

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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HERMENEUTICS OF THE FEMALE ATHLETIC BODY

JOSHUA REMILLARD
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Francisco Javier Lopez Frias
Assistant Professor of Kinesiology
Thesis Supervisor

Mary Jane De Souza
Professor of Kinesiology
Honors Advisor

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended as a response to Lopez Frias and Monfort's call for the use of hermeneutic investigation within the philosophy of sport in their paper "The hermeneutics of sport: limits and conditions of possibility of our understandings of sport" (Lopez Frias & Monfort, 2016). My goal is to give an account of a hermeneutic investigation into the female athletic body and show the merits of using hermeneutic methodologies for this kind of investigation. To do so, I will begin by examining common philosophical methodologies used to understand the body, including Cartesianism, phenomenology, and poststructuralism. I will draw on the work of philosophers identified as central figures in these traditions Rene Descartes, Edmund Husserl, and Michel Foucault respectively, and illustrate some difficulties found in each of these philosophers' works. I will then go on to show how a hermeneutic investigation can be used to resolve these issues and provide a more complete understanding of female athletic bodies. To do this, I will draw on important figures in hermeneutics and feminist philosophy as well as in the philosophy of sport, including Hans-Georg Gadamer, Martin Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and Iris Marion Young. I will use the hermeneutic framework provided by Gadamer and Heidegger to expand the ideas presented by de Beauvoir and Young. Using these ideas, I will show how the hermeneutic method can be used to understand the contemporary practice of sex testing in sport.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	2
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Cartesian Method	3
2.1. The Cartesian Method and the Body	4
2.2. Shortcomings of the Cartesian Method.....	5
Chapter 3: The Phenomenological Method	8
3.1. <i>Husserl's Transcendental Ego</i>	8
3.2. <i>Husserlian Phenomenology and the Body</i>	11
3.3. <i>Shortcomings of the Phenomenological Method</i>	14
Chapter 4: Foucauldian Poststructuralism	16
4.1. <i>Foucault's Analysis of Power</i>	16
4.2. <i>Foucauldian Poststructuralism and the Body</i>	18
4.3. <i>Shortcomings of the Foucauldian Poststructuralist Method</i>	22
Chapter 5: Hermeneutics	24
5.1. <i>The Hermeneutic Method in Heidegger and Gadamer</i>	24
5.2. <i>Hermeneutics and the Body</i>	29
5.3. <i>Phenomenological Implications of Prejudices</i>	30
5.4. <i>Prejudices and Sex Testing</i>	32
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Limitations	36
Chapter 7: References	39

Chapter 1: Introduction

Over the relatively short history of the philosophy of sport, various methods have been used to investigate a wide range of topics concerning sport, from considering the ethics of doping to questioning what makes a sport a sport, or a game a game. I am here concerned with ontological investigations of sport, and in particular the bodies of female sportspeople, or athletes. Before giving a hermeneutic account of the ontological characteristics of the female athletic body, I will first acknowledge the most prominent ontological methodologies used in considering athletes and their bodies.

The three methodologies that I have identified are the Cartesian reductionist method, the phenomenological method, and the Foucauldian poststructuralist method. In this thesis, I will give an account of each of these three methodologies, as well as address some of the issues they face in addressing prominent ontological issues surrounding sporting bodies. I will then introduce the hermeneutic method and show how this might be used to fill in the gaps left by each of the above methodologies.

In particular, I plan to examine the practice of sex testing in contemporary sport. Sex testing has become a rather controversial practice due to the sometimes unreliable nature of the tests and continuing debates over whether it is even possible to determine one's sex by purely biological means. I will here use the practice of sex testing as an exemplary case for which all three methods that I have identified above have been used to analyze the practice, showing the ways in which each of these methods fails to understand certain aspects of sex testing. Finally, I will examine the practice of sex testing using a hermeneutic methodological framework. I will explain how the hermeneutic method sheds light on particular aspects of the practice of sex testing which are missed by the other three methods. By providing a hermeneutic analysis of sex

testing, I plan to provide a ground for future interdisciplinary investigations into how to maintain fair competition in sport while eliminating potentially harmful biases provided by the three former methods.

Chapter 2: The Cartesian Method

The Cartesian method relies heavily on the idea of radical doubt presented in Rene Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Radical doubt is the process described in the "First Meditation" where Descartes first introduces his famous evil genius thought experiment, which goes as follows:

I shall then suppose, not that God who is supremely good and the fountain of truth, but some evil genius not less powerful than deceitful, has employed his whole energies in deceiving me; I shall consider that the heavens, the earth, colours, figures, sound, and all other external things are nought but the illusions and dreams of which this genius has availed himself in order to lay traps for my credulity, (Descartes, 1998, p. 8).

By doubting everything, Descartes begins the separation of the mind from the world.

When Descartes doubts all things in the world, he finds that the only one thing of which he can be certain is his own existence as a thinking being. Thus, Descartes believes that there are two realms: the immaterial realm of the mind which can be known with certainty, and the possibly illusory realm of the empirical world.

Having presumably shown that the existence of the mind is the only thing that is certain, Descartes begins his "Second Meditation" by affirming this with the title "Of the Nature of the Human Mind; and that it is more easily known than the Body" (Descartes, 1998, p. 8). The title not only affirms Descartes' hierarchical view of placing the mind over the body, but it also provides insight into Descartes' method for the investigation of empirical objects.

The method that Descartes sets forth begins with the mind, which can be known for certain. That which is purely an object of the mind is mathematics, as it is considered to have no empirical part. From here, Descartes subsumes empirical objects under mathematical rules by introducing the concept of measurement. When we measure an object, we are taking its

properties and representing them with mathematical quantities, therefore bringing them under the certainty that we can have with mathematics.

The body, as with all empirical things for Descartes, is to be subsumed under this normative structure of reduction to measure, as is clearly indicated by a further thought experiment that he provides:

When looking from a window and saying I see men who pass in the street, I really do not see them, but infer that what I see is men, just as I say that I see wax. And yet what do I see from the window but hats and coats which may cover automatic machines? Yet I judge these to be men. And similarly solely by the faculty of judgment which rests in my mind, I comprehend that which I believed I saw with my eyes (Descartes, 1998, p. 13).

Here we can see that Descartes considers the body as merely a machine. Everything that can be known about the body is that which can be reduced to mechanistic causal relations. Therefore, if we are to truly know anything about the body, we must understand the way in which these causal relations function.

2.1. The Cartesian Method and the Body

With the claims to knowledge of empirical objects through their causal relations, we can see how the body is to be understood in the Cartesian framework. The body is no more than a machine, akin to the robots that Descartes describes in the thought experiment above (Hogen, 2009). Because bodies are objects of the empirical world, we must use the faculties of the mind to bring them under mathematical causal relations so that we can truly know them. There is no meaning to be sought in bodies beyond that which one can measure. This leaves us with no room to understand bodies as they are situated within meaningful, historical, social, etc. contexts, lest we be grossly in error. This view of the body appears in contemporary society, often in the

context of scientific and biological view of the body, as is clearly illustrated in the title of R. McNeill Alexander's (1992) book on human movement "The Human Machine."

The Cartesian method, while certainly important for scientific research, has some shortcomings, which can be illustrated by examining how the female body would be understood with this methodology. The female body would be seen as simply a machine from the Cartesian perspective. When the female body is seen as a machine, we can therefore come to know it mechanistically through the functions of its parts. In contemporary society, one of the most common reductions that we see is the reduction of the body to its genetic components (Sexton, 2001). If we can discover how the genetic components of the body function, then we would understand human nature. Based on genetic causal relations within the body, the woman is set apart from man. Thus, everything from different primary and secondary sex characteristics, to hormone levels, to athletic performance is constrained by the causal relations which determine men and women to be essentially different.

2.2. Shortcomings of the Cartesian Method

While the Cartesian method certainly provides us with valuable information about how to understand bodies, it leaves out two important factors that are constitutive of bodies: the meaning attributed to bodies and the capabilities that our bodies have. If we understand that women and men are both causally determined by their biology, that is, their material nature, then humans are considered to be essentially fixed to be one way or the other. However, when we understand the world only in this way, it leaves us blind to the prejudices and biases that inform our investigation.

Furthermore, the biological view cannot fully take into consideration the concept of capabilities. By capabilities, I mean the concept that Lopez Frias and Monfort have in mind

when they say that “capabilities enable humans to project their existence by opening and closing future possibilities, which help them cope with their existential situation” (Lopez Frias & Monfort, 2016, p. 10). Capabilities are what enable us to act in both ordinary and transcendent ways, allowing us both to perform everyday tasks and to push our boundaries. If our bodies are determined by biology, then we are essentially limited by these determinations, leaving other aspects of human nature aside.

This is not to claim that there are no limitations set on us by genetics, biology, the physical environment, etc., but to assert that there is always the possibility for us to change ourselves and influence the outcomes of material events. For example, the genetic view of the body would assert that because of genetics, women’s bodies are necessarily constructed as being less strong than men’s bodies. However, this view leaves out the notions of the meaning of bodies, or and in particular the meanings that have been attributed to the female athletic body in certain cultures. For instance, in today’s culture women’s capabilities have become limited by having the meaning of “less strong than men” attributed to their bodies.

We can see an example of the controversy caused by Cartesian views of the body by examining the practice of sex testing in sport. This practice examines the chromosomes and hormonal levels of female athletes in order to determine that they are “real women.” However, when we consider the case of the South African runner Caster Semenya, who was banned from competition for having hyperandrogenism (Longman, 2016). This condition causes high levels of testosterone in those affected by it. In Semenya’s case, although she was raised and identifies as a woman, her body produced enough testosterone so that she was not classified as a woman, and was ineligible for competition. The view of womanhood as inherently biological here provides us with insight into the meaning that we attribute to women’s bodies: that they are

inherently weaker and less athletic than men's bodies (Fouche, 2017). Thus, although Semenya identifies and presents herself as a woman, the Cartesian method would say that essentially, she is not.

Despite providing us with valuable information concerning the biological functions of the body, the Cartesian view cannot account for the rich cultural and intrapersonal influences on the body. We can know about the function of sex organs, but what is missing from the Cartesian reductionist method is the "meaningful significance" that these biological norms have created. Having shown how the Cartesian reductionist method is not suitable to capture the whole picture of the female athletic body, I will now turn to another method that has been used to examine the body, the Husserlian phenomenological method.

Chapter 3: The Phenomenological Method

The phenomenological method differs significantly from the Cartesian reductionist method despite obvious connections between the two. This can easily be seen in Edmund Husserl's (1960) landmark work on phenomenology entitled *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Beyond the clear connections between Husserl and Descartes in both the name and structure of the book, Husserl derives many key elements of his proof and investigation from Descartes and his method.

3.1. Husserl's Transcendental Ego

We can easily see this by the name of the first section of the "First Meditation" in this book, which is titled "Descartes' *Meditations* as the prototype of philosophical investigation" (Husserl, 1960, p. 1). Along with the reverence shown to Descartes' philosophy in the title of the book, this section also assumes Descartes' philosophical method as prototypical for all of philosophy. As being prototypical, Husserl here signifies that he is going to draw greatly on the philosophical methods of Descartes to derive his phenomenological method, which he calls "neo-Cartesian" (Husserl, 1960, p. 1).

By further examining Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, we can see more clearly the links between his and Descartes' methods. First of all, Husserl quotes Descartes, saying that "anyone who seriously intends to become a philosopher must 'once in his life' withdraw into himself and attempt, within himself, to overthrow and build anew all the sciences that, up to then, he has been accepting." (Husserl, 1960, p. 2). Thus, Husserl's philosophical method begins from the standpoint of radical doubt in the same way as that of Descartes' method.

Between Descartes and Husserl, however, the idea of radical doubt and its appropriate application change greatly. While Descartes allows for doubt of everything, including the world,

Husserl explicitly rejects this possibility. To be more specific, Husserl rejects the notion that the world can be doubted and rejected rather than the notion that the world *as such* can be doubted and rejected. This is the foundation for what Husserl is to deem the “phenomenological *epoché*,” that our presuppositions of the world can be questioned, doubted, and ultimately rejected, but not that the world of experience itself can be rejected. Husserl notes this, saying:

We shall retain only this much: that the evidence of world-experience would, at all events, need to be criticized with regard to its validity and range, before it could be used for the purposes of a radical grounding of science, and that therefore we I must not take that evidence to be, without question, immediately apodictic (Husserl, 1960, pp. 17 – 18).

Thus, what Husserl’s phenomenology intends to be is a method of investigating the world in which one does not reject the world itself, but one’s presuppositions about the world, how evidence is obtained from the world, and in a manner that generates objectively valid, or apodictic, knowledge. Taking this notion of radical doubt as his starting point, Husserl builds his phenomenology in a manner that radically diverges from the progression of Descartes’ philosophy. In talking about the phenomenon, or that experience derived from the empirical representation of the world, Husserl says,

But, no matter what the status of this phenomenon's claim to actuality and no matter whether, at some future time, I decide critically that the world exists or that it is an illusion, still this phenomenon itself, as mine, is not nothing but is precisely what makes such critical decisions at all possible and accordingly makes possible whatever has for me sense and validity as "true" being (Husserl, 1960, p. 19).

It is worth noting two important aspects of Husserl’s phenomenology in the above quotation. The first aspect is Husserl’s divergence from Cartesian reductionism, in construing the difference between the possibilities of absolute certainty and mere illusory knowledge of the world as arbitrary. The second aspect is that of the “critical decisions” that one makes. In

denying the necessity to prove the world with absolute certainty, Husserl instead turns to the notion of decision. What Husserl here champions is the decisions that one makes with regard to the world that one inhabits, whether real or illusory. While shifting the focus of analysis from the Cartesian world to the transcendental ego's decision, Husserl's idea of phenomenology remains distinctly mentalistic. This shift of analysis from objects to experience marks the change from the Cartesian reductionist view to the Husserlian phenomenological view.

This maintenance of the mentalistic perspective taken in Husserlian phenomenology can be shown by examining the phenomenological *epoché*. The *epoché* is that process of withdrawing into oneself, as Husserl said that all philosophers must do once in their lives. In this process, one avoids confronting "all positions taken toward the already given Objective world and, in the first place, all existential positions" (Husserl, 1960, p. 20). The "existential positions" that one does not confront are questions of whether the outside world is real or illusory as we have already seen are deemed arbitrary by Husserl for his phenomenology. In doing so, one comes up against the pure ego-subject experiencing the world.

This transcendental ego-subject experiencing the world, whether 'true' or 'illusory,' is to be the object of Husserl's phenomenology. "The world is for me absolutely nothing else but the world existing for and accepted by me in such a conscious cogito" (Husserl, 1960, p. 21). It is not the world but the world *for me* that is the true world. To know the world as detached from my transcendental ego is impossible, as the world is *always* understood from the perspective of a subject which inhabits, experiences, and makes decisions in the world.

The change that happens between Descartes and Husserl, then, is on the focus of what is to be taken as the object of investigation. For Descartes, it is objects of empirical experience, which are to be analyzed according to a method of comparison of the external world to *a priori*

faculties of the mind, thus showing the true essence of the world. For Husserl, it is the subject itself that is to be analyzed, albeit the subject as thinking ego-subject. What we want to know is how this thinking ego-subject *experiences* and *responds to* things-in-the-world as the *ego cogito* rather than attempting to know absolutely the existential status of things-in-the-world-themselves.

3.2. Husserlian Phenomenology and the Body

With this analysis of Husserlian phenomenology, we can understand how one would interpret the body using the phenomenological method. When one undertakes a phenomenological investigation of the body, one does not try to understand the mechanisms at play in the body using methods such as genetic investigations, hormonal investigations, or investigations of muscle mass. Rather, one tries to understand the original personal experience of one's body, and how one responds to and makes decisions in the world based on this first-person experience of the body. We can see an instance of this type of investigation in Dianne Chisholm's (2008) essay *Climbing Like a Girl: An Exemplary Adventure in Feminist Phenomenology*¹.

¹ In this essay, Chisholm acknowledges in particular two philosophers who provided inspiration for this piece, Simone de Beauvoir and Iris Marion Young. While indebted to the work of these two philosophers, Chisholm's essay diverges greatly in methodology from these two predecessors. While Beauvoir and Young are certainly phenomenological philosophers in many aspects, their phenomenology is not in the Husserlian tradition. Rather, their phenomenology tends to be more Heideggerian and hermeneutic. The change that happens between Young and Chisholm is this switch from a more Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology (and, as I would argue, a method truer to Beauvoir) to a more mentalistic Husserlian phenomenology. While Chisholm often claims to be continuing Beauvoir's work, often using phrases such as "She advances Beauvoir's understanding that to be a woman in a man's world is to occupy a primary existential situation, one that places different challenges on men and women to act freely and that calls for women's extra effort to overcome masculine domination and normative femininity." (Chisholm, 2008, p. 20), Chisholm seems rather to misunderstand the notion of an "existential situation" in Beauvoir. The existential situation for Beauvoir is a situatedness of oneself within a lived experience that is within a meaningful situation produced by our history and our being as creatures within meaningful existential situations.

In her paper, Chisholm situates the body within an existential situation, choosing to examine exemplary cases of the use of the body to overcome obstacles, such as in women's mountain climbing. Chisholm's phenomenology focuses particularly on the capabilities of the climber Lynn Hill and the account that Hill gives of her experience in mountain climbing. Chisholm intends to show "how even a small-framed woman can embody the highest aspirations in the field." (Chisholm, 2008, p. 15). This focus is in line with Chisholm's claim that she attempts to overcome Iris Marion Young's lack of interest in capabilities, as Chisholm says that "Young overstresses gender when she foregrounds women's past interpellation of femininity and their negative experience of embodiment as "typical" of all women at all time" (Chisholm, 2008, p.11). Chisholm thus believes that Young's concept of gender does not allow for the possibility of transcending one's conditions and using our capabilities to overcome obstacles. To return to Lopez Frias and Monfort's idea of capabilities as the possibility to comport oneself in the world and to be able to transcend one's limitations, we can see the relationship between Chisholm's and Young's essays. Chisholm intends to build upon Young's work by choosing to focus on how we can use our capabilities to overcome limitations. This is opposed to the restrictive essentialist view that Chisholm sees in Young's work, which Chisholm believes would limit our capabilities to transcend our limitations.

While Chisholm is certainly right that capabilities and the possibility for transcending limitations are central aspects of our bodies, the way that Chisholm addresses this issue is limiting and leads to the same kind of essentialism that she hoped to overcome. In explaining how the body exists, Chisholm turns to Merleau-Ponty, saying "Hill expresses a climber's understanding of that primacy of perception that Merleau-Ponty attributes to the "natural self," that is, to the prereflective, prepersonal knowing of the body that both grounds and transcends

the willful, thinking, conscious, and self-conscious cogito.” (Chisholm, 2008, p. 17). Chisholm here appeals to Merleau-Ponty’s concepts of prereflective and prepersonal bodily knowing to try to explain the seemingly intuitive connection that Hill has with the mountain. By using such concepts, Chisholm attempts to draw our attention to types of procedural knowledge that are sometimes called “knowing how” or “skilled coping” (Brievik, 2007; 2014; Hoogeveen, 2011; Kretchmar, 2005). This is the type of knowledge that we use when we swing a tennis racquet, throw a baseball, or even when we are performing menial daily tasks such as walking. They are tasks that we innately “know how” to do, but once asked to explain how they are performed, we remain at a loss for words. I can hit a tennis ball over a net and into the court, but I am unable to explain to you the complex way in which my muscles coordinate themselves to precisely strike the ball and exert the proper amount of force to cause the ball to soar over the net and into the court. This is the kind of prereflective knowledge that Chisholm talks about. These actions and sensations happen before we reflect on them, with our explanations of them being mere *post hoc* rationalizations.

It is these prereflective phenomena and intentions that Chisholm and other phenomenologists hope to capture in their work. Chisholm again turns to Hill, saying

Hill attributes her climbing ability to the body's motility and spatiality, to the body in general. At the same time, she clarifies that the body she relies on for climbing is not that of "any man" but a sexed body. Hers is the body of "any woman" that must approach every climbing situation against a background of masculine domination where the feminine is thrown into (often hostile) relief. (Chisholm, 2008, p. 18).

It is the “body in general” that Hill cites as essential to her climbing. This body in general is the prereflective body that Chisholm is trying to investigate. Hill does, however, mention that her body is “not that of any man,” but of “any woman.” She briefly mentions that the body of any woman exists in a situation where masculine domination is the norm, but this is

quickly forgotten. Chisholm's characterization of the female body takes the milieu of social relations and meanings that have led us to understand women in the way that we do today as contingent and postreflective. The real female body for Chisholm is instead the way that women prereflectively navigate the world through procedural knowledge.

3.3. Shortcomings of the Phenomenological Method

We can now see how Chisholm's understanding of the female body fails to address the idea of what it means to be a female body. After briefly acknowledging that there are historical factors that influence our understanding of female bodies, Chisholm immediately returns to examining Hill's account of her personal experiences while climbing. This is especially prominent when Chisholm explains Hill's "girl's reach":

For Hill, who does not consider her climbing miraculous, it is only right that a girl should find a reach that fits her girl's physique, especially in free climbing that involves "anything using your own body - hands, feet, gams, et al. [sic] - for upward progress" (xi). As a girl among men, Hill has to invent a makeshift style that alters or surmounts set routes, methods, and limits of reach. (Chisholm, 2008, p. 21).

The above quotation illustrates some of the problems with understanding the female athletic body through a purely phenomenological lens. First of all, it assumes that the experience described is an instantiation of what it means in general to have a female body. Using this method, Hill's experience is not the experience of all women when climbing, but it is a way that we can come to know what it means to have a woman's body compared to a man's body. When we examine merely the phenomenal experience, however, we are left with something similar to the quotation above. A woman's body is different from a man's body when climbing because there are different limitations in reach. Thus, women can overcome these limitations by adjusting the procedures that they use to overcome the supposed limitations of the body. This does not, however, account for certain objections. For example, a person who identifies as male

but has a small frame, such as Hill's, will face similar bodily limitations to Hill under this phenomenological view. Furthermore, somebody who was raised and identifies as female who has a larger build and longer reach will not face the same limitations experienced by smaller women and will thus be more like a man.

Chisholm's focus on the concepts of ascendance and overcoming, while certainly a worthwhile investigation, cannot encompass the whole of what it means to be a female athletic body. While Chisholm's investigation provides us with a manner of understanding how we can use our capabilities to overcome obstacles, it does not address the broader social and historical structures that contribute to our understanding of our situation. The Husserlian phenomenological investigation that Chisholm undertakes serves to elucidate the first-personal experience, and while it can provide us with an account of our capabilities and how we can overcome limitations, it cannot explain how we come to understand these capabilities. Thus, the ahistorical nature of Chisholm's Husserlian phenomenological investigation cannot provide us with the best method for understanding the female athletic body.

Chapter 4: Foucauldian Poststructuralism

The development of a Foucauldian power architectonic bears great resemblance to both the phenomenological method and the Cartesian reductionistic method. I will here show these similarities through Michel Foucault's (1975) landmark work examining the penal system and bodies, *Discipline and Punish*.

4.1. Foucault's Analysis of Power

Foucault's architectonic of power sets up a relation between subject and object that sits between the phenomenological *epoché* and Descartes' reductionism. On the one hand, Foucault tries to understand the first-personal perspective of the subjects that are being analyzed in his works, similarly to the phenomenological method. On the other hand, Foucault utilizes these first-personal perspectives to understand the subject as well as objects perceived by the subject through the lens of power. In construing epistemology in this way, Foucault claims that

Perhaps...we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands, and its interests. (Foucault, 1995, p. 27).

We can see here how the Foucauldian power architectonics that develop out of this constitute an amalgamation of the philosophical systems discussed thus far while also criticizing them. First, Foucault criticizes the rationalist tradition of Descartes (as well as the empiricist and idealist traditions) by introducing the idea of lived experience. The notion of power is one that is more concrete and personal when a subject is relating to an object than the abstract distanced position that one takes up when using the Cartesian reductionistic method.

Focusing on power is also what keeps Foucault's epistemology so closely tied to both the phenomenological and Cartesian traditions. The emphasis on power is similar to the reduction to

the *a priori* in Descartes. Rather than a subject which is endowed by God with some *a priori* knowledge that constitutes reality,

Power produces knowledge...power and knowledge directly imply one another...there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault, 1995, p. 27).

Power for Foucault is always in a constantly reciprocal relationship with knowledge, each one constituting the other. In fact, in coining what he calls “power-knowledge” (Foucault, 1995, p. 27), Foucault recognizes the inseparability of epistemology from power.

It is this understanding of the relation between power and knowledge from which Foucault proceeds to develop his epistemology. However, differently from the two positions previously discussed, Foucault understands power-knowledge as a historical form of knowledge. To understand power, we must understand its history and how it developed. Because power and knowledge are inseparable entities, in order for us to understand what it means to know something, we must understand the power relations underlying our knowledge of this thing and the history of these power relations.

Foucault construes autonomy in a similar manner to how he construes knowledge. In their essay “Foucault and the Glamazon: The Autonomy of Ronda Rousey,” Pam Sailors and Charlene Weaving offer an interpretation of the connection between autonomy and power in Foucault’s work. They say that “It is impossible to make sense of Foucault’s concept of self without making sense of his concept of power because, according to Foucault, the two are mutually dependent.” (Sailors & Weaving, 2017). The self for Foucault here does not make sense outside of power relations, and power relations do not make sense outside of autonomous selves. While these selves are autonomous, however, they are only autonomous insofar as they

exist within power relations, i.e., either transgressing or reinforcing power relations. Thus, Foucault conceives of some notion of the autonomous capabilities of individuals, but this notion is always construed *only* in terms of power conformity and power transgression.

We can therefore see how Foucault's conception of knowledge, power, and the self coincide. They are all interrelated: they produce, reproduce, and reinforce one another. Power constructs the self and knowledge, but the self can transgress power and create knowledge. Foucault's theory is based on the notion that the world is *only* understandable through an analysis of how power has come to construct knowledge through transgression and conformity to power.

For Foucault, we can truly come to know the world via analyses of these power structures. This method of coming to know the world is a sort of reduction to power, similarly to the reduction to the *a priori* for Descartes. However, instead of reducing the world to a combination of qualities, quantities, and measures, objectively valid knowledge for Foucault is derived from an understanding of the history of power. This method understands the world as a product of historical power relations, and so knowledge is merely a product and tool of those in power attempting to maintain power.

4.2. Foucauldian Poststructuralism and the Body

We can see from this analysis that a Foucauldian poststructuralist view of the body would be focused on power, and the way that entities have come to be known through these power relations. One would therefore understand the female athletic body as a product of historical struggles for power. As opposed to the Husserlian and Cartesian methods presented above, the Foucauldian perspective on the body provides a more historical take on issues of sex and gender.

While a Cartesian would say that to be a woman is to have female genitalia, or to have a particular hormone level or set of chromosomes, and a Husserlian would say that to be a woman is the experience of “woman-ness,” a Foucauldian would say that the category of “woman” is merely a product of the historical struggle of men to maintain power. The body is nothing more than the canvas upon which ideas of masculinity and femininity have been imposed as means to further power inequalities.

We can see an example of this in Rayvon Fouché’s (2017) book *Game Changer: The Technoscientific Revolution in Sports*. In this book, Fouché provides a Foucauldian analysis of the case of Caster Semenya, which was discussed above in the section on the Cartesian method. Fouché offers a similar criticism of the Cartesian method to the one that I have provided above, saying that “her tragic situation will not shed any light on how non-normative bodies will be treated in the future by sporting competitions defined by a male-female binary.” (Fouché, 2017, p. 142). The concern that Fouché presents here is that the Cartesian method does not allow us to understand non-normative bodies, or bodies that do not fit in to our common understanding of male and female bodies as essentially different via biology.

While Fouché’s criticism of the use of the Cartesian method in understanding female athletic bodies is similar to the hermeneutic criticism that I have offered, his approach to understanding the body differs. Fouché explains that “Semenya’s case also highlights how the female athletic body is a construction with publics, governing bodies, competitors, physicians, and scientists invested in maintaining a carefully calibrated equilibrium of female sex identity.” (Fouché, 2017, p. 142). While certainly all of the persons and institutions that Fouché cites play key roles in determining what is to be considered a female body, it is the notion of “maintaining a carefully calibrated equilibrium of female sex identity” which identifies Fouché’s method as

Foucauldian. Fouché here understands the female body as something to be “maintained” by these groups of people. It is the maintenance of these categories of maleness and femaleness through the exertion of power of the former over the latter which produces our understanding of bodies. The difference between male and female bodies can thus be understood through the struggle to maintain the power relations which hierarchically places masculinity above femininity. Fouché further utilizes the Foucauldian method to understand female athletic bodies by examining how truth is produced through power. He says that

Unfortunately in the Semenya case the ways in which the IAAF used the historical power of technoscientific testing to sidestep the social and cultural mechanisms that form gender identity are not questioned. ... Instead, the IAAF depended on the truth-manufacturing machinery of technoscientific testing to output a sex confirmation on which the appropriate choices would be made therewith. (Fouché, 2017, p. 143).

Fouché here provides us with a more direct insight into his method. Fouché explains that in the case of Semenya, sex verification tests were used as a form of “historical power.” This historical power is used to blind people to the ways in which gender has been socially constructed. Fouché moves on to explain that these technoscientific methods of sex testing are “truth-manufacturing.” The claim here is therefore not just that the methods of sex testing are used to make people avoid questioning the ways in which gender has been socially constructed, but that the use of these methods create the truth within culture. Thus, power is not only something which is used to make people avoid questioning culture, but it also actively produces the truths of the culture.

According to this Foucauldian view presented by Fouché, we can thus see how the practice of sex testing would be evaluated. The male-female binary is merely constructed from historical power structures acting to create and maintain power within the ruling class (in this case, the masculine). Sex testing is a manifestation of this power intended to maintain a cultural

sex-based hierarchy with men as the ruling class. Sex testing is therefore merely a way to keep women subordinate: a hierarchical difference is postulated between men and women, and the genetic or hormonal testing is used to prevent people from questioning the hierarchy and complacent within the male-female binary.

This methodology can also be seen in Fouché's discussion of intersexed people. In this discussion, Fouché examines the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) policy of testosterone-based sex identification, a concern similarly raised by Pam Sailors, Sarah Teetzel, and Charlene Weaving in their paper "The Complexities of Sport, Gender, and Drug Testing" (Sailors, Teetzel, & Weaving, 2012). This policy is intended to provide a neat separation between men and women, barring those who are intersex. This denial of the recognition of intersex people by the IOC is understood by Fouché as another way of maintaining power structures by reinforcing the male-female through reductionist methods. Fouché says that "Instead of figuring out a way to incorporate intersexed individuals into Olympic competitions, the IOC has turned its back on the individuals it has labeled as unworthy of contributing to the Olympic movement." (Fouché, 2017, p. 149). To maintain the hierarchical subordination of the feminine to the masculine, any categories which lie outside of the male-female binary ought to be eliminated. This elimination of categories outside of the male-female binary is an example of how power is used to create knowledge. That is to say that men, as the class who hold power, seek to maintain their power. Men's power comes from being distinguished from women, and therefore men have something to hold power over. However, if the biological distinction between men and women is eliminated, so is the source of men's power. This simultaneously creates the knowledge that male and female are the only categories of sex and gender and maintains the hierarchical structure that places masculinity above femininity

4.3. Shortcomings of the Foucauldian Poststructuralist Method

While the poststructuralist method takes historical and cultural aspects into consideration, it remains reductionistic. The body, instead of being a manifestation of our capabilities, our sense, and our interaction with the world, becomes reduced to nothing more than the ground upon which power struggles manifest themselves. Bodily experience is not understood so much as it is reduced to a place where we can understand how power has functioned to marginalize certain peoples. Our capabilities for going beyond our limits and exhibiting our powers are subordinate to how power functions: that is, our capabilities are *nothing more* than our abilities as they relate to imposed structures of power.

Jürgen Habermas further voices a criticism of the Foucauldian poststructuralist method in his book *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. He says that power is supposed to be the fundamental matter to which everything is reduced. This, however, leads to a vicious cycle that Habermas points out:

According to this philosophy, the subject can take up two basically two and only two relationships toward the world of imaginable and manipulable objects: cognitive relationships regulated by the *truth* of judgments; and practical relationships regulated by the *success* of actions. Power is that by which the subject has an effect on objects in successful actions. In this connection, success in action depends upon the truth of the judgment that enters into the plan of action; via the criterion of success in action, power remains dependent on truth. Foucault abruptly reverses power's truth dependency into the power dependency of truth. Then foundational power no longer need be bound to the competencies of acting and judging subjects – power becomes subjectless. (Habermas, 1987, p. 274).

Habermas here claims that in his search for fundamental power, Foucault is looking for a way to ground power in something other than subjects acting in the world. In doing so, Foucault first defines power as the ability to successfully affect objects. To judge whether our action is successful, we must use a truth criterion. Furthermore, power also determines truth for Foucault,

and so power and truth are simultaneously dependent on each other. This supposedly leaves power and truth as entities separate from subjects which can be objectively analyzed. However, Habermas notes that Foucault's notion of the subjectless concept of power derives from a subject-dependent concept of power. This means that in order to have this fundamental objective concept of power, we necessarily have to define it via the subjects that Foucault is trying to escape from. Thus, the Foucauldian poststructuralist method attempts to escape from the nature of subjects as beings embedded in the world, this attempt is ultimately unsuccessful. We can, however, find a resolution to this problem by examining beings as subjects who are always necessarily embedded in a world of tradition and meaning.

Chapter 5: Hermeneutics

The final method to be examined here is hermeneutics. As opposed to the prior three methods, hermeneutics is a more holistic methodology that considers all aspects of experience when describing a phenomenon. Thus, as a holistic method, the hermeneutic method tries to avoid reducing phenomena to simple elements such as power, matter, or sensory experience while viewing all other elements as epiphenomenal.

5.1. The Hermeneutic Method in Heidegger and Gadamer

We can see an example of the hermeneutic methodology in Martin Heidegger's landmark work, *Being and Time*. According to Heidegger, the Being of a person, "is not something we can simply compute by adding together those kinds of Being which body, soul, and spirit respectively possess" (Heidegger, 1962, p. 77). Instead we must take the phenomenon of the person as a whole, including the entirety of the significance of the phenomenon rather than reducing it to individual parts such as mathematical units or power relations.

This leads Heidegger to develop his own conception of truth which diverges from traditional conceptions of truth as justified, true belief. Heidegger instead considers truth to be *aletheia*. The term "*aletheia*" is taken from the Greek word "ἀλήθεια," which is traditionally translated merely as truth. The term, however, signifies something different than we would contemporarily understand as truth. According to Heidegger, the term is a negation, "a-letheia," which refers to the un-coveredness of something. Thus, what truth is for Heidegger is an uncovering of the hidden meanings and significances which are obscured by other reductionistic methods.

From this conception of truth and holism, there should therefore also be an object that differs from the methods presented above which present objects as matter, mentalistic intentionality, and power, respectively. This object, Heidegger refers to by the terms “*Dasein*,” and “Being-in-the-world.” These two terms are used to relate to different aspects of the object of investigation. *Dasein* is used to refer to the person who experiences. Although typically translated from German as “existence,” *Dasein* translates literally to “being-there.” This takes us to the second term, Being-in-the-world. “In-the-world” is the “there” where the person is “Being.” More plainly, we as people live in an “existential situation” where everything is saturated with meaning. Decisions are made with regard to their practical significance, and within a particular meaningful context. The purpose of hermeneutics, then, is to uncover this meaning through an investigation of *Dasein*, as *Dasein* is Being-in-the-world.

Because the hermeneutic method is intended to be holistic, there are therefore different areas that ought to be uncovered. These areas that are to be examined in a hermeneutic investigation are called “moments of facticity.” There are a wide variety of factual moments that may be investigated, including social situation, economic status, political climate, or scientific research. These factual moments are to be investigated as parts of an overarching whole of the situation, and are continually informing each other in forming a dynamic environment of meaning.

By examining Heidegger’s work, his student Hans-Georg Gadamer elaborated on and developed the Hermeneutic methodology that Heidegger affirms in *Being and Time*. Gadamer does this by focusing on the concept of “prejudice.” Contrary to our contemporary understanding of the term, Gadamer takes prejudice to be something positive - even necessary - in all situations in which we are trying to understand objects and ideas. Gadamer says that

“prejudice certainly does not mean a false judgment, but part of the idea is that it can have either a positive or negative value.” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 273). When we enter into an interpretive situation, i.e., a situation in which we are to make a judgment about some object or idea, we necessarily enter into this situation holding our own expectations, values, and beliefs. These expectations, values, and beliefs have developed over the span of one’s lifetime, and they may be true or false. Merely because I presuppose something concerning an object when I am investigating it does not mean that I am wrong, but that these expectations, beliefs, and values are to be critically examined in my investigation. I do not gain insight into the nature of things by simply casting off any previous beliefs that I hold about the object, but by critically evaluating them in reference to the object.

For example, suppose that I am beginning an investigation into the nature of water. I would begin by looking to the glass of water on my desk. My initial thoughts, or prejudices, about the glass of water would be that its purpose is to be drunk and provide me with refreshment. I could then ask a chemist what water is, and her response would be that water is the arrangement of two hydrogen atoms bonding to an oxygen atom which creates a chemical compound with a dipole. I would then ask an exercise physiologist, who would say that water is a vital component for life which provides us with the ability to move, cools us, comprises an essential component of blood, and helps to eliminate bodily wastes. I could then ask a worker at a hydroelectric power plant, who would tell me that water is something whose motion turns turbines to create electrical energy. If I were then to go to a Catholic priest, he would tell me that water is something to be blessed and used in a baptism, or perhaps that it is the foundation of the miracle that Jesus performed of transforming water into wine. In all of these situations, each person has their own interpretation of what water is. However, this does not discredit my initial

account, but adds to it. After critically examining the object and my prejudices, I have come to find that water is not only something refreshing to be drunk, but also has a wide variety of functions and structural components which contribute to its being as “water.” I was not wrong with my initial evaluation of water, but my concept of water has been amplified. Thus, my prejudice is not cast aside, but is located within a web of significance which adds to my understanding of the concept.

Gadamer recognizes in the above quote, however, that prejudices “can have either a positive or negative value” (Gadamer, 1975, p. 273). While in the case of the water, my prejudice was positive, but not fully developed. Gadamer thus poses the question of how we are to safeguard the truth in our prejudices while doing away with the untrue. To answer this question, Gadamer turns to two sources which are commonly thought to create prejudice: authority and tradition.

Gadamer’s analysis begins by examining the notion of authority. It is often thought that deference to an authority is a relinquishment of one’s own autonomy and reason; that when I blindly accept what I am told, I am easily misled, and am not using my own reason. Gadamer challenges this notion of authority, however. He conceives of authority, saying

the authority of persons is ultimately based not on the subjection and abdication of reason but on an act of acknowledgment and knowledge—the knowledge, namely, that the other is superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence—i.e., it has priority over one's own. (Gadamer, 1975, p. 281).

Authority, for Gadamer, is thus not something to be wholly rejected. When we recognize another’s authority, we are not denigrating our own use of reason and subjugating ourselves to the control of another. Rather, the deference to authority is done as an autonomous recognition of our own limitations. For example, when I am in physics class, I defer to the authority of my

professor when he says that force is equal to the product of mass and acceleration. While I may perform an experiment in a lab to demonstrate this principle, I accept it because I recognize the knowledge of my professor, and by extent the knowledge of Isaac Newton. I am here making the autonomous choice to defer authority to my professor instead of poring through Newton's *Principia* and examining the proofs that Newton provides. The decision that I have made is both autonomous and rationally justified.

Gadamer then moves to examine the role of tradition in prejudices. In the common understanding of tradition's role in producing prejudice, tradition functions similar to authority. Tradition is viewed as a pacifying force on reason; we defer to tradition when we refuse to use our own reason and thus leave ourselves open to holding unjustified ideas. Therefore, to have a proper investigation, we ought to cast off the forces of tradition that would otherwise cause our conclusions to be false.

Gadamer counters this assertion by recognizing our situatedness in a historical context. He says that "understanding in the human sciences shares one fundamental condition with the life of tradition: it lets itself be addressed by tradition." (Gadamer, 1975, p. 283). When we are examining some object or idea, we are not examining it from the perspective of some outside observer divorced from historical context. We ourselves are subjected to various ideas given to us from tradition that influence the way in which we see the world. The position that we ought to take the perspective of a disinterested observer in order to understand what is "really there" is itself a prejudice given to us by tradition, which is to be examined within its own context. It is one particular way of understanding the world, but it does not mean that it is the way in which the world actually is. The prejudices that we hold from traditions are to be examined and understood within their contexts. Thus, when we are examining prejudices, we are not simply

taking our prejudice and asking whether it is in conformity with the world outside of us. Rather, we examine why the prejudice is held. It is on this basis with which we are to judge whether the prejudice is held correctly held or ought to be rejected.

Thus, we can see how the hermeneutic method is to function. It is a process of uncovering what is hidden in our everyday lives by our prejudices. However, these prejudices are not to be regarded as something negative which cloud our judgments about objects and ideas. Rather, they are to be explicated within the context of the traditions in which they developed. This leaves us with a method that intends to show how the world has come to be understood as it currently is.

5.2. Hermeneutics and the Body

By examining the factual moments of the body in sport, hermeneutics attempts to describe the existential situation of the body holistically. Thus, a hermeneutic approach to understanding the body would try to explain the body in its continuous interactions with all of the contexts in which meaning is attributed to the body. I would like to preface this section by reiterating that I am not here trying to provide a normative notion of what a female athletic body is, but rather investigating the factual moments which have led to the development of our contemporary notion of what a female athletic body is.

We can see how a hermeneutic investigation of the body in sport would function by examining Lopez Frias and Monfort's (2016) paper "The hermeneutics of sport: limits and conditions of possibility of our understandings of sport." In this paper, Lopez Frias and Monfort identify three key factual moments that contribute to our understanding of sport: these moments are embodiment, capabilities, and tradition. By examining these three moments of sport

individually, Lopez Frias and Monfort are not arguing that these are three separate moments, moments to be ordered hierarchically, or of some linear causal order. Rather, they describe these three moments as having an “intertwining relationship.” That is to say, these moments share a communal relationship with each other, none taking any priority, and each always having influence over each other and our understanding of sport.

Furthermore, by focusing my investigation on the factual moment of embodiment, this does not mean that I am doing so to the detriment of the other two moments. Instead I plan to examine the concept of the body, in particular the female athletic body, in the context of the concepts of capabilities and tradition. Thus, the focus of this investigation will be narrowed, but will still retain the emphasis on a holistic investigation, characteristic of hermeneutic methodology.

5.3. Phenomenological Implications of Prejudices

In order to understand how female athletic bodies have come to be understood as they are today, we must begin with an investigation of how female bodies have been differentiated from male bodies. Simone de Beauvoir offers an explanation for this differentiation in her book *The Second Sex*. The distinction between male and female, de Beauvoir claims, lies in categorizing men and women based on their reproductive organs. This leads de Beauvoir to examine how this differentiation led to the idea that women are inferior to men in performing physical tasks. She says that

Pregnancy, giving birth, and menstruation diminished their work capacity and condemned them (women) to long periods of impotence...Indispensable to the perpetuation of the species, she perpetuated it too abundantly: so it was man who controlled the balance between reproduction and production. (Beauvoir, 2010, p. 72).

When women are considered essentially different from men because of their reproductive capacities, their capabilities come to be understood on this same basis. In this case, according to Beauvoir, women are understood based upon their reproductive cycle. Human reproduction is a process that takes place over a period of about nine months in which one is understood to be less physically capable. Women are thus seen to be essentially less physically capable in general than men. The reproductive capabilities of women are seen as passive and reproductive as opposed to men, whose role in reproduction is seen as active and productive. We therefore have a view of women as passive, or immanent, as opposed to men who are viewed as active, or transcendent.

We can see how this prejudice of women as passive opposed to men as active can perpetuate leading to actual differences in one's capabilities. Because women are seen as passive, they are not allowed to participate in activities seen as active, such as athletics or politics. This idea further manifests itself in the way that space is understood differently between men and women. Iris Marion Young in her essay "Throwing Like a Girl" examines these differences, saying "a space surrounds us in imagination that we are not free to move beyond; the space available to our movement is a constricted space." (2004, p. 33). For her, this idea of the passivity of women manifests itself by confining women in space. Because women are seen, and see themselves, as passivity, this prejudice inclines women to view space as less open to them. Instead of being an open area in which one can manifests one's capabilities, space is seen as confining. It is not something which is open to women, as she is viewed as passivity. This is similar to the analysis that Chisholm provided above. For Chisholm, although one is viewed as confined in space, it is possible to overcome this confinement and project oneself out into space.

5.4. Prejudices and Sex Testing

In contemporary society, however, the differentiation between men and women is often based on biological factors other than simply reproductive organs. Rather, gender testing is done on the bases of either chromosomal configuration or hormone levels. Both of these methods of differentiating men from women are based on a Cartesian reductionist method as presented above. We must here consider the prejudices that have led to these methods of differentiating between men and women. We can here again turn to Gadamer's analysis of prejudices and the notion of the "prejudice of suspending prejudices" (CITE). Gadamer credits this method of suspending prejudices to Descartes, so we must investigate the prejudices present in this reductionist method in the context of the prejudice of suspending prejudices.

When we undertake an investigation of the differences between men and women through a biological reductionist method, we supposedly suspend the prejudices that we have about the world and allow the data to speak for itself. Thus, we ought to be able to find the difference between men and women in the components that make up the whole person. However, this supposed suspension of prejudice brings with it its own prejudice: that there is an inherent biological difference between men and women which determines their capabilities.

The prejudice thus lies in the maintenance of the categories of male and female when we are performing a Cartesian reductionistic investigation of the body. When we attempt to suspend our prejudices to perform this kind of investigation, we still must have some ideas that guide our investigation and our interest in performing the investigation. In this case, the guiding principles that we use are the prejudices of the essential biological differences between men and women.

Alongside the prejudice of a male-female binary, there is also the prejudice that hierarchically places men above women with regard to their capabilities. This can again be

understood by looking at the practice of sex testing in sport. We can especially see how this prejudice manifests itself in the shift from using chromosome-based sex testing to hormone-based sex testing. When chromosomal-based sex testing was used, there were various incidents in which this testing provided inconsistent results. For instance, the Polish sprinter Ewa Klobukowska was discovered to have both XX and XXY chromosomes, which implies that she has a Y chromosome which typically was only found in males (Padawer, 2016). However, the notion that chromosomes alone determine sex was rebutted by geneticists and endocrinologists, who explained that a combination of various factors determined one's sex. Furthermore, these chromosomal differences were not necessarily connected to any differences in performance. In a similar case, the Spanish hurdler Marie Jose Martinez Patiño was found to have XY chromosomes and internal testes which produced high levels of testosterone. However, Patiño's cells were unable to utilize the testosterone that her body produced, so she did not have access to any possible benefits that increased testosterone levels would provide (Padawer, 2016).

Cases like these led organizations like the International Association of Athletics Federation (I.A.A.F) to change their sex testing policies. Instead of using "gender testing," these sport governing bodies would test for hyperandrogenism. This would provide a basis for barring those who had an unfair advantage from competing. This policy change was intended to suspend our previous biases about sex, that it was dependent on chromosomes, and would utilize a method that would objectively determine one's possible athletic capabilities. It was supposed to maintain fairness in sporting competitions by disallowing unfair advantages. However, this policy maintained prejudices related to the male-female binary. The process is intended to keep those who have high levels of testosterone (i.e., men) from competing in women's events. This testing process assumes, however, that testosterone provides a competitive advantage in athletics,

and that this competitive advantage is present in men rather than women. Men are still considered to be transcendent beings while women are seen as immanent. Thus, while attempting to suspend our prejudices, we still remain trapped in others.

However, not all of the prejudices that we hold are negative. When we examine the history of sex testing in sport, we see a common theme running through all methods which attempt to demarcate men from women: the problem of fairness. In her *New York Times* article “The Humiliating Practice of Sex Testing Female Athletes,” Ruth Padawer says “The I.A.A.F maintained it was obliged to protect female athletes from having ‘to compete against athletes with hormone-related performance advantages commonly associated with men.’” (Padawer, 2016). While we again see the prejudice of a hierarchical relationship between men and women, this prejudice appears in the context of fairness. While the shift from chromosomal-based sex testing to hormonal-based sex testing *maintains* the male-female hierarchy, the reproduction of the male-female hierarchy is not the *reason* for this shift. The reasoning is based on a concept of fairness that is understood alongside the concept of a male-female hierarchy.

As a positive prejudice, this concept of fairness ought to be maintained in our sporting competitions. This does not mean that everybody must have absolutely the same training, nutrition programs, hormonal levels, etc., but that competitions with uncertain outcomes should be maintained. It is this positive prejudice of fairness which should be the ground for future development of athletic competition.

These prejudices provide us with a clearer picture of the female athletic body as something that is understood as passive, opposed to the active bodies of men. This prejudice manifests itself in our contemporary practices of sex testing, as well as in phenomenological investigations of female bodily experience. Through our reductionistic approaches to

understanding sex, we maintain the prejudices of a male-female binary, and the hierarchical placement of male bodies above female bodies. This understanding of the world leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy in women, in which their phenomenological experience of space is often one of constraint, thus leading to decreased capabilities in athletic competitions. These negative prejudices, however, are accompanied by the positive prejudice of fairness, which should be maintained as a core tenet of sporting competition.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Limitations

In this thesis, I have examined three of the major methods of investigating bodies in the philosophy of sport: the Cartesian method, the phenomenological method, and the Foucauldian method. I have shown how these three methods can be used to provide an account of the female athletic body and some shortcomings of these methods. Shortcomings of these methods include a lack of consideration of capabilities and tradition in the Cartesian method, a lack of examination of tradition's impact on capabilities in the phenomenological method, and a reduction of tradition to mere power struggle in the Foucauldian method.

I have then presented an account of the hermeneutic method of investigation, showing how it could fill in the gaps left by these other methodologies. This can especially be seen in the way that hermeneutics treats tradition. Rather than trying to reduce tradition to its constituent components and trying to separate oneself from the tradition, hermeneutics recognizes that we are necessarily always part of our traditions. Traditions therefore cannot be reduced to a singular element such as power, which acts like the first cause in a causal chain. Rather, traditions must always be examined from the perspective of someone who is already engaged in these traditions. This leaves room for us to recognize positive prejudices and critically reject elements of negative prejudices. The hermeneutic method further allows for the incorporation of capabilities, as it is simply a descriptive method that allows room for change and progress.

Through a hermeneutic investigation of the female athletic body, we have seen the common prejudices that lead to our contemporary concept of the female athletic body. By examining sex testing practices in sport, we are pointed towards the maintenance of a male-female binary and the subjugation of women to men in athletic competition. The history of this subjugation has led to phenomenologically significant results in female athletic performance.

The practice of sex testing and maintenance of the male-female hierarchy has, however, brought with it the maintenance of the positive prejudice of fairness in athletic competition. This is a fairness that maintains the element of uncertainty in athletic competition, leading to meaningful and exciting competitions and opportunities for the betterment of the self.

The use of the hermeneutic methodology, however, has several limitations. The first limitation is the difficulty of recognizing our prejudices. This difficulty could lead to a pathological kind of deference to authority or tradition, as Gadamer asserts, rather than a critical reflection. Thus, our negative prejudices could be reinforced, doing nothing more than reproducing the status quo. For example, if we recognize the male-female body as a positive prejudice rather than a negative one, this could lead us to believe that the categorization of bodies as male and female is absolute and essential.

Another limitation of the hermeneutic method is its focus on holism. While I have championed the focus on holism as hermeneutics as a positive attribute, this could also be a limiting factor. When one focuses too much on the whole picture, one often loses track of the ways in which the constituent parts are interacting. We could therefore continue to try and examine and reexamine the categories of “male” and “female” while remaining ignorant to important scientific research which could inform our concept of these categories and lead to progress in our understanding of them. However, the holistic component of the hermeneutic methodology could also lead to increases in interdisciplinary work so that we can determine the whole picture in harmony with its parts.

Finally, it must be recognized that this is a preliminary study. All that has been done in this thesis has been a groundwork investigation into the hermeneutics of the female athletic body and a general circumscription of the topic. This thesis is not to be understood as definitive for

how we are to progress in our search for fair standards by which to judge sporting competitions.

Rather, this thesis should be taken as a basis from which further interdisciplinary research should be performed to allow for the improvement of fair competition across various sporting disciplines.

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Academic Vita
Joshua D Remillard

CONTACT INFORMATION:

- Address: 716 East Sample Street, Ebensburg, PA 15931
- Phone: 1(814)-381-4999
- Email: jdr5451@gmail.com

EDUCATION HISTORY:

- The Pennsylvania State University *August 2014 – May 2018*
- Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology
- Honors in Kinesiology
- Thesis: *Hermeneutics of the Female Athletic Body*

AWARDS

- Noll Endowment for Undergraduate Research *Summer, 2017*
- Scholarship for the Center for the Study of Sport in Society *Summer, 2017*

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- The Examined Life Conference, April 21-23 2016: *The Normative Ethical Connection between Sport and Warfare*
- 45th Annual Conference for the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport September 6-9 2017: *Hermeneutics of the Female Athletic Body*
- Conroy, DE, Dubansky, A., Remillard, J., Murray, R., Pellegrini, C., Phillips, S., & Streeper, N. (2017). Using Behavior Change Techniques to Guide Selections of Mobile Applications to Promote Fluid Consumption. *Urology*.

WORK HISTORY

- Lifeguard *2012-2015*
Ebensburg Borough Pool

