Introduction

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The Use of Cases and Case Studies: Philosophy and the Contributions of Feminist and Critical Race Philosophy

What it means to use cases and case studies in one's scholarship and research varies tremendously across fields. Case histories in medicine focus on the course of disease, diagnosis, and treatment of one particular individual and are taken to hold crucial pedagogical value for medical education; case studies in political science may draw conclusions about political behavior from an in-depth study of a few different historical cases. As Mary Morgan (2014) has pointed out, even what gets labeled as a *case study* varies between disciplines. *Making the Case* brings together new works by established and emerging feminist and critical race theorists, primarily philosophers, who engage specific case studies and/or analyze case-based methodologies. In doing so, the volume seeks to demonstrate the depth and breadth of work in this area while highlighting the distinct approaches that feminist and critical race philosophers have pursued when it comes to case-study work. We use the term *feminist and critical race philosophies* (and *philosophers*) throughout in order to identify work of feminist and critical race theorists that engages with the tools, practices, and theories of philosophy.[1] Feminist and critical race philosophers employing casework such as that represented in this volume have also reflected on the role of casework within philosophy, including both its challenges and its potential.

Historically, much of the discipline of philosophy has shied away from employing cases and case studies, seeking instead to provide abstract

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and decontextualized analyses, particularly in the case of those philosophers who are trained in the analytic tradition. Some of the hesitancy of philosophers to use or develop case studies stems from a conception of good philosophical analysis as necessarily abstract and removed from the messiness of life's complexities. Many philosophical works seek to clarify the concepts and frameworks that lie behind our everyday interactions with the world and each other, with a goal of allowing us to understand and articulate the core concepts that cut across the particularities of individual cases. Relatedly, many philosophers see themselves as seeking to identify and articulate ideals that form worthy goals for human beings or offering paradigms that serve as ideal schemas from which we can better understand the world. Such philosophers focus their attention on such lofty questions as, What is the ideal of justice? the good? truth? knowledge? Sometimes, philosophers have then gone on to apply their ideal schemas to particular cases, such as has been done in the field of applied ethics. Yet, increasingly, numerous philosophers who are concerned with making philosophy relevant to understanding our current situations have found such a model of the application of a philosophical theory or ideal to be an inadequate way of engaging with cases and have questioned the value of developing philosophical theories and ideals in the abstract. These theorists' commitment to working with cases can be understood as a form of nonideal theorizing (see Corwin Aragon's contribution to this volume), through which the philosophizing begins with the specific situations at hand and builds from there. Feminist and critical race philosophers have been central to this trend. In this volume, we draw attention to the ways in which cases and case studies have become important methodological tools for the specific work of feminist and critical race philosophers. The individual chapters that follow showcase the wide variety of forms and uses of case studies that feminist and critical race philosophers engage; taken as a collection, they highlight certain common themes and methodological choices that are distinctive (though not exclusive) to feminist and critical race philosophy.

Trends toward Case Studies in Philosophy

In spite of philosophy's history noted above and the persistence of certain pockets of resistance, it would be a mistake to characterize contemporary philosophy as inherently resistant to casework. Several trends within var-

ious areas of current philosophical discourse can be identified that lend themselves to the encouragement of casework.

First, the move toward naturalizing epistemology, which began with W. V. O. Quine (1969) but has developed in a variety of directions, can be read as offering strong encouragement for the use of cases and case studies within philosophy. Naturalized epistemologists claim that we cannot determine the ideals of knowledge without taking seriously how we actually engage (as humans) in knowledge seeking (Kornblith 1994). This requires looking at how we know things, and cases can provide observations and descriptions of this. According to naturalists, the normative claims of epistemologists that elevate certain propositions to the status of knowledge cannot be answered without close attention to describing our epistemic capacities (psychological and social) and those circumstances within which we engage in inquiry. Relatedly, the historicist turn in philosophy of science that began with Thomas Kuhn (1962) encouraged the study of actual cases of scientific development to inform one's philosophy of science and ensure that it is based on such evidence of how science has actually been done.

Second, as Lorraine Code notes in this volume, there has been a certain "thawing" between the two schools of continental philosophy and Anglo-American analytic philosophy. This thawing has resulted in more possibilities for a mixture of approaches and a recognition that there are philosophical things to learn about the world through the careful investigation of cases, including the use of narrative and literary styles of theorizing that historically found a more natural home in continental philosophy while meeting sharp rebuke from epistemologists of the analytic tradition.

Third, there is a growing movement of philosophers of science interested in producing socially relevant philosophy of science (see, for example, Fehr and Plaisance 2010). Socially relevant philosophy of science entails attending to the ways that philosophy of science "contributes to public welfare and collective wellbeing" of societies by taking up the epistemological and ethical issues of science that arise within our struggles to develop, interact with, and use science (SRPoiSE).[2] Careful attention to cases is a crucial tool in undertaking socially relevant philosophy of science, and several contributions to this volume offer examples of how to do this from the perspective of feminist and critical race philosophies, especially the chapters by Sean Valles, Carla Fehr, Lacey Davidson and Mark Satta, and Sergio Armando Gallegos-Ordorica.

Fourth, feminist philosophers and critical race theorists have for the last thirty years increasingly been pressing on the problems of philosophical

methods that fail to attend to the socially located specificities of oppressed people. Here, the criticism has been that by ignoring the specifics of situations in attempts to engage in abstract theorizing, philosophy runs the danger of generating theories that have little to do with "lives on the ground" and can be a distraction from the hard realities of those lives. It also runs the risk that specific theories created within philosophy and the problems they focus on bear a closer resemblance to the lives of and challenges faced by those in dominant and mainstream epistemic locations while ignoring the lives of people who are oppressed or otherwise marginalized in society. Reflecting on philosophy and its attraction to the abstract, the universal, and the ideal at the expense of the concrete, the situated, and the present, feminist and critical race philosophers have argued that philosophy itself can contribute to structures of domination by ignoring its own situatedness. This theme comes out in many of the contributions to this volume. What has become apparent in these criticisms is that in spite of the activity of theorizing at times being presented as though it is disconnected from real-world cases, the authors' situations and experiences shape the problems taken up and the frameworks formed such that the theory is never as removed from real-world situations as it purports to be. The pressure stemming from these oppression-focused criticisms of abstract methodology has contributed to a certain opening within philosophy, an opening through which case-study analysis has thrived.

Characteristics of Case Use in Feminist and Critical Race Philosophies

Given their critiques of abstract methodology, it is no surprise that feminist and critical race philosophies have been major contributors to contemporary case-study work. The contributions to this volume demonstrate the impressive range of ways in which feminist and critical race philosophers are making use of cases. In many instances, the authors are employing now-well-developed concepts from feminist and critical race epistemologies to understand particular cases. For example, concepts such as epistemic injustice and epistemologies of ignorance offer incisive ways of understanding how oppression is playing out in specific circumstances. In other instances, the authors are providing new analyses of the demands of responsible research involving cases, integrating ethical and epistemic concerns, and carefully developing understandings of what kinds of

knowledge can be generated from the study of cases. While the selections featured here demonstrate the plethora of ways in which feminist and critical race philosophers are engaging casework, they also make evident certain features that are characteristic of casework done from feminist and critical race perspectives.

Perhaps most importantly, we see that feminist and critical race philosophers are very deliberate in the *kind*s of cases that they choose to work with. They are motivated to engage cases that focus on elements of marginalized and oppressed peoples' experiences. Attention to the details of such cases can reveal the complexity of how domination and injustices play out. In the process, feminist and critical race philosophers often use cases to demonstrate how knowledge and epistemological frameworks play a role in such domination. They are not just attracted to case studies because such studies offer more details than abstract theory and can be more empirically grounded as a result. Rather, they acknowledge that the very choice of the case study one works with can make a difference in the type of understanding generated because the cases selected determine where the epistemological attention is directed. What we see in the work of feminist and critical race philosophers is an illustration of just how important the use of case studies can be for revealing aspects of oppression and marginalization that would otherwise be hidden from view, falling outside the scope of existing philosophical frameworks that were not drawn up with an eye toward explaining such experiences.

Our Definition of Cases and Case Studies

In formulating this collection of works, we have been very deliberate in taking a broad conception of what constitutes a case and, correspondingly, a case study or case-analysis methodology. This breadth is in keeping with feminist and critical race philosophers' willingness to use a variety of methodological and conceptual tools to attain their goals of identifying the structures, practices, and experiences of various forms of oppression while taking seriously the need for those tools to be well grounded in experiences. What we take to be common to the idea of case-engaged work is a commitment to the epistemological value of employing *thickly described* cases in one's analyses.

The contributions presented here vary widely in the ways in which they can be understood as engaging with cases. Lorraine Code's chapter,

for example, argues for the epistemological value of narrative in its ability to capture the nuances of an individual situation. For Code, this includes fictional narrative and literature, which can at times serve as extremely rich tools for revealing the pervasive effects of oppression as well as offering contrasting imaginings of a different social world. In this regard, we do not restrict our definition of *case studies* only to the use of actual historical and contemporary examples, although it must be stressed that the epistemic value of literary examples will be a direct function of how well these cases resonate with lived experience and existing evidence while also using creative scope to emphasize certain aspects of human conditions and situations. Gaile Pohlhaus's chapter uses a case from her own personal experience (a case of nonfictional narrative) as a philosopher in an interdisciplinary group to reflect on larger questions concerning the situatedness of philosophers themselves, how they come to understand problems of interest to them, and how they might be missing the relevance of situation. ShaDawn Battle's chapter, on the other hand, provides an analysis of the murder of Michael Brown and other Black men by police officers through the literary lens of James Baldwin's *Blues for Mister Charlie*. She thus combines the fictional with the all too real.

In a different mode, many other chapters in this collection use a social-scientific model of a case study, through which a case is taken to provide evidence either disrupting or supporting particular knowledge claims or larger epistemic frameworks. All the pieces in this volume use case studies to highlight various forms of injustice, and, in so doing, they illuminate the ways in which the philosophical use of case studies has the potential to serve an important function in dismantling dominant epistemic, scientific, social, and political structures. Thus, the right sort of case study can play a key role in social change and the remediation of injustices.

Crucially, although we have taken a broad view of what constitutes cases and case studies, we do not mean to include every type of example that a philosopher might draw on. A hypothetical example that is *thinly* described to illustrate a philosophical point clearly falls outside the scope of case-based methodology and can represent exactly the kinds of problems of abstract philosophical method that many of the case analyses employed within this volume seek to avoid through their careful attention to *thickly* described cases. Furthermore, this volume specifically attends to the kinds of uses of cases and case analyses that feminist and critical race philosophers have found helpful in their epistemic goals of revealing

the details and contexts of oppression and marginalization and developing potential solutions to conditions of injustice.

Contents and Organization of This Collection

The analyses in this volume represent a distinctive composition of cases. Traditionally, cases in philosophy, especially those drawn from science, medicine, and policy, have started their analyses from the perspective of dominant knowers. Feminist and critical race theorists inside and outside of philosophy have consistently critiqued this fault since at least the late 1980s. For example, Guyatri Spivak's ([1988] 1994) "Can the Subaltern Speak?" marked a turning point in this area. Her paper, which examines the *sati* suicides of Indian widows, is also a scathing critique of what academia attends to. She argues that white academic subjectivity actively erases the subjectivity of nondominant knowers even when it claims to be reflecting or focusing in on the experiences of oppressed groups. The chapters in this volume largely start their theorizing about cases from the perspectives of nondominant knowers. The frameworks employed and the insights provided in these chapters are robust and critical. Importantly, they present an opportunity for readers to examine specific social effects of epistemic practices that have largely been unrecognized.

Making the Case is divided into three parts. The first section, "Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives on Case Studies," engages some of the epistemological and ethical challenges that arise from the use of case studies inside and outside of philosophy and the ways that these affect social-justice claims and outcomes.

The second section, "Critiquing the Practice: The Case of Philosophy," analyzes and assesses philosophy's own practices for their ability to impede or further social justice. These chapters not only seek a reshaping of philosophical practice, they also call upon philosophy to be significantly more intentional in recognizing the responsibilities involved in case-engaged research.

The final section, "Case Studies for Social Justice," offers a series of case studies: the murder of Black men by police, the impacts of settler-colonial epistemologies, the epistemology of HIV transmission, the Mexican Genome Diversity Project, and the death of Matthew McCain in a North Carolina jail. The chapters utilize a set of shared tools from feminist and

critical race philosophies and demonstrate the ability of case-engaged philosophical work not only to reveal what frequently goes unnoticed or unexamined but also to highlight the ways in which these tools can drive and frame social-justice responses.

Part 1: Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives on Case Studies

The use of case studies to generate theoretical knowledge and understanding brings with it epistemological questions concerning the status and consequences of such knowledge. As many have noted, though case studies can be very informative with respect to the case at hand, it is not immediately clear when or how the knowledge they generate can be applied from one context to the next (Morgan 2014; Crasnow, this volume), nor is it clear the ways in which they can move broad social-justice goals forward. The chapters in this first section in particular take up epistemological and methodological challenges that stem from the use of case studies and highlight the ways in which epistemological and methodological practices have broad and specific impacts on social justice.

The first chapter, Corwin Aragon's "Building a Case for Social Justice: Situated Case Studies in Nonideal Social Theory," focuses on social theory and locates the importance of case-study use within the larger project of nonideal theorizing. Nonideal theorizing seeks to begin with "the messy, unjust reality of our actual world" and, through such critical engagement with the actual world, builds theory that helps us understand how to make that world more just (Aragon 26, this volume). In contrast to ideal social and moral theory (Aragon uses the work of Rawls as his foil), in nonideal theorizing, ideals are not posited theoretically at the outset and then applied to the world to see if they obtain, but rather the theorizing itself occurs through critical engagement with actual social practices, or what Sally Haslanger (2012) has called an ameliorative philosophical analysis. Case-study work will be crucial in this regard. Aragon recognizes that there are several different types of case studies, each with advantages and disadvantages. He articulates three types: nonideal hypothetical case studies (which include fictionalized accounts that are informed by social conditions), nonideal experiential accounts of lived experiences of social injustice, and social-scientific case studies that provide evidence that identifies systematic social phenomena. He draws on the strengths and

weaknesses of these in order to articulate the parameters for building the kind of *situated* case studies that will be helpful to the project of nonideal theorizing and its ability to facilitate social change to benefit marginalized groups.

Aragon's methodological requirements for situated case studies speak to the issue of how case studies are selected, while Sean Valles's chapter, "The Coupled Ethical-Epistemic Model as a Resource for Feminist Philosophy of Science, and a Case Study Applying the Model to the Demography of Hispanic Identity," speaks to how methodologies are selected and how they have significant outcomes for social policy. His chapter both outlines a theoretical framework to guide feminist methodological choices and demonstrates the joint epistemic and ethical impact of methodology selection through his case study of the United States census. Valles argues in favor of Nancy Tuana's "coupled ethical-epistemic" model of analysis (Tuana 2010), a model that allows for "jointly examining the ethical features and evidentiary features of a scientific case study" (Valles 47, this volume). He then puts this model to work, building on his 2015 paper with Katikireddi by developing four questions for researchers to employ to help them understand the ethical-epistemic implications of research methodologies, practices, and policies (Katikireddi and Valles 2015). Using his expanded ethical-epistemic model, Valles goes on to examine the case of the collection practices of the US census, assessing the ethical-epistemic significance of the two-question-format collection tool through which individuals must self-report race and ethnicity data on their census forms. He compares this to a combined one-question format, pointing out numerous ethical and epistemic concerns with the current two-question method that are illuminated by the ethical-epistemic framework. Valles concludes that instead of treating race and ethnicity as two independent questions on the 2020 census, a combined race-ethnicity question that places *Hispanic* as an ethnicity category "alongside racial categories" would best meet ethical-epistemic standards (66).

It is clear that feminist and critical race philosophers have frequently turned to case studies to make visible the ways in which social practices have failed to achieve their stated goals and ideals of social justice and objective knowledge, failures for which nondominant groups have often paid the price. In her contribution "Feminist Science Studies: Reasoning from Cases," Sharon Crasnow focuses on feminist science studies and its very effective use of case studies to demonstrate evidence of androcentric and sexist bias within numerous scientific studies. However, she notes

that epistemological problems remain concerning what exactly the case studies show, and these problems can dull the force of such feminist work. According to Crasnow, such problems stem from an undertheorization of case-study methodology. For example, if one views a case study as providing a piece of evidence used to offer inductive support for the claim that science is value laden and biased, as a single case it offers only a very weak inductive argument. Such cases of androcentric bias can then reasonably be dismissed as outliers without challenging the idea of objective science being value neutral. Instead, Crasnow takes a deeper dive into the epistemological issues of case-study work to help strengthen an appreciation of the significance of feminist science criticism. To do this, she draws on some of the recent work on case-study methodology to articulate how the feminist case studies should be understood as providing a stronger challenge to the appropriate role of values in science. Crasnow employs both Hasok Chang's conception of the relationship between cases and our philosophical accounts as a process of "epistemic iteration" between the abstract and the concrete and Mary Morgan's strategies for how to take what we learn from one case and move it to another site. Crasnow uses the work of Chang and Morgan to engage two cases of feminist work in science studies (Elizabeth Anderson's study of the role of values in divorce research and Elisabeth Lloyd's study of the research on female orgasm) in order to develop a more robust understanding of the epistemological significance of the case studies found in feminist science studies.

Part 2: Critiquing the Practice: The Case of Philosophy

While the chapters in the previous section assess the theoretical value and practical implications of case studies, those in this section turn their analyses inward by reflecting upon how the habits, theories, and practices of philosophy itself can either further or impede social justice. Thus, the discipline and practice of philosophy becomes the locus of the cases in this section. Philosophy is examined in action, whether that be examining how reviewers have responded to published philosophical work, how philosophers have interacted with members of other disciplines, or how philosophers have responded when questioned about their professional responsibilities. While the field of philosophy in general has not been particularly invested in reflecting upon either what biases are incorporated into its practice or what are or should be the outcomes of philosophical

activity, feminist and critical race philosophies have been very active in doing so. In particular, they have provided robust critiques of the norms and standards of the field, not only for its lack of attention to race, gender, sexuality, ability/disability, class, and location but also for how the discipline has ignored the situated nature of its own practices and likewise ignored the responsibilities that arise from its research. For example, Charles Mills's 1997 book, *The Racial Contract*, served as a watershed moment by explicitly raising much-needed questions about philosophy's failure to understand itself as a discipline that has participated in silencing and marginalizing socially and politically disenfranchised groups. Mills's book highlights how US culture exists under a racially dominated state of ignorance and demonstrates how philosophy has been complicit in furthering this agenda. The lack of engagement by philosophers on "matters related to race" (Mills 1997, 18) has been enabled by the tendency in mainstream epistemology to analyze hypothetical examples that are distant from the material conditions of people's lives, what Lorraine Code (1987) has called thin narratives.

Code's body of work, from her initial book, *Epistemic Responsibility* (1987), through to her 2006 book, *Ecological Thinking*, presents a lineage of critical evaluation of the functioning of contemporary mainstream philosophy. She brings to the forefront philosophy's inability to reflect upon its practices and identify to what it does and does not lend attention. In her contribution to this volume, "The Power and Perils of Example: 'Literizing Is Not Theorizing,'" Code returns to her initial work in this area and further points to the limitations of a common form of philosophizing that ignores the situated nature of the practice of philosophy.

Code begins her chapter by taking up the case of how her own early work was received. She reexamines the hostile response *Epistemic Responsibility* received in the late 1980s from those entrenched in the abstract methods of contemporary analytic epistemology and considers what this reception reveals about the framework of analytic epistemology. She argues that narrative, including literary narrative, can offer a richness and attentiveness that is necessary for substantive understanding, especially in developing an understanding of the lives of the nondominant. She views her work in *Epistemic Responsibility* as well as much of her later work as contending that, contrary to the orthodox approach of analytic epistemology, knowing well cannot be done "without fleshed-out, situated-populated examples conveying a sense of the lived implications of the questions and circumstances that generated them" (102, this volume).

Code intentionally employs a broad understanding of case study, using the terms *extended examples*, *narrative*, and *examples* interchangeably. She does this to challenge the conception of a *case* or an *example* as a thin articulation used to develop a narrow understanding of the work of epistemology. As she states, if the valued epistemic framework is built on theorizing the simple case of "the cat is on the mat," we will not develop an epistemology that will move us toward epistemic responsibility. Instead, she articulates the shift in our view of knowledge that results when we take seriously the value of fleshed-out examples embedded in both literature and rich narrative descriptions of particular real-world cases. This shift requires an acceptance of uncertainty and an attitude of humility on the part of the knowers, recognizing that exactitude is often sacrificed through the development of such rich forms of understanding. Drawing on a variety of specific philosophical uses of examples throughout her chapter, Code demonstrates how "examples specific in their discursive positioning . . . perform the function of contesting epistemic commitments to 'a view from nowhere'" (123).

In "What Philosophy Does (Not) Know," Gaile Pohlhaus takes up similar themes concerning the failure of philosophy and philosophers to recognize the situatedness of their own frameworks, arguing that philosophers need to become more reflective about who they are and what kind of knowledge they are able to generate. Pohlhaus conceptualizes the activity of knowing as involving "epistemic movement," and she is concerned with cases where knowers can at times get stuck within a certain framework (disciplinary or otherwise) that can prevent the development of rich understanding. Pohlhaus works with two cases in order to illustrate her points. First, she uses an experiential case, offering an extended description of her personal experience of bringing her philosophical framework to the table in an interdisciplinary group discussion. Pohlhaus takes herself to be someone who strives to maintain a clear awareness of her own situatedness and its effects on her philosophizing. With this in mind, she experiences puzzlement when, in this interdisciplinary discussion about the extension of (human) rights to primates, her philosophical concern that such a move in effect centers a rights framework on humans are met with accusations that her concerns "come out of nowhere." This experience provokes her reflection on a kind of epistemic "discoordination" within the group, stemming from differences in their rhetorical spaces (Code 1995), that cause her discussants to fail to see the pertinence of her points. Importantly, through this experiential case, Pohlhaus identifies a distinct value of the

epistemic movement practiced in philosophy: philosophers "move toward considering the conceptual conditions that enable epistemic activity," and this "provides an opportunity for reflecting on whether the conventions governing our epistemic movement are in line with our avowed commitments" (135, this volume). In her second case, Pohlhaus focuses on the forum of philosophy conferences, analyzing how their specific rhetorical spaces, complete with expectations of presentation, questioning, and levels of agreement and disagreement, can lead to nondominant groups having more difficulty getting their objections heard and understood as relevant. Pohlhaus argues for the epistemic value of explicitly acknowledging the specifics of the rhetorical space within which our epistemic movement is happening. She uses both of her cases to demonstrate the importance of identifying the process of reorienting oneself such that "what at first appears unintelligible, misplaced, or irrelevant can become intelligible, well placed, and relevant" (140, this volume).

While the previous two chapters reflect upon the lack of awareness of the situated nature of philosophy, Carla Fehr's contribution, "Doing Things with Case Studies," turns to a consideration of how philosophers have failed to think seriously about what is *done* with case studies when they engage them philosophically. In particular, Fehr is concerned with the responsibilities philosophers have when their case studies are what she calls socially significant case studies. These are case studies that reveal or "trade on injustices or harms faced by individuals or groups of people in fairly direct ways" (Fehr 155, this volume). While many feminist and critical race philosophers have found that case studies can be particularly useful for making visible the manifestations of the particularities of the social injustices facing specific groups, Fehr is concerned about the relationship between the academic employing the case study and the subjects and stakeholders of socially significant case studies. She argues that when a philosopher makes the choice to take up and develop a socially significant case study, moral demands follow to take action in working toward the alleviation of the social injustice in question, in order to avoid objectifying the subjects of the case study in problematic ways. As Fehr notes, when academics employ such socially significant case studies, they and their careers benefit from the significance of the injustice itself. For Fehr, it is not enough to simply unearth the workings of these injustices for a philosophical and academic audience through discipline-based conference presentations and publications, which is what philosophers tend to do. To avoid engaging in objectification, more must be done with the case

study, through taking action oneself or, at a minimum, by finding ways to put one's work and insights in the hands of those who are well placed to work toward the elimination of the injustice. Fehr also argues that, in addition to the ethical dimension of how an academic selects, develops, and "does things" with socially significant case studies, there is an epistemic dimension to this work. Activities such as disseminating one's work to the case study's subjects, various stakeholders, policy makers, and other nonphilosophers more closely connected to the circumstances of the case, as well as collaborating with these groups, can provide various checks on the assumptions behind one's research and offer further epistemic resources for the research itself.

Part 3: Case Studies for Social Justice

In her landmark 1990 book *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins develops Black feminist epistemology explicitly as a tool of social justice and social change for oppressed groups, especially for Black women. As she describes in subsequent editions, Black feminist thought is "commit-t[ed] to justice, for one's own group and for other groups" (Collins [1990] 2000, 31). This sentiment is endemic in many areas of feminist philosophy, especially feminist epistemology, where the explicit goal of harnessing its tools to drive social change has been frequently enlisted.

The case studies in this section build upon decades of this work, making use of now-well-developed concepts from feminist and critical race theory such as epistemologies of ignorance and epistemic injustice to understand a range of cases that present immediate and dangerous injustices that are in urgent need of attention and action. These chapters offer strong examples of how contemporary feminist and critical race philosophers are taking philosophical analysis to places previously unexamined by philosophy, allowing these places to be interrogated and reshaped in the service of social-justice goals. The cases in these chapters build upon a set of shared theoretical underpinnings to illuminate the potentially deadly nature of social and bureaucratic systems that function through and further epistemologies of ignorance and epistemic injustice. ShaDawn Battle's contribution, "Singing the 'Blues' for Black Male Bodies: Epistemic Violence, Non-alterity, and Black-Male Killings," makes this startlingly clear.

Battle's chapter builds upon work in epistemologies of ignorance and epistemic injustice to read the 2014 murder of Ferguson, Missouri,

Black teenager Michael Brown by police officer Darren Wilson through the lens of James Baldwin's 1964 play *Blues for Mister Charlie*. Initiating her argument from a postcolonial perspective rooted in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Battle combines this theoretical underpinning with Charles Mills's epistemology of ignorance and Kristie Dotson's (2011) conception of epistemic violence to argue that "Baldwin's fictional protagonist, Richard Henry, and the late Michael Brown are victims of epistemic violence insofar as they are silenced and spoken for by white racist authority as overdetermined variations of the nonhuman" (181, this volume). A critical aspect of Battle's chapter in her alignment of Brown's murder with the murder of Richard Henry in Baldwin's play is that she shows just how scripted and predictable Michael Brown's murder and the murders of entirely too many Black men and women are in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Following Mills, she shows that the racial contract, its epistemology, and its deadly consequences are alive, flourishing, and, importantly, also traceable if we are willing to lend our attention to them. She concludes that the importance of detailing this sort of case analysis lies in "liberating Black male bodies from the white-supremacist social imaginary of them as a non-Others" (182, this volume) and in exposing racist epistemic practices that normalize and enable the murder of Black men and women.

On a similar trajectory, in her chapter "Land(point) Epistemologies: Theorizing the Place of Epistemic Domination," Esme Murdock positions her argument intentionally from the perspective of Black feminist epistemologies and Indigenous epistemologies to make clear how mainstream epistemic positionalities view their starting points as neutral ones for knowing the world, when they actually are "compromised in particularly colonial ways" that enable a "settler-colonial epistemological framework" (213, this volume). This dominant framework amounts to a kind of epistemic violence, providing a privileged understanding of settlers by prioritizing their sovereignty over the land and erasing "Indigenous socioecological systems" (213, this volume). Contesting this dominant framework, Murdock provides a case analysis of the contestability of what counts as evidence in the Bedouin people's attempt to protect their land in the Naqab Desert from Israel. She argues that the ways in which land and relationship to land are interpreted "can function as a site of both epistemic domination and epistemic decolonization" (213, this volume). Like Battle's chapter, Murdock's also makes clear the practical and political consequences of epistemic violence. This type of violence enables social

systems of domination to operate in ways that are normalized and appear functional yet are highly dysfunctional and frequently deadly.

The frameworks of epistemic injustice and epistemologies of ignorance also shape the practices of science and medicine. In "Epistemology and HIV Transmission: Privilege and Marginalization in the Dissemination of Knowledge," Lacey J. Davidson and Mark Satta employ feminist and critical race philosophies to examine research findings and case studies on HIV transmission, tracing the ways that research is disseminated and interpreted by medical and lay audiences. They work to identify patterns of epistemic harms that are replicated in, and sometimes addressed by, communities who are significantly affected by HIV. To do so, they frame and explicate a specific type of epistemic injustice that they describe as a "structural-linguistic epistemic harm," which identifies "the structure of the language and the accompanying social practices" as the locus of the epistemic harm (259, this volume). They argue that the concept of structural-linguistic epistemic harm is vitally relevant for understanding the epistemology of HIV transmission because the social practice of linguistic exchange that involves seeking to know another person's HIV status "harms askers because they are less apt to receive the best information with which to make an informed risk assessment, and it harms those asked because it encourages either giving epistemically suspect answers or risking social consequences by providing a more informative response" (259, this volume).

Sergio Armando Gallegos-Ordorica's chapter, "*Mestizaje* as an Epistemology of Ignorance: The Case of the Mexican Genome Diversity Project," also takes up concerns with medical research, the formation and dissemination of knowledge, and epistemic harm. The chapter examines the influence of the study of genetics, specifically how the social policies of the Mexican government, including their goal of nation building through "race mixing," or *mestizaje*, shaped the Mexican Genome Diversity Project (MGDP) and its goals of understanding diabetes, hypertension, and obesity in Mexican communities. Gallegos-Ordorica argues that the concept of *mestizaje* functioned as an epistemology of ignorance by creating a false view of a "unifying and homogeneous Mexican identity" (272, this volume). This understanding of Mexican identity was employed in collecting samples and interpreting the results of the MGDP, which in turn led to a "racialized picture of the Mexican population that helped to perpetuate the myth of a homogeneous nation" (272, this volume). Gallegos-Ordorica wants to find avenues for resisting this state of ignorance that has harmed

Amerindian groups and the Mexican working class, both of whose health is poorly accounted for by the MGDP. He develops José Medina's (2013) arguments for "insurrectionist genealogies" and contends that creative work can provide beneficial epistemic friction that can begin to counter the outcomes of the MGDP. Gallegos-Ordorica points to projects by artists and writers who resist the homogenization of Mexican identity through their creative "reappraisal and retelling" of Mexican history and their active reconstruction and challenging of Mexican mestizo identity (283, this volume).

The volume's final chapter, by José Medina and Matt S. Whitt, "Epistemic Activism and the Politics of Credibility: Testimonial Injustice Inside/Outside a North Carolina Jail," builds upon Medina's previous work on epistemic resistance to develop the concept of epistemic activism. Medina and Whitt provide an analysis of the epistemic structures and physical conditions of the Durham County Detention Facility in North Carolina and the ways these led to the death of Matthew McCain in January 2016 while detained in this facility. They also make clear the ways that people who were incarcerated in the facility and their allies, through the Inside-Outside Alliance, worked to resist these epistemic structures to raise awareness of the conditions in the facility and of the death of Matthew McCain. As Medina and Whitt argue, particular epistemic structures are designed to obscure knowledge of and diminish the credibility of dominated epistemic subjects. Carceral structures are among those most pernicious in generating epistemic harm. Medina and Whitt argue that this is especially the case with jails, because they occupy a unique position in the carceral system in that they sequester people who have not been proven guilty of a crime—i.e., they are presumed innocent—but are still treated as carceral subjects whose credibility is significantly diminished and are thus considered to be unreliable epistemic agents. Medina and Whitt frame the pathways through which the social and institutional structures of jail intentionally diminish the credibility of people who are incarcerated and show how these dominated epistemic actors and their allies have worked to actively and successfully resist this mode of oppression. Thus, an account that wishes to document both how people are epistemically harmed and oppressed and how they resist such epistemic domination must provide a robust framework that makes clear the complexity of interactions, social structures, and contexts.

The chapters in this volume present a cohesive argument for and demonstration of the value and impact of case-engaged research in feminist

and critical race philosophies. At times, chapters share similar theoretical frameworks, especially those in the third section of the book whose focus is on epistemic injustice and epistemologies of ignorance. These last chapters demonstrate the valuable range through which these frameworks can be employed. Yet each piece is comprehensive in itself and can function theoretically and practically as an independent paper for use in scholarship as well as in advanced undergraduate and graduate coursework. From the works in this collection, we can see how contemporary feminist and critical race philosophers are developing ways of working through the complex methodological issues that come with using case studies to generate knowledge and understanding and how they are using the tools of casework to extend the range of philosophical analysis, putting it into the service of social-justice work in novel ways.

Notes

1. Where appropriate, we refer to *feminist and critical race theorists/theories* to explicitly recognize the broader theoretical resources that come from feminist and critical race theory. Critical race theory has a long and rich history outside of philosophy, starting in the late 1980s. In a similar vein, feminist philosophy is in many ways a subfield of feminist theory, especially that which emerges from the social sciences.

2. See, for example, the special issue of *Synthese* (volume 177, no. 3, 2010), the website presence of the Consortium for Socially Relevant Philosophy of/in Science and Engineering (https://www.srpoise.org), and the Joint Caucus of Socially Engaged Philosophers and Historians of Science (https://www.jointcaucus.philsci.org).

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