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Epistemologies of Ignorance Regarding Women of Color and their Intersectional Identities

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Abstract

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In Chapter One I will look at how there is a lack of awareness and understanding surrounding women of color's experiences due to stereotypes, especially domestic migrant workers. In Chapter Two I will look at the limits of empathy, or being able to understand another's point of view. I will argue that the problems surrounding intersectionality are not immediately overcome through empathic understanding because of the current circulation of negative emotions. Negative emotions should be replaced with positive ones, thereby allowing for sincere empathy.

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INTRODUCTION: “Whiteness is not really a color at all, but a set of power relations.” This quote by Charles Mills summarizes a key issue in society today. Whiteness, including white privilege, is a set of power relations working together. As a result of these power relations, women of color become disadvantaged, almost as if they are invisible. This can be explained through the epistemology of ignorance. Mills defines it as, “...a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions...producing the ironic outcome that the whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves made” (18). Women of color are ignored even when they are present, and this is because of the world that has been created without them. There is “white solipsism”, which is “...tunnel vision blind to nonwhite experience” (Ortega 57). This blindness towards nonwhite experiences reinforces the structure of domination and supremacy in society. Through the epistemology of ignorance, it can be seen that women of color, especially domestic migrant workers, are the object of ignorance. I argue that women of color can overcome being objects of ignorance through positive emotion. The key to overcoming the epistemology of ignorance regarding women of color is not necessarily to produce more knowledge and empathy, although both are important. The first step is to push aside the lack of engagement and casual assumption of inferiority and to circulate strong, positive affects. Then, genuine empathy can occur and the lack of engagement can be worked upon.

In Chapter One I will look at how there is a lack of awareness and understanding surrounding women of color’s experiences due to stereotypes, especially domestic migrant workers. In Chapter Two I will look at the limits of empathy, or being able to understand another’s point of view. I will argue that the problems surrounding intersectionality are not

immediately overcome through empathic understanding because of the current circulation of negative emotions. Negative emotions should be replaced with positive ones, thereby allowing for sincere empathy.

CHAPTER ONE ABSTRACT: In this chapter I argue that there is a disconnect between women of color and white women due to different stereotypes regarding each group. Due to this disconnect, many white women have tunnel vision towards the experiences of women of color. I bring forward that the phenomenon of tunnel vision can best be seen through globalization. The western woman often does not understand the experiences of the domestic migrant worker, further pushing her into a realm of invisibility.

CHAPTER ONE: TUNNEL VISION TOWARDS WOMEN OF COLOR

Women as a group are disengaged from each other. Audre Lorde argues in *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* that women ignore their differences or see them as a cause for separation. There is a bridge between white women and women of color, and that difference needs to be bridged. Lorde is right that the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. If we use the patriarchy's tools, we are validating them and deeming them effective. We wouldn't be dismantling but rather legitimizing the patriarchy's authority. Part of using the master's tools is that white women do that when they do not recognize differences. They are simply just using the master's tools, and if they're using the tools like that, there will be a disconnect and a lack of knowledge. bell hooks gives an example of the gap between white and black women. She writes, "A major barrier has consistently been the fact that individual white women tend to be more unaware than their black female counterparts of the way the

history of racism in the United States has institutionalized structures of racial apartheid that were meant to keep these two groups apart” (218). This highlights how there is a disconnect between white women and women of color due to their different understandings of the past. In addition, white women’s ignorance towards this history demonstrates the lack of accountability that white people often have because they do not know the role they have played in forming this history (hooks 120). It also shows how there is a need for white women and women of color to connect and bond so that they can recognize and overcome difference.

In “Uses of Erotic”, Lorde points out an interesting power dynamic. Women become the other, and their needs and desires are not regarded as important because they do not hold the power. Lorde writes, “The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a deeply female and spiritual plane, firmly rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling...For women, this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source of power and information within our lives” (53). Suppressing the erotic is not what makes a woman strong but rather embracing the erotic gives a woman her strongest sense of self (Lorde 54). Women, however, are taught to suppress it because an empowered woman is a dangerous woman. The erotic is a way to form a bridge between two people, whether that bridge is a sharing of joy, something emotional, or a physical connection (Lorde 56). The erotic allows one to share a deep pursuit with another person, which allows them to gain a unique sense of knowledge about them. This erotic knowledge is empowering because it serves as a lense through which we examine aspects of our existence (Lorde 57).

I argue that women, however, cannot have access to this erotic knowledge because that would mean women are empowered. Lorde discusses how a woman's eros is repressed and therefore women lose a sense of knowledge of themselves and a connection with themselves, and as a result of this they have a disconnect or inability to find joy with others. Because of this incapability for women to have erotic knowledge with themselves, they cannot form a deep connection within themselves and therefore cannot truly form deep connections with others. Women need to gain that erotic knowledge in order to form a connection. Lorde herself discusses an erotic disconnection from herself, so she is aware of the gap in power and knowledge. People in power, however, are ignorant and are disconnected from others. Lorde gets at this epistemological ignorance by identifying it as a gap in knowledge and power, but my point of view is that she fails to acknowledge how this gap in power and knowledge can be distinct for women of color. Lorde is thought to be the originator of intersectionality, but she does not dwell on specific cultures and their kinds of knowledge, whereas Kimberle Crenshaw makes that distinction when it comes to intersectionality.

Kimberle Crenshaw details in "Mapping Margins" how race and gender are treated as mediums of bias where negative frameworks can arise (1). As a result, social power in place works to exclude those who are marginalized or different (Crenshaw 1). Women of color have an intersectional identity, and this is often problematic for them because their intersectional identity, or specifically their race and gender together, is what allows for intersecting patterns of racism and sexism. Additionally, their intersectional identity as both a woman and person of color is a problem because people respond to one or the other, so the interests and experiences of women of color are marginalized when it comes to both (Crenshaw 11-14).

A problem results where people fail to recognize multiple grounds for identity when considering how the social world is constructed. My point of view is that understanding the violence that women of color face can be seen through Crenshaw's concept of structural identity. She defines structural identity as "the ways in which the location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reform qualitatively different from that of white women" (Crenshaw 3). Women of color carry burdens such as poverty and child care responsibilities as a result of gender and class oppression (Crenshaw 2). Their class and race make them susceptible to violence. Immigrant women have limited access to resources and will often be reluctant to leave abusive partners because they are scared of getting deported (3). In this observation, women of color are clearly disempowered. I intervene in the texts to show that Fricker's notion of identity power plays a role here in a subtle way (Epistemic Injustice 14-15) because men use their identity, perhaps unintended, to influence a woman's actions. In this context gender plays an important role. The woman is already silenced by the mere fact that he is a man and she is a woman of color (Mapping Margins 15). He inevitably has this power over her, which is what makes women of color susceptible to issues such as domestic violence and rape.

Thus, I argue that there are patterns of subordination in women of color's experiences, and this occurs because it is a consequence of the burden that women of color have to carry since their burdens are not necessarily recognized. Intersectionality, thus, is a way to re-conceptualize race as an alliance. These patterns of subordination are an example of how people are epistemologically ignorant of the world they have created by creating such power structures and subordinating women of color.

Race is often another aspect of a woman's intersectional identity, and it plays an important role when we interact with others. In The Racial Contract, Charles Mills discusses race relations. Mills states, "The Racial Contract is that set of formal or informal agreements... henceforth designated by 'racial' criteria...as 'white'...with the class of full persons, to categorize the rest as 'nonwhite' and of a different and inferior moral status..." (The Racial Contract 11). He goes on to point out that the nonwhites are objects of the agreement while whites are the subjects of the agreement (The Racial Contract 12). The Racial Contract reveals that whiteness is upheld in society, which results in the othering of nonwhite people. He cites colonialism as an example of racial domination that has been in the form of white people ruling over nonwhite people, resulting in racial privilege that has lasted centuries (The Racial Contract 21-27). In most cases, the privileged group is unaware of the world they themselves have created. People of color are the object of ignorance. bell hooks has a similar conception of race relations. She writes in "Killing Rage, Ending Racism" that whiteness exists without knowledge of blackness (33). I argue that such a lack of knowledge is an example of tunnel vision.

Mills's purpose in writing The Racial Contract is to uncover the hidden (17), but he neglects to uncover a major element that is at play in his work. I argue that he has tunnel vision towards gender as his work does not take it into consideration. For this reason, there is a lack of intersectionality in his work. Mills quotes *The Heart of Darkness* and says, "Africa is thus the 'Dark Continent' because of the paucity of (remembered) European contact with it" (The Racial Contract 45). Since Africa has not come into contact with white color, which is more desirable, it is viewed as a dark and unwanted space. This epistemological ethnocentrism affects women,

especially women of color, in ways distinct from men. This can best be seen when framed in terms of testimonial injustice.

Fricker finds in “Testimonial Injustice” that an epistemic injustice is occurring, where someone is wronged in their capacity as a knower (3). One of the driving forces behind epistemic injustice is prejudice. Fricker writes “Either the prejudice results in the speaker’s receiving more credibility than she otherwise would have- a credibility excess- or it results in her receiving less credibility than she otherwise would have- a credibility deficit” (Testimonial Injustice 17). In this context, a woman’s race carries a social charge that affects how the hearer perceives the speaker, resulting in a credibility deficit. Additionally, her race carries an epistemic charge (Testimonial Injustice 17). Educational background, class, race, and gender can impact how much credibility a speaker has, and ...”it is generally in the interests of the hearers to believe what is true and not believe what is false” (Testimonial Injustice 17-18). Often, prejudice will inflate or deflate the credibility a speaker has, and as a result of the hearer’s prejudice the hearer will miss out on a piece of knowledge.

I argue that an important form of prejudice that Fricker discusses is identity prejudice. This occurs when a prejudice is formed for or against peoples of a certain social identity and as a result they are prevented from conveying knowledge. Fricker gives the example of a courtroom. Racial identity power can be exercised in a way by where members of a jury can make deflated credibility judgements with the result that the speaker is unable to convey to the jury the knowledge he has. Thus, stereotypes distort the hearer’s perception of the speaker (Epistemic Injustice 36). She brings the courtroom example up in this context and finds that the

jurors are often distorted by prejudicial racial stereotypes that they cannot, in the courtroom context, perceive the hearer as anything but a liar based on their color (Epistemic Injustice 36).

Testimonial injustices come about due to stereotypes, or “widely held associations between a given social group and one or more attributes” (Epistemic Injustice 30). Fricker writes, “Many of the stereotypes of historically powerless groups such as women, black people, or working-class people variously involve an association with some attribute related to competence or sincerity or both: over-emotionality, illogically, inferior intelligence, evolutionary inferiority, incontinence, lack of moral fibre, etc” (Epistemic Injustice 32).

Stereotypes can also exist as images because people associate attributes with certain social groups (Epistemic Injustice 37). Fricker writes, “Images are capable of visceral impact on judgement, which allows them to condition our judgements without awareness, whereas it would take an unconscious belief to do so with comparable stealth” (Epistemic Injustice 37). Prejudicial images from the hearer’s social imagination then persist in a hearer’s pattern of judgements. This is extremely problematic for women of color because the value of their testimony is often ignored. There is tunnel vision towards nonwhite experiences, which often results in the silencing of women of color.

My point of view is that women of color, especially black women, are not seen as having epistemic authority, and it is not possible for women to know in an authoritative way. Their intersectional identity is what leads to this gap in epistemic knowledge. Fricker writes, “The subject is wrongfully excluded from the community of trusted informants, and this means that he is unable to be a participant in the sharing of knowledge. Everyone has the ability to be an

epistemic agent, but women are not. Since women are not epistemic agents, they cannot be knowers, but Fricker fails to show how women of color are even less authoritative in their knowledge due to their intersectional identities. They experience epistemic objectification, or when a hearer undermines a speaker in her capacity as a giver of knowledge, so the speaker is epistemically objectified (Epistemic Injustice 133).

bell hooks finds that stereotypes are a response to emotion. She writes, "...Stereotypes emerge as a response to the traumatic pain and anguish that remains a consequence of white racist domination" (37). Stereotypes are a form of representation that do not depict what is real. They are a projection onto the other that shape the way we see color (hooks 38).

My point of view is that race and gender together play a role when it comes to how they are perceived by hearers. Fricker accounts for how independent factors create stereotypes but she fails to acknowledge how both factors such as race and gender acting together can create certain stereotypes, which play a role in terms of testimonial injustice. George Yancy writes, "Black women's hypersexual tendencies render their bodies impossible to rape, for they are always already sexually lascivious" (Black Bodies, White Gazes 27). Black women are viewed as sexually vulnerable, thus in the eyes of juries consent is not possible because black women are always willing to engage in sexual relations. This view held by many highlights how people can be epistemologically ignorant especially towards nonwhite experiences since sexual appetite is not a characteristic of all black women. The voice of black women is unheard because their answer seems to be assumed. In the courtroom example, a white woman, perhaps especially in contrast with a woman of color, is often associated with the quality of trustworthiness. The

hearer's perception of the speaker in this case provides motivation to accept what the speaker is saying (Epistemic Injustice 77).

I argue that women of color can experience testimonial injustice in a pre-emptive manner. Certain social groups aware that they are subject to identity prejudice and are therefore susceptible to credibility deficit will tend not to share their thoughts or judgements (Epistemic Injustice 130). An example of this is if this social group is generally not taken seriously. This epistemic injustice occurs in silence because it pre-empts any exchange of knowledge. The credibility of the potential speaker is constantly in question by the hearer, so the potential speaker will choose to be silent because their testimony seems unsolicited (Epistemic Injustice 130). The speaker's credibility therefore is already undermined before she even shared her thoughts.

Consider again the fact that the U.S. DOJ Bureau of Justice Statistics finds that African American women experience higher rates of rape and sexual assault than white, Asian, and Latina women ("Female Victims of Sexual Violence"). A study conducted by the Journal of Counseling and Development found similar findings to that of Fricker. Stereotypes play a major role when it comes to African American women looking to seek services regarding sexual assault and domestic violence. Because African American women are seen as "figures that require control", their testimony or experiences are often not taken as seriously. Thus, this discourages some African American women from speaking out about their abuses (Journal of Counseling and Development 266-271). As a consequence of their silence, emotions such as anger can develop as discussed later. These negative stereotypes regarding black women often serve as a barrier to helping them get access to the resources they need or proper legal

resources. The Women of Color Network writes, "Stereotypes regarding African American women's sexuality, including terms like 'Black jezebel,' 'promiscuous,' and 'exotic,' perpetuate the notion that African American women are willing participants in their own victimization." As a result, these stereotypes minimize the seriousness of the offenses that are occurring against African American women and obstruct access to proper legal remedies (Women of Color Network). As a result, black women are less likely to report abuses due to these social biases about the color of their skin. According to the Michigan Journal of Counseling, a study conducted by Donovan (2007) revealed, "Black women were less likely to be trusted as genuine victims and were more likely to be blamed for their sexual assault. Additionally, George and Martinez suggested that Black women sexual assault victims "are less likely than White women to have a rape case come to trial and lead to a conviction" (Michigan Journal of Counseling 19).

This means that when a black woman gives a testimony, this testimony is not taken seriously or believed. I argue that this is similar to what Miranda Fricker refers to as identity prejudice. The woman of color's testimony is not seriously heard because of a pre-existing bias, which results in a gap in knowledge because the speaker and the hearer. A study regarding college students sheds light on the issue of how race and gender can play a role in victim-blaming in terms of sexual assault. A study conducted by Varelas and Foley inquired how 126 college students of various races viewed scenarios of rape when the race of the victim and the perpetrator were included. The study found that white college students were more likely to associate some fault to a black woman being raped if she were sexually assaulted by a black man. The results additionally showed that a victim of sexual assault who is a black woman is likely to be seen as less believable and more responsible for her assault than a white victim

(Michigan Journal of Counseling 20). Thus, it is the black woman's intersectional identity that creates this gap in knowledge. The hearer assumes that the woman of color's testimony is less believable, resulting in the hearer being less able to understand the woman of color's experiences and less likely for justice to truly be served. This sort of testimonial injustice is systematic, or connected with common prejudices with other types of prejudice (Fricker 27). Fricker writes, "Systematic testimonial injustices, then, are produced not by the prejudice simpliciter, but specifically through different dimension of social activity- economic, educational, sexual..." (27). She goes on to say that this makes one susceptible to testimonial injustice and a variety of different injustices because of their systematic connection with one another (27). I bring forward that women of color are often victims of systematic injustice because their sexual and racial dimensions, or their intersectional identities, create a negative identity prejudice, which leads to a credibility deficit. These prejudices often devalue the words of the speaker and endure throughout society (Fricker 29).

We can also examine globalization through Mill's idea of an epistemology of ignorance. Mills writes that as a result of an epistemology of ignorance an ironic outcome is produced where "...whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made (29). Mills's notion here is correct especially when it comes to white women being epistemologically ignorant of the world they have created for women of color.

Globalization is defined as a process of interactions that integrate people, companies, and governments of different nations. It is a process that is driven by international trade and investment. One of the current trends in this process is the globalization of migrant women. Barbara Ehrenreich details in "Global Woman" how woman from poor, underdeveloped

countries migrate to developed countries to raise other people's children while their children are back in their home country. Migrant women sacrifice the wellbeing of their children in order to raise children of western women. In a phenomenon known as othering, migrant women rendered invisible and seen as a product, or commodity.

An aspect of globalization is othering. Othering defines the unacknowledged core of globalization. Othering is a process where an individual or group is pushed into the role of the "other", and their identity is established through this opposition. The concept of othering dates back to Orientalism. Mohanty writes that Orientalism is a style of thought that makes a distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident" (Mohanty 3). The relationship between the West and the Orient is one of power and domination, with the West being the one in the position of power. The concept of othering is a process where an individual or a group of people are pushed into the role of the "other", and their identity is established through this opposition. The other is associated with negative qualities, and this othering creates disconnect because it allows for categorization to occur. There is a disconnect because the other is seen as different than yourself typically because of oneself does not identify with an aspect of their group or individual identity. On a subconscious level, when one makes judgements about another person based on their racial identity, one is othering them by seeing them as different and categorizing them as something different than oneself. This sense of othering has led to an in-group and outgroup dynamic to develop as discussed later.

Another aspect of globalization is a "care deficit." In wealthy countries, a "care deficit" has emerged (Ehrenreich 28) where as women from wealthier countries enter the workforce,

migrant woman from developing countries are being pulled to work for them (Ehrenreich 28). Women from poor, developing countries have a difficult decision to make: they can either remain in their home country and raise their children in very difficult and poor conditions or they can make money and provide for their own children but not get to raise them (Ehrenreich 21). This is a demoralizing decision women have to make, and a large number of women will choose the second option. This is because maternal love is becoming a commodity, and poverty pushes migrant woman towards migrating. Western culture places emphasis on individualism (Ehrenreich 24), so the western woman is abandoning her role of domesticity and pursuing a career while migrant women they hire to take care of their children are rendered invisible. The western woman is able to be successful because she has turned her care over to another woman. Thus, there is an unacknowledged dependency that the western woman has on the migrant woman. It is important to note that the migrant woman does not replace the western woman. Although the western woman's children may call the migrant woman "mom" (Ehrenreich 22), the migrant woman only simulates maternal love as it is a part of her role. Ehrenreich writes, "...As affluent and middle-class families in the First World come to depend on migrants from poorer regions to provide child care, homemaking, and sexual services, a global relationship arises that in some ways mirrors the traditional relationship between the sexes" (32).

In Ehrenreich's findings, it is interesting that there is a sense of dependency present amongst women themselves, whereas Simone de Beauvoir finds that dependency occurs amongst men and women. The western woman is dependent on the migrant woman to fulfill her role, yet the migrant woman is the one who is rendered invisible and experiences a loss of

freedom. Simone de Beauvoir, on the other hand, brings forward that a woman's identity is established in relation to men (De Beauvoir 3). Thus, the migrant woman is being othered because her identity is becoming invisible due to the western woman. Furthermore, the migrant woman enables affluent men to continue avoiding the second shift (Ehrenreich 30) because men still do not contribute to housework. This sense of dependency goes both ways. There are asymmetries in their dependencies on each other since women of color rely on the western woman for income, and the western woman relies on the woman of color to take care of her children. The women, however, are not equal in power. The western woman is considered superior to the domestic migrant worker, and as a consequence many domestic migrant workers experience some form of oppression, such as exploitation. The domestic migrant worker is rendered invisible, leaving her powerless in her ability to change the circumstances of her current situation.

What does this invisibility look like? Maids and nannies are often hidden away behind closed doors in private homes (Ehrenreich 24). Migrant women who are forced into sex work are concealed even more due to the illegal nature of their work (Ehrenreich 24). Another way that women are othered when it comes to caregiving practices is that migrant women are seen as a commodity. They are a commodity that third world countries have, and they are exported to wealthy countries. This is a dehumanizing process, and women are othered in this sense because their identity shifts from being human to being a product. Ehrenreich gives the example of imported sex partners (30). Immigrant women are described as the "exotic Orient" (Ehrenreich 30) because white westerners do not realize that they have more to offer than sex work. Often times, female migrants come from middle class families back home and have high

school/college diplomas (Ehrenreich 31). Their intelligence is not recognized, however, because there is only a demand for their sex work or care work. Migrant women are belittled to financial transactions, and therefore they are being exploited.

I argue that the treatment of many domestic migrant workers relates to one of the concepts mentioned in Marion Young's "Five Faces of Oppression." One of the faces she describes is exploitation. Exploitation is using the labor of others for a profit and not compensating those people fairly (Young 48). Migrant women are being exploited for their ability to provide care and for sex work, and they are often not compensated. This exploitation only benefits the western woman and her family. Another important concept in Young's work is the notion of cultural imperialism, or when a dominant group is unaware that they are projecting their experiences as representative of the world (Young 59). Therefore, they do not know that the world they are creating is blind towards the experiences of the subordinate group, and an epistemology of ignorance occurs. An example of an applied cause of cultural imperialism is when the western woman assumes that her notions of the world are perhaps similar to that of the domestic migrant worker.

The Human Rights Watch reviewed forty-three employment relationships involving migrant domestic workers and found that abuses ranged from limited freedom of movement, assault and battery, withholding passports, and sexual misconduct. In addition, the migrant woman's lack of knowledge of social and cultural experiences in her new country make her susceptible to exploitation (Human Rights Watch 7).

Furthermore, the Human Rights Watch finds that psychological abuse is one of the main abuses regarding domestic migrant workers. Psychological abuse reinforces the employer's power, domination, and control over the migrant domestic workers, which creates a cyclical relationship of superiority and inferiority. Psychological abuse is the reason that migrant domestic workers do not seek employment elsewhere (Human Rights Watch 18). Psychological abuse can include: insulting domestic migrant workers, denying them proper clothing, and requiring them to wash their clothes separately from the employers' or with dirty rags. The Human Rights Watch finds that the abuse migrant women experience is an important mechanism for control and it is how power operates (18). The migrant woman tolerates these abuses because she believes she will incur serious harm if they left her job, forcing her to remain in abusive conditions (Human Rights Watch 1) and be exploited.

I argue that the western woman, often the employer, does not realize the consequences of her actions. She falls into an epistemology of ignorance, where the others are objects of ignorance and there is a sense of blindness towards their experiences. The western woman is not aware that she is thriving due to another woman. The western woman often does not know the struggles the migrant woman faces or the poor conditions her family back home deals with. Hence, the western woman is ignorant to the experiences of the migrant woman, rendering her even more invisible. I argue that the reason employers are epistemically ignorant towards the experiences of domestic migrant workers is because employers have a negative prejudice towards domestic migrant workers due to the pre-existing power dynamic. Miranda Fricker writes, "Prejudices are judgements...and which display some (typically, epistemically culpable) resistance to counter-evidence owing to some affective investment on the part of the subject"

(Epistemic Injustice 35). Therefore, due to this generalization employers do not want to understand the experiences of domestic migrant workers.

Although it can be argued that hatred is creating a sense of detachment between the domestic migrant worker and the western woman as argued by Sarah Ahmed (55), I argue that hatred is not the cause of the employer and western woman's abusive actions. Hate is not the affect that is circulating in this context but rather there are other negative affects, such as inferiority, that are at stake. There are often negative emotions or affects that are associated with certain stereotypes, such as the domestic migrant workers being associated as the other. I argue that it is rather the label of the "other" that often causes the western woman to be blind towards the domestic migrant worker. The label of the "other" is a powerful label that influences people's emotions. Negative affects are often associated with inferiority, and those negative affects are circulating in this context. Positive affects, on the other hand, allow for empathy. Ahmed argues that hatred most often occurs when there is a threat of loss. Ahmed writes, "...they signify the danger of impurity, or the mixing or taking of blood" (Cultural Politics of Emotion 44). This is not what is occurring in the power dynamic between the western woman and the domestic migrant worker. The western woman does not let the migrant woman have a position of power, or allow for a "mixing or taking of blood" to occur. The Human Rights Watch finds that a live-in migrant domestic worker is often seen as a "member of the family" yet is considered inferior to true family members. Because of this devalued role, she is susceptible to abuse, which reinforces that she is subordinate and her employer is in a position of power. This power dynamic is cyclical, allowing for the employer to engage in severe worker abuse. Overcoming ignorance and this lack of understanding can be done by developing

a type of empathy based on the understanding the other person. Negative emotion can be replaced by positive emotion.

I argue that the western woman is ignorant of the domestic migrant worker's lived experiences, and therefore the domestic migrant worker cannot be seen as a giver of knowledge by the western woman, which creates a gap between them. Carla Fehr, author of *The Woman Question and Higher Education*, writes that people are often ignorant of racism towards people of color, as argued by Mills (104). She writes, "The epistemology of ignorance supports the racial contract because it allows whites to not know about racism. If they do not know about racism, or do not allow themselves to know about racism, then they cannot feel obligated to redress the injustices of racism...." (Fehr 104). In this particular context, I argue that the western woman is ignorant about the racism she is holding towards the domestic migrant worker. The western woman has false views about race that seem correct to her because that is how she expects the world to be (Fehr 104). That is why there is this power structure in place and the domestic migrant worker gets labeled as the "other". In addition, this power structure is how ignorance is maintained (Fehr 105). The western woman's treatment of the migrant woman is an example of racism because she treats the domestic migrant worker differently due to her race. Thus, my point of view is that it is a blindness towards difference, specifically race, that is the cause of the problem.

As a result of the concept of othering, I argue that a sense of detachment is created and, as a consequence, power dynamics form, which leads to white women being unaware of a woman of color's experiences and worldview. The others are the object of ignorance, and this

blindness towards nonwhite experiences reinforces disconnect between white women and women of color because we are detached or withdrawn from people who are different. This is what allows in-groups and out-groups to form. When in-groups and out-groups form, the in-group is seen as the powerful and desirable group whereas the out-group is the “other.” This disconnect between the white woman and the migrant woman stems from an imbalance of power, and as a result of this power struggle, there is a lack of unification between humanity and certain individuals or groups of people who are seen as less (Cultural Politics of Emotion 44). Ahmed gives an example of the in-group and out-group mentality in her work. She writes about how countries might close their borders to asylum seekers because there is a possibility that the asylum seekers can cause instability (Cultural Politics of Emotion 42). Not all asylum seekers are bogus, but the possibility of there being a bogus asylum seeker gives people the justification to block immigration (Ahmed 47). Uncertainty about whether or not that one individual is a bogus asylum seeker leads people to develop the feeling that regard all asylum seekers should be regarded as bogus. Thus, the asylum seekers become the outgroup. Mills looks at power from an epistemological mode whereas Ahmed looks at an affective mode of that power but goes further than Mills because she looks at how othering also have an affective mode because it is a powerful label that influences people’s emotions.

My argument is that Fricker’s notion of power can be understood in terms of the globalization of women. Fricker finds that people’s exercise of power often has to do with their gender (Epistemic Injustice 9). She writes, “power is a capacity, and capacity persists through periods when it is not being realized, power exists even while it is not being realized in action” (10). The western woman’s exercise of power is structural (Epistemic Injustice 10). Her

operation of power is dependent upon a functioning social world- factors such as shared institutions, shared meanings, shared expectations, and so on (Epistemic Injustice 10). Additionally, the western woman's power is dependent upon co-ordination with a range of social others" (Epistemic Injustice 12). In other words, the western woman's power depends upon the social contexts of the migrant woman. It is the migrant woman's different social circumstances that allow for the western woman to have a power over her, further strengthening the need for Lorde's bridge between women who are different.

My point of view is that Fricker's notion of power is comparable to that of Foucault. Power is not localized in the hands of the western woman as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed through a net like operation (Foucault Power/Knowledge 98) where the western woman derives her power from the migrant woman's narrow social contexts. As a result of this power, a social order is created where migrant women's actions are being controlled at the mercy of the western woman.

Nancy Daukas, author of *Epistemic Trust and Social Location*, writes about a problem called "epistemic exclusion on the basis of social location" (109). She says, "This problem is expressed through a frequently normalized pattern in epistemic interaction in virtue of which epistemic authority is granted to, or withheld from individuals on the basis of their perceived membership in a socially constructed group" (109). I argue that this is similar to Fricker's notion of epistemic injustice, but Daukas adds that epistemic character can be used as a medium for social change (104). The western woman is epistemically excluding the domestic migrant worker because of her social location. My point of view is that domestic migrant workers

largely do not speak out against the injustices they face because they do not want to risk being seen further as irrational, since women are collectively labeled as emotional and irrational. In this respect, Daukas is right: “Unjust epistemic exclusion on the basis of social location is therefore self-perpetuating: its consequences perpetuate the inequalities that fulfill, and therefore seem to justify, the discriminatory expectations that, in turn, perpetuate unjust epistemic exclusion” (116), and this is what I call tunnel vision.

I bring forward that Carole Pateman is an example of how a white woman can have tunnel vision towards the way in which social location operates. She argues that the contracts laid out by Locke, Rosseau, and Hobbes are too idealized because they tell stories of freedom. Instead, she creates her own version of a contract known as the Sexual Contract, which tells stories of subjection. She shows how men can have power over women when they “contract in.” Pateman describes three parts to her contract: the marriage contract, the prostitution contract, and the contract of surrogate motherhood (*The Sexual Contract*). All three aspects of her contract discuss how the patriarchy is upheld and women’s freedoms and equalities are undermined. She discusses how women have control over other women, but she fails to take race into account.

I find that Carole Pateman is an example of how even women in the field of philosophy can be epistemologically ignorant. She is ignorant of her white privilege since she generalizes her experiences to all women, and she does not articulate how women, depending on their race, can have different issues with consent. She describes issues of consent as if they are universally applied to all women. Pateman writes, “Rape is central to the problem of women

and consent in everyday life. Rape is widespread, both in and out of marriage, but although women of all ages and classes are attacked, the majority of rapes are not reported” (Women and Consent 156). Pateman makes note of how women of different ages and classes are attacked but fails to mention color. She goes on to discuss the implementation of criminal law in courts and the contradictory beliefs about women and consent in the legal system, but she never mentions how these experiences are different for women of color. In the marriage contract, she discusses sexual access to bodies, but she does not take into consideration how sexual access varies based on a woman’s color. Crenshaw, on the other hand, acknowledges that through intersectionality it can be seen that a woman of a certain color makes her more susceptible to rape and “sexual access”. Pateman falls into the trap she is criticizing, and she creates a stronger disconnect between women since she does not acknowledge how woman of color’s experiences differ from a white woman’s experience.

She brings up the marriage contract and how wives are taught to embrace their role of domesticity. However, my point of view is that she does not take race into account when it comes to gender experiences cause white women and women of color have different responsibilities in caregiving practices. She is right that civil freedom is a masculine attribute (2), but she does not see how a man’s civil freedom can affect a woman’s civil freedom based on the woman’s color. Although she takes gender into consideration, she does not consider epistemic issues or intersectionality. Thus, she fails to take intersectionality into consideration. She, too, has a sense of blindness towards non-white experiences.

I argue that Pateman's notion of contracting in conflicts with my framework which combines Fricker's concept of social power, with Foucault's netlike theory of power. She describes power as something that is only accessed when parts of the sexual contract are activated, but she does not realize how power is constantly being exercised, whether or not one is aware of this happening. Power does not occur only when there is action, rather power structures are constantly existing and affecting the everyday lives of women in ways that people are not even aware of.

I bring forward that Lorde, Mills, and Pateman are all authors that are epistemologically ignorant towards women of color. Patricia Hill Collins builds on Crenshaw's ideas in regards to epistemic ignorance. Collins writes in "Intersectionality" that intersectionality is a way of understanding the complexities of the world, in people, and in human experiences (2). The events and conditions of social and political life can rarely be understood and defined by one factor. They are shaped by many factors in influencing ways (Intersectionality 2). Thus, one must look to how race and gender operate together in forming one's understanding of the world. Collins recognizes the need to use intersectionality as an analytic tool. While Crenshaw first points to the problems of intersectionality in the legal system, Collins sees intersectionality as a way to understand inequality and bring out change by restructuring power dynamics. She writes, "intersectionality is not simply a method for doing research but is also a tool for empowering people" (37).

CHAPTER ONE CONCLUSION: In conclusion, authors such as Mills, Fricker, and Pateman are epistemologically ignorant towards race and gender respectively. Women of color

are less likely to be seen as epistemic knowers, and because of their race and gender, they are often associated with negative stereotypes. Domestic migrant workers assume the position of the other, and these negative affects play a role in allowing the western woman to maintain her dominant role. Negative stereotypes stand in the way of empathy, as I will discuss in Chapter 2. Although I am not drawing upon Sara Ahmed's politics of hate, her discussion of affects is important. In the next chapter I will look at how affects associated with stereotypes are negative and need to be replaced with positive affects.

CHAPTER TWO ABSTRACT: Humanity is disconnected in an intersectional sense. Due to an epistemological ignorance, the formation of in-groups and out-groups, and the concept of othering, disconnect is occurring in terms of race since difference in skin color is viewed as a cause for separation. This disconnect, however can be bridged through empathy and emotion, and feelings of indifference can be transformed into feelings of unity, but only after the epistemological gaps are decreased. In this chapter I bring forward that positive emotions must replace negative emotions that circulate in society as a way to resist stereotypes and assumptions. Only then can empathy occur. In addition, I find that feelings of anger can be transformed into empowerment.

CHAPTER TWO: ROLE OF EMPATHY AND CIRCULATION OF EMOTION

Empathy has often been cited as a possible way to bridge the gap of disconnection. The kind of empathy I focus on is one that allows you to understand another person. Empathy can be utilized as a way to overcome differences but only after the circulation of positive emotions

replacing the casually negative ones. Currently, empathy is not sufficient enough to overcome differences because such empathy will inevitably be prejudiced. In the Empathy Exams, Leslie Jamison discusses how empathy is important because it shapes how we view the world and express emotions to others. Jamison articulates, "...A superlative kind of empathy (is) to seek, or to supply: an empathy that rearticulates more clearly what's shown" (Empathy Exams 14). Empathy can allow us to become aware of our own feelings, but this often results in self-critique as discussed later. I find that we can bridge the gap of erotic disconnections we might have with ourselves if we are able to express genuine empathy. Pain, suffering, and other emotions we experience can be understood and discovered by others through empathy, and empathy can act as a medium for emotions to be understood. Jamison reflects on how people could not empathize with her because they did not physically see the problems she was experiencing, but that does not make the problems she faced any less real. She needed to establish a common ground with them in order to understand what they were experiencing. She writes, "Empathy requires you to know nothing. Empathy means acknowledging a horizon of context that extends perpetually beyond what you can see" (Jamison 5). The problem with establishing a common ground in terms of racism is that many of those in dominant positions find that racism is not a real problem because they are not experiencing it and therefore no common ground is established. Empathy alone does not have the power to transgresses boundaries. It is only after the epistemological gap has decreased and positive emotions are circulated that empathy can act as a medium where disconnects in knowledge can decrease because people could understand each other's emotions and experiences. Radical empathy, or

trying to understand and share feelings with others and change our perspective from judgement to accepting is possible after the emotions that block empathy are understood.

Empathy is a possible way of being able to understand the experiences of others. J. D. Trout, author of *The Empathy Gap: Building Bridges to the Good Life and the Good Society*, writes, "Empathy is the capacity to accurately understand the position of others- to feel 'this could happen to me.'... Empathy has as a goal to accurately understand people's inner states by placing ourselves in his situation or taking his perspective" (21). I argue that empathy is a way to overcome problematic norms, and differences can be healed through circulating positive emotion. Currently, my point of view is that there is an empathy gap between women of color and the western woman. An empathy gap is created due to a sense of unfamiliarity with an individual or their lived experiences (25). An empathy gap is difficult to overcome, however, because there is denial regarding differences. I argue that if the lack of empathy towards women of color is decreased, they will not experience a credibility deficit because their experiences would be better understood. This double-consciousness, or awareness of one's own experiences and the experiences of others, can break the barriers of ignorance that permeate society today.

I argue that empathy plays a role in perceiving whether or not another has a credibility excess or deficit. Because the hearer has a prejudice towards women of color, the hearer cannot empathize with the woman of color. The hearer assumes that she is different due to this stereotype, or presupposition, and therefore sees a cause for separation. If the hearer, however, empathizes with the woman of color by attempting to put themselves in the

speaker's position, they can overcome difference and accurately judge the woman of color's level of credibility based on un-biased factors.

It is crucial to note the difference between empathy and sympathy. Sympathy is associated with an obligation to go along with, or agree with (Trout 55). Empathy is meant to allow for one to disagree, listen, and question another in order to overcome norms in society and better understand the world around us. I argue that this, however, is not how empathy alone presents itself in society today as discussed later.

Empathy alone is not enough. Combining empathy with pedagogy is crucial in order to overcome this disconnection between groups of women. Part of the cause of the problem stems from a lack of care and a lack of knowledge about the other. bell hooks writes in Teaching to Transgress that her education in an integrated school was oppressive. Growing up in the South, bell hooks, a black girl, could not get an education because of her color. Racism had integrated into education, and as a result there was a disconnect even in the education system due to race.

I find that this is similar to Daukas's notion that marginalized individuals sometimes cannot develop the same intellectual potentials as those around them because they do not have the same privilege, social location, and educational resources (116). This affects their ability to be epistemic knowers and over time results in an assumption that the group as a whole cannot produce productive epistemic knowledge that would benefit the community (Daukas 116-117). For bell hooks, by changing the subject matter, the way it was taught, and who taught it, however, progress can be made and people can learn about the disconnect that

is occurring and use their knowledge as a way to prevent themselves from engaging in behavior that encourages such a disconnection. Ignorance is maintained not because it would require societal restructure but because people are afraid of embracing knowledge or do not care enough to.

In addition to a lack of knowledge, my point of view is that the cause of the problem lies in power, and power is tied to emotion. Transgressing norms often results in heightened emotions, especially by those who are not in positions of power. bell hooks writes about rage in "Killing Rage, Ending Racism." She finds that the way race is discussed today is through the lense of whiteness (4). The voices of progressive black women are often unheard and those talking about racism are rarely people of color. The problem with the way racism is talked about today is that it is rarely communities of color who are discussing it. White people who are talking about racism do not truly understand the experiences surrounding racism. This often leads to them being in denial that racism is a real problem (hooks 4). She makes an important distinction between unawareness and denial. hooks writes, "Racism is real...It goes beyond prejudice and discrimination and even transcends bigotry, largely because it arises from outlooks and assumptions of which we are largely unaware" (4). Those talking about racism create a world where they are unaware of how large scale the problem is. This often leads to them being in denial of the problem. hooks goes on to write, "The 'we' of unaware does not include black people. We do not have the luxury to be unaware and when are unaware it is just that, an act" (hooks 4).

As a result of denial, major white voices often pretend racism does not exist or is not a real problem and therefore that a solution to racism cannot be achieved because the problem does not actually have to go away (hooks 4). This sense of denial is what leads to what hooks calls a “killing rage” (11). People of color experience racial harassment in their daily lives, but they have accepted this as a part of their lives that cannot change due to the denial surrounding racism. In these racialized incidences, people of color are often overcome with emotion due to their lack of power and inability to change the present situation. hooks writes about her own personal experience with racism and says, “I felt a ‘killing rage.’ I wanted to stab him softly, to shoot him with the gun I wish I had in my purse. And as I watched his pain, I would say to him ‘racism hurts.’ With no outlet, my rage turned to an overwhelming grief and I began to weep” (10). hooks goes on to say, “All around me everyone acted as though I were invisible” (10). The woman of color’s invisibility is what allows for women of color to be an object of ignorance. She was motivated by emotion to transgress boundaries. Anger is an appropriate response to racism because it has a sense of presence, and it is that presence that colonizers do not want to recognize. They are in denial about this assertion of anger (hooks 12).

What does bell hooks’s notion of rage look like? She defines “killing rage” as the fierce anger black people carry due to repeated occasions of everyday racism (hooks 4). An important aspect of it is refusing to be a victim. hooks finds that shared victimhood is disempowering and disempowering because it leads to feelings of despair and hopelessness (51). Her spirit of resistance (56) is important because it did not allow her to become a victim and give into the subordination she was experiencing in racist interactions. hooks discusses Ann Petry’s novel, *The Street*, and says, “...Most black folks were holding anger at racism so intense that it

constantly threatened to implode, to destroy us from the inside out” (139). This is an example of the rage that bell hooks is discussing in her work. It is a rage that is often silenced because when people of color do speak up, there is a negative backlash. White people’s inability to understand how they are potentially being racist to people of color builds upon the rage of communities of color, and it is partially why white people are unable to extend empathy to people of color.

I find that an issue with empathy is that not only does it have the potential to ignore or be blind towards women. Kate Manne, author of *Down Girl*, gives her own account of testimonial injustice. I bring forward that Manne’s account of testimonial injustice is different from that of Fricker’s account because Manne takes misogyny into consideration whereas Fricker concentrates on racial identity power rather than sexism. Manne finds that testimonial injustice exists as a way to police and enforce social rules and as a result women are insufficiently cared for (11). Social norms are conformed to, and women are often victim-blamed because of the gendered expectations that exist in society. Even in testimonial injustice there are power relations because it involves one’s word against another. Manne says, “Specifically, they (examples of testimonial injustice) all involve a historically *subordinate group member* trying to testify against a *dominant social actor...*” (193-194). The issue with this dynamic is that it becomes known as a “he said/she said” conflict and men are more likely to gain the sympathy of an audience. Manne finds that there is a tendency to sympathize with men’s pain over women’s pain and forgive men for their sins (193). Manne writes, “We are protective on his behalf and hence suspicious of her” (193). She calls this phenomenon

“himpathy” (197). Himpathy occurs when excessive sympathy is shown towards male perpetrators of sexual violence (Manne 197).

“Himpathy” can best be seen through the case of Brock Turner, a Stanford University student who was put on trial for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman. Instead of focusing on the way that Turner hurt the victim, the focus on the part of the judge and the jury was turned to the fact that a harsh conviction would severely impact Turner’s future (Manne 197). Many found that Brock Turner was a caring, respectful man (Manne 198). The judge also corroborated that there is evidence of good character on his behalf, and his guilt had been established so punishing him severely would not have been productive for him. Such a mindset is why there is hesitation to believe women who testify against men.

Being remorseful and choosing to take the high moral ground should not grant a man an empathic reaction from people because that does not erase the consequences of his actions. His actions often result in the silencing of women. The victim of his actions is often seen as the problem. The most common question becomes “what does the victim want out of this?” (Manne 200). It is forgotten that the victim is not pursuing justice because she has a personal vendetta. She is pursuing justice because she was wronged and the law was broken. She is not trying to take away from her perpetrator by pursuing appropriate legal action, yet she is seen as unforgiving and problematic (Manne 200). Manne writes, “When our loyalty lies with the rapist, we add profound moral insult to the injuries he inflicts on his victims” (Manne 204). Ideally justice should be protecting those that are wronged, but currently in society that is not the case. Those who commit wrongdoings are empathized with and their victims are often silenced

as a result. Many women choose not to come forward because their interests are not protected, and sometimes women are even intimidated into being silent (Manne 219).

Another example of a man who took advantage of his social position and obtained sympathy is Daniel Holtzclaw. He targeted thirteen black women and sexually assaulted them (Manne 212-213). Many members of the jury expressed empathy towards Holtzclaw, and they were not sympathetic towards the women (Manne 213-214). Holtzclaw utilized his position as a white man and as a police officer offer to exploit black women, and many of his victims were scared to speak up because they knew that they could be perceived as not worthy of sympathy (Manne 219). Not only did the jury have tunnel vision towards the victims' experiences, but the victims also sustained a credibility deficit because they were associated with negative stereotypes, such as being associated with prostitution (Manne 214). Manne writes, "If the women who are the victims of such crimes try to bring their attackers to justice, they will be up against structural barriers and roadblocks, as well as subject to suspicion, blame, resentment, and so on" (217). Thus, they were pushed into silence. There was overwhelming evidence that Holtzclaw was guilty, yet many people did not view him that way. The positive stereotypes surrounding whiteness and men enabled him to be viewed in a favorable light and gain sympathy. Notions such as sympathy stand in the way of justice. I argue that such mindsets that inevitably promote tunnel vision give rise to a sense of rage as discussed below.

Rage not only has the power to destroy but it also has the power to construct. hooks writes that people of color, especially black communities, are told to suppress their rage. Black rage is seen as unwanted, and many people of color have found a way to silence their rage.

hooks writes, "To perpetuate and maintain white supremacy, white folks have colonized black Americans, and a part of that colonizing process has been teaching us to repress our rage...Most black people internalize this message" (14). These communities, too, are in denial that rage is an appropriate way to tackle racism, which is why many of them do not act upon their rage. hooks finds that rage is an appropriate healing response to oppression and exploitation (12). hooks writes, "Rage can act as a catalyst inspiring courageous action" (16). Instead, however, people of color are taught to silence their rage and as a result a white supremacist capitalist patriarchal structure is maintained where white people have access to benefits of material privilege that communities of color do not have. This is a form of exploitation similar to what Marion Iris Young finds.

As a result of suppressing rage, apathy occurs. The danger of apathy is creating a superficial way of extending empathy, which results in a color-blindness. An example of an author who does this is Nancy Daukas. Daukas finds that by assimilating one's epistemic self-conception, women of color can be better seen as a source of epistemic knowledge (Daukas 111). Daukas writes, "We must deliberately attend to what we are doing, self-consciously assessing whether we are accurately representing our epistemic competencies, or explicitly deliberating about whether or not to extend the epistemic principle of charity to others" (Daukas 112). She argues that there are two layers to evaluating epistemic trustworthiness. The first is Daukas's notion that we need to frame our epistemic attitudes in a way that encompasses everyone and does not exclude members of certain communities. Withholding judgement is an important part in this first layer to evaluating epistemic trustworthiness. After withholding judgement and being aware of one's epistemic self-awareness, the next step in

evaluating epistemic trustworthiness should be to look at situational factors such as context and discipline (Daukas 112).

I find that this artificial methodology in extending empathy leads to an epistemology of ignorance because it often leads to distorted judgements and ultimately denial about the racism that people of color are incurring. My point of view is that evaluating character and deciding whether to extend empathy is what leads to an inaccurate reflection of a woman of color's epistemic status and experiences. As Mills and Yancy point out, women of color are often assumed to have negative qualities, which results in a credibility deficit as Fricker articulates. Even when one is self-aware of their epistemic knowledge, they can still be epistemologically ignorant by being unaware of the world they have created around them and the racism they are producing, or a sense of denial. By essentially compelling someone to have empathy for another, then, one can subconsciously assert their beliefs and assumptions about race and gender and deem one to be an unreliable epistemic knower. This leads to distorted judgements because stereotypes have been internalized (Daukas 114) and does not combat the issue of the invisibility of women of color and the racism they incur. Evaluating whether or not one is epistemically trustworthy highly revolves around attitudes towards others (Daukas 115). By internalizing norms that are persistent in society, and evaluating situational factors, it is possible to inaccurately determine the degree of epistemic credibility we should extend to another (Daukas 115). I argue that this is another issue with this notion of artificial empathy. Realistically, groups in power will not extend empathy to the powerless groups. They do not want to challenge or change the existing structure of society, so they will remain complacent in their deniability and ultimately will not extend empathy.

Moreover, this extended empathy may promote victimization instead of transformation (hooks 18). Victimization is seen as a positive thing for white people because it is the opposite of activism. When people of color internalize this victimization, they are rendered powerless and therefore suppress their rage (hooks 19). The power structure in this context leads to an in-group and out-group phenomenon as articulated by Sarah Ahmed. Those who are in power are seen as the in-group and the powerless are a part of the out-group.

I find that the in-group and out-group mentality as described previously also occurs when studying domestic migrant workers, and it relates to the concept of empathy. Ligaya Lindio-McGovern writes in *Globalization, Labor Export and Resistance* about her experience with the insider/outsider dynamic as a Filipina woman. She writes, "I am insider in the sense that I have also experienced how it feels to enter a foreign culture and be separated from one's family, sometimes experiencing alienation.... I am an outsider in the sense that I do not conduct my work in the foreign-home sites where the Filipino domestic migrant workers live..." (4). Because the Filipina sociologist is different from the domestic migrant workers, she is seen as an outsider. She, however, does not let her status as an outsider result in a gap in knowledge. She utilized her position as a way to have "empathetic understanding" (5) towards the experiences of the migrant workers. She writes, "I felt angry, sad, and frustrated as I got to know more about their lives and when I got involved in some of their struggles while in the field...These emotions gave me a personal taste of what some of the women were undergoing and working with" (5).

Not only did she draw upon empathy as a way to connect with the women, but she utilized emotion and a similar concept of hooks's rage to gain awareness about the lives of the domestic migrant workers. By allowing for her to personally connect with the women on an emotional level, she was able to better understand their experiences. Allowing for the rage of the domestic migrant workers to be heard is what allowed Lindio-McGovern to empower the domestic migrant workers. Empathetic understanding alone would not have empowered the domestic migrant workers or allowed for Lindio-McGovern to truly understand the experiences of the domestic migrant workers. She was moved by emotion. Lindio-McGovern discussed how she got a personal taste of what the women were going through by doing personal interviews with the women, and as a result, she felt emotional connections with the women. The personal interviews were a way for her to try to understand the domestic migrant workers' experiences, such as leaving their own children behind to take care of other children, the abuses they experienced, and the emotional pain they felt of being degraded (4-5). She used her position as an outsider, or a sociologist/researcher to better understand the experiences of the domestic migrant workers to gain insight into their lives by letting their "rage" be heard (6).

I argue that women like Lindio-McGovern are examples of how this sense of detachment between the western woman and woman of color can be overcome. The difference that Lorde discusses in *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House* between white women and women of color can be bridged if we have empathy towards the experiences of others and allow for the "rage" of women of color to be heard. Then, empathy can be utilized as a way to transgress the norms that "stick" (Ahmed 42) with us, such as the stereotypes that Fricker discusses. This is why stereotypes have lingered on. We tend to

embrace the familiar (44), and that is why stereotypes persist and an epistemology of ignorance occurs against women of color. They become the object of ignorance as long as stereotypes about them exist in society. I argue that once these stereotypes are combatted by circulating positive affects, connections can form, and women of color will no longer be subject to epistemic injustice due to their intersectional identities.

bell hooks is an example of how there is a need to transgress against norms. Epistemic injustice can be a way of educating people in a way that strengthens them to overcome the norms they have internalized. Daukas writes about how epistemic knowledge can be utilized as a means for social change. I argue that in addition to epistemic knowledge, emotion is a necessary means for social change. Everyone is a part of an epistemic community but not everyone is perceived as morally trustworthy (Daukas 2006). This results in powerless groups being angry, and that anger can be transformed into a catalyst for positive change.

One of the reasons epistemologies of ignorance exist, especially in regards to women of color, is because people are afraid of change or are in denial that there is a serious need for transformation. In order to stop this ignorant, tunnel vision perception towards women of color, there would need to be changes made not only in the court system but also in society itself so that women of color are genuinely able to be seen. Thus, ignorance is maintained not because it would require societal restructure but because people are afraid of embracing knowledge or do not care enough to. Nancy Tuana writes, "Another category of ignorance involves topics that we do not even know that we do not know because our current beliefs, interests, and theories obscure them" (The Speculum of Ignorance 6).

Society's current beliefs towards women of color obscure the injustices they are incurring. If society learns to embrace knowledge and emotion, these epistemologies can be overcome. Mariana Ortega writes in *Hypatia* that there are mechanisms in society today by which women demean and belittle other women, and those who are belittled are often women of color (59). This is because women often hold an arrogant perception towards other women who seem different (Ortega 59). Ortega quotes Marilyn Frye and says women often have "a moral dread of being outside the field of vision of the arrogant perceiver" (80). Many women of color, however, are inevitably outside the field of vision of white women because white women have tunnel vision towards women of color. Because there is a sense of community that women find importance in, many women believe there should be a "harmonious community of agreement" (Ortega 59). This is why some women hold arrogant perceptions towards other women who are different since they are seen as a threat to the cohesiveness of the community (Ortega 59). Ortega quotes Lugones and writes, "White/Anglo women do one or more of the following to women of color: they ignore us, ostracize us, render us invisible, stereotype us, leave us completely alone, interpret us as crazy" (89). This is another example of how women of color are often misunderstood, and it relates back to Ahmed's example of the insider/outsider dynamic. Anything that is not familiar is regarded as an outsider. Ortega finds that if society shifts their gazes from being arrogant perceivers to loving perceivers, the disconnect people experiences can be bridged and we can learn more about others desires and needs. She adds that in addition the structure of racism can be dismantled and we learn more about others desires and needs.

Ortega finds that from being epistemologically ignorant, we should shift to learning to love the others. Ortega writes, "...loving perception includes looking, listening, checking, and questioning" (Being Lovingly, Knowingly Ignorant 61). We must check and question the desires and needs of women of color, rather than ignoring their voices. White women cannot understand the experiences of women of color, but they can learn about the experiences and have conversations with women of color about it. Frye introduces the notion of the loving eye, which involves the loving perceiver to "...know what are one's interests, desires and loathings, one's projects, fears and wishes, and that one know what is and what is not determined by these" (59-60). The loving perceiver, therefore, no longer sees the other as a threat or a means to fulfill their desires (60). Rather, the loving perceiver recognizes a sense of independence of the other. According to Ortega's notion of the loving eye, the western woman has a sense of dependence towards the domestic migrant worker, but if the western woman shifts her gaze from an arrogant perceiver to a loving one, she can recognize her own independence and no longer utilize the domestic migrant worker as simply a means to fulfill her desire of childcare. The western woman would no longer see the domestic migrant worker as an invasive object but rather as her true self. I argue, however, that the loving eye involves a sense of asymmetry. Ortega finds that the unequal nature is what allows for autonomy and an accurate understanding of another, which allows one to overcome any potential tunnel vision towards the unknown. Ortega finds that the western woman would see the domestic migrant worker as an autonomous individual through the loving eye, but the western woman may not come to this realization she is not truly hearing the responses of the domestic migrant worker and is

instead focusing on herself. On the contrary, I find that the dual nature leads the perceiver to focus on themselves and leads to a form of self-critique.

Another important aspect of the loving eye is what Frye calls “a great wanting” (Ortega 91). Due to this wanting, the western woman typically simplifies, invents, and expects the world to be in a certain way rather than inquiring about it (Ortega 91). This is how ignorance develops. In response to the great wanting, Frye writes that one should be in possession of the great wanting (Ortega 92). Ortega says, “...It is a discipline of knowing and owning the wanting: identifying it, claiming it, knowing its scope, and through all of this, knowing its distance from the truth” (92). This sense of self-awareness is similar to Daukas’s notion of being self-aware of epistemic abilities and limits. Yet, I argue, it is possible to think that we are being loving perceivers but we are actually distorting objects of perception (Daukas 92).

My point of view is that checking and questioning is not enough to make positive changes for women of color because then women of color are only made visible when white women “give them a voice” (Ortega 62). This is why women of color have not been able to truly assimilate into society. They are included or excluded from society at the mercy of another woman. In order for women of color to truly be homogenized, the boundaries of perception must be adjusted to the point where knowledge production goes both ways as articulated by Daukas and Ortega. Checking and questioning women is important because if a perceiver misclassifies or misrepresents the experience of women of color, checking and questioning can prevent ignorance. Ortega writes, “According to Frye, checking and questioning are necessary if the perceiver is to avoid making up a reality that reinforces his or her worldview... which we

experience as we are socialized into particular types of beings” (61). By simply looking and listening, women of color cannot be completely visible.

Ortega argues that self-awareness is important, but also, we also must check and question the desires and needs of others, especially when it comes to women of color. The in-group cannot understand the experiences of the out-group unless they learn about the experiences and have conversations with each other about it. White women are often in denial of the situations they have created or are unaware of the ways in which they have participated in creating systematic racism or sexism. Daukas says, “Well-intentioned, intelligent, epistemically skillful people, including many who are white, have unintentionally created situations...” (118). This is why shifting from the ignorant eye to the loving eye is crucial because it allows for one to become aware of the potential situation they could have created.

I argue that there is a sense of asymmetry between those in power and the powerless. The people in power, often white people, are the ones who are granted all the agency. They are the ones who are supposedly listening, checking, and questioning the needs of others as a way to gain emphatic understanding, but this simply maintains the structure of domination. This method of checking and questioning does not allow a woman’s intersectional identity to truly be understood. Elizabeth Spelman in *Inessential Woman* notes that the issue with understanding a woman of color’s intersectional identity lies with attempts to separate her gendered from her racialized identity (13). Spelman writes, “If I believe that the woman in every woman is just like me, and if I also assume that there is no difference between me and the other woman, then seeing the other woman “as a woman” will involve seeing her as

fundamentally like the woman I am” (13). Such a notion is problematic because it takes power away from the woman of color and places it in the hands of white people. White people, then, are the ones who determine whether racialized groups are heard or oppressed. They obscure differences and maintain racial domination (hooks 31).

Even though people of color are listened to and questioned, I find that they are not truly heard. When their “rage” is suppressed, people of color are not truly being listened to. People of color are not in a position of power because they cannot utilize their rage for positive transformation. I argue that there is an unequal balance of power since people of color see the world in terms of whiteness but whiteness exists without the knowledge of color. hooks writes, “Collectively black people remain silent about representations of whiteness...As in the old days where black folks learned to “wear the mask,” many of us pretend to be comfortable in the face of whiteness only to turn our backs and give expressions to intense levels of comfort” (37).

I argue his asymmetry suggests that there is not truly love in the notion of the loving eye because it does not take the circulation of emotion and power fully into consideration. The loving eye implies that white women need to have more of a loving eye towards women of color, but the more loving the eye is, the less power people of color have. In addition, it is difficult to have this notion of love because there is a constant struggle for power between black and white females, making it very challenging to form constructive, mutually satisfying bonds (hooks 219). My point of view is that the loving eye is a way for white women to interrogate women of color and to possibly self-critique by gaining insight into how they became oppressors/exploiters rather than understand their potential racist mindsets and

interactions with women of color. hooks writes, “Many black females active in the feminist movement felt that the moment they allowed themselves to open up, white females betrayed their confidence” (219). As a result, many black females did not see a point in forming connections with white females because such a relationship reinforced the structure of subordination and oppression. This is why empathy and the notion of the loving eye are not enough to overcome racial structures in society. Empathy and the loving eye do not pay sufficient attention to emotion and power.

I find that that the problem of the loving eye itself can be seen through Daukas’s notion for multiple perspectives. Daukas explains that it is possible for people to “...ignore, or simply ‘not see’, the need for including the perspectives of members of unjustly stereotyped groups; or to misunderstand and devalue such perspectives included” (118). She adds this is why it is important to occupy an objective perspective (Daukas 118), or else one could assume over confidently that they know more about a particular domain. In addition to an objective perspective on the hearer’s part, which is typically white women, women of color need to develop a “double consciousness” (119). Daukas writes, “...it has been necessary for her to learn to ‘see how things look’ from the ‘dominant white perspective’...” (119), and as a result this woman of color has developed a double consciousness that allows her to “...constantly confront and negotiate differences between situations, including her role in them...and the way that people are expected to perceive them” (117).

By developing a sense of “double consciousness”, Daukas argues that women of color are able to develop a degree of epistemic trustworthiness (117). Asking women of color to

understand whiteness while whiteness exists without knowledge of blackness is the problem. Women of color feel that it is the responsibility of white people, especially white women, to understand the experiences of women of color rather than women of color trying to find a way to find a place in a racist society. Asking a woman of color to be complacent with the way race relations function in society today is partly why her rage and anger develops. The loving eye, which asks the dominant group to check and question others, often leads to a distorted perception because women of color are not given a voice or a way to express their rage in regards to the casual racism they face. Consequently, the dominant group is in denial or is unaware about how grand the problem of racism is. Thus, the loving eye does not adequately expand upon knowledge because it does not truly require cooperation. In addition, there is no way to know if the oppressed group is being asked the right sorts of questions.

Daukas writes, "Participating in epistemic activity often requires that we recognize when a particular inquiry requires cooperation among diverse inquirers" (117). Daukas adds that while there are "...some kinds of shared patterns of experience..." between unjustly stereotyped groups (117), we should focus on the individual perspective because not all women who belong to particular groups have the same experiences. Daukas writes that focusing on the individual allows us to ..." ask different kinds of questions, experience the 'same' interactions differently, notice different kinds of patterns, describe what they notice differently, and so on" (117). Focusing on the individual still does not overcome the problem of self-critique or of group-based oppression.

The issue with the loving eye is that white people are the ones asking the questions and evaluating the situation. According to the notion of the loving eye, women of color should simply answer the questions that white people are asking rather than have a voice themselves, and this is problematic because such questions could be phrased in a way that are careless towards race. The loving eye reproduces unbalanced power structures in a new light. Those asking the questions and in power are the ones who determine whose voices are heard and worthy to speak. It is problematic that the fate of people of color rests in the hands of whiteness. hooks writes, "...Whites were and are always with us, their voices, values, and beliefs echoing in our brains" (110). I argue that the loving eye, or listening, checking, and questioning the desires of others often leads to people of color being reminded of their marginalization or even ultimately passively accepting the white supremacist attitudes and assumptions. Thus, the loving eye does not really get at the problem because it turns to itself and is more concerned with self-critique. This can best be seen through a phenomenon known as white guilt.

A study conducted in the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* found that white guilt occurs when those who are advantaged might feel bad or guilty when disadvantaged groups are systematically oppressed (117). They then feel guilty about their own social position. As a result, focus is turned inward onto the self. The study finds "A second characteristic of guilt is that it focuses attention on the self. Those who feel guilty concentrate on what they have done wrong and the extent to which they are responsible for the harm they have caused" (*Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 118). The issue with self-critique is that it does not solve the problem or result in genuine empathy. The self-focused nature surrounding guilt is

what makes it difficult for genuine empathy and change to occur since it shifts focus away from real issues such as racism and sexism and focuses on self-critique. Self-critique can often result in denial and a cyclical relationship carries on between self-critique and denial in relation to the loving eye.

An example of how white guilt promotes attitudes of narcissism rather than getting at the problem can be seen through Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *Beloved* is based on a true story, and it tells the tale of a black woman, who as a slave ran away from Kentucky to Ohio in order to gain freedom. The Bowdins, two characters who are white, help runaway slaves by letting them live in their house. At first glance, Mr. Bowdin's actions present themselves as honorable because he stands out from the other white men from his time by helping slaves. The motive behind his actions, however, tell a more complex story. I argue that the Bowdins experience white guilt and want those around them to perceive them as noble and altruistic. Their actions were motivated by narcissism. The problem with this is that promoting something out of narcissism does not really attack the issue at hand. It diverts attention away from the problem and onto the self. Although the Bowdin's were helping the slaves out of their sense of guilt, they were not truly hearing the slaves. They simply utilized their house as a safe-haven for fugitive slaves as a way for them to feel better about their privilege and as a way for society to view them as noble people. Their house was a symbol for freedom, but they were in denial of how large the problem of racism truly was. As long as they felt less guilty, they felt like the problem was being mitigated. Such an attitude could amplify the rage and anger of the slaves.

Another example of a man who experiences white guilt in *Beloved* is Mr. Garner. He, too, treats slaves differently than those around him. Baby Suggs, a slave, feels that the slavery Mr. Garner runs is different and special because he allowed for his slaves to be paid for labor (Morrison 130). Baby Suggs felt as though she had been free due to this special type of slavery, but she was far from freedom of racism. Mr. Garner acted out of guilt. My point of view is that Mr. Garner, similar to Mr. Bowdin, felt guilty about his own social position with respect to the slaves and acted out of narcissism by giving himself and the slaves the impression that he was granting the slaves freedom by treating them with some degree of respect. This results in denial about the extent to which racism is problematic and suggests that feelings of guilt do not by themselves truly bring about positive change. Neither of the men acted to abolish slavery or even try to understand the experiences of the slaves. They simply acted in a way that made them feel less guilty about their social position.

hooks does not give up her fight against racism without a challenge, which is a characteristic of her rage. She refused to give into the racism she experienced and had a willingness to commit herself to the struggle to end white supremacy (193). She had a sense of self-determination, which advocated for the collective needs of black people (254). Being angry about the everyday racism that one experiences is what prompts one to address systems of domination by challenging racism, sexism, exploitation, and oppression (hooks 260). Having rage and self-determination allows one to construct oppositional worldviews, draw upon the knowledge of allies, and learn from people of other races (hooks 260-261). My point of view is that hooks does not give up her power without a challenge. When her power is challenged, it makes her angry, and her anger itself is a force that can transgress boundaries. This is because

emotion, or anger, has a sense of presence that colonizers do not want to see. They are forced to acknowledge emotion rather than be in denial about it.

I bring forward that the authors discussed above do not adequately take emotion or empathy into consideration. Fricker has tunnel vision towards empathy because she does not take into account how testimonial injustice can increase or decrease one's ability to empathize with the speaker, nor does Fricker or Mills discuss the role of emotion. This is why hooks is important. She calls attention to the fact that humans are emotional people, so our response to racism must encompass emotionality. She finds that empathy is not enough without consideration of emotion because not everyone is compelled to relate to the understanding of others, and many would pretend that "differences" do not exist (hooks 141).

I argue that the current emotional state regarding the value of blackness needs to be changed. Currently, blackness is associated with powerlessness and victimization, and mainstream culture negates the value of blackness (hooks 158). According to Sara Ahmed, emotion shapes the surfaces of individual and collective bodies (71). Ahmed writes, "Bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others." (71). Since black bodies are typically experiencing everyday racism, their bodies are taking on these negative associations and stereotypes, which lead to negative emotions. Ahmed goes on to say that non-white others are seen as strangers and "bodies out of place" (86). In order to overcome this alienation, emotions need to be worked upon. Ahmed writes, "To be emotional is to have one's judgement affected" (109). Emotions have the power to change how blackness and color is seen. Emotions can impact the tunnel vision that permeates structures of society today by

creating positive affects. Ahmed adds that emotion has a sense of intentionality because emotions are intentional in the sense that they “...involve a direction or orientation towards an object” (195). Thus, emotions ultimately take a stance. Emotions circulate between bodies and move between people, which results in these negative emotions “sticking” in society and becoming an accepted norm (Ahmed 184).

I argue that emotions could be utilized in an encouraging way by associating positive qualities with blackness and circulating those within society. Emotions are circulated throughout society and we take those emotions in. This can best be seen through Ahmed’s example of a bear. Ahmed writes, “we have an image of the bear as an animal to be feared, as an image that is shaped by cultural histories and memories. When we encounter the bear, we already have an impression of the risks of the encounter...” (209). The emotions associated with the bear were already embedded within our society. We then attribute feeling to that object and conclude that the bear is fearsome, which is a notion that sticks in society. We can use Ahmed’s model of emotion as a way to re-conceptualize race. If we associate positive emotions and feelings towards color, then those positive emotions can move outwards towards those objects. This could allow for genuine empathy and a loving eye that does not remind marginalized groups of their subordinated position.

I argue that these positive emotions can begin with love but only where love is not reduced to an individual emotion. The idea that “black is beautiful” emerged because blackness has often been associated with ugliness and undesirability (hooks 260). hooks calls the notion “black is beautiful” as the idea of “loving blackness.” My point of view is that by circulating in

society images of loving blackness, or color in general, there is room to overcome internalized racism and aesthetic values that have been assigned to color. This could allow people of color to enter the mainstream workforce, especially domestic migrant workers, rather than being seen as invisible or often inferior. The concept of “loving blackness” would not mean merely an assimilation to white standards if the way blackness, or color, is viewed would fundamentally change (hooks 123). “Loving blackness” is an appropriate emotional response to racism because it assigns positive social images to people of color. hooks finds that light skin is often what is associated with beautiful and desirable, and dark skin is correlated with evil temper and treachery (hooks 127). These images are repeated within society.

It is in society first and not in individual perception that these images must be changed. But this change requires that communities of colors are agents and not victims. Emotions such as rage and anger could be utilized to solve the problem and ultimately could be transformed into positive emotions which would lead to constructive race relations. hooks writes, “We cannot value ourselves rightly without first breaking through the walls of denial which hide the depth of black self-hatred, inner anguish, and unreconciled pain” (162). I argue that “loving blackness” must begin first from within.

Without this rage communities of color, especially women of color, risk a lack self-regard. They risk internalizing social norms and expectations and therefore risk suffering from poor self-respect. In addition, the lack of power that women have could affect a woman’s ability to cultivate self-regard because they harbor feelings of powerlessness. This is often why women of color choose to stay silent and not act upon their anger.

An example of a lack of self-regard can be seen in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The slaves are under the impression that being paid for slavery is the way that they deserve to be treated instead of receiving actual freedom. Those domestic migrant workers who have repressed their rage provide another example of how women of color lack self-regard. Their lack of self-regard is partly why dominant groups are able to successfully treat them poorly.

I find that having self-regard is an important first step because it could transform rage into a positive emotion. Having self-regard allows oneself to cultivate positive images of themselves, and those positive images and affects would then circulate into society. I argue that having self-respect has the ability to change emotions of shame and denial into anger, and anger provides a sense of empowerment. When bell hooks was angry, she was empowered to take a stance. She saw the need to change her current situation, and she used her anger as a way to overcome racism and speak up about the injustices she sustained. It is because bell hooks had self-respect that she was able to recognize that she deserved to be treated better. If domestic migrant workers had self-regard, they could transform their sense of shame and denial into a sense of empowerment. By standing up against the western woman by no longer being silent and assigning positive images to themselves, women of color could project positive feelings outward.

By ending this color hierarchy or assigning a positive value to darkness, people of color could be seen as valuable holders of epistemic knowledge. Furthermore, I argue that this notion of loving color relates to Lorde's concept of erotic knowledge. Women of color could have access to their erotic knowledge through self-love. They could have formed a deep connection

within themselves if they use rage against the negative stereotypes about them. hooks argues that self-love can be utilized as a means of undermining practices of domination.

My point of view is that this is an example of Sara Ahmed's model of emotion. People of color internalize the negative emotions surrounding their race, so if they begin to have self-love and positive emotions about their race, they could project positive feelings outward. By circulating positive emotions around bodies, positive emotions regarding race will stick. In addition, if people assign positive value to darkness, they will project positive emotions towards people of color, and people of color will then internalize those positive feelings. The dynamic of emotion in the outside in model is cyclical: as positive emotions are projected outwards, they are internalized and then again projected outwards. I argue that "loving blackness" and specifically self-love is additionally a way to end negative stereotypes. hooks writes, "loving blackness as political resistance transforms our ways of looking and being, and thus creates the conditions necessary for us to move against the forces of domination and death and reclaim black life (162).

CHAPTER TWO CONCLUSION: In conclusion, I argue that embracing color allows for genuine empathy to occur rather than an artificial system of empathy. Genuine emotional connection fosters empathy, and the current empathic relationships between white women and women of color foster apathy because women of color's rage is not heard and the boundaries of racism are not overcome. Empathy is a way for boundaries surrounding racism to be transgressed, but the empathic connection must embody emotion so that the rage of women of color can be heard and understood.

Empathy can occur only after positive affects are circulated. Empathy alone does not sufficiently allow for one to understand the perspectives of others because it could be conflated with negative stereotypes and assumptions. The loving eye is problematic because it turns attention away from the problem at hand and turns back to itself through self-critique. Humans are emotion creatures, and the current gesture of empathy does not take emotion into consideration. Negative emotions should be transformed into positive ones, and positive affects should be circulated so that negative stereotypes and assumptions can be combatted. This would then allow for a sincere form of empathy.

GENERAL CONCLUSION: In conclusion, I argue that any immediate empathy along with the notion of the loving eye must be rejected. Adopting empathy immediately is problematic because stereotypes and epistemic differences distort it. The loving eye itself is also not enough to reconceive race due to its focus on the self. The loving eye often turns to itself and does not really get at the problem. The process of combatting systematic racism, especially towards women of color, must begin with the rage of communities of color, not the loving eye of the white person. bell hooks gives the example of black communities who experience rage. The loving eye of the white person often results in self-critique, white guilt, and denial. Rage has the ability to transgress norms. It produces feelings of empowerment and ultimately becomes a loving, positive emotion where people are able to love color. When this transformation is made, genuine empathy can occur and women of color, especially domestic migrant workers, can experience genuine empathy.

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