On Epistemic Appropriation*

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In this article, I offer an account of an unjust epistemic practice—namely, epistemic appropriation—that harms marginalized knowers through the course of conceptual dissemination and intercommunal uptake. The harm of epistemic appropriation is twofold. First, while epistemic resources developed within the margins gain uptake with dominant audiences, those resources are overtly detached from the marginalized knowers responsible for their production. Second, epistemic resources developed within, but detached from, the margins are utilized in dominant discourses in ways that disproportionately benefit the powerful.

I. ON SHARING EPISTEMIC RESOURCES: SOME PRELIMINARY NOTES

On Miranda Fricker's account of hermeneutical injustice, a speaker is the victim of a hermeneutical injustice if some significant area of her social experience is obscured "owing to a lacuna in the collective hermeneutical resource."[1] A woman in the early 1960s who is unable to communicate the gravity of a coworker's unwanted sexual advances, owing to the fact

1. See Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and Ethics in Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 159.

that the concept "sexual harassment" has not yet been developed, suffers a hermeneutical injustice on Fricker's account. The "collective hermeneutical resource" refers to a set of interpretive epistemic resources (e.g., concepts, meanings, stories, tropes) that is shared between interlocutors. In discussing the idea of collective hermeneutical resources, one ought to distinguish between intercommunal and intracommunal collective hermeneutical resources.[2] A pool of resources is intracommunally shared when people within a given community or group collectively utilize the concepts in that pool. Whether or not those concepts are shared with others outside of that community or group is a separate question. An intercommunally shared pool of resources is a pool of resources that is shared not only within communities and groups but also across different communities and groups. Importantly then, epistemic resources might be intracommunally shared without also, at the same time, being intercommunally shared. When Fricker suggests that there is a lacuna in the "collective hermeneutical resource," she means to suggest that there is a lacuna in the intercommunally shared pool.

In an unjust society, some communities and groups possess more social, material, and political power than others. I will refer to these communities and groups as "dominant" groups and communities. I will refer to the comparatively less powerful communities and groups as "marginalized" communities and groups. In an unjust society, concepts and other epistemic resources come to be intercommunally shared in a number of ways: (1) accidentally, as a result of increased interaction between groups and communities but without any underlying intention to do so; (2) mutually, as a result of a collective desire among groups and communities to achieve shared understandings and accomplish shared goals; (3) forcefully, as a result of efforts on the part of more powerful groups and communities to assimilate less powerful groups and communities into their own or to mobilize less powerful groups and communities to advance the

2. In her 2007 account, Fricker did not explicitly distinguish between these two ways of sharing hermeneutical resources, and this failure has prompted a number of objections to her account of hermeneutical injustice. For critiques, see Rebecca Mason, "Two Kinds of Unknowing," *Hypatia* 26 (2011): 294–307; José Medina, "The Relevance of Credibility Excess in a Proportional View of Epistemic Injustice: Differential Epistemic Authority and the Social Imaginary," *Social Epistemology* 25 (2011): 15–35; Gaile Pohlhaus Jr., "Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice: Toward a Theory of Willful Hermeneutical Ignorance," *Hypatia* 27 (2012): 715–35; Kristie Dotson, "A Cautionary Tale: On Limiting Epistemic Oppression," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 33 (2012): 24–47. For an account of the structure of collective hermeneutical resources, see Trystan S. Goetze, "Hermeneutical Dissent and the Species of Hermeneutical Injustice," *Hypatia* 33 (2018): 73–90. For a revised account of hermeneutical injustice, see Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Injustice and the Preservation of Ignorance," in *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance*, ed. Rik Peels and Martijn Blaauw (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 160–77.

ends of the powerful; or (4) through varying acts of resistance on the part of marginalized groups and communities to facilitate broader acknowledgment and understanding of their experiences.[3] As a matter of course, then, many concepts and other epistemic resources first develop intracommunally within communities and groups. There will often be delays before intracommunally shared resources gain intercommunal uptake (if they ever do). Those communities and groups whose intracommunally shared epistemic resources are, systematically, least likely to become intercommunally shared can be said to be epistemically marginalized.

Insofar as Fricker's account of hermeneutical injustice primarily concerns the absence of necessary epistemic resources, unjust practices affecting the dissemination and intercommunal uptake of existing resources remain undertheorized.[4] For example, epistemic defects might occur as a result of structurally maintained (as in the case of segregation) gaps and spaces, which prevent epistemic resources from traveling between groups and communities.[5] Alternatively, defects can result from more active refusals on the part of individual agents, as in cases where agents exhibit some investment in misunderstanding their interlocutors or where agents fail to acquire or employ the relevant epistemic resources when attempting to understand their interlocutors.[6] Indeed, an attentiveness to Fricker's notion of hermeneutical injustice naturally draws our attention to epistemic harms that occur during the later stages of conceptual dissemination and intercommunal uptake.

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3. This list does not purport to be exhaustive. Moreover, in suggesting that marginalized groups and communities can resist the powerful by broadly circulating some of their intracommunally shared epistemic resources, I am not denying that marginalized groups can also resist powerful groups by intentionally keeping some resources hidden from dominant groups. See, e.g., Catherine Hundleby, "The Epistemological Evaluation of Oppositional Secrets," *Hypatia* 20 (2005): 44–58; Heidi E. Grasswick, "Liberatory Epistemology and the Sharing of Knowledge: Querying the Norms," in *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science*, ed. Heidi E. Grasswick (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 241–62; Alison Bailey, "Strategic Ignorance," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2007), 77–94.

4. One might think that Fricker's example of Joe illustrates exactly the sort of case I have claimed she excludes. It bears mentioning, however, that the Joe example is not intended to illustrate a systematic case of hermeneutical injustice, for Joe's epistemic marginalization is neither persistent nor wide-ranging, but one-off. For my purposes, I will focus on epistemic marginalization of the persistent and wide-ranging sort. For the example, see Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 156–58.

5. See Elizabeth Anderson, "Epistemic Justice as a Virtue of Social Institutions," *Social Epistemology* 26 (2012): 163–73.

6. Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. refers to this former phenomenon as "willful hermeneutical ignorance." See Pohlhaus Jr., "Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice," 715. Concerning the latter phenomenon, see Kristie Dotson's discussion of contributory injustice in Dotson, "Cautionary Tale."

In this article, I offer an account of an unjust epistemic practice, namely, epistemic appropriation, which harms marginalized knowers during these later stages. The harm of epistemic appropriation, as I articulate it, is twofold. First, while epistemic resources developed within the margins gain intercommunal uptake, those resources are overtly detached from the marginalized knowers responsible for their production. Call this first harm *epistemic detachment.* When epistemic detachment occurs, the intercommunal pool is expanded to incorporate new epistemic resources (e.g., concepts, interpretations, stories, and meanings), but the participatory role of marginalized contributors in the process of knowledge production is obscured. While epistemic detachment may occur independently from other epistemic harms, it is often compounded by a second harm, namely, *epistemic misdirection.* Epistemic misdirection occurs when epistemic resources developed within, but detached from, the margins are utilized in dominant discourses in ways that disproportionately benefit the powerful. That is to say, the benefits associated with the epistemic contributions of the marginalized are misdirected toward the comparatively privileged. Taken together, epistemic detachment and epistemic misdirection constitute what I am calling *epistemic appropriation.* Insofar as epistemic appropriation constitutes a persistent and unwarranted "epistemic exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production,"[7] it is a form of epistemic oppression.

Throughout the article, I utilize the term "epistemic appropriation," rather than "testimonial appropriation" or "hermeneutical appropriation," to indicate that my account combines features that Fricker associated with either testimonial injustice or hermeneutical injustice but not both. For example, my account of epistemic appropriation is inclusive with respect to the kinds of epistemic resources it concerns. While many of my examples focus on the appropriation of hermeneutical resources (e.g., stories, concepts, meanings, and interpretive tropes), my account should be understood more broadly to include the appropriation of informational resources (e.g., testimony, questions, criticisms, hypotheses, and so on).[8] In addition, my account aims to be inclusive with respect to the causes of epistemic appropriation. That is, epistemic appropriation,

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7. This definition of epistemic oppression comes from Kristie Dotson. See Kristie Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," *Social Epistemology* 28 (2014): 115. See also Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Oppression and Epistemic Privilege," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 29 (1999): 191–210.

8. For the distinction between hermeneutical (interpretive) and testimonial (informational) resources, see Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Contribution as a Central Human Capability," in *The Equal Society: Essays on Equality in Theory and Practice*, ed. George Hull (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2015), 76. For discussion, see Christopher Hookway, "Some Varieties of Epistemic Injustice: Reflections on Fricker," *Episteme* 7 (2010): 151–63.

on my account, should be understood to have both individual and structural roots.[9]

Finally, although my examples situate the phenomenon within a (so-called) Western setting and reach only as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, the origins of epistemic appropriation extend much deeper into our collective global past.[10] Thus, in offering a philosophical analysis of epistemic appropriation, I am in no way claiming to have "discovered" it. Rather, I aim to articulate the conceptual contours of epistemic appropriation and to illuminate the relationship between epistemic appropriation and other epistemic harms that have attracted the attention of contemporary epistemologists and ethicists.[11] The article proceeds as follows. In Section II, I analyze two historical examples of epistemic appropriation. In Section III, I consider two contemporary examples and respond to the objection that epistemic appropriation is inappropriately charac-

9. Contrasting hermeneutical (structural) injustice with testimonial (interpersonal) injustice, Fricker states that unlike testimonial injustice, "no agent *perpetrates* hermeneutical injustice—it is a purely structural notion." See Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 159. For a structural account of testimonial injustice, see Anderson, "Epistemic Justice as a Virtue."

10. The epistemic dimensions of appropriation have been the subject of numerous texts by thinkers in many academic fields (including, e.g., Postcolonial Studies; African American and Africana Studies; and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) and have been a special focus of the writing of people (especially women) of color both inside and outside of the academy. Although it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive list of theorists whose work deals centrally with this theme, notable discussions include Maria W. Stewart, "An Address Delivered at the African Masonic Hall," in *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches*, ed. Marilyn Richardson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 56–64; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 21–78; Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Molefi Kete Asante, "The Rhetoric of Globalisation: The Europeanisation of Human Ideas," *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 1 (2006): 152–58; Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61–88; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2002); bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End, 1982); Linda Martín Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (1991): 5–32; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Whose Story Is It Anyway? Feminist and Anti-Racist Appropriations of Anita Hill," in *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 402–40; Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Hazel V. Carby, "The Multicultural Wars," *Radical History Review* 54 (1992): 7–18. For a recent article which utilizes the term "epistemic appropriation," see Aliza Segal, "Schooling a Minority: The Case of Havruta Paired Learning," *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education* 7 (2013): 149–63.

11. As Rachel McKinnon and others have noted, there is a "deep irony" in the fact that "while Fricker's work is extremely important in detailing the concept and structure of epistemic injustice, this topic finally achieved wider uptake with Fricker's work, largely with her 2007 *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, but the large body of, primarily, Black feminist thought isn't acknowledged." See Rachel McKinnon, "Epistemic Injustice," *Philosophy Compass* 11 (2016): 438–39.

terized as an injustice. In Section IV, I distinguish epistemic appropriation from several related unjust epistemic practices: hermeneutical injustice, testimonial injustice, and testimonial smothering. In Section V, I articulate the primary epistemic harm of epistemic appropriation in terms of a violation of a human capability for epistemic contribution. I argue that the free exercise of this capability requires the cultivation of what Elizabeth Anderson has termed "democratic moral inquiry," and I discuss how we might make progress toward achieving this epistemic goal. In Section VI, I consider a final objection to my account.

II. EPISTEMIC APPROPRIATION: TWO HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

A. *Harriet Taylor Mill and "The Enfranchisement of Women"*

Consider the following. In July 1851, a document entitled "The Enfranchisement of Women" was published in the *Westminster Review* under John Stuart Mill's name. In presenting the manuscript to the editor, Mill stated this: "J. S. M. to W. E. Hickson: 6 India House/3rd March 1851/ Dear Hickson—If you are inclined for an article on the Emancipation of Women, a propos the Convention in Massachussets [*sic*] which I mentioned to you the last time I saw you, I have one nearly ready, which can be finished and sent to you within a week, which, I suppose, is in time for your April number."[12] While Mill uses careful phrasing—"I have one nearly ready" and "can be finished"—the note itself makes no mention of Harriet Taylor, a collaboration with her, or the possibility that the manuscript may have been authored by her entirely (as is now widely believed to be the case).[13] The editor was led to believe that Mill was the author, and the manuscript was published as if Mill had written it. While Mill would acknowledge the manuscript's rightful authorship in personal letters, as well as in the introduction to a second print of the essay in his *Dissertations and Discussions*, it was not until long after Harriet Taylor Mill died that her authorship received public acknowledgment. John Stuart Mill was generally taken to be the author of the manuscript during the height of its influence.[14]

12. Quoted in Friedrich Hayek, *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor: Their Correspondence and Subsequent Marriage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 167.

13. For discussion, see Dale E. Miller, "Harriet Taylor Mill," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2015); See also Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing*, trans. Kathryn Hamer and Lorraine Code (New York: Routledge, 2003), esp. chap. 3.

14. See, e.g., the account of Paulina Davis, who states the following: "In July following this convention, an able and elaborate notice appeared in the 'Westminster Review.' This notice, candid in tone and spirit, as it was thorough and able in discussion, successfully vindicated every position we assumed, reaffirmed and established the highest ground taken in principle or policy by our movement. The wide-spread circulation and high authority of this paper told upon the public mind, both in Europe and this country. It was at the time

A charitable reading of the situation suggests that the irony of a man taking credit for a woman's writings on women's rights was not (entirely) lost on the pair. The idea that this essay was published without Harriet Taylor's permission or with the intent of exploiting her is not an idea that we should take seriously. As any of Mill's writings about Taylor Mill suggest, he believed that Taylor Mill was eminently capable of generating brilliant ideas and communicating them most effectively. More plausibly, the pair lacked confidence in the ability of the British general public to recognize value in the contributions of a woman, especially when those contributions threatened the status quo. Consider the following correspondence from John Stuart Mill to Harriet Taylor, written approximately nine months prior to the publication of "The Enfranchisement of Women":

> J. S. M. to H. T., October/November 1850: You will tell me my own dearest love, what has made you out of spirits. I have been put in spirits by what I think will put you in spirits too—you know some time ago there was a Convention of Women in Ohio to claim equal rights—(& there is to be another in May) well, there has just been a Convention for the same purpose in Massachussets [*sic*]—chiefly of women, but with a great number of men, including the chief slavery abolitionists Garrison, Wendell Phillips, the negro Douglas [*sic*] &c. The New York Tribune contains a long report—most of the speakers are women—& I never remember any public meetings or agitation comparable to it in the proportion which good sense bears to nonsense—while as to tone it is almost like ourselves speaking—outspoken like America, not frightened & senile like England—not the least iota of compromise—asserting the whole of the principle & claiming the whole of the consequences, without any of the little feminine concessions & reserves—the thing will evidently not drop, but will go on till it succeeds, & I really do now think that we have a good chance of living to see something decisive really accomplished on that of all practical subjects the most important—to see that will be really looking down from Pisgah on the promised land—how little I thought we should ever see it.[15]

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supposed to be by Mr. John Stuart Mill. Later we learned that it was from the pen of his noble wife, to whom be all honor for thus coming to the aid of a struggling cause." See Paulina Davis, "A History of the National Woman's Rights Movement, for Twenty Years, with the Proceedings of the Decade Meeting Held at Apollo Hall, October 20, 1870, from 1850 to 1870," in *Women and Social Movements in the United States, 1600–2000*, ed. Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin (Center for the Historical Study of Women and Gender, Binghamton University; Alexandria, VA: Alexander Street, 1997), 16. See Hayek, *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor*, 304 n. 5, for personal correspondence in which John Stuart Mill acknowledges Harriet Taylor Mill's authorship.

  15. Quoted in Hayek, *John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor*, 166–67.

Mill's reiteration of the fact that the majority of the Massachusetts speakers were women suggests that he found this detail remarkable. Moreover, Mill contrasts a "frightened and senile" England with a more "outspoken" America. This comparison between England and the United States is not merely a political comparison but an epistemic one, that is, Mill is comparing the quality of two epistemic environments. While American audiences of the 1850s demonstrated a willingness to recognize women as epistemic agents (e.g., as knowers and transmitters of knowledge, or put differently, as thinkers, speakers, presenters, and writers), English audiences, at least to John Stuart Mill's mind, did not. This offers some insight into the decision to publish "The Enfranchisement of Women" under John Stuart Mill's name, despite the fact that women writers and speakers in other locations were already beginning to gain recognition (and respect).

Concerned primarily with the goal of maximizing attention paid to the essay and expanding its influence for the cause of women's suffrage, the pair was less motivated to seek out platforms through which Taylor Mill could be showcased as an independent intellectual figure.[16] As a result of being attributed to her husband, Taylor Mill's ideas likely received wider readership and greater intellectual respectability than they might have if published under her name. Still, the decision to disseminate Harriet Taylor Mill's ideas under John Stuart Mill's name—as opposed to finding venues through which Taylor Mill could establish her own voice—had a profoundly negative effect on others' assessments of her abilities. Despite Mill's insistence that Taylor Mill was collaboratively involved in many of his publications and the author of "The Enfranchisement of Women," the historical commentary on Taylor Mill has been disturbingly critical.[17] One commentator summarizes this criticism by stating that "Harriet Mill occupies a position below her desert in the intellectual history of her time. This is in a measure unavoidable in the case of those who have left no tangible evidence of their power."[18] Indeed, while she published several pieces under her own name before marrying Mill, nearly everything after—including much of her philosophical thought (both her work as sole author and her collaborative work with Mill)—was printed under Mill's name. In this case, a marginalized knower contributes to the intercommunally shared pool of epistemic resources, but only by first detaching herself

16. For discussion, see Alice Rossi, "Sentiment and Intellect: The Story of John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill," in *Essays on Sex Equality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 3–63.

17. For a critical overview of Harriet Taylor Mill scholarship, see Jo Ellen Jacobs, "'The Lot of Gifted Ladies Is Hard': A Study of Harriet Taylor Mill Criticism," *Hypatia* 9 (1994): 132–62.

18. Richard Garnett, *The Life of W. J. Fox* (London: John Lane at Bodley, 1910), 97. Quoted in Jacobs, "'The Lot of Gifted Ladies Is Hard,'" 137.

from her epistemic contributions. Because of this detachment, her status as an epistemic contributor is consequently unrecognized. Insofar as Taylor Mill's contributions are attributed to Mill, her contributions are regarded as evidence of his capabilities, not her own.

B. Race, Gender, and Class in the Construction of Epistemic Inequalities

To better understand the severity of such epistemic disparities, let us take a closer look at Mill's description of the 1850 Massachusetts convention. While he twice mentions that the majority of speakers were women, none of the women are actually named. In fact, the only speakers whom Mill names are men. The convention to which Mill refers (and at which he specifically places male speakers Garrison, Phillips, and Douglass) also included speeches by Harriot Kezia Hunt, Ernestine Rose, Antoinette Brown, Sojourner Truth, Abby Kelley Foster, Abby H. Price, and Lucretia Mott.[19] Through their un-naming, not only are the women speakers detached from their role in the production of knowledge, but attention is misdirected toward their named male counterparts.

Importantly, the operation of epistemic detachment and misdirection in Mill's description occurs along dimensions of gender and also along dimensions of race. Although we cannot be sure that Mill meant to refer only to white, middle-class women when he refers, en masse, to the women speakers above, clues in the passage suggest that he, perhaps unwittingly, did. In distinguishing the "chief slavery abolitionists" (who all happen to be men) from the women (who have gathered to "claim equal rights"), Mill implies that abolitionists, on the one hand, and suffragists, on the other, constitute two separable political identities. On such an account, Black women speakers like Sojourner Truth, for whom abolitionism and women's suffrage were entangled endeavors, find no place in Mill's bifurcated description.

Indeed, Black women were (and are) uniquely affected by epistemic appropriation; their epistemic contributions have historically been (and continue to be) detached and misdirected by and toward men (comparatively privileged by gender) and by and toward white women (comparatively privileged by race).[20] For example, concerning the effect of gender

19. J. G. Forman, "Women's Rights Convention: At Worcester, Mass." *New-York Daily Tribune*, October 26, 1850.

20. For discussion, see hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*; Hazel Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*, ed. Houston A. Baker Jr., Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 61–86; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989, 139–68; The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in *All the Women Are White, All the Men Are Black, but Some of Us Are Brave*, ed. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (New York: Feminist, 1982), 13–22.

subordination on Black women intellectuals, Brittney Cooper observes that

> when the term Black public intellectual is used, only a limited number of people come to mind. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, there is Frederick Douglass (but not his mentees, Mary Church Terrell and Ida B. Wells); Booker T. Washington (but not his wife Margaret Murray Washington); W. E. B. Du Bois (but not his contemporaries, Anna Julia Cooper or Fannie Barrier Williams); E. Franklin Frazier, Martin Luther King (but not their contemporaries, Anna Arnold Hedgeman and Pauli Murray); and Harold Cruse (but not his contemporary, Toni Cade Bambara). The history of Black public intellectualism is a history of race men.[21]

Concerning the effect of racial subordination, bell hooks notes that at the time of her writing in the early 1980s, most of the collections of nineteenth-century Black women's writings had been edited by white women. She states, "It is significant that in our society white women are given grant money to do research on black women but I can find no instance where black women have received funds to research white women's history."[22] With this in mind, let us consider more closely the case of Sojourner Truth—activist, preacher, woman, thinker, mother, and former slave—for whom issues of race, gender, and class intersect in the construction of her epistemic reality.

C. The Co-optation of Sojourner Truth

In the same year that Harriet Taylor Mill published "The Enfranchisement of Women" under John Stuart Mill's name, Sojourner Truth delivered what has become her most famous speech at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. Because she did not read or write, Truth was especially vulnerable to the appropriation of her words and image by white, educated female peers.[23] One particularly illuminating example of such co-optation can be found in a short article entitled "Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl," written and published in 1863 by Harriet Beecher Stowe, a white woman with literary training. In the piece, Stowe recollects Truth's visit to Stowe's Andover home a decade earlier, during which Truth (reportedly) discussed her time as a slave and her thoughts concerning women's suffrage.

21. Brittney C. Cooper, *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 24.
22. hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, 10.
23. For discussion, see Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 17–18. See also Donna Haraway, "Ecce Homo, Ain't (Ar'n't) I a Woman, and Inappropriate/d Others: The Human in a Post-humanist Landscape," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 86–100.

Although Stowe had publicly endorsed Truth several years earlier (at Truth's request) and was no doubt impressed by Truth's bold presence and powerful discourse, Stowe's 1863 account reduces Truth to a caricature and muddles the complexity of Truth's intellectual thought. Stowe repeatedly objectifies Truth, referring to Truth and her grandson as "specimens" and comparing Truth to nonhuman forms such as art (e.g., statues) and flora (e.g., trees).[24] Moreover, Stowe portrays Truth's words in an artificial dialect and utilizes obsessive detail to depict Truth—who was born in the state of New York—as a foreign "exotic." As historian Nell Irvin Painter notes, "In a piece nine pages long, Stowe uses the words 'Africa' or 'African' six times, 'Libyan' seven times, 'Ethiopian' once, 'Egypt' once, 'Native' three times, and terms of exotic locales ('torrid zones,' 'desert') six times. Through her force of repetition, [Stowe] depicts herself and her guests as a neutral American audience and Truth as a denizen of the desert on display in the exhibition hall of Stowe's parlor."[25] Through her publication, Stowe detaches Truth's person from Truth's thought, and in the process, she wholly distorts both. As evidence of Stowe's disconnect from Truth at the time of Stowe's writing in 1863, Stowe inaccurately wrote that Truth, who lived until 1883, had already passed away. Despite her complete disassociation with Truth, Stowe demonstrated no qualms about capitalizing on Truth's reputation.[26] Indeed, it seems no accident that Stowe published "Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl" ten years after the Andover encounter, during a time when Stowe financially supported herself by publishing shorter popular pieces. That the benefits associated with Truth's contributions were misdirected via Stowe is indicated by the following fact: while Stowe's short article likely procured a payment of two hundred dollars, Truth's own full-length, cloth-bound biography (published over a decade earlier and with which Truth made her livelihood) sold for twenty-five cents a copy.[27]

In the years after Stowe's publication, Truth resisted Stowe's cooptation. Truth publicly dispelled the inaccuracies in Stowe's account and redirected curious audiences to read her biography, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, instead.[28] This observation suggests that not all collabora-

24. Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1863.

25. Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, a Symbol* (New York: Norton, 1996), 155. See also Nell Irvin Painter, "Sojourner Truth in Life and Memory: Writing the Biography of an American Exotic," *Gender and History* 2 (1990): 3–16.

26. According to Painter, Stowe was recorded to have done impersonations of Truth to the amusement of her friends, and "Truth-like" figures appear in Stowe's fiction. See Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 153–54.

27. Ibid., 111 and 153. Martin Delany articulates a similar criticism of Harriet Beecher Stowe in a letter to Frederick Douglass. See Robert S. Levine, ed., *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 224–25.

28. See Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 162–63.

tions between marginalized and dominant knowers are to be understood in terms of epistemic appropriation. Truth's collaboration with Olive Gilbert—a white female friend to whom Truth dictated her biography—enabled Truth to become a self-employed businesswoman, selling copies of her book at the events she attended and at which she often spoke. While the power imbalances between Truth and Gilbert may have made the collaboration problematic in other ways, Truth's exclusive ownership over and profitability from the sale of her book enabled her to support herself throughout her life. Truth's ability to benefit directly from her own epistemic labor reveals a crucial difference between epistemic appropriation and more empowering epistemic relationships.

III. EPISTEMIC APPROPRIATION: A CONTEMPORARY FACE

A. *Epistemic Appropriation and the Research Subject*

While it might be tempting to think of epistemic appropriation as a mere relic of a more prejudiced historical epoch, it manifests a contemporary face. Consider the following case. Every few years, a department in the social sciences at a large university facilitates a research program in which graduate students and their supervisors conduct fieldwork examining the effects of poverty on school-aged children's academic success. Because the university is located in an affluent area, researchers travel to other neighborhoods to conduct this research. Research consists of class observations and interviews with teachers, students, aides, and parents to collect information regarding the difficulties associated with educating under conditions of indigence. Consent is obtained before interviews are conducted, and participant anonymity is protected. Final reports are written up and presented in small groups at the university, as well as at larger academic conferences. The results are eventually published in academic journals and books. The participants from the grade schools in which the research is conducted are not compensated for their involvement (participation must be strictly voluntary), nor are they credited for their contributions (confidentiality must be preserved).[29]

In this example, the students, teachers, aides, and parents who are interviewed and observed as part of the university's research initiative are contributing alongside researchers in the creation of new knowledge paradigms. These knowledge paradigms are utilized to inform dominant narratives about the relationship between poverty and childhood education. Over the years, this practice produces a large body of academic literature which comes to be appreciated within the academic community.

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29. For a critique of these research practices, see Matt Bradley, "Silenced for Their Own Protection: How the IRB Marginalizes Those It Feigns to Protect," *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 6 (2007): 339–49.

However, very little of the research is appreciated by the *subject community*, nor is it used directly (or even indirectly) to their benefit. The participatory role of students, aides, parents, and teachers in producing the research is unrecognized and uncompensated. The funds acquired by the university to conduct research are not funneled back into the schools in which the research is conducted, and it is the university researchers who receive the epistemic capital associated with the published results. The researchers themselves are able to see their epistemic labor directly and immediately rendered into benefits. A line on one's curriculum vitae increases the likelihood of fellowships, job offers, promotions, and merit raises, all of which make safe and affordable housing (and good school districts for one's children) attainable. In addition, the researchers are able to garner recognition and prestige within their own institutions, where both are accompanied by generous spikes in one's credibility and access to larger platforms for continued contribution.

Of course, such research is intended to enhance the educational lives of participants, by helping educators improve the learning environment for children or by providing arguments that would convince a state legislature to allocate more funds for teachers' aides, or materials, or more teachers, or better after-school programs, or more nutritious school lunches, and so on. Yet while both academic researchers and members of the participating school district collaborate in the development of the research, the school district participants must wait years, even decades, before their epistemic contributions trickle down in the form of benefits to their community (if they ever do). Before the research becomes visible enough to begin informing practice (if it ever does), the original student participants will have reached adulthood, and many will have little choice but to send their own children to schools with large class sizes, poorly compensated teachers, scarce staffing support, and insufficient material resources (such as working computers and basic amenities like a functional heating and cooling system). The researchers, however, supported by stable (if not overly generous) academic salaries and stipends, are able to send their children to schools amply equipped with well-paid educators, guidance counselors, and school psychologists, and where each student is provided with healthy lunches, up-to-date textbooks, and a personal laptop.

Katherine McKittrick critiques this practice whereby "we can apparently 'fix' (repair) the plight of the other by producing knowledge about the other that renders them less than human."[30] As McKittrick puts it, the "cyclical and death-dealing spatialization of the condemned and those 'without' remains analytically intact, at least in part, because thinking oth-

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30. Katherine McKittrick, "On Plantations, Prisons, and a Black Sense of Place," *Social and Cultural Geography* 12 (2011): 947–63, 955.

erwise demands attending to a whole new system of knowledge."[31] Indeed, epistemic marginalization renders the participant community less likely to benefit from the value of their epistemic contributions, from which they are, as a matter of academic procedure, detached. Instead, benefits disproportionately advantage the powerful. While relationships that facilitate the exchange or mutual sharing of epistemic resources between dominant and marginalized knowers are potential sources of moral and epistemic transformation, the prevailing structures of power under which such relationships develop threaten to undermine the liberatory potential of these relationships for marginalized knowers. For even as epistemic agents struggle against unequal power structures, they operate within them.

B. The "Trojan Horse" Tactic as Epistemic Appropriation

Let us examine a final case: the critically acclaimed television show *Orange Is the New Black*. The show is based on a memoir of the same title written by Piper Kerman, a white, middle-class woman who was convicted of felony money laundering—having once transported a suitcase full of drug money as a favor for her at-the-time lover—and sentenced to fifteen months in a federal prison.[32] In her memoir, Kerman recounts her time in prison and the events that led up to her incarceration, but she also details the stories of several of her prison mates, many of whom are not white and many of whom are not middle-class. Without these other women, it is quite clear that Kerman's book would have been much shorter and much less interesting. While Piper (Chapman, as she is named in the television adaptation) is the show's main character, Kerman's depictions of the women who shared their lives with her provide the groundwork for the television show's supporting characters.[33] Consider the statement is-

31. Ibid.

32. Piper Kerman, *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2011).

33. One might object that the women about whom Kerman writes in her book did not actively contribute epistemically; rather, they were just living their lives. In other words, if the women can be said to have made epistemic contributions at all, it was not deliberately (in the way that, e.g., Sojourner Truth did). To be sure, the extent to which these other women actively or passively contributed to Kerman's (and our) knowledge about them varies in each case. Some of Kerman's discussions of other women are purely informed by Kerman's observations about the women as they interacted with her or with others. Other discussions, however, obviously required that the women about whom Kerman wrote actively contributed to Kerman's understanding of them and their lives by sharing with her information about their past, their families, their hopes, their dreams, their fears, etc. While my account is less interested in the former (purely observational) sorts of cases, the latter cases, I think, are more concerning. As I note earlier, epistemic contributions can come to be intercommunally shared "accidentally, as a result of increased interaction between groups and communities but without any underlying intention to do so" (see Sec. I). The mere fact that such contributions were initially trans-

sued by the show's creator, Jenji Kohan, regarding her desire to adapt the memoir into a television show:

> In a lot of ways Piper was my Trojan Horse. You're not going to go into a network and sell a show on really fascinating tales of black women, and Latina women, and old women and criminals. But if you take this white girl, this sort of fish out of water, and you follow her in, you can then expand your world and tell all of those other stories. But it's a hard sell to just go in and try to sell those stories initially. The girl next door, the cool blonde, is a very easy access point, and it's relatable for a lot of audiences and a lot of networks looking for a certain demographic. It's useful.[34]

Kohan plainly describes an epistemic situation in which Black women, Latina women, and older women (as well as, we might add, trans women, poor women, and women for whom these marginalized identities are multiple and intersecting) are not recognized as epistemic contributors in their own right.[35] The underlying assumption is this: for more marginalized women's stories to gain intercommunal uptake, they must first unfold via a comparatively privileged epistemic agent. As Kohan candidly admits, a story whose protagonist is a young, attractive, white, cisgender, middle-class woman interacting with poor women, women of color, older women, and trans women is far less troublesome to mainstream networks and audiences than a story whose protagonist is a poor woman, an older woman, or a trans woman of color.

While the world constructed in *Orange Is the New Black* does indeed expand to explore the narratives of more diverse women, this world expands around (rather than beyond) Piper, keeping Piper—and other white characters—located at the center of the show's events. During the show's first season, the plot centrally focuses on Piper, her life in the facility as

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ferred (to Kerman) unwittingly does not negate the possibility that further dissemination of (and profit from) those contributions by Kerman and others might be appropriate. On my account, epistemic appropriation involves the detachment of epistemic contributions from the marginalized knowers responsible for their production and the misdirection of the benefits associated with those contributions toward the comparatively privileged. Thus, while my account of epistemic appropriation requires that marginalized knowers have contributed to the process of developing and sharing the relevant epistemic resources, I see no reason to think that the marginalized contributors must always be self-consciously aware of their participation in such a process.

34. Jenji Kohan, interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, August 13, 2013.

35. This epistemic situation might be theorized in terms of Kristie Dotson's concept of testimonial quieting. See Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26 (2011): 236–57.

well as her backstory, and on the lives of her family and friends on the out-side. Unlike the white characters we meet when Piper first arrives at Litch-field Penitentiary—Morello (the prison van driver), Red (the cook), Yoga Jones (the resident hippie guru), and Nichols (the lovable "junkie")—many of the women of color depicted are given little by way of introduc-tion, and when they are shown speaking, it is almost exclusively to (or about) other white characters. The first two episodes of the series contain no more than three conversations between nonwhite characters, none of which last longer than a few seconds, and only one of which is not about Piper. In the first exchange between two women of color, one Latina woman (Gloria) acerbically laments the fact that Piper's Spanish is better than that of the other Latina woman (Daya) to whom she addresses her critique. The second exchange between two women of color immediately results in a physical altercation between them. In the first exchange between two Black women, which takes place between Sophia, a trans woman who runs her own hair salon in the prison, and Taystee, the comedic character (who is first shown on-screen complimenting Piper's "perky" breasts), is inter-rupted after only a few seconds when Piper walks in. The scene ends with Taystee leaving the salon with a lock of Piper's yellow hair woven onto her head; she later brags to the other inmates about her new blond look. These early exchanges suggest that the show might have been better named "Orange Is the New Blond," for viewers can make no mistake that this is very much a story about Piper. Indeed, it is Piper—highly educated, WASP, designer of her own line of artisanal bath soaps—whose unthreaten-ing existence serves as a portal through which these other women and their less conventional narratives can be explored.

As the series progresses, the show is forced to grapple with the short-comings imposed on it by its own narrative strategy. By the third season, Piper is, arguably, one of the least interesting characters on the show. Some might cite Piper's diminished appeal as evidence that the "Tro-jan Horse" strategy is, indeed, an effective one. Yes and no. Without the stories of the show's other characters (and especially the characters of color—notably, Taystee, Suzanne "Crazy Eyes" Warren, Poussey, Sophia, and Daya, to name a few), the show would likely be insufferably banal. Yet despite the waning allure of Piper's character, the show's writers—the overwhelming majority of whom are white—perform Herculean ef-forts throughout the series to keep her character relevant.[36] The actress who plays Piper remains the first-billed actress in every season (subordi-nating her costars into the roles of supporting actress and guest actress),

36. Had the show remained faithful to the book, Piper's character would have been released from the facility (and the series) after just one year. For data on the lack of racial diversity in television writing rooms, see Darnell Hunt, "Race in the Writer's Room: How Hollywood Whitewashes the Stories That Shape America," The Color of Change, October 2017.

and she appears in more episodes than any other character. She is almost always pictured in the center of promotional material.

There is, of course, much to celebrate about the show: it's funny, it boasts a largely female cast (starring women of different races, gender identities, sexual orientations, and body types), it affirms a refreshing array of love relationships between women, and it sympathetically portrays the complex lives of people who are incarcerated. Indeed, one might object that insofar as the "Trojan Horse" tactic increases the visibility of marginalized perspectives, it is inappropriately characterized as an injustice. That is, one might argue that perhaps it doesn't matter how marginalized knowers' stories enter the mainstream so long as they eventually arrive. To be sure, the show offers a creative way to "hack" a system in which dominant perspectives are privileged and marginalized perspectives are often never portrayed at all. Still, while the show creates space for marginalized perspectives, those perspectives remain tethered to the dominant.

Indeed, there is something deeply unsettling about a show that tells the stories of Latina women, Black women, trans women, old women, and poor women, while the show's creators, producers, writers, and the author of the book from which it is adapted are, overwhelmingly, none of the above.[37] Insofar as *Orange Is the New Black* engages in a kind of contemporary feminist praxis, it falls short of the feminist objectives articulated by Lugones and Spelman: "While part of what feminists want and demand for women is the right to move and act in accordance with our own wills and not against them, another part is the desire and insistence that we give our *own* accounts of these movements and actions. For it matters to us what is said about us, who says it, and to whom it is said: having the opportunity to talk about one's life, to give an account of it, to interpret it, is integral to leading that life rather than being led through it."[38] The "Trojan Horse" strategy increases the uptake of diverse perspectives within the mainstream, yet the strategy remains limited so long as marginalized knowers are not located at the center of their own stories. Though indicative of progress, this state of affairs must not be confused with justice.

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37. We might characterize this sort of perception in terms of what Mariana Ortega calls "loving, knowing ignorance" regarding white feminist engagements with women of color. In contrast to the "arrogant perceiver" who "does not even care to know about the object of perception, who merely wants to possess, use, coerce, and enslave this object," the loving, knowing perceiver, however earnestly, nonetheless acquires and disseminates inadequate representations of women of color. This leads to ignorance about women of color, even though the perceiver herself desires "to see women of color in their own terms, does not want to homogenize them, does not want to be coercive with them, does not want to use them." See Mariana Ortega, "Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant: White Feminism and Women of Color," *Hypatia* 21 (2006): 56–74, 61.

38. María C. Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice,'" in *Women's Studies International Forum* 6 (1983): 573–81.

IV. HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE, TESTIMONIAL INJUSTICE, AND TESTIMONIAL SMOTHERING

One might object that epistemic appropriation, as I have articulated it, is not sufficiently distinguished from several related unjust epistemic practices, specifically hermeneutical injustice, testimonial injustice, and testimonial smothering.[39] In the following subsections, I will discuss the differences between epistemic appropriation and these other epistemic harms. First, let us consider the relationship between hermeneutical injustice and epistemic appropriation.

A. *Hermeneutical Injustice and Epistemic Appropriation*

On Fricker's account, cases of hermeneutical injustice must meet two conditions: conceptual deficit and nonculpability.[40]

> **Conceptual Deficit**: hermeneutical injustice must be explained in terms of a conceptual deficit in the intercommunally shared pool of resources.

> **Nonculpability**: hermeneutical injustice involves no epistemic culpability on the part of any individual agent; it is a structural phenomenon.

Epistemic appropriation fails both conditions. First, because epistemic appropriation primarily concerns our practices of disseminating existing epistemic resources, it involves no conceptual deficit. Rather, epistemic appropriation involves a sort of conceptual theft. Second, as my examples demonstrate, epistemic appropriation involves individual agents (some of whom are culpable) and structures alike. Consequently, epistemic appropriation cannot be understood in terms of hermeneutical injustice.

Let me say more. Insofar as hermeneutical injustice is appropriately understood in terms of what Dotson has called "a second-order epistemic exclusion result[ing] from *insufficient* shared epistemic resources,"[41] its correction requires, as Langton puts it, a "conceptual revolution" or "filling the lacuna with an entirely new concept."[42] To illustrate, consider Fricker's example of Carmita Wood, a female university employee who quit her job as a result of stress associated with being sexually harassed by a male coworker. Wood's harassment occurred before the concept

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39. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection.

40. For the Conceptual Deficit condition, see Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Injustice and the Preservation of Ignorance," 173. For the Nonculpability condition, see Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 159.

41. Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," 129.

42. Rae Langton, "Review of Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing," *Hypatia* 25 (2010): 460.

"sexual harassment" was coined by feminists and incorporated into the collective conceptual pool; consequently, Wood found herself at a loss for how to understand, and hence to communicate, her situation when she sought benefits at the unemployment insurance office. Insofar as a conceptual deficit prevented Wood, a marginalized knower, from fully comprehending and hence communicating her situation, she suffered a hermeneutical injustice on Fricker's account.

Importantly, Carmita Wood did eventually come to understand her experiences in terms of sexual harassment. Once Wood was able to render her experience intelligible, owing to the fact that the relevant concepts had become available, she no longer suffered hermeneutical injustice. Yet insofar as Wood's epistemic marginalization marked her more general ability, vis-à-vis her epistemic peers, to participate in the shaping and sharing of epistemic resources, her epistemic marginalization existed long before and persisted long after any particular instance of hermeneutical injustice.[43] Thus, a marginalized knower can acquire concepts with which to understand a particular experience without thereby altering her less central position in the process of shaping collective meanings more generally. As my examples of epistemic appropriation have shown, the mere development of new concepts does not guarantee a change in the underlying system that renders marginalized knowers, comparatively, epistemically powerless.[44] The processes through which new concepts are disseminated and gain uptake are of equal importance.

B. Testimonial Injustice and Epistemic Appropriation

One might object that insofar as the harm I am labeling "epistemic appropriation" is one in which there is a knower who is perceived as less credible owing to prejudices attaching to her social identity, the phenomenon is already captured by Fricker's notion of testimonial injustice.[45] While the two phenomena are closely related, they are distinguish-

43. As Laura Beeby notes, "There was no hermeneutical injustice in Carmita Wood's case until she stood in the unemployment insurance office and failed to come up with something to write in the appropriate box on her claims form." See Laura Beeby, "A Critique of Hermeneutical Injustice," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 111 (2011): 479–86, 481. Insofar as Wood struggled for quite some time to articulate to herself the harms caused by her harasser, Wood experienced hermeneutical injustice long before she entered the unemployment insurance office. Nonetheless, while the experience of hermeneutical injustice may last much longer than a literal moment, it is only in the event that one does try to render obscured experiences intelligible—either to oneself or to others—that one can be said to be a victim of hermeneutical injustice.

44. Indeed, as Dotson states, a major difficulty in addressing second-order epistemic oppression can be found at the first-order level, where "historical, social and political factors determine who will possess that epistemic power and who will be relatively powerless." See Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," 129.

45. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for raising this concern.

able. Like hermeneutical injustice, testimonial injustice involves two components: credibility deficit and epistemic loss.[46]

> **Credibility Deficit**: an unjustly compromised assessment of a targeted individual's credibility or competence.

> **Epistemic Loss**: the subsequent discounting of, or the failure to solicit, the epistemic contribution of the targeted individual on the basis of that compromised credibility assessment.

Consider Fricker's central examples of testimonial injustice. In the first example, drawn from Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Tom Robinson's testimony—in which he, a Black man, expresses sympathy for a white girl—is utterly discounted by the members of the all-white jury. In the second example, drawn from Anthony Minghella's screenplay of *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, Marge Sherwood's suspicions that her fiancé's sudden disappearance involved foul play are dismissed as mere "female intuition" by her fiancé's father.[47] In cases of testimonial injustice, a speaker's epistemic contributions are rendered epistemically inert, that is, they do not receive the uptake necessary to be epistemically operative. Indeed, in describing the harm of testimonial injustice, Fricker states that "knowledge that *would be* passed on to a hearer is not received."[48] As Fricker concludes, "the fact that prejudice can prevent speakers from successfully putting knowledge into the public domain reveals testimonial injustice as a serious form of unfreedom."[49] Epistemic appropriation, in contrast to testimonial injustice, illustrates one way in which marginalized knowers remain "seriously unfree" while nonetheless having put knowledge into the public domain.

While testimonial injustice, on Fricker's account, "presents an obstacle to truth, either directly by causing the hearer to miss out on a particular truth, or indirectly by creating blockages in the circulation of crit-

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46. For the Credibility Deficit condition, see Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 28. For the Epistemic Loss condition, see ibid., 43. My articulation of testimonial injustice is broader than Fricker's original formulation in two respects. First, Fricker uses the phrase "identity-prejudicial credibility deficit" in her account of testimonial injustice. See ibid., 28. I use the phrase "unjustly compromised assessment" so as to include cases of testimonial injustice that involve no individual prejudice but that instead stem from more structural causes. See Anderson, "Epistemic Justice as a Virtue." Second, rather than simply refer to the speaker's "testimony," I refer to the speaker's "epistemic contribution" so as to include a wider range of contributions. See Hookway, "Some Varieties of Epistemic Injustice." I adopt these amendments to demonstrate that epistemic appropriation is distinct from testimonial injustice even in its broadest form.

47. For the examples, see Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 14–29.

48. Ibid., 43; emphasis mine.

49. Ibid.

ical ideas,"[50] epistemic appropriation ensures that those blockages are (at least partially) circumvented. Targets of epistemic appropriation are not prevented from putting knowledge into the public domain; rather, they are prevented from being recognized as having put knowledge into the public domain. That the members of marginalized groups are never acknowledged as contributors is essential to the perpetuation of their epistemic marginalization.[51] As McKittrick summarizes it, "No one moves."[52]

In her discussion of testimonial injustice, Fricker recounts the experiences of a woman who adopts the following practice: when she wants to make a policy suggestion in her workplace, "she actually writes down the suggestion on a little piece of paper, surreptitiously passes it to a sympathetic male colleague, has him make the suggestion, watches it be well received, and then joins in the discussion from there."[53] This strikes me as a case of epistemic appropriation—characterized by the dual processes of epistemic detachment and misdirection. As in the case of Taylor Mill, the harm is facilitated by the marginalized knower herself. Fricker herself distinguishes the case from cases of testimonial injustice, describing it as a "practical" or "professional" "follow-on disadvantage" of testimonial injustice (where practical or professional disadvantages are, for Fricker, distinct from epistemic disadvantages).[54] Accordingly, pervasive testimonial injustice creates the background condition for epistemic appropriation. While I agree with Fricker that cases of epistemic appropriation are distinct from cases of testimonial injustice insofar as they are "caused by it rather than being a proper part of it,"[55] I think epistemic appropriation is inaccurately characterized as a mere "practical" or "professional" disadvantage.

C. Testimonial Smothering and Self-Facilitated Epistemic Appropriation

In cases where epistemic detachment and misdirection are facilitated by the marginalized knower herself (as in the case of Taylor Mill and the woman described above), the harm may function similarly to Dotson's notion of testimonial smothering, or the coerced "truncating of one's own testimony in order to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence."[56] While

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50. Ibid.
51. Indeed, as McKittrick suggests, this practice proceeds under the assumption that the marginalized are "too destroyed or too subjugated or too poor to write, imagine, want, or have a new lease on life." See McKittrick, "On Plantations," 955.
52. Ibid.
53. Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, 47.
54. Ibid., 46.
55. Ibid.
56. Where uptake is very unlikely (or costly), the knower may withhold her contribution entirely. See Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence," 244.

both testimonial smothering and agent-facilitated epistemic appropriation share the end goal of increasing the uptake of some epistemic contribution in environments reasonably perceived to be deficient, they achieve this goal in distinct ways. In cases of testimonial smothering, a knower distorts the content of her contribution so as to ensure uptake; thus, the object of testimonial smothering is the speaker's content. In cases of epistemic appropriation, rather than compromise the content of her epistemic contribution, the agent detaches herself from it; thus, the object of epistemic detachment is the epistemic contributor herself. Once the epistemic contribution is detached from the speaker (and relinquished into the hands of the comparably privileged), the benefits associated with the contribution are misdirected toward the powerful. Testimonial smothering and self-facilitated epistemic appropriation are both coerced forms of silencing.

V. THE PRIMARY EPISTEMIC HARM OF EPISTEMIC APPROPRIATION

A. The Capability for Epistemic Contribution

When epistemic detachment occurs, an agent is unjustly estranged from her own epistemic contributions, while those contributions are nonetheless taken up and circulated among dominant audiences. When epistemic detachment is compounded by epistemic misdirection, the benefits associated with the agent's contributions are funneled away from her and are instead concentrated in the hands of the powerful. In the case of the professional woman described above, it is the "sympathetic male colleague" who is consistently recognized by his coworkers as an indispensable member of the epistemic community, a participant who is responsible for reliably contributing novel ideas to discussion. It is he (and not his silenced coworker) who is recognized as pushing the conversation forward in innovative ways. Her marginalized status in that epistemic community remains intact, despite the fact that her contributions are taken up by the community as a whole. By comparison, the sympathetic colleague no doubt enjoys an unearned boost in the amount of credibility his peers afford him as a result of being perceived by his colleagues to have produced twice as many good ideas.

Epistemic detachment and epistemic misdirection violate the free exercise of what Fricker describes as "our functioning as contributors to shared information and understanding."[57] Following Fricker, let us refer to this function simply as "the capability for epistemic contribution," or,

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57. For a complete account of the capability for epistemic contribution, see Fricker, "Epistemic Contribution as a Central Human Capability," 75.

as Dotson has referred to it, "epistemic agency."[58] Indeed, our basic human capacities are appropriately understood to include our epistemic capacities, and the well functioning of those capacities involves not only the ability to obtain epistemic goods (i.e., to receive an education, to secure credibility, etc.) but also the ability to contribute epistemic goods (i.e., to propose new ideas, conceptual resources, hypotheses, innovative frameworks, etc.).[59] Fricker identifies testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice as practices which thwart an agent's capability for epistemic contribution.[60] As my examples demonstrate, this capability can be thwarted by epistemic appropriation as well.

B. Toward Democratic Moral Inquiry

The capability for epistemic contribution requires for its free exercise the development of what Anderson calls democratic rather than authoritarian forms of moral inquiry. According to Anderson, authoritarian moral inquiry occurs if "(1) it is conducted by people who occupy privileged positions in a social hierarchy; (2) the moral principles being investigated are those that are supposed to govern relations between the privileged and those who occupy subordinate positions in the social hierarchy; and (3) those in subordinate positions are (a) excluded from participating in the inquiry or (b) their contributions—their claims—are accepted as requiring some kind of response, but where the response of the privileged fails to reflect adequate uptake of subordinates' perspectives but rather uses their social power to impose their perspectives on the subordinates."[61] As my account thus far suggests, this characterization of authoritarian moral inquiry must be supplemented with two additional features. Moral inquiry is also authoritarian when, under conditions 1, 2, and 3 laid out by Anderson, (*c*) those in subordinate positions are procedurally detached from their epistemic contributions, or (*d*) the benefits associated with the epistemic contributions of the subordinate disproportionately benefit the powerful. If either (*c*) or (*d*) occurs, the process of moral inquiry cannot be said to be democratic.

   If just epistemic environments are to be achieved, not only must the dominant develop an openness to learning about the world as it is ex-

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58. For comparison, Dotson defines "epistemic agency" as "the ability to utilize persuasively shared epistemic resources within a given community of knowers in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required, the revision of those same resources." See Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression," 115. I take it that epistemic agency and the capability for epistemic contribution amount to much the same thing.

59. Fricker, "Epistemic Contribution as a Central Human Capability," 75.

60. Ibid., 80.

61. Elizabeth Anderson, "The Social Epistemology of Morality: Learning from the Forgotten History of the Abolition of Slavery," in *The Epistemic Life of Groups: Essays in the Epistemology of Collectives*, ed. Michael S. Brady and Miranda Fricker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 75–94, 78.

perienced by the marginalized, but they must also allow the marginalized to shape the resources with which such experiences are to be understood. Indeed, Gaile Pohlhaus Jr. states, "When one genuinely cares to know something about the world as experienced from social positions other than one's own, one must use epistemic resources suited to (and so developed from) those situations. Prerequisites for acquiring such resources are, first, to allow the resources to be well-developed by persons situated in them; second, to trust those persons have developed them well, and third, to take an interest in learning to use those resources."[62] While these prerequisites indeed provide us with a starting point, conditions (*c*) and (*d*) above suggest that it is not sufficient for epistemic equality that dominantly situated knowers merely develop an interest in using resources generated within the margins—for those resources may be utilized to further dominant ends. Our epistemic responsibilities aren't terminated once new concepts which speak to the experiences of marginalized subjects are generated. Our responsibilities also concern how those concepts enter into and are used within the mainstream. Consequently, we might develop Pohlhaus Jr.'s account as follows. First, we might say that we have epistemic responsibilities not merely to use resources created by nondominantly situated knowers but also to publicly acknowledge nondominantly situated knowers as contributors in the processes of meaning making. The link between the production of novel epistemic resources and those laboring to produce those resources cannot go unrecognized. Second, the benefits associated with the epistemic contributions of the marginalized should not disproportionately advantage those already occupying advantaged social positions.

VI. DEFENDING THE "EPISTEMIC"

Finally, one might worry that insofar as epistemic appropriation largely appears to be a by-product of other kinds of nonepistemic structural inequalities and prejudices (e.g., economic inequality, racial inequality, gender inequality), independent investigation of it is unwarranted.[63] For if we eliminate the underlying nonepistemic inequalities, one might object, the elimination of epistemic inequalities will inevitably follow suit.[64] I do not disagree that the elimination of sexism, racism, economic inequality, and other structural inequalities would likely radically reduce, and perhaps even completely eradicate, epistemic injustice. Nonetheless, I think there is value in examining epistemic inequalities in their own right.

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62. Pohlhaus Jr., "Relational Knowing and Epistemic Injustice," 731.
63. Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for raising this worry.
64. For an account of reducible and nonreducible forms of epistemic oppression, see Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression."

First, accounts of epistemic harm prompt us to think about ourselves in a novel way, namely, as epistemic agents. Thinking of ourselves as epistemic agents specifically draws our attention to our responsibilities and capacities as knowers, what we are capable of and what we are owed in these capacities. By recognizing ourselves as epistemic agents, we can come to understand the importance of being perceived to be credible by our peers, of communicating our experiences to a wide range of others utilizing common epistemic resources, and of contributing to the processes through which knowledge is developed and disseminated without fearing that those contributions will be systematically ignored, appropriated, or exploited.[65] Without drawing our attention to the epistemic domain of our lives, these kinds of harms simply do not come into focus.

Second, while it is one thing to imagine (as part of, say, a theoretical exercise or thought experiment) what would follow as a result of the elimination of sexism, racism, economic inequality, and so on, it is a wholly different matter to actually bring about such elimination. Structural inequalities overlap and intertwine; attempts to dismantle one structural inequality often produce the unintended effect of reinforcing others. Consider, for example, Linda Martín Alcoff's example "where a well-meaning First World person is speaking for a person or group in the Third World" such that "the very discursive arrangement may reinscribe the 'hierarchy of civilizations' view where the United States lands squarely at the top. This effect occurs because the speaker is positioned as authoritative and empowered, as the knowledgeable subject, while the group in the Third World is reduced, merely because of the structure of the speaking practice, to an object and victim that must be championed from afar, thus disempowered."[66] Indeed, concludes Alcoff, "though the speaker may be trying to materially improve the situation of some lesser-privileged group, the effects of her discourse [are] to reinforce racist, imperialist conceptions and perhaps also to further silence the lesser-privileged group's own ability to speak and be heard."[67] As Alcoff warns, our real-life efforts to eradicate one form of inequality, for example, material inequality, might deepen epistemic inequalities as a result. Of course, one might think that,

65. For an account of epistemic exploitation, see Nora Berenstain, "Epistemic Exploitation," *Ergo, an Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 3 (2016): 569–90. See also Emmalon Davis, "Typecasts, Tokens, and Spokespersons: A Case for Credibility Excess as Testimonial Injustice," *Hypatia* 31 (2016): 485–501. Epistemic exploitation—like epistemic appropriation—involves a failure to adequately compensate marginalized knowers for their epistemic labor. Unlike epistemic appropriation, however, epistemic exploitation need not involve epistemic detachment (although it sometimes does). In many cases of epistemic exploitation, the exploited contributor remains visibly connected to the products of her epistemic labor, as her exploitation occurs in virtue of a sort of (perceived or actual) epistemically privileged standing with respect to the contributions in question.

66. Alcoff, "Problem of Speaking for Others," 26.

67. Ibid.

in light of such realities, what is called for is not an independent account of epistemic inequality, but rather better practices for improving material inequality. But this suggestion has got things the wrong way around. As history has repeatedly demonstrated, any such practice that is developed without centering the participation of those persons whose lives it purports to improve risks distorting those persons and their lives. Removing epistemic barriers that prevent marginalized persons from fully participating in collective efforts to dismantle structures of oppression is imperative if those efforts are to succeed. Insofar as identifying and understanding these epistemic barriers is a necessary precursor to their removal, independent conceptual investigation of such barriers is called for.

Indeed, one reason broader structures of inequality remain entrenched is that their oppressive nature is easily distorted and obscured. Sometimes, the oppressive nature of these structures is obscure to those who are oppressed by them, as in the case of hermeneutical injustice. More often, however, the oppressive nature of such structures is apparent to those who are oppressed by them, yet attempts by the oppressed to present this information to the dominant are epistemically thwarted. Epistemic justice, then, enhances the realization of broader forms of justice by first expanding our knowledge about injustice. Insofar as a better understanding of injustice improves our ability to combat it, we are warranted in delineating the nature of epistemic inequalities in epistemic terms. While knowing is only half the battle, it is, importantly, the first half.