Cognition as a Social Skill

> People become people only when they enter into culture,
> which is to say, only when culture enters into them, and becomes them,
> when they are programmed with and hence constituted by tools
> of understanding created by a culture at a certain point in history.
> Through existence in history, which is existence in culture,
> people obtain and incorporate cultural tools, and these become
> as much a part of them as their arms and legs.
> J. M. Balkin, *Cultural Software*, p. 18

1. Introduction

To make progress in understanding the demands of social justice, it is important to distinguish oppression or injustice that is *repressive,* that is, forced upon individuals through directly coercive measures, and oppression that is *ideological,* i.e., enacted unthinkingly or even willingly by the subordinated and/or privileged.[1] This distinction draws on one tradition in critical theory according to which ideology "has especially to do with the concepts and the languages of practical thought which stabilize a particular form of power and domination; or which reconcile and accommodate the mass of the people to their subordinate place in the social formation" (Hall 1996/2006, 24-25). Ideology, on this approach, provides the basis for a practical orientation to the world, or what Marxians sometimes call a "practical consciousness." Fluent participation in any social milieu depends on a practical orientation that enables one to communicate and coordinate. But not every practical orientation is ideological. Ideology sets us up to participate fluently in practices and structures of injustice.[2]

Repression – understood as injustice coercively enforced – is a serious violation of justice. Ideological oppression is also serious but more insidious, for it is more difficult to identify and critique: it is embedded in forms of coordination that we are highly motivated to engage in, and engage in fluently; results of such coordination are often valuable; and the terms of such engagement come to constitute our self-understandings and our identities.

Most cases of oppression are plausibly hybrid, i.e., ideology plays a role, but the ideology is not hegemonic and coercion is often employed to keep the subordinated in their place (see, e.g., Manne 2016). However, there are notable differences in how much coercion is required. For example, in the contemporary United States, gender is largely ideological. Men and women enact gender with hardly a second thought, even when "correct" gender performance is

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[1] I will not offer an account of oppression in this paper. I endorse an account, such as Iris Young's, according to which there are multiple irreducible forms of oppression (Young 1990), e.g., exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, systematic violence. See also Cudd 2006; Haslanger 2012, Ch.11.

[2] The term 'ideology' can be used in a pejorative or non-pejorative sense (Geuss 1981). In a non-pejorative sense, ideology guides our participation in social practices, whether just or unjust. In the pejorative sense, the term is used as part of an explanation of how unjust and oppressive social structures are stabilized and sustained. More specifically, the pejorative use of the term attempts to illuminate how agency is (or can be) colonized under conditions of injustice. Because my focus is on this colonization of consciousness, I choose to use the term in the pejorative sense. I use the term 'cultural technē' non-pejoratively for a satchel of cultural tools. Whether the tools in question constitute an ideology or not will depend on context.

demanding, expensive, and against one's best interests. Discipline makes of us what Foucault (1975) would call, "docile bodies," who are managed by institutional and material structures and who, importantly, police ourselves through self-discipline, so that coercion by others is not necessary.

For example, dropping one's child at school is a practice that is an instance of a more general practice of parenting that relates one in multiple ways to other persons and things. Parenting structures distribute things of (+/-) value, e.g., love, knowledge, skills, time, sleep, money, status, clothing, toys and other "stuff"; [3] and more on the negative side, chores, and the tedious minutia of caregiving and scheduling. These structures also reflect and reinforce assumptions about gender, race/ethnicity, class, ability, religion, citizenship. Our participation in them is often unjust, but we enact them and build our identities around them, and they reproduce themselves with hardly a thought. The love we have for our children and our spouses leads us to buy the right things, to invest in the right activities, and generally, to do things "right." But what is "right" by these standards may both reflect and contribute to systems of injustice that are largely beyond the reach of individuals who are just trying to live their lives and take care of those they love (e.g., Lippmann 1922/1998, Brighouse and Smith 2008).

I've argued elsewhere that ideological oppression is best understood by focusing on social practices (Haslanger 2017a). On my view, practices constitute and depend on social relations; relations link nodes in structures. Social relations include relations *between people*: being a parent of, being an employee of, being a student of; they also include relations *to things*: cooking, owning, occupying, driving, eating, herding. For example, the practice of cooking involves not only a cook and someone to eat the food, but also the source of seeds, land, water, heat, the knowledge to produce palatable foodstuffs, and culinary traditions; in the contemporary context cooking also links us to distributors, transport systems, waste disposal systems, and global labor chains. Virtually all practices are embedded in such broad systems. Attention to practices is crucial for work on social justice because they are a nexus where individual agency is enabled and constrained by social factors; they produce, distribute, and organize, things taken to have value[4]; and they are a potential site for social change.

Because of the huge cognitive demands of coordination across highly varying and variable circumstances, humans cannot rely on "preinstalled, competence-specific information" (Sterelny 2012, xi).[5] A cedar waxwing may be hard-wired to eat small red round things found in its environment (e.g., holly berries), or to mate with others who emit a particular call. Humans

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[3] I follow Anderson (1993) in being a pluralist about value and grounding kinds of value in apt ways of valuing.

[4] To my mind, work on justice has focused too much on distributive justice, as if the things of value are "given" and the only issue is how we distribute them. An account of social justice must investigate the process by which some things rather than others are valued, produced, managed, and how things disvalued are also produced, managed, and distributed. See, e.g., Stanczyk 2012.

[5] There is considerable controversy over the extent to which human social cognition is managed by "innate modules" and the extent to which innate capacities for social learning are responsive to and enable us to acquire locally specific information and skills. Nevertheless, it is clear that both innate capacities and social learning are required. Sterelny (2012) discusses this at length, and although I am convinced by his arguments in favor of extensive social learning, the subject matter of my project is sufficiently high-level social coordination, that I can remain somewhat neutral on the detailed explanation of the basics of human social cognition. We are hard-wired to acquire information and skills specific to our environment and social context, and this learning shapes – not entirely, but in important ways – how we engage with the world and each other, both practically and epistemically.

evolved to be social foragers in a broad variety of ecological contexts. This required social learning, reliable cross-generational transmission, and the material and technological resources for building on what came before (Sterelney 2012, esp. Chs. 2-3).

Very roughly, I take practices to be patterns of behavior that enable us to coordinate due to learned skills and locally transmitted information, in response to resources, and whose performances are "mutually accountable" by reference to some shared schemas/social meanings.[6] The slogan is that practices are constituted by interdependent cultural schemas (aka *social meanings*) and *resources*, i.e., things taken to have (+/-) value (Sewell 1992; Haslanger 2012).[7] Structures are sets of interconnected practices.

On this conception, practices are not necessarily governed by rules, and they need not be consciously or intentionally performed. As in Bourdieu[8], practices

> …can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, [and] objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor. (1972/1977, 72)

Situating practices in a coordinated network of learned dispositions – what Bourdieu calls a *habitus* – allows us to broaden the social world beyond human interaction. Humans engage in practices with non-human animals (commonly with dogs and horses), and some non-human animals engage in practices with each other (hunting, foraging, and raising offspring together).[9] Many human practices are highly sophisticated and involve kinds of thought and action that are seemingly unique to humans; and likewise, some non-human practices are beyond us.

The social meanings we generate and transmit to others with whom we coordinate constitute *culture*, as I will be understanding that complicated and contested notion. A culture, in this sense, is not a "concrete and bounded world of beliefs and practices" distinctive of a society, ethnic group, or community (Sewell 2005, 39). Rather, culture provides range of public meanings that provide tools for coordination within a group (Sewell 2005, Balkin 1998, Swidler 1984). The "tools" do not form a coherent framework and are constantly being altered, repurposed, discarded. Admittedly, to say that culture provides us with "tools" may stretch the meaning of the

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[6] I develop this account more fully in my "What is a Social Practice?" forthcoming in *Philosophy*.

[7] In the past I have used the term 'schemas' both for public *cultural* schemas and internalization of them as *psychological* schemas. (This is how Sewell (1992), I believe, uses the term; see also Howard (1994), Hollandar and Howard (2000).   This has caused confusion, so I will aim to use the term 'social meaning,' and for webs of meanings, 'cultural technē,' in place of 'cultural schema' going forward; though as I will indicate below, 'social meanings' include narratives, patterns of inference, and other cultural memes that one might not normally consider "meanings" in a narrow sense. See also Balkin (1998).

[8] In Bourdieu's terminology, "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g., material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus,* systems of durable, transposable, *dispositions*…" (1972/1977, 72) As I understand it, a habitus is a system of coordinated dispositions in a group of individuals which enables them to engage in the practice; individuals will have those particular dispositions that enable them to do their part. A habitus arises from the objective conditions that call for coordination, and also shape those conditions. This "looping" or "interdependence" between the social meanings, the dispositions, and the conditions is crucial to both Bourdieu's view and mine.

[9] I am assuming here, with Sterelny (2012) and others, that there is some cross-generational transmission of information and skills in certain species of non-human animals. (See also Hearne 1986; Gruen 2014; Zawidzki 2013, esp. Ch. 1)

word a bit, for it is not to suggest that they are intentionally designed or taken up for a purpose. We take advantage of culture and it serves as an instrument for us. But just as Bourdieu suggests that our coordination is "orchestrated" but not by a conductor, similarly, culture is an instrument, but most of it is not designed as such by individuals. For example, a cultural narrative of the gendered division of labor enables us to coordinate in raising children. None of us designed or created it (in its many manifestations!); it predates us and has shaped the world we are born into. This often gives it the appearance of naturalness, necessity, inevitability (Bourdieu 1972/1977, 78-9). Social meanings are malleable and contested, but when hegemonic, they function a bit like the local geography, i.e., as a "given" around which we structure our lives.

This notion of culture is a theoretical (or "analytic") category that functions as an explanatory device. As I've already claimed, practices coordinate us in response to resources, and, as William Sewell (2005) argues:

> …human practice, in all social contexts or institutional spheres, is structured simultaneously both by meanings and other aspects of the environment in which they occur – by, for example, power relations or spatiality or resource distributions.

So:

> The point of conceptualizing culture as a system of symbols and meanings is to disentangle, for the purpose of analysis, the semiotic influences on action from the other sorts of influences – demographic, geographical, biological, technological, economic, and so on – that they are necessarily mixed with in any concrete sequence of behavior. (Sewell 2005, 44)

Culture, as Sewell suggests, creates a "semiotic net" that highlights some features of the world and obscures others, that links some items with others conceptually, or through narratives and default inferences, but is also flexible, fragmented, and can be extended, torn, repaired, etc. As we are socialized, we learn how to "read" social meanings fluently, and our attention, perception, and memory filters and shapes what is available for higher level cognition in attitudes.[10]

On this picture, there are multiple factors that play a role in cultural explanations of behavior (see also Figure 1):

(i) public social meanings (the tools of culture);

(ii) psychological mechanisms and dispositions that shape our experience such as attention, memory, default assumptions and inferences, and corresponding bodily responses;

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[10] Primitive social practices can achieve coordination through rudimentary forms of signaling, e.g., I signal my strength by flexing my muscles, and even simply through "information leakage," e.g., if you scream and run when you see a snake, I run too, even if I don't know what you are screaming about (Sterelny 2012, Ch. 3, Ch. 6, esp. p. 125-6). But more sophisticated practices depend on symbolic resources for communication and coordination. Symbols are public vehicles for conveying what Grice would call "non-natural" meaning: they aren't simply a symptom of or evidence for the referent, e.g., smoke means fire.

(iii) full-blown and fine-grained propositional attitudes that play a role in (holistic?) folk psychology as hypothesized causes of behavior (Zawidzki 2013, 12-13)[11]; and

(iv) the material conditions as interpreted and managed through our practices, including the physical environment (geography, climate), the built environment, and our physical embodiment.
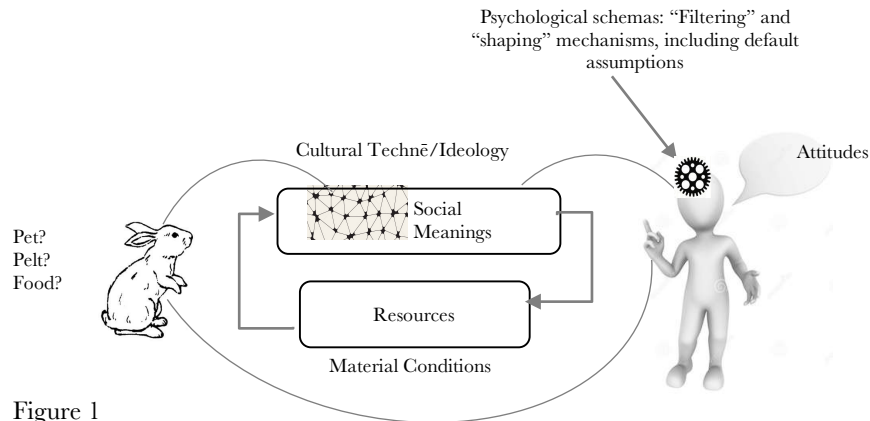

Figure 1

I use the term 'psychological schemas' for the mechanisms that function in (ii) as a kind of placeholder for a broad range of mental phenomena that cognitive scientists will have to help us discover and sort out (Valian 1999; Machery 2009). Although humans, generally, may have a broad tendency to structure experience in terms of narratives, or rely on strategies to avoid cognitive dissonance, particular forms of these will function as defaults in different social contexts.[12] Jack Balkin (1998) characterizes these as "cultural software."

> Examples include the tendency to structure experience in terms of narratives, psychological methods of categorization, varieties of metaphoric and metonymic thinking, strategies for reduction of cognitive dissonance, heuristics and biases employed in making judgments under uncertainty, and understanding by means of networks of conceptual oppositions in the form "A is to B as C is to D." (102)

An adequate account, however, should include psychological dispositions affecting both our cognitive and emotional lives, and also our bodily dispositions to move, gesture, speak, and act.

It is important to note that social meanings are responsive to our embodied engagement with the world, i.e., with objective reality. As Sewell notes, "The world is recalcitrant to our predications of meaning" (Sewell 2005, 51; also Kukla and Lance 2014). For example, interpreting bunnies as pets may be apt, but wolves, not so much. As a result, the looping of social meanings and resources can function as a source of correction. But because we also shape

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[11] Note that the term 'attitude' is used differently in philosophy and psychology. In psychology attitudes concern (+/-) evaluations; in philosophy they are states of mind that have propositions as their content; paradigms are belief and desire.

[12] See also Haslanger 2017, Ch 2. In previous work I have neglected to attend adequately to the bodily and agentic dispositions that come with enculturation. Thanks to Ángeles Eraña Lagos for calling my attention to this.

the world to "fit" social meanings, the "correction" may not always be what we need to reimagine and reshape the world to be more just. For example, a disabled child may not learn to read in school and so face reduced employment options and need government support. But the conclusion should not be that such children are uneducable and a drain on society. Too often the social meaning of disability is disabling. In such cases, the world may appear to confirm our beliefs and the aptness of our schemas, but instead, the world requires correction.

I propose that we can illuminate the idea of a practical orientation or practical "consciousness" by locating its source in a web of social meanings – a cultural technē – that we draw on as we engage in social practices. When the cultural technē guides us to engage in unjust structures, it is an *ideology*; the practices, structures, institutions, along with the thinking and acting shaped by the ideology are *ideological formations* (Haslanger 2017b). In this paper, my aim is to show how social meanings shape thought and action and how this provides us resources for thinking about ideology and ideology critique. I'll also draw some conclusions for epistemology.

2. *Mindshaping*

According to the dominant model in analytic social ontology – one that plays a role in analytic philosophy from philosophy of mind, through epistemology, to ethics – the social world consists of psychologically sophisticated individuals who form intentions and/or commitments (consciously or unconsciously) to act. Usually they say what they mean and mean what they say in a context of cooperative communication. Sometimes they act together, or at least coordinate, under conditions of common knowledge. Sometimes they share knowledge by giving testimony, or disagree with each other. They design practices for particular purposes and enact them for reasons. When problems arise, they must have made a factual error, or been wrong about their reasons.

> On this standard view, folk-psychology is conceptualized in fundamentally epistemic and individualistic terms. As we navigate about the social world, we are presented as engaged in a quasi-scientific enterprise, seeking to explain and predict one another's behavior by way of making reasonable hypotheses about the underlying mental causes of that behaviour. (McGeer 2015, 260; also Zawidzki 2013, xii)

I don't deny that this is part of what goes on in the social world, but in order to engage in the mental activity required for this picture we must already have quite sophisticated cognitive capacities that include a rich supply of concepts. And we must already participate forms of interaction that enable us to make plausible interpretive hypotheses about others. Although some kinds of cognitive selection and forms of interaction are hardwired in humans, there must also be forms of sociality prior to sharing intentions to take a walk (Gilbert 1989) or paint a house (Bratman 1992). These more basic forms of sociality are where we should look for the makings of ideology, which concerns the sources of our practical orientations, i.e., the social preconditions for thinking and acting.

There is a different model of social cognition that supports a shaping role for culture in human agency. On this view, *coordination* is at the center of our sociality; folk psychology is *regulative* rather than predictive; and *mindshaping* is prior to mindreading. I will begin by sketching how, on this view, engagement in practices shapes our cognition; I'll then turn to consider the role of social meanings.

Some nonhuman animals and all normal humans in their "unreflective quotidian interactions" rely on a low-level social cognition that requires "only the interpretation of bouts of behavior as goal directed and rationally constrained by available information, [and] not the attribution of concrete, unobservable causes with content represented via individually variable modes of presentation" (Zawidzki 2013, 14). For example, this low-level cognition – a kind of advanced intentional stance (Dennett 1991) – allows, e.g., predators to be able to anticipate the behavior of their prey in order to be successful hunters. It does not require or demonstrate an ability to attribute full-blown beliefs to others. The same is true of much human behavior and interaction. This low-level sociality is not a human achievement; but higher-level cognition is.

As mentioned above, it is well-known that human brains are not "fully wired" at birth, and as a result have "locally sensitive neurological profiles" (Zawidzki 2013, 6). So interpreting other human minds is a much more difficult task than interpreting minds that are "wired" to be relatively stable across time and place. The problem is that:

> Inferring another's propositional attitudes based on her behavior is a computationally intractable task, unless she has already been shaped to be cooperative and easily interpretable. Such shaping does not require prior mastery of human psychology. (Zawidzki 2013, 28)

Victoria McGeer elaborates at least one stage of the shaping process:

> …our folk-psychological competence consists in our aptitude for making ourselves understandable to one another, as much as on our aptitude for understanding one another. And we do this by making (self and other) regulative use of the norms that govern appropriate attributions of a range of psychological states. Thus, very often when we make such attributions to one another or to ourselves, we are not engaged in the activity of explaining and/or predicting behaviour at all. We are engaged in the activity of moulding behaviour cajoling, encouraging, reprimanding, promising and otherwise giving ourselves over to the task of producing comprehensible patterns of well-behaved agency in ourselves and others from a folk-psychological point of view. (McGeer 2007, 148-9)

In short, "This intractable epistemic task is off-loaded onto our social environment" (Zawidzki 2008, 199). Consider what it would be like to drive in traffic, if we had to predict the behavior of other drivers on the road, based simply on direct evidence of their psychological states. We would not last long. The driving environment, however, consists of laws, road signs, median strips, institutions for education and licensing, and such. We shape behavior through education and incentives, and experienced drivers become fluent in reading the road and anticipating the actions of others, with hardly a second thought.

> Members of a group take the culture's concepts, scripts, and meanings to be normative for members of the group in the following sense: when encountering others who are similarly socialized, we begin with the assumption that they will do things the "right way" and feel entitled to criticize them if they don't (Zawidzki 2008, 204-5).

Some evidence for this is when engaged in a practice with competent others, if another participant does something incorrect or unintelligible from the point of view of the practice, the first response is criticism or correction ("Hey, you can't turn left from that lane!"). We aim to

interpret and be interpretable, and the best strategy for this is to conform our behavior (and thoughts) to the public norms and to demand the same of others.

Demanding compliance with norms through belief ascriptions is one sort of interpretive/regulative framework, but culture isn't all about norms for belief. It is also about managing perception, attention, memory, and other cognitive, emotional, and bodily tasks through symbolic systems. Matteo Mameli (2001) uses the term 'mindshaping' to characterize "a kind of social bootstrapping" in which the ascription of features to individuals can – through processes of shaping and disciplining – result in the individuals coming to have the features in question (Huebner NDPR 2013.09.18).[13] For example, we ascribe gender to infants (even fetuses!) and complex practices of interpellation and social policing give rise to different patterns of gendered behavior, experience, and self-understanding. The ascription of gender, however, depends on gender designations and social meanings being publicly available and, more broadly, gender-coded practices, e.g., a binary gender regime.

So, at least in the typical case, the symbolic resources we draw in conducting our mental lives will be ones that are well-suited to enable us to coordinate with others in a world that has been shaped by that coordination.

> Practical taxonomies, which are a transformed, misrecognizable form of the real divisions of the social order, contribute to the reproduction of that order by producing objectively orchestrated practices adjusted to those divisions. (Bourdieu 1972/1977, 163) [14]

These divisions create channels of power and prestige, so are potential sites of injustice:

> Systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e., the divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribute to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the product…. (Bourdieu 1972/1977, 164)

For example,

> The mythico-ritual categories cut up the age continuum into discontinuous segments, considered not biologically (like the physical signs of ageing) but socially [baby, child, tween, teen…elder…], and marked by the tokens which express and underline the representation of the uses of the body that are legitimately associated with each socially defined age, and also those which are ruled out because they would have the effect of disrupting the system of oppositions between generations…Social representations of the different ages of life, and of the properties attached by definition to them, express, in their own logic, the power relations between the age-classes…(Bourdieu 1972/1977, 165)

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[13] Sterelny and Zawidzki also discuss Mameli's idea of *social niche construction*, as an important factor in the development of human social cognition. In niche construction, generally, an arbitrary "mistake" in behavior turns out to be fruitful and is passed down to future generations; in short, "Imprinting is a form of nongenetic trait inheritance that can alter a species' niche in ways that feed back into genetic inheritance. Mameli's idea is that mindshaping via the mechanism of social expectancies is a human form of niche construction. We alter the selectional environment of subsequent generations by shaping their minds in ways that affect the social niche in which they find themselves." (Zawidzki 2013, 18)

[14] I interpret Bourdieu's use of 'misrecognizable' here to reflect the fact that, as he says shortly after, "Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness" (1977/1972, 164). This will become relevant later (see especially fn. 17.)

Bourdieu's suggestion that there is a perfect homology between culture and social structure is clearly overstated; the two are not fused (Alexander 2011, 14). The pressures on culture to change and the options that are culturally intelligible are different from the pressures on and options available in evolving structures. So there are points when culture and social structure fall out of sync and create contradictory demands on agents. Or, in other words, the meanings that structure one set of practices may be in tension with those that structure another closely related set in the same or nearby milieu; in such cases the possibilities for and meaning of action become unclear and hard to navigate. Nevertheless, we still must reach for or change cultural tools in order to maintain coordination.

For the purposes of this discussion, I take two lessons from the mindshaping literature. First, our mental life is deeply shaped by the local requirements for coordination, and the terms of coordination are culturally specific. Second, coordination is managed by social meanings, or what I have called a cultural technē. Coordination is highly valuable. We encourage and reinforce patterns of behavior that facilitate coordination and discourage those that don't. So in contrast to the standard individualist model, sociality does not begin when psychologically mature individuals undertake joint action. Rather, our mental lives are shaped to enable us to fluently engage in the social practices of our milieu, and we are held accountable in light of the social meanings that support the terms of coordination.

3. Symbolic power

Although I have already spoken several times about power, it may be useful at this point to differentiate several forms of power relevant to the discussion. Just as mainstream social ontology assumes that the social world consists of psychologically sophisticated individuals who act and interact intentionally for reasons, an individualistic conception of power assumes that power, at least in the paradigm case, consists in an agent having an ability to control the behavior or actions of another, and does so intentionally. So, for example, the classic definition of power by Robert Dahl, ""*A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do" (Dahl 1957, 202-3; see also Hayward 2004, 11). This might occur in several ways (Hayward 2004, Ch. 2), e.g.,

i) *A* has "power over" *B* and controls how *B* acts directly, e.g., by coercion, threat, or other forms of influence.

ii) *A* manipulates of the "rules of the game" in ways that silence or mislead *B* (even if *A* and *B* have no direct contact) (Bachrach and Baratz 1975, 904).

iii) *A* manipulates *B's* own understanding of *B's* needs and wants in a way that is contrary to *B's* interests. (Lukes 1974)

Note, however, that although in all three cases, is assumed that power is "dyadic" (A has power over B), *A's* manipulation of *B*, need not be achieved, and often cannot be achieved, simply by a direct show of force (using physique, personality, or weapon); rather, it relies on background meanings, practices, institutions, and structures. For example, a boss's threat to fire an employee is backed up by power granted through his or her role in the company. A threat of a bad grade in a course is something a teacher wields, but the power of this threat lies, at least in part, in what

the grade of D *means*, e.g., to a future employer or admissions committee.

Once we note how power is situated in roles and meanings, it is a short step to conclude that power is not always "dyadic," i.e., A having power over B, or intentional; rather, power resides in structures and is enacted as people participate in everyday interactions.[15] The idea of structural power is central to discussions of oppression. In her helpful characterization of Foucault's account, Nancy Fraser captures several of his important insights:

> Foucault's account establishes that modern power is "productive" rather than prohibitive. This suffices to rule out those types of liberationist politics that presuppose that power is essentially repressive. Similarly, Foucault's account demonstrates that modern power is "capillary," that it operates at the lowest extremities of the social body in everyday social practices. This suffices to rule out state-centered and economistic political praxes, since these praxes presuppose that power resides solely in the state or economy. Finally, Foucault's genealogy of modern power establishes that power touches people's lives more fundamentally through their social practices than through their beliefs. This, in turn, suffices to rule out political orientations aimed primarily at the demystification of ideologically distorted belief systems.…More positively, it is that Foucault enables us to understand power very broadly, and yet very finely, as anchored in the multiplicity of what he calls "micropractices," the social practices that constitute everyday life in modern societies. (Fraser 1989, 18)

I suggested above practices are coordinated through culture, and although it is useful to think of culture as a set of tools, or instruments, we should not think of it as consciously designed and created by individuals for a particular purpose. Culture forms the social reality we navigate, in part, by providing symbolic resources that structure our behavior; in this way, it also distributes power. Although culture can be contested and changed, this requires a collective process of changing social meanings.

Miranda Fricker has pointed to a particular form of symbolic power in the phenomenon of hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2007). Roughly, *hermeneutical injustice* occurs when "some significant area of one's social experience [is] obscured from collective understanding owing to persistent and wide-ranging hermeneutical marginalization "(154), i.e., members of the disadvantaged group suffer "unequal hermeneutical participation with respect to some significant area(s) of social experience" (153). She considers, for example, how introduction of the term 'sexual harassment' was important to correct the hermeneutical injustice faced by women who experienced retaliation for rejection of sexual overtures in the workplace, but had no way to conceptualize the wrong as a civil rights violation. Her focus is, explicitly, on hermeneutical lacunae.

Fricker's work has made important contributions to discussion of symbolic power. However, for our purposes, her account suffers from two weaknesses. First, although she grants that hermeneutical lacunae are a *systematic* problem, her focus on transactional injustice is overly individualistic and fails to capture structural injustices (Anderson 2012). On Fricker's account, Carmita Woods suffered an injustice by being subject to her boss's sexual acts at work, and being denied unemployment insurance when she quit in order to escape them. The injustice had two

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[15] There are many texts that argue for and elaborate this claim. In addition to Hayward (2004), I recommend Silbey (1998).

dimensions: that the conditions of her employment were intolerable, and that she had no way to effectively communicate the wrong. The communicative wrong is a disadvantage that women suffer by virtue of a failure at the level of language, so in this sense is systematic; but, Fricker maintains, "the moment of hermeneutical injustice comes only when the background condition is realized in a more or less doomed attempt on the part of the subject to render an experience intelligible, either to herself or to an interlocutor" (159). We might ask, however, what of the women who accept the treatment as part of what it is to be a woman and don't try to articulate it as an injustice, either to themselves or to others? Such cases are paradigms of ideological oppression, but on Fricker's account, in such cases the woman does not suffer hermeneutical injustice.

Second, although hermeneutical lacunae are a significant source of harm, Fricker's focus on lacunae side-steps the ways in which symbolic power is, as Fraser put it, *productive*. Culture provides tools for constituting ourselves as subjects, and the problem is not just what tools are left out, but what sort of subjects we become given the tools we have. For example, in the United States, the concepts and language of race structure our interactions and identities, and do so in ways that are both implicated in and responses to racial injustice (Mills 1997, esp. 53-62, 88-89; Hayward 2013). What we wear, how we speak, where we live, where, how, and with whom we spend leisure time, are all practices (among others) that are organized by racial meanings and distribute resources unjustly (Anderson 2010, Haslanger 2014). Moreover, such meanings affect perception, attention, and memory (Siegel 2017, Taylor 2016). The problem is not just that there are gaps in our hermeneutical resources, but the power of the hermeneutical resources we are given. Minds and bodies are shaped by everyday practices that distribute things of value and disvalue, and these practices depend on meanings that must be exposed to critique in order to achieve justice (Foucault 1975; Bartky 1990).

To better understand the role of symbolic power in ideological oppression and possibilities of critique, let us return to Bourdieu. Bourdieu distinguishes doxa, heterodoxy, and orthodoxy (Bourdieu 1977/1972, 168). See Figure 2 (which reproduces the diagram in Bourdieu's text):

Figure 2
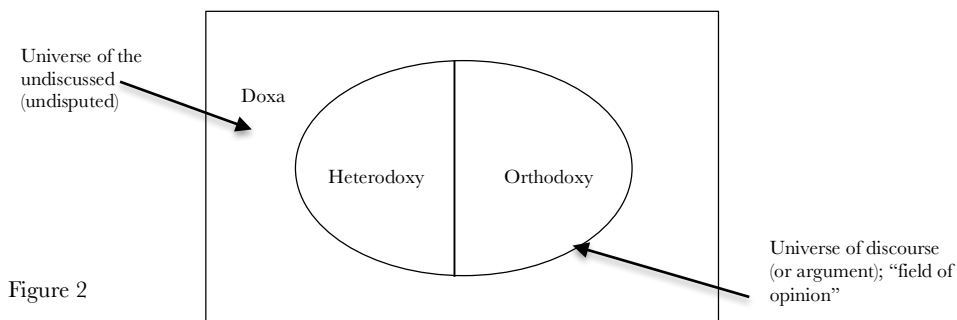
The space of doxa, for Bourdieu, consists of "that which is beyond question and which each agent tacitly accords by the mere fact of acting in accord with social convention" (169). Being subjectively necessary, it *"goes without saying because it comes without saying"* (167). Bourdieu is not entirely clear what is included in doxa. At different times, he characterizes it as including "principles," (167) "mythico-ritual homologies," (167) "theses," (168), and "dominant systems of

classification" (169). In contrast to his notion of the habitus – understood in terms of dispositions – doxa appear to be representational, though not necessarily belief-like.   In terms of the model of practices I sketched earlier (see Figure 1), I would take doxa to be the available social meanings in a context, and orthodoxy to be the (dominant) set of attitudes that are taken in that context to be correct or appropriate. According to a different tradition in thinking about ideology, ideology is a kind of orthodoxy.[16] However, if, as in the Hall (and Althusserian) tradition, ideology forms the basis for our practical consciousness or practical orientation, then I think it is better to situate ideology, at least primarily, in doxa.[17]

The line between the "field of opinion" and doxa, is a crucial site of social struggle, for doxa is taken for granted and unquestioned, and one step in a process of liberation is to challenge the status quo:

> In class societies, in which the definition of the social world is at stake…the drawing of the line between the field of opinion…and the field of *doxa*…it itself a fundamental objective at stake in that form of class struggle which is the struggle for the imposition of the dominant systems of classification. The dominated classes have an interest in pushing back the limits of *doxa* and exposing the arbitrariness of the taken for granted; the dominant classes have an interest in defending the integrity of doxa, or short of this, of establishing in its place the necessarily imperfect substitute, *orthodoxy*." (Bourdieu 1972/1977, 169)

So, on this model, we can disrupt the system by making doxa explicit and available for contestation, by challenging orthodoxy and making what was mere heterodox opinion a new orthodoxy, or an entrenched part of doxa (Ewick and Silbey 1995; 1999; 2003).

However, there are several limitations to this model. First, Bourdieu seems to include in doxa both "what goes without saying and what cannot be said for lack of an available discourse" (1972/1977, 170). There is reason, however, to distinguish doxa from what cannot be said or comprehended, i.e., the culturally unintelligible. We want to allow, for example, that in some cases what lies outside of the universe of discussed and undiscussed is, in a sense, forced into cultural intelligibility – either as doxa, heterodoxy, or orthodoxy – but only through a process of

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[16] For a helpful discussion of the different traditions in thinking about ideology, see Eagleton (2007, especially Ch. 1).

[17] One advantage to taking ideology to be orthodoxy is that it is easier to capture what is way in which ideology is "illusory." Orthodoxy is illusory because it doesn't capture social reality, but provides a kind of public rationalization of that reality that masks what is really at issue. (Thanks to Christopher Zurn for pointing this out.) I don't deny that a useful way to think about 'ideology' is to locate it in orthodoxy (if one opts for the pejorative sense then orthodoxy that masks injustice, or in the non-pejorative sense, for orthodoxy generally). On the account I favor, however, ideology resides in the doxa, so where is the illusion? Doxa, as social meanings, are not necessarily propositional, and shape social reality. This, in fact, I take to be a benefit of viewing ideology this way. (The slogan is: ideology (sometimes) makes itself true.) On this account, the notion of illusion cannot simply be a matter of falsehood. MacKinnon reaches for the idea by saying, "This epistemology does not at all deny that a relation exists between thought and some reality other than thought, or between human activity (mental or otherwise) and the products of that activity. Rather, it redefines the epistemological issue from being the scientific one, the relation between knowledge and objective reality, to the problem of the relation of consciousness to social being" (MacKinnon 1989, 98-99). I would suggest a different framing, viz., that ideology (social meanings, doxa) are illusory in the sense that they frame (and constrain) a particular set of options as inevitable, natural, good – as "reality" that is simply given – when, in fact, it is none of these.

distortion, and so is not fully, or aptly, disclosed (Spivak 1988). For example, in some social contexts forms of lesbian desire are culturally unintelligible, for any representation of lesbian desire is rendered "intelligible" by modeling it on heterosexual desire with two females. But such "intelligibility," one might argue, does symbolic violence to the phenomenon (Butler 1990, Rich 1980). The culturally unintelligible is not part of what *"goes without saying because it comes without saying"* that can simply become an object of contestation.

Second, Bourdieu (1972/1977) represents doxa as if it is constituted by consensus, and is *unanimous* (168): "each agent tacitly [accepts the doxa] by the mere fact of acting in accord with social convention" (169). In other terms, doxa is hegemonic.[18] But as James Scott has argued, things are always (and thankfully) much more complicated:

> Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of *both* hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understanding resistance to domination. (Scott 1990, xii)

So at least within the field of opinion (perhaps also within doxa?), we should include a distinction between the public transcripts from the "hidden" transcripts (see Figure 3).[19] This distinction
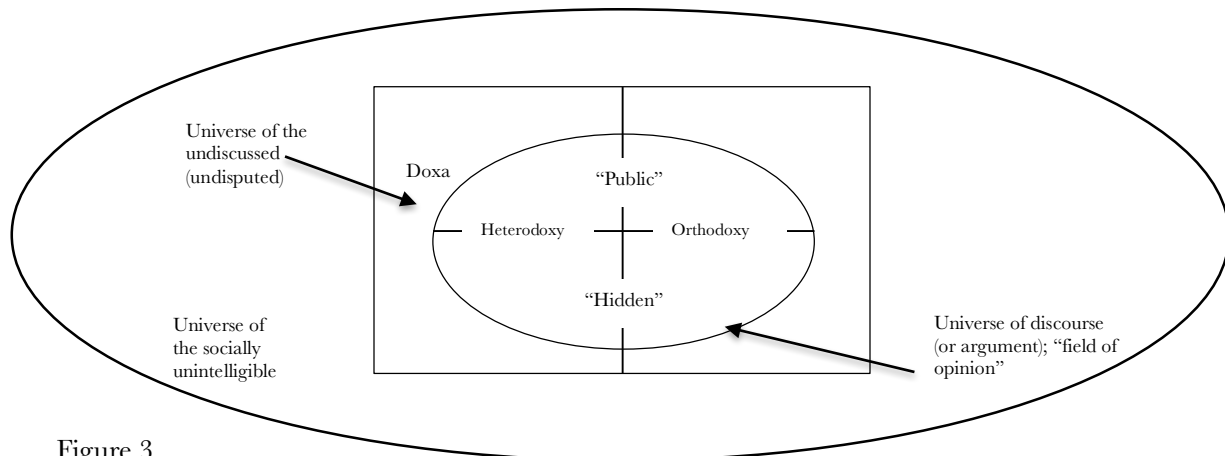

Figure 3

encourages us to locate sites and forms of resistance that provide resources for ideology critique, e.g., counter-publics (Fraser 1990; Warner 2002; Medina 2013). Moreover, the differences between public and hidden transcripts can illuminate how cultural domination functions in the public sphere, e.g., by silencing, distortion, and marginalization (Scott 1990, 5). And resistance revealed in hidden transcripts can attest to the limits of a dominant ideology, thus avoiding the presumption that we are all merely "cultural dupes" and the anxiety that hegemony is so complete that social change is impossible because unthinkable (Scott 1990, 90-96; Silbey).

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[18] At other points, Bourdieu seems to acknowledge that doxa is not unanimous, otherwise resistance would be impossible: "Politics begins, strictly speaking, with the denunciation of this tacit contract of adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa; in other words, political subversion presupposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision of the world." (1982/1991, 127-8)
[19] Thanks to Rachel McKinney for suggesting this.

On Scott's view, hidden transcripts emerge as forms of resistance to domination. However, this is an empirical claim that we need not embrace. Although surely one source of hidden transcripts is resistance, another source lies in the conflicting demands of different practices. In moving between different social milieu, we engage in practices that situate us in very different roles, e.g., a single individual might be a being a mother at home, a choir director at church, a cashier at Wal-Mart, and a student at the community college. The norms for interaction and the meaning of one's actions differ dramatically between these settings. Some hidden transcripts emerge just in an effort to make sense of our lives, e.g., we might navigate each of these settings by drawing on religious meanings, or inspirational messages ("follow your dream"), or feminist resistance. And experience in one setting can give one resources, e.g., meanings and practices, to critique others.

It is important to note that although Scott's work emphasizes the hidden transcripts of the subordinate, on his model, the dominant as well as the subordinate produce and enact hidden transcripts, and both depend on their own alterative "public" spaces, collective social meanings, and their own structures of power. Speaking specifically of the subordinate "hidden" transcript (but presumably also applicable to the dominant, mutatis mutandis), he points out:

> First, the hidden transcript is a social product and hence the result of power relations among subordinates. Second, like folk culture, the hidden transcript has no reality as pure thought; it exists only to the extent it is practiced, articulated, enacted, and disseminated within these offstage social sites.[20] Third the social spaces where the hidden transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance; they are won and defended in the teeth of power. (Scott 1990, 119)

This suggests that we need to do more to capture the relationship between public and hidden forms of doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy, for we want to allow for "hidden" resistance to dominant or public forms of resistance as well as dominant orthodoxy.[21]

I suggest that we understand each (doxa, orthodoxy, and heterodoxy) as relative to a community within a social context. So, what is doxa for a community of lesbian feminists in 2017 San Francisco may be heterodoxy in the mainstream culture of 2017 California, or what was doxa for lesbian feminists in 1980 New York. The same is true of what I have been calling

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[20] Scott (1990) is clear that issues of domination and resistance are not just "in the head," or in symbols; they have a material reality: "…it is impossible to separate the ideas and symbolism of subordination from a process of material exploitation. In exactly the same fashion, it is impossible to separate veiled symbolic resistance to the ideas of domination from the practical struggles to thwart or mitigate exploitation….The hidden transcript is not just behind-the-scenes griping and grumbling; it is enacted in a host of down-to-earth, low-profile strategems designed to minimize appropriation. In the case of slaves, for example, these strategems have typically included theft, pilfering, feigned ignorance, shirking or careless labor, footdragging, secret trade and production for sale, sabotage of crops, livestock, and machinery, arson, flight, and so on." (188)

[21] In characterizing the hidden transcripts of the dominant group, Scott suggests that they represent "the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed" (xii, quoted above). Thus, it would seem that a hidden transcript of the dominant, e.g., mainstream White Supremacy, would only consist of what supports the dominant structure, such as explicitly racist claims that can only be uttered in private settings and other private practices that uphold the racial power structure. To capture the full power of Scott's insights, I think we need to allow that there is covert resistance as well as public resistance to both the dominant frame of meaning and the frame of meaning that becomes dominant in the resistance.

'cultural technē.'[22] The cultural technē is the set of social meanings that agents draw on in a particular milieu in order to participate in the local practices; such meanings can be made articulate and challenged, and explicitly upheld as orthodoxy. But as Scott says, hidden transcripts are not just pure thought; neither is a cultural technē. Rather, both are enacted in practices. And a cultural technē is ideological insofar as it is enacted in unjust social practices. Those who have internalized the cultural technē of their context develop dispositions to participate in the practices fluently and to correct those who don't.

I'll assume that public orthodoxy consists of the public practices and symbolic resources that stabilize the current power structure in that milieu, and public heterodoxy consists of the practices and symbolic resources that form the base of public resistance, if there is such. Then, for example, under Jim Crow in the United States, the discourse and practices of White Supremacy would be public orthodoxy, and the discourse and practices of the Civil Rights Movement the public heterodoxy. Each, however, generated their own resistance, along a spectrum.[23] For example, Black nationalists called for a more radical movement than King envisioned, and Black feminists created hidden transcripts that challenged the male dominance of the mainstream Civil Rights Movement. Similarly, the hidden transcripts White Supremacy also emerged along a spectrum. For example, the KKK exemplified a more radical White Supremacy than was supported by the mainstream, but there have also been ongoing pockets of resistance to White Supremacy that didn't become public heterodoxy. Quakers long provided antiracist resources to combat the wrongs of White Supremacy, some of which were taken up in the non-violent practices of the Civil Rights Movement. And resistance is not always as large or as organized as the examples just offered. For example, in both orthodox and heterodox institutions there will be pockets of resistance to particular practices that do not rise to public notice, e.g., foot-dragging, gossip, covert aid to the subordinate.[24] So a better model might be something like this (see Figure 4):[25]

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[22] I admit that the machinery here may be getting too complicated and it isn't clear how the pieces fit together. I am drawing on Sewell's (1992) notion of practices, Balkin's (1998) notion of "cultural software," Hall's (1996/2006) conception of ideology, McGeer's (2007) and Zawidzki's (2013) notion of mindshaping, Bourdieu's (1972/1977) notion of doxa, and Scott's (1990) notion of "hidden transcript." I do believe that all of these texts are pointing to a complex social process, but I'm having trouble articulating it. What we call the various parts is far less important to me than finding ways to illuminate it and capture how it works.
[23] As Ortner (1995) suggests, what counts as "resistance" is complicated (174-5), and "…there is never a single, unitary, subordinate" (175).
[24] For a useful chart of different forms of material, status, and ideological domination, and different forms of public and hidden resistance, see Scott (1990, 198).
[25] I use "left" and "right" in the diagram as suggestive distinguishing markers. Of course, it is not necessary that the alternative forms of resistance are aptly considered "left" and "right," or even what counts as "left" and "right" in a given context.
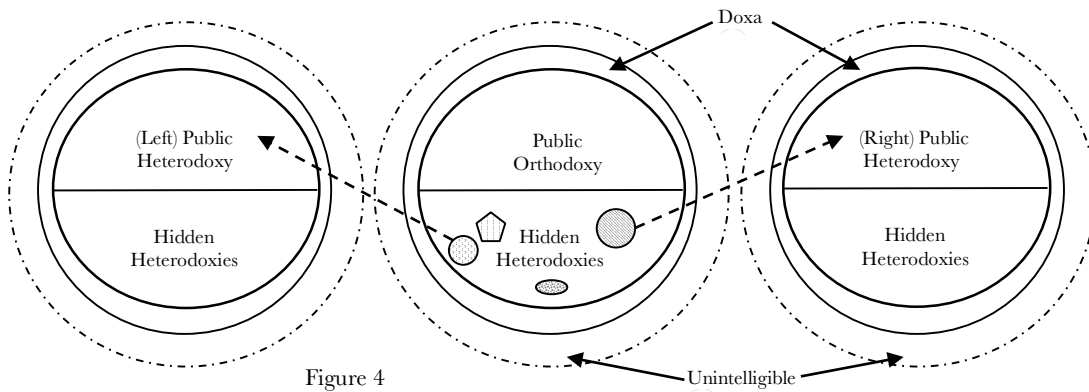
Figure 4

So there are many ways in which social meanings distribute and consolidate power and matter for social justice. Here are some examples:

- Because practices depend on social meanings (in addition to the built environment, etc.) to manage coordination, dominant meanings that "fix" social categories, assumptions, and norms play a crucial role in creating and maintaining social structures, e.g., the production and distribution of resources, the assignment of social roles, the configuration of power relations, and the formation of social identities. If we are concerned to create just structures, we should be concerned with social meanings.
- Social meanings that function as doxa may lend an appearance of inevitability or naturalness to the dominant social structure, but social meanings can be changed. Some individuals or groups of individuals may be better positioned to shape social meanings, define what falls within the categories, and enforce the social norms. (Think of the "cool" kids in school.) This is another site of power. Attention to how this power is managed and distributed is important to achieve justice. (See, e.g., Alexander 2011.)
- Social meanings not only organize us in relation to resources (things of +/- value), but play a role in determining what counts as a resource, i.e., what is valued and how. What real estate is valuable is not just a matter of the intrinsic features of the land or buildings. The slogan, "Location, location, location," is about location in social space. Under conditions of White Supremacy, skin color is a resource; under conditions of male dominance, female body shape is a resource. We need to think beyond a narrow conception of the economic to adjudicate what is a fair and just production and distribution of resources (Anderson 1993; Satz 2010).

4. *Consequences for Ideology Critique*

When we ask: why does the US suffer from enduring racial inequality, the answer is not, or not simply: because people share racist beliefs (or other attitudes). That just pushes the question back: Why do they share these beliefs (and attitudes), for so long, and in the face of good evidence that they are unwarranted (Haslanger 2017b)?

Ideology, on the account I've been sketching, is an explanatory tool: it helps us explain certain patterns of injustice in terms of the practical orientations it produces. For example, why are Black men regularly convicted of crimes they don't commit? At least sometimes it is because, due to the dominant ideology – the local cultural technē that supports racial injustice – the judge and jury cannot believe, or even make sense of, their defense; it doesn't fit any script they have

available.[26] Members of subordinated communities, however, see the situation differently; they have "hidden transcripts" that tell a different story and draw on different experiences, symbolic resources, and narratives. When their perspective is not recognized or legitimized this can result in material injustices such as convictions, incarceration, and other political and economic wrongs.

A crucial feature of a cultural technē is that it is one part of a system that functions (not always successfully!) to regulate our interactions in a domain, and cannot be understood apart from its role in that system.[27] A cultural technē is not, then, just a collection of attitudes, or even a collection of cognitive mechanisms, but the cultural dimension of the local social regulation system. When internalized by individuals, it provides tools for psycho-somatic self-regulation that enables fluent coordination with others; it also structures our subjectivity (Gatens 1996, viii). Because of its regulative function, it has normative force. Yet insofar as it regulates our interactions in ways that are problematic (morally, epistemically, politically), it is an apt target for critique. Explanations drawing on cultural technēs, then, are not just drawing on sets of attitudes, but referencing this coordination system that derives from, is imbedded in, and sustains social practices (Garfinkel 1981; Haslanger 2016).

Let's suppose, as I've argued, that our mental lives are deeply shaped by an ideological cultural technē. How do we go about ideology critique? Can we just apply the tools that mainstream epistemology already provides to address it? Of course, we can critique many of the beliefs that ideology produces as misrepresentations, both in orthodoxy and heterodoxy. But given the mindshaping model, and the idea that the problem we are addressing is a *practical orientation*, this is not adequate.

- If our shared practices depend on the local mindshaping that enables us to coordinate, then there will be considerable pressure for individuals to continue to act on the outputs of those cognitive mechanisms, whether or not the attitudes are shown to be epistemically problematic. As Fraser (1989) suggests in the passage quoted above, "…power touches people's lives more fundamentally through their social practices than through their beliefs. This, in turn, suffices to rule out political orientations aimed primarily at the demystification of ideologically distorted belief systems." Shifting from explicit belief to implicit bias is a helpful move, but it is crucial to see implicit attitudes as one component of a broader system of social coordination and regulation, and not think that our one (or best!) leverage point is in individual psychology (Haslanger 2017d).
- If our practices have been effective in shaping the world, then attempting to change a belief that records that aspect of the world will look epistemically unwarranted. Ideology has a tendency to make itself true. For example, women, for the most part, *are* more nurturing than men. To suggest that this claim is "mere ideology" and so false or illusory is a bad strategy. What's needed is a critique of the practice that distributes caregiving labor disproportionately to women and prevents men from developing nurturing skills. Such critique will depend on an account of justice and a moral epistemology that I have not provided here (see Haslanger 2017c).

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[26] Medina (2013) and Fricker (2007) both discuss the conviction of Tom Robinson in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960/2002) as an example.

[27] Compare: The handlebars of a bike can be removed and considered on their own, but to understand what handlebars are, you must understand their function in riding a bike. Handlebars are not just an aggregation of metal particles in a certain shape.

- Practices enable us to establish and affirm relationships and identities. Through them, we distribute power, resources, knowledge; we criticize and praise each other. These practices are meaningful to people, are often valuable in some ways (even if problematic), and structure our lives together. It is not possible just to quit, cold turkey. So to disrupt a cultural technē that promotes injustice, we need to establish new practices that enable us to both discover and create value.[28] Reasoning with people is not enough (though it may be a start). We need to create and affirm spaces of resistance, counter-publics, hidden transcripts.

4. Conclusion

I've argued that our mental lives are socially embedded and that they are shaped to enable us to coordinate in social practices. This is relevant for social justice, for if we are engaged in practices that are unjust, then we are embedded in a cultural context that will make it difficult for us to gain critical perspective. This is relevant for epistemology and epistemic critique. Here are a few important lessons:

(a) *Epistemology of ignorance:* Epistemology should not only concern itself with whether what we believe is knowledge, but also what we fail to believe, the knowledge we lack (Mills 1988, Sullivan & Tuana 2007, Mills 2007, Alcoff 2007).

(b) *Epistemology of aptness:* Ideology critique must question the aptness of our terms, concepts and cultural schemas. Ideology's home is in our ways of framing and parsing the world. Likewise, aptness is relevant to epistemology, especially the question of propaganda (Stanley 2015). Just as we question whether 'grue' is a legitimate predicate in the quest for scientific knowledge, likewise we should question whether the terms of our public discourse, e.g., 'tax relief' or 'job creators,' 'welfare,' 'unemployed,' are apt in our quest for social and political knowledge (Anderson 1995).

(c) *Integrating normative inquiry:* The practices in which ideology functions create the social world, so we must look beyond truth to evaluate our beliefs. Consider direction of fit: if our beliefs "make themselves true," then we can have "maker's knowledge" of the fact (Langton 2009, Ch. 13). But if the truths they create are sites of injustice, then we have reason to draw attention our role in making the world so-known and complicate our relationship to the belief. Epistemology cannot be fully separated from broader normative inquiry (MacKinnon 1989; Langton 2004; Medina 2013).

(d) *Genealogical inquiry:* Because our beliefs are the output of mindshaping, we must also investigate the cultural formation of cognitive processes and their social function. (Haslanger 2012, Ch. 13).

In short, social epistemology is not just about individuals and what knowers can share, but also about the construction of knowers through social and cultural practices. To ignore this is

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[28] In this, I agree with Thomas Kuhn's idea of what is required to change paradigms (1970, Ch. 12): 'In science, the testing situation never consists…simply in the comparison of a single paradigm with nature. Instead, testing occurs as part of the competition between two rival paradigms for the allegiance of the scientific community.' (p. 145)

to allow ideology to do its work unnoticed and unimpeded. Moreover, critique cannot simply challenge belief, but must involve challenges to those practices through which we ourselves become the vehicles and embodiments of ideology.

Acknowledgements

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