

**Racial Interpellation and Second-personhood:  
Understanding the Normative Dynamics of Race Talk**

By

Andrea J. Pitts

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR IN PHILOSOPHY

in

Philosophy

August, 2015

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

José Medina, Ph.D.

Lisa Guenther, Ph.D.

Kelly Oliver, Ph.D.

Lucius T. Outlaw, Jr., Ph.D.

Linda Martín Alcoff, Ph.D.

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To Gertrudis Ocampo and Jane Ellen Moore

## Acknowledgements

This work is a collaborative effort made possible by the many mentors, colleagues, friends, and family that have supported me throughout my studies. First, I have been nourished by the guidance and trust of José Medina, whose contributions to my thinking, professional growth, and creative abilities have been immense. Second, the mentorship of Adriana Novoa has been central to my continued existence in academia. Her critical questions and words of wisdom always remain with me. Many thanks to my committee for their comments on earlier versions of this project and on their willingness to always challenge me, both personally and intellectually. Sincerest thanks as well to Mariana Ortega and my friends and colleagues from the Roundtable on Latina Feminism. Their continued strength and work help sustain my belief that it is possible to create new philosophical spaces for critical dialogue and praxis. A very special thanks to Elisabeth Paquette for her unending encouragement of my work, and for her generosity and patience. Finally, many thanks to my parents, Gricelda Maria Guzman Ocampo Pitts and Jay Pitts, for always believing that I am capable of accomplishing great things.

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## Introduction

In a letter sent to Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, Arizona, the sender writes in support of Arpaio's enforcement of immigration law. She states: "I just wanted to say THANK YOU for all you are doing for Phoenix/Maricopa County! You are the only one who cares enough to uphold our laws ... Why do we have no backbone to protect our culture, our state, and our well-being? ... We don't owe illegals ANYTHING! They are felons as soon as they cross that border ... They arrive here with nothing, so they steal from hard working Arizona State citizens. They use stolen security numbers belonging to you and I, they steal identities, credit card numbers, they commit numerous crimes to profit off of the innocent. Our citizens are victims of illegal immigration. Then, they have the nerve to say that we are racial profiling! Please! It is what it is! If you have dark skin, then you have dark skin! Unfortunately, that is the look of the Mexican illegal who are here ILLEGALLY!" (sic). This letter was used as evidence in the class action lawsuit, *Ortega Melendres, et al. v. Arpaio, et al.* This and other evidence showing that Arpaio encouraged his staff to racially profile Latinas/os in Maricopa County helped convict Arpaio of violating the Fourteenth and Fourth Amendments (Constituent letter 2008).

Areille Garcia, a friend of Luis Ramirez, the 25-year old Mexican immigrant who was beaten to death by white teens in Shenandoah, PA in 2008, is asked about the attitude toward Mexican immigrants in Shenandoah. She states: "I think it's — most of the time, it's OK. But there are times when there are racial slurs. I mean, with my husband, I've been with him four years, and like, I'm telling you, there are many times that I've heard people scream racial slurs to him. You know, like I was pregnant with my son, and they told me, "What's that in your belly? Another person I'm going to have to pay for? Another Mexican on welfare?" Like stuff like that. It's disgusting" (Democracy NOW! 2008).

In Murrieta, California in July of 2014, a group of anti-immigration protestors formed a blockade to prevent a Department of Homeland Security bus transporting 140 women and children

from reaching its intended destination, a detention center in the city. The protesters waved American flags and held signs that read: “NO NEW TAXES\$/NO NEW illegals!” “It’s not about HATE/ It’s about LOVE FOR OUR OWN!!!” and “Send Them Back with Birth Control” (Parker 2014).

Each case above is an example of a racial discourse that has impacted Latinas/os in the United States. There is, perhaps, no direct correlation between such forms of racial speech and the specific policy changes or violent acts that each of the cases invoke. However, such examples do point toward the need to examine the forms of speech that people use to discuss race in order to adequately understand racism, white supremacy, and racial violence. At the same time, while we can find many examples of racial speech that function pejoratively or that potentially harm persons of color, we can also find many demonstrations of solidarity and of coalition building that operate via racial discourses as well. For example, many political organizers, educators, and historians often cite phrases such as “Black and brown lives matter,” “Sí, se puede (“Yes, we can!”), “¡El pueblo unido, jamás será vencido!” (“The people united will never be defeated!”) and “¡Viva la Raza!” (Long live la Raza!”). Such words are powerful phrases that attempt to build solidarity among diverse populations and that attempt to create new significations for group identities that have been marginalized and denigrated in U.S. history. In this project, I examine both how, as Mari Matsuda states, “words can wound,” and also how words can unite and strengthen historically oppressed communities. My method for undertaking this project is to put into conversation critical philosophy of race with two predominantly Anglo-American forms of philosophical discourse: neo-pragmatist speech act theory and metaethical theories of agency. Generally, my analysis takes up questions regarding the nature of normativity, i.e. how normativity functions politically and socially. My more specific aim is how *racial* normativity functions via linguistic acts. To meet my general aim, I defend what has been described in the literature on normativity as “second personhood,” and to meet my specific end, I develop what I call a notion of “racial interpellation.”

To clarify, my account is a non-ideal, intersectional, and situated approach to second-personhood, which relies on a relational conception of agency. By utilizing a conception of relational agency, I propose that many implicit forms of racial interpellation occur without an agent's direct awareness. As I discuss in chapter 4, for example, microaggressions are everyday slights that do not require an agent to hold avowed or intentional forms of overt belief in racial hierarchies. Rather, the account of second-personhood that I develop in this project attempts to explain how patterns of speech are implicated in contemporary forms of structural racism. Accordingly, in order to expand the critical hermeneutic and communicative dynamics of racial interpellation more directly, I begin by distinguishing my analysis of second-personhood from other theoretical accounts that explore the normative significance of second-personal interaction.<sup>1</sup> In the first two chapters, I distinguish between two philosophical approaches to the role of second-personal interaction (although there are surely others that I am omitting). The first approach, the metaethical approach, is a form of analysis that takes as its primary concern the ontological and epistemic necessity of another being/agent to ground ethical engagement and obligation. Philosophers such as Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, Stephen Darwall, and Lorraine Code have all taken such an approach. Such thinkers tend to analyze the ontological constraints of agency in terms of the presence and intimate other-directedness of moral engagement. The second approach I call the "neo-pragmatist approach" to second-personhood, which tends to take a quietist position toward theories of truth.<sup>2</sup> Instead, these thinkers analyze language and speech as a form of embodied action, investigating the question of *how*

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<sup>1</sup> I am using the term "interaction" in a very broad sense here to include metaethical articulations of the ontological co-primacy of second personhood and more pragmatic accounts of second personal addresses through speech. I will discuss these positions in more detail below.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quietism' in analytic epistemology is a methodological claim that holds that one need not argue for a given position because there is no adequate answer that can be given. In this case, there is no non-normative way of determining the nature of truth, thus a metaphysical analysis of truth is not a *philosophically* fruitful avenue to explore. Neo-pragmatist theorists thus tend to look at use theories of meaning and the function of truth in discourse. For my purposes, understanding the nature of truth is an inherently political, social, and pragmatic concern, although a full account of the function of truth exceeds the scope of this project.



speakers make claims to one other and how these claims lead to other forms of embodied action. Philosophers such as Wilfred Sellars, Robert Brandom, Rae Langton, Huw Price, and Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance have all taken up versions of this approach. In what follows, I examine thinkers that utilize these two approaches with the hope of, first, sufficiently distinguishing my account of second-personhood from these accounts. Second, in conjunction with demonstrating how an account of race can mark the respective benefits and limitations of these two existing approaches, I develop an account of racial interpellation that attempts to make sense of racial norms. This second aim demonstrates the need for a new approach to second-personhood, which I develop throughout the project by analyzing theories from critical philosophy of race and specific sites of racial discourse.

The project proceeds in the following order. In Chapter 1, I examine two influential contemporary accounts of second personhood developed through metaethical approaches to agency: that of Lorraine Code and that of Stephen Darwall. Then, in the second chapter, I turn to two neo-pragmatist approaches to second personal communication: that of Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance and that of Rae Langton. To provide a touchstone example for my analysis, I examine the utterance “Look! A Negro!” an indirect vocative hail discussed in Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks*.<sup>3</sup> I show that each metaethical and neo-pragmatist position I analyze overlooks important elements of racialization. I also argue that Fanon’s examination of the recognitive<sup>4</sup> “Look! A Negro!” retains both subjectivizing and objectivizing elements of race talk that play a crucial role in the account of racial normativity that I am developing in this project. Namely, I propose that meta-ethical approaches, including those that emphasize intersubjectivity and mutual dignity and respect, fall short of accounting for the epistemic and ontological asymmetries of white supremacy and colonial domination. In addition, I claim that

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<sup>3</sup> By “indirect vocative hail,” I mean those utterances interpretable by a specified other in which the speaker’s intentions do not determine the normative function of the speech act, a point I will elaborate in Chapter 2.

<sup>4</sup> This term, coined by Kukla and Lance (2009), refers to any speech act that seeks to give expression to a speaker’s recognition of something (Kukla and Lance 2009, 45-46).

the neo-pragmatist approaches, while highlighting crucial aspects of the varied functions that can operate within race talk, fail to adequately articulate how embodied and non-rational responses to norms operate within racial speech. The alternative approach that I will develop will be, thus, a non-ideal, intersectional, and situated approach to second-personhood that can be distinguished from these other positions.

In the chapters following these sections on philosophical methodology, I explore both theoretical and empirical research from critical race studies to develop my account of second personhood. My contribution to the extant literature on these themes will be a demonstration in the following chapters of how second-personal elements of racialization operate within various forms of racial speech. I call such second-personal elements of racialization “racial interpellation.” I aim to show that within all positions of articulation—including third personal, second-personal, and first personal designations of race—there exists a crucial second-personal “call” or “hail” to socially-situated second-persons. That is, there exists a “you” or “you all” that is normatively and epistemically addressed through every position of articulation in racial discourses.

Also, throughout this project, I employ the term “interpellation” to stand in for second-personal vocative hails. I also claim, however, that indirect second-personal vocative hails occur within all forms of racial speech. Thus, one central claim in my approach is that, “race talk” cannot solely rely on the speaker’s avowed intentions to determine the normative function of the speech act. I thereby reserve the term “direct interpellation” for those speech acts directed to a specified “you” in which the speaker’s intentions can be linked to the normative function of the act. The term “indirect interpellation” will refer to all utterances in which there exists no verbally specified “you” addressed within the utterance, and in which the speaker’s avowed intention cannot be directly linked to the normative function of the act.

While the term “interpellation” was given a large degree of uptake through the work of Louis Althusser, my use of the term is meant to extend beyond Althusser’s conception of subjectivization and to critique his somewhat totalizing conception of state power and agency. I intend to use the term to connote its Latin meaning from the word *interpellare*, which signifies “to interrupt by speaking.” My conception of the normative dynamics of forms of speech that aid in processes of racialization lends itself more closely to this prior connotation of the word. That is, I take it that speech acts function to construct forms of racial identities by creating new sites of agency and contestability within the dynamics of racial normativity. Thus, second personal vocative racial hails, on my account, “interrupt” or perpetually reconstruct the normative dynamics of race. This may occur by reinforcing pre-existing norms of white supremacy and racism, or via the creation of new sites of identification and resistance to such norms.

In this vein, Judith Butler has offered a now well-known critique of Althusser that I use as the springboard for my understanding of the term. In addition to focusing on the work of J.L. Austin, Butler locates her discussion of speech acts within Althusser’s writings on state power alongside his claims about speech. Namely, Butler critiques Austin’s distinction between perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts. Illocutionary speech acts, through an act of enunciation, do the very thing that comprises the meaningful content of the utterance. For example, marriage declarations and promises functions like this. Contrasted with this, perlocutionary speech acts, on Austin’s account, “produce certain effects as their consequence” rather than instantiating the content of the speech through action “at the moment of the utterance” (Butler 1997, 3). However, as Butler points out, Austin’s distinction requires a temporal dimension that delimits the bounds of the speech act and its transformational and normative framing. On this point, she argues that even illocutionary speech acts exceed their moment of enunciation. She states: “The ‘moment’ in ritual is a condensed historicity: it exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute

and escape the instance of utterance” (Ibid.). She then challenges Austin’s distinction by examining the context and historical dependency of forms of hate speech and their injurious potential. She critiques Austin’s distinction between perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts by focusing on forms of hate speech that both produce injurious consequences as well as performatively constitute subject positions that locate the addressee in a social relation to others.

To explain such processes of subjectivization through speech, Butler turns to Althusser’s famous 1970 essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.” For Austin, she writes, “the subject who speaks precedes the speech in question. For Althusser, the speech act that brings the subject into linguistic existence precedes the subject in question” (Ibid., 24). In acts of hate speech, the authority of the speaker both ushers into being a subordinated subject, and simultaneously calls up the historicity of the language in question—what Austin considers “the ritual dimension” of linguistic conventions (Ibid., 25). Ideology, in Althusser’s view, interpellates individuals as concrete subjects with agency and epistemic resources for their sustained social existence. Subjecthood becomes the very *sine qua non* of social intelligibility within capitalist state formations. The individual, according to Althusser, must thereby recognize himself as an actor that can respond to the demands that are imposed on him to sustain specific relations of production.<sup>5</sup> This becomes a kind of “obviousness” of one’s own existence as a subject, i.e. as “free, ethical, etc...,” that allow the individual to be unable to “fail to recognize” himself as always already a “concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable” subject (Althusser 1994, 129-130). This process then occurs via a *misrecognition* of an already existent subject that must take up the normative terms of ideological interpellative hails. In Althusser’s famous example, through the police officer’s vocative hail, “Hey, you there!” the individual recognizes itself as the subject that is beholden to state power. The hailed individual “believes/suspects/knows” that

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<sup>5</sup> Given the author’s own inattention to gendered dynamics of power, I continue to use the masculine pronoun to characterize this omission in Althusser’s account.

the call was meant for him (Ibid., 131). Yet, in the act of turning around, the individual thereby sustains a relationship between it and the state. The subject acts *as if* it were always already beholden to state power, and fails to recognize that the act of recognizing oneself as the target of the hail is one of the very constitutive practices that support the maintenance of state power.

Butler, however, critiques Althusser's account of interpellation by arguing that self-knowledge—or the act of recognizing oneself in another's hail—is not required for an individual to be constituted as a subject (Butler 1997, 31). Butler's critique here seems to stem from her rejection of Althusser's understanding of the sovereign power of the speaking subject. She rejects the notion that any subject exercises sovereign power over its speech. That is, all language takes up conventionally and historically situated sites of meaning and contestation. She also adds that “the discourse that inaugurates the subject need not take the form of a voice at all” (Ibid., 33). Thus, she views Althusser's account of subjectivization as too dependent on voice and on first-personal recognition of oneself in a given instance of interpellation.

I agree with Butler that voice and verbal forms of communication are not the only means whereby one becomes constituted as a subject. Her emphasis on third-personal forms of interpellation that occur via means of documentation and other texts (e.g. “bureaucratic forms, the census, adoption papers, employment applications”) is correctly placed and fits very well with my account of racial interpellation (Ibid., 34). As I mention above, speech is only one mode whereby racialization occurs, and I too agree that second-personal hails occurs via means other than speech. Racial interpellation, then, on my account is not restricted merely to vocative speech acts. Rather, as I intend to show, a broader account of indirect interpellation plays a role in third-personal and first-personal forms of communication as well (including textual, spoken, and nonverbal forms of communication).

I part ways with Butler, however, at her view that the normative demands in processes of subjectivization lack dependency on some form of first-personal recognition. Namely, there is an

important point about normativity that must uphold for one to feel *bound* by the authority of a given person or thing. One may act in accordance with a norm and have no awareness of that norm, but in such cases, these actions are not contingent on the subject's agential taking up of said subject position. Such subjects do not themselves feel committed to particular norms that pertain to that subject position and in this sense, do not hold themselves accountable to those norms. For example, white supremacy and color-blindness operate in tandem when an individual or group does not feel bound by racial norms, despite the structuring functions that bear heavily on aspects of that individual or group's privilege. Thus, a white person who does not feel bound by norms that pertain to other races will thereby not recognize and likely not bear any accountability for norms that affect other races. Remaining ignorant of the norms that affect people of color protects white supremacy and creates an obstacle to racial justice.<sup>6</sup>

While this does not entail that others will not hold them accountable for those norms, it does suggest that the individual does not find such normative claims authoritatively binding and, thus, does not view them as norms in any practical way. Their ignorance of these norms thus protects their inaction and insensitivity to others. This may seem largely irrelevant when considering the vast amount of relative ignorance (including self-ignorance) that any individual bears with respect to her/his/their actions and her/his/their particular sociohistorical setting.<sup>7</sup> However, because epistemic and moral responsibility partially depends on the recognition of an authoritatively binding norm, we cannot assume that, for example, processes of racialization would occur were it the case that *nobody* felt bound by the normative grip of racial identities. A large part of what we mean by racial identities is constituted

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<sup>6</sup> Although "white guilt" is another relevant response to the accountability of racial norms by white people, I would claim that this kind of normative positioning requires first-personal recognition of racial norms that then place demands on the white subject. However, in this case, the subject interprets those demands largely from the perspective of other white individuals, and not in terms of their import on people of color.

<sup>7</sup> I include the gender neutral pronoun "their," which is becoming more frequently used by transgender persons and communities.

through the normative expectations that we have of ourselves and others. Butler is correct to claim that subjectivization can occur without the first-personal uptake of a *particular* vocative hail, but as I will argue in this project, processes of racialization depend on some form of second-personal address, located somewhere within the space of a discourse that yields that race is a real, yet constructed social phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the primary difference between Butler's account and my own is that first-personal recognition for the normative significance of one's utterances is quite important, and I rely upon contemporary epistemologies of ignorance to highlight this divergence from Butler's position.<sup>9</sup> Also in this vein, to better clarify the relationship between first personal uptake and normativity, I examine the topic in detail in the first two chapters of this project.

A second major claim made in this project is that second-personal addresses often function latently within third- and first-personal forms of communication. For example, as I argue in chapter 3, the debates in Tucson, Arizona regarding the banning of Mexican American studies programs take as their focus the role of racial histories in public education curricula. Yet, as I show, such seemingly impersonal forms of discourse also entail and indirectly address particularly situated racialized individuals—i.e. Latinas/os, Chicanas/os, and all other individuals that will be affected by the erasure of large parts of the political, economic, and social relationship between Mexico and the U.S. This would include, I claim, the numerous white Anglo-Americans that are also interpellated as subjects who bear no responsibility for knowing and responding to the histories and continued legacies of anti-Latina/o and anti-Chicana/o racism in the U.S. While Butler is correct to add to Austin's conception of illocutionary speech acts via an expansion and critique of Althusser's notion of interpellation, I wish

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<sup>8</sup> Because racial interpellation can occur via third-personal and first-personal forms of address, such second-personal speech acts need not be directly addressed to an individual for them to have binding force. Indeed, this difference also separates my view from that of Darwall.

<sup>9</sup> For example, I draw largely from the work of José Medina and Charles Mills to defend this extension of Butler's critique.

to retain a space for the crucial second-personal character of racialized discourses that render “race talk” a normatively binding discourse that continues to bear relevance in the U.S.

Lastly, before beginning my critical analyses of the extant literature on second personhood, I would like to briefly explain the example from Fanon’s work that I will draw on throughout the following two chapters. The chapter titled “The Lived Experience of the Black Man” [*L’expérience vécue du Noir*] is a markedly distinct chapter of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Namely, the chapter takes as its focus a first-personal articulation of racism and colonial violence. Of specific concern to me in this project is how Fanon descriptively engages his experiences of specific forms of speech that contain derogatory racial slurs. Fanon begins the chapter by pointing to two speech acts: “‘Dirty nigger!’ or simply ‘Look! A Negro!’” I read the conjoining phrase, “or simply” as an indication that Fanon takes these two utterances to bear a contentful similarity. However, if we were to examine their pragmatic functions we would see that the structure of these utterances may appear *prima facie* quite dissimilar. Namely, one is directed second-personally by the speaker to a (presumably) nonwhite hearer, and would, accordingly, very likely be considered hate speech by contemporary standards. The second utterance, by contrast, could be considered a call to a (presumably) white hearer to attend to the presence of the ostensive object/subject of the utterance, in this case, a black person present in her/his vicinity. Although, as I will argue below, the normative impact of these utterances may appear similar, their target audiences are distinct. This may, at first glance, seem obvious or insignificant. However, it is precisely these similarities and differences that I will explore throughout the next two chapters in an effort to note how current metaethical and neo-pragmatist approaches fail to fully capture the normative dynamics of racial interpellation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> These two approaches do not fail due to their methodological starting positions, but rather the views currently available that I discuss are inadequate for the purposes of understanding racial normativity. My position then serves as an extension or blending of these methodologies, which may be rejecting some common threads of both approaches while retaining elements of each.



What is noteworthy with respect to racial interpellation in particular is that all discussions of race, articulated from any standpoint of enunciation, contain second-personal vocative hails (either direct or indirect). Fanon discusses later in the chapter cited above an occurrence of a child calling out to his mother on a train, “Look, a Negro!” This utterance, I argue, contains a second-personal vocative hail that while not addressed to Fanon directly, nonetheless contains a second-personal norm that implicates both Fanon and the child himself (Fanon 2008, 89). Although Fanon is not invited as a speaker by the child, i.e. the child’s intentions do not treat Fanon as an interlocutor, the address indirectly—that is, unintentionally for the child—second-personally hails Fanon. In addition, the mother and other hearers nearby are also implicated, albeit indirectly through the speech act as well. The normative content of the child’s utterance is one of negation, wherein the child’s observation report of “a Negro” marks out a distinct object/subject in the world, i.e. one that the child clearly does not identify with nor consider relationally associated with himself and his racial identity. Fanon’s example, however, demonstrates the ways in which racialization occurs via *indirect* vocative hails to others. Fanon finds himself implicated through the declarative utterance of the child, and the child, whether aware of the implication or not, is also situating his authorial voice in distinction from the subject/object of his observative speech act, i.e. the man/object that he is pointing out on the train.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to note here that the mother’s response to the child’s observative utterance is a direct address to Fanon—i.e. the very object of the child’s ostension. Because the mother understands the second-personal character of her child’s utterance, despite its surface function as a declarative utterance, she offers a direct response to the addressee of that indirect hail. Her reply, “...Don’t pay attention to him monsieur, he doesn’t realize you’re just as civilized as we are,” aids in filling in the normative content of the child’s utterance (Fanon 2008, 93). The observative’s third-

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<sup>11</sup> The term “observatives” comes from Kukla and Lance 2009. They state that observatives “are those recognitives that give expression to our recognition of an empirical fact, object, or state of affairs in observation, and more paradigmatically in perception” (46).

personal claim bears an indirect second-person vocative hail that the mother recognizes and thereby directly responds to by turning to the addressee of that second-person claim. Fanon states as much when he describes how the term, “Negro” calls up images of degradation and subjugation: “I cast an objective gaze over myself, discovered my blackness, my ethnic features; deafened by cannibalism, backwardness, fetishism, racial stigmas, slave traders, and above all, yes, above all, the grinning *Y a bon Banania*” (Ibid., 92).<sup>12</sup> Fanon switches between third-person speech and first-person speech in the following paragraphs to note his own dual role as subject and object of such forms of speech. Moreover, Fanon’s discussion of the way in which the colonizing Other fixes him with “his gaze, gestures, and attitude” demonstrates that forms of racialization need not be dialogical (Ibid., 89). That is, despite his attempt to “demand an answer” from the gaze of the colonizing Other, his subjectivity is denied and thereby fragmented due to an inability to be recognized as a being that can contest the colonizer’s authorial force. In the instance on the train, his agency is circumscribed through the child’s utterance and the mother’s response effectively attempts to negate the implicit content of the hail.

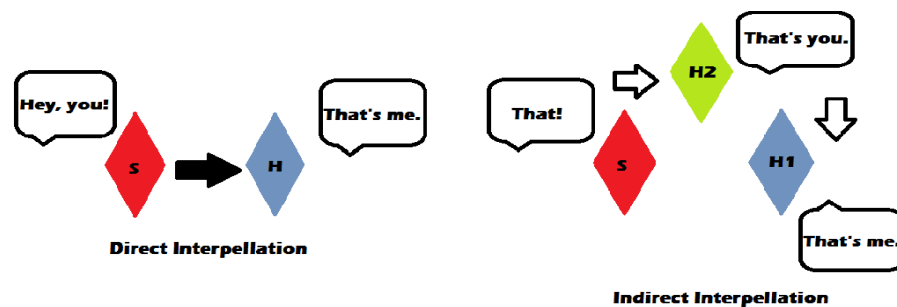
One potential objection to this reading is that the child’s utterance forecloses the possibility of engaging Fanon as an interlocutor (i.e. it disqualifies him as a second person or partner in communicative interaction), and what the mother is doing when addressing Fanon is precisely to reverse that. She is annulling the child’s disqualification, and issuing a second-person address where none was made possible by the child’s utterance. Perhaps the implicit address being something like: “Sir, you are one of us; don’t pay attention to his way of disqualifying you because he is not aware that you—despite appearances—can be treated like a white person, i.e. “as civilized as we are.” While such

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<sup>12</sup> The phrase “*Y a bon Banania*” is referring to a post-World War I advertisement that became popular in France. The advertisement features a Senegalese Tirailleur (infantryman) happily eating a bowl of cereal and speaking positively of the product. The grinning soldier for the French colonial army is depicted as blissfully ignorant and benign while consuming the French breakfast product, reinforcing images of the cultural and intellectual inferiority of Africans during the time (Cf. Donadey, Anne. “‘Y a bon Banania’: Ethics and Cultural Criticism in the Colonial Context.” *French Cultural Studies* 11 (31): 2000).

a view may be consistent with some of the positions that I will discuss below, primarily that of Stephen Darwall, it rejects the central premise of my claims regarding racial normativity. Namely, this reading assumes that the normative dynamics of speech acts are determined by the speaker's intentions, whereas my view endorses the broader claim that addressers, addressees, and other hearers determine the normative content of a speech act. In such cases, the mother's correction of the child and subsequent address to Fanon implies that part of learning the appropriate racial norms requires learning to no longer consciously point to racial difference in the world, but rather to internalize the difference as one that need not be expressed as mattering in the world. This is to say that despite the child's explicit perception of racial difference, including stereotypes and stigmas (e.g. fear of Black people, exoticization of Blackness, etc.), he must learn to sublimate these processes by avowedly endorsing a form of racial egalitarianism that overlooks or attempts to set aside such contentful forms of racial distinction. This form of sublimation can be considered one of the means whereby non-intentional forms of racism and racial discourse emerge.

With respect to interpellation, consider two models of communication to better illustrate this point.



In direct interpellation, the speaker's intentions and direction of address are marked by the solid arrow. The speaker intends to hail the hearer and the hearer locates her/himself as the subject of that hail. This fits with the classic Althusserian interpretation of interpellation, i.e. "Hey, you!" However, the second model requires a social context, illustrated by a second hearer or hearers. In this case, the

speaker's intentions do not directly determine the normative significance of the speech act. Rather, as in the second diagram, Hearer 2 understands (at least) two normative functions of the speaker's utterances. The first may be the third-personal observative utterance "That!" marks some "object" in the world. As in the case of the child on the train, the speaker is not inviting the object of her/his ostensive utterance to become an interlocutor and is not *intending* to utter a second personal address. Despite these intentions, however, the hearers of the observative utterance hear more than the third personal speech act, namely they hear the second personal address to Hearer 1. The indirect address is derived from the hearers (i.e. the social context of the utterance) rather than the speaker's intentions in this case. Thus, it is the collective social recognition of the implicit second-personal hail that gives the utterance its normative force. Without this indirect second-personal address, the mother on the train that I mention above would have no reason to turn to Fanon and address him. Had she not heard some implicit address to him specifically, as an unintended target of the child's utterance, one that she recognizes despite the child's ignorance, she would not have addressed him directly. As I'll discuss in more detail below, the meaning and normative significance of a speech act need not be determined by a speaker's intentions. Rather, as Kukla argues, the speaker may, in fact, be surprised by the normative content of her/his/their utterance after it has been heard and interpreted by others.

With this example in mind, I will now turn in the following chapters to two approaches to second-personal speech acts in an effort to defend what I refer to above as *indirect* racial interpellation.

## **Section I Approaches to Second-personhood**

## Chapter 1

### Metaethical Approaches to Second-personhood

#### Introduction

To develop a non-ideal, intersectional, and situated conception of second personhood, I will put contemporary metaethics in conversation with critical race theory. One traditional way to set metaethics apart from other areas of ethical discourse is via distinctions between normative ethics, applied ethics, and metaethics. Normative ethics focuses on moral theory, and, as a field, attempts to work out which moral theories are apt to explain distinctions between right and wrong, good or evil, and moral permissibility and impermissibility. Applied ethics turns to specific sites of ethical debate, often specific issues or institutional settings to determine how a given theory or set of theories can interpret particular empirical or historical phenomena. Metaethics, in contrast to both of these discourses, takes as its focus the ability to engage in moral theorizing, in general. Namely, metaethics explores questions regarding the ontological status of moral agents and moral values, the epistemic capacities necessary for moral deliberation and agency, the psychological and social commitments of moral decision making, the communicative and hermeneutic dimensions of moral discourses, and so on. In the context of this project, I refer specifically to *metaethical* approaches to second-personhood because I am addressing a problem within metaethics, namely questions regarding the nature of normativity and agency.

Over the last thirty years, critical theorists of race have raised many questions regarding agency, race, and racism, including authors such as Anita L. Allen, Enrique Dussel, Patricia Hill Collins, Charles Mills, and Naomi Zack. Many of these theorists have pointed to the ways in which conceptions of moral personhood have been framed in such a way that they preclude the histories of non-Western and non-Anglo traditions and ways of knowing. Also such theorists, as I outline below, often critique the notion of moral or political personhood that undergirds much contemporary ethical and political

theory. In this vein, for example, some critical race theorists criticize the ways in which rational and epistemic capacities have been denied to persons of color or how conceptions of public political participation require certain forms of discursive engagement (e.g. a stark division between private and public values). My account, in conversation with some of these views, takes as its starting point that ethical theory cannot be done from an idealized historical and cultural positioning. Following Charles Mills' critique of ideal theory, I claim that a theory of second personhood should not begin from an idealized position. Namely, I propose that a theory regarding the metaethical conditions for normativity via linguistic acts should start from the actual conditions of our social and moral worlds. However, such a view does not mean that there are no idealizations or normative claims made by non-ideal theories. Rather, as Mills states, "what distinguishes ideal theory is the reliance on idealization to the exclusion, or at least marginalization, of the actual" (Mills 2005, 168). Many ethical and political theories offer views that idealize human capacities, histories, social institutions, and remain silent on issues of oppression (Ibid., 168-169). My position turns instead directly to concrete contexts of oppression in an effort to theorize the non-ideal moral and political situations in which we live. Following this, although I draw from several philosophical traditions that have often failed to theorize the actual non-ideal constraints of agency and human embodied action.

This commitment to non-ideal theory also leads me to develop, in response to feminist ethics, an *intersectional* and *situated* account of second-personhood. A situated theoretical positioning has been explored by a range of feminist theorists throughout the 20th century, including, for example, Simone de Beauvoir, Annette Baer, Lorraine Code, Donna Haraway, Nancy Hartsock, Carole Pateman, and Margaret Urban Walker. Following these diverse theorists, my account requires that we understand normativity from the situated contexts of the experiences of individuals and groups. Toward this end, Lorraine Code outlines the work of Margaret Walker to underscore an important difference between

theories of moral knowledge that are *theoretical-juridical* and those that are *expressive-collaborative*. Theoretical-juridical theories, she states:

Work with a picture of knowledge for which right perception is “alike” in moral agents, who therefore can readily “put themselves in someone else’s shoes.” They will all see/know “the same” things, formulate problems propositionally in the same way, and thus start from the same place in moral deliberation (Code 2002, 158).

In contrast, expressive-collaborative accounts of moral knowledge are contextually-based and rely on the presumption that moral deliberation is an ever-evolving process of negotiation among historically, culturally, and socially located beings. In addition to contextualism, the collaborative aspect of the approach rejects abstract and individualist conceptions of moral agency, and utilizes models of agency that understand moral interaction—i.e. normative interaction—as a “cooperative engagement in producing habitable communities, environments, and ways of life” (Ibid., 159). My account is intersectional thus by virtue of needing to respond to the myriad ways in which subject positions are located within distinct social, cultural, and historical contexts. Drawing from women of color writers such as Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Audre Lorde, and others who propose that ethical, political, and all agential positionings are dependent upon various forms of identification, group-identity, structural categorization, and hermeneutic configurations. These include but are not limited to how we are situated as racial, gendered, sexual, classed, and differently bodied. My work here thereby attempts to respond to these complex and interrelated aspects of agential positioning to further account for the multiplicity of ways in which we communicatively interact with one another.

Given these theoretical commitments, when considering linguistic agency in particular, I also interpret meaning as normative. Normative judgments are ‘ought’ judgments. Following expressivist theorists such as Allan Gibbard, the version of expressivism that I endorse broadens claims about



moral language to address questions of meaning.<sup>13</sup> In his most recent book, Gibbard argues that all meaning is normative, or put another way “*Means implies ought*” (Gibbard 2012). For my purposes here, I follow this basic position, i.e. that language, including moral language, is normative. What this implies is that, for an account of second-personhood we must have recourse to differential epistemic and agential positionings of interlocutors. This includes examining the concrete contexts in which language is employed. Thus, to reiterate, my position with respect to its metaethical commitments is a non-ideal and situated account of second personhood, which includes the claim that meaning is normative. With respect to race, as I elaborate below, this means that racial discourses are normative—i.e. they produce norms. Accordingly, in the following chapter, I examine how language is a form of action. For now, let’s turn more closely to several metaethical approaches to second personhood. Two contemporary theorists that examine second-personhood are Lorraine Code and Stephen Darwall. Both theorists analyze—in distinct ways—the *structure* of moral agency that is necessary for normative judgment. To understand the metaethical components of my position, it is important to distinguish my view from these two theorists of second-personhood.

### **1.1 Understanding Oppression via Darwall’s account of Second-Personhood**

I begin here with the writings of Stephen Darwall, a theorist who has developed a highly influential approach to second-personhood within metaethics. Darwall utilizes a Strawsonian perspective on the question of the moral significance of what he calls the “second-person standpoint.” Darwall’s central claim is that normatively addressing another agent’s “conduct and will” requires taking up the “second-person standpoint” (Darwall 2006, 3). Such a standpoint is an “I-you-me structure of reciprocal address” that produces what Darwall calls “second-personal reasons” for the

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<sup>13</sup> By ‘expressivism,’ I am referring to the metaethical quasi-realist position that interprets moral language as expressive of approving or disapproving attitudes toward specific objects of moral consideration.

uptake of an utterance and for actions that proceed from that utterance (Ibid.). Second-personal reasons differ from “state-of-the -world regarding” or “agent-neutral reasons” because they require that the authority and accountability of particular individuals be recognized (Ibid., 5). The importance of this claim for moral philosophy, Darwall argues, is that all moral obligations and demands are essentially second-personal (Ibid., 8). He includes here the category of rights claims and P.F. Strawson’s notion of reactive attitudes as presupposing the second-personal standpoint and, accordingly, second-personal reasons. Darwall thus considers second-personal reasons as “always fundamentally agent-relative,” and argues that the I-you-me structure necessarily includes within it a first-personal perspective (Ibid., 9-10). Second-personal reasons are crucial for Darwall because he believes that we are normatively bound by others only when we interpret the demands that they place on us as stemming from a direct other, one who is recognized as a fully free and rational agent. In his words, “To enter intelligibly into the second-person stance and make claims on and demands on one another at all, I argue, you and I must presuppose that we share a common second-personal authority, competence, and responsibility simply as free and rational agents” (Ibid., 5).

This position, while illuminating in some respects, differs from the non-ideal, intersectional, and situated approach to second-personhood that I develop in this project. First, to note a few similarities between Darwall’s view and my own, I agree with Darwall that there is something crucial about understanding second-personal interactions for our ethical lives. Also, like Darwall, I agree that normativity operates at a level of engagement via the invocation of a “you” or “you all,” which is discursively called upon to abide by particular norms. That is, Darwall and I both agree that there is a normative discursive space whereby we come to hold one another accountable. Similarly, I also agree that authority and relations of power play a fundamental role in how second-personal forms of engagement operate.

Yet, the differences between our views are many. Whereas Darwall requires the recognition of free and rational agency on the part of speakers and hearers for norms to have binding force, I argue that such mutual recognition need not exist to make normative claims and demands. Contrary to Darwall, I claim that the binding normative force of an utterance does not depend on both speaker and hearer recognizing one another's equal free and rational capacities, about which I'll say more below. Secondly, Darwall strongly distinguishes between practical authority and epistemic authority. Under Darwall's articulation, the practical authority that undergirds claims or demands on another's will or actions are distinct from epistemic forms of authority regarding reasons for belief or cognitive attitudes. On this point, Darwall claims that although regarding testimony as reason giving for belief formation, for example, can require second personal authority, "this authority is not second-personal all the way down" (Ibid., 57). Namely, second-personal reasons, in the "pure" sense, as Darwall often states, may require no epistemic authority at all. This is to say that reason giving of the sort he has in mind requires only mutual recognition of equal freedom and rationality. Moreover, Darwall claims that epistemic authority derives from access to "facts that hold independently of [the relation between interlocutors]" (Ibid., 59-60). This is unlike pure second-personal authority which derives solely from "normative relations that reciprocally recognizing persons assume to exist between them" (Ibid.). My account, however, attempts via its pragmatist leanings to break down a stark distinction between theoretical and practical reason. My position is largely a normative account of epistemology, which thereby rejects the possibility of solely agent-neutral forms of reason-giving. As I'll discuss in the following chapter, all forms of reason giving bear normative second-personal addresses and accordingly, I thereby dismantle a stark distinction between epistemic and practical authority. All forms of authority on my account are practical, and thus even epistemic authority is second-personal "all the way down."

To clarify, let us consider a potential objection and response that Darwall discusses in his book, *The Second-Person Standpoint*. In his defense of the claim that second-personal addresses must presuppose the mutual recognition of the freedom and rationality of both parties for such addresses to contain normative force, Darwall raises the case of chattel slavery. Darwall rejects as a potential unintuitive consequence of his view that chattel slavery would become either “impossible, necessarily confused or pragmatically self-contradictory” under his view (Ibid., 268). He suggests that his more modest claim is, instead, that “any address of a second-personal reason, including any from master to a slave, is committed to the presupposition that addresser and addressee share an equal normative standing as free and rational persons” (Ibid.). Thus, the implication here is that even under conditions of chattel slavery, second-personal addresses require shared “mutual dignity and respect” (Ibid., 268-269). This may strike many readers as quite counterintuitive given the violent and unjust conditions of chattel slavery, especially as it existed in contexts like the United States and Brazil, for example. Darwall offers several reasons to defend his claim. I would like to work through each one in some detail to clarify how I distinguish his position from my own.

First, it is important to note the way in which Darwall introduces the topic of slavery in his work. He considers slavery as an abstract phenomenon, and one that might pose a problem for his account. His view does not engage with any particular history of slavery, nor does he specify which form of slavery (e.g. chattel slavery, bonded labor, racialized slavery, etc.). This positioning distinguishes his approach from my own. Namely, rather than taking on concrete cases of second-personal interaction, Darwall poses an abstract category of relations of domination and subordination to defend his account. Here, we can consider Darwall’s view a kind of ideal theory of second personhood. Regarding a parallel point, Mills states that social epistemology is much like other mainstream forms of theorizing in political science that “frames American sexism and racism as ‘anomalies’: U.S. political culture is conceptualized as essentially egalitarian and inclusive, with the long

actual history of systemic gender and racial subordination being relegated to the status of a minor ‘deviation’ from the norm” (Mills 2007, 17). In this sense, Darwall makes the same theoretical move that Mills criticizes; essentially he treats slavery and conditions of inequality as aberrations to an otherwise functioning account of second-personal authority and reason-giving. He does at times mention forms of reason-giving that are not second-personal in the way in which he describes, but he makes clear that “we are concerned solely with the pure giving of reasons, abstracting from nonrational factors [such as “intimidation, seduction, and so on”]” (Ibid., 39). Thus, while Darwall’s account may work very well under just conditions of legitimate forms of authority, his view is less helpful for making sense of racial norms that stem from inherently *unjust* social and historical circumstances.

Turning to specific points made in the argument, Darwall dismisses the claim that a slaveholder’s address to “the world at large that he has authority over his slaves” commits him to the view that the slaveholder esteems his slaves with mutual dignity and respect. As he rightfully points out, such a category of speech acts would have no bearing on the counterintuitive claim that a slaveholder must view his slaves as free and rational agents in order for his second personal address to bear normative force. The interlocutors of such speech acts would be other non-enslaved peoples, who could, depending on the circumstances, be viewed with equal dignity and respect. Imagine for example an utterance being addressed to other property-owning men in a slave-holding society.

The more troubling responses from Darwall include his two other reasons for defending the abovementioned counterintuitive claim that slaveholders and slaves share an equal normative standing as free and rational agents with respect to second personal interaction. He states that second-personal addresses from slaveholders to slaves under conditions of chattel slavery need not be considered conceptually confused or pragmatically self-contradictory because such speech acts need not be “unsupported or false” (Ibid., 267). He continues:

After all, there are many forms of unequal authority that we believe might be quite consistent with the equal dignity of rational persons as such. Imagine a sergeant in a citizen army that a fully just society of equals maintains entirely for defensive purposes. In issuing an order to a private, the sergeant addresses a second-personal reason based on the relations of superior authority she can quite reasonably expect the private to accept and be guided by from the perspective of one free and equal person among others (Ibid).

To defend the analogy, Darwall speculates that “it seems possible for a slaveholder in the antebellum South coherently to have believed, however mistakenly or unjustifiably, that his slaves could be expected rationally to endorse his claim to authority over them” (Ibid., 268). This, Darwall claims would bring the two seemingly distinct cases closer. The slaveholder, like the sergeant, believes that the addressee of his speech act is a free and rational agent, despite conditions of slavery.

Surprisingly, Darwall does not refer here to a notion he discusses earlier in the book. Namely, he does not discuss the possibility of Strawsonian “objective attitudes” operating under conditions of slavery. In earlier sections of the book, Darwall agrees with Strawson’s claim that children and “those with ‘deep-rooted psychological abnormality’” should not be treated as members of a moral community (Ibid., 69). Rather, they become “appropriately subject to ‘treatment’ or ‘management’” (Ibid.).<sup>14</sup> Given this previous discussion of non-moral beings, it is puzzling why Darwall does not explore this notion in his discussion of the moral status of slaves, at least when considering the perspective of a slaveholder toward a slave. Such an analysis would go a long way toward addressing the concerns that I raise below regarding the category of “subpersonhood.”

Moreover, the example of the sergeant and the private strikes me as importantly distinct, for reasons that Darwall seems to allude to in a previous section of this chapter. The sergeant-private

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<sup>14</sup> This claim is itself worthy of critique for its harms against persons with disabilities, but I will leave that criticism for another project.

example emerges earlier in the chapter when Darwall is discussing issues of coercion more generally. Darwall claims that a second-personal address from the sergeant requires that the *private* hold himself<sup>15</sup> responsible to the command of the sergeant by accepting the sergeant's reason as stemming from a free and rational agent. In other words, "both the sergeant and the private are committed to recognizing their common second-personal competence and second-personal authority" (Ibid., 262). However, when the case reemerges in the analogy to slavery, Darwall only considers the perspective of the sergeant and the slaveholder. Darwall makes no mention of the perspective of the slave that would require that the slave view the slaveholder as a free and rational agent. In the scenario, his readers, I assume, are meant to take for granted that slaves would view slaveholders as free and rational agents—i.e. agents bearing (at least) equal dignity and respect as themselves. However, this should hardly be assumed to be a commonplace condition for the normative dynamics of second-personal communication under conditions of structural racism.

Importantly, if we turn to slave narratives, despite the often convoluted forms of mediation that such forms of testimony undertake, such documents present a rather complicated picture of the normative conditions of slavery. My concern here is not to present a full analysis of any particular slave narrative, but rather to point to one example in which the normative dynamics between slaveholders and slaves were not as neatly distinguished in terms of the account of second-personal reasons that Darwall provides. Consider this passage from Mary Prince's narrative of her experience of enslavement in Devonshire Parish, Bermuda. She writes:

It was a long time before I got well enough to work in the house. Mrs. Wood, in the meanwhile, hired a mulatto woman to nurse the child; but she was such a fine lady she wanted to be mistress over me. I thought it very hard for a coloured woman to have rule over me because I was a slave and she was free. Her name was Martha Wilcox; she was a saucy woman, very

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<sup>15</sup> This is following Darwall's gender pronoun usage.

saucy; and she went and complained of me, without cause, to my mistress, and made her angry with me. Mrs. Wood told me that if I did not mind what I was about, she would get my master to strip me and give me fifty lashes: "You have been used to the whip," she said, "and you shall have it here." This was the first time she threatened to have me flogged; and she gave me the threatening so strong of what she would have done to me that I thought I should have fallen down at her feet, I was so vexed and hurt by her words. The mulatto woman was rejoiced to have power to keep me down. She was constantly making mischief; there was no living for the slaves--no peace after she came" (Prince 2006, 14-15).

In this case, we see Wood, a white speaker threatening Prince, a black interlocutor. While at first glance, the threat may not constitute second-personal authority on Darwall's account, however, note Prince's description of being "vexed and hurt" by the mistress' words. We can assume that the command issued by the mistress did not include a recognition of the mutual dignity and respect of Prince. Yet, Prince responds to the command of the mistress in a way that suggests her desire to comply with the norm that she "mind what she was about." This brief example demonstrates that Prince's reception and recognition of the normative content of Wood's utterance is not straightforwardly devoid of second-personal reasons, because Prince feels accountable to Wood's command, yet such a command is also coercive and thereby not partaking in the proffering of mutual dignity and respect. Although such an example would require much further examination to analyze the normative content of this brief interaction between Prince and Wood, suffice it to say that Darwall's ideal account of second-personal authority cannot adequately account for such forms of discourse.

Several potential consequences of this example follow for Darwall's account. First, it may be that such commands are not genuine cases of second-personal reasons. Coercion and threats would not be second personal addresses on this reading. Darwall states regarding this point: "To be sure, the most interesting and disturbing cases of domination include second-personal traces or simulacra, such



as a humiliating mutual acknowledgement of the slaveholder's power to subjugate the slave" (Darwall 2006, 266). Darwall follows this statement with a footnote that discusses a potential counterexample. Nir Eyal offers a fictional example from the film *Once Upon a Time in the West*.<sup>16</sup> Eyal states that when a rapist in the film forces his victim to look him in the eye while he is raping her, that this becomes a second-personal interaction. Rather than interpreting the violence as a "He is raping me" situation, Eyal states, the "You are raping me" situation is even more humiliating to the victim." Darwall's reply to this counterexample of second-personal reasons in a case of domination and humiliation is that the situation

does not involve the address of a second-personal reason that presupposes a normative standing. What the rapist forces to be mutually acknowledged seems to be something like 'I can do this to you and you can't stop me' or 'I can treat you as someone to be raped,' not anything normative such as 'I am entitled to rape you.' This is humiliating subjugation rather than a second-personal addresser's presupposed authority (Ibid.).

This reply, however, does not sufficiently distinguish between the two forms of potential uptake of the violent act mentioned. Namely, nothing seems to sharply distinguish the claim that the rapist can claim to "treat [his victim] like someone to be raped" and the claim that he himself is also entitled to rape his victim. To assume the former rather than the latter seems to assume that the rapist's intended address or normative claim determines the act. For example, that the rapist could not possibly claim that he would be entitled to commit such an egregious act. However, from the victim's standpoint, we have no reason to assume that she does not interpret the violent act as a claim of entitlement and, as one that presupposes his authority to violate her.

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<sup>16</sup> Note that already this account of normative uptake is a fictional case, and not grounded in the actual testimonies of rape victims.

This emphasis on the speaker's intended address raises another potential consequence for Darwall's account. Namely, that norms or normative reasons for action do not arise from conditions of oppression. To clarify, Darwall's claim that second-personal addresses from slaveholders to slaves require mutual recognition of free and rational agency is also based in the Austinian conception of infelicity conditions. Darwall invokes Austin's notion of "abuses," which are "hollow" speech acts wherein the act is achieved but is done insincerely. For example, when an individual says "I promise" but has no intention of keeping the promise, an act is performed but is done without the speaker having the proper intentions to perform the act (Austin 1962, 15-16). Darwall claims that a slaveholder can insincerely appropriate the language of second-personal addresses without actually intending to hold any slave as an equal in terms of freedom and rationality. Thus, the speech act would be an abuse in the Austinian sense and the slave would mistakenly believe that the slavemaster's second-personal reasons was sincere. However, here again, nothing indicates that the normative dynamics of structural racism requires that slaves *mistakenly* believe that slaveholders sincerely make second-personal addresses. What I would describe as processes of subjectivization via second-personal racial hails do not require this kind of recognition for mutual free and rational personhood. Moreover, this view would commit Darwall to the claim that structural racism, white supremacy, or any other form of domination does not create reasons for acting. That is, if normativity actually required *direct* I-you interactions among mutually recognized free and equal others, many unjust normative structures would not and, in fact, could not exist. If we take his views more narrowly, that second-personal addresses made under conditions of structural racism, white supremacy or any other form of domination do not create legitimate reasons for acting, then we are left with the conclusion that a great deal of the norms that structure our political and social institutions are illegitimate. This latter claim I might endorse as well. However, for Darwall, its scope would be quite radical, for example, that U.S. legal norms required for state and federal governance are illegitimate.

To clarify: in response to this view about the appearance of free and equal recognition of personhood under conditions of slavery, we can reconstruct the following set of claims. Let's assume that some racial norms are created via linguistic practices under conditions of structural white supremacy. Second-personal forms of address create and enact norms. Either second-personal forms of address occur between interlocutors who are unequally situated under conditions of structural white supremacy or they don't. Also either second personal forms of address require second-personal reasons or they don't. According to Darwall, the *actual* recognition of mutual dignity and respect among interlocutors is necessary for second-personal reasons to exist. The recognition of mutual dignity and respect between persons of color and white persons is not possible under conditions of structural white supremacy. If second-personal forms of address require second-personal reasons, then second-personal forms of address do not exist between interlocutors who are unequally situated under conditions of structural white supremacy. Following Darwall, then, second-personal forms of address do not create or enact racial norms under conditions of structural white supremacy. However, if, according to my view, second-personal forms of address do not require second-personal reasons and thus do not require the recognition of mutual dignity and respect, and if second-personal forms of address function via differential forms of recognition between relationally-situated agents, then second-personal reasons can exist between interlocutors who are unequally situated under conditions of structural white supremacy. According to my view, then, second-personal forms of address do create or enact racial norms under conditions of structural white supremacy.

Recall, too, that Darwall states that practices of slavery are not necessarily confused or pragmatically contradictory. That is, on his account, slaveholders do not fall into a performative contradiction when normatively addressing slaves. Rather, according to Darwall, slaveholders do not make second-personal addresses to slaves at all. According to his view, such coercive forms of illegitimate authority entails that slaveholders are simply not normative agents in the relevant sense. I

propose, however, what Darwall misses in his account is any gradation between agency and non-agency. Namely, his conception of second-personhood does not account for conceptions of “subpersonhood” or relational models of agency wherein those who are socially and politically recognized as “free and rational agents” relegate others to a status that requires obedience to the normative demands of such so-called agents. Under such conditions, the “sub-agent” or “non-idealized agent” is neither wholly exempt from second-personal address, nor are they viewed as fully free and rational agents. Rather, the normatively binding character of second-personal forms of address arise from interpersonal relations and structural arrangements of authority and power that make the interactions between “agents” and “sub-agents” unequal.

To further extend my critique of Darwall here, it is important to highlight another aspect of our approaches that distinguishes our views. The distinction is that his metaethical approach does not account for forms of subjectivization under non-ideal conditions—and by this, I mean to include the process whereby individuals take up racial and racist norms that they attribute to themselves and to the groups to which they consider themselves members. Darwall assumes that second-personal address requires the recognition of free and equal personhood. However, according to this view, the normative recognition of an individual’s own position as a subordinate subject within a system of white supremacy, for example—as a subperson or sub-agent—would imply a performative contradiction. This would presuppose that all oppressed persons, at some level, freely and rationally accepted their own domination or subordination. What is more plausible is that some subset of persons recognizes one another as free and equal interlocutors and thus many racial norms function via these forms of engagement. This would be more akin to Mills’ conception of the “racial contract.” As Mills states of such a form of rationalization:

The Racial Contract is that set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements (higher-level contracts about contracts, which set the limits of the contracts’ validity) between the

members of one subset of humans, henceforth designated by (shifting) ‘racial’ (phenotypical/genealogical/cultural) criteria C1, C2, C3 ... as “white,” and coextensive (making due allowance for gender differentiation) with the class of full persons, to categorize the remaining subset of humans as ‘nonwhite’ and of a different and inferior moral status, subpersons... (Mills 1997, 11).

Such an account of the implementation of the normative dynamics of structural racism provide a more plausible case for how racially oppressed peoples can become subject to racial norms that affect both their own self-understandings and their understandings of others. Namely, some subgroup or subgroups of individuals, embedded within relations of power, effectively organize civil and social structures that instill racial norms in a manner that systematically privileges whites and disadvantaged nonwhites.

Moreover, Darwall’s account, as I mention above, relies on an analogy that discounts the positions of articulation from nonwhites who have been historically denied free and equal personhood and who continue to face forms of structural racism. If we turn to *Black Skin, White Masks*, we can see the relevance of taking up, as many feminist and critical race theorists have done, the standpoint of those who have faced oppression. Fanon writes:

Ontology does not allow [a colonized people] to understand the being of the black man, since it ignores the lived experience ... Blacks have had to deal with two systems of reference. Their metaphysics, or less pretentiously their customs and the agencies to which they refer, were abolished because they were in contradiction with a new civilization that imposed its own. (Fanon 2008, 90)

Here, we see that the position of articulation that determines the “customs,” “agencies,” and “metaphysics” of Black people is derived from a standpoint of whites. The “two systems of reference” that Fanon mentions here are the epistemic and hermeneutic content of being black in a white

supremacist society, one that requires all individuals to be fluent in the dominant norms and values of whiteness. In this sense, Fanon states that “For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man” (Ibid.). Thus, the “lived experience” that Fanon articulates in this chapter refers to the relationality that is required for Black people in a white supremacist society and the relative independence—i.e. in terms of “metaphysics,” “customs,” and “agencies”—that whites enjoy and on which they pride themselves.

The speech act, “Look! A negro!” then takes on a new significance according to this conception of relationality. Namely, the child’s demarcation between himself and the subject/object of his ostension serves to call up a hierarchy of dependency. Both the child and the Black man are viewed, for different historical and social reasons, as sub-agents. The child is a proto-agent, of sorts, who is partially held accountable for his speech act, yet whose behavior is excused to others. In this sense, the child’s accountability is attributed partially to his mother, who bears a moral responsibility for his actions.<sup>17</sup> The Black interlocutor’s subagency is not proto-agency, but of a different kind. Rather, as Fanon states, the status of agency is perpetually denied to him. He writes:

The white world, the only decent one, was preventing me from participating. It demanded that I behave like a man. It demanded of me that I behave like a black man—or at least like a Negro. I was expected to stay in line and make myself scarce (Fanon 2008, 94).

The category of moral agency is perpetually denied to colonized peoples, but not in a manner that negates them from moral responsibility, as Darwall’s account might suggest. Rather, being “expected to stay in line and [to] make [oneself] scarce” are the kinds of normative expectations for individuals relegated to the status of subpersonhood. Thus, the relationship between Darwallian moral agents and

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<sup>17</sup> This conception of agency is not one I will defend primarily because of the often harmful attribution of blame to mothers for the failings of a given social system. Rather, I use this example here to clarify differing forms of dependency.

my or Mills' account of subpersonhood means that the *mutual* recognition is not required for normatively binding second personal speech acts.

Returning to Fanon's example, neither the mother nor the child will question a meaningful relationship between civilization, moral agency, and whiteness. These terms become hermeneutically sutured under structures of colonial domination. For the child, presumably, forms of self-attribution and self-ignorance emerge through the enactment of norms stemming from his utterance. For white agents acting under conditions of white supremacy, their authority is often supported by structural features of an organizing social order. Such structural features of white supremacy insulate the need for white persons to interrogate their status as worthy of moral agency or as appropriate candidates for moral agency. For example, while Fanon finds himself an "object among other objects," the child locates himself as a subject among subjects—subjects like his mother, who can be arbitrators of the world around them. The attribution of blackness to Fanon further buttresses the child's white privilege. Recall that the mother does not chastise the child for the attribution of blackness to Fanon, but rather that the child will "make him angry" because he is publically avowing distinctions that should not be explicitly articulated. The child's 'realization' that "[he's] just as civilized as [they] are" entails that the structures of "civilization" normatively demand a public acknowledgement of formal racial equality, while implicitly operating via a presupposition of racial hierarchy. Mid-twentieth century liberal French customs and social norms indicate that racial hierarchy be formally disavowed, yet this disavowal serves as a means to avoid confronting the continued denigration of people of color.

Fanon notes:

Speaking softly, as if addressing a child, they explained to me that some people have adopted a certain opinion, but they added, 'We can only hope it will soon disappear.' And what was that? Color prejudice. (Ibid., 97)

Public avowal of color prejudice becomes denied in public discourse, yet continually marking distinctions among persons. This form of disavowal indicates the child and mother's privileged position of articulation, wherein the lived experiences of those who are benefitted by white supremacy can wholly deny or ignore the existence of racial prejudices.

Darwall's account of second-personhood thus fails to address, perhaps as a more vivid illustration, distinctions between relationally dependent forms of agency, as we see Fanon describe in the passage above, and the kind of mutually-recognized free and rational agency that he discusses in his work. Given that many systemic structures of oppression explicitly prevent individuals and groups from being deemed equally free and rational, Darwall's account falls short of serving a useful purpose for articulating the nuances of racial norms, i.e. norms that begin from the *non-ideal* concrete social contexts in which conceptions of race circulate. This is important not just for understanding racial normativity and white supremacy, but also other forms of subordination and domination, including heteronormativity and structural forms of sexism and gender discrimination. Accordingly, my analysis of racial normativity will need additional resources to examine second-personhood and its implications for processes of racialization.

Finally, before I turn to some metaethical resources for developing my approach to second-personhood, I would like to briefly explore a potential rejoinder from Darwall. Namely, Darwall's response could be that, while non-ideal conditions of reason-giving are important and worthy of analysis, his research simply is not carrying out this work. Rather, his account of second-personhood is meant to clarify conceptual issues regarding practical authority and action-guiding reasons. Moreover, such a position seems like a likely rejoinder from Darwall given the framing of "dominance hierarchies" in a recent essay that distinguishes the Strawsonian reactive attitude of resentment from Nietzsche's critique of *ressentiment*. While I will not explore the details of that account here, suffice it to say that Darwall's definition of dominance hierarchies in this essay is hardly sufficient for



understanding the nature of racial hierarchies and actual contexts of racial discourse. For example, Darwall states that “hierarchies of pure dominance are established through a competitive struggle for dominant positions when those below submit to those above by signaling their unwillingness to contest their dominance, to no longer be rivals” (Darwall 2013, 78). To be fair, this account of dominance is meant to serve, in part, as a response to Nietzsche’s criticisms regarding the desire to enact retaliation for being harmed that is characteristic of his conception of slave morality. However, unlike theorists like Ofelia Schutte (1984) or John Pittman (2006), who put Nietzsche’s account of *ressentiment* in dialogue with social contexts of oppression, Darwall remains at an abstract level of analysis for understanding patterns of domination and hierarchy. This level of conceptual analysis thereby leaves his work with fewer resources to address forms of reason-giving that occur under unjust or (subtly or severely) coercive conditions. In such concrete cases, whether an agent meets Darwall’s standards for second-personal authority is underdetermined. Thus, even if Darwall’s view contains important insights for our conceptual clarity, his work cannot address forms of racial discourse that operate in our non-ideal contemporary social settings. To develop an account of second-personhood that is then suited for this task, I will turn to resources from feminist metaethics.

## **1.2 Developing a Situated Account of Second-Personhood**

Importantly, there are other resources within metaethical approaches to second-personhood that are helpful for interpreting forms of relational dependency. Lorraine Code’s work is one such example, and her work is quite distinct from that of Darwall’s. While Darwall’s analysis relies upon a conception of equal free and rational agency between interlocutors, Code takes as her starting point approaches in feminist ethics to develop a criticism of such forms of autonomy-based moral theories and epistemology. Drawing from the work of Annette Baier, Code argues that “Persons are essentially second persons” (Code 1991, 85). By this, Code means that moral and epistemic agency requires a

nurturing environment wherein an individual develops personhood. All persons have been, are, or will become again, dependent on others. Thus, her account begins with dependency rather than independent autonomy. She claims, moral and epistemic agency is reliant upon a “communal basis of moral and mental activity” (Ibid., 82). Moral analysis requires a shareable and teachable set of virtues. This emphasis on the educational and interactive components of moral analysis undergirds the claim that moral agency inherently depends upon others. This does not merely mean an abstract reference to others as objects of moral analysis, however. Rather, it means that agency itself, i.e. the very enabling conditions of our actions and judgments, must be based on the social relationships that we have with others. Code also argues that our epistemic agency is dependent upon second-personal interaction. That is, even self-knowledge, she contends, depends upon forms of common, shareable ways of thinking, including social “conventions of criticism, affirmation, and second thinking” (Ibid., 84).<sup>18</sup>

Code’s analysis of second-personhood then serves as a critique of moral theories that take self-sufficiency and independence as key features of moral and epistemic agency. No one, she claims, “naturally [grows] to autonomous self-sufficiency” (Ibid., 85). Following Baier, she affirms that second personhood is a descriptive characterization rather than explicitly prescriptive one. However, the normative significance of the descriptive account of moral and epistemic development that she defends is that such an account requires the analytic rejection of detached, impersonal accounts of moral agency. Echoing Baier again, she does not explicitly address *who* such second persons are that aid in moral development. Rather, she emphasizes “the practice of ‘second person’ discourse,” which appears to create conceptual space for the account of racial interpellation that I am addressing here (Ibid., 86-7).

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<sup>18</sup> This latter point regarding a social conception of self-knowledge, I develop through the work of Gloria Anzaldúa in Chapter 5.

Despite these amenable features of Code's account, her analysis of second-personhood does not explicitly address racial norms and identities in the manner that interests me in this project. Namely, the dependency that she describes seems to count as a universal feature of all forms of moral and epistemic agency. While I agree with this at a broad level, it does not aid in explaining the moral and normative distinctions that arise due to structural forms of racism and white supremacy. For example, while it may be the case that all social identities and norms are interdependent, it seems clear that one of the very characteristic features of privilege within white supremacist social contexts is that many white people are systematically able to remain ignorant of such interdependency. Moreover, such interdependency can be explicitly denied or can be attributed to those who are in positions of subordination or sub-personhood.

Consider, for example, Fanon's discussion of colonial doctors in French-occupied Algeria. Fanon describes the presence of European medical clinics in Algeria as "part of the oppressive system" of colonialism. While most of Fanon's analysis is focused on conditions of *distrust* among providers and patients within such institutional settings, he does mention an "exception" wherein a "colonized individual ... recognizes what is positive in the dominator's action" (Fanon 1965, 122). He states: "When the native, after a major effort in the direction of truth ... says, 'That is good. I tell you so because I think so,' the colonizer perverts his meaning and translates, 'Don't leave, for what would we do without you?'" (Ibid.). Thus, here, any gesture on the part of the colonized speaker toward the relative benefit of some action done by the colonizer is viewed as an indispensable necessity by the colonizer. In more concrete terms, the French doctor begins viewing his Algerian patients as dependent upon him for their well-being, and he does not question this assumption nor does he question his own dependency upon others.

To be fair, Code does cite the doctor-patient relationship among other potential institutional relationships that might benefit from a second-personal discourse of interdependency (Code 1991,

86). However, her analysis of second persons would require not only an examination of how even the most privileged subjects are interdependent upon others for their cognitive content, but also how various discursive structures—like those within contexts of racial and class-based forms of subordination—serve to render dependency a feature that marks the inferiority of particular populations. Think, for example, of contemporary iterations of dependency used within political discourses about “welfare queens,” single mothers, or the recent case of Republican representative of Georgia, Jack Kingston, who proposed in 2013 that low-income students do manual labor in schools in exchange for subsidized lunches (Terkel 2013). These types of discourses attribute responsibility to individuals for *structural* patterns of injustice. With respect to Kingston’s proposal, the free lunches that some students rely on due to their family’s socioeconomic status become interpreted by some U.S. conservatives as a problematic implicit message to children that they ought to remain dependent on state funds. However, what Kingston and his proponents neglect are the conditions that give rise to patterns of poverty, e.g. lack of gainful employment, employment discrimination, lack of funding in schools and school teachers, etc. These structural factors affect the likelihood of intergenerational cycles of poverty, and lead to the need for families to seek state support through free lunch programs, subsidized housing, and other social welfare programs. However, this dependency is viewed by some individuals, like Kingston, as an individual failing. Thus, his proposal is an attempt to address what he views as a personal form of dependency that specific individuals take, rather than seeing the structural patterns that lead to conditions of poverty and state-based fiscal subsidiaries.

Despite these concerns, Code’s account is an important theoretical springboard for my non-ideal and situated account of second-personhood. In Chapters 3-5, I attempt to supplement Code’s metaethical approach with an account of the normative dynamics of racialization. That is, I underscore how different racial groups and racialized individuals are hailed and interpreted within specific social contexts that affect the manner in which dependency relations take on ethical and political significance.

However, before extending my analysis in the remaining chapters, in the next section, I examine two recent neo-pragmatist accounts of second-personhood to more carefully locate my account of second-personhood within philosophy of language: that of Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance and that of Rae Langton.

## Chapter 2

### Neo-pragmatist Approaches to Second-personhood

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to expand how my view makes two moves within the neo-pragmatist literature on second-personhood. First, I endorse what Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance call the role of a “transcendental vocative” for all normative speech.<sup>19</sup> Briefly put, this is the view that all normative speech must include implicit hails to an audience, i.e. a set of ‘you’s that are entailed in every meaningful normative address. Secondly, I defend what I call the *indeterminacy of uptake thesis*. This view is that all norms are subject to public scrutiny, and there are no indisputable normative judgments. This thesis also entails that for any norm there is a set of innumerable potential forms of uptake, which also indicates that all norms are subject to innumerable forms of resistance. In what follows, I elaborate both of these theoretical commitments in dialogue with the neo-pragmatist literature on second-personal address, and then point forward toward my analysis of racial normativity. I argue that for all racial speech, there is a necessary form of racial interpellation that normatively hails a set of interlocutors, including self-hails to the speaker. These (often implicit) hails are what I call racial interpellation.

First, to better situate my analysis, I will clarify what I mean by a “neo-pragmatist” approach to second-personhood. In a recent essay regarding the distinctions between classical American pragmatism (C.S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and others) and “neo-analytic pragmatism” (Wilfred Sellars, W.V.O. Quine, Richard Rorty, and Robert Brandom), Tom Rockmore presents several distinguishing features between these two theoretical discourses. Namely, Rockmore argues that while both discourses share a rejection of Cartesian foundationalism within epistemology, the late

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<sup>19</sup> My account of expressivism ala the work of Gibbard holds that all meaning is normative. Thus all speech bears a transcendental vocative in the manner that Kukla and Lance describe. This point I will elaborate in further detail below.

turn by analytic philosophers influenced by Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore turned to their criticisms of epistemic foundationalism for different reasons than the classical American pragmatists. The reason recent neo-pragmatist thinkers such as Richard Rorty, John McDowell, and Robert Brandom turned to anti-foundationalism was the failure of a project that began with Gottlob Frege's famous distinction between sense and reference (Rockmore 2005, 264). A semantic approach to epistemology, including concerns with definite reference, could not be sustained in the wake of skeptical criticisms. Thus, neo-pragmatism emerged as an anti-foundationalist discourse, but one that continued to seek the form of metaphysical realism that was at the heart of the analytic efforts of figures such as Bertrand Russell, Alfred Tarski, and Saul Kripke. However, classical American pragmatists did not share this later form of realism and gave up not only correspondence theories of truth, but also the epistemological task aimed at knowing a mind-independent world.

To clarify this distinction, we can distinguish "metaphysical realism" from what Rockmore calls "epistemological realism." He argues that neo-pragmatists retain the former, while classical American pragmatists adopted the latter. Metaphysical realism rests on three assumptions, according to Rockmore:

- 1) "there is a way things are"
  - 2) "what we know is already fully constituted in a way that in no sense depends on the knower or on a link of any kind between knower and known"
  - 3) "When one knows, one knows objects as they are and not merely as they might appear"
- (Ibid., 268).

In contrast to this view, following Kant, pragmatists such as Peirce claimed that knowledge is limited to human experience, which does not seek to understand "things as they are." As Rockmore puts the point, "For Peirce there is literally no real with which our present view, or any view, can agree and to which it can correspond, since what we mean by "real"... is not known or knowable in advance but

rather emerges within the cognitive process” (Ibid., 268-269). Following from this distinction, we see neo-pragmatists endorsing an epistemological anti-foundationalism, as in Brandom’s version of inferentialism, and simultaneously retaining a view about the “way things really are” to understand which inferences “are correct” and “what really follows from what” (Brandom 2000, 27).

More recently, critics who have continued to develop this distinct branch of neo-pragmatism, including the theorists that I discuss below, have philosophically pushed the metaphysical realist commitments of their predecessors. For example, Huw Price’s recent defense of a form of metaphysical pluralism takes a pragmatist approach to the meaning of truth. Rather than endorsing a form of representationalism, Price argues for the role of a “truth norm,” a norm which allows interlocutors to disagree with one another. This account, Price claims, commits him to a form of quietism about metaphysical realism and to shift our questions about linguistic practices from an emphasis on “*what* we are saying” to “*why* we are saying it—why we use those words and concepts in the first place” (Price 2011, 110). This shift then allows Price to become a quietist with respect to the question of whether our linguistic practices “get the world right” and rather allows us to analyze the empirical content of our experiences as themselves worthy of debate.

Similarly, in the opening of Rebecca Kukla and Mark Lance’s *‘Yo’ and ‘Lo’: The Pragmatic Topography of the Space of Reasons*, these authors too take a quietist position—or what they describe as “agnosticism”—with respect to whether semantics can be reduced to pragmatics. Sellars and Brandom both propose, via distinct arguments, that traditional semantics can be reduced to a pragmatic meta-language. They maintain this by claiming also that the metaphysical goals and commitments of semantics can be understood directly via pragmatics, including as noted above that inferentialism can make good on questions of whether our speech acts “get the world right.” Kukla and Lance’s agnosticism prevents them from making such a claim. Rather, these authors view mental states and speech acts as meaningful “only insofar as they are properly situated within a body of discursive



practices that is their constitutive precondition” (Kukla and Lance 2009, 7). This means that they accept the explanatory priority of pragmatics without committing themselves to the metaphysical claim that traditional questions of meaning can be fully accounted for within discussions of how mental states and speech acts function normatively. Thus, both adaptations of neo-pragmatist accounts of language resist the broad claim to metaphysical realism. That is, like classical American pragmatists, they do not positively endorse metaphysical realism, but they fall short of denying the plausibility or usefulness of metaphysical realism as a question, as Pierce does. We could potentially infer that these forms of quietism emerge from a recognition of the traditional problems with reference and representationalism that circulated within philosophy of language since Frege but that such concerns cannot be addressed while maintaining the core methodological commitments of classical pragmatism.

For my purposes here, this form of quietism does not hamper my account of racial normativity. That is, my concerns with race are not focused primarily on what race is, in terms of its ontological status. Rather, my concerns are how race operates, as a social phenomenon to the kinds of epistemic and moral beings that are engaged in debates about such matters. For example, how do racial norms affect social space and our understandings of ourselves as raced beings? Although some theorists continue to address metaphysical questions about race, I intend to avoid the question of whether our racial discourses *refer* to “real human-independent facts” about racial groups.<sup>20</sup> My interest in neo-pragmatism emerges from discussions of how speech acts operate, and my concerns with racial normativity focus on how and why individuals and groups feel committed to or bound by norms that categorize individuals, histories, and cultures into distinct racial designations. Turning now to Kukla

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<sup>20</sup> Although I do reject racial naturalism, I do not take up that argument in this project. Moreover, with respect to reference, I do not propose that racial discourses can be manufactured out of thin air. Rather, I am a “realist” in the sense that I hold that race is materially and historically situated and that racial discourses bear significant material consequences for our identities and institutions. However, I do not defend a *metaphysical realist* position, i.e. I do not argue that we can have recourse to a non-normative representationalist theory of truth.

and Lance, I hope to distinguish my approach from some several neo-pragmatist approaches to language and to demonstrate some of the problems and potentially useful theoretical work that such theorists can provide for contemporary discussions of race.

## 2.1 Understanding Second-personhood through Neo-Pragmatism

First, Kukla and Lance make an extensive case for the importance of second-personal speaking positions. Employing the same language as Darwall—in terms of agent-relativity and agent-neutrality—they claim that second-personal speech acts play a central normative role in social linguistic practices. For example, even declarative utterances bear performative force in their uptake as statements of fact. While I cannot defend a general theory of truth here, suffice it to say that when dealing with statements of proposed “fact” about social phenomena such as the inherent racial features or characteristics of groups, these utterances too bear performative force and can be contested precisely via the uptake or failure of that performative force. Along these lines, Kukla and Lance propose that even declarative utterances function via the presumption of normatively-laden positions that attempt to take “neutral” standpoints. That is, when uttering a declarative statement, a speaker positions herself in relation to all others and attempts to assume a form of anonymity in terms of her authority of that utterance. All speakers, she performatively asserts, should be entitled to utter the declarative, and accordingly, all hearers should be committed to endorsing its content. “Truth” and “falsity” thus come into play in terms of disagreement about the relative success of the speech act. For example, a hearer can challenge the speaker by claiming that the utterance is false, which thereby indicates that no one is required to normatively commit themselves to its content.

Kukla and Lance also discuss an agent-relative form of address that operates within all normative speech acts. On this point, they argue for a *transcendental vocative* that functions within all speech acts. They state:

This vocative function is a condition for the possibility of the speech acts doing or meaning whatever else it does or mean ... Speech acts not only strive to make normative claims upon those whom they target, but they call second-personally upon those to whom they speak to recognize themselves as bound by these normative claims and to acknowledge this uptake. (Ibid., 153)

What they propose here is that the normative force of a speech act requires an agent-relative utterance that, for them, locates both the speaker and the hearer/s in the space of reasons. The “space of reasons” for these authors is distinct from that of other Sellarsian neo-pragmatists such as Robert Brandom and John McDowell. Namely, Brandom interprets this “space” as a set of inferential relations between differently voiced declarative utterances, and McDowell understands the space of reasons as a space that is in relative contrast to a space of mere causal relations (Ibid., 1-2). The space of reasons is, instead, available by interpreting human understanding as the faculty of moral spontaneity. Kukla and Lance take a different stance than these two theorists. They propose that the space of reasons should be understood as a pragmatic structure that is comprised of, in their words, “human bodily activity” (Ibid., 8). They criticize Brandom, for example, for merely concerning himself with language and theoretical language rather than concrete events. They state: “[Brandom] often gives no story about how to materially identify [concrete] events, and he often writes as though different speakers’ respective commitments and entitlements may as well be abstract scores that shift around in Platonic space” (Ibid., 8). This, in conjunction with their claim that second-personhood is an essential feature of normativity thus creates space for the type of account of racial norms that I propose here. For Kukla and Lance, rather than an abstract game of giving and asking for reasons, they interpret the space of reasons as a social space, or social context in which some utterances will bear out particular responses and others will not. Their project then calls for a social and political critique of language. My project then is looking to a concrete set of speech acts to elaborate a specific context in which

specific utterances matter and bear out concrete effects. Here, we see a tight connection between Kukla and Lance’s approach and the situated, intersectional, and non-ideal metaethical stance that I endorse in Chapter 1.

Also, rather than deploying a language of free and rational personhood to justify the relevance of second-personal perspectives, Kukla and Lance build from Brandom’s account of inferentialism and deontic scorekeeping to provide a typology of speech acts that looks at the normative functions of different forms of linguistic utterance. They examine speech acts in functional terms—inputs and outputs—and in terms of agent-relative and agent-neutral address (Ibid., 16). The output of a speech act is “the normative statuses the speech act strives, as part of its function, to bring about” (Ibid.). The input of a speech act is “what would entitle the performance of a speech act, if it were entitled” (Ibid.).<sup>21</sup> Agent-relative and agent-neutral utterances differ on whether the speech act is “personalized” or “structurally public” (Ibid., 17). That is, the function of agent-neutral utterances is impersonal and functions as if it need not rely on any specific speaking position for its normative uptake. Agent-relative speech acts rely on the individual character of the speaker’s positionality within a given social order for its normative uptake. For example, only specific individuals are normatively entitled to declare legally-recognized marriage unions in the United States. An utterance by a legally-authorized speaker to declare a marriage between individuals in the U.S. would have an agent-relative input—the normative import of her/his/their marriage pronouncement depends on that speaker’s positionality in a network of commitments and entitlements. In addition, a marriage pronouncement also has both agent-neutral and agent-relative outputs. Namely, a set of commitments and entitlements would be specific to the married couple and other sets of commitments and entitlements would be directed to others more generally to recognize the couple’s legal union.

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<sup>21</sup> In neither case would the normative function of the speech act depend on what the utterance actually accomplishes.

Unlike Darwall, and further distinguishing their pragmatist approach from other ideal metaethical approaches, Kukla and Lance's emphasis on non-declarative speech acts partially stems from their critical stance toward what they call the "declarative fallacy" within philosophy of language. They contend that there are many important semantic phenomena that do not function via declarative utterances and that such phenomena must also be accounted for within the pragmatic meta-vocabularies that philosophers of language have been developing over the past several decades. This pragmatist framing of their view also puts their account in tension with Darwall's views about the role of the second-personal standpoint within social practices. Namely, Kukla and Lance critique Darwall for describing reasons themselves as second-personal (Ibid., 125-126). Darwall, they claim, fails to properly distinguish between agent-relative commitments and entitlements (or, respectively, outputs and inputs in their taxonomy of the functions of speech acts) with respect to the practical implications of second-personal vocative utterances. Darwall conflates the distinction between being compelled to act based on agent-relative norms that derive from specific relations with others, and being addressed by such specific others, with this particular command being the properly motivating norm that is recognized by the listener. For example, as they point out, one can have an agent-relative reason for acting that differs from a second-personal address made by another in relation to you. Consider the example of being a parent of a newly adopted child.<sup>22</sup> Such a relationship entails specific commitments and entitlements that the parent now bears with respect to particular others. However, neither the adopted child her-/himself, nor any specific other in relation to that new parent must make the demand that is properly normatively binding for that new parent to feel bound by certain parenting norms. The binding norms on the parent may be derived from declarative utterances about what good parenting involves, which does not utilize a direct vocative structure, according to Kukla and Lance.

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<sup>22</sup> This is an example from Kukla and Lance 2009, 123-125.

The explanation, they contend, for why Darwall's account conflates the agent-relativity of a claim with the agent-relativity of a position of articulation is because Darwall considers *reasons themselves* to be agent relative. Kukla and Lance consider this a mistake. Second-personality, they write, "is a feature that a transaction such as a speech act can have" (Ibid., 125). Reasons, unlike transactions, are not themselves second-personal precisely because moral demands can be what they describe as "alethic imperatives"—a demand to hold one accountable to a norm that she/he already abides by (Ibid., 111). Reasons are second-personal, according to Darwall, because they *always* create reasons to motivate a specific other, what Kukla and Lance call constative imperatives. Constative imperatives seek to create new commitments. Thus, because Darwall "overinflates" the category of constative imperatives, he fails to see non-second-personally-directed forms of moral address, such as agent-neutral demands made about good parenting practices.

Thinking in terms of racial normativity, consider again an example from *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon writes:

In the twentieth century the black man on his home territory is oblivious of the moment when his inferiority is determined by the Other ... Together we proclaimed loud and clear the equality of man in the world ... And then we were given the occasion to confront the white gaze ... The real world robbed us of our share. In the white world, the man of color encounters difficulties in elaborating his body schema. The image of one's body is solely negating (Fanon 2008, 90).

If we consider this example in terms of alethic and constative imperatives, we can see the function of different racial norms at play. First, consider Fanon's description of "the black man on his home territory" as one in which there are numerous alethic imperatives operating. Thus, there need not have been any direct second-personal addresses to Fanon or his interlocutors in Martinique that prompted the form of racial discourse that he describes. Namely, the proclamation of "the equality of man in

the world” is an affirmation of formal equality among racial groups, a series of racial norms that presents the differential treatment of racial groups as inconsequential for access to the material and hermeneutic benefits of a given social order. Fanon suggests that in Martinique, Black interlocutors, largely through interactions with other Black persons, including African Americans, are not confronted with the constative imperatives that displace their own perceptions of themselves as equal moral agents. The reasons for accepting these commitments are not solely *between* the interlocutors, but are rather based in the interlocutors’ sense of what the world *already* accepts, i.e. the equal moral status of persons regardless of race. Thus, as Kukla and Lance state “an alethic imperative is one that demands that someone do something that she is independently bound to do given true facts about the world” (Kukla and Lance 2009, 111). However, in Fanon’s example, the presumption about the “facts of the world” by his interlocutors in Martinique is ‘confronted by the white gaze’ in other contexts with white interlocutors. In such cases, what is ‘being robbed’ from people of color by white interlocutors is both a presumed moral equality and dignity, but also a conception of “the real world.” In this case, the moral commitments that white interlocutors are thought to obtain are absent and thus Fanon states that Black individuals experience a negating experience of their own body. Their personhood is denied via an agent-neutral set of background norms that attribute differential normative treatment for people of color, but which also simultaneously deny the significance of racial identities.

Constative imperatives function within Fanon’s description when he describes the speech acts of his white interlocutors. He quotes one such speaker, “You must understand that I am one of Lyon’s biggest fans of black people” (Fanon 2008, 96). The imperative, “you must understand” is an attempt to convince others that, despite all appearances, there are no racial norms that function in the speaker’s judgments and actions. Fanon states: “When they like me, they tell me my color has nothing to do with it. When they hate me, they add that it’s not because of my color. Either way, I am a prisoner of

the vicious circle” (Ibid.). In these cases, color prejudice and racism are denied by white interlocutors, i.e. the constative imperative is that people of color will not be treated according to racial norms by these speakers. Yet, the “vicious circle” is the perpetual marking of race and its significance, e.g. “Hey, I’d like you to meet my black friend ... Aimé Césaire, a black *agrégé* from the Sorbonne ... Marian Anderson, the greatest black singer ...” (Ibid.). The new, agent-relative imperative that is offered by white interlocutors is the lack of significance of race against a background of new alethic imperatives which are the denial of equal moral dignity and color prejudice. Unlike in the above example, where in the presumption that no structural racism exists for Black interlocutors who have not “confronted the white gaze,” here, white interlocutors presume a background of racism to defend their own positionings, asserted through constative speech acts, as subject who are free of color prejudice.

Through this account of the importance between alethic and constative imperatives, we can see that Kukla and Lance’s views of second-personal positions of articulation treats reasons themselves as, in their words, “essentially subject to public epistemic appraisal” (Kukla and Lance 2009., 126). Via this claim, I propose the *indeterminacy of uptake thesis*. That is, the presumed background that demarcates alethic imperatives ought to be available for public scrutiny and, in fact, often is, as Fanon’s discussion demonstrates. Depending on one’s position of articulation and her/his/their aims through particular constative imperatives, the alethic imperatives at play will vary. Thus, a declarative utterance about whether a reason is agent-relative or agent-neutral is itself open to scrutiny and debate. This means that non-agent relative forms of moral address—e.g. “But do come in, old chap, you won’t find any color prejudice here”—might well be the motivating reason for an individual’s action, which entails that one *already* holds oneself in agreement with a particular binding norm, i.e. an alethic imperative (Fanon 2008, 93). However, so too, one could claim that a binding norm, of some particular action, was itself created by an address—e.g. a white interlocutor expects her audience to create a new norm based on her speech act, “You see, my dear fellow, color prejudice is totally foreign



to me” (Ibid.). This might be what Darwall considers the required second-personal reasons for moral actions. However, as we saw, with alethic imperatives, Kukla and Lance argue that this need not be the case and that our judgments about which reason was the properly motivating reason is still open to debate.

In the cases that Fanon mentions, the presumption is that people of color are expected to believe in the formal equality of all persons, yet in the first case, the alethic imperative presumes a background set of norms that commits the interlocutors to this state of affairs. In the other case, the constative imperative presumes a particular agent’s lack of prejudice which is meant to assure a form of mutual equality. However, as is clear in both cases, this presumption is a racial norm that creates contradictory experiences for people of color. Despite the professed background or relative security of an interlocutor’s well-intentioned efforts at color-blindness, the perpetual marking of race and racial differences serves to reify racial hierarchy and white supremacy. White supremacy operates in this case precisely because the authority of the white interlocutor is what confronts Black interlocutors’ authority. Or as Fanon phrases the matter, “The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man” (Ibid., 90). The implications of one’s constative imperative imply agent-neutral alethic imperatives about the current state of the world and background operative norms. However, differential positions of authority determine which alethic imperatives are given more credibility and uptake, e.g. a white speaker professing that there is no racism or racial prejudice within a particular group and the hearers of this articulation agreeing with the claim without inquiring into whether any people of color in the group experience racism or racial prejudice.

This last point, about the public appraisal and debate regarding the meaning and normative entailments of our speech acts is directly relevant to a conception of racial interpellation. This potential for debate entails that the forms of uptake available for a normative claim are many, and so too there are innumerable methods for challenging a given norm. Kukla and Lance, deriving their framework

from a neo-pragmatist starting point, do not attempt to provide an account of the functions of our utterances via individual or group intentions, recall their quietism with respect to metaphysical realism. Rather, they assert that their taxonomy itself will have relevant normative bearing and relation with other frameworks for interpreting the functions of speech acts within a given discursive community.

This is also in stark contrast to Darwall's response to potential objections about chattel slavery. Recall that Darwall claimed that the slaveholder should be held to Austinian felicity conditions to defend his theory of second-personhood. This required the counterintuitive claim that all second-personal addresses from slaveholders were "abuses" in the Austinian sense because the speakers lacked the appropriate intentions for the act. Contra this view, my approach, following Kukla and Lance, does not rely solely on the speaker's intention to determine the constituting effects of a speech act. That is, rather than determine whether the felicity conditions of a speech act have been met and distinguishing between proper uptake and mistaken uptake, I consider "uptake" a collective result of differentially situated speakers, hearers, social conventions and so on. Along these lines, Kukla states: "The uptake of a speech act is others' enacted recognition of its impact on social space. Intentions in speaking are part of the story that gives a speech act the performative force it has, but they are not privileged or definitive. The speaker may only discover, in how her utterance is taken up, what sort of speech act it really was" (Kukla 2012, 5). Thus, this framework for the performative force of a speech act allows for a plurality of possible methods of constructing the potential meanings and consequences of a given speech act. The view concedes that "utterances...will enact multiple functions and have multiple inputs and outputs, and [such acts] will also be caught up in various levels of social and ethical normativity that do not directly concern their functioning as truth-claims" (Kukla and Lance 2009, 38).

Although "uptake" is a very general term for the potential set of responses that may occur following from a particular speech act, this phrase points to differential responses that hearers,

listeners, and even the broader responses of groups and individuals who were not present for the given speech act can have. Here, following Butler, I depart from traditional Austinian conceptions of speech act theory to point toward the close relationship between perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts. That is, the binding norms created via a given utterance may be available immediately to particular interlocutors, but also may surface through what appear to be effects of the act itself and may impact individuals and groups who were not even addressed by the act itself. Recall here the observative utterance of the child on the train discussed above. The point of emphasis here is to link linguistic acts to other forms of embodied action, which too cannot be merely relegated to the intentions of one particular agent. Agency, in terms of the relational model that I discuss in Chapter 1, arises via an intersubjective social process, which includes an interpretive process that itself functions within various discursive fields. Also, as I continue to discuss in later chapters, often times the attribution of authority for particular interlocutors will arise from political and ethical commitments against a broader backdrop of social injustices.

In this vein, Kukla's more recent work (Kukla 2012) has been focusing on what she describes as "discursive injustices" and she has begun to develop a theoretical space for examining how members of disadvantaged groups experience a lack of social uptake for the normative entailments of their speech acts. However, Kukla's own work has not explicitly focused on race and I would like to briefly consider a couple of ways in which her view can be supplemented by the account I offer here. First, although Kukla and Lance both align themselves with post-Heideggerian phenomenological approaches to embodiment, they stress that some theorists have given priority to conceptual discourse and thought over embodied practice (Kukla and Lance 2009, 5). In this sense, they write that such a prioritization treats discourse and thought as though they were not already embodied practices and such views also undervalue the crucial role that discursive and cognitive practices play in our development of epistemic and moral sensibilities. I agree with these criticisms, but I have yet to see

their work take on an extended analysis of contextually-situated dimensions of racial discourse and thought. For this reason, a situated, non-ideal, and intersectional analysis of second-personhood, which requires an engagement with corporeal self- and other-language and with concrete social practices, serves as a fruitful area to extend their work.

Also, as I mention above in my discussion of Code's work, the embodied dimensions of racial norms requires analyzing non-intentional elements of structural racism. Here, following Linda Alcoff and Fanon, I propose that racial hails that undergird processes of subjectivization require the incorporation of entrenched and implicit forms of perceptual judgment and corporeal habituation. By these embodied elements of action I mean to suggest that many of our perceptual practices operate via non-reflective and non-conscious processes. Here, many theorists refer to implicit biases or the role of affect in our ethical and political behavior. While I gesture at these non-intentional factors, I do not propose to study them explicitly in this project. Rather, my account of second personhood is meant to create theoretical space for an account of racial embodiment that can engage with phenomenological, existential, and hermeneutic dimensions of affect and embodied implicit biases.

This discursive openness of my account, thus, points to another area in which I extend the indeterminacy of uptake thesis. Namely, Brandom's language of commitments and entitlements does not offer much room for indirect forms of normative address. Although according to his view and mine, we can make explicit some acknowledgements and attributions of normativity within a given speech situation, and these can thereby be held to public scrutiny, my additional claim is that that we can never make all of the social and ethical norms at play in our judgments available for public scrutiny. Thus indeterminacy requires incompleteness as well. Recent analyses of epistemic ignorance (Cf. Mills 2007 and Medina 2012) and implicit bias (Cf. Shotwell 2011 and Saul 2013) point toward the ways in which even phenomenologically-aligned inferentialist accounts of structural racism and sexism might be unable to account for all the corporeal engagements through which individuals and groups are

called upon to take up specific social norms.<sup>23</sup> Thus, my non-ideal, intersectional, and situated account of second-personhood endorses a strong version of the indeterminacy of uptake thesis.

## 2.2 Langton and Visual Scorekeeping

While Kukla and Lance offer a sophisticated analysis of the pragmatic functions of speech acts, other neo-pragmatist philosophers of language have also analyzed the possibility of ethical harm through linguistic utterances. One such theorist is Rae Langton. Langton describes her own approach toward practical changes in the factual and normative beliefs of consumers of pornography as pragmatic. Borrowing the conceptual framework of Brandom, Langton adopts the phrase “conversational scorekeeping” to explain how pornography can bear concrete effects on its consumers. This question regarding how language can have concrete effects can parallel the examples of the normative dynamics of second-personal interaction that I discuss above. Just as Code and Darwall grapple with the practical implications of second-personhood, Langton is inquiring into how language—rather than moral subjects more generally—can bear normative force. Drawing from the work of David Lewis, Sellars, Brandom, and others, Langton argues that conversational scorekeeping is akin to a game in which the presuppositions of the conversation are like the points in a baseball game (Langton and West 1999, 6). The number of points or the amount of presuppositions required to maintain the game/conversation is determined by a set of rules. How the score/presuppositions are calculated is based in the behavior of the players. Unlike a baseball game, however, conversational

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<sup>23</sup> Along these lines, in a recent book, Shannon Sullivan has explored pragmatist conceptions of habit and the relevance of non-conscious and subconscious forms of white privilege (Sullivan 2006). Drawing from the work of John Dewey’s pragmatism and Jean Laplanche’s psychoanalysis, Sullivan constructs a view of habituation to explain white supremacist norms and actions that operate without the conscious awareness of the agent. She traces aspects of white privilege such as ontological expansiveness, the view that whites should be authorized to move in and out of any social space, and white guilt, which tends to paralyze and prohibit whites from engaging with people of color due to a self-centered concern about their own moral statuses as anti-racists. Sullivan’s work is a clear example of how contemporary theorists of race have begun taking up embodied and non-conscious aspects of race and racial norms. Although I will not be drawing from her work here, such approaches are compatible with the approach that I develop in this project.

language games operate via a “rule of accommodation” whereby the calculated presuppositions evolve by whatever means necessary to allow the relevant moves to be considered correct play. In baseball, this could not be the case, because anyone could adjust the rules at any time to acquire more points, also thereby fundamentally altering the rules of the game as the play progressed. In conversation, however, people add or subtract relevant presuppositions in order to make sense of their interlocutors. Often this requires temporarily altering the meanings or grammar of one’s own language to make sense of the conversation.

Langton uses the example of the phrase used in conversation “even Jane could pass.” Unless someone challenges the presupposition of her statement—i.e. that Jane is incompetent—then this presupposition gets added to the “conversational score” to render meaningful the speaker’s utterances. Such presuppositions comprise what she describes as a “common ground” among speakers (Langton 2012, 83). In a similar fashion, pornography, Langton and Caroline West argue, presupposes certain beliefs, implicitly or explicitly, about women or women’s desires. Such presuppositions then arrange the normative dynamics of future interactions that many pornography consumers have with women.

Via this account, we can derive an account of second-personal interaction. Conversational partners develop a common ground by building in sets of presuppositions. With respect to processes of racialization, we might think that, on Langton’s view, if someone, even implicitly, makes a presupposition regarding racial stereotypes or prejudices, these get added to the conversational score of the interlocutors. Drawing from Mary Kate McGowan’s work, Langton states: “Any conversational move that contributes to the score is also an illocution that alters normative facts about what is permissible, and even possible, in the conversation thereafter” (Ibid., 83). For Langton, “altering the ‘common ground’ just is altering the shared ‘common belief’” of hearers (Ibid., 84). Presumably, then, on this view, individuals would find racial norms binding via such interactions with shared common belief systems.

There are many virtues of this account, and Langton's critique of pornography is important. Many women are representationally degraded through pornography and, moreover, pornography as an industry can disenfranchise and coerce women into demeaning forms of work. In this regard, Langton's analysis continues important work by feminist theorists against the harms caused by pornography, and her focus on pornography as hate speech furthers these debates in terms of its level of critique. Thus, Langton's Austinian critique is quite compatible with the intersectional, non-ideal, and situated account of normativity and second-personhood that I defend.

However, despite this overlap with my own position, I find Langton's account incomplete as an account of normativity.<sup>24</sup> One primary concern that I have is with the assumption that hearers of a presupposition that do not publically challenge that presupposition will implicitly or explicitly adopt the content of the presupposition. In Langton's example, she assumes that those who do not speak out against the speaker's indirect implication that Jane is incompetent tacitly endorse the claim as well. This need not be the case. We could easily imagine that all the hearers of the speaker reject the implication, but are not in a position to challenge the view. We could also imagine that hearers act as if they agree, while tacitly rejecting the implications of the speaker's views because they are not able to publically challenge the speaker. Perhaps they have particular reasons for not challenging the speaker (e.g. the speaker is in a position of relative authority over them, like a faculty member or boss), or they attribute what Miranda Fricker calls a "credibility deficit" to the speaker (Fricker 2007, 18). In the latter case, none of the interlocutors actually believe or take seriously the presupposition, thus it may contribute very little to the conversation at all.

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<sup>24</sup> To be clear, one distinction between Langton's account of pornography and my own focus on race talk is that Langton is analyzing representation much more broadly than I am. Namely, Langton is attempting to account for the ways in which visual media can impact belief and desire formation. My more narrow focus is how linguistic communication impacts belief and desire formation. To be sure, my account also remains incomplete as I do not attempt to provide a full theory of representation.

If we shift our focus to pornography, some further concerns arise about Langton's view as well. For example, her account does not offer any way to determine what distinguishes those who develop the "common ground" of sexist and misogynistic beliefs from consuming pornography and those that might not, or even how people develop different forms of misogynistic belief (e.g. beliefs regarding different forms of femininity, desires for different types of sexual acts, etc.). One claim from Langton's account of conversational scorekeeping is that the mere viewing of pornography will contribute to shared common beliefs about women. This claim explains why Langton must account for how pornography contributes to the formation of desire, which moves beyond mere belief formation. Unlike in conversational dynamics wherein the interlocutors might develop different cognitive attitudes or beliefs regarding the content of the words uttered, in the viewing of pornography, the act of watching pornography produces attitudinal effects, including emotions, desires, and erotic attachments. In this sense, Langton understands that it is seemingly inappropriate to reduce all potential responses to pornography or other such material as merely "scores" in a common conversational game. While this language is often used by neo-pragmatist thinkers to make sense of the normative space of reasons, it treats reasons as a quantifiable entity that shares the same relation to all interlocutors and, relatedly, as able to be rationally reflected upon or made explicit. However, racial, sexual, and gender normativity need not rely on the intentional reflection of individual actors and bear an innumerable set of potential responses. Because norms are dependent on differing sites of authority and responsibility, individual actors cannot be thought to function as equal participants in a game. As such, epistemic gaps and patterns of ignorance, including ignorance of the locus of one's own desires, will always complicate the normative implications of a given act. Langton recognizes this problem, and thus proposes that some amount of affective response is required to fit the analogy between conversational scorekeeping and the "visual scorekeeping" that undergirds pornography as hate speech.



One potential problem with the analogy between conversational scorekeeping and visual scorekeeping, as in the viewing of pornography, is that a conversation involves dynamic interlocutors that can, in some cases, contest the presuppositions of one another. On her account, visual perception does not, on its own, offer a clear means to “contest” the presuppositions that are required to sustain its meaningfulness. Consider the case of viewing a pornographic film. If watching a pornographic film, according to Langton, can contribute to a set of shared common beliefs about women, then the implications of this account of visual perception are vast. While I do not disagree with the claim *prima facie*—i.e. the claim that perception plays a role in establishing our shared common beliefs—I do find it puzzling that there seems to be no distinction among the ways in which differing individuals, with different affective and cognitive configurations, might approach the viewing of pornographic content. Think here of differences among consumers of pornography. Non-heterosexual or non-white consumers of pornography that view pornographic content that depicts white women having sex with white men ought not be assumed to *always* have the same responses as white heterosexual consumers of pornography. Namely, the erotic, imaginative spaces of consumers of pornography differ and thus lead to differential responses to given content. Langton’s account of visual scorekeeping seems to cover over these crucial differences. While I agree that misogyny is indeed the “common ground” in the *production* and *design* of a great deal of pornography, we cannot assume that there is a homogeneous set of consumers that hold the *same* misogynistic beliefs for the *same* reasons. There are many different reasons—e.g. psychological, environmental, etc.—that lead to negative and demeaning beliefs about women and women’s sexuality, but understanding how representations can be understood and contested is an important layer of analysis that Langton’s view does not succeed in addressing.

Along these lines, Alcoff has argued regarding racial perception that individuals and social groups acquire perceptual habits that impact the meaningfulness of their experiences (Alcoff 2006, 187-189). Such perceptual habits mean that individuals would see the world differently depending on

the ways in which they were trained to perceive the world. This would also help explain what Fanon describes as two systems of reference in the quotation I mentioned above. The lived experience that he describes explicitly invokes embodied ways of knowing the world. Such forms of corporeal knowledge exceed the mere examination of one's body from a first-personal perspective. He describes "a slow construction of my self as a body in a spatial and temporal world—such seems to be the schema" (Fanon 2008, 90-91). However, "beneath the body schema," he writes, "I had created a historical-racial schema" Ibid. 91). This historical-racial schema is the body that is "returned" to him on the train after the child's utterance and the mother's response. It is, in his words, "overdetermined from the outside" (Ibid., 95). In this sense, all corporeal engagement with the world is always already conditioned by one's social and historical surroundings. Thus, Langton is correct, to some degree, that our background presuppositions can impact our abilities to perceive. However, these also impact how individuals will "consume" the images and representations that they experience. Langton and others who rely on scorekeeping models of normativity overlook the non-reflective and embodied elements of normativity that impact our perceptual practices. Think here again of phenomena like the "weapon bias" wherein empirical research points to differential forms of racial perception that lead people to judge whether or not they mistakenly see a weapon in someone's hand (Cf. Payne 2006). Moreover, similar to the way in which silence on the behalf of the interlocutors in a conversation that do not openly contest a given presupposition, hearers or viewers of racial presuppositions need not endorse a norm merely by virtue of experiencing the presumed authority of a norm. Following Alcoff and Fanon then, I claim that whatever our account of second-personal interaction must be, it must be able to accommodate strategic forms of resistance via our perceptual practices. That is, there must be, in Alcoff's words, ways to learn to "see better" (Alcoff 2006, 204). Along these lines, the following chapters attempt to set up the normative dynamics of given cases in which different positions of articulation aid in processes of racialization. What I do in these chapters is mark the potential

normative functions of specific speech acts, but also in the final chapter of the project to show the possibilities for resistance from specific interlocutors affected by the presumed authority of particular racial norms.

By way of a conclusion of this section of the project, I would like, then, to reiterate the differences through which I have engaged two distinct approaches to second-personhood. First, with respect to the work of Darwall and Langton, I distinguish myself from their views by showing, in the former case, that structural racism requires a conception of second-personhood that begins from non-ideal and concretely embedded examples of racialization. Thus, Darwall's analysis of slavery and second-personhood fail to capture meaningful features of how structural racism functions normatively. Taking up a non-ideal approach to second-personhood thereby enables me to discuss categories of subpersonhood and the political and social inequalities that function under white supremacy. With respect to Langton's work, I argue that her account of conversational scorekeeping presumes a determinate form of common uptake for specific speech acts, and moreover her view does not provide a rich enough conception of embodied perception to make sense of racial norms and structural racism. Accordingly, both views seem inadequate to the task of accounting for racial interpellation.

Secondly, although my approach more closely parallels that of Code and Kukla and Lance, I argue that neither framework has thoroughly dealt with questions of race. Namely, for Code, her important metaethical discussion of dependency does not offer an explicit social or political analysis of structural racism that directly marks the normative significances of differing forms of relationality and dependency among racial groups and racialized individuals. With respect to Kukla and Lance, my analysis in the remaining chapters attempts to engage with the material dimensions of the normative force of racial interpellations. Drawing from case studies that outline differing positions of articulation, I propose that these dimensions of often indirect forms of vocative address effectively bear their

normative significance in action. Turning to concrete instances—e.g. a public policy debate regarding the banning of Mexican American Studies in Tucson, Arizona—will enable the kinds of engagement with embodied racial norms that I hope to develop with my account of racial interpellation and second-personhood. This emphasis on concrete cases is developed directly out of my methodological commitments to a situated, non-ideal, and intersectional understanding of race.

## **Section II Racial Interpellation in Context**

## Chapter 3

### Racial Interpellation in the Third Person: Civic Education and Anti-Latina/o Racism

#### Introduction

As I argue in Chapter 1, my account of second-personhood is non-ideal, intersectional, and situated. This means that my account draws from specific sites of agency and examines the embedded relationships of power in which agents find themselves. Also, in Chapter 2, I argued that if the transcendental vocative functions within all normative forms of address, then we must examine how racial interpellation functions within forms of racial address. In this next section of the project, in order to place my discussion of second-personhood in *specific contexts* of racial speech, I will turn to several sites of racial discourse. Drawing from the distinct pragmatic functions of speech acts that I outline in Chapter 2, we see in this chapter how third-personal speech acts contain implicit racial interpellations. My analysis focuses on a case of anti-Latina/o racism in the U.S. Southwest, namely, a series of legislative documents that led to the banning of Mexican American Studies (MAS) in Tucson, Arizona. I show that even in fact-stating cases of third-personal address, an implicit “you” or “you all” is invoked by the speaker and such hails bear normative weight. I conclude by pointing to responses to the banning of MAS in Tucson to demonstrate a multiplicity of forms of uptake resulting from the cases of third-personal address that I discuss. These responses further support the indeterminacy of uptake thesis that I developed in Chapter 2.

To defend the role of racial interpellation in this case, I discuss three interrelated sets of norms that surface throughout the legal documents that supported the banning of MAS in the district. The three normative trends are nativism, individualism, and, what Leo Chavez calls the “Latino-threat narrative.” Each set of norms, I argue, bear implicit second-personal vocatives that support anti-Latina/o racism. In what follows, I first outline some of the historical background of the banning of MAS in Tucson. Then, I turn to specific language within the Arizona legislation involved in the ban

to specify indirect second-person hails that surface via each set of norms—i.e. nativism, individualism, and via the “Latino-threat narrative.”

### **3.1 Banning Mexican American Studies in the Tucson Unified School District**

On May 11, 2010, Governor of Arizona Jan Brewer approved House Bill 2281. HB 2281 contains the following mandates:

a school district or charter school in this state shall not include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following

1. promote the overthrow of the United States government.
2. promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
3. are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

In December of 2010, then-Superintendent, Tom Horne, filed a motion to find the Tucson Unified School District’s (TUSD) Mexican American Studies program to be in violation of the Arizona statute that came out of HB 2281, A.R.S. 15-112. In June of 2011, the newly elected Superintendent of schools, John Huppenthal, issued another finding, stating again that TUSD was in violation of the new state statute. In December of that year, an Arizona judge agreed that the TUSD was indeed violating the mandates of A.R.S 15-112. The concerns expressed by Horne and Huppenthal were that the Mexican American Studies program in the district, also known as “La Raza Studies,” was teaching “a kind of ethnic chauvinism that the citizens of Tucson should no longer tolerate” (Horne 2007, 1). Underlying Horne and Huppenthal’s claims was the view that “people are individuals, not exemplars of racial groups” (Ibid.). In a statement written by Horne, he states: “What is important about people is what they know, what they can do, their ability to appreciate beauty, their character, and not what race into which they were born (sic)” (Ibid.).

One of the primary textbooks for the Mexican American Studies program was Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a classic text in the discipline of critical pedagogy, which discusses how to reformulate educational models by starting from the lived realities of those who face oppression. Horne writes regarding this text:

Most of [the parents and grandparents of students in the Mexican American studies program] came to this country legally, because this is the land of opportunity. They trust the public school with their children. Those students should be taught that this is the land of opportunity, and that if they work hard they can achieve their goals. They should not be taught that they are oppressed (Ibid., 2).

Moreover, referring to books that discuss the Chicano rights movement and the movement's conception of *Aztlán* as a homeland for Mexicans in the U.S. southwest whose land was stolen by the U.S. in 1848, Horne writes that such books that outline the importance of resignifying this geographic region for Mexican Americans should not be paid for by American taxpayers. The reason for this is that these books promote the overthrow the U.S. government and create racial resentment among students. Following the court ruling, many books were banned from the district's curricula, including a text that features prominently in Chapter 5 of this project, Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La frontera*. Such books were removed from classrooms and prohibited from being studied in the district's schools. In addition, any school found not to comply with the new state statute would risk losing state financial support which would result in the loss of millions of dollars. Interestingly, Horne and Huppenthal's complaints only targeted Mexican American Studies in the school district, and did not affect other curricula that included course material on African American, Asian American, and European history. Since the ruling in 2011, supporters of MAS have attempted to revive parts of the program, but Huppenthal remains skeptical of the program's ability to comply with the mandates of A.R.S. 15-112.



At the heart of this controversy is a question regarding what counts as a proper public educational curriculum for U.S. citizens. Huppenthal and Horne claim that teaching students to endorse forms of ethnic and racial solidarity and the continued promotion of programs that examine historical analyses of oppression in the U.S. are obstacles to the betterment of U.S. political goals. The targeting of Mexican American Studies in particular, in Arizona, is important. That is, much of Horne and Huppenthal's worries about Mexican American Studies in the TUSD often refer to the contemporary immigration debates within the U.S. Southwest. At one point in Horne's findings, he states that books taught in the MAS program are "gloating over the difficulty we are having in controlling the border," suggesting that the MAS program wrongly teaches students to feel discontent with the current immigration policies of the U.S. (Horne 2007, 3). Huppenthal and Horne seem to agree that other programs that teach about histories of violence or other forms of systemic marginalization and disenfranchisement of U.S. minorities (e.g. African American or Asian American studies) were not found to be in violation of the mandates of A.R.S. 15-112. The last major ruling on the banning of MAS occurred in March of 2013. There, a U.S. district court judge ruled that the appeals filed by teachers and administrators of the program did not sufficiently "meet the threshold needed to establish a constitutional violation," (Acosta, et al. v. Huppenthal, et al. 2013, 1). In this document, a federal judge ruled in favor of the constitutionality of the wording and mandates of A.R.S. 15-112. Thus, current litigation has been denied for proponents of MAS in the district.

### **3.2 Anti-Latina/o Racism and Structural White Supremacy**

Given this contextual framing of the example, I will add here a brief note about the conception of anti-Latina/o racism that I use throughout this chapter. It is important to note that while African American, Native American, and Asian American Studies programs were not targeted in the debate, the displacement of Mexican-American Studies points to what Andrea Smith considers one of the "pillars of white supremacy." Smith argues that making sense of the power relations that different

groups of people of color experience under white supremacy (e.g. Native peoples, Latinas/os, Arab and Muslim Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, etc.) requires that we interpret the notion of white supremacy as operating via three distinct but related logics (Smith 2006). These three logics or “pillars” are slavery/capitalism, genocide/colonialism, and Orientalism/war (Smith 2006, 67-69). The first pillar is the commodification of people of color, and in particular the commodification of Black peoples through the brutality of the Middle Passage, the violence and exploitation of African and African-descended peoples in slave economies in the Americas and the Caribbean, the regulation and control of Black Americans via Jim Crow laws, and the perpetual criminalization of Black Americans within the current era of mass incarceration. The second pillar, Smith argues, operates via the elimination of indigenous peoples, either through violence or through assimilation. In particular, Smith underscores the “present-absence” of Native peoples in the U.S. and the “temporal paradox” wherein “living Indians [are] induced to ‘play dead,’ as it were, in order to perform a narrative of manifest destiny in which their role, ultimately, was to disappear” (Ibid., 68). The third pillar of white supremacy, “Orientalism,” drawing here from the work of Edward Said, names specific peoples or nations as “inferior and as posing a constant threat to well-being of empire” (Ibid.). Orientalism, in turn, provides global justifications for military violence. Smith cites here the U.S. “War on Terror,” which justifies harassment and violence against Arab and Muslim Americans, and which justifies military aggression against predominantly Muslim and Arab nations. The logics of these three pillars of white supremacy serve to reinforce one another and often effectively separate communities of color that may be distinctly affected by one or another specific form of racial oppression. She argues that resistance to only one logic of white supremacy makes that form of resistance complicit with the structural domination of other groups affected by the remaining logics of white supremacy.

By referring to structural facets of white supremacy, I am claiming that racism is not an individualistic set of biases or beliefs about people of differing racial groups. This latter claim is taken

usually to mean that racism is the result of individual prejudices and discrimination. Against this view I claim that what makes white supremacy *structural* in nature are the material differences among racial groups in terms of rewards and harms sanctioned via institutional social practices. Or put another way, following Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, we can consider the development of racialized social systems that afford material benefits to whites as a social group against a background of racial hierarchy as the *structural* characteristic of white supremacy (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 44).

Thus, anti-Latina/o racism functions under multiple logics of white supremacy, and as Smith states, “these logics may affect peoples differently depending on whether they are black, Indigenous, Mestizo, etc.” (Smith 2010, 3). The targeting of MAS in Tucson, while it unjustly targets Mexican Americans and, by extension, other Latinas/os more broadly, it bolsters white supremacy via the perpetuation of the logic of Orientalism or, what I will refer to more broadly as *nativism*—a racialized conception of a group as foreign and inherently inferior due to characteristics of that group. Moreover, the language of individualism endorsed throughout A.R.S. 15-112 also undergirds Smith’s second pillar of white supremacy. Namely, inclusion or assimilation within a specific form of American individualism serves as a way to erase or diminish the importance of non-Anglo-American cultural, ethnic, and racial identities.

### **3.3 Nativism and Racial Interpellation**

To clarify what I mean by nativism, consider the examples of anti-Latina/o racism that Alcoff points to in her piece “Comparative Race, Comparative Racisms.” Alcoff states that often forms of anti-Latina/o racism surface via claims regarding the foreignness of Latinas/os and the refusal of Latinas/os to assimilate to “American culture.” Alcoff cites the work of political theorist Samuel Huntington as an illustration of this form of discrimination. Huntington states, for instance, that “There is no *Americano* dream. There is only the American dream created by the Anglo-Protestant

society. Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English” (Huntington 2004, 256). This form of racial discrimination targets Latinas/os as foreign and as unable to endorse and uphold the democratic values of the state (Alcoff 2007, 176). The targeting of the MAS program stemmed from this particular logic of white supremacy—or what Alcoff calls an “axis of racism”—that places the cultural practices and norms of non-Anglo-American groups as unworthy of social inclusion and political representation (Alcoff 2007). As I’ll argue in a moment, some normative hails socially locate Mexican American peoples and cultures as potential threats to the order of the nation. To clarify this point, we can trace a form of racialized nativism that functions within the legal documents presented against the Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson. This analysis is then the first context in which we can see how racial norms function via indirect second-personal interpellations.

Before turning to those texts, we can briefly revisit some views on the pragmatic functions of speech acts to specify some potential normative dimensions of the language I will analyze in the documents that led to the banning of MAS. First, recall that at the end of J.L. Austin’s essay titled, “Performative Utterances,” Austin returns his readers to the distinction between performative utterances (of the kind that he has been discussing through the essay) and declarative statements. Austin states that in many cases of illocutionary speech acts such as “I warn you to...”, “I advise you to...” proper assessment of the normative dimensions of such utterances requires an assessment of the justification of the warning in question or the soundness of the advice given (Austin 1979, 250). At first blush, such speech acts appear distinct in kind from other forms of speech, and, perhaps, most clearly as distinct from declarative utterances regarding statements of fact. However, he follows this claim with a query regarding the nature of declarative statements. He writes:

But actually—though it would take too long to go on about this—the more you think about truth and falsity the more you find that very few statements that we ever utter are

just true or just false. Usually there is the question are they fair or are they not fair, are they adequate or not adequate, are they exaggerated or not exaggerated? ... 'True' and 'false' are just general labels for a whole dimension of different appraisals which have something or other to do with the relation between what we say and the facts. If, then, we loosen up our ideas of truth and falsity we shall see that statements, when assessed in relation to the facts, are not so very different after all from pieces of advice, warnings, verdicts, and so on (Ibid., 250-251).

Recall from the discussion of neo-pragmatism in Chapter 2 that all third personal statements bear second-personal claims in order to function normatively. Thus, even seemingly agent-neutral utterances are hails to an audience. However, such hails, of course, seek to erase the normative relevance of the speaker. Accordingly, many third-personal utterances do successfully do this and those that do create norms.

Through this lens, I propose that third-personal addresses within the context of the banning of MAS in Tucson include second-personal addresses to differing racial groups. Consider, for example, the impact of the statement within the Arizona statute A.R.S. 15-112 that prohibits district schools from offering courses that "Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals." Such a statement contains indirect vocative addresses, although such a statement might appear on its surface to avoid implicating specific racial or ethnic groups and to be broadly applied to all ethnic groups. For instance, one indirect second-personal hail may be "those of you who think that racial and ethnic identity matter for success in the nation are mistaken," or "in order to be considered an American citizen you ought not consider yourself a member of a racial or ethnic groups." In these cases, conceptions of individualism and nativism are placed outside the context of ethnicity, culture, and race. Rather than connecting these views to dominant Anglo-Protestant norms and values, the statement in A.R.S. 15-112 attempts to place individualism outside of any cultural or historical context.

To better situate nativism in Tucson, however, we can look more closely at the history of ethnic studies in the state.<sup>25</sup> In “The Nativistic Legacy of the Americanization Era in the Education of Mexican Immigrant Students,” René Galindo writes that although Mexicans helped establish private and public schools in the mid-nineteenth century, by the end of the century, “schools were firmly in the hands of Anglo administrators and school boards” (Galindo 2011, 333). He cites that, following the 1870s, nearly sixty years passed before a Mexican administrator served on the district’s school board. Also during that period, he argues, Mexicans were targeted by Americanization policies and many were forced to repatriate. For example, during the years of 1929 and 1937 approximately 458,000 people of Mexican-origin, both immigrant and native-born to the U.S., were either deported or repatriated to Mexico (Ibid.).

Within Tucson schools, Americanization policies were strictly enforced. In 1919, English-only instruction became required by law in the state of Arizona and Tucson developed the 1C Program, which segregated schools by English-speaking ability and required mandatory immersion programs for Spanish speaking students. Many students who went through the 1C Program reported feeling threatened and reported being abused by instructors (Ibid., 339). Many cases of abuse were enacted as forms of punishment for speaking Spanish in the classroom. Eventually, the 1C program was replaced by the state’s first bilingual educational program in 1969 (Gómez and Gabaldón 2013, 166).

Regarding racial interpellation more broadly, during this period many Spanish-speaking Americans were normatively hailed to conform to Anglo-American cultural values and ways of life, including English-only norms of linguistic communication. Consider, for example, Gloria Anzaldúa’s discussion of the Americanization program that she endured during her primary education in southern

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<sup>25</sup> It is important to point out the third-personal position of articulation that I am taking up to discuss this history is consistent with my claims regarding the neopragmatist quietism that I defend in Chapter 2. My own third-personal acts also contain indirect vocative acts, but such indirect hails, I would argue, are more conducive to anti-racist and pluralist norms and values.

Texas. She describes her teacher stating: “If you want to be American, speak ‘American.’ If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong” (Anzaldúa 1999a, 75). Anzaldúa describes being hit on the knuckles with a ruler for pronouncing her own name in a Tejano dialect of Spanish. In these cases, there are direct second-personal hails made to students in schools. The claim appears to be that national identity or inclusion as a potential contributor to the nation requires stripping oneself of cultural or linguistic relations to Mexican cultures and histories.

In Arizona, in response to these forms of discrimination, as Gómez and Gabaldón argue, the Tucson Unified School District was also a major center for political resistance to racism and for civil rights activity since the 1960s. For example, following a desegregation lawsuit in 1979, it was the first district in the state to create a Black Studies Department. Also several lawsuits spanning over the late 1970s to the 1990s secured tax revenue to renovate and restructure schools that primarily served Mexican American and Native American students (Ibid., 166-167). One significant development that points toward the current debate over ethnic studies in the TUSD was that, while a Native American Studies Department was created in response to the Native American Languages Act of 1990, no call had been made for a Mexican American Studies program in the district at that time. Despite both the severe treatment that both groups suffered through the Americanization programs that affected the district, and despite the prominence of Mexican Americans within the school district (Mexican Americans comprised the majority of students in the district), there was no specific program that would address the needs of this portion of the student body that comprised the TUSD. While the 1990 federal mandate legally codified the claim that “It is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages,” no such federal mandate was ever enacted for the Spanish language of inhabitants of the U.S. Southwest (Public Law 101-477 1990, 4). Such policies might have led to implicit hails to Latinas/os in the state such as “your language and culture are not worth preserving in

schools,” or “the histories of abuse against Native Americans outweigh the abuses that Mexicans and other Latin Americans have suffered at the hands of the U.S. government.” Moreover, as Gómez and Gabaldón state, “Mexican American students did not have a department that could provide the kind of vital support (parental involvement, dropout prevention, college preparation, and so on) that the other minority groups enjoyed” (Gómez and Gabaldón 2013, 168). This was especially important because drop-out rates among students enrolled in the 1C program had never moved below 60 percent over its 47 years in operation and because drop-out rates remained high after the district’s development of the Bilingual Education Department in 1969.

Stemming from growing dissatisfaction with the treatment of Mexican American students in the district, over the years 1997 and 1998 a series of audits were conducted by three distinct subcommittees that would address the status of the Bilingual Education Department. These concerns were raised by faculty members who called for the district to act in the interest of Mexican American and other Latina/o students. Finally, in 1999, upon the request of the subcommittees involved, the district established its first Hispanic Studies Department, which included a project for a new curriculum that would address K-12 education in the district (Ibid.). Following this decision, a Pan-Asian Studies Department was also created that would serve Asian and Pacific Islander students in the district. Finally in 2002, the Hispanic Studies Department developed the Mexican American Studies program to serve in Tucson schools throughout the district.

Gómez and Gabaldón also state that these structural developments incited a backlash against minority programs in the district. A public debate emerged as to whether programs designed to aid minority students should be eligible to receive increased state funding. One of the previous court decisions that allowed for the governing school board to increase desegregation funding had, in effect, served to shift a great deal of taxpayer money toward minority students (Ibid., 169). The increase from \$2 million in 1980 to \$63 million in 2008 caused controversy at the state level due to conservative



legislators' disapproval of spending state funds on minority students, which included potentially offering funds to students who were undocumented. In this backlash, for example, Gómez and Gabaldón cite several initiatives that targeted the bilingual education programs in the state, including the "English for the Children" initiative in 1998 which proposed Arizona Proposition 203 that would serve to replace many bilingual education programs with English immersion programs. Proposition 203 restricted the use of bilingual programs to very limited circumstances and created waivers that would grant students entry into its programs. The document states:

[English is] the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity ... Immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English, thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement" (Arizona Proposition 203, 2000).

While the proposition was voted in by 63% of the constituents of the state, the document assumes that knowledge of English will be a strong enabling capacity for success in the U.S. However, what the policy does not offer is an analysis of other structural barriers to social mobility, such as forms of racial discrimination in terms of access to employment, education, and housing for Latinas/os.

Following this legislative trend, Tom Horne, in his campaign running for superintendent of schools attacked his opponent, Jaime Molera, because of Molera's policies concerning the waivers that granted students access to the bilingual education programs. In his years as superintendent, Horne also explicitly targeted Mexican American students in the TUSD. As Gómez and Gabaldón write, "His office called for investigations to determine whether Mexican students were illegally attending public schools in US border towns; criticized schools for sponsoring Spanish spelling bees; proposed to set cutoff scores on the state's high school graduation test so that 10 percent of high school seniors would be denied graduation; revised the English proficiency test so that English learners could be pushed

into regular classes even when they were not proficient in reading or writing; threatened to dismiss teachers who spoke with an accent; and lowered the amount of preparation teachers were required to have when serving English learners”(Gómez and Gabaldón 2013, 170). Such actions create second-personal hails that suggest, for example, that “those of you with accents are deserving of unequal treatment” or “you, Spanish-speaking persons, ought not support and promote excellency in Spanish via spelling bees or similar programs/events.” These hails normatively place English as a more valuable language than other languages. By discouraging the use of Spanish among school children in the district, these efforts suggest that this language cannot offer something valuable to its speakers. Furthermore, this disparagement of the language coincides with claims regarding “authentic” forms of American identity, which, as I discuss in the next section, requires a form of liberal individualism.

### **3.4 Individualism and Racism without Racists**

In 2006, just after his reelection, Horne crafted “An Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson,” a document that sparked the debate about the role of Mexican American Studies in the district and called to terminate the program. Horne and others involved in this backlash were taking a stand against funding for programs that supported the use of the Spanish language in schools. The indirect interpellative claims here appear to suggest that educational instruction in Spanish, and any encouragement of cultural norms, practices, and values of non-Anglo-American groups constituted potentially harmful practices. Such beliefs seem to stem from the form of nativism that I describe above, and are intimately related to a specific conception of individualism. Moreover, as I argue below, the racial interpellative content of Horne’s position mirrors that of some contemporary multicultural liberal views.

First, turning to the language of Horne’s early documents about MAS in the district, we can see traces of the Americanization rhetoric of the early twentieth century. Woodrow Wilson, in a speech

in 1915 to recently naturalized citizens of the U.S., expressed suspicion over the loyalties of citizens who maintain group-based ethnic identities in the U.S. Wilson states:

You cannot dedicate yourself to America unless you become in every respect and with every purpose of your will thorough Americans. You cannot become thorough Americans if you think of yourselves in groups. *America does not consist of groups.* A man who thinks of himself as belonging to a particular national group in America has not yet become an American, and the man who goes among you to trade upon your nationality is no worthy son to live under the Stars and Stripes (Wilson 1915, my emphasis).

From this excerpt, we can see that Wilson is invoking a sense of U.S. American identity that divorces itself from specific non-Anglo American cultural identities, which would presumably include rejecting non-white and non-Anglo-American ethnic and racial identities. This language positively hails non-Anglo-Americans to adopt an individualistic conception of identity, an identity that feels no social or political ties to groups or interests outside of those of mainstream Anglo-American people. Also individualism in this sense is assumed to be a universal good, which precludes other forms of political and social identification.

In Horne's letter to citizens of Tucson, the author offers several statements regarding U.S. national identities that are very similar to those of Woodrow Wilson from 1915. For example, in an introductory section titled "Philosophy," Horne writes:

I believe people are individuals, not exemplars of racial groups. What is important about people is what they know, what they can do, their ability to appreciate beauty, their character, and not what race into which they are born. They are entitled to be treated that way. It is fundamentally wrong to divide students up according to their racial group, and teach them separately (Horne 2007, 1).

In addition, A.R.S. 15-112 states the following:

A school district or charter school in this state shall not include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following:

1. Promote the overthrow of the United States government.
2. Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
3. Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
4. Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

Both Wilson's address to recently naturalized citizens of the U.S. of 1915 and Horne's "Philosophy" express a claim that focuses heavily on U.S. identity being constituted via a commitment to a strict form of individualism.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding this racialized individualism, Bonilla-Silva argues that since the 1950s, racism has shifted in several significant ways, one of which includes an invocation of liberal and individualist ideologies that treat notions such as "equality, fairness, reward by merit, and freedom" in an "abstract and decontextualized manner" (Bonilla-Silva 2000, 189). Bonilla-Silva argues that this new form of liberal individualism, in his words, "is a formidable rhetorical mine that allows Whites extreme argumentative flexibility on racial and racially perceived matters and enables them to raise liberal arguments to support and/or pursue illiberal ends" (Ibid., 190). Following this claim, we can excavate the "rhetorical mine" of the banning of MAS in Tucson to unearth second-personal vocatives that create racial norms. Moreover, the form of individualism that I outline here prohibits the kind of metaethical second-personhood that I discuss in Chapter 1. Namely, the rhetoric of individualism found in the legal documents of the banning of MAS in Tucson denies forms of dependency and shared vulnerability among non-white citizens. While white citizens are treated as a vulnerable group—i.e. teaching about the political relationship between Mexico and the U.S. promotes resentment against

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<sup>26</sup> While this sentiment in the U.S. is certainly not new, it is worth noting that unlike within liberal multiculturalist discourses wherein individual rights are given priority over group rights, in this version of individualism, even solidarity among individuals based on non-Anglo ethnic or cultural ties is rejected

white persons—other racial groups are denied any form of vulnerability. Thus, here, as in various other discourses, norms of whiteness becomes invisible and universally applicable within the district’s curriculum. The school district members do not call for an audit to analyze the content of the core state curriculum for its racial content, nor is there any discussion of ethnic solidarity among white students or faculty in the district.

In this latter vein, another potentially implied second-personal hail of the A.R.S. 15-112 legislation is “you, white persons, have no ethnicity, nor any race that bears relevance in this matter.” However, as Nakayama and Peñaloza ask rhetorically, “If whiteness is everything and nothing, if whiteness as a racial category does not exist except in conflict with others, how can we understand racial politics in a social structure that centers whites, yet has no center?” (Nakayama and Peñaloza 1993, 54). The claim here is that judging from the history of the Americanization programs in Arizona and the lack of public funding for schools that primarily serve minority students that existed prior to the 1970s, the district claims that whiteness played no role in the historical disenfranchisement of Latina/o students. To claim as much would be to “promote resentment” toward white persons as a racial group. The second-personal implication here appears to be “you, white readers, bear no responsibility for addresses the disenfranchisement of Latinas/os in the state of Arizona.” Whiteness, when implicitly engaged via second-personal racial norms, functions as a kind of anonymity and this kind of racial normativity supports the epistemic ignorance and insensitivity of whiteness. However, as I proposed in Chapter 1, my analysis of second-personhood seeks to mark the ways in which mutual dependency functions as a precondition for ethical engagement. The anonymity of whiteness depends upon the perpetual marking and denigration of other racial groups. As I argue in my discussion of Fanon in Chapter 1, this form of “racism without racists” denies the existence of race, while simultaneously marking its perpetual importance.

Consider also that Horne's claim that "people are individuals, not members of racial groups" is a claim about the social ontology of persons. In particular, in his appeal to "the citizens of Tucson" he opens the document by stating that "The citizens of Tucson, of all mainstream political ideologies, would call for the elimination of the Tucson Unified School District's ethnic studies program if they knew what was happening there" (Horne 2007, 1). Thus, he assumes a third-personal position to defend the proposal that he will offer in the document, stating that "The purpose of this letter is to bring these facts out into the open." (Ibid.). Horne assumes in this letter an agent-neutral stance on the claims he's making regarding the social ontology of persons. By appealing to "the citizens of Tucson," he assumes that if the "facts" of the program are made clear to his audience, they too would feel the call for the termination of the program.

Here, at one level, we see an appeal to a presumably anonymous body of potential readers who will understand and interpret his claims in a manner that would be in agreement with the prescriptive claims that he offers (i.e. the call for the termination of the program, the claims regarding ethnic solidarity, etc.). The following claims that Horne makes regarding the status of social groups and individuals thus is meant as a preface for the more direct criticism that he will make of the program. His statement about "what is important about people" is asserted in the declarative voice as well, proposing that his claim again is addressed to the anonymous Tucson citizen, and calls for her/his/their agreement. The final statement of the paragraph, "It is fundamentally wrong to divide students according to their racial group, and teach them separately," makes a similar rhetorical move.

Notice, however, within this kind of assertoric speech, Horne implicitly excludes specific readers from his pronouncement. Namely, while some moderate readers may not initially disagree with the "what is important about people" statement, he suggests through this utterance that racial-group membership plays no role in determining features of one's identity such as their aesthetic views, the perception and legibility of their character, their credibility as knowers, or their relative ability to

act within a given social space. This form of individualism proposed by Horne indirectly suggests that citizens of Tucson *ought not* believe that such features of one's identities are affected by race and processes of racialization. Thus, he assumes that the general readers of his document must also be persons who shares his conception of individualism.

In a next paragraph of the document, Horne writes that “the evidence is overwhelming that ethnic studies in the Tucson Unified School District teaches a kind of destructive ethnic chauvinism that the citizens of Tucson should no longer tolerate” (Horne 2007, 2). The “evidence” that Horne then proceeds to cite includes a criticism of the name used for the program (“La Raza Studies”), the textbooks that the program uses, and some of the material used in activities associated with the program. Interestingly, while Horne does make several prescriptive claims regarding the content of the curriculum in the program (e.g. ‘ethnic chauvinism should not be tolerated,’ and ‘students should not be taught that they are oppressed’), he does not explicitly provide an interpretation of the “evidence” that he proposes. The primary rhetorical move is to assume that his readers will use the same “background [individualist] philosophy” to interpret his claim that ethnic group identification is harmful to students.

Here again Bonilla-Silva's work is relevant. As he states, the language of individualism becomes a tool through which terms like “equality” and “fairness” can be abstractly wielded by interlocutors in a way that rejects material inequalities and patterns of discrimination. Consider the low graduation rates that Gómez and Gabaldón cite in their analysis of the history of the 1C program in the Tucson school district. Horne's rhetorical move is to locate claims about individualism as “background” information to support his position about the interests of students in the Tucson school district. However, if one were to cite the empirical research on educational metrics for success for students in the district, there would be more (third-personally articulated) evidence to endorse a normative position that would *support* funding for MAS. For example, a 2012 report conducted by researchers in

education studies at the University of Arizona analyzed graduation rates and statewide assessment test results from 2008-2011 to determine the impact of MAS in Tucson on student achievement. The report concluded that “there is a consistent, significant, positive relationship between MAS participation and student academic performance (“Mexican American Studies Impact Analysis” 2012, 7).

Like most empirical research, this study offers a series of third-personal statements regarding the impact of MAS in Tucson. However, an important difference here is that social scientists, like those who conducted the 2012 study, usually must make their methodologies explicit and hence available for public scrutiny. Regarding scientific knowledge more broadly, Helen Longino describes “objectivity” in scientific practice as the inclusion of intersubjective criticism and “the degree to which both its procedures and its results are responsive to the kinds of criticisms described” (Longino 1990, 76). She continues, that scientific methods must be considered social processes and that “objectivity” in science depends on factors such as the existence of shared avenues for criticism, shared standards of practice, the responsibility to respond to criticism, and a fair distribution of epistemic authority among the participants in the practice (Ibid.).<sup>27</sup> In this sense, while empirical research shares a third-personal grammatical structure with the forms of background knowledge that Horne invokes, the practices that the researchers of University of Arizona engage in and those of Horne differ to a large degree. Namely, Horne’s background claims are not offered explicitly for public scrutiny, nor does he attempt to distribute epistemic authority to those who are critics of his version of individualism.<sup>28</sup>

Also along these lines, a claim found in A.R.S. 15-112 is that public schools should not “advocate ethnic solidarity....” This statement makes the broader claim that identification with one’s

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<sup>27</sup> Longino’s conception of objectivity is compatible with my neo-pragmatist and metaethical approach developed in the project, although a full defense of her account is beyond the scope of this project.

<sup>28</sup> Of course, we could attempt to trace second-personal vocatives within the 2012 study, and such claims would address the normative content about the study itself (e.g. that student success is an important social issue, that the demographics of the TUSD are important measures of how the district operates, etc.).



ethnic group is antithetical to the goals of public education in the nation, perhaps something like “your non-Anglo cultural identity is an obstacle to the meeting the demands of U.S. citizenship.”

Along these lines, Horne writes in his “Open Letter to the Citizens of Tucson”:

On the TUSD website, it says the basic text for this program is “the pedagogy of oppression.”

Most of these students’ parents and grandparents came to this country, legally, because this is the land of opportunity. They trust the public schools with their children. Those students should be taught that this is the land of opportunity, and that if they work hard they can achieve their goals. They should not be taught that they are oppressed. (Horne 2007, 2).

Referring to Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Horne makes an implicit claim here regarding the families of Tucson students, and a claim that is not uncommon to liberal discourses of multiculturalism in terms of their second-personal normative content. Namely, the implication is that there is a strict division among Latinas/os within the U.S. Southwest with respect to migration status and Latinas/os ought to be understood in this manner.

To elaborate the relationship between Horne and some versions of contemporary liberal political theory, let us briefly consider here a version of liberal multiculturalism that defends a distinction between native-born and non-native born Latinas/os in the U.S.. The view I will analyze is that of Will Kymlicka’s, an important figure in contemporary liberal multiculturalism. What is similar between Horne’s views about migration status and Kymlicka’s is that both normatively endorse the claim that there should be stark distinctions among Latina/o groups in the U.S. with respect to their relationship to the state. Namely, while their positions differ in many respects and appear to be unlikely bedfellows, both Horne and Kymlicka claim that Mexican Americans who voluntarily come to the country should be expected to adopt the dominant language and culture of that country.

To clarify Kymlicka’s position, we can briefly discuss his stance on voluntary Latina/o migrants. In 1995, Kymlicka’s book *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* made a

huge impact on contemporary Western liberalism. Its central focus was a set of thorny issues involving special state accommodations for cultural minority groups within the nation-state.<sup>29</sup> He argues that post WWII, many Western nation-states adopted the model of universal human rights, which held that rights should be “assigned to individuals regardless of group membership” (Kymlicka 1995, 6). This meant that, despite some accommodations made through affirmative action and reparations (which are still largely contested within liberal theory), there cannot be group-specific rights to accommodate cultural or religious differences. Cultural and religious practices are considered part of private life on this view, and thus cannot be endorsed by the state without violating the cultural and religious neutrality of the state.

Yet, as Kymlicka and others have pointed out, a doctrine of universal human rights is “simply unable to resolve some of the most important and controversial questions relating to cultural minorities: which languages should be recognized in the parliaments, bureaucracies, and courts? Should each ethnic minority or national group have publicly funded education in its mother tongue? Should internal boundaries ... be drawn so that cultural minorities form a majority within a local region? Should governmental powers be devolved from the central level to more local regional levels controlled by particular minorities....should the traditional homelands of indigenous peoples be reserved for their benefit and so protected from encroachment by settlers and resource developers? What are the responsibilities of minorities to integrate...” and so on (Ibid., 4-5). To address these issues, Kymlicka developed a theoretical apparatus for liberal theorists that he proposed would resolve some of these difficult issues. The proposal would retain a central role for individual autonomy, which he proposed as a core commitment of liberalism.

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<sup>29</sup> Importantly, Kymlicka does not discuss racial minorities such as African Americans, a point which is worthy of its own criticism, but for which I do not have the space here.

Kymlicka's version of liberal multiculturalism, then, relies heavily on a distinction between different minority groups within the state, a distinction that corresponds to the distinction that Horne draws in the documents he proposes that called for the termination of the Mexican American Studies Program in Tucson. Kymlicka's distinction is between what he calls *national minorities* and a separate form of cultural minority group that he calls *polyethnic groups*. National minorities are those groups that seek rights to self-government alongside majority cultures. Polyethnic groups, Kymlicka claims, often attempt to become integrated into majority cultures, but also attempt to transform the institutions of the majority culture to better accommodate their own relevant cultural differences. Unlike polyethnic groups, Kymlicka argues, national minorities were involuntarily incorporated into new political jurisdictions, and such groups thereby hold special rights to self-government. Polyethnic groups, he claims, are comprised of immigrant groups that voluntarily migrated into a new national setting. The voluntariness of the patterns of migration, Kymlicka argues, denies self-governing rights to polyethnic groups. However, given the involuntary, and hence, unjust nature of the existence of national minorities, such groups should be granted special rights to self-government within the state. Examples of national minorities, Kymlicka states, are aboriginal groups and the Québécois of Canada, as well as Puerto Ricans and Native Americans in the U.S. Kymlicka also considers some Mexican Americans relevant members of national minorities.

The qualification, for Kymlicka, of being considered a national minority is tied to the notion of voluntariness. Whether or not an individual chose to enter into a new national context should thereby dictate the amount of special accommodations that that individual should expect to find within the state. In addition, Kymlicka does defend rights for polyethnic groups to practice their cultural customs in private life, but sees "their distinctiveness [as] manifested primarily in their family lives and in voluntary associations, and is not inconsistent with their institutional integration" (Ibid., 14). Such a distinction—between national minorities and polyethnic groups—remains even within his later

work, including his 2007 book *Multicultural Odysseys*, wherein the author distinguishes between “old minorities, who were settled on their territory prior to it becoming part of a larger independent country, and ‘new’ minorities, who were admitted to a country as immigrants after it achieved legal independence” (Kymlicka 2007, 77).

The important point with respect to Mexican Americans for Kymlicka’s and Horne’s view is that he draws a distinction between “the descendants of Mexicans (Chicanos) living in the south-west when the United States annexed Texas, New Mexico, and California after the Mexican War of 1846-48” and other “Spanish speaking-immigrants recently arrived from Latin America ... who come to the United States with the intention to stay and become citizens” (Kymlicka 1995, 16). With respect to normative interpellation, this distinction proposes that subgroups of Latinas/os ought to view themselves as distinct in relation to the state depending on their familial and historical lineages. For example, Mexican Americans who descended from persons who migrated after the 1840s should understand themselves as unable to request accommodation rights from the state, including linguistic rights. One potential hail from this claim could be “you, Mexican Americans, ought to make different claims on the state depending on the manner in which your families came under the jurisdiction of the U.S. government.” However, as Thomas Pogge has pointed out about such a distinction,

These categorizations are merely constructs of Kymlicka’s theory. In the real world, there are Tejanos (Texans with Mexican ancestry), Chicanos (other residents with Mexican ancestry), Hispanos (New Mexicans with [pretensions to] Spanish ancestry), and so on, but (as far as I know) no distinction is made by Hispanics themselves between Tejanos who did and did not have ancestors in Texas before 1836, or between Chicanos who did and did not have ancestors in the Southwest before 1848 (Pogge 2003, 106).

There is no distinction made among many Mexican Americans between the voluntariness and involuntariness of those who lived in the U.S. prior to the annexation of the territory of the now U.S.

Southwest and those who migrated afterward. The implication of Pogge's critique of Kymlicka's distinction is that the special accommodations that should be granted to national minorities according to Kymlicka's version of multicultural liberalism cannot address the rights-based claims developed by Chicanos as a cultural minority in the U.S. This is so because the political demands of the Chicano rights movement, for example, were never prefaced on a view about the native status of Mexicans in the U.S. prior to the Gladsden Purchase or the Treaty of Guadalupe. Rather, many of the demands came from the systemic disenfranchisement of and discrimination against Mexican Americans in the U.S., with their demands ranging from claims to national sovereignty, immigration reform, housing and property rights, to fighting for labor rights for farmworkers and for domestic workers.

Another line of criticism against the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migrants is, as Jorge Gracia points out, that "it is disingenuous to claim that immigrants subject to political persecution immigrate voluntarily ... even those who come to the United States because of economic exigency, one could argue, do not have a choice: starving is not a realistic option" (Gracia 2008, 114). Gracia claims here that the distinction that Horne and Kymlicka propose, which, too, bears roots in a form of nativism (albeit at a more sophisticated level in the work of Kymlicka), ignores important facets of agency that question the relative "voluntariness" of decisions to migrate. Recalling my analysis of second-personhood in Chapter 1, we can consider the ways in which an individual's practical agency is interdependent with others. Both Horne and Kymlicka's claims regarding the norms that should be taken up by voluntary immigrants deny this mutual dependency and instead treat practical agency as something that is divorced from historical, social, and political constraint.

Importantly, Pogge's and Gracia's criticisms makes reference to how Latinas/os understand themselves, and not how Kymlicka's theory proposes that they ought to define themselves. That is, they attempt to create agential discursive space for persons who are potentially affected by policy decisions regarding English-only educational curricula or decreases in state funds for Latina/o

students. Both authors propose that the ability to make claims on the state should depend on how one is concretely located within a broad range of normative positions with respect to the history of that state and its treatment of racial and ethnic minorities. Neither Kymlicka nor Horne's respective positions rely on such a non-ideal account of agency. Namely, the conception of choice and voluntariness that functions within each of their respective accounts appears to foreclose the kinds of mutually dependent forms of agency that I defend in this project. The protection of individual rights, on their views, appears to be enough for fair treatment in the U.S. Moreover, in both cases, the decision to immigrate to another country is viewed as an autonomous decision, one for which the agent decides independently and is thus willing to take on the full responsibility of her/his/their actions. Recall my discussion in Chapter 1 regarding a commitment to a relational model of agency and a situated approach to ethics. Both Kymlicka and Horne's model of agency and migration presume a model of independent moral deliberation and one that is stripped of context, which prevents the agent from sharing responsibility with other agents.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to this commonality among Horne and Kymlicka's position, the role that histories of violence and conquest play within their models of civic education is significant. In a recent discussion regarding the question of whether to include polyethnic groups (i.e. "new" immigrant minorities) under the umbrella of national minorities and granting them the same forms of accommodation rights, Kymlicka states: "the logic of liberal multiculturalism does attach importance to facts of history and territory. Across Western democracies, the policies adopted for 'old' homeland minorities across the West differ from those adopted for 'new' immigrant minorities" (Kymlicka 2007, 226). Thus, we can see from Kymlicka's recent account that history does play an important role in the granting of accommodation rights to cultural minorities.

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<sup>30</sup> Such other relevant agents and factors might include employers, families, friends, state representatives, educational resources, threats of violence, dire poverty, and so on.

Unfortunately, for our purposes here, his emphasis on history is attached to territory rights, which does not yet address the question of Mexican Americans in Arizona who do not distinguish between those individuals and families inhabiting U.S. Southwestern territories prior to the annexation of land to the U.S. and those arriving afterward. As such, whether or not the Tucson Unified School District ought to take on a special obligation to recognize the cultural and historical influences of Mexican Americans in Arizona—as it does for Native Americans—remains unresolved under such a liberal framework. As a state-supported institutional practice, whether MAS should be permitted is a matter of *precisely how* the state should recognize its relationship with Mexico and Mexican-descended peoples within the nation-state. If treated as a voluntary immigrant group—which is how Horne discusses the matter—i.e. the parents and grandparents of students in the Mexican American Studies program coming to the U.S. legally and seeking a “land of opportunity”—the state need not protect certain forms of historical framing. This bears implicit claims such as “it is your responsibility to learn English if you migrated here legally” and the claim that “you, Latinas/os, will be afforded equal opportunity to succeed if you simply identify as individuals and assimilate to Anglo-American cultural norms and values.” The conception of voluntariness that both Horne and Kymlicka propose thereby erases the histories of violence and continued forms of economic exploitation that exist between the U.S. and Mexico. Moreover, the denial of accommodation rights for Mexican Americans, including language rights, effectively attempts to separate people of color in the U.S. Southwest by recognizing the harms committed against Native Americans, for example, but denying and suppressing the harms committed against Mexican Americans. As I point out above via Smith’s work, this divisive tactic effectively supports structural white supremacy.

### 3.5 The Latino Threat and Responses to the Banning of MAS

Following this form of individualism in Horne's account, returning to the language of A.R.S.15-112, it is clear that Horne's statement that "people are individuals, not exemplars of racial groups" endorses an assimilationist model of identity for Mexican Americans. Horne's later statement: "What is important about people is what they know, what they can do, their ability to appreciate beauty, their character, and not what race into which they were born," proposes that none of these factors—i.e. knowledge, ability, taste, and character—are relevantly assessed in terms of group membership within an historically marginalized group. Unlike African Americans and Native Americans, on Horne's view, Mexican Americans have no reason *not* to believe "that this is the land of opportunity, and that if they work hard they can achieve their goals" (Horne 2007, 2). Although the histories of disenfranchisement and marginalization outlined through the Mexican American Studies program provide a counterhistory to this narrative, Horne treats such narratives as divisive and leading to forms of resentment and anti-white sentiment among students within the TUSD.

Also, the link that Horne draws between the banning of MAS and the recent immigration debates is telling. Primarily, because the focus on immigration presupposes, as does Kymlicka's distinction between polyethnic groups and national minorities, that ethnic solidarity among U.S. Chicanos is considered destabilizing to the nation because cultural and political representation for Mexican Americans does not currently exist within the state of Arizona (this is what Kymlicka refers to as the threat of an "ethnic revival" in *Multicultural Citizenship*). Kymlicka's blindspot as well as Horne's is that a stark division between immigrant and native-born citizen within many politically mobilized Latina/o communities does not exist, as we can see, for example, in the 1960s with the Chicano Rights Movement.

Along these lines, Leo Chavez has recently argued that expressed fears of the "reconquest" of the U.S. Southwest have lingered throughout the last two centuries, and much anti-Latina/o racism



(which includes Mexican American, Central American, and South American ethnic groups) can be attributed to this fear of destabilizing the cultural and political climate of the U.S. (Chavez, 2008). In Horne's 2010 document titled "Finding by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction of Violation by Tucson Unified School District Pursuant to [Arizona Revised Statute] 15-112 (B)," Horne cites the new Arizona statute that prohibits "courses or classes that ... 1) Promote the overthrow of the United States Government. 2) Promote resentment toward a race or class of people..." (Horne 2010, 2).

Horne's concerns coincide with what Chavez calls the "Latino Threat Narrative." This narrative, Chavez argues, is a series of interwoven themes within U.S. political discourses regarding immigration and national security that construct Latinas/os as criminals, sexually licentious and reproductively irresponsible, recalcitrant to integration within U.S. mainstream culture, and as potentially dangerous to national security. As early as the 1920s, undocumented Mexican immigrants were viewed as criminals; however, by the 1970s, this view shifted to include the idea that Mexican immigrants were *invading* the United States (Chavez 2008, 26). Chavez cites major U.S. national magazines that featured headlines depicting the "out of control behavior" of Mexican immigrants, including pieces from the *U.S. News and World Report*, *Atlantic Monthly*, as well as *Time Magazine*. Emerging out of this trope was the idea that Mexican Americans were planning a *Reconquista* [reconquest] of the U.S. Southwest. By the 1980s, the theme of reconquest became widespread, with headlines worrying over a "Disappearing Border" and that "Los Angeles is being invaded" (Ibid., 29-30). Likening this narrative to the Gramscian notion of "common sense,"—i.e. "the largely unconscious and uncritical way of perceiving the world that is widespread within any given historical epoch—Chavez argues that the Latino Threat Narrative overshadows and homogenizes the lived experiences of Latinas/os in the United States.

Horne's statements regarding the educational material that encourages students to "overthrow the United States government" thus fits within the Latino Threat Narrative. This narrative assumes a

third-personal, agent-neutral stance that implicitly creates racial norms for Latinas/os in the state. Namely, when heard by Latinas/os, it may target them as potential threats to the stability of the nation, casting them as criminals or enemies of the state. Such implicit hails could be something like “citizens of the U.S., you should be concerned about Latinas/os in the U.S.” or as in the letter to Sheriff Joe Arpaio that I cite at the beginning of this project states, “you, Latinas/os, pose a threat to the well-being of the nation.” Much of the recent forms of criminalization of immigrants in Arizona, via SB1070 for example, append criminal charges to violations of civil immigration law. That is, migrants in Arizona who are stopped by local police and who are not carrying alien registration documents can be given a misdemeanor charge and fines up to \$1000 and/or be imprisoned for up to six months. Criticisms of such forms of criminalization are that policies that allow local police officers to question and detain persons who they suspect of being undocumented will encourage racial profiling in the state. Thus, specific sets of racial norms are supported that also encourage law enforcement officers to view persons who appear to be Latina/o as unlawful. This potential hail, “You, officer, should carry out the duties of your job by suspecting persons who appear to be of Mexican and Central American descent to be unlawfully present in the state,” thereby creates a normative directive whereby racial discrimination becomes legally sanctioned.

Turning to other second-personal implications of Horne’s writings, we can also see the impact of Horne’s statement on the constitution of specific forms of ethnocentric racial normativity. In the “Testimony by Witnesses” section of Horne’s document, he cites an anonymous teacher:

Impressionable youth in TUSD have literally been reprogrammed to believe that there is a concerted effort on the part of a white power structure to suppress them and relegate them to a second-class existence. This fomented resentment further encourages them to express their dissatisfaction through the iconoclastic behavior we see—the contempt for all authority

outside of their ethnic community and their total lack of identification with a political heritage of this country. (Horne 2010, 5).

Part of what this quotation demonstrates is a third-personal claim about the status of “a political heritage” in the U.S. that excludes the historical, cultural, and social impact of Latina/os and Chicanas/os. In addition, it renders ethnic solidarity among Latinas/os and Chicanas/os as merely a vehicle of contempt and hate-mongering. However, we can also find indirect forms of second-personal vocatives within these declarative utterances. It suggests to students in the TUSD that they themselves are subject to “reprogramming” by the educational curricula of the district, which overshadows any non-public educational means by which students acquire knowledge of the political and social contexts around them. Furthermore, it denies any agency to their decisions and their parents and guardians to choose to participate in the MAS program. Finally, it indirectly tells students of the TUSD that they currently do not bear “a second-class existence,” and, rather, it suggests to them that they are already treated with equal recognition and respect within the “political heritage” of the country. This last indirect vocative, perhaps something like, “You, Latina/o and Chicana/o students of the TUSD, are not subject to racism, racial oppression, political disenfranchisement, and marginalization,” functions both third-personally and second-personally. It both makes a claim about the racial politics of the U.S., as well as addresses students indirectly through the interpellative call that they should not view the racial climate of the U.S. as one that bears any traces of racism, racial oppression, political disenfranchisement, or marginalization for Latinas/os and Chicanas/os.

Furthermore, this statement bears racial norms for white citizens of the district as well. The implicit first-personal plural of the letter, i.e. “we, teachers of the district who oppose the program,” appears to suggest that the political heritage of the country is not associated with cultural or ethnic group-based distinctions. It thereby diminishes the responsibility of white citizens in the district to be responsible knowers of histories of discrimination against Mexican Americans in the nation. This kind

of ignorance and insensitivity to the experiences of people of color stems from the belief that formal equality can provide equal opportunities within the nation. As I state above via Code's and Bonilla-Silva's respective writings, the presumption that moral agents all come from the same social, cultural, and historical backgrounds effectively creates a misleading conception of moral deliberation, and such a view supports structural white supremacy.

In this vein, consider briefly Horne's statements about the parents of Tucson students. He assumes that the parents and guardians of Tucson students will not want to encourage their children to learn about the histories of oppression that affect Mexican Americans in the country. Although Horne relies on this claim to defend his position about the content of MAS, he does not include any testimonial evidence from parents or guardians of students in the program. While Horne's documents contain many direct quotations from teachers, students, and school administrators, they do not cite parents or guardians to support his claim that such speakers would endorse his claims.

Along these lines, Horne and other critics of MAS reject or ignore the testimony of the authors and students who express their approval of the program and the benefits it affords to the district. For example, a website titled "SaveEthnicStudies.Org" states the following;

National Trends:

Current third grade reading scores are being used to calculate future prison needs. Latino and African American males score lowest in third grade reading tests Latino high school dropout rates nationwide hover around 56 percent. Roughly 24 percent of graduating Latinos go on to college

Local Solutions:

Tucson Unified School District's Ethnic Studies and Mexican American Studies programs have reversed the bad trends. The dropout rate in this program is 2.5 percent, as opposed to 56 percent nationally. Students in the program significantly

outperform their peers on the state's standardized AIMS tests (Save Ethnic Studies Updates).

Horne does not refer to these forms of testimonial evidence for the success of the program.

Importantly, responses to the banning of MAS such as that of SaveEthnicStudies.org suggest that there is a plurality of forms of uptake regarding the significance of the MAS program. Along these lines, consider the “No history is illegal!” campaign organized by the Network of Teacher Activists. This group of educators responded via a slogan that affirms a third-personal declarative. Interestingly, the campaign effectively responded to the implicit hails of the racial speech of Horne et al. While the ban never claimed directly that any specific form of *history* would be considered illegal, resistance to the ban mobilized around that indirect claim. Namely, they asserted that A.R.S. 15-112 made the teaching of Mexico-U.S. political relations and teaching the history of the Chicano Rights movement illegal in the state. The campaign organized public teach-ins and shared curricula in an effort to help distribute information in support of the program in Tucson. The campaign’s website also focused heavily on testimonial evidence from educators from diverse geopolitical contexts who expressed their support of MAS programs. This method of resistance thereby endorsed a form of pluralism with respect to civic education, and rejected the implicit individualism and erasure of non-Anglo ethnic identities that surfaced through the normative content of the ban.

Other resistance groups also formed following the ban, including, for example, the Arizona Ethnic Studies Network, and MAS received letters and forms of support from such organizations as the Modern Language Association, the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, and the National Council of Teachers of English. These diverse forms of uptake thereby indicate that there are a variety of “you”s that are invoked through this ban. Consider another slogan from “No history is illegal!”, the phrase “A campaign to save our stories.” This phrase utilizes a first-personal plural position to defend a variety of marginalized

perspectives. Citing Martin Luther King, Jr., the campaign's website also uses King's statement, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Thus, the campaign rallies around a shared commitment to including various forms of cultural and historical curricula in public schools. Finally, they conclude "What is happening in Arizona is not only a threat to Mexican American Studies, it is a threat to our right to teach the experiences of all people of color, LGBT people, poor and working people, the undocumented, people with disabilities, and all those who are least powerful in this country" ("No history is Illegal!"). Thus, directly, the campaign states that it is committed to a pluralistic conception of civic education and the importance of differing perspectives and voices within public discourses in the U.S.

Such responses demonstrate that Horne et al.'s normative claims were challenged and continue to be challenged. Furthermore, they suggest that the normative uptake of the ban has not been homogeneous. The second-personal claims made by Horne et al. were recognized and have been rejected by many who oppose the ban. This then supports the kind of indeterminacy of uptake and the potential for resistance that I discuss in Chapter 2. To turn to a more complex case of racial interpellation, in the following chapter, I examine the context of clinical medicine to defend an interpellative distinction *within* second personal forms of address, a distinction that supports my non-ideal, intersectional, and situated account of second-personhood.

## Chapter 4

### Racial Interpellation in the Second Person:

#### Clinical Medicine and the Provider-Patient Relationship

##### Introduction

Second-personal hails, as I analyze in the previous chapter, are present in third personal cases of race talk. To illustrate this I examined the case of the Tucson Unified School district, wherein we see the function of indirect vocatives within the legal and institutional framings of the banning of Mexican American Studies. In this chapter, I turn to second-personal forms of discourse and seek to demonstrate further the functioning of *indirect* racial interpellations. The context of relevance in this case, the provider-patient relationship, is one that requires attention to the interpersonal dynamics of communication within clinical encounters. That is, communication in clinical medical settings between patients and providers often occurs in an institutionalized space that utilizes highly regulated norms to structure the interactions between patients and providers. At a general level, medical encounters offer a rich space for examining interpersonal communication. Clinical medical encounters often entail that medical providers bear a set of specific legal and ethical responsibilities with respect to the nature of their interactions with patients. Because patients are often rendered quite vulnerable to medical providers with respect to the level of access to their bodies and to intimate details of their lives, the roles of medical providers are often legally and morally framed to protect the rights and, ideally, to attend to the unique vulnerabilities of the situations of their patients.

In response to the specific interpersonal situation of the patient-provider relationship, many bioethicists have pointed to the ways in which the vulnerabilities and rights of patients have been abused or neglected within the context of clinical medicine. While landmark codes of ethics such as the *Nuremberg Code*, the *Declaration of Helsinki*, and the *Belmont Report* provide professional guidelines for medical providers to reduce harm to patients and to respect patient autonomy, many scholarly

works have been published within bioethics to engage with these issues as well. Among these, touchstone works by theorists such as Jay Katz (1984) and Susan Sherwin (1992) have examined the nature of authority and power within the clinical setting, including the giving and requesting of consent for medical procedures and barriers to trust between providers and patients. As I elaborate below, some bioethicists have paid attention to the dynamics of differing forms of social injustices within the context of clinical medicine, including attention to gender, racial, and class oppressions. Moreover, since the 1960s, researchers in the field of sociolinguistics have examined how interpersonal communication demonstrates forms of social status among speakers and speech communities. More recently, the discourse of microaggressions has analyzed how unintentional verbal, non-verbal, and environmental cues can lead to the further perpetuation of racist, sexist, and heteronormative forms of psychological and emotional harm.

Given these diverse disciplinary perspectives on the interpersonal dynamics of the clinical encounter, in this chapter I outline several accounts of the relationship between language and power from sociolinguistics and clinical psychology. This theoretical framing plays an important role in outlining the epistemological dynamics of the provider-patient relationship, which is the subject of the second section of this chapter. In particular, I turn to literature in the fields of bioethics, social medicine, and postcolonial theory to outline the ways in which racial interpellations function in clinical medicine. Such communicative dynamics, as some theorists have argued, help explain why racial disparities exist in health outcomes and treatment decisions between white patients and patients of color.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> To clarify my site of analysis, many studies of provider-patient communication focus on the context of the “medical interview” wherein a physician asks the patient questions regarding her/his/their concerns and then offers a diagnosis, treatment options, or a referral based on the patient’s expressed symptomatology and evidence from the medical exam. This form of communicative interaction is common in clinical medicine and thereby provides an appropriate context for examining the racial and culturally distinct patterns of communication that might bear relevance for a study of the normative dynamics of race talk.



First, I will examine several strands of sociolinguistics and clinical psychology to outline research that points to patterns of harm that discuss how second-personal pronoun use need not directly map our attributions of power and authority. I begin with an examination of verbal markers of hierarchy to note how I approach second-personal interpellations through microaggressions. Then, in the second section of the chapter, I turn to Fanon's writings on clinical medicine to examine how the forms of harm that I discuss in the first section surface within the normative racial dynamics between medical providers and patients of color. Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I turn to the field of social medicine to link Fanon's analysis of colonial medicine more directly to contemporary forms of microaggression and racism.

#### **4.1 Understanding Power, Authority, and Microaggressions**

To begin this section of the analysis, I draw here on a distinction from sociolinguistic research that focuses on pronoun usage and non-reciprocal power relations. Although my analysis in Chapter 2 of the transcendental vocative makes a philosophical point regarding the pragmatic function of second-personally directed speech acts, this analysis of pronoun usage is not meant to convey this deeper metaethical and pragmatic point. Rather, I take this analysis of pronoun usage to be indicative of the general structure in language that illustrates the political and social dynamics of second-personhood. Namely, what I elaborate here as the T-V distinction, and with it the accompanying analysis of non-reciprocal power relations among speakers, is an example that can be used to analogously describe the metaethical and pragmatic points that I raise in the first two chapters. As I outline below, the T-V distinction, and the additional empirical literature on pronoun usage, non-verbal behaviors, and microaggressions map well the normative dynamics of subpersonhood and unequal relations of power. Moreover, it aids in situating speakers in their respective normative

positions. If we then examine how unequal forms of address occur in clinical medicine, we can see the functioning of racial interpellation in the case of second-personal speech.

First, let us examine briefly the notion of the T-V distinction to more carefully map out the analogical terrain necessary for the abovementioned claim regarding second-personhood. The T-V distinction became a prominent theoretical resource in the 1960s via a landmark paper by social psychologist Roger Brown and Shakespearian scholar Albert Gilman. In that piece, Brown and Gilman outline the history of second-personal pronoun usage across various European language families to draw conclusions regarding the semantic distinctions marked by the usage of specific pronouns. “T-V” stands for the Latin terms *tu* and *vos*, pronouns that came to prominence between 1100 and 1500 CE to address emperors and other royal persons in speech. This distinction remains in many European language families, and marks normative positions among speakers. Brown and Gilman described the distinction as “the power semantic” whereby “power is a relationship between at least two persons, and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behavior” (Brown and Gilman, 255). Semantic power, they state, is also a nonreciprocal relation: “the superior says *T* and receives *V*” (Ibid.). While this distinction existed for centuries noting legal, political, and social distinctions among speaking positions, the T-V convention eventually shifted to distinguish relations of intimacy and solidarity. Thus, Brown and Gilman argue that the T-V distinction also serves to mark equality among speakers, with either speakers in equally highly ranked positions using formal *V* pronouns (e.g. *usted* and *vos* in Spanish, *vous* in French, *Lei* in Italian, *Sie* in German, and *you* in English), or speakers in non-intimate relationships, but of equal standing (Ibid., 257-258). Equality, intimacy, and solidarity are marked by the use of informal pronouns (e.g. *tu* in Spanish, French, and Italian, *du* in German, *thou* in English). Among the relationships that Brown and Gilman examine are those of employment and the family, noting how the T-V distinction is used among individuals that are more or less familiar with one another, or are in more or less non-reciprocal relations of power.

Generally, Gilman and Brown argue that socially distributed networks of power explain shifts in second-personal pronoun usage. They claim that nonreciprocal forms of pronoun address—i.e. wherein one speaker in a ‘superior’ position uses the T pronoun, and the other, in an ‘inferior’ position uses the V pronoun—is often associated with societies wherein “power is distributed by birthright and is not subject to much redistribution” (Ibid., 264). As linguistic communities shifted to more egalitarian political arrangements, facilitating more social mobility, the reciprocal solidarity semantic—i.e. both speakers using T or both speakers using V—became more prominent.

There are, however, certainly problems with Brown and Gilman’s analysis, including their perception of other language families such as Afrikaans as stemming from “a more static society” and having “a less developed equalitarian ethic” when compared to those communities of France and the United States (Ibid., 267-268). Such a distinction between European language families and those existing in African and South Asian contexts (E.g. Gujarati and Hindi) mirror colonial perceptions of historical and political development that often depict non-European societies as more primitive or less fully understanding of liberal political goals such as freedom, equality, and democracy.

While Brown and Gilman do not seem markedly concerned about these dimensions of their analysis, they do offer some resources that became prominent in later discussions of racial and gender inequality in sociolinguistics. Also, for my purposes here it is important to point to the representation of unequal power relations through language. Fortunately, Brown and Gilman do mark other nonreciprocal forms of address that persist in seemingly more egalitarian societies. For example, they consider the uses of the first name by White Southerners in the U.S. when speaking to Black Southerners, and the nonreciprocal use of a White Southern interlocutor’s surname by many Black Southerners (Ibid., 267-268). Accordingly, given these persistent linguistic asymmetries, they propose that “Differences in power exist in a democracy as in all societies” (Ibid., 268). Yet, the shift from pronominal to other verbal expressions of power is a matter of coding or marking those distinctions

of power. In more egalitarian societies, they propose, nonreciprocal pronominal distinctions become less prominent because such societies attempt “to suppress every conventional expression of power asymmetry” (Ibid.). “Nevertheless,” they conclude “the differences of power are real and are experienced,” i.e. whether or not they are explicitly marked by pronoun usage. These other forms of verbal and nonverbal markings eventually become theoretically described through the discourse of microaggressions, which I outline below.

Historically, however, following Brown and Gilman, other linguists, and sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s, sociolinguists in Europe and the U.S. developed these insights to establish a body of literature analyzing the social dimensions of asymmetrical power relations among different speech communities. The 1977 book by Nancy Henley *Body Politics: Power, Sex, and Nonverbal Communication* is a notable contribution to the field, and her work outlined the ways in which nonverbal communication patterns mark nonreciprocal power relations among speakers. She proposed that rather than simply indicating intimacy, familiarity, or romantic and sexual attraction, nonverbal communication also bears an important political function. That function is to mark relationships of status, power, dominance, and superiority. Henley examines racial, class, and gender stigmas that impact non-intentional forms of nonverbal communication, including the spatial distance between interlocutors, the likelihood of terminating the interaction, and the openness or inhibition of one’s bodily movements. Henley’s analysis brought together a large portion of empirical research from social and clinical psychology demonstrating how subtle nonverbal forms of racial, class, and gender discrimination appear in a variety of social contexts in the U.S., including employer-employee relations, the organization of public spaces like parks and zoos, and inside private residences.

Of particular relevance for my analysis here, Henley's work extended Brown and Gilman's claims that nonverbal and paralingual cues<sup>32</sup> mark status and power in societies that otherwise propose politically egalitarian social ideals. For example, citing another sociolinguist, Henley points out that paralinguistic markers bear political relevance for determining social status. She quotes a study from 1965:

The dominant middle-class white culture in the United States has a certain set of views on lower-class Negro speech. It is "loud," "unclear," "slurred," "lazy." The myth of loudness should be exorcised at once (Henley 1977, 71).

Henley urges her readers for more empirical research that attempts to address the vast economic, political, and social disparities between racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. Henley's own position is that such nonverbal forms of communication are not the cause of social oppression and marginalization, but rather part of an interactive process that leads to the perpetuation of harms. She states that "nonverbal communication is a mechanism ... not a cause of prejudice ... changing nonverbal behaviors will not eliminate prejudice or oppression—these must be attacked at their political and economic roots" (Ibid., 13). I agree with Henley here that the causes of such non-intentional forms of nonverbal communication that perpetuate cycles of oppression are not themselves the sole factors of such oppressions. Rather, and I agree with her work here as well, such forms of communication contribute to and sustain cycles of oppression.

To elaborate this point, Henley provides the example of a job interview wherein the interviewee is a black man and the interviewers are a group of mostly white men. She writes that the interviewee notices something disjointed about the interview. Despite being well qualified and confident before the interview, the interviewee notices that during his interactions with the hiring

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<sup>32</sup> Paralanguage refers to "noises made by the vocal tract which carry meaning but aren't ordinarily studied as language. Some examples are such utterances as *tch-tch*, *mm-hmm*, or even coughing and clearing of the throat at times" (Henley 1977, 70).

committee the group does not seem interested in his application or candidacy, that “they seem almost sloppy about it,” and that the interview does not last very long at all (Ibid., 9). Despite feeling self-assured before the meeting, the interviewee feels nervous and uneasy during the interview process. Now, the candidate doubts his performance and considers blaming himself for their disinterest. Then, however, Henley continues addressing the interviewee:

What was going on? Had they already made up their minds to hire somebody else before wasting your time with that interview? You feel you’ve been discriminated against, but not in a way that you could describe coherently. Here is racism, but what is this process by which it works? (Ibid.)

Henley argues that, although the precise psychological processes in place here are hard to document in empirical research, such phenomena are widespread and consist in forms of harm against people of color and women.

Henley’s work in the 1970s called for more empirical research, and in recent decades a new body of literature has emerged to describe such nuanced forms of everyday harm included in verbal and nonverbal communication. Derald Wing Sue’s term for such harms is *microaggressions*, and these consist in

the constant and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned, moral, and decent family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, teachers, clerks, waiters and waitresses, employers, health care professionals, and educators (Sue 2010, xv).

Sue’s insight here is that some of the most ubiquitous forms of racial injustice occur through everyday interactions. Thus, harkening back to the sublimation of the T-V distinction that sociolinguists noted through the eventual shift away from direct verbal markings of authority and power, Sue’s discussion of microaggressions specifically brings into focus the manner in which nonverbal and verbal cues

continue to mark hierarchies and stigmas against people of color and other historically oppressed groups. While the phenomenon known and coined as “racial microaggressions” was initially developed and studied by educator and clinical psychiatrist Chester Pierce, Sue expands Pierce’s work to examine how microaggressions exist in many subtle forms of oppression. Sue points out that most often microaggressions come in the form of well-intentioned statements that unjustly single-out persons from historically oppressed groups and that diminish their contributions and reaffirm racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies.

For example, when a Black student in an introductory psychology course comments to the professor that the course seems ethnocentric and Eurocentric, the professor offers the following in response:

I appreciate your exceptionally thoughtful and intelligent observation. You are a most articulate young man with good conceptual and analytical skills. His is the type of nonjudgmental analysis and objectivity needed for good dialogues. We need to address these issues in a calm, unemotional, and reasoned manner (Ibid., 4).

Sue points out there that the instructor did not consider the content of the student’s claim, namely, that the course materials did indeed contain primarily white Eurocentric perspectives on psychology that could “alienate and/or [fail] to capture the experiential reality of students of color” (Ibid., 9). Secondly, the comment implies that the student needs to “calm down” and avoid an overly emotional response in the classroom. These implications suggest that Black people may be prone to overreaction and violence, and it pathologizes and devalues a learning style that might differ from Anglo American and white European norms of docility in the classroom (Ibid., 10). Finally, the “compliment” proposed to the student, that he is “exceptionally thoughtful,” “intelligent,” and “most articulate,” is a common microaggression. In such cases, Sue argues, the speaker praises a particular person from a historically oppressed group, while also implying that other members of a group express negative stereotypes. It

is an expression of exceptionalism that attempts to distinguish one person to the detriment of the larger group.

One overarching feature of microaggressions, Sue proposes, is their unconscious and non-deliberate character. Sue acknowledges that there remain conscious and intentional forms of racist and sexist behavior wherein individuals and groups openly espouse negative biases and commit harmful acts against persons of historically oppressed groups, including hate groups like the Klu Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, Americans for Truth About Homosexuality, and the National Organization for Marriage. However, microaggressions are more ubiquitous, Sue argues; these harms pose a greater threat to people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ persons (Ibid., xv). Because many people in the United States endorse egalitarian values, but yet enact harmful microaggressions against historically oppressed groups, Sue claims that we need new resources to change these forms of injustice.

Also, microaggressions exist not only at the interpersonal level, but also at institutional and cultural levels, and the need for their redress occurs at these level as well. Citing the work of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Sue argues, for example, that institutions and organizations that have primarily white management and administration create environmental microaggressions that send indirect messages to people of color. Namely, such groups implicate that “the chances of doing well at this institution is stacked against them” and may suggest a variety of second-personal messages such as the following: “1 ‘You and your kind are not welcome here.’ 2 ‘If you choose to come [here], you will not feel comfortable here.’ 3 ‘If you choose to stay, there is only so far you can advance” (Ibid., 26). These implications are subtle messages that may be conveyed through institutional structures and organizational features of groups.

Sue and his colleagues offer a taxonomy of microaggressions to clarify the means through which such harms take places. The three primary categories of microaggressions are microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations. Both microinsults and microinvalidations are often



unconscious, while microassaults are usually conscious and deliberate. Microassaults, as Sue states, are “most similar to what has been called ‘old-fashioned’ racism, sexism, and heterosexism conducted on an individual level” (Ibid., 29). Microinsults are those forms of verbal, nonverbal, and environmental communications that “convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial heritage” (Ibid.). For example, when a white teacher expresses surprise and overenthusiasm at the academic excellence of a Black or Latina/o student. In such cases, the implication is that students of color are not usually expected to excel academically. Microinvalidations are those verbal, nonverbal, and environmental cues that subtly express to persons from historically oppressed groups that their thoughts, experiences, and feelings are not welcome, supported, or important. For example, a common question for Asian Americans and Latinas/os is “but where are you *really* from?” implying that the individual does not belong to relevant cultural histories of the nation by presuming a kind of exoticism or foreign status.

This genealogy of verbal, nonverbal, and environmental cues implies, as the original insights of Brown and Gilman suggest, that egalitarian political values do not erase or remove painful communicative patterns of interaction in contexts of injustice. Thus, if Brown and Gilman, Henley, and Sue are correct, then contemporary modes of speaking and interacting do not eradicate the power semantic that existed in more formal forms of address. That is, the ways in which microaggressions and other nonverbal cues function is to mark those with whom one identifies as an equal, and those with whom one treats as less than equal. Thus, while in much contemporary parlance the T-V distinction has dropped out of usage and does not function as clearly to mark racial, gender, and sexual injustices, other interpersonal forms of interaction such as microaggressions and various nonverbal cues retain vestiges of these markers of superiority and inferiority. Such contemporary patterns of communication thereby mark how these relations of power have transformed over time, i.e. overt, explicit, and publicly recognized verbal subordination has shifted to implicit, subtle, and often-unconscious non-publicly identified forms of communication.

In the next section, I examine how such contemporary verbal, nonverbal, and environmental cues function within the context of clinical encounters between providers and patients. As we will see, indirect second-personal vocatives that mark inferiority, exclusion, or invalidation can be seen through contemporary empirical research in bioethics. First, I'll analyze Fanon's early writings on colonial medicine, then turn to the field of social medicine, and conclude by addressing contemporary forms of harm in clinical medicine through the use of medical interpreters.

#### **4.2 Racial Interpellations in the Clinical Encounter**

In his 1959 *L'An Cinq, de la Revolution Algerienne*, translated into English as *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon presents a phenomenological description of the levels of trust and distrust among European doctors and Algerian patients in French-occupied colonial Algeria. Alongside the “racialism and humiliation” that accompany colonialism, Fanon claims that Western medical science becomes “part of the oppressive system” in contexts of colonial domination (Fanon 1965, 121). The provider-patient relationship in a colonial situation, he states, is one marked by distrust and diffidence—e.g. “I find myself literally insulted and told I am savage” (Ibid., 125). The patient may justly worry that she/he will be mocked, humiliated, or abused by the doctor. The physician may worry that patients are not genuinely seeking to improve their health and instead harbor ulterior motives that remain under the guise of medical attention. Due to such high levels of distrust, then, Fanon writes that in the clinical encounter: “The doctor rather quickly gave up the hope of obtaining information from the colonized patient and fell back on the clinical examination, thinking that the body would be more eloquent” (Ibid., 126). The doctor, then, according to Fanon, effectively silences the patient by expecting that the physical manifestations of illness and injury will speak the truth that the patient will not or cannot express about her/his/their own medical condition.

Published after *Black Skin, White Masks*, *A Dying Colonialism* develops a theoretical critique of the Algerian context of colonialism, which, by this time, he had witnessed first-hand. Already in *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon sharply critiques what Alondra Nelson refers to as an approach to medicine that focuses on racist claims made *internal* to scientific knowledge practices (Nelson 2011, 42). For example, Fanon’s criticisms of Octave Mannoni and other leading contemporary psychoanalysts of the period point to his aim of challenging the findings of these theorists and, in Nelson’s words, “to demonstrate [that] racism, not rationality, was at the root of scientific claims about the alleged inferiority of [colonized peoples]” (Ibid., 25). However, by *A Dying Colonialism* and the essay “The ‘North-African Syndrome,’” Fanon’s focus on medicine shifts and he emphasizes the *clinical* aspects—i.e. the practice of caring for patients—of biomedicine within a colonial context.<sup>33</sup> This shift to the interpersonal dynamics between providers and patients is where I would like to situate my discussion of indirect second-personal racial hails within second-personal speech. Moreover, as I elaborate below, Fanon pays direct attention to pronominal address in the clinical encounter to highlight how colonial racism functions in medicine.

Consider that, although Fanon initially attempted to submit *Black Skin, White Masks* as his medical thesis (which was rejected by his committee, leading him to submit a more “traditional” analysis), his writings published after that text mark a shift in his thinking about the “formal medical racism” that he encountered while working as a clinician in Lyon and Blida (Keller 2007, 827). Through Fanon’s experiences in these clinical settings, he began to note, as he describes in “The ‘North African Syndrome,’” the colonial impact on the epistemic and hermeneutic dimensions of the relationships between colonial medical staff and colonized patients. In this essay, Fanon proposes three theses about the diagnoses that his colleagues in Lyon are making about the prevalence of North

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<sup>33</sup> Fanon also expands his critique of clinical medicine in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). However, I do not have sufficient space here to note the connections between this later work and his 1950s publications.

African patients who express symptoms of pain and illness, but who have no identifying lesions to explain their symptoms.<sup>34</sup> His colleagues claim, he writes: “When you come down to it, the North African is a simulator, a liar, a malingerer, a sluggard, a thief” (Fanon 1976, 7). Rather than accept this diagnosis, Fanon offers these three theses:

- 1) That the behavior of the North African often causes a medical staff to have misgivings as to the reality of his illness;
- 2) That the attitude of medical personnel is very often an *a priori* attitude. The North African does not come with a substratum common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European. In other words, the North African, spontaneously, by the very fact of appearing on the scene, enters into a pre-existing framework;
- 3) That the greatest willingness, the purest intentions require enlightenment. Concern the necessity of making a situational diagnosis (Fanon 1967, 4-13).

Fanon poignantly asserts here that Western medicine teaches medical staff to only look for lesions in the body to explain harm. Thus, because a North African patient expresses symptoms that cannot be located in any specific site of the body, the clinicians become frustrated with the patient. The clinician, then, according to the contemporary medical standards, assumes “The North African’s pain, for which we can find no lesional basis, *is* judged to have no consistency, no reality. Now the North African is a-man-who-doesn’t-like-work” (Ibid., 6). This diagnosis, as a malingerer and as untrustworthy, however, Fanon claims is based in a structural *a priori* determination made by French doctors who view North African patients as *inherently* deceptive and lazy.

Fanon’s second thesis can also be supported by current empirical research that suggests that health care providers routinely offer different treatment regimens to patients exhibiting identical

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<sup>34</sup> The standard operative assumption for clinicians was that pain or illness could only result from physiological lesions within the body.

symptomatology but whose visible identities differ only by race and gender. For example, one study found that “male physicians prescribed twice the level of [painkillers] for white ‘patients’ than for black ‘patients’” (Smedley et. al., 11). Other studies indicate that physicians rate black patients lower than white patients on factors like the intelligence, educational level, level of compliance, likelihood to abuse drugs and alcohol, and likelihood of follow-up with occupational and rehabilitational therapy. Such findings turned up in studies even when physicians are primed with information about their patients’ income levels and educational backgrounds (Ibid.). This research, echoing that of microaggressions, also claims that implicit biases and stereotypes of “well-meaning whites who are not overtly biased and who do not believe that they are prejudiced demonstrate unconscious implicit negative racial attitudes and stereotypes” (Ibid., 10). Accordingly, this supports Fanon’s third thesis, that even “the greatest willingness [and] the purest intentions require enlightenment” (Fanon 1967, 10). Fanon describes the conditions of North Africans living in France as a “daily death” wrought with conflict, hatred, and patterns of abuse ‘in the tram, the doctor’s office, with the prostitutes, on the job site, at the movies, in the newspapers, in the fear of all decent folk of going out after midnight” (Ibid., 13). All aspects of French society implicate the harm and suffering of North Africans. Fanon thus provides here a *structural* interpretation of the detrimental medical conditions for racialized patients in France. Recall here Sue’s analysis of the *everyday* character of microaggressions against persons of color, a point that Fanon’s prescient writings suggest in the 1960s.

To elaborate this point in further detail, we can consider how Sue’s elaborations of microaggressions allow theorists to see not only the forms of everyday harm that many persons of color and LGBTQ+ persons experience, but also through Fanon’s work, how the conditions of coloniality impact the institutional obstacles to overcoming microaggressions. The collaboration between these two fields of study help bring to the fore the ways in which, for example, Sue’s recommendations to mental health care providers can remain attuned to the dynamics of the provider-

patient relationships in postcolonial contexts. For instance, Sue recommends that providers take on four objectives to help overcome microaggressions in their practices (Sue 2010, 279). Three such recommendations that Sue provides are: “Learn about people of color, women, and LGBTs from sources within the group” and “Learn from healthy and strong people of the group” (Ibid.). The first recommendation suggests that therapists “[acquire] information and [be] exposed to minority-run businesses, radio and TV stations, or poetry and writings from minority authors” (Ibid.). The second recommendation proposes that therapists seek information and experiences with people who are community leaders “to counterbalance the biased” images and perceptions that are prevalent about many people of color and LGBTQ+ persons. Moreover, mental health professionals, by nature of their occupation, are often exposed to a disproportionate amount of persons who suffer from emotional distress. In this sense, Sue proposes that mental health professionals may unjustifiably assume that all members of racial, LGBTQ+, or other minority groups are emotionally distressed and in need of mental health care services.

While these recommendations are imperfect and incomplete with respect to how to address microaggressions writ large, they do point toward institutional proposals that might benefit medical providers with respect to reducing the presence of microaggressions in their respective practices. Moreover, Fanon’s writings on colonial medicine adds an important layer of analysis to Sue’s work. Namely, with respect to formerly/currently colonized countries,<sup>35</sup> wherein many medical institutions were established during or after a country’s colonial period, the legacies of colonial rule bear relevance for how providers should be trained to interpret their own negative stereotypes, biases, and fears regarding their patients. In this sense, reading and learning from the humanities and the social sciences can be quite relevant. That is, learning about the work conducted by and for people who have been

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<sup>35</sup> We may also include in this phrase “currently colonized countries” those territories declared by the United Nations as “non-self-governing territories,” which includes, among others, Guam, French Polynesia, Western Sahara, and the Virgin Islands.

oppressed and marginalized in that setting will aid in providing the kind of educational resources and stable representations of persons who face stigmatization. In this way, institutional resources can be used to support literature, film, and other creative media by people of color, LGBTQ+ persons, and other historically oppressed groups.

Importantly, what Fanon's work also brings quite clearly to the discussion of microaggressions is the nature of trust and distrust between providers and patients from historically oppressed groups. In this sense, his work speaks to the communicative and epistemic dynamics of medical practitioners and patients. Namely, in *A Dying Colonialism* Fanon analyses the medical practices during the Algerian Revolution and links the personal and intimate encounters between medical providers and patients within the broader structural framework of colonialism. His writings illustrate the ways in which the practice of medicine becomes an instrument for both domination and resistance to colonial violence. In this sense, Fanon claims that Western medical science is continuous with systems of colonial violence and domination. Despite the institution's prima facie "concern [with] man's health [and that] its very principle ... is to ease pain," within contexts of colonialism, Western medical science is taken as yet another mechanism for the subjugation and degradation of colonial subjects (Fanon 1965, 121). He describes communicative and epistemic dynamics whereby medical knowledge and practice become subsumed under structural frameworks of meaning that translate the significance of illness, not toward the ends of health and wellbeing, but rather as tools for colonial domination. For example, he writes: "The statistics on sanitary improvements are not interpreted by the native as progress in the fight against illness, in general, but as fresh proof of the extension of the occupier's hold on the country" (Ibid., 121-122). This is not merely a reactionary dismissal of Western medical practices, but rather, the spread of Western clinical medicine becomes understood as an indication of the omnipresence of colonial power and its control over the lives and deaths of those who are subject to colonial force.

Such hermeneutical contexts not only affect those who are subject to the brutality of colonial conquest, but also those who benefit from it. That is, Fanon describes several of the interpretive responses of European doctors in Algeria and the manners through which the voices of those who are colonized become distorted. As I mention above in Chapter 1, he states: “When the native, after a major effort in the direction of truth, because he assumes his defenses have been surmounted, says, ‘That is good. I tell you so because I think so,’ the colonizer perverts his meaning and translates, ‘Don’t leave, for what would we do without you?’” (Ibid., 122). Thus, here Fanon points to forms of willful and collective patterns of ignorance on the part of the colonizers in their interactions with colonized patients. Mills, in the essay “White Ignorance” describes such *structural* forms of ignorance as insulating mechanisms for white supremacy (Mills 2007). He argues that collective memory must also account for collective amnesia, that is, shared hermeneutical gaps and mistaken beliefs that support structures of racism and white supremacy. These patterns of distortion and self-delusion, existing among whites and non-whites alike, point toward the provider-patient communicative dynamics that Fanon describes. With respect to microaggressions, such patterns of willful ignorance are important to raise in the educational and institutional settings of medical providers. For example, Sue suggests that providers should be “vigilant of their biases and fears,” yet this also requires being responsive to the areas of knowledge and experience that one lacks and how this might affect the potential forms of trust and distrust between providers and patients.

Also worthy of note in Fanon’s description of the epistemic and hermeneutical aspects of colonial medicine is what he calls the physician’s understanding of “the eloquence” of the colonized patient’s body. This phrase refers to the directed examination undertaken by the doctor when all trust has been lost between patient and provider. That is, the doctor refuses to listen or rely on the expressed symptomatology of the patient and, instead, as Fanon states, the doctor “[falls] back on the clinical examination, thinking that the body [will] be more eloquent” (Fanon 1965, 126). In such a situation,



the experience of illness—the pains, discomforts, longings, and sensations—of the patient are eclipsed. The colonized patient’s own lived experience of her/his/their body becomes irrelevant to the process of forming a medical diagnosis. Instead, the body is assumed to “speak for itself” and to speak in a manner that cannot be affected by the distorting effects of colonialism. However, as Fanon notes, the doctor’s confidence that the patient’s body will facilitate better treatment soon dissipates, because rather than finding a docile or compliant body, “the body proved to be equally as rigid” (Ibid.). He continues: “The muscles were contracted. There was no relaxing. Here was the entire man, here was the colonized, facing both a technician and a colonizer” (Ibid., 126-127).

The patient’s “body” too does not lend itself to the treatment regimens and therapy offered by the clinician. I do not interpret Fanon pointing to physiological differences here. Rather, I understand him to be describing a Manichean stance taken by the patient, wherein the patient, too, lacks confidence and trust in the colonizing doctor and thus either refuses to compliantly follow the prescriptions of the doctor or refuses to blithely give her/his/their body over to the clinical examination. This embodied resistance can occur in a number of ways, including an outright refusal to enter into the clinical setting or through the refusal to undergo treatment in the manner outlined by the physician.

With respect to this latter action—what contemporary medical practitioners would label “noncompliance”—Fanon situates the trust or mistrust in Western medical treatment within a colonial encounter wherein the lives and epistemic authority of colonized patients are already deemed expendable. He writes: “Accepting the medicine, even once, is admitting, to a limited extent perhaps but nonetheless ambiguously, the validity of the Western technique. It is demonstrating one’s confidence in the foreigner’s medicine. Swallowing the whole dose in one gulp is literally getting even with it” (Ibid., 131). “Noncompliance” in this context refers not to an individual’s refusal to adhere to the treatment regimen of a physician, as it so often gets cast in contemporary discussions in

biomedical ethics. Rather, the terms of acceptance for a colonized patient are steeped in a broader structural context of white supremacy which refers outward to the histories of manipulation, deception, and destruction meted out by European colonizers. Again, as Fanon reminds us, “The fact is that ... colonization, having been built on military conquest and the police system, sought a justification for its existence and the legitimization of its persistence in its works,” its works in this case, being Western medical science and practice (Ibid., 122).

Thus Fanon’s writings point to harmful patterns of communication within the context of clinical medicine and his writings begin to shed light on the manner in which colonial power manifests itself through the medical encounter. Interestingly, Fanon’s own writings engage with pronominal usage and discuss power dynamics through the use of the T-V distinction. Namely, Fanon states in “The ‘North African Syndrome’” that French doctors and medical students are “inclined to use the second person singular” when speaking to Arab patients (Fanon 1967, 9). He continues: “It’s a nice thing to do, we are told...to put them at ease...they’re used to it” (Ibid.). He then cites an intern: “I can’t help it ... I can’t talk to them in the same way that I talk to other patients” (Ibid). Interestingly, Fanon marks the use of the informal singular *tu* used to refer to Arab patients in France. Also throughout the essay he marks the dehumanization of such patients through their interactions with doctors. As I note above, he cites the distrust, invalidation, and discrediting of Arab patients present throughout his training in France, and the way in which colonialism creates unjust and harmful conditions for North African persons living in France.

Moreover, the essay becomes a direct address, also utilizing the second person singular to medical staff at French hospitals. Near the end of the essay, Fanon begins using the pronoun *tu* to implicate the medical personnel whom he holds accountable for the mistreatment of North African patients. He states:

Votre solution, monsieur?

Ne me poussez pas à bout. Ne m'obligez pas à vous dire ce que vous devriez savoir, monsieur.

Si TU ne réclames pas l'homme qui est en face de toi, comment veux-tu que je suppose que tu réclames l'homme qui est en toi?

Si TU ne veux pas l'homme qui est en face de toi, comment croirai-je à l'homme qui est peut-être en toi?

Si TU n'exiges pas l'homme, si TU ne sacrifies pas l'homme qui est en toi pour que l'homme qui est sur cette terre soit plus qu'un corps, plus qu'un Mohammed, par quel tour de passe-passe faudra-t-il que j'acquière la certitude que, toi aussi, tu es digne de mon amour? (Fanon 2001, 31).<sup>36</sup>

Fanon here uses the informal second personal French pronoun to speak to medical staff and personnel. Interestingly, he switches between the formal and the informal in this passage, noting the deliberate use of pronominal address. The first line “*Votre solution, monsieur?*” uses the formal “*votre*” rather than the informal “*ta*.” Importantly, he asks the question to the formal audience, yet, then switches to the informal usage and capitalizes the informal pronoun “*tu*.” Fanon’s hail here is for a situational diagnosis, meaning that he is requiring that his colleagues, who profess to care about the health and wellbeing of their patients, examine themselves, the colonial situation, and the conditions of their patients.

Notice here the progression of his second personal claims. First, he addresses the question formally, asking the solution to the conditions that give rise to what his colleagues are calling the “North African syndrome.” He states just before this question: “It means that over the whole territory of the French nation (the metropolis and the French Union), there are tears to be wiped away,

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<sup>36</sup> “Your solution, sir? Don’t push me too far. Don’t force me to tell you what you ought to know, sir. If YOU do not reclaim the man who is before you, how can you assume that you reclaim the man that is in you? If YOU do not want the man who is before you, how can I believe the man that is perhaps in you? If you do not demand the man, if YOU do not sacrifice the man that is in you so that the man who is on this earth shall be more than a body, more than a Mohammed, by what conjurer’s trick will I have to acquire the certainty that you, too, are worthy of my love” (Fanon 1967, 16).

inhuman attitudes to be fought, condescending ways of speech to be ruled out, men to be humanized” (Fanon 1967, 16). The question is posed to those with whom he addresses himself as either equally in a position of superiority (the solidarity semantic) or to someone who is of higher stature than himself (the power semantic). Yet, when he elaborates the question, he shifts to the informal second person pronoun. In this case, the remainder of the essay is seemingly addressed to someone of lower stature or equal familiarity. The series of conditional statements that Fanon makes suggest that the egalitarian ideals of his colleagues—i.e. through “the man that is in you”—ought to be consciously sought. That for his colleagues to be “worthy of his love” as an equal they must “sacrifice the [men] that [are in them].”

Consider here the discussion of subpersonhood from Chapter 1. The metaethical interpretation of second-personhood that I develop there relied upon a notion of relational agency. This describes the process whereby persons become socially and politically recognized as “free and rational agents” by relegating others to a status that requires obedience to the normative demands of such “free agents.” In this case, the French notion of ethical and epistemic personhood that presumes itself to be superior to North African personhood is what Fanon is hailing his colleagues to sacrifice. Through the lens of second-personhood that I developed previously, this would require that French doctors recognize that their conceptions of agency, esteem, and personhood are only made possible through the degradation and subjugation of non-white persons. Thus, through a rhetorical marking of pronoun usage, Fanon performatively situates his personhood and professional being, as a practicing clinician, *above* those of his colleagues in France, or at a level that draws attention to their relative positioning as agents. The power semantic in this case refers to Fanon’s attentiveness to the racial injustices of French colonial occupation. Thus, to be worthy of his love and respect, in solidarity as professional clinicians, his colleagues are called to eradicate colonial violence.

This series of second personal hails thereby provides the imperative to his readers to develop a new conception of personhood, one which, directed by reference to pronoun usage and its implications in colonial medicine, can lead to decolonial forms of engagement.

### **4.3 Social Medicine, Interpretation, and Interpellation**

To link Fanon's discussion of pronoun usage to more contemporary examples of racial violence and microaggressions in clinical medicine, we can turn to the field of social medicine. Social medicine, as a field, is concerned with social and community factors that impact a person or group's health status and mortality rates. These include factors such as the organizational and operational structures of health care systems, but also non-clinical or extra-clinical factors as well, such as the forms of employment, education, and economic systems that impact health and death. While social medicine as a discipline began in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of industrialization and the economic disparities that disproportionately affected poor, working-class populations, the field has continued to grow well across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Leading theorists such as Friedrich Engels and Rudolf Virchow were among the earliest scholars to point to the need for sociological analyses of health and disease. Importantly, these early accounts of social medicine pointed directly at the economic factors of patients' social existences that led to high disease and mortality rates.

Among leading 20<sup>th</sup> century theorists, Salvador Allende was trained in Virchow's vein of social medical analysis, and social medicine grew significantly within various Latin American contexts, including in Peru, Brazil, Cuba, and Chile in particular. Allende's explicit attention to communicable diseases, addiction, emotional distress, and occupational illnesses eventually led to public health policy enacted during his presidency that would definitively characterize the health system of Chile from those of other geopolitical settings. As Howard Waitzkin notes, "Like Engels and Virchow before him, Allende saw major origins of illness in the structure of society. This vision implied that medical

intervention without political activism would remain ineffectual and, in a deep sense, misguided” (Waitzkin 2000, 69).

This insight strongly undergirds a social analysis of the communicative conditions and dynamics of the provider-patient relationship. Namely, the social structure in which the medical encounter occurs bears with it not only the extra-scientific factors affecting access to care and resources, but also institutional and cultural factors that operate across a given health care context. Here, the entry point into class, racial, and gender dynamics seems more pressing. As we saw previously with Fanon’s analysis of colonial medicine, the conditions of colonial domination lead to tightly linked forms of epistemic harms. Namely, the denial of credibility for North African patients, as well as a trenchant epistemic arrogance on behalf of French health care providers, led to immense communicative barriers to health information and resources for those patients. Moreover, the patients’ justified distrust of their providers limited the possible health care options to them as well.

In addition to colonial and racial factors of social medicine, Waitzkin points out other relevant structural aspects that influence provider-patient communication. Namely, his work in the 1990s analyzed what he described as the “micropolitics of medicine” (Waitzkin, 1991). In this text, Waitzkin analyses a series of transcribed medical interviews with special attention to how both patients and doctors discuss their own social contexts and the relevant factors of that social context in its effects on health. In most cases, Waitzkin argues neither patient nor doctor seem to challenge the broader social contexts in which they live. Unlike the suggestion above drawn from Allende’s work in social medicine, both sets of interlocutors expect the medical encounter to be devoid of political critique.

Waitzkin provides several reasons for this assumption (Ibid., 5). Among these are a provider’s concern with emotionally upsetting a patient. Pointing to broad, structural problems that influence health and disease, i.e. problems that are not in the control of a given individual, can lead to painful forms of frustration or hopelessness. Despite this paternalist concern, there are other reasons why

contextual social problems may not arise in the clinical encounter. Consider how medical education functions in health care systems like the U.S. Many physicians are not trained in any capacity to spend time on understanding or critiquing cultural, political, or economic factors affecting health. Rather, narrow notions of epidemiology and public health may highly individualize a provider's understanding of a patient's given social context. Finally, Waitzkin cites that providers may feel that they are overstepping their boundaries as a health care professional if they begin to delve into the social problems that affect their patients. Here, role-specific constraints might limit how open a given provider or a given patient feels about discussing particular social aspects of health and disease.

In his earlier writings in the 1980s, Waitzkin developed a sustained analysis of the effects of capitalist forms of health care systems on health and disease rates. In this work, Waitzkin's focus is broader than the provider-patient interaction. He analyses in this work the way in which a state's political and economic values may impact the development of particular health care systems. For example, a deep tension within contemporary liberal industrialized nations is a form of contestation that arises between the simultaneous valuations of safety and profit (Waitzkin 2000, 8). As Waitzkin states: "Safety in the workplace, in almost all instances, means increased cost of production and, as a result decreased profits" (Ibid.). Moreover, corporations cannot simply raise the costs of goods to make up for these safety concerns (Ibid.).

Given such tensions, Waitzkin claims that we see large group-level variations in health, disease, and mortality rates, but, more importantly for my purposes, we see these tensions emerge in provider-patient interactions as well. Waitzkin asks whether "what transpires between doctor and patient may reinforce oppressive social arrangements beyond the encounter itself" (Ibid., 119). This means that despite the provider's intentions of helping to improve the lives of their patients through medicine, the micropolitics of their interaction, in effect, sustains the factors that harm their patient's lives. Waitzkin bases his discursive analysis on 30 randomly selected doctor-patient interactions from a

sample of 336 interviews which were tape-recorded and followed-up with questionnaires. He then narrowed the sample into three distinct patterns of interaction that emerged across the groups. One theme that emerges across many of these recorded interactions is the physician's concern with the patient's ability to return to work or to maintain a role in economic production. For example, in one interview, a white 55-year old man who works as a machine operator, but has recently been out of work due to disability, expresses concern with depression and anxiety over his union potentially going on strike (Ibid., 126-127). However, rather than addressing what the patient seems to express as a concern about financial stability, the doctor appears to shift the conversation to a discussion about stress caused by unemployment. Here, instead of addressing the overarching concerns with the patient's union and his previous potential occupational disability, the doctor states that returning to work will be "the best thing in the world for you" (Ibid., 127). In this case, the health of the patient is equated with his ability to return to potentially unsafe and unjust working conditions simply because these are the economic options that are available to him within this given social setting.

Another example from Waitzkin's analysis is of a 50-year old white, married woman who lists "wife" as her occupation on the questionnaire. The patient expresses symptoms of exhaustion with particular household tasks and, due to this exhaustion, expresses frustration with a previously-diagnosed heart condition for which she has already received treatment. Rather than suggest a change in the distribution of labor or attempting to ease her feelings of guilt over her inability to maintain the home by herself, the doctor opts to use pharmacological treatment. Waitzkin states of this case:

The implicit ideological message is that the woman's occupational role in housework is worthwhile, desirable, and necessary ... As many commentators have pointed out, such work by women is crucial in reproducing the relations of economic production. Here a well-intentioned doctor contributes to this socioeconomic arrangement. There is no critical



appraisal of any aspect of the woman's role, even those physical demands that exacerbate symptoms of heart disease (Ibid., 143).

In both cases, the providers appear to reinforce social conditions that support broader socioeconomic structures that may lead to increased health problems. In this vein, Waitzkin's work points to the ways in which class- and gender-based harms are overlooked or rejected by providers. While Waitzkin's research does not focus explicitly on race, we can see through these cases that the providers' references to "what's best" for the patient contain microinvalidations of other potential forms of harm that might be affecting their patients. In this first case, the patient appears distressed because of unjust working conditions and in the second, the patient appears to express dissatisfaction with the gendered distribution of labor in her home. While Waitzkin's examples do not speak to racial microaggressions, we can see the functioning of class and gender norms. Such norms then constitute the everyday harms and indirect second-personal interpellations of class and gender. More research on how race functions in such clinical settings is necessary, but given the empirical literature that I discuss below regarding the role of interpreters in clinics, we can begin to see how racial dynamics are also at play in the medical encounter as well.

With respect to race, in particular, it is also important to point out that the medicalization of social problems such as anger, anxiety, depression, and so on that we see in the above examples appears to bypass the social and political origins of these phenomena. In this vein, consider, for example, what Nelson cites as a form of resistance against this medicalization process enacted by the Black Panther Party in the 1970s (Nelson 2011, 153-157). In 1973, facilitated by Huey P. Newton of the Black Panthers, many feminist, civil rights, prisoners' rights, and student organizations joined collectively to challenge funding for the Center for the Study and Reduction of Violence at the University of California, Los Angeles. The center, they argued, was attempting to biologize the causes of violence among primarily black men, which would, in effect, lead to individualized *medical*

treatments for *social* issues that led to the forms of indignation, rage, and violence that people of color were experiencing in southern California. This pathologizing of people of color was heavily criticized, and led to a series of hearings that eventually resulted in the blockage of state resources for the center. While the Black Panthers remained vigilant about opening and operating its own community health clinics, as this example demonstrates, they were also attentive to the depoliticization of social problems and socially-caused health care concerns in other medical institutional contexts as well. In addition, the form of highly individualized medical intervention that the center would, in Nelson's words, "make already marginalized populations more vulnerable to medicine as an instrument of social control" (Ibid., 155). Thus, despite the center's claim that it will aim to have concrete benefits in public health, it would, in fact, eventually exacerbate already unjust and unstable social conditions.

Finally, to further contextualize the impact of social factors affecting the provider-patient relationship, we can look to contemporary studies of medical interpreters to see how racial hails function within current medical discourses. In addition to the work on microaggressions, which examines how everyday interactions bear forms harm that treat persons from historically oppressed groups as subpersons, the empirical literature on medical interpreters also suggests that implicit second personal hails exist across linguistic communities that affect how racial norms function.

Consider, first, a study from 2001 that found that Spanish-speaking patients often encounter medical misinterpretations through nurses that work in clinics. Often medical interpreters in clinics are not formally trained in interpretation and thus the interpretation process may contain miscommunications or interpretive augmentations that affect the patient's ability to communicate with her/his/their provider. Immigrant patients rate language and cultural differences as among the biggest obstacles to receiving adequate care and frequently report dissatisfaction with their care. More often immigrant patients state that misdiagnosis, poor medical care, overmedication, and the inappropriate hospitalization of patients is due to miscommunication (Elderkin-Thompson et al. 2001, 1344). In a

2001 study, Elderkin-Thompson et al. found that over half of the patient encounters they studied involved interpretations that led to misunderstanding that involved the following racialized and professional processes:

1. physicians resisted reconceptualizing the problem when contradictory information was mentioned;
2. Nurses [as interpreters] provided information congruent with clinical expectations but not congruent with patients' comments;
3. Nurses slanted the interpretations, reflecting unfavorably on patients and undermining the patients' credibility; and
4. Patients explained the symptoms using a cultural metaphor that was not compatible with Western clinical nosology (Ibid., 1343).

In each of these cases, we see that Spanish-speaking patients, when relying on an interpreter during a medical visit, are met with credibility deficits that affect their communication with their physicians. Some of the factors explaining this credibility deficit include the role that nurses play as a liaison between a professional discourse and an often more colloquial discourse (as spoken by their patients). This factor explains why nurses would adjust a patient's statement to fit with a given set of standards within Western clinical medicine. However, these forms of miscommunication also diminish the patient's ability to challenge particular professional norms that may adversely affect her/his/their own health care. In such cases, misdiagnosis and under- or overtreatment may ensue due to the patient's inability to express her/his/their incongruence with the given medical expectations of their symptomatology. This is especially pressing for considerations regarding psychological or palliative forms of treatment wherein the patient's symptomatology is crucial for determining the appropriate course of action. Here, consider again Fanon's claim that the physician attempts to rely on the "eloquence of the body" when the patient can no longer be trusted. However, rather than merely

silencing the patient via a stark disregard for her/his/their agency, interpreters in effect distort (often unintentionally) the claims made by patients to prevent incongruence with medical standards. This gives the appearance to a physician of the patient's compliance, but, in effect, diminishes the opportunity for further examination from the patient and the physician. Among the recommendations that Thompson et al. make are that medical interpreters and physicians continually check and question the information that they are building throughout the medical interview in order to reduce these forms of misinterpretation.

Moreover, as Brad Davidson argues, interpreters can serve as gatekeepers and exert a certain amount of control during the medical interview. Citing the work of Cecilia Wadensjö, Davidson points out that in clinical settings “interpreters ‘are always placed in this contested arena between being providers of a service and being agents of authority and control’” (Davidson 2000, 382). Accordingly, when immigrant and Spanish-speaking interpreters and patients differ with respect to social, economic, and education statuses, this leads to substantial miscommunications. Elderkin-Thompson et al. found that

When the patient differs substantially from the nurse on dimensions of social prestige and power, occasionally the nurse treated the patient as a subordinate. Patient's comments might be ignored, the patient might not be asked for clarification, or the nurse might speak for the patient. If the physician insisted on direct queries to the patient, the social imbalance could be eliminated. However, even among physicians who demonstrated a desire to hear the patient's comments, the perception of the patient appeared to change if the interpreter continued throughout the encounter to dismiss the patient's comments or to interpret them in a subtly demeaning manner (Elderkin-Thompson et al. 2001, 1354).

These forms of social difference point to intra-group microaggressions within Latino communities in the U.S. Additionally, such forms of subtle interpretive augmentations reiterate the subpersonal status

of persons from historically oppressed groups, including forms of discrimination based on color or national hierarchies among Latinas/os, and class-, gender-, or sexuality-based forms of discrimination.

Although in the transcriptions of the interview we can see through the formal pronominal use of *usted* and conjugations according to that pronoun, the power-dynamic remains masked under the subtle variations in speech that the interpreters employ. For example, when one Spanish-speaking patient expresses her symptoms during a medical interview, describing variations in her sight and pain and irritation in her eyes, the interpreter restates her symptoms by summarizing that “It’s simply that [her] eyes burn” (Davidson 2000, 294). In this case, the physician expressed to the interpreter that he thinks the condition is not that severe, and the interpreter’s reduction in severity of the patient’s expressed symptoms mirrors his assumption that the problem is not severe. The interview is thereby overlooking the significance of the patient’s ability to articulate her own bodily conditions.

Unlike other patients, with (even limited) linguistic abilities to communicate directly with physicians, many cross-linguistic forms of communication within clinical medicine retain this power asymmetry and thus put non-English-speaking patients at a disadvantage and make them especially vulnerable to medical mistreatment.<sup>37</sup> This also helps explain why we see vast disparities in health care among Latina/o patients and white patients. For example, Latinas/os are more likely to live without insurance, have higher rates of HIV infection, higher rates of diabetes and obesity, and more likely to be employed in high-risk occupations than white adults (CDC Health Disparities & Inequalities Report - United States, 2013). Such disparities mark the structural features of medicine that lead to unequal forms of treatment and health outcomes for patients of color in the U.S. Such problems, as social medicine highlights, are exacerbated by poverty, incarceration, poor educational services, and other institutional barriers to adequate physical and mental health care.

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<sup>37</sup> I should add, however, that even in same-language communication, such intersecting barriers to effective communication and adequate distribution of epistemic credibility are present.

Thus, although the power semantic of the T-V distinction no longer operates within many contemporary language families to mark differences among class and political status and standing, empirical research points to the resilience of racial, class, gender, and sexual distinctions that mark how communication prevents adequate care in clinical medicine. What this demonstrates is that second-personal racial hails need not occur explicitly, as in the manner that Fanon critiques in his work. Rather, the ubiquity of microaggressions and the denial of credibility or inquiry for persons of color exists without the need for direct second personal pronominal invocation. Here, recalling Bonilla-Silva's claim that since the 1950s, race talk has transformed to include liberal and individualist ideologies that treat notions such as "equality, fairness, reward by merit, and freedom" in an "abstract and decontextualized manner" (Bonilla-Silva 2007, 189). This kind of communicative flexibility thereby masks the once-explicit second-personal hails that marked Spanish and English discourses, and subtle markings of insult, denial, and neglect remain within everyday interpersonal experiences with institutionalized racism. Here, in their stead, we find implicit second personal hails that serve as everyday slights and normative hails to many persons of color.

I propose then that rather than *direct* second-personal vocatives, as we see with the verbal use of the T-V distinction, a great deal of our interpersonal communication bears *indirect* second personal hails, such as nonverbal cues and microaggressions. These everyday harms often undergird and play a normative role in medical encounters, but also in other institutional settings. Moreover, these forms of everyday harm thereby create, as Sue, proposes, a series of second personal hails such as: you do not belong; you are abnormal; you are intellectually inferior; you are not trustworthy; and you are all the same (Sue 2010, 79). Sue argues that these interpretations of microaggressions create a series of negative responses to those who are their targets, including senses of powerlessness, feeling invisible, requiring compliance with white standards, and creating pressure to represent one's group (Ibid., 80-82). To be sure, verbal markings of hierarchy continue to exist and bear detrimental consequences for

communities of color. However, what I hope this examination of indirect second-personal address highlights is how our linguistic communication need not directly bear references to race and racial terminology to have a normative impact on personal, interpersonal, and institutional racial dynamics.

With these forms of racial interpellation in mind, in the final chapter I examine first-personal forms of self-writing to examine ways to resist these forms of everyday harm. Namely, I examine the writings of two Latina authors to understand how self-writing, as a first-personal form of expression, contains second-personal hails that address both the author and her audience in an effort to reject harmful forms of everyday racism.

## Chapter 5

### Racial Interpellation in the First Person: *Autohistoria* and Beneficial Epistemic Friction

#### Introduction

Thus far I have examined cases of indirect second-personal hails that, in large part, negatively impacted persons of color. In the case of the Tucson Unified School District, public officials used third-personal articulations of individualism to attempt to suppress the histories of Mexican Americans and to hail white Anglo-Americans as individuals whose cultural identities are meant to be most properly conducive to democratic ends in civic education in the U.S. In the context of clinical medicine, the role of interpreters impacts the ways in which differently situated Latinas/os are hailed as compliant, dependable, or credible. In this chapter, I argue that first-personal speech acts contain second-personal vocatives embedded in self-hails and other-hails, and that such hails aid in anti-racist processes of identity construction. That is, I propose that self-hails and indirect second-personal hails via first-personal speech acts aid in developing senses of self for groups and individuals, and provide the opportunity for groups and individuals to develop new hermeneutical resources for identity construction.

In what follows, I analyze how first personal forms of speech, primarily self-writing practices, serve to support heterogeneous forms of identity for U.S. Latinas. Such an analysis requires special attention to how self-interpellative practices are related to self-knowledge and self-ignorance and to one's knowledge or ignorance of others. In particular, I examine the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Irene Vilar, whose writings provide ample resources for exploring questions of self-knowledge and ignorance. I argue that the form of self-writing illustrated in the works of Vilar and Anzaldúa can provide a rich point of theoretical contact with what José Medina has described as *beneficial epistemic friction* within contemporary epistemology. Beneficial epistemic friction is a cognitive norm that, as he states, “forces one to be self-critical, to compare and contrast one's beliefs, to meet justificatory



demands, [and] to recognize cognitive gaps” (Medina 2012, 50). In what follows, I show that by writing about oneself and one’s experiences in a manner that hails others to critically interrogate their own identities, Anzaldúa and Vilar shed light on important metaethical facets of self-knowledge and first personal speech. Supporting Code’s and other feminist epistemologists’ accounts of relational identity and selfhood, their writings demonstrate the fundamental forms of epistemic interdependency necessary for self-knowledge, i.e. a point that extends my reading of the nature of second-personhood. Accordingly, I claim, via an examination of Vilar and Anzaldúa’s writings, that self-knowledge is, like all knowledge, *social*, and that self-knowledge requires contestation and affirmation as well, i.e. resistance and support. However, the forms in which such contestations and affirmations ought to take place, I claim, depend on a political analysis of how groups and individuals are situated as knowers with respect to credibility assessments and the availability of hermeneutical resources. What this requires is an acknowledgement of the metaethical points that I defend in Chapter 1. Namely, self-knowledge is interdependent and requires a social setting to render our self-affirmations and self-knowledge meaningful. To defend these claims, I first outline some relevant literature on self-knowledge to situate my analysis. Then, in the second section, I turn to writings by Anzaldúa to show how her work provides resources for developing a social conception of self-knowledge. Then, in the third section, I examine Vilar’s writings to point to hermeneutical gaps that render certain forms of experience and social uptake difficult. Such gaps help carve out the political analysis that I defend in the concluding section wherein I state that practices of self-writing shed light on normative dimensions of self-knowledge and second-personhood more generally.

### **5.1 Self-Knowledge, Self-Ignorance, and Shared Epistemic Responsibility**

The topic of self-knowledge raises a contentious set of epistemic issues. As Medina points out in his 2006 piece “What’s So Special about Self-Knowledge,” some epistemologists endorse quasi-

Cartesian models of epistemic subjecthood and assume that knowers have direct and immediate access to their own mental states or objects of cognition. Other theorists, however, treat the topic with more suspicion. A rather counterintuitive approach in this latter skeptical vein argues that self-knowledge should not be considered relevantly distinct from other forms of knowledge. This view claims that self-knowledge is similar to the knowledge of others' mental states insofar as it is merely a set of inferential judgments. Just as we observe others and draw inferences about their mental lives, according to this view, we do the same for ourselves by observing and making judgments accordingly. We, as individual knowers, just happen to be particularly well-positioned to make judgments about ourselves given our epistemic familiarity with our own behavior. Such an approach was most famously endorsed by Gilbert Ryle in his 1949 *The Concept of Mind*. Moreover, the aforementioned Cartesian account often fails to acknowledge or notice substantive existential problems with access to one's own "inner life."

However, most contemporary epistemologists, including feminist epistemologists, reject these two extremes. These contemporary approaches acknowledge that there is indeed something unique about self-knowledge that sets it apart from other forms of knowledge, and yet many of these theorists deny that we have full transparent and immediate access to self-knowledge. For example, in his 2006 work *Self-Knowledge and Resentment*, Akeel Bilgrami argues that self-knowledge ought to be distinguished from other forms of knowledge (including perceptual knowledge). He proposes that features such as self-transparency and self-authority are not epistemological notions in "the standard sense" and rather are "fallout[s] of a normative notion of agency" (Bilgrami 2006, xiv,133). Such a normative notion, for Bilgrami, however, is relatively far removed from political concerns in the book, as he states explicitly (Ibid., 341-342). For feminist epistemologists (and feminism more generally), self-knowledge constitutes a crucial facet of political, social, and ethical life. As I discuss in Chapter 1, an early and important articulation of this insight comes from Code's work on "second persons." All persons,

Code claims, are “second persons,” meaning that epistemic and moral agency requires being embedded in interdependent relations with other persons (Code 1991, 82). With respect to self-knowledge, Code states that “‘personal’ knowledge depends on common knowledge. Even the ability to change one’s mind is learned in a community that trains its members in conventions of criticism, affirmation, and second thinking” (Ibid., 83-84). Thus, this conception of self-knowledge develops a social ontology of personhood that articulates and critiques the notion that knowers can have self-knowledge independently of their relationships with others. Additionally, as I argue in Chapter 1, such a metaethical point allows us to make better sense of a non-ideal and situated account of ethical and epistemic subjecthood.

More recently, Medina has presented several feminist arguments that address the positions of Bilgrami, Ryle, Donald Davidson, and other epistemologists of self-knowledge. Briefly put, Medina claims that Bilgrami’s account of self-knowledge mistakenly distinguishes self-knowledge from other forms of knowledge in a manner that diminishes epistemic and moral accountability (Medina 2012, 122). The account of self-knowledge that Medina provides then proposes a way for feminist theorists to engage directly with forms of self-knowledge that are required for epistemic and moral responsibility. Included in his analysis is an examination of structural patterns of ignorance that affect an agent’s ability to meet the epistemic minimums necessary for responsible epistemic and moral agency. To carry this out, his work combines contemporary studies of epistemologies of ignorance with an analysis of self-knowledge.

Historically, the question of how structural patterns of ignorance affect women and people of color has been explored by numerous authors, ranging, for example, from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in 17<sup>th</sup> century New Spain to W.E.B. Du Bois and Fanon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to contemporary critical race and feminist theorists of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such work has been crucial for theorizing how an individual’s own subjectivity or conception(s) of self (selves) may be affected by structural patterns of

ignorance. Within the contemporary philosophical literature on Latina/o racial identities in particular, issues pertaining to relational identities, forms of self-alienation, and critical self-knowledge practices have been explored by theorists such as Medina (2012), Linda Martín Alcoff (2006), Jorge J. E. Gracia (2000), María Lugones (2003), Paula Moya (2002), and Ofelia Schutte (2000). Much of this work highlights the often conflicted positions of Latinas/os in the U.S. with respect to their own racial, sexual, and cultural identities. For example, as Alcoff writes of self-alienation:

Without a social recognition of mixed identity, the mixed race person is told to choose one or another perspective. This creates not only alienation, but the sensation of having a mode of being which is incessant, unrecoverable lack, an unsurpassable inferiority, or simply an unintelligible mess. This blocks the possibility of self-knowledge: the epistemic authority and credibility that accrues to nearly everyone at least with respect to their “ownmost” perspective, is denied to the mixed race person (Alcoff 2006, 279).

María Lugones also writes concretely of self-knowledge when she states:

One understands oneself in every world in which one remembers oneself to the extent that one understands that world ...One may indeed inhabit a world and a self fails to recognize oneself because one has no understanding of that world. It may be that in that world one is familiar to others but not to oneself (Lugones 2003, 59).

Such theoretical articulations explain how structural patterns of ignorance, including the accompanying forms of knowledge that insulate that ignorance, impact the self-knowledge of Latinas/os. However, such perspectives from Latina theorists such as Alcoff and Lugones are quite distinct. Namely, a crucial theoretical facet within any conception of self-knowledge is the view's underlying conception of the self or selves.<sup>38</sup> When examined via this category of analysis, Lugones, Alcoff, Anzaldúa, and other theorists of self-knowledge diverge significantly. For example, while

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<sup>38</sup> I thank Mariana Ortega for highlighting this point to me in a previous draft of this chapter.

Lugones argues that knowers are comprised of a plurality of selves, she also proposes that each self must bear a relational memory to other selves in order for a coherent epistemic and ethical perspective to emerge (Lugones 2003, 59). Alcoff work's appears distinct from this perspective by endorsing the inevitability of multiplicituous, inconsistent, and fractured selves, communities, and hermeneutical horizons (Alcoff 2006, 124). Moreover, as I discuss below, Anzaldúa and Vilar's writings shed light on such distinct conceptions of selfhood as well. That is, their work presents the striving of selves toward coherence and unity that surface in Lugones' conceptions of self-knowledge and self-alienation,<sup>39</sup> but their writings also suggest the continual work of discontinuous selves that may never find resolution or a fully articulated existence, as we see in Alcoff's work.<sup>40</sup>

Before turning to the writings of Anzaldúa, however, I would like to note two qualifications about the relationship between ignorance and self-knowledge. First, as Charles Mills, Shannon Sullivan, and many others have stated about epistemologies of ignorance, the epistemic gaps and insensitivities produced by structural forms of injustice are not simply cognitive lacks or arbitrarily absent sets of belief. Rather, ignorance, in the manner that interests me, is understood as *productive* and *supportive* of structural injustices. In a recent essay on the topic of epistemologies of ignorance, Alcoff states that while mainstream epistemology has taken note of ignorance itself, i.e. as a failure of epistemic practices, contemporary analyses of epistemologies of ignorance shed light on the substantive and constitutive effects of ignorance (Alcoff 2007, 39-40). That is, willful ignorance and socially-accepted epistemic practices that ignore, distort, or reject certain forms of knowledge serve to justify and disseminate particular beliefs within a society while neglecting or misrepresenting others.

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<sup>39</sup> Lugones has appeared to shift from this discussion in her most recent works. However, there remains an interesting project to connect her recent decolonial feminist writings with her earlier work on multiplicitous selves.

<sup>40</sup> Another important Latina feminist perspective in this literature is that of Marian Ortega, whose work examines multiplicitous subjectivities. Her work offers a contrasting view to both that of Lugones and Alcoff, and frames their respective positionings. Her forthcoming book, *Between Worlds: Latina Feminist Fenomenology and the Multiplicitous Self* (SUNY Press) engages with these themes in great detail.

Alcoff claims that epistemologies of ignorance create certain beliefs and ignore others for the purposes of benefiting some subpopulation, and such patterns of ignorance serve to subjugate or segregate other subpopulations. For example, along these lines, Mills argues that the failure of European colonizers to recognize African and indigenous persons as equal persons was a form of self-deception and evasion that eventually became a socially-accepted epistemic norm (Mills 1997, 97). Given this relationship between knowledge production and the production of ignorance, I choose to refer in the remainder of the paper to ‘self-knowledge/ignorance.’<sup>41</sup> By this, I mean that what an individual may not know about herself or her relations with others and the world is supported, and at times insulated, by those things that she *does* know.

Secondly, as I suggest above, such patterns of structural ignorance do not affect only those knowers who benefit from the systematic injustices at issue. That is, as Mills states, “the ‘white’ in ‘white ignorance’ does not mean that it has to be confined *to* white people ... it will often be shared by nonwhites to a greater or lesser extent because of the power relations and patterns of ideological hegemony involved” (Mills 2007, 22). Raising this point, however, is not meant to attribute blame to people of color or hold persons who are oppressed individually culpable for being affected by structural patterns of ignorance. As Medina has argued, the *structural* nature of epistemologies of ignorance makes it such that the way to address the issue is not to blame individuals for their particular beliefs or to paternalistically tell them that they ought to believe differently. Rather, socially-shared patterns of ignorance require socially-shared forms of epistemic responsibility and action. In this sense, a second important claim regarding my study of Anzaldúa and Vilar is that taking up the question of self-knowledge/ignorance for authors of color is not meant to point to the individual culpability of such authors. Rather, I intend to illustrate just the opposite through their work—namely,

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<sup>41</sup> This is an adaptation of Sullivan’s use of the phrase ‘knowledge/ignorance’ in Sullivan 2007.

that forms of self-writing that challenge structural patterns of ignorance/knowledge require an interpretation of shared epistemic responsibility and action.<sup>42</sup>

## 5.2 Theorizing *Autohistoria* and Self-Interpellation

Anzaldúa's writings have long been revered by her readers for their critical and intimate portrayal of the practice of self-writing. The now-classic 1981 edited collection *This Bridge Called My Back* by Cherríe Moraga and Anzaldúa was a groundbreaking text for women of color feminism in many ways, but especially because of its emphasis on the *political* nature of the act of writing by women of color. The collection, along with Anzaldúa's own writings, highlight the importance of considering women of color as authors who are competent speakers about their own experiences of oppression, resistance, and their everyday lives. This point was and is crucial not only to build solidarity among women of color, but also to disrupt and critically interrogate the work of white feminist scholars who write on the conditions of oppression faced by women. There are numerous works in Anzaldúa's oeuvre that foreground the act of self-writing; however, for this paper, I would like to focus on several concepts that she developed in her later work. Ana Louise Keating, biographer and scholar of Anzaldúa, states that many of the concepts developed in her later works have been underexplored by her readers and are worthy of more critical attention (Keating 2006, 7-8). Following this call, I examine how Anzaldúa's later writings interweave first-personal articulations of the experiences of the author with key theoretical terms, and analyze how these writings demonstrate rich epistemological views on the topic of self-knowledge/ignorance among people of color.

One such key concept from her later writings is *autohistoria*. While Anzaldúa never offered a systematic definition of the concept, she did utilize the notion in her writings, interviews, lectures, and

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<sup>42</sup> Medina (2012) defends a similar position using the work of Iris Marion Young (2011).

teaching (Keating 2008, 5-6). One brief discussion of the concept appears in a footnote in her 2002 essay “now let us shift ... the path of conocimiento ... inner works ... public acts”: “*Autobistoria* is a term I use to describe the genre of writing about one’s personal and collective history using fictive elements, a sort of fictionalized autobiography or memoir; and *autohistoria-teoría* is a personal essay that theorizes” (Anzaldúa 2009b, 578). In an earlier 1987 essay, “*Tlilli, Tlapalli*/The Path of the Red and Black Ink,” Anzaldúa offers theoretical gestures toward some of the core features of *autohistoria* and *autohistoria-teoría* that emerge in her later writings. Namely, she describes the process of writing as “a sensuous act” that functions to give meaning to trauma, and that also produces anxiety by bringing contradictory desires and beliefs to light. She states: “I write the myths in me, the myths I am, the myths I want to become ... *Con imágenes domo mi miedo, cruzo los abismos que tengo por dentro*” (Anzaldúa 1999a, 93).<sup>43</sup> In this statement, Anzaldúa notes the importance of creating stories that narrate one’s life.

While other philosophers have examined narrative notions of identity, including, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre (1984), Charles Taylor (1989), and Catriona MacKenzie and Kim Atkins (2010), Anzaldúa provides an account of how to theorize collaboratively with others via one’s articulation of the self. Such a proposal is an important element of her work and demonstrates her philosophical commitments to collective forms of epistemic responsibility and meaning-making practices. Toward this end, in “*Tlilli, Tlapalli*,” Anzaldúa also states that “Being a writer feels very much like being a Chicana, or being queer—a lot of squirming, coming up against all sorts of walls. Or its opposite: nothing defined or definite, a boundless, floating state of limbo where I kick my heels, brood, percolate, hibernate and wait for something to happen” (Anzaldúa 1999a, 94). In this passage, she highlights two important functions for self-writing—for creating critical self-reflection and for

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<sup>43</sup> “I write the myths in me, the myths I am, the myths I want to become ... With images I tame my fear, I cross the abysses I have inside” (Anzaldúa 1999a, 93), original translation.



creating new narratives for oneself and others. These two functions surface throughout her writings, and ground her conception of knowledge production, including affective forms of uptake that are enacted via speech. As we then see in this work from 1987, Anzaldúa is already foreshadowing the notion of autohistoria that emerges in her later writings.

Also, in 1990, Anzaldúa continues to develop features of autohistoria in “To(o) Queer a Writer.” In this piece, Anzaldúa discusses the way others understand her as an author. She discusses being labeled a “Chicana writer” and a “lesbian writer,” and her own understanding of her identity as a writer, which rejects the two identity ascriptions just mentioned (Anzaldúa 2009c, 164). While she defends her own authority to describe herself as a “Chicana, tejana, working-class, dyke-feminist poet, writer-theorist,” she rejects the normative impact of being labeled a “Chicana writer” or “lesbian writer” by others. She states that such labels “mark down” her identity, i.e. she cannot be a writer, but must be marked as a non-standard or “inferior” writer (Ibid.). In addition, she argues that an audience’s interpretation of one’s actions within hermeneutical processes of reading and writing plays a central role in the production of knowledge. She writes:

More and more today the reader is becoming as important if not more important than the author. Making meaning is a collaborative affair. Similar class, ethnic, and sexual identity is a strong component of the bond between writer and reader. This intimate interactive relationship I have with readers has to do with a colored queer feminist mestiza identity. Not all writers experience this interaction. This interaction comes with the realization that writing is a collaborative, communal activity not done in a room of one’s own. It is an act informed and supported by the books the author read, the people s/he interacts with, and the centuries of cultural history that seethe under her skin (Ibid., 168).

This account of the centrality of audience uptake presents a dense hermeneutical position on the distributive nature of knowledge production and meaning-making practices. That is, Anzaldúa

describes the epistemic and affective content of written and spoken works as “a collaborative affair” that develops in situ. Moreover, by referring to “the centuries of cultural history that seethe under [an author’s] skin,” Anzaldúa describes an interpretive horizon of meaning that constitutes the possibilities of meaning for a given text, performance, speech act, or action in general.<sup>44</sup>

Similar to her later notion of autohistoria-teoría, as we see in “*Tlilli, Tlapalli*” Anzaldúa’s medium for theoretical articulation are stories about her own life. Her comments above on her readership are embedded in an essay that describes a first-personal account of delivering readings in the San Francisco Bay Area. She describes different responses from her audiences and the manner in which differing constellations of identity positions among her audience members position her own authorial self as a writer. While some audiences acted as passive recipients to her words, often, as she describes, expecting her words to fulfill certain expectations for them about a “Chicana” or “lesbian” author, other audiences opened discursive and hermeneutical space in novel ways. She writes of specific audiences “‘reading’ her readings,” i.e. as maintaining a self-reflective awareness of her positioning as a queer woman of color invited to present her written work to them as an audience. She states: “Their faces were not blank nor passive [sic]. They saw me as vulnerable, a flesh-and-blood person and not as a symbol of representation, not as a ‘Chicana writer.’ They saw me as I wanted to be seen then—as an embodied symbol” (Ibid., 169). By “embodied symbol,” Anzaldúa appears to be providing an early articulation of what she later calls “the Coyolxauhqui imperative.” Briefly put, the Coyolxauhqui imperative becomes, for Anzaldúa, a call to “re-member” a self through narration (I elaborate this position in further detail below). This is a second-personal hail to position oneself anew, via embodied action, including providing new articulations of oneself to oneself. In this vein, the title of her 2002 essay “now let us shift” includes the phrases “inner works...public acts,” thus pointing

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<sup>44</sup> Such a position undergirds theoretical accounts of meaning-making by other later feminist epistemologists, including the work of Medina (2012), Alcoff (2006), Gaile Pohlhaus, Jr. (2011), and others.

her readers to the laborious processes of transformation that one engages in *with oneself* or *collaboratively with one's selves*, and the visible actions that manifest the remaking of one's identity and possibilities for existence via collaboration with others. Such collaborative processes of identity formation also provide the theoretical space to make sense of epistemic limitations and forms of self-ignorance that undergird our understandings of ourselves.

We can clarify Anzaldúa's conceptions of "inner works" and "public acts" by looking to her understanding of *conocimiento*. While a fully satisfactory theoretical articulation of this notion requires more space than I have available here, we can point to several salient features of her account to clarify the relationship between self-knowledge and self-ignorance. *Conocimiento*, more generally a Spanish term for "knowledge" or "consciousness," is given a technical use in Anzaldúa's writings. While the concept is developed from her earlier work on notions such as *mestiza consciousness* and *la facultad*, *conocimiento* becomes, for Anzaldúa, a resistant form of epistemic practice. In "now let us shift," she states:

Skeptical of reason and rationality, *conocimiento* questions conventional knowledge's current categories, classifications, and contents . . . A form of spiritual inquiry, *conocimiento* is reached via creative acts—writing, art-making, dancing, healing, teaching, meditation, and spiritual activism—both mental and somatic (the body, too, is a form as well as a site of creativity). Through creative engagements, you embed your experiences in a larger frame of reference, connecting your personal struggles with those of other beings on the planet, with the struggles of the Earth itself (Anzaldúa 2009b, 542).

"Conocimiento" is the term used to describe an acquired state of awareness that renders one equipped with a capacity to act and to create. The connections in the above passage between spirituality and creativity are tightly intertwined. Amala Levine in "Champion of the Spirit: Anzaldúa's Critique of Rationalist Epistemology," for example, argues that Anzaldúa's descriptions of spirituality locate

“spirituality physically in the body” (Levine 2008, 174). Levine claims that Anzaldúa rejects conceptions of spirituality that position divinity, freedom, and goodness against the corporeal. Levine states: “Demonized as evil, corrupt, and treacherous, despised as wanton temptress yet used as sexual object when not desexed and adulated as virgin, women historically have been dismembered and disemboweled only to be filled with the male fantasies that have scripted social and cultural taboos” (Ibid.). Against this view, Anzaldúa’s reclamation of the relationship between creative spontaneity and embodied being resituates the locus of freedom within a materially embedded set of possibilities for meaning and action. Levine describes this position as an understanding of “the human as a quantum being” (Ibid., 175). She proposes “Just as [an] atomic [or] subatomic process, despite the appearance of chaotic movement, is not random but guided by the cells’ intelligent awareness, so the quantum mind creates reality out of unlimited potential configurations” (Ibid.). This, I propose in concert with Levine, is neither a rationalist nor a “postmodern” positioning on the possibilities for meaning and action. Rather, the “centuries of cultural history,” in Anzaldúa’s words, provide the frames of reference for our meaning-making practices, and guide and shape the possibilities for new forms of self-interpretation and narrative construction. However, such constructions are not constrained by a disembodied form of rationality or spirituality that seeks its fulfillment outside of corporeal pleasures or forms of human action. Rather, it is our collaborative interactions with others, including their distinct cultural histories and meaning-making practices, that frame and shape our understandings of ourselves.

In a demonstration of autohistoria-teoría, “Now let us shift” outlines the stages of conocimiento via a reflection on the author’s personal experiences. The essay includes her reflections on the Loma Prieta Earthquake that struck northern California in 1989, on receiving a diagnosis of type I diabetes in 1992, and on the hysterectomy she underwent in 1980 (among other events in her life). Throughout the essay, Anzaldúa writes of a process of dismembering and re-membering oneself.

From Aztec mythology, she draws from images of the moon goddess Coyolxauhqui. Coyolxauhqui's body was torn apart by her brother, Huitzilopochtli, and scattered in all directions, including into the sky, where her decapitated head became the moon. "Putting Coyolxauhqui together," which is one of the stages of *conocimiento*, requires a desire for new personal and collective forms of self-knowledge/ignorance.

She states of this desire for self-re-membering, "As the modern-day Coyolxauhqui, you search for an account that encapsulates your life, and find no ready-made story, you trust her light in the darkness to help you bring forth (from remnants of the old personal/collective autohistoria) a new personal myth" (Anzaldúa 2009b, 559-560). Harkening here again to acts of myth-making, Anzaldúa emphasizes the terrifying process of re-membering one's personal and collective stories. She describes this "nueva historia" as resembling Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* at first—"mismatched parts pieced together artificially" (Ibid., 561). However, such a figuration of oneself or others also "inspires" and prompts the narrator to engage "both inner and outer resources to make changes on multiple fronts: inner/spiritual/personal, social/collective/material" (Ibid.). Part of this transformational process requires confronting one's "shadow self," which includes one's forms of ignorance and potential complicity with values that the striving self might not endorse (Anzaldúa 2009a, 551). This confrontation, she states, offers a seeming paradox: "the knowledge that exposes your fears can also remove them" (Ibid., 553).

The kind of confrontation with one's own forms of ignorance that Anzaldúa describes is an important point of convergence with what Medina describes as an awareness of one's own epistemic gaps. Medina articulates two levels of ignorance (Medina 2012, 149). There are first-order forms of ignorance wherein some individual or group of individuals lack a specific contentful area of knowledge. In addition to ignorance in this sense, there are also meta-forms of ignorance in which, rather than simply not knowing some given area of knowledge, an individual or group *does not know*

*that they do not know* some given area of knowledge. In such cases, meta-ignorance insulates or protects first-order forms of ignorance. Anzaldúa describes a practice of attempting to confront, at a meta-level, one's own epistemic gaps or acknowledging one's values and desires that conflict with one's own professed goals. Medina, too, discusses this form of epistemic meta-awareness, and describes it as a form of epistemic humility. In such cases, the knower is aware of her/his/their own forms of first-order ignorance or insensitivities, and thus holds her-/himself accountable for those epistemic gaps. Making one's own epistemic limitations visible creates space not only for learning from others, but also for accepting that such gaps may be supported by structural patterns of ignorance.

In addition, Medina describes two forms of epistemic resistance that echo Anzaldúa's distinction between "inner works" and "public acts," and her distinction between the "inner/spiritual/personal" and the "social/collective/material." The phrase "epistemic resistance," for Medina, bears a relationship to sociopolitical, psychological, and biological meanings of the term "resistance." For example, in biology, when an organism is "resistant" this usually connotes "the inherent ability of an organism to resist harmful influences (as disease, toxic agents, or infection" (quoted in Medina 2012, 49). Also, in sociopolitical discourses, "resistance" may refer to "an underground organization of a conquered or nearly conquered country engaging in sabotage and secret operations against occupation forces and collaborators" (Ibid.). Such notions direct us to various interpretive resources for understanding the term when it is applied to self-knowledge/ignorance.

In its epistemic function, Medina argues, resistance appears in two forms—i.e. internal and external—with two potential valences—i.e. positive and negative. Internal epistemic resistance comes from one's own cognitive resources. It can be positive "insofar as it is critical, unmasks prejudices and biases, reacts to bodies of [one's own] ignorance, and so on" (Ibid., 50). Internal epistemic resistance of this sort echoes what Anzaldúa describes of her capacity to write. She states in "*Tlilli, Tlapalli?*" that "To write, to be a writer, I have to trust and believe in myself as a speaker, as a voice for the images.

I have to believe that I can communicate with images and words and that I can do it well” (Anzaldúa 1999a, 95). This form of internal motivation or force acts as a self-critical assessment of one’s own capacities as an author. As a form of “inner work,” this requires confidence in one’s own creative capacities as a writer, which are forms of self-confidence that are often discouraged for women of color. Recall here, for example, Anzaldúa’s rejection of the label “Chicana writer” for this very reason.

Additionally, internal resistance may also have a negative valence, wherein one’s own “inner work” “involves a reluctance to learn or a refusal to believe” (Medina 2012, 50). Dogmatically holding on to one’s beliefs, willful ignorance, or what Mariana Ortega calls “being lovingly, knowingly ignorant” would be examples of such forms of negative internal resistance. Consider, for instance, Ortega’s account of loving, knowing ignorance. She describes this form of ignorance taking place among white feminists who appropriate or instrumentally cite the work of women of color for their own aims. In such cases, well-intentioned white feminists may know major slogans and essays by women of color theorists, but they do not “check or question” their own interpretations of the experiences and theoretical positions of women of color (Ortega 2006, 61-62). In particular, a lovingly, knowingly ignorant feminist who casually cites the work of women of color may never check or question whether her *use* and *understanding* of the authors she cites are merely serving her own interests. In this sense, disparate works by women of color become homogenized and given only cursory analyses (Ibid., 62). Yet, white feminists who cite women of color can also take credit for “giving a voice” to women of color in their own work, and thereby gain credibility for utilizing culturally or racially diverse perspectives (Ibid.). Medina’s notion of internal negative epistemic friction echoes Ortega’s articulation of being lovingly, knowingly ignorant because the knower, in this case, a white feminist, does not critically assess her own abilities and motivations to understand, interpret, or engage with the work of women of color. Such a position fails to acknowledge the forms of meta-ignorance and experiential insensitivities that might exist within, to use Anzaldúa’s phrase, her own “shadow

side.” This form of reluctance to assess one’s own complicity in the harming of others serves as a kind of internal epistemic resistance.

External epistemic resistance, on the other hand, is drawn from outside one’s own cognitive and affective resources. In its positive valence, Medina calls such resistance “beneficial epistemic friction,” which is a form of resistance that forces one “to be self-critical to compare and contrast one’s beliefs, to meet justificatory demands, to recognize cognitive gaps, and so on” (Medina 2012, 50). This notion would refer to epistemic motivations that lead individuals and groups to re-assess their own positions or views, to consider viewpoints that they do not hold, to attempt to defend or explain one’s own position in a way that would be better understood by others, or to recognize their own epistemic limitations and patterns of ignorance. Consider, in this case, the way in which Anzaldúa’s audience was “‘reading’ her reading” and maintaining openness toward her work. Practicing these epistemic virtues—i.e. open-mindedness and humility—requires positioning oneself as an audience member, listener, and, in Anzaldúa’s autohistoria, as one who is accountable to another’s vulnerabilities. Many of the audience members who Anzaldúa describes were neither queer nor women, yet she describes them as “call[ing] out encouragement, [they] would rock and hum to my words—they were listening with their bodies and not just their intellects” (Anzaldúa 2009c, 169). Her audience, through demonstrating their attentiveness and appreciation for her particular positionality, could be described as showing the author that they received her words as beneficial epistemic friction. They appeared willing and open to critically assessing themselves and their distinct perspectives based on the content of her words. She was “an embodied symbol” because both the content and the performance of her words were offered as critical resources to her audience, allowing them to orient themselves around her public act. Such forms of orientation, as I discuss in the final section, are derived from novel meaning-making practices for personal and collective forms of self-constitution.



More generally, epistemic friction requires that knowers be willing to reassess their own beliefs, which can be quite difficult, especially with regard to one's own self-interpretations. Furthermore, because many people of color and women are often denied the authority to determine the meanings of their own identities and are rather "marked down" or judged via gender and racial stereotypes and stigmas, epistemic friction can also be detrimental. Medina explains that some epistemic motivations can lead to "censoring, silencing, or inhibiting the formation of beliefs, the articulations of doubts [sic], the formulation of questions and lines of inquiry, and so on" (Medina 2012, 50). Thus, in some cases, especially for persons who are members of historically oppressed groups, epistemic resistance from others can lead to self-doubt, shame, or political inaction. In Anzaldúa's work, these themes emerge from her discussions of the Borderlands, the Coatlicue state, and nepantla. For example, nepantla—a Náhuatl word meaning "in-between space"—identifies a "transitional temporal, spatial, psychic and/or intellectual point of crisis," often signaling moving from self-doubt to conviction and *conocimiento* (Keating 2009, 322). Also present in her earlier and later writings, the Coatlicue state refers to "a prelude to crossing" from *mictlán*—the mythological Aztec underworld—to new forms of consciousness (Anzaldúa 1999a, 70). The "descent into *mictlán*" is brought about by "[our] resistance, [our] refusal to know some truth about [ourselves which] brings on that paralysis, depression, brings on the Coatlicue state" (Ibid.). She writes that once in this state of inaction and despair,

Every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing ... Knowledge makes me more aware, it makes me more conscious. 'Knowing' is painful because after 'it' happens I can't stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before (Ibid.).

These descriptions from *Borderlands/La frontera*—i.e. descriptions of the movement into the Coatlicue state, the descent into *mictlán*, and the path toward new forms of consciousness—can be used as theoretical bridges to both her later notion of *conocimiento* in the early 2000s and to the

epistemological tools developed by Medina. The path to *conocimiento* expands the *travesía* that she begins to theorize in *Borderlands/La frontera*, and provides an account that converges with Medina's conceptions of beneficial and detrimental epistemic friction. That is, the descent into *mictlán*, the first stage, is brought about by a "refusal to know some truth about [oneself], which is supported by the forms of negative epistemic resistances that Medina describes in his work. In this vein, the source for the self-doubt and the epistemic withdrawal will determine whether the resistance is internal or external. Moreover, the pain that she describes with every step highlights forms of resistance that allow or disallow one from learning about oneself and from learning from others.

In such painful confrontations with one's own ignorance, or what Anzaldúa later describes as those transitional spaces between states of knowledge and action—what she calls *nepantla*—we can also locate her position on collective forms of epistemic responsibility. For example, in "Let us be the healing of the wound: The Coyolxauhqui imperative—*la sombra y el sueño*," the last piece published by Anzaldúa during her lifetime, the author writes of the events of the attack of the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001. She states:

The day the towers fell, me sentí como Coyolxauhqui, la luna. Algo me agarró y me sacudió, frightening *la sombra* (soul) out of my body ... Wounded, I fell into shock, cold and clammy ... suspended in limbo in that in-between space, *nepantla*, I wandered through my days on autopilot, feeling disconnected from the events of my life (Anzaldúa 2000a, 303).<sup>45</sup>

Here, she harkens back to her descriptions in 1987 of "[un] *susto* [when] the soul [is] frightened out of the body," and such an event is what she describes as leading to the descent to *mictlán* (Anzaldúa 1999a, 70). Interestingly, following from this form of external epistemic friction, we see her defend a notion of shared epistemic responsibility. She writes of her desire to speak out to condemn the United

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<sup>45</sup> "The day the towers fell, I felt like Coyolxauhqui, the moon. Something grabbed me and shook me, frightening the shadow (soul) out of my body ..." (Anzaldúa 2009a, 303).

States' "act of war" and to situate herself against the U.S. Yet, she also writes that "sadly we are all accomplices ... As an artist I feel compelled to expose this shadow side which the mainstream media and government denies. In order to understand our complicity and responsibility we must look at the shadow" (Anzaldúa 2009a, 304). Here, readers can note that Anzaldúa does not excuse herself from responsibility for the United States' military actions. Rather, in this piece, her last and perhaps most explicitly engaged piece of writing on international politics, she proposes a distributed form of epistemic responsibility that demonstrates beneficial epistemic friction for her readers. The events of 9/11 lead her to interrogate and to express her own relationship to the actions of the United States' government. Such events are indicative for her of "our collective shadow" (Ibid., 311). Our collective shadow symbolizes the historical violence and fragmentation that, she claims, we are all now called to confront and to re-member. The Coyolxauhqui imperative is both her symbol for a necessary process of "dismemberment and fragmentation" and for "reconstruction and reframing" (Ibid., 312). However, as she states, "there is never any resolution, just the process of healing" (Ibid.), and an open-ended hail to others.

Thus, the process of "putting Coyolxauhqui together" involves creating new personal and collective narratives that can render one's experiences meaningful and productive. Developing new autohistorias is presented as a difficult task, and one that involves critically interrogating one's own social position within embedded frameworks of meaning and knowledge production. Perhaps more importantly, as she asserts in "To(o) Queer the Writer," it also includes searching for communities and hermeneutical resources to make sense of one's own experiences and responsibilities. The practice of "putting Coyolxauhqui together," she states, "represents the search for new metaphors to tell you what you need to know, how to connect and use the information gained, and, with intelligence, imagination, and grace, solve your problems and create intercultural communities" (Anzaldúa 2009b, 563). These epistemic practices emerge via the forms of autohistoria and autohistoria-teoría that she

describes, and require an interpretive community that can collaboratively render such experiences and forms of knowledge meaningful. Such practices, as Anzaldúa notes occur in collaboration with others. They involve experimenting with new narratives and find out how or whether they resonate with others. This process renders self-knowledge a shared endeavor, and points away from any wholesale independent or self-sufficient narratives of self-knowledge practices.

### 5.3 Vilar and Impossible Interpellations

The interpretative communities that I discuss with respect to Anzaldúa's conception of *autobistoria* offer heterogeneous forms of uptake, which present new possibilities for resistance, adaptation, or for new hermeneutical resources. How such interpretive resources and communities emerge, however, sometimes requires disorienting and painful experimentation on behalf of those who are attempting to locate their senses of self. Anzaldúa describes one of her own failed attempts to render meaningful her own experiences as "the blow-up ... a clash of realities" (Ibid., 563). Often an individual's self-interrogative practices involve finding oneself in a situation in which no world of sense can account for one's experiences. The possibility of expression, of *conocimiento*, requires an interpretive community to critically reflect the new stories that the author puts together. This notion of shared epistemic labor to produce meaning, including one's self-understanding, is apparent throughout Vilar's work. Moreover, as we'll see now through Vilar's writing, we can trace a series of epistemic gaps that point to the work of *autohistoria-teoría* and to second-personal hails implicit in practices of self-writing.

Initially, my interest in the interpretive circumstances of Vilar's writings emerged from thinking about what historian Laura Briggs has referred to as a series of "double-binds" for many Puerto Ricans. These double-binds arose from a series of cultural perceptions about Latino/a families that stemmed from the medical history of Puerto Rico-U.S. political and socioeconomic relations.

Briggs writes: “In the science of reproduction and the medicine of sexually transmitted diseases and birth control ... Puerto Rican families have been either too close or too fragmented, too big and cohesive or too limited and fractured” (Briggs 2002, 6). In public policy debates, she notes, Puerto Rican women were targeted as abusing birth control and sterilization, or as irresponsibly neglecting them as means to prevent pregnancy. Also in the nationalist discourse of the island, Briggs notes, women were either praised as diligent mothers of the nation and its citizens, or were accused of sexual deviance and made representatives of the failures of the nation. Finally, Briggs marks the perceptions of Puerto Rican families by the U.S. as both “(inferior) Americans” and as alien, i.e. as both included within the political milieu of the mainland U.S., but also as perpetually cast outside of that milieu.

Notably, Briggs’ main area of interest and mine with respect to these double-binds is the way in which discourses surrounding sexuality and the family frame the possible modes of self-knowledge/ignorance for Latinas regarding their own sexual identities and embodiment. These contexts help locate the social and epistemic resources that Vilar invokes to describe her own experiences and the hermeneutic gaps in which she locates herself. To frame Vilar’s work, it is helpful to connect Briggs’ discussion of the series of “double binds” for Puerto Rican women to the “double bind” that Vilar, a Puerto Rican woman, uses to describe her *testimonio* about sexual trauma, reproductive agency, and her own family history. Briggs argues that given the coupling between the developmentalist rhetoric of the mid-twentieth century and the strong nationalist movement in Puerto Rico during this same period, many women’s sexual agency was and continues to be circumscribed through such socially-available networks of identity and productivity. Vilar also discusses double-binds on her website about her book, *Impossible Motherhood*. She states: “The story begins with a double bind: I’m fated to be misunderstood and my body will never forget the life interrupted that shall die with it. You will never understand. I will never forget. Yet here we are. You and I” (Vilar 2009). Vilar’s story is a tale of her struggles with mental illness, pregnancy, abortion, and an emotionally-destructive

relationship with a man she met at age 16 who was thirty-five years her senior. The most shocking element of her story for many readers is her public discussion of the fifteen abortions she underwent over a period of fifteen years. Of particular interest in my analysis here is the manner in which she interweaves her own personal and family narratives with the history of reproductive politics and colonial relations between Puerto Rico and the U.S. Vilar's autohistoria, in Anzaldúa's sense, is an exploration into her experiences at the intersections of U.S. societal expectations for many educated middle class Latinas to be "sexually liberated," pro-choice and feminist, and the pressures to be responsive to the struggles of a family legacy, which for Vilar included the normative expectations of her grandmother, Lolita Lebrón, the nationalist radical.

We should note that Briggs's historical work takes on what Alcoff has referred to as an "objectivist" form of contextualism about race and social identities. Briggs acknowledges the "socially constructed, historically malleable, culturally contextual" nature of social identities (Alcoff 2006, 182-183). Moreover, she approaches the topic of women's forms of agency and identity through analyses of medical research and clinical practices both in Puerto Rico and in the U.S. to trace how race, class, sexuality, and gender "organize ... social relations for Puerto Rican families" (Ibid., 183). However, as Alcoff remarks, third-personal, objectivist approaches can also "be inattentive to the microinteractions in which [processes of ethnic and sexual identification] operate, are reproduced, and [are] sometimes resignified" (Ibid.). In this vein, Vilar's autohistoria is particularly telling of such microlevel patterns of social identification. Vilar locates her autobiographical voice within a particular set of political positions on abortion. She writes:

My life could be summed up by the extreme human experience of abortion. I began this book as the Pygmalion/My Fair Lady story of an older man and a teenager, a teacher and a student, and the predictable but not interesting dissolution of their mutual fascination. But this has changed. The story that needed to be told was that of an addiction....I was

warned about the possible hatred directed at me from both pro-choice and pro-life camps. My testimony was fated to be misunderstood (Vilar 2009, 2),

She continues:

This testimony...does not grapple with the political issues revolving around abortion, nor does it have anything to do with illegal, unsafe abortion....Instead my story is an exploration of family trauma, self-inflicted wounds, compulsive patterns, and the moral clarity and moral confusion guiding my choice. This story won't fit neatly into the bumper sticker "my body, my choice" (Ibid.).

In these passages, Vilar describes her project as "opening up the conversation on abortion to [an] existential experience" of abortion (Ibid.). She states that most of what becomes reiterated through stories of abortion are stories of forgetting. Pro-life advocates emphasize the responsibility of sex and pregnancy and "exploit and sensationalize the experience" of abortion by neglecting potential misjudgments and forms of ignorance that often accompany unwanted pregnancies (Ibid.). Pro-choice advocates accept abortion as a nation's "moral obligation to ensure a woman's right to life and health," and thereby acknowledge and accept abortion as the inevitable consequence of "human missteps" (Ibid., 4). Both sides, she suggests, neglect the productive or agential capacity to terminate a pregnancy, i.e. to find and articulate a meaningful resistant self through the termination of another/not yet other. Vilar states: "Yes, I was an abortion addict and I do not wish for a scapegoat. Everything can be explained, justified, our last century tells us. Everything except for the burden of life interrupted that shall die with me" (Vilar 2009, 5). What remains ambiguous throughout her work is whether her experience of abortion is an experience of a life interrupted that is her own or is rather the life of another/not yet other.

Furthermore, her text demonstrates a process of self-writing and self-expression regarding desires for love and familial legacy. In this sense, Vilar's autohistoria is not solely located within the

pro-life/pro-choice positions in the United States. Her discussion of her family and their migration story to the United States also reinscribe the ambiguity of the loss and interruption of selves in the making. This other-directedness of her writing builds on the hermeneutic connections she's made with intimate others throughout her life. For example, Vilar's grandmother, Lolita Lebrón served twenty-five years in a West Virginia prison for an armed demonstration for Puerto Rican independence at the U.S. House of Representatives in 1954. Vilar writes that after a pardon from President Carter in 1979, she began viewing her grandmother as heroine and made Lebrón her "love object" (Ibid., 23). She describes her desires to become a revolutionary to "free" the island from colonialism. In one scene, writing of this relationship with her grandmother, she states:

Each time I saw her, she reminded me to address her by her name, 'Lolita.' When she spoke of my mother she called her 'Tatita,' never 'my daughter' or 'your mother.' Once, I asked her why. 'Tatita is her own person. She is not yours or mine,' she said pointing both her index fingers up at the ceiling. I saw my grandmother's blunt disregard for my feelings as sublime honesty. In part, perhaps, because I need her to be just that: Lolita, the heroine (Ibid.).

This scene notes Vilar's discomfort and fascination with her grandmother's conception of the relationship between a maternal role and the nation. Such a trope continues to affect their relationship and eventually creates an impossible position for her within the legacy of her grandmother's own narrative of self-sacrifice. This foreclosure will eventually aid in preventing particular forms of meaningful self-hails for Vilar whereby she can locate herself both as responsive to the anti-colonial struggles of her family and as someone who has undergone repeat abortions.

Vilar's first book, *The Ladies' Gallery*, is a memoir tracing the lives of her grandmother, her mother, and herself. In that text, Vilar writes that for many nationalist leaders, "women and the nation were synonymous" (Vilar 1998, 47). Vilar quotes the nationalist leader Pedro Albizu Campos,



When our women lose the transcendental and divine concept that they are not only mothers of their children but mothers of all future generations of Puerto Rico, if they come to lose that feeling, Puerto Rico will disappear within a generation. The Puerto Rican mother has to know that above all she is a mother, and that motherhood is the greatest privilege God has given the human species (Ibid.).

Yet, Vilar's first memoir challenges this rhetoric by pointing to the destructive expectations for sacrifice that accompany this conception of motherhood. She writes poignantly of the sexual violence inflicted against her mother and of her mother's eventual suicide, which took the form of jumping from a moving vehicle while riding in the car with her family. Vilar also writes in this first book of her own struggles with suicide and mental illness.

In her second book, *Impossible Motherhood*, Vilar unravels the repercussions of this narrative of sacrifice through her own lived experiences. In one passage, Vilar recollects a conversation about the completion of her first book with her grandmother. On the telephone, Lebrón expresses to her that the book should not be published. Lebrón states: "Listen carefully, my family is the nation of Puerto Rico to which I have given my life, and anyone, you listen well, anyone who threatens the nation is the enemy. I have fought for this nation and in the name of all the fallen ones in the struggle. Your mother is a fallen one. You are defiling her memory." Vilar asks "Am I your enemy?" Lebrón responds: "That book of yours, saying Tatita did not die in a car accident, but killed herself, is a farce, and the nationalist movement won't take it. You publish that book and the movement won't forgive you." Vilar asks: "What about you, Lolita?" "I am the Movement," her grandmother responds. Thus, Vilar's decision to write about suicide and her grandmother's conflation between the nation and her own identity gets placed within the network of expectations for motherhood that she perpetually negates through the act of repeat abortions. Here we see an example of negative epistemic friction, wherein these interactions lead Vilar to doubt her capacities and her desires. Yet, this same source of

harmful friction is the very person who provides a sense of cultural continuity for the writer, especially as these sustain her as a Puerto Rican woman.

In the text, Vilar contrasts the narrative of her grandmother with the relationship with a man she calls “her master,” a professor of Latin American Literature and Theory at Syracuse University. The contrast to the narrative of maternal sacrifice emerges through the narrative of this man’s seemingly more egalitarian rejection of maternal sacrifice. In their early courtship, her lover tells her he “needs an unformed woman, unfinished, with not too many wounds” (Vilar 2009, 60). Later in the text, after providing an account of her experience of her first abortion, about which she did not tell her lover, Vilar writes that she began to desire becoming a mother. However, she writes that she felt as though “her master” would leave her if she carried a child to term. She cites previous contexts in which he had expressed that what he desired and respected about her was of her lack of attachments and responsibilities. He expresses to her at one point, “I don’t want to step into the father role. It’s important that you keep your independence and remain a free woman” (Ibid., 82). In their eventual discussion of her second pregnancy, Vilar writes of his response:

Halfway through my confession he began nodding his head in agreement and he kept doing this after I was done talking. He added a “Sí, sí”... here and there until he finally stood up, put his hands deep in the pockets of his pants and, looking into my eyes, told me the choice was mine, only mine. I could choose to submit to fear and assume a life of motherhood and domesticity. He preferred I didn’t. He saw potential in me. He quoted women, feminist thinkers and authors, to support his position. [He then adds,] “If you are with me, you have to endure the burden of freedom, and that requires, in part, remaining childless. If you are grown up enough to have a child, you are just as fit to be a single mother. But I will not be a victim of your displacement (Ibid., 82-83).

Although Vilar's lover does not represent the range of feminist positions on mothering by any means, Vilar's discussion of his utilization and appropriation of reproductive freedom demonstrates its prominence within the models for sexual agency through which she is attempting to hail her sense of self.

Also, while it is clear that Vilar's grandmother clearly rejected the terms of Vilar's autohistoria, so too did her "master." Namely, he dismissed her endeavor to write a second book due to a form of poststructuralist skepticism about the transformational potential of writing. Citing Paul de Man's work on the death of autobiography, Vilar's "master" criticized the act of self-writing, by conceiving of it as always already participant within "an ideological construct, and [thereby] a fiction of sorts" (Ibid., 98). Vilar states that she was instructed by her "master" to "never to believe in the importance of what [she] was doing" with her writing projects (Ibid., 98). Yet, it is precisely her autohistoria that marks the epistemic friction between the two narratives that frame her possibilities for self-knowledge and self-uptake. Vilar writes that through the process of writing "there is a frightening continuity and discontinuity when I think of my past and present. How different I have been. But even more frightening is the awareness of how entirely other I might yet become" (Ibid., 35). The form of becoming that she locates through the possibilities of writing the self and through birthing a child both develop and emerge within matrices of hermeneutical space that attempt to shift away from previously destructive narratives of sexual and cultural agency. Writing about the existential experience of abortion attempts to point to a site of omission for Vilar, wherein her conception of the aborted self/potential for self is not accepted as a series of guilty admissions and missteps. Rather, her writings negotiate discussions of pregnancy, love, family, and writing, suggesting various sites of pleasure and displeasure, and agency and compulsion. These citational markings demonstrate the forms of epistemic friction and re-membering that help her locate and develop a sense of self.

Via these two accounts of her grandmother and her lover, Vilar contrasts representations of her heroine and her master. The two figures both seem to represent for Vilar forms of familial legacy and future possibilities, and both are described as constraining her agency and desires. In this sense, both figures provide sources of epistemic friction. However, neither appears to wholly positively impact Vilar's sense of self. Rather each offers something that she values, alongside something with which she struggles. That is, on the one hand, the figure of her grandmother serves to couple her own maternal body with that of the struggle for anticolonial resistance and national freedom; and on the other hand, her lover unites the role of progressive leftist politics, including a repudiation of motherhood, with the possibility for sexual liberation and radical love.

A collected anthology by Frances Negrón-Muntaner and Ramón Grosfoguel highlights the trenchant nature of this colonial/national dichotomy for many Puerto Ricans. In their introductory essay, Grosfoguel, Negrón-Muntaner, and Chloé S. Georas argue that a stark dichotomy between colonial imposition and national independence does not accurately capture the experiences and theoretical positions of many Puerto Ricans (Grosfoguel et. al, 1997, 1). Drawing from their experiences as young intellectuals from the island who studied on the mainland, they critically position themselves against the dichotomies that demand either a pro-U.S. or a pro-nationalist discourse. They challenge both the colonial and neo-colonial manifestations of U.S. domination over the island, while also maintaining a critical, interrogative stance toward the failed socialist projects of other Latin American and Caribbean nation-states.

Vilar, too, appears to be challenging these dichotomies with respect to national and liberal frameworks for Puerto Rican women. She also appears to view her own sexual and familial identities as inherently intertwined with those of the Puerto-Rican-U.S. political relations. For these reasons, she marks abortion and the subsequent elimination of future potential states of being through these series of double-binds. After an eleven-year relationship with her “master” that included a total of

twelve abortions, Vilar eventually writes of the birth of her first daughter, conceived with a new partner, to whom she is currently married. She writes: “Halfway through working on this book I got pregnant for the sixteenth time. I would not have been able to give birth without the call to attention and self-reflection writing this story down demanded. My daughter became the coherence emerging from the shameful mass of thirty-five years” (Ibid., 5). Also, in the epilogue of the book, a series of journal entries written in the second-person to her then-infant daughter, Vilar closes the book by stating: “Loretta Mae. You are the bond between me and the world I come from. You are becoming my origins” (Ibid., 222). The process of writing herself and writing to a not-yet self, the second-personal hail to her daughter as “becoming [her] origins” marks a potential site for resisting the previous narratives and double-binds through which she found her own agency to be circumscribed. This, as we noted above, is what Anzaldúa describes as “putting Coyolxauhqui together” and with it comes the potential for criticism and misunderstanding, but also the potential for beneficial epistemic friction.

#### **5.4 Writing Self, Writing Others/*Escribiendo nos/otras***

Mary Thompson, a recent critic of Vilar, writes that despite “an appreciation for the author’s agency and self-fashioning,” Vilar’s book reiterates dangerous tropes that “ultimately threaten reproductive justice goals if applied more broadly to understand repeat abortion” (Thompson 2014, 140). Thompson offers a compelling analysis of questions of agency for women who undergo repeat abortions and she cautions Vilar’s readers not to adopt dichotomous metaphors of illness/health or madness/rebellion to interpret the conditions of repeat abortion. Importantly, she points out,

[I]n any year in the United States, almost half of women seeking abortions have already had at least one prior termination. According to a 2006 occasional report from the Guttmacher Institute, women having repeat abortions are somewhere more likely to be black, less likely to

have a college degree, and ‘slightly more likely to have Medicaid coverage’ than other abortion patients, and more than half of women seeking repeat abortions have at least one child (Ibid., 135).

These patterns in the U.S. suggest that Vilar’s experiences might be distinct from those of many women seeking repeat abortions and she cautions readers against overgeneralizing Vilar’s views. Moreover, Thompson argues, in response to Vilar’s expressed feelings of shame surrounding her repeat abortions that “Women generally and women of color specifically would not feel ashamed of having one or fifteen abortions if there was unqualified support for women’s rights rather than tempered, qualified support for ‘good choice-makers’ and condemnation of ‘bad’ ones” (Ibid., 138). Thompson emphasizes a form of collective responsibility that ought to be the focus of the political discourse of repeat abortions. Thus, in light of this distributed account of social responsibility, she urges Vilar’s readers to resist interpreting her as either a villain or a heroine. Moreover, Thompson’s critique is important for pointing to ways in which the pathologizing narrative of addiction that Vilar develops can lead to conflating individual culpability with shared social responsibilities surrounding reproductive justice. Thompson, as do other theorists on the political and hermeneutical relationships between Puerto Rico and the U.S. such as Briggs and José Quiroga (1997), argues that the usage of metaphors of disease is commonplace in discourses about Puerto Rico. Moreover, such language has been used to both justify imperialist intervention by the U.S. on the island, as well as to proffer “a cure” via national independence or through neoliberal economic development (Thompson 2014, 148; Quiroga 1997, 116).

Despite these important warnings to Vilar’s readers, *Impossible Motherhood* illustrates a “shadow side” of self-interpretation. Her own foregrounding of her story as “fated to be misunderstood” points to epistemic gaps within her and her audience’s potential interpretive resources. Namely, her writing and Anzaldúa’s autohistoria-teoría highlight an important feature of self-knowledge/ignorance and

second-personhood. First, their work foregrounds the fundamental interdependency between authors/speakers and readers/audiences that is necessary for any form of self-knowledge/ignorance to emerge. For an epistemologist like Code, this might be interpreted as a description of the kind of nurturing environment that is necessary for an individual to develop a notion of selfhood or notions of self. Code claims that moral and epistemic agency is reliant upon a “communal basis of moral and mental activity” (Code 1991, 82). This does not merely mean an abstract reference to others as objects of moral or epistemic analysis, however. Rather, it means that agency itself, i.e. the very enabling conditions of our actions and judgments, must be based on the relationships that we have with others. Second-personhood then serves as a critique of moral and epistemological theories that take self-sufficiency and independence as key features of moral and epistemic agency. No one, as Code claims, “naturally [grows] to autonomous self-sufficiency” (Ibid., 85).

In this sense, Anzaldúa’s and Vilar’s writings perform the metaethical feature of second-personhood, i.e. epistemic and ethical interdependency within self-knowledge. Namely, Anzaldúa’s conception of *autohistoria-teoría*, i.e. of theorizing via an act of personal and collective self-reflection, highlights the interdependent relations that make self-knowledge possible. *Autohistoria-teoría* requires an awareness of the multiple sites of knowledge/ignorance, including those sites of knowledge/ignorance in others and in oneself. Writing of what he calls “the meta-lucidity of kaleidoscopic consciousness,” Medina describes a similar form of resistant imagining. He states: “The metaphor of the kaleidoscope captures well some aspects of the multiplicituous consciousness that can hold and maintain active multiple perspectives simultaneously. The metaphor of kaleidoscope underscores a fluid way of imagining ourselves and others in which patterns of relations are in flux, changing seamlessly and ceaselessly, with some relationship possibilities giving way to others” (Medina 2012, 201). Such critical conceptions of self-knowledge/ignorance elaborate differential forms of epistemic authority that knowers ought to attribute to themselves or specific areas of knowledge or

areas of ignorance. Moreover, such forms of consciousness and attempts to re-member one's story and self require taking epistemic risks. This means that knowers should be able to confront that they may be mistaken about their beliefs about themselves or about others. Or as Anzaldúa states, they must be able to confront their *desconocimiento* and their shadow sides.

Yet, given differing relations of power under conditions of structural injustice, some persons will find themselves in a state of self-doubt quite often, while other, more privileged groups and individuals are largely supported and afforded forms of epistemic security. For example, as Vilar's autohistoria highlights, for privileged men in positions of relative power, the ability to become skeptical of one's written self is achieved only in light of a prior sense of epistemic and existential security. Vilar's vulnerability within structural conditions of U.S. cultural and epistemic imperialism and via sexist denials of credibility and authority for women makes her ability to write of her experiences crucial. Thus, her readers, even with Thompson's cautionary suggestions in mind, ought to afford her credibility and discursive space to interrogate her own life. Also, and perhaps more importantly, her readers ought to critically interrogate the uncomfortable or disorienting position that her writing invokes. Her work, including the redemptive face of motherhood that emerges from her self-narration does not offer a neat resolution for liberal feminist or conservative audiences, and such a position could very well be co-opted by a number of interpretive communities. Accordingly, her work should be construed as an exercise in creating beneficial epistemic friction, because it hails her readers to interrogate even the familiar binaries they may have, e.g. between health/illness, desire/compulsion, and freedom/oppression.

Also, in "Putting Coyolxauhqui Together: A Creative Process," Anzaldúa discusses the process of writing. She states:

What about the style—the particular way of saying things, the imprint of self you leave on the page? Style brings up the politics of utterance—who says what, how, to whom, and on whose



behalf. When you use a particular language register to re-create particular realities, you include certain groups of people and exclude others (Anzaldúa 1999b, 248).

Anzaldúa suggests here that the process of writing, including writing collective stories through autohistoria, effectively hails an audience and potentially dismisses others. Autohistoria-teoría then makes this claim explicit via the proposal that writing about oneself provides the theoretical tools for others to critically interrogate their positions and the world. This would also include the disorienting hails that might compel a reader to critically assess her/his/their own epistemic positionality and responsibility. However, as Sarah Ahmed and others have pointed out, disorientation work “is not always radical ... the forms of politics that proceed from disorientation can be conservative, depending on the ‘aims’ of their gestures, depending on how they seek to (re)ground themselves” (Ahmed 2006, 158). Thus, the forms of epistemic responsibility and action made possible through Anzaldúa’s writings should not be considered a determinate grounding for normative action. Rather, autohistoria-teoría is a critical call to interrogate ourselves via the epistemic resistance that her views create. What follows from her account and from my elaboration of her views is that judgments of self-credibility, self-orientation, and self-worth are always subject to resistance and criticism from others. This is because, as Code reminds us, even our capacities to carry out such epistemic activities are prefaced on the *social* character of knowledge that makes these practices meaningful.

Accordingly, this means that our judgments of others, including credibility assessments, judgments of merit, and so on require that we self-reflectively mirror back to ourselves our own situatedness as judges, i.e. we *must read ourselves as readers*, to extend Anzaldúa’s phrase. This requires that self-knowledge, like all forms of knowledge, is subject to political and social forms of critique. Privilege, subjugation, and resistance function with respect to our abilities to know ourselves and others. While such an epistemic position cannot normatively map out the ways in which we ought to act in a given situation, it does prescriptively call us to remain attentive to the groups of *nos/us* and

*otras*/others in which we find our own self-understandings made available. Autohistoria, then, is a critical call to interrogate ourselves via the epistemic friction that the views of others create.

## Conclusion

Understanding the three distinct sites of analysis that I propose in previous chapters—i.e. state policies for public school curricula, the provider-patient relationship, and practices of self-writing—thereby highlight features of the non-ideal, intersectional, and situated approach to second-personhood that I defend in this project. While I have utilized methodological resources both from feminist metaethics and neo-pragmatism, it is these contextual accounts of what I describe as ‘second-personhood’ that more adequately frame how racial interpellation functions in sites of meaning and action. Also, as I have argued, when we consider distinct perspectives within our linguistic communication—i.e. third-personal, second-personal, and first-personal discourses—we can analyze several important, yet interrelated layers of the metaethical and linguistic functions of racial normativity. Each level highlights how language both serves to create norms, i.e. norms that can be harmful and marginalizing, norms that can be empowering and conducive to coalition building, or various constellations of these possibilities. By way of conclusion, I will then highlight how each level of linguistic analysis serves an explanatory role with respect to racial normativity and second-personhood, and then point toward further avenues for research developed by this project.

With respect to metaethics, each site of analysis points to the networks of agency in which the differing positions of articulation can be situated. For example, within the context of the banning of MAS, the positions of Horne and Huppenthal, as elected school board and state officials, impact the respective amounts of influence and credibility that each speaker receives. While it is not new to argue that one’s political positioning impacts one’s epistemic positioning, it is important to note how their respective subject positions, i.e. as white, wealthy, cisgender, heterosexual men of U.S. citizenship—situate them with respect to the ability to serve as authorities in U.S. public education. We can ask the broader question as well about what led these two men to target and reject an educational program that educates young people about the history of Mexico-United States relations. Namely, the

preservation of a kind of liberal individualist rhetoric preserves the idea that *anyone* (in an agent-neutral sense) ought to be able to contribute to public political discourse. In fact, this is the implication of Horne and Huppenthal's claims about public education and civic participation. However, as I argue via feminist metaethics, our agency is constrained by our very networks of relations. Thus Horne and Huppenthal's assumption that anyone ought to be able to contribute to public political discourse can be seen to bear willful ignorance that masks how their respective racial, gender, and class positionings allow them the security and presence afforded along with their speaking positions. Also their public disavowal of the importance of Mexican American Studies demonstrates implicit and indirect harms to others whose agency and identities require being situated within the cultural history of Mexico-U.S. relations.

Moreover, as I point out in the chapter on clinical medicine and the provider patient relationship, we can consider many such indirect second-personal hails to be microaggressions that create the sense that historically oppressed groups are not welcome or worthy of membership in various institutional settings. As I argue in Chapter 4, such microaggressions in the form of indirect second-personal address thereby mask the once-explicit markers of hierarchy that existed linguistically. Rather, by analogy to the T-V distinction, we can understand second-personhood to function indirectly and subtly through everyday speech. Often, as Sue points out, even well-intentioned therapists, educators, and politicians do harm to others through verbal and nonverbal cues. These cues are thus connected to what I described in Chapter 2 as the indeterminacy of uptake thesis. Namely, that the normative uptake of our speech is not in the control of the individual. Because there are always innumerable ways to challenge, interpret, and analyze a given utterance, the normative impact of second-personal hails, microaggressive or otherwise, are never determined in a given context. Their pragmatic functions might be more or less stable, which means that the same utterance may function

the same way in a given context over time, but even this still harkens to the possibility for an as-yet undisclosed use or potential meaning of a given utterance.<sup>46</sup>

This indeterminacy, I propose, can lead to forms of both political progressivism and conservatism. That is, because the normative uptake of our utterances are indeterminate, they bear the potential for liberatory theories of action and interpretation, but our utterances also always retain the risk of misinterpretation and being misconstrued toward ends that we do not intend. Thus, my final context of analysis, which focuses on personal narration and community building, examines how speakers can negotiate hermeneutical gaps and the possible configurations of identifications that form in response to acts of self-writing. Such processes of self-writing point outward as well, toward the various constellations of listeners, and toward a theory of collaborative listening that is a necessary complement to my position on racial interpellation. What kinds of hearing, listening, and affective presence is required for coalition building remains an unexamined but important topic of analysis. Although I attempted to gesture at such practices through Anzaldúa's writings, autohistoria is only one means whereby actors can situate their voices in concert and in contrast to the normative hails of others.

I hope, however, to have begun to open further spaces for elaboration and exploration into the relevant normative dynamics of racial discourse. I also thereby hope to include my position as one among many in a continued series of contestations, collaborations, and continued engagements with the multivalent spaces of our linguistic praxes.

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<sup>46</sup> This view is obviously parasitic upon Quine's indeterminacy of translation thesis, but more based on contextual factors of discourse and the situatedness of speakers rather than our abilities to theoretically posit the existence of objects and others.

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