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SLURS, INTERPELLATION, AND IDEOLOGY

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abstract: The goal of this paper is to give an account of the pragmatic and social function of slurs, taken as speech acts. I develop a theory of the distinctive illocutionary force and pragmatic structure of slurs. I argue that slurs help to produce subjects who occupy social identities carved out by pernicious ideologies, and that they do this whether or not anyone involved intends for the slur to work that way or has any particular feelings or conscious thoughts associated with using or being targeted by the slur. I offer an Althusser-inspired account of what an *ideology* is, as well as of the *mechanisms* by which slurs can serve to cue and strengthen ideologies. A slur, I argue, is a kind of interpellation, which reduces its target to a *generic* identity and *derogates* and *subordinates* its target. I explore how slurs and ideologies work in tandem to constitute and fortify one another. I end by applying my account to see how well it fits and helps illuminate three quite different, especially complex slurs.

My goal in this paper is to give an account of the pragmatic and social function of slurs, taken as speech acts. In "Slurs and Ideologies" (forthcoming), Eric Swanson argues that slurs characteristically function by cueing and strengthening damaging ideologies, and they also manifest endorsement of

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these ideologies. I agree, but in this paper I give a more detailed account of what an *ideology* is, as well as the *mechanisms* by which speech acts can serve to cue and strengthen one. I seek to explain what makes an ideology-cueing speech act a slur, and how exactly a slur and an ideology work in tandem to enable one another. I develop a theory of the distinctive illocutionary force and structure of slurs, as opposed to other kinds of ideology-cueing speech or pejorative speech.

My focus is on the pragmatics of slurs—that is, on how they function as speech acts in communicative context. This means that a slur is technically not a *word or term* for my purposes, but an *act* of using a word or term. A slur is a *doing*. Although it will sometimes be easier to talk about terms, in this paper, this should always be understood as shorthand for the uses of terms (and I will try to avoid such shorthand when grammatically feasible). Unlike various other authors, I do not try to distinguish slurs on the basis of their semantic content.[1] Since I am not concerned here with semantics, it is possible that a term that is normally not pejorative at all could be used to slur *ad hoc*. It is also possible—as far as my account goes, since I am agnostic on the semantics of slurs—that a term may retain its semantic meaning and yet lose its slurring force over time or in a new context.[2]

I turn first to ideology and then back to slurs. I end by offering a detailed analysis of three particular slurs to test how useful my account is for understanding how they function.

1. WHAT IS IDEOLOGY?

"Ideology" is a multivalent, family resemblance term that probably does not pick out a natural kind; different writers use it in importantly different ways. All accounts of ideology that I know of agree that ideologies are characteristically *self-reproducing* and that one of their central functions is to *reproduce the conditions of production*—or, in less insistently and narrowly economic terms, to reproduce the social relations and identities that maintain the social order. An ideology cotravels with—and helps to produce and enforce—a *social ontology* that includes specific social identities and relations, as well as general facts about the world that explain those social identities and relations. Beyond that, there are wide divergences in how the concept is understood.

[1] Distinguishing slurs by their semantic content can be tricky. For example, it is not at all obvious how the term "African American" has a different reference, literal intension, or extension than a well-known slur for the same group, although clearly the function of the terms is very different. There have been various attempts to give a semantic story about such cases (for instance Hom 2008; Anderson and LePore 2013; Camp 2013; and Ashwell 2016; among others). Luckily, I get to sidestep these debates.

[2] In this I again agree with Swanson (forthcoming).

Sometimes ideologies are described primarily as sets of ideas in people's heads, and sometimes as much more material. Sometimes they are taken to be false misrepresentations of reality, and sometimes as constitutive of reality.

Since the term has no single, fixed meaning in theory or practice, I take myself to be here offering what Sally Haslanger would term an ameliorative theory of ideology.[3] That is, I am artificially sharpening the concept in a direction that I believe will be productive for the purposes of conceptually clarifying and addressing ethical and political problems, and furthering social justice. The measure of the success of my account is not how well it matches with current everyday uses of the concept of ideology, nor how well it analyses theorists' concepts of ideology, but rather whether it bears helpful fruit, which I leave it to readers to decide.

My account of ideology is continuous with a materialist tradition of thinking about ideology that includes thinkers such as Gramsci, Du Bois,[4] Lacan, and most importantly Louis Althusser, who has long been my primary source when it comes to thinking about ideology.[5] Ideology, as I use the term, has several characteristic features, which I will explore in more detail after setting them out:

(1) As above, ideologies are characteristically *self-reproducing*, and one of their central functions is to *reproduce the conditions of production*—that is, to reproduce the social relations and identities that maintain the social order. An ideology cotravels with and helps to produce and enforce a *social ontology*, which includes specific social identities and relations, as well as general facts about the world that explain those social identities and relations.
(2) Ideologies are built into practices and the material environment; they are not primarily or essentially "ideas in the head." Swanson says that an ideology "is a cluster of mutually supporting beliefs, interests, norms, values, practices, institutions, scripts, habits, affective dispositions, and ways of interpreting and interacting with the world" (forthcoming, 6). I like this list but would add even less idea-like phenomena such as buildings, aesthetic products, street signs, spatial divisions such as gates and hedges, and the like.
(3) Even when ideology manifests itself in cognitive states, these can be implicit rather than conscious or intentionally endorsed.
(4) Ideologies need not be *false*; they are not sets of misrepresentations. While they in some sense represent social relations, these are not representations that cover over reality. Indeed, they play a role in *constituting* reality.
(5) Ideology has a *naturalizing* effect. An essential part of its functioning is that it hides the contingent history of the social relations and identities that it reproduces, making these instead look given, natural, ahistorical, and not the kind of thing there is any point to critiquing.

[3] See, for instance, Haslanger 2005.
[4] These first two are cited as important precedents by Swanson (forthcoming) as well.
[5] See, in particular, his classic essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (Althusser).

I co-opt and repurpose my final two characteristic features of ideology from Louis Althusser's classic essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses"(1971):

(6) Ideologies and subjects with particular social identities are *co-constituting.*
(7) *Interpellation* is the key mechanism by which ideologies reproduce themselves.

I now explore the different parts of this conception of ideology by way of an extended example, saving the discussions of interpellation and naturalization for the following section.

For a rich example, consider democratic ideology and how it is constitutively enacted in the concrete practice of voting. The practice of voting in "democratic" countries—the literal, material practice of showing ID, entering into a closed-off voting space, and making a mark that indicates one's choice of representatives—*enacts* certain political and ontological commitments. Furthermore, it does so regardless of whether the voter has these "in mind" as she votes, and indeed regardless of whether she believes in these commitments at the level of conscious reflection. The practice, in its material and institutional space, is premised on the "ideas" that, for instance: electoral democracy is a way of maintaining both citizen autonomy and citizen participation; the will is a unified thing that can be represented in an act of choosing; each identifiable human self contains one and only one choosing will; elected "representatives" indeed represent the will of the people; a mark on a page or a screen can transparently stand for a preference; choosing from a short palate of predetermined distinct options counts as both a substantive act of autonomy and a substantive form of political self-determination; and, however we came to our decision and whatever influenced us in picking who to vote for, ultimately we are self-standing, autonomous choosers whose vote is determined by us as independent agents. Surely there are more commitments that can be teased out. Some of these are foundational metaphysical facts about persons and wills; some are more derivative political facts.

Democracy is an ideology. It is not just an abstract idea, but rather a set of norms, practices, habits, institutions, and more. Voting is part of this ideology. The *act* of voting reproduces, depends upon a shared commitment to, and strengthens this ideology. It also clearly cues ideology—it puts democratic ideology in play, makes it salient, and endorses it. It does not do so solely or most powerfully because of the conscious beliefs in our head. Indeed, you might enter the voting booth feeling totally cynical about the democratic process. You might think that none of the choices available represent your political will, that your choice feels free but has been thoroughly

manipulated by stage and message management, that the outcome is overwhelmingly determined by corporate lobbying rather than the will of the people, and so forth. Nevertheless, when you walk into the voting booth, pull the curtain, and mark your candidate, you *enact* a set of rituals that has this ideology as its precondition, and you reinforce and reproduce the ideology. Your commitment to its norms and meanings is built into your actions. And in reproducing the ideology you also help reproduce a set of relationally defined social identities (elected representative, citizen, Democrat, constituents, etc.). Thus the ideology of democracy, instantiated and institutionalized in voting practices (among others), is not just a set of mental representations. It is embedded into material practices. Furthermore it need not be explicitly accepted or articulated by its practitioners in order to successfully reproduce itself.

Are the commitments built into the practice of voting *false*? Do they constitute a *misrepresentation*? Here I want to make two points. First, many of these elements are not neatly truth-assessable. Do selves *really* contain one and only one will in them, and can we *really* exercise autonomy by using that will to choose among a palate of electoral options? Each of us has a will that is to some extent messy and fragmented and tension-ridden. Does that mean we don't really have one and only one? Our exercises of autonomy are never perfect or unconstrained; does that mean they are not real? What we reinforce in voting is an idealized, abstract model of selves and social relations. It is roughly true insofar as it is regulative, and never fully true. Such is the way of such things. Some parts of it are pretty dubious, such as the idea that the act of marking the ballot counts as substantive political participation. But to call such a model a "misrepresentation" or a "correct representation" seems to flatten and occlude its function and power. It is a theoretical and political framework or lens through which we interpret actions and relations.

Second, in enacting ideological practices and rituals such as voting, we *help constitute* the facts to which the ideology is committed. Hence our practices function as *performatives*, in J. L. Austin's sense, and not just as reflections or outgrowths of predetermined truths (or falsehoods). *Part of what it is* to be an autonomous chooser is to do things like vote. Part of what we mean when we attribute an independent will to someone is that they do things such as represent their will by marking electoral choices. To an extent, we *define* political participation in a democratic society in terms of voting. This is part of how ideology reproduces itself: not just by transmitting ideas, but by inducting people into norms and rituals that not only reflect that ideology but make it

the case that the ideology actually structures social life. And to the extent that voting presents itself as simply the *obvious*, unquestionable way that one participates in political life and performs being an autonomous citizen, it naturalizes electoral democracy. It presents this set of rituals as built into the logic and nature of agency and community, rather than as a specific and severely limited social practice with a particular contingent history.[6]

So far, I have argued that ideologies constitute social roles and relations. But I am interested in the stronger claim that ideology helps constitute the actual subjects who inhabit these roles and relations; that is, it helps produce identities. I also want to defend the converse claim: practicing subjects are a constitutive category of ideology, and there can be no ideology without subjects inhabiting the roles it carves out. Thus, I will be arguing that subjects and ideologies are *co-constituting*.

Ideology essentially includes webs of norms, institutions, and practices. Althusser points out that there can be none of these things without *practitioners*. Ideology can only reproduce itself if there exist the *right kinds of subjects* to inhabit the roles that make it up (such as wage-earners, commodity-consumers, and property-owners in original capitalist ideology, for instance). To put it as Althusser does: among the material resources that a social order must reproduce in order to maintain itself are *obedient subjects*, who occupy the normatively defined roles that make it up (Althusser 1971, 132). Ideological institutions such as the judicial system, the electoral system, religion, education, and capitalism require specific sorts of practitioners with specific identities in order to exist at all.

Where will these practitioners come from? Althusser argues that ideology constitutes subjects who inhabit the social roles it needs to have inhabited—it *makes its own practitioners*. The judicial system requires criminals, "peers," and judges; the electoral system requires voting citizens and candidates; religion requires priests, believers, and heathens; education requires teachers and students; and capitalism requires workers, owners, and consumers. Ideology creates subjects with the sorts of identities and positions that it needs to reproduce itself. Without these practitioners it would not exist, since ideologies are not just sets of mental ideas but sets of practices. These are the subjects who enact the practices that essentially make up ideologies: voting, worshipping, studying, standing trial, purchasing, and so forth.

[6] This is true whether or not individual acts of voting actually have a significant chance of altering anything, which of course they overwhelmingly do not. The elevation of voting to a constitutive marker of political participation shows up in the common refrain that people who don't vote don't even have the right to weigh in or complain about political issues. We may (or may not) find this refrain unfortunate, but it reflects a deep-seated ideology in which voting is a privileged ritual indicating that one is a participant in political life.

2. INTERPELLATION IS THE MECHANISM BY WHICH IDEOLOGY CONSTITUTES SUBJECTS

So ideology needs to produce the right kinds of subjects, who will reproduce it in turn. But how does it make the subjects it needs for its own existence? Althusser argues that the central mechanism for constituting subjects with the right sorts of identities is what he terms *interpellation*. As he puts it, subjects are *recruited* through calls or "hails." These hails are vocatives; they call out to a subject, second-personally, and call upon her to recognize herself as (already) the self she is being recognized as being, with the social identity and position she is recognized as having.

To be successful or felicitous, interpellative hails need two features: First, they need enough social authority and contextual relevance to make a normative claim on the one hailed; they must be able to successfully call upon her to recognize herself in the hail and to respond to it appropriately. Second, in hailing someone, the hail has to recognize that person as *already* having a certain identity, and, through what often gets called "constitutive misrecognition," the one hailed must in fact *come to be* (at least incrementally more) *the self she is recognized as being*, by recognizing herself as properly recognized by the hail. I need not be conscious of an interpellation as an interpellation in order for it to work, but paradigmatically, upon being successfully interpellated, I have an experience of recognizing that it is "really me" who has been recognized as having the identity I have.

As Althusser puts it, perhaps a bit melodramatically: "I … suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals … or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects … by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday … hailing: 'Hey, you there!' The hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was really' him who was hailed (and not someone else)" (Althusser 1971, 174). Interpellation reproduces ideology by producing the subjects that ideology needs, such as voters, criminals, students, women, and the like.

This sounds highly abstract, but concrete examples are easy to find:

First, a teacher calls out attendance, and as each student's name is called, she or he calls back "Here!" and raises her hand. Each student, clearly, must recognize that she is the one is being recognized when her name is called. Furthermore, it is not enough that the student thinks to herself, "Yup, that was my name!" Rather, the point of the recognition is to call upon her to give the call uptake, to recognize back that she has been properly recognized. That

is, she needs to respond to the teacher. But more interestingly, not any old response will do. The kind of response that is appropriate is ritualized. The student may raise her hand and say "here!" and she can probably vary that routine a bit, but she can't say, "Yes, can I help you?" or "Hey, Mary, how's it going?" (which would be perfectly appropriate responses to being hailed in other settings). And in responding appropriately, she *enacts* the social identity of being a student, as well as recognizing the teacher's *authority* to call for a student-like response from her.

It's one thing to be officially enrolled in school, but it's quite another to have a *student identity*, to react and feel and move like a student. The idea is that it is through countless such interpellations as a student that each student comes to embody that identity. Through ongoing interpellations, each student comes to recognize herself as the kind of person being hailed when people address students, and her student identity comes to be built into her practices, her values, her self-understanding, and the norms that grip her. The repeated process of interpellation, then, doesn't just recognize students as students, but it *constitutes* them as having this identity. It builds it into their bodies. Through various interpellations, students are inducted not just into how to respond to teachers, but into how to talk, how to dress, how to socialize, and how to spend their time. And in time they come to reproduce this student role automatically and without need for conscious reflection.

Second, to use one of Althusser's central examples, when I hear a police siren behind me, I not only recognize that it is *really me* who the police officer is hailing (and indeed I tend to have that recognition whether or not it is correct), but I recognize that the way to give uptake to the call is to pull over and to respond as a *potential criminal*, as someone who is guilty until proven innocent. That feeling is typically a visceral pull, even if I believe I didn't do anything illegal. I can recognize and respond to the call only by engaging in ritualized, deferential behaviors that position me as a potential criminal. (Of course, I can also respond in other ways, such as gunning the motor and trying to escape, but this marks me as a transgressive problem and still keeps me within the logic of the criminal identity.)

Although Althusser does not explore how this sort of interpellation intersects with race, class, and gender, it clearly does. A young black man who hears a police siren needs to behave differently in responding to the call than does a middle-aged white woman, for instance. And these differences in uptake reflect the fact that interpellations from police recognize different people as having different identities, and in particular very different relationships to potential criminality. Ross Gay powerfully describes how such interpellations (from police and others who are enacting social rituals for recognizing who counts as "potentially criminal") can constitute black men's sense of self

quite independent of their law-abiding behavior: "I've been afraid walking through the alarm gate at the store that maybe something's fallen into my pockets, or that I've unconsciously stuffed something in them; I've felt panic that the light skinned black man who mugged our elderly former neighbors was actually me, and I worried that my parents, with whom I watched the newscast, suspected the same; and nearly every time I've been pulled over, I've prayed there were no drugs in my car, despite the fact that I don't use drugs; I don't even smoke pot. That's to say the story I have all my life heard about black people—criminal, criminal, criminal—I have started to suspect of myself" (Gay 2013).

Third, paradigmatically, it is an authoritative speaker who interpellates. But in fact there need be no literal speaker who issues the interpellative hail. Consider how traditional public bathroom doors interpellate us into one binary gender or the other. When we see the doors, most (but not all) of us, almost without reflection, recognize that one door but not the other is "*really* intended for *me*," and we go through it almost without thinking. And even though the bathrooms are usually almost interchangeable, and even when they are empty, almost all of us have had that oddly powerful sensation of being out of place, deeply uncomfortable, maybe even a bit revolted, when we end up by choice or error in the "wrong" bathroom.

But *what it is* to have a binary gender is, in part, to be the kind of person who goes through one kind of bathroom door and not the other. Most of us grant by now that there are few or no intrinsic properties that all members of a binary gender share; pretty much the only thing that members of a gender consistently share is that we recognize such gendered interpellations as aimed *at us* and give them uptake. Gendered interpellations call upon us to recognize some clothing as *for us*, some sports as *for us*, some arrangements of body hair as *for us*, and so forth. In each case, the constitutive misrecognition is that our gender is something given and fixed that predates and is properly recognized by these interpellations, whereas in fact it is in part by wearing gendered clothing, engaging in gendered sports, etc., that we have a gender. And in each case, once the norms have gripped us deeply, we typically feel viscerally uncomfortable and alienated if we end up gender-crossing. (And even if I transgress and wear something that is counter to how my gender is supposed to dress, or use the wrong bathroom, or train in the wrong sport, or refuse to shave my legs, or whatever, I acknowledge the interpellations and their authority even by experiencing myself as transgressing.)

Thus gender-marked doors are powerful tools for constituting social relations and identities, sorting us into two genders and helping to establish that division as given and "obvious." A pair of bathroom doors featuring a picture of a rooster on one and a cat on the other (or a "cock and pussy") may look

Figure 1. A bathroom door denaturalizing and undermining binaristic gender identity [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

cute and benign, but it enforces an even stronger binaristic message, signaling that gender is naturalized in genitals and interpellating users by way of their body parts.[7] They also widen the gap between the genders by suggesting that men and women metaphorically belong to different species. Conversely, all-gender signs like the one in figure 1 are not just inclusive in practice, but they work to undermine the interpellative effect of the door altogether. It is impossible to have the "that's obviously the door that is intended for people like me" response to this door. This makes it a pragmatically powerful political tool, and not just a sign with a nice semantic message.

Interpellations surround us. An advertisement in a magazine shows a picture of a woman about my age and asks me, "Are you starting to worry about wrinkles?" and I recognize that the ad is speaking *to me*, that I am appropriately the one it is calling. This either inspires or enforces my worries about

[7] See https://imgfave.com/view/3974842, photographer unknown.

wrinkles, or it makes me take a stand as someone who might be expected to worry, given who I am, but doesn't. A woman in my gym asks me, but not my large black male workout companion who actually works at the gym, where the yoga class is being held. The childbirth class instructor sorts the class into "moms" and "dads" for some activity. The voting registration form asks me to identify myself as a Democrat, a Republican, or one of those people who refuses to identify as either. Or, to take one of my favorite current examples: Google's Gmail app has started suggesting complete reply emails from a palate of options, which are keyed to the content of the original email. The feature invites us to determine which of the pre-fabricated responses is *really* what we wanted to say back—which one is in our "own" voice—thereby streamlining us into one of a small number of normative possibilities (see figure 2).

Interpellation is often experienced as a visceral pull, a compelling flash of recognition of ourselves as recognized. But when it works smoothly it may be completely automated and unconscious. Its product is properly constituted, reasonably obedient selves who have been shaped into having the kinds of identities, governed by the right kinds of norms, that ideology needs in order

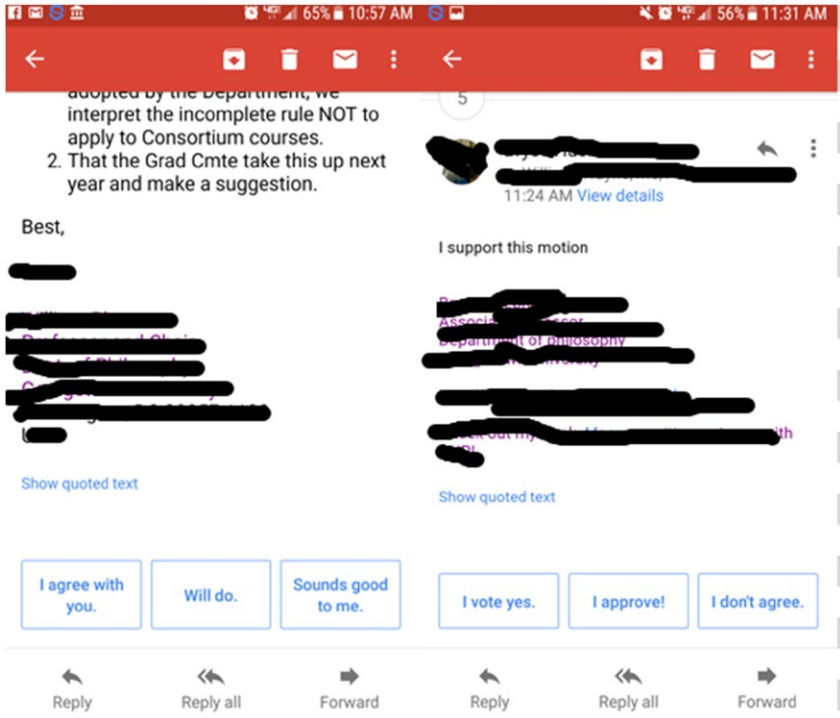

Figure 2. Interpellation in Gmail [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

to reproduce itself. As we saw, interpellation, when it hits its mark, has an interesting kind of inescapability even when we resist or resent it: ignoring an interpellation or pointedly transgressing it are still ways of responding to it, of operating within the logic of action set up by the norms it imputes. If a student responds to hearing her name in roll call with "Can I help you?" or "Hey there, Mary!" she is performing being a *bad or disobedient student*, not something altogether different such as a waitress or a casual friend. Thus, well-placed interpellations are powerful social tools for constituting identities and inserting subjects into sets of social norms that have their own, ideology-reproducing logic.

Ideology has a characteristic and essential *naturalizing* effect. That is to say, part of how it functions is by masking its own contingency and history and making the social relations and identities that incarnate it look like just how things *naturally, of course*, are, thereby removing the need to explain or question them.[8] An ideology builds in an ontology and a set of norms, and it includes practices that make this ontology seem given; furthermore, this is so regardless of whether we believe in the ontology explicitly. For example, money has value because we treat it as *already, naturally* having value, even though we all know that if we collectively stopped treating it as having value, its value would immediately disappear. The *intrinsic* value of money is built into our practices of using it, and this is so even if we consciously recognize that this is a kind of collective misrecognition. Capitalism, democracy, patriarchy, and smaller and subtler ideologies all share this naturalizing logic; it is part of what helps them survive. The same goes for the subjects who are required to incarnate and reproduce ideology: once subjects are habituated into subject positions that they inhabit "automatically," the norms that govern those subject positions (deference to the police siren, using the "correct" bathroom, etc.) do not show up as contingent or in need of interrogation and assessment, but just as how things automatically are and are supposed to be.[9]

Interpellation is a powerful tool for executing this naturalizing move. It only works if subjects feel that the hail recognizes who they *really, already are*—interpellation constitutes subjects, but it does so by seeming to recognize an already-given reality. Thus we do not experience interpellative hails as

[8] Plato explored this naturalizing move in the myth of the metals, as did Hegel in his reading of the Antigone myth, among other classic sources.

[9] It is through this process that the gendering of the body comes to feel "natural," for instance. Sandra Bartky (1990) gives us lots of lovely examples of this. Once you are used to shaving the parts of your body your gender is supposed to keep hair free, not doing so just feels "naturally" wrong, and so forth.

contingently constituting us, but rather as recognizing given, "natural" facts about us. We really are, naturally, women or criminals or aristocrats with "noble blood"—and hence the norms and practices that attach to these identities have authority over us. But in fact this reverses the order of causality: it is at least in part because we take on these norms as applying to us that we have these identities.

3. SLURS

I have claimed that interpellation is a key mechanism by which an ideology reproduces itself, by constituting subjects who take that ideology, their place in it, and the norms that govern that place to be just *naturally* how things are. Interpellation functions through hails that recognize subjects and call upon them to recognize themselves as properly recognized through their uptake of the call. This process works regardless of whether the subjects involved explicitly believe in it.

Slurs, I propose, *just are* interpellations of a specific sort. They are hails that, like all interpellations, recognize a subject (or subjects, when plural) as having a specific identity, and thereby help constitute them as having that identity by calling upon them to recognize themselves as having it and hence as subjected to sets of norms. Specifically, they are interpellations that recognize a subject (or subjects—henceforth I will just let the singular case stand in for both possibilities unless it matters) as having a (1) generic, (2) derogated, and (3) subordinated identity. Let me consider these three features in turn:

Slurs are generic: A slur, when directed at its target, recognizes someone not just as having a specific identity, but as *reduced to* an instance of that identity—as interchangeable with any other member of the group, at least for the purpose of calling for uptake by the slur. That is, the one wielding the slur need not think that the person slurred is in fact indistinguishable from any other group member; this would be implausible if taken literally. But the uptake called for by the slur is determined by group membership and nothing more. If I call a Hispanic man a "Paco,"[10] I am calling upon him to recognize himself as having been recognized as, in effect, *any* Hispanic man. I am expecting

[10] I am convinced by Herbert 2018 that one ought to be as sparing as possible mentioning slurs in academic articles and talks, as it's not clear that there is a neat use/mention distinction when it comes to the harms that slurs inflict. I do think that I need some examples here to make my point clear, but in line with the guidelines she proposes, I will be using as few as possible. I discuss the issue of how we should talk about slurs more below.

him to reply (merely) as someone who is (perhaps) subservient and looking for work or lazy or whatever set of stereotypes is being invoked.[11]

Slurs derogate: But being generic is not enough to make an interpellation into a slur. After all, calling someone "doctor" is also generic in this way. Slurs are interpellations that *derogate*—they recognize someone as having an abject or lesser identity. And, according to the logic of ideology that I explored above, they recognize that abjection or lesser value as inhering "naturally" in the person's character rather than being a contingent product of social relations. Calling someone "underpaid" is not a slur, because it refers to their location in a system of social relations. But calling someone a "redneck" is, as it recognizes them as *inherently suited* to occupy various derogated and economically disadvantaged social roles because of who they *really are*. Even a slur like "wetback," whose literal semantic content derives from having a certain social narrative (namely, having crossed the Rio Grande to make it to the United States), functions by seeming to identify a timeless and given feature of the person slurred—the slur transforms the social description into a metaphor for an *inherent* outsider, criminal identity. When used as a slur, it's as if the wetness "sticks" to all group members long after they crossed the river and even if they didn't actually do so.

Slurs subordinate: In some sense, all interpellations are exercises of power. In recognizing, they demand uptake and self-recognition, and they have to be undergirded by the proper authority in order to work. (I don't get to pull you over with a police siren, nor do I get to give President Obama a casual "Hey, how's it going?" with a fist bump as I pass him on the street, much though I would like to.) But slurs exercise power by positioning the interpellator above the one interpellated on some sort of hierarchy, at least locally. I can insult someone as an equal ("Wow, you're being an asshole!") but I can't slur someone as an equal; the use of the slurring name not only *reflects* but *constitutes* a

[11] This nicely dovetails with Swanson's point that slurs are not traditional *names*, because they treat people as interchangeable (Swanson, forthcoming, 16). Swanson attributes to me and Mark Lance (2009) the view that all interpellations name people as noninterchangeable individuals, and hence he concludes that slurs are not vocatives in our sense. But although our introductory example of a vocative interpellation, which Swanson quotes, is of a use of an individual name ("To utter a vocative is to call another person—in calling out 'Hello, Eli!' I recognize the fact that that person there is Eli, and I do so by calling upon him to recognize that he has been properly recognized"), we also give plenty of examples of what we call kind-specific vocatives. These hail whatever set of people happen to fit into a group. Nothing said in Kukla and Lance 2009 or in Althusser 1971 rules out that an individual can be hailed with a kind-specific vocative—one that hails a person as someone who happens to instantiate a group. Indeed, the classic Althusserian examples of interpellation, which are paradigmatic cases of vocatives for us, tend to focus on recruiting subjects into broad, generic social identities. We can be interpellated into a broad social identity like "macho man" or "white trash," or we can be interpellated into particular individual personalities (for instance, when your parents insisted on interpellating you as bad at sports, or as a picky eater, or whatever other family mythology got enforced).

kind of subordinating speech, which positions the one slurred in a less empowered position than the one using the slur.[12]

There are at least two interesting complications here. First, when group insiders use terms that are traditionally slurs with one another (the most obvious case being variations on "n----" used within the African American community), they do not always have the same subordinating force as they do when used by outsiders. We could haggle over the details as to whether such speech acts are slurs being used in nonstandard ways that undercut their subordinating function, or not slurs at all; either way, their use clearly depends in rich ways on their history as tools of subordination when used by oppressors.[13]

Second, some slurs are designed to "punch up." For example, "Becky" is used as a slur by black women, against a certain sort of white woman who is seen as benefiting from her white femme privilege, especially through her manipulation of men. It's not clear that such speech subordinates in the traditional sense, since the slur carries with it an acknowledgment of the target's (unjust) greater social power. But it does seem to me that such speech subordinates in a more local sense, exercising a kind of situational dominance, or a situational flip in power relations, in the face of an acknowledgment of general oppressive structures that disadvantage the one using the slur and advantage the target of the slur.

Understanding slurs as generic, derogatory, subordinating interpellations helps make more precise the sense of the idea that slurs help to *cue* ideology, because they work by recognizing someone as inhabiting a subject position carved out within and defined by the norms of an ideology (an ideology of racial or class stratification, for instance). They also cue ideology by calling upon the one recognized to recognize herself as placed within ideology and to respond appropriately. Furthermore, slurs *strengthen* an ideology by helping to constitute the subjects that are needed to instantiate and reproduce it. They do this very effectively, by calling upon subjects to recognize themselves as *really, already* the kind of subjects that an ideology needs them to be, even if they resist or resent this identity. Thus, like interpellation more generally, slurs at once constitute subjects in ideology and draw on ideology to recognize and place subjects. But (unlike interpellations more generally) they do this in a way that is inherently pernicious and harmful to the subjects recognized, by derogating and subordinating them on the basis of their membership in a generic kind.

[12] For more discussion of slurs as subordinating speech, see for instance Maitra 2012; McGowan 2012; and Barnes 2016.

[13] There is plenty of interesting literature on reclaimed slurs and insider uses of slurs; see, for instance, Herbert 2015 and Anderson, forthcoming. I put aside the subtleties here.

Not only do slurs cue and strengthen ideology, but they do so in a way that is particularly sneaky and inescapable. Like interpellations more generally, they recognize the subjects they constitute as *already, naturally*, *inherently* having the derogated identities they in fact help socially constitute, and they call on subjects to respond by recognizing themselves as *really properly* recognized in this way. Thus they reinforce an ideology while masking the socially contingent character of the identities the ideology relies upon. And, like interpellations more generally, slurs have an odd kind of unavoidability, because responding to a slur by pushing back against it or even by ignoring it still folds the target into the ideological logic it cues and positions her within it, as long as she recognizes it as aimed *at her.*

4. INDIRECT, THIRD-PERSON SLURRING

Not all slurs are used second-personally against their targets. Probably at least as often, people use slurs between them to refer to members of a group when none are present. People will use a slur in conversation with other ingroup members, for example, to refer to members of an "undesirable" outgroup moving into their neighborhood or taking their jobs or dating their children. Third-person slurs clearly don't have the same kind of direct interpellative force as traditional name-calling. I think, however, that understanding slurs as most paradigmatically second-person interpellations of the sort I have described helps us understand the third-person case as well.

First, third-person slurs still counterfactually interpellate any group members who would have heard them. In doing so, they still cue and strengthen ideology. The folks trading the slurs know how to play the slurring language game with one another precisely because they grasp the ideological norms and ideologically defined subject positions at play and the norms and power relations that govern them. They know how to use the slurs to generically reduce, derogate, and subordinate group members. They are both drawing on and practicing this knowledge in sharing slurs.

Second, using a slur third-personally with others who we think will play along is a way of interpellating *those others* as the sorts of people who will be willing and able to play that game—as having the right identity and the right derogating stance toward the slurred group to participate in the slurring, even just by acknowledging it. Slurring others *together* is a special kind of speech act that enforces and constitutes ingroup boundaries and memberships.[14] It powerfully positions not just the one uttering the slur, but also the audience who hears and recognizes the slur within the ideology that gives the slur its

[14] See Lynne Tirrell's (2012) compelling development of a similar point, although she doesn't use the language of interpellation.

primary force and meaning. When I slur someone who isn't present *to you*, I call upon you to recognize yourself as *not* a member of that group, but instead as a member of a group that has the power to subordinate those group members. I also call upon you to recognize yourself as a trusted insider who can be counted on to properly separate what it is appropriate to say with one another from what "others" can overhear us say.

And once again, this interpellative logic has a certain inescapability; even if I refuse to participate in the game, and even if I call you on the offensiveness of the slur, I still do so as "one of us," as someone who recognizes that I was recognized by you as positioned in a certain way, with respect to you, the slurred group, and (implicitly) ideological norms and social relations more broadly.

5. SLURS AND IDEOLOGIES ACTIVATE AND ENABLE ONE ANOTHER

A slur cues and activates an ideology and helps to reproduce (pernicious, harmful) social identities and relations that embody an ideology, as well as the social ontology that undergirds it. But notice that this process does not rely on people feeling any particular way or consciously thinking any particular thoughts when they utter or are targeted by a slur. Swanson claims that "Uses of slurs … encourag[e] the speaker and others to feel that their own consent to and endorsement of that ideology would not be out of place" (forthcoming, 1) and likewise, that "ideologies can provide speakers with the feeling that they are justified in using a slur" (forthcoming, 9). It is likely true that this is a typical psychological effect of slurring speech. But I am not fond of this reliance on how speakers and others "feel," because I think that slurs can do their ideological work even when people don't notice their effect and even when people feel uncomfortable hearing them used third-personally. We don't want to say that just because some particular person didn't feel insulted by a slur, or because someone did not consciously intend to slur, that a speech act was not a slur. Intentions and feelings can vary from person to person and circumstance to circumstance; they are too contingent and unreliable to be the mechanism by which interpellation functions to reproduce ideology. We want a less psychologistic, less contingent, more robustly concrete story than this.

I've argued that interpellation works even when we resist it and even when we don't notice it, and that ideology works even when we don't "believe in" it in any conscious or felt sense. Slurs play a direct causal role in positioning subjects within ideologies, by calling for their recognition of themselves as recognized as already in them. Slurs bind those that hear them with sets of

norms suited to their ideologically defined subject positions, roles, and identities. In using a slur, we concretely interpellate people into giving it ideologically appropriate uptake, regardless of our intentions or inner feelings. And in giving concrete uptake to the recognition performed in a slur—including uptake in the form of resistance, refusal, or pointed ignoring—we automatically enforce the ideology that supports the subject position we are recognized as having, again regardless of whether we feel insulted, angry, or nothing at all.

Slurs, on my account, are specifically hails, or more formally, vocatives, that call for recognition and uptake. They interpellate their targets as inhabiting a generic, derogated, subordinate subject position. Often ideology-cueing speech does not have a vocative form at all (including slogans like "Make America Great Again"). Other examples (like "maverick" or "climate rationalist"[15]) are ideologically loaded ways of naming individuals but do not function as generic derogations that subordinate. Dog whistle speech almost by definition cues ideology, even if it's not directed at or descriptive of anyone. Insults may derogate and name without subordinating, and hence without functioning as slurs. "Climate alarmist" is a generic naming that derogates, but it has no subordinative force; it just points to and insults the content of someone's beliefs, but it doesn't exercise any subordinating power, even though it definitely cues and endorses and helps reproduce an ideology. These are not slurs, even though the ideologies they cue are (I would argue) clearly damaging. Thus, understanding slurs as generic, derogating, subordinating interpellations allows us to give a precise theory of slurs as a subspecies of ideology-cuing speech acts.

In the final sections of this paper, I apply this account of slurs to see how well it fits and helps illuminate three quite different, especially complex slurs. In these sections, it will be necessary for me to mention slurs that have power in our culture far more frequently than I have in the rest of this paper in which I have tried to minimize these mentions. Mentioning a slur can mobilize negative biases and associations, activate stereotype threat, and otherwise harm (Herbert 2018). By flagging that I will be mentioning slurs and reminding the reader that even the mention of slurs can harm, I hope to frame these mentions in a way that allows readers to be conscious of such effects and to try to minimize it. I also use scare quotes around the slurs throughout, to help avoid normalizing them as part of everyday speech, and in the hope of marking them at the visual level as problematic terms that I am not uttering in my own voice and that are not to be taken for granted as readable. Here I

[15] This is apparently the right-wing term for climate deniers. Just Google "Breibart climate" for multiple references.

am following and to some extent adapting Cassie Herbert's best practices for mentioning slurs in an academic context, which include both avoiding their mention when possible, and flagging the risk of harm when mentioning them is required (op.cit.).

6. CASE STUDIES

6.1. *Case study: "Thug"*

The term "thug" has come under a fair amount of discussion in recent years, as it emerged as a prominent racialized term used against, for instance, Black men shot by police and Black protesters. We see the term used frequently as part of rhetoric designed to minimize the tragedy and the moral unjustifiability of Black deaths (i.e., calling both the victims of shootings and the protestors of those shootings by that term). Luvell Anderson, in particular, has explored the status of the word as a racial slur (Anderson, forthcoming), as well as the partially but incompletely successful attempts to reclaim the term as insider speech.

As used, the term recognizes a subject as having a generic, derogated, and subordinated identity, as required by my account. Calling someone a "thug" erases the complex individual and contextual reasons he may have for whatever actions he takes, effectively explaining his[16] actions instead as rooted in an arational instinct for violence and disruption—an instinct that is shared with all other "thugs," and that defines his character. It thus assigns him a generic identity. The term is clearly derogatory: It labels its target as stupid and brutish, as outside the civilized moral community. And finally, calling someone by that term has a subordinating function. It positions the interpellator as someone with reason and self-control, in contrast to the target, who accordingly needs to be managed and contained by force rather than persuaded by reason. It directly legitimates the use of coercive tools of control and containment against the target, and it positions the user of the slur as one of the ones protected by those tools, rather than one of the ones at risk from them.

The use of the term "thug" serves a naturalizing function, in the sense I discussed above. Anderson argues that the term has both racial and class overtones, and that it invokes the "purportedly natural association of Black masculinity and criminality" (forthcoming, 8). I would add that it forges a natural association between these things, and low intelligence and reasoning capacities as well. Thus it wraps criminality, stupidity, race, and gender in a unified, tightly-bound natural package. When someone calls a man by

[16] The term is almost exclusively used against men. If it were to be used against a woman, it would definitely have a masculinizing connotation.

that name, we turn his purportedly unruly *behavior* into a marker of a *stable character trait*. The "thug" acts in ways the speaker finds unruly, threatening, and transgressive *because* he is a "thug"—because of his given character—and not *because* of righteous, situationally appropriate anger, or a risk-benefit calculation made in a situation of serious need, or rational fear, or just being black and male in the "wrong" space, or even different aesthetic cultural norms that govern things like slang and clothing choices. The term thus erases the social, historical, and contextual factors that might explain the behavior that is perceived as merely instinctive and brutish, foreclosing any potential for interpreting that behavior as rational and appropriate.

Because of the resilient logic of interpellation, resisting or trying to deny the applicability of the slur does not undo its interpellative power. We saw Ross Gay, above, describe movingly how powerful it is to be interpellated into a criminal identity, and Anderson (forthcoming, 2–4) describes a similar experience. Moreover, resistance to being labeled as a "thug"—that is, trying to prove that the slur misses its mark—requires being especially deferential and orderly. This still concedes the interpellative power of the slur, and indeed it enhances its subordinating force. If the slur is to be incapacitated, it will need to be by way of a general disarming. Reclamation by insiders (such as Tupac Shakur's "thug life" trope) is a more hopeful path toward disarmament than individual resistance to being interpellated.[17]

Early in this paper, I argued that interpellation is a central mechanism for the reproduction of ideology, and that an ideology builds in a social *ontology* and includes practices that make this ontology appear as given and natural rather than historical and contingent. So what is the *ontology of "thugs"*? The term "thug" cues a specific and elaborate racist ideology—one that recognizes a wide variety of ideologically defined subject positions and relations. The use of the term helps produce, as an effect, at least three *kinds of people*, as well as norms that are conceptually sutured to each kind, and together these three kinds make up an *ontology of social relations and divisions*. These are:

> (1) People (overwhelmingly, black men) who are inherently an unruly *disruptive threat*, a source of violence and lawlessness, and who must be managed through *force and containment*, not reason.

[17] Although, as I mentioned earlier, reclamation is difficult in all sorts of ways, and always "precarious," as Herbert (2015) puts it. Sadly, exploring slur reclamation remains outside of the scope of this paper.

(2) People "like us" who are inherently *under threat*, and in need of protection. Calling other people "thugs" when one is amidst one's "own" people functions to interpellate the audience as ingroup members who are *under threat like you are.*
(3) People (police, security guards, wardens, etc.) whose natural place it is to *maintain order*, including through violence if necessary; this group is needed to enforce the divisions between the first two groups that keep the second group safe.[18] Since they are managing a subrational threat, they are acting appropriately if they use force.

Hence the term interpellates "thugs" directly, but it also indirectly interpellates those in a position to use the slur, as well those whose job it is to maintain the orderly divisions between the two groups. In effect, the term racializes and naturalizes not only its targets, but these other subject positions as well. So slurring that uses this term draws on and enforces an entire ideological system with multiple subject positions.

6.2. *Case study: "Slut"*

Like "thug," the term "slut" interpellates a generic, derogated, subordinate identity, and it naturalizes this identity. It relies on and helps produce a specific social ontology that undergirds a specific ideology. Thus it counts as a slur, according to my account. However, the details of its pragmatic functioning of its concomitant social ontology are interestingly different in the two cases.[19]

The term certainly functions to interpellate people into generic identities: A woman who is called by this term—and it is overwhelmingly used against women and has feminizing impact when used upon on a man—is reduced to a feature, namely her actual or perceived sexual activity and desires. For the purposes of this interpellative encounter, at least, she is interchangeable with any other woman deemed overly sexually active or desirous. It is also a derogatory term. The clear force of the slur is not to celebrate sexual pleasure and appetite, but to mark women who have a lot of sex (or are perceived as having, wanting, or even being hypothetically willing to have a lot of sex) as less worthy of respect and as impure and lacking in virtue. Calling a woman or girl a "slut" subordinates her. A "slut" does not have a complex narrative within which her sexual activities are intricate parts of human relationships, driven by context-sensitive choices. Rather, she is just a thing that has sex, as a matter of character. Thus her agency is reduced; her intimate life story is no longer one

[18] This racialization of the identity of the police as order-keepers has become amazingly literal of late. Not only does the expression "blue lives matter" suggest that being a cop is a naturalized, quasi-racial identity, but recently the New York Police Department Union put out a video claiming that "blue racism" against cops is "even more racist" than traditional racism based on skin color (https://vimeo.com/230376456, accessed August 24, 2017).

[19] As far as I know, the only extended philosophical discussion of the pragmatics of the term "slut" is Herbert 2017, although Lauren Ashwell (2016) also discusses the term briefly.

that displays self-determination and meaning. Furthermore, naming her as a thing *for* sex carries with it a subtle rape threat: having sex with her would be just using her for her purpose. If someone is *defined* as wanting sex too much and being available for sex, then consent is dramatically less relevant and is easily presupposed.

That the label is a naturalizing one is clear from the idea that it names a character trait, a kind of person, rather than just indicating that someone has engaged in specific activities. But the naturalizing force becomes more vivid when we notice that a woman need not actually have a lot of sex to be a "slut." If she dresses or presents herself the wrong way, or enters the wrong spaces, her true, inner "slut" nature becomes nameable, even if she hasn't had much or any sex.

What is the social ontology of "sluts," and what subject positions propagate from the use of the term? The term carries with it at least the following identities:

> (1) Abject women who are sexually available, and hence available to be used and discarded in ways that women in general are not.
> (2) "Good" women who do not desire or take pleasure in sex, except perhaps altruistic pleasure, and who successfully avoid sex.
> (3) Perhaps most tellingly, men who are always ready for sex and will take sex when they can get it—because the concept of a "slut" requires that there be plenty of men available to have sex with them, even though they are abject. Such men are not themselves particularly abject or objectified; they are just acting as men *naturally* do.

We can also examine the complex background ideology that makes use of these subject positions as its constitutive categories and is cued and strengthened by the use of the term. Broadly, the term both enforces and depends on binaristic and heteronormative gender roles and relations. More specifically, its use reflects and reinforces the idea that having sex devalues women but is at worst neutral for men. The entire concept of a "slut" also feeds essentially off of a commodity exchange model of sexual and gender relations, in which proper women have no sexual desire, but are willing to have sex in exchange for a valuable reward such as financial stability, a baby, or a marriage that will afford social respectability; only "sluts" "give it away." Less obviously but powerfully, I think, the practice of identifying and naming "sluts" goes hand in hand with the idea that heterosexual men are inherently sexually undesirable, with "gross" bodies, and hence they need to either "pay" for sex with these sorts of social goods or take it by force. Only in this way can we understand "sluts" as *defective* women with inappropriate desires.

If my account of slurs is correct, then using this slur depends on this ideological background for its interpellative force and also activates and strengthens this ideology. Like "thug," it interpellates women into one subject position but does so by situating them in a network of other subject positions that are part of the same ideology and also propagate out from the slur.

6.3. *Case study: "Illegal"*

The term "illegal," as used to name a kind of person, is a fascinating example of a slur, for my purposes. It turns an adjective that literally describes an institutional social status—indeed, a status that makes no conceptual sense whatsoever outside of the contingent, human-created legal system—into a noun that names a *kind of person*. Thus its ideological, naturalizing function is exceptionally clear and explicit. Having a specific legal immigration status is transformed, when the term becomes a slur, into a name for a kind of person with a bundle of characterological properties: someone inherently criminal, alien, and, crucially, threatening to the social order. An "illegal" is defined by their outsider status and by how that status threatens internal order. This is so even though, of course, many people against whom the slur is directed are in fact documented immigrants, children of immigrants, refugees, and others who in fact are in the country legally. It is clear, therefore, that the term purports to pick out a naturalized character type—an inherent outsider—rather than a literal, contingent legal status. Like "thug," the term is not *directly* a racial slur, but it is heavily racialized. A quick Google image search of "illegals" yields a virtually unbroken wall of images of people (mostly but not entirely men) visually presented as Latinx.[20]

"Illegal" meets my criteria for being a slur, as it interpellates people into a generic, derogatory, subordinating identity. Calling someone an "illegal" names them as generically interchangeable with anyone else with their (real or imagined) illegitimate residency status. The derogatory force of the term is fairly obvious; no one uses the term unless they are seeking to mark an individual or the group as a whole as transgressive and as a social problem. The subordinating force of the term is powerful indeed, and painfully concrete. By calling someone out for their (again, real or perceived) undocumented presence in the country, the user of the slur also draws attention to the precarious and vulnerable position of the target of the slur and to the putative power of

[20] This paper was written in 2017, before the current crisis concerning detention camps for immigrant children. This news cycle has altered the image search results considerably, and one now gets at least as many pictures of children as of men. It has not changed the racialization of the results, of course.

the user of the slur to have that person disrupted and displaced, which can quite possibly cause them severe harm. The use of the term functions almost directly as a threat, and it puts the person slurred in the position of needing to be deferential and obedient in order to avoid trouble and to prove there is no good reason to displace them.

One final time, let's look at the social positions and the background ideology that the term buttresses and presupposes. At least four different relationally defined subject positions are built into the interpellative force of the term:

> (1) People who are inherently, as a matter of character and nature, outsiders who are *in a place where they don't belong*, and who threaten to disorder that place, and perhaps even to displace its proper residents.
> (2) People—the same people, insofar as they are adults and able-bodied—who are *for* cheap labor and have whatever precarious claim they have on staying because they are willing to do any work. Because this is what they are *for* and why they have not yet been removed, they have no right to try to control or negotiate the terms or conditions of their employment.
> (3) People who *belong here*, are in their *proper place*, and need and deserve protection from forces that threaten to disorder that place.
> (4) People (legislators, ICE officers, police officers, perhaps other public servants such as teachers and nurses) whose job it is to patrol and gate-keep, enforcers who fortify the divide between those who belong here and those who don't, and who keep the people who don't belong from *flooding* in and overwhelming those who do.

The ideological background picture that undergirds and is cued by the term "illegal" is familiar. The force of the slur relies upon and enforces understanding of the nation as fundamentally under threat and in need of protection on behalf of its proper residents, so that it doesn't slide into chaos and disarray. "Illegals" become in effect an undifferentiated mass rather than a countable set, in more than one sense. They form a *tide* that threatens to burst through our protective barriers and *flood* the inside if these barriers aren't sufficiently fortified. At the same time, a parallel ideology in play is that of capitalism itself, which positions people in precarious positions as a *resource* that is meant to provide exploitable labor. This is a nice example of how, true to the Marxist roots of the concept of interpellation, inducting people into ideological subject positions via interpellation can be part and parcel with reproducing the conditions of production—in this case a cheap, pliable, and necessarily compliant labor pool. All of this imagery—"illegals" as a flood, as a tide, and as a resource—serves as a powerful force for objectifying and subordinating Latinx residents of the United States, whether they are undocumented or just perceived as not belonging here.

7. CONCLUSION

Slurs are interpellations that recognize people by reducing them to an instance of a generic identity and that function to derogate and subordinate. The use of a slur, whether targeted directly at its victim or used among insiders, helps generate multiple interrelated subject positions; it does not merely constitute the identity of the one slurred. Like interpellations more generally, interpellations *naturalize* these identities, as well as the social ontology and the background ideology they both presuppose and support. Interpellation is oddly inescapable; it constitutes identity even among those who explicitly resist or reject the interpellation. Pernicious ideologies require subjects that inhabit these derogated, subordinate roles, and slurs help to produce the subjects that ideologies need in order to reproduce themselves.[21]

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