

Let us take stock of the argument so far. I began by noting that many social epistemologists writing about epistemic injustice tend to focus on linguistic, conceptual, and communicative hermeneutical resources. I then turned to several examples of how embodied practices and gendered comportments function as hermeneutical resources and/or lacunae in the sense that they shift the perceived relevance and availability of discursive resources, practices, and other means of achieving coherent, truthful, and empowered self-interpretations. We are now positioned to consider the implications of

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incorporating nondiscursive resources into the theorization of hermeneutical injustice, and to address several possible objections.

What would extending the category of hermeneutical resources to include nondiscursive interpretive resources mean for how we generally understand the relationship between hermeneutical injustice and epistemic injustice, more broadly? If it is the case that nondiscursive hermeneutical resources can oppressively restrict self-interpretation, as I have argued, then one outcome may be that hermeneutical injustice is not best understood as a sub-species of epistemic injustice, so long as "epistemic" and "discursive" are taken to be interchangeable. To be sure, most of the cases discussed above involve discursive resources that are put out of play by nondiscursive interpretive lacunae. But timidity, instinctual non-violence, and other conditioned embodied comportments are not only contextually injurious because they foreclose access to words, concepts, and styles of expression, but also because they foreclose whole projects, desires, emotions, aims, and other forms of meaning-making and fulfillment. Some schemas of embodiment flatten the choice architecture with which one constructs self–interpretations. Other ways of inhabiting a lived body do the opposite by opening us to new understandings of who we are, who we might be in the future, and what kinds of goals we might set for ourselves. Such foreclosures and openings strike me as deeply hermeneutical, but not exclusively epistemic; or, at least, they are "epistemic" in a broader sense than is sometimes taken up in the literature on epistemic injustice.

My overarching proposal is that hermeneutical vulnerability overlaps with, but is not identical to, discursive vulnerability. Here, I am informed by Lisa Guenther's account of the intercorporeal pathways through which we develop practical senses of self. Guenther argues that perceiving the world with others comprises an "invisible net that supports the coherence of [one's] own experience" (Guenther 2013, 146). We rely on gestural, embodied, cooperative, and affective interactions with others to, in her words, "support our capacity to make sense of the world, to distinguish between reality and illusion, and even to tell where our own bodily existence begins and ends" (Guenther 2013, 146). This is why Guenther argues that forcefully stripping away self-constitutive relational moorings through the practice of solitary confinement amounts to "violence against the ontological structure of life itself" (Guenther 2013, 143). The forms of hermeneutical injury that Guenther investigates cannot be fully accounted for exclusively in terms of discursive epistemic resources, in part because self-understanding draws from myriad resources beyond the discursive, including relational, affective, and embodied practices.

This would mean that hermeneutical injustice can be precipitated by gaps or overreliances upon discursive *and* nondiscursive hermeneutical resources; hermeneutical injustice can concern thwarted attempts to "make sense" of one's experiences discursively, *and also* embodied comportments that impinge upon one's sense of self; hermeneutical injustice can take place at the level of communication, *and also* affect and perception. In all likelihood these instantiations of hermeneutical injustice often occur in tandem. But they concern different kinds of hermeneutical resources and dysfunctions, and highlighting those differences can help ensure that we do not fail to recognize hermeneutical injustice in instances in which hermeneutical resources such as words, concepts, and styles are ostensibly available, but that availability is rendered moot by nondiscursive comportments. Recall the frequent use of the terms "hermeneutical resources" and "epistemic resources" as largely interchangeable. Perhaps this is one reason to keep them distinct.

One might object that a given embodied comportment or practice can be hermeneutically oppressive in one context and hermeneutically liberatory in another.

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This is true. For some, the embodied, practical skills associated with cooking—techniques of cutting, whisking, peeling, tasting, and more—might buttress a self-understanding that admits self-efficacy, independence, and communal ties. In a different context, gendered expectations and norms around cooking might produce just the opposite, such that cooking becomes a stifling burden of social reproduction. Cooking, in the abstract, is neither a liberatory nor oppressive hermeneutical resource, and situated culinary practices both widen and narrow one's self-interpretive horizon. (This ambiguity is also discernible in Bar On's concept of the ready-to-fight body, which surely is not a good in and of itself but can nonetheless contextually serve a liberatory function.) Note that this objection about the double-edged nature of nondiscursive hermeneutical resources also lands on discursive resources. The liberatory promise of an urgently needed neologism emerges out of the way that the neologism will be taken up and deployed in practices, institutions, and networks. So, too, with nondiscursive hermeneutical resources.

It is also important to emphasize that none of the foregoing implies the fatalistic view that embodiment is wholly determinative of one's epistemic possibilities. Gendered comportments of timidity or hesitation do not impose indefeasible limits to self-interpretive possibilities, but they can be constrictive by altering the perceived salience of ways of speaking, moving, deliberating, and interacting. To borrow Elizabeth Barnes's analogy, culturally entrenched comportments can be understood as "wheel ruts (the deep indentations in a dirt road made by wagon wheels). . . . [O]nce there are ruts in a road, those ruts explain why wagons continue to travel the way they do, because once there are ruts in a road it's really hard to drive a wagon anywhere but the ruts" (Barnes 2017, 2423). Hard, but not impossible! This is an apt picture of the way in which conditioned scripts of embodiment are both powerful, and also defeasible and non-determinative.[10]

Relatedly, nothing in the argument thus far implies that hermeneutical justice would require casting off *all* self-interpretive constraints related to the body (just as hermeneutical justice does not entail access to a comprehensive lexicon of every potentially useful or liberatory word and concept that will ever be). Any embodied, temporal, and situated being is irreducibly bounded by and limited in her orientation towards and engagement with the world. One's experiences, identities, material conditions, and histories enable and constrain the hermeneutical resources at one's disposal. Even despite the fact that there are no wholly unbounded "views from nowhere," we can still compare discrete practices and comportments in terms of their social impacts. Being hermeneutically limited is inevitable, but having one's self-interpretive horizons oppressively and systematically distorted is not. Discrete practices and comportments—scripts of movement, comportments of timidity—can be critiqued in terms of how they contribute to hermeneutical foreclosure, how they are encouraged or discouraged unequally across populations, and how they exacerbate oppressive social structures.

One might still suspect this is a needless expansion of the category of hermeneutical resources. After all, putting a bag over someone's head may have harmful hermeneutical outcomes in the sense of interfering with their ability to acquire knowledge, but that does not mean that we need to expand the category of hermeneutical resources to include burlap sacks. Is something so multifaceted and vague as "embodiment" truly a "resource"?

I agree that the language of "resources," "lacunae," and "economies" can be awkward when applied to embodied dispositions and practices. To be clear, my claim is that embodied interpretation is a crucial stage in the perception and prejudgment of

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resources as relevant, attainable, and urgent. We can speak of specific forms of embodied practice, comportment, and disposition—forms of dancing, cooking, music making, fashion, exercise, seated posture, habits of eye contact, physical risk-taking—as discrete hermeneutical resources, in that their availability and uptake bear upon self-understanding. Distinct ways of moving, wielding, and taking up one's own body, like words, concepts, and styles, can be covered over or reclaimed, discouraged or encouraged, and awarded or refused uptake. All of these are hermeneutical resources in the sense that engaging (or being conditioned away from engaging) with them shifts the field of possibility for self-interpretation.

One might also object that expanding hermeneutical resources beyond the bounds of epistemic resources risks muddying what is distinctive and valuable about the study of hermeneutical injustice qua epistemic injustice.[11] It has long been recognized (and might even seem blatantly obvious) that bodies are key sites of oppression and marginalization, while the wrongs of hermeneutical injustice are sometimes more subtle and easily overlooked. Does talk of "nondiscursive hermeneutical resources" distract from the practical payoff of analyzing epistemic injustice as a distinct form of oppression?

Even if there are good reasons to continue to privilege strictly epistemic or discursive resources in the study of hermeneutical injustice, it is important to situate such analyses alongside other hermeneutical mechanisms that shape the horizons of self-interpretation. The point of doing so is not to add an overlooked form of hermeneutical injustice to existing taxonomies. Instead, my aim has been to highlight the *continuities* between discursive and nondiscursive hermeneutical oppression, and to argue that it is significant for the study of hermeneutical injustice that discursive self-interpretation can be undergirded and reinforced by enculturated embodied comportments. Just as lacunae of discursive resources can influence the way in which one takes up one's own body, one's embodied comportments (and the unavailability of alternative comportments) can filter the perceived relevance or accessibility of discursive resources.

Invoking this wider set of hermeneutical resources need not threaten the practical upshot or urgency of theorizing discursive hermeneutical dysfunctions. It also follows naturally from Fricker's explicit invitation to consider alternative accounts of the relationship between hermeneutical injustice and other forms of epistemic injustice:

> It may now be the time to say with Hookway that what's needed is further investigation of the internal diversity of the broad category of testimonial injustice. (Indeed, we should no doubt apply the same logic to the other general category in my provisionally dualistic taxonomy, namely hermeneutical injustice.) . . . While I hope that my basic taxonomy of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice may stand the test of time when it comes to the ongoing usefulness of keeping the basic kinds in mind, I also hope that the internal diversity of these kinds may be further explored in their various dimensions of significance. (Fricker 2010, 176)

Embodied, comportmental resources associated with gendered embodiment are only one such area of exploration, and they are suggestive of a wider diversity of hermeneutical resources.

One way to incorporate nondiscursive hermeneutical resources into current debates is to consider their role in processes of "hermeneutical smothering" (Medina 2021, 414). This concept has its origins in Dotson's distinction between "testimonial quieting" and "testimonial smothering," where the former refers to an audience's failure to recognize a

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speaker as a knower, and the latter refers to self-silencing on the part of the speaker "to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence" (Dotson 2011, 244). Medina suggests a possible extension of the concept of testimonial smothering in the context of hermeneutical injustice:

> Although Dotson articulates her distinction between quieting and smothering to deal specifically with testimonial cases, this distinction could also be extended to identify different cases of hermeneutical injustice: cases of *hermeneutical quieting*, which would occur whenever an audience fails to identify a speaker as capable of generating meaning in a particular area, and cases of *hermeneutical smothering*, which would involve ways of *stopping oneself from generating meaning when one perceives the hermeneutical climate as unwilling or unable to provide appropriate uptake*. (Medina 2021, 414, emphasis added)

I understand the descriptions of gendered embodiment in the previous section to describe something akin to hermeneutical smothering, in that they concern internalized restrictions on self-interpretation. I especially appreciate Medina's suggestion that hermeneutical smothering occurs at the level of perception—"when one *perceives* the hermeneutical climate"—which harmonizes nicely with Tuana, Bar On, Beauvoir, and Young's respective claims that gendered embodiment shifts the way in which objects, goals, resources, and practices disclose themselves.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that constrictive embodied comportments, practices, and dispositions have hermeneutical stakes that are not fully captured by an approach to hermeneutical resources that restricts itself to terms, concepts, and styles. As illustrative examples, I have drawn from Tuana, Bar On, Beauvoir, and Young's respective phenomenologies of feminized bodies. Of course, gendered bodily comportment is only one of many possible forms of nondiscursive hermeneutical dysfunction. To further incorporate nondiscursive resources into the study of hermeneutical injustice, it will be important to turn to other traditions and situated analyses of nondiscursive interpretive oppression.

One such analysis, which predates the accounts offered above by more than a century, is that of Maria Stewart. In an 1832 lecture at the New England Anti-Slavery Society, Stewart argued that imposed physical labor distorted the interpretive dispositions and intellectual prospects of enslaved persons:

> I have learnt, by bitter experience, that continual hard labor deadens the energies of the soul, and benumbs the faculties of the mind; the ideas become confined, the mind barren. . . . Again, continual and hard labor irritates our tempers and sours our dispositions; the whole system becomes worn out with toil and fatigue; nature herself becomes almost exhausted, and we care but little whether we live or die. . . . O, ye fairer sisters, whose hands are never soiled, whose nerves and muscles are never strained, go learn by experience! Had we the opportunity that you have had, to improve our moral and mental faculties, what would have hindered our intellects from being as bright . . . ? (Stewart 1987, 47)

Here, Stewart connects a host of physical energies, sensations, and affects—numbness, irritation, fatigue—with the diminishment of the energies of the soul. Her description of

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the epistemic limits imposed by oppressive labor evinces an acute attentiveness to the continuity between embodied practices and one's horizons of self-interpretation. Patently, there is no straightforward equivalence between the embodied comportments of enslavement, racialization, and racist oppression and the socially situated accounts of patriarchal oppression and gendered embodiment offered by Tuana, Bar On, Beauvoir, and Young. Instead, Stewart's analysis is only one example of how the theorization of nondiscursive hermeneutical injustice has a long history in terms other than those deployed in epistemology, phenomenology, and white feminist theory. This article has undertaken the narrow aim of reconstructing several possible resources and processes of self-interpretation that enable and constrain recourse to truthful and self-efficacious self-interpretations. This is only one small step in engaging with what is "hermeneutical" about hermeneutical injustice, which would also require an unceasing, reflexive interrogation of how one poses questions about hermeneutical injustice, and the limits of the resources and traditions upon which one relies.[12] The question of how to position oneself towards inherited traditions of interpretation and meaning-making is fundamental to the study of hermeneutical injustice, just as it is to the tradition of philosophical hermeneutics. Posing this question demands what Dotson calls "open conceptual structure[s]" in which "[o]ne has to remain constantly aware that there is always more to say and remain sensitive to the inevitability of damaging oversights" (Dotson 2012, 42). To similar effect, Simpson emphasizes that a rigorously critical hermeneutics is one that is never complete:

> There is thus a sense in which some degree of ethnocentrism is epistemologically unavoidable. . . . [A] hermeneutically self-aware ethnocentrist, one who is aware of her transcendental ethnocentrism, would interpret others in accordance with the criteria that her lights reveal, but not in a way that dogmatically precludes the possibility (or desirability) . . . that she could learn from others. (Simpson 2021, 64–65)

For the purposes of this article, I take this to mean three things: first, that nondiscursive hermeneutical resources take a variety of forms beyond those raised here; second, that this article inherits and deploys a set of hermeneutical resources (terms, concepts, sources, and practices) from social epistemology and phenomenology that should not be taken to be adequate or authoritative; and third, that any account of hermeneutical injustice always ought to refuse the last word when it comes to trying to understand how it is that others come to understand themselves.

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Notes

1 It is worth noting that some of the "nondiscursive" resources that I foreground may be considered by others to be "discursive" in a more expansive sense of the term. In what follows, I will consider words, concepts, and expressive styles that serve as semantic or performative components of linguistic communication and/or social expression to be discursive hermeneutical resources. This categorization is heuristic in nature, and does not imply a rigid delineation between discursive and nondiscursive resources; in fact, I will argue for continuities between them in this article.

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2 I adopt the premises that "truth" and "self-efficacy" are goods worth striving for in self-interpretive efforts. Substituting other values here should not dramatically affect the argument about the relationship of nondiscursive resources to discursive resources. It is the form and function of these resources (and not the justification for why their absence constitutes an injustice) that are the focus of this article.

3 As Ian James Kidd and Havi Carel put it, "[t]he injustice may be that people are prevented from *making sense* of their experiences, or of *sharing* that sense with others" (Kidd and Carel 2018, 219).

4 A notable exception to this general trend is Luis Oliveira, who uses the term "hermeneutic resources" to name "either the concepts [subjects] possess *or their dispositions for conceptual application*" (Oliveira 2022, 111, my emphasis).

5 See Tessman and Bar On (1999) for Bar On's reflections on the designation "white" from her perspective as a Jewish Israeli expatriate immigrant.

6 As Ahmed notes, Fanon's "[o]rdre surtout tactile, vestibulaire, cinesthétique et visual" is a reference to Jean Lhermitte's *L'image de notre corps* (Fanon 1952, 90). See Ahmed (2007) for detailed consideration of the relation between phenomenology and race.

7 Carolyn Culbertson, who also analyzes martial arts training as a distinct mode of prereflective engagement, or what Martin Heidegger calls *In-der-Welt-sein*, points specifically to associated shifts in perception: "If … I am immersed as a student in a martial arts class, my cares and concerns are different. Things disclose themselves differently too. My intention in this case is to master the technical skills that I am learning and, if sparring, to avoid submission or injury. Here I encounter my training partners as trustworthy too, but also as competitors. In these ways, the worlds I am immersed in shape not only what I care about, but *even shape the basic way in which things appear to me*" (Culbertson 2019, 22, emphasis added).

8 See Francis and Gontier (1986, 358).

9 To be clear, these resources are not *only* anterior, since discursive resources also inform nondiscursive self-interpretation. Self-interpretation generally involves both discursive and nondiscursive resources, but I am foregrounding the latter because they do not always make an appearance in discussions of hermeneutical injustice.

10 Barnes's analogy is originally introduced in the service of elucidating Sally Haslanger's conception of "social structures." See Haslanger (2006).

11 See Fricker's argument that "the category [of discriminatory epistemic injustice] will only be useful if it remains bounded and specific, not relaxing outwards to embrace the generality of unfair interpersonal manipulations or … systemic riggings of the epistemic economy" (Fricker 2017, 53).

12 See Medina (2021) for a survey of pioneering accounts of what we now call "epistemic injustice" by feminists of color, including Sojourner Truth, Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida B. Wells, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde. In Medina's words: "[I]t would contribute to the epistemic injustice suffered by feminists of color *not* to acknowledge that their scholarship and activism have focused precisely on the host of issues we now call *epistemic injustice*" (2021, 408).

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