Confronting blackface

Stancetaking in the Dutch Black Pete debate

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Recently, the Netherlands witnessed an agitated discussion over Black Pete, a blackface character associated with the Saint Nicholas festival. This paper analyzes a televised panel interview discussing a possible court ban of public Nicholas festivities, and demonstrates that participants not only disagree over the racist nature of the blackface character but also over the terms of the debate itself. Drawing on recent sociolinguistic work on stancetaking, it traces how panelists 'laminate' the interview's participation framework by embedding their assessments of Black Pete in contrasting dialogical fields. Their stancetaking evokes opposing trajectories of earlier interactions and conjures up discursive complexes of identity/belonging that entail discrepant judgments over the acceptability of criticism. The extent to which a stance makes explicit the projected field's phenomenal content, it is argued, reflects the relative (in)visibility of hegemonic we-ness.

Keywords: Black Pete, stance, metastancing, metapragmatic regimentation, panel interview, visibility, hegemony

1. Introduction

For young children growing up in the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, Saint Nicholas celebrations are an annual highlight. Tradition suggests that the holy man arrives from Spain by steamer with his white horse and his assistant Black Pete (BP) in the middle of November. On the evening of December 5, they wander over rooftops, Saint Nicholas on horseback and BP carrying a bag of gifts, which BP delivers through the chimney. Dutch children receive their presents that evening, while Flemish children receive theirs the next morning. In November, images of the odd couple begin to dominate the streetscape and media, with toy stores publishing illustrated catalogues, bakeries stocking their shop windows with Nicholas-shaped chocolate figurines, and

shopping malls staging meet-and-greets with the saint. Reenactments like these are a regular part of the festival buildup and much energy is spent on the right attire. Saint Nicholas, solemn but friendly, ageing with a white beard, sports a richly decorated red and white Catholic bishop's robe, including crozier and miter. In contrast, BP is a hyperactive and playful blackface character with thick red lips, hoop earrings, and a curly wig. His colorful outfit includes tights, a white frilly collar, and a feathered cap.

Nicholas celebrations in the Low Countries date back to medieval times (Knoops et al. 2014), and throughout the ages, the figure has undergone multiple transformations (Blakely 2001; Helsloot 2008). Analogous traditions depicting him as a Catholic bishop with a demonic counterpart exist in neighboring countries (Blakely 2001; Boer 2014). The latter's racialization, however, appears to be a relatively recent Dutch-Flemish phenomenon. It is accredited to Jan Schenkman, whose 1850 booklet *Sint Nicolaas en zijn knecht* ("Saint Nicholas and His Servant") inaugurated the story of the 'Moorish' servant living with Saint Nicholas in a faraway castle in Spain. The image of a black subordinate obeying a white religious dignitary thus originated while Europe was preparing for the Scramble for Africa. His costume is also inspired by that of 18th century African pages, who were status symbols among patrician Dutch families (Boer 2014; Brienen 2014). In the 1960s, leftist intellectuals began to criticize the racist characterization of the figure. Two decades later, citizens of Surinamese descent started raising their voices (Helsloot 2005). In the new millennium, the tone gradually hardened. Frustrated by a lack of uptake, activists threatened to disturb traditional Nicholas-welcoming parades (Helsloot 2014). In November 2011, Curaçao-born poet-activist Quinsy Gario was violently arrested at a parade in Dordrecht for wearing a T-shirt stating "BP is racism" (Helsloot 2012). Two years later, the situation escalated (Helsloot 2014; Pijl and Goulordava 2014). In October 2013, activists requested that a court ban the Amsterdam parade. On October 7, Gario was invited to comment on the case on the late-night show *Pauw en Witteman*. His appearance triggered a national uproar, forcing politicians, opinion leaders, and other public figures to take a stance on the issue. On October 18, Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte declared that "BP is black, and I cannot change that, because his name is BP," which further exacerbated tensions. International controversy ensued when an anti-racist advocacy group presented the case to the United Nations. Interviewed by Dutch television on October 22, Jamaican history professor Verene Shepherd, president of the UN expert panel examining the case, stated that she considered BP "definitely racist." In response, a Facebook page was set up in support of the blackface tradition, which gathered over two million likes within a few days. In subsequent years, the debate became even more grim and acrimonious. In 2017, a group of BP supporters was arrested for blocking a high-

way in an attempt to prevent activists from attending a rally. For the 2018 arrival parade, activists had announced protest demonstrations in multiple municipalities. BP supporters responded with calls for violent counterdemonstrations and, as a result, local authorities in several places simply banned the protests.

So far, critical analysis has focused mainly on the arguments and strategies ('topoi'; Reisigl and Wodak 2005) that support the deracialization of BP and normalize his appearance in the annual reenactments (see, e.g., Helsloot 2012; Pijl and Goulordava 2014):

1. BP is black due to chimney soot
2. BP is a voluntary assistant/Nicholas treats him respectfully
3. People celebrating Nicholas have no racist intentions
4. It is an innocent children's festival
5. It is (merely) tradition
6. BP critics are the real racists
7. 'We' are forced to relinquish our own culture

Tropes 3–5 exemplify an 'intentionalist' deracialization strategy that restricts racism to deliberate acts of verbal abuse and discrimination, thereby effacing its structural dimension (Essed 1997; Blommaert and Verschueren 1998; Reyes 2011). Tropes 6–7 are instances of a well-documented reversal strategy (e.g., Reisigl and Wodak 2005). Tropes 1–2, however, are more peculiar. They counter a 'contextualizing' critique tracing the genealogy of BP reenactments against a background of historic interethnic relationships with a purely internal account of the tradition, which takes the denotational content of the Nicholas story at face value. Hence, they illustrate what others have described as 'cultural aphasia' (Helsloot 2012), 'smug ignorance' (Essed and Hoving 2014), and a 'Dutch habitus' ignorant of its own historical roots (Pijl and Goulordava 2014). The latter represents the persistent failure of Dutch society to accept that this stereotypical caricature of blackness is rooted in its own colonial past, coupled with a refusal to engage in dialogue with minority groups for whom it indexes persistent patterns of subordination.

This paper takes a slightly different approach. It is not so much concerned with the tropes by which the (de)racialization of BP is accomplished, but elucidates the understandings of the debate that circulate among members of Dutch society and examines how the ongoing societal conflict is discursively constructed by the participants. Hence, we will show that debaters' attempts to (de)racialize BP are embedded in wider discursive complexes of identity/belonging that in turn entail discrepant judgments over speaking rights and the acceptability of criticism. We will do so based on an empirical snapshot of one situated instance: the already mentioned *Pauw and Witteman* late-night show of October 7 that sparked

the 2013 upsurge.[1] In the analysis, we reconstruct, on a turn-by-turn basis, how the participants of the panel interview 'metapragmatically regiment' (Silverstein 1993) the unfolding encounter. Metapragmatic regimentation refers to "the capacity of language […] to structure and typify itself [and] provide coherence to a stretch of communicative activity by segmenting and rendering it as a socially recognizable event" (Reyes 2011, 459). We will argue that, on this occasion, metapragmatic regimentation extends well beyond rendering the event 'socially recognizable' as a panel interview and includes successfully connecting local speaking practices to wider social processes outside the television studio.

The panel interview turned into a passionate confrontation between Quinsy Gario, co-petitioner for a ban of the Amsterdam parade, and one of the other guests of the show, media celebrity Henk Westbroek. The latter, a one-time singer of a popular rock band, had been invited to comment on his decision to run for the position of mayor of Utrecht but was asked by the interviewer to respond to Gario in the discussion of BP. The entire incident lasted approximately 10 mins and 30 secs. As indicated above, it quickly triggered a torrent of responses, both in online and offline media, which often involved the subsequent recontextualization of Gario and Westbroek's statements, either in the form of a spoken or written quote by subsequent commentators or by rebroadcasting snippets of original footage. The interview thus became part of what Leudar and Nekvapil (1998, and elsewhere) termed a 'dialogical network,' a rhizomatically expanding web of public statements mediated by press coverage, through which "even opponents who do not wish to be seen meeting face to face can argue in public" (1998, 44). To complicate matters even further, it will soon become clear that panelists orient the dialogical, multi-voiced discursive nature of the debate already in the opening node of the dialogical network itself. To address the complexity that comes with this multiplicity of voices and discourses, this paper draws on recent sociolinguistic literature regarding stance and stancetaking (Englebretson 2007; Jaffe 2009). First, the concept of stance crosses the gap between the 'propositional' and 'interactional' (Lempert 2009), which greatly facilitates the leap from argumentative texture to metapragmatic regimentation. It also allows us to trace in detail how the panelists navigate the multi-voicedness of the debate. Hence, we will start by looking into the affordances that stancetaking offers for transforming the panel interview's participation framework (PF) and for inserting the encounter into a broader 'dialogical field' (Irvine 1996) comprising reflexively projected prior and future interactions.

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1. The late-night show was broadcast by the Dutch VARA broadcasting association (*Omroepvereniging VARA*), which in 2014 merged into BNN-VARA. At the time of preparing the final draft, the broadcast could still be retrieved from www.npostart.nl

2.   Stancetaking beyond the local

According to Du Bois' highly influential (2007) formulation, taking a stance is a situated performance that involves the projection of three interconnected relationships: (a) evaluating an object or state of affairs, (b) aligning oneself with other stancetakers evaluating the same stance object, and (c) affectively and epistemically positioning oneself in relation to that stance object. Kiesling (2011) respecified this third stance axis as *investment*. In addition to the propositional (*affect*) and interactional (*alignment*) axes, speakers also implicate themselves in the stance performance by indicating how strongly they are *committed* to their stance. The analysis below takes Kiesling's version of the stance triangle as its starting point, but we will also show that speaker commitment and investment closely resonate with constituency and related issues of socially distributed epistemic access. In this way, the notion of stance draws together aspects of what other authors have described as 'assessment,' 'affiliation,' 'footing,' and a range of other concepts (see Kiesling 2011 for a useful overview), up to the point that stance is occasionally criticized as too all-inclusive (see, e.g., Kockelman 2012). Its specific analytical purchase, however, lies in the grip it provides on the way these various elements are incrementally calibrated against one another as the speakers are sequentially (re)fashioning their respective stances in interaction (see, e.g., various papers in Englebretson 2007; Damari 2010; Stockburger 2015).

Panel interviews constitute an interactional architecture specifically geared towards stancetaking. The moderator and news desk scan the news for controversial topics and invite guests who hold conflicting opinions on these topics, which results in "a lively sparring match between thoroughly committed adversaries" (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 300). The format "provides fertile ground for cultivating lively and dramatic conflict" (ibid.), while simultaneously allowing journalists to assume a neutral stance and reconcile the professional standards of neutrality and being adversarial. Stancetaking is thus deeply entrenched in the panel interview format's PF and is always anchored locally.

However, as the panelists incrementally 'unpack' their own stance and that of their interlocutor in the course of the interview, they also repeatedly reach out beyond the spatiotemporal confines of the television studio. The current encounter, for example, derives much of its complexity from subsequent 'laminations' of the basic stancetaking architecture. Panelists' stancetaking practices routinely evoke interactional constellations that extend beyond the initial PF, thereby altering the capacity in which interlocutors participate in the event. Irvine (1996) offers a useful overview of the various processes "by which participation structures [are] constructed, imagined, and socially distributed" (p. 136). Often, this lamination involves a 'diachronic contextualization' of the speech event, establish-

ing an intertextual relationship with one or more 'shadow conversations' (ibid.), that is, prior and/or future speech events that are somehow entailed by the current encounter. It may also include the superimposition of additional PFs, casting absent participants as co-implicated parties in the encounter.

Roughly speaking, the excerpt below exhibits three different sets of techniques for transforming the PF of the encounter:

– *Exploiting the intertextual affordances associated with the alignment axis.* Stancetakers may respond to stances an interlocutor (presumably) assumed on an earlier occasion (as in Damari's 2010 'intertextual stancetaking' among a married couple) or to prior stances taken by stancetakers who are not physically co-present at all (Du Bois 2007). These 'intertextual' alignments diachronically recontextualize the encounter by evoking a trajectory of prior events, but may also be prospectively oriented. Thus, panelists may solicit support among the not-yet-involved co-present audience or not co-present future participants. The crucial question here is *on what basis* such prospective alignments are solicited, as this may involve an appeal to identity categories with a wider circulation that can potentially reframe the panel interview.

– *Metastancing.* Rather than offering an alternative evaluation of the stance object (and 'disaligning' with one's opponent prior stance), panelists may transform *the prior stance itself* into the object of their stancetaking (Vandergriff 2012; Zienkowski 2017; cf. Kockelman's 2004 'secondary stances'). Often, metastancing involves the 'double-voicing' of a third-party critical stance by recontextualizing it in one's own discourse, which is a powerful resource for soliciting audience alignment without having to respond in terms of content (Vandergriff 2012). Metastancing may also involve 'stance accretion' (Rauniomaa 2003, cited in Damari 2010). In doing this, speakers treat the prior stance as part of a recurring pattern and as indexing an enduring predisposition, which can be attributed to either an individual stancetaker or an entire demographic category (Damari 2010). Again, this may entail diachronic recontextualization and the projection of wider collectivities onto the current PF.

– *Discursive negotiations over the constituency on whose behalf a panelist is speaking.* In section three below, Gario constructs a list (Jefferson 1990) to demonstrate that his stance is shared by an entire demographic category, in response to an interviewer's attempt to portray him as merely expressing his personal appreciation. Often, such wider constituencies are themselves intertextually constituted, as speaking on behalf of someone else requires a license to do so. Drawing attention to constituency complements commitment and

expands the investment dimension of stancetaking. Following Kockelman (2004), Kiesling (2011) paraphrased commitment as the tension between an interlocutor 'animating' a stance and being its 'principal' (Goffman 1981). The notion of principal, however, is equivocal. In addition to 'psychological' commitment, it can also be interpreted 'sociologically' as bearing responsibility for a discourse (Kockelman 2004, 132). If we look at how the panelists below gradually unpack (and hold one another accountable for) each other's stancetaking, the sociological entity behind the animator is as much an issue as the intensity of speaker commitment. Hence, we take investment to cover both sociological 'constituency' and psychological 'commitment.'

By exploiting the opportunities that stancetaking offers for 'laminating' the PF of the encounter, the interview participants are resourcefully crafting their locally produced assessments of BP as rooted in a trajectory of prior and future interactions. It is these projected 'dialogical fields' (Irvine 1996) emanating from panelists' stance performances that provide a window onto the metapragmatic understandings of the wider societal conflict over BP that circulated in Dutch society at the time of the incident.

This survey of possible laminations also illustrates that stancetaking allows us to maneuver swiftly between the panelists' *reflexive* metapragmatic regimentation of talk (Silverstein 1993; in this instance, the fact that they behaviorally orient to the encounter as a panel interview) and their efforts to *reportively* calibrate the speech event (ibid.). Reportive metapragmatic calibration here refers to the way in which the panelists use denotationally explicit metapragmatics (metastancing, constituency negotiations) for anchoring their stancetaking in the multiplicity of voices that characterizes the debate. In the discussion section, however, this sharp distinction is subsequently problematized. Reportative calibration is indeed anchored in the panelists' denotational efforts to renegotiate the meaning of their stancetaking, but it does not necessarily *exclusively* rely on such denotational resources. There exist significant differences between panelists concerning the extent to which their stancetaking makes explicit the phenomenal content of the projected dialogical field, and these appear related to whether that field sufficiently resonates with established 'hegemonic' conceptions of we-ness.

3.   Negotiating constituency

Initially, the late-night show debate follows the 'serial interview arrangement' format (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 308), which minimizes direct interaction between rival stancetakers. Gario (QG) is interviewed first and is initially the sole

recipient of the interviewer's questioning. The interview opening (lines 001/29) is produced with the overhearing audience in mind, with Gario and the interviewer working together to introduce Gario as holding a particular stance. Proper questioning starts in lines 033/42, when the interviewer confronts Gario with a critical third-party statement. Here we encounter the first metapragmatic restructuring of the encounter, which revolves around conflicting interpretations of Gario's constituency. Upon closer inspection, however, the conflict is already looming in the introductory round itself:[2]

```
001    INT:   [Quinsy. (.) >We gaan met jou praten. >Quinsy Gario.=
002    ?:     [(xx).]
003    INT:   =eh::::::m (.) eh Jij houdt je op dit moment bezig als activist
004           ==heb je trouwens niet alleen dit jaar maar ook al eerdere
005           jaren gedaan, .hh (.) eh met de komst (.) van Zwarte Piet,
006           e:h (en S- en) eh Sinterklaas, maar je richt je met name op-
007           op Zwarte Piet,
008    QG:    ==Dat klopt.
009    INT:   ==eh D['r is ook een aa:nkomst in:: Amsterdam, >zoals
010    QG:         [Ja.
011    INT:   in veel grote plaatsen de Sint aankomt, >in Amsterdam
012           komt ie aan, .h >en wat jou betreft, .h eh >NIET.
013           (1.2)
014    QG:    .hhhh Nou eh- Wat mij betreft komt ie zo:nder Zwarte
015           Piet of komt ie ten minste met het besef waar Zwarte Piet
016           voor staat.
017    INT:   Ja. (.) Waar staat Zwarte Piet voor wat [jou] betreft.
018    QG:                                            [eh-]
019    QG:    VOOR MIJ of- of- Wat ↑mij betreft staat: Zwarte Piet
020           voor een (0.3) .hhh (.) >een- een- eh koloniale o:prisping.
021           Het is >een- een- (.) relikwie, uit achttien eenenvijftig,
022           bedacht door Jan Schenkman, .h en dat is twaalf jaar voor
023           de afschaffing van de slavernij, en wij voe:ren dat
024           toneelstukje (0.3) constant elk jaar weer uit, dus het lijkt
025           alsof wij terug willen keren naar die periode waarin ik
026           .hhhh een tot slaa:f gemaakte ↑mens was, en dat ik
027           eigendom zou zijn van één van u.
028    INT:   Juis[t.
029    QG:        [En daar ben ik dus tegen.
```

Translation:

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001    INT:   [Quinsy. (.) >We are going to talk to you. >Quinsy Gario.=
002    ?:     [(xx).]
003    INT:   =eh::::::m (.) eh You are currently occupied as an activist
004           ==you did so not only this year but also the
```

.	final fall	TEXT	louder
,	continuing intonation	°text°	quieter
?	rising intonation	>text<	faster
↑	sharp pitch rise	(1.5)	timed pause
:	prolonged sound	(.)	micro-pause
-	cut-off sound	=	latching
.h	inbreath	[text]	overlapping talk
text	emphasis	((text))	nonverbal activity

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005        years before, .hh (.) eh with the arrival (.) of Black Pete,
006        e:h (and S- and) eh Saint Nicholas, but you focus in particular on-
007        on Black Pete,
008   QG:  ==That's right.
009   INT: ==eh The[re is also an arri:val in:: Amsterdam, >like
010   QG:         [Yes.
011   INT: in many places where the Saint arrives, >he arrives
012        in Amsterdam, .h >but as far as you are concerned, .h eh >NOT SO.
013        (1.2)
014   QG:  .hhhh Well eh- As far as I am concerned he arrives withou:t Black
015        Pete or at least in full awareness of what Black Pete
016        stands for.
017   INT: Yes. (.) What does Black Pete stand far as far [you]'re concerned.
018   QG:                                                 [eh-]
019   QG:  FOR ME or- or- As far as ↑I'm concerned Black Pete
020        stands fo:r (0.3) .hhh (.) >a- a- eh colonial hiccup.
021        It's >a- a- (.) relic, from eighteen fifty one,
022        created by Jan Schenkman, .h and that is twelve years before
023        the abolition of slavery, and we constantly reena:ct that
024        piece (0.3) each year over and over again, so it seems
025        like we want to return to that period where I was
026        .hhhh an en ↑sLa:ved person, and I would be
027        the property of one of you.
028   INT: Correc[t.
029   QG:        [And that is what I'm against.
```

Only Gario is interviewed at this stage, but interviewer and interviewee both orient to the event as an antagonistic exchange between multiple stancetakers, staged for an overhearing audience. In line 001, the interviewer's switch from Gario's first name to his full name signals the shift into talk produced for the audience. The interviewer then provides 'background information,' explicitly framing Gario as holding a stance. Gario restrains himself to reviewing the accuracy of the information provided about him, either confirming (lines 008, 010) or partially correcting it (lines 014/16). When Gario eventually elaborates on the stance attributed to him (lines 019/27), the interviewer systematically withholds recipiency tokens, again confirming the audience's status as the primary recipient (Clayman and Heritage 2002). Similarly, the interviewer's third-position evaluation *juist* "correct" (028) treats that elaboration not as 'news' or as an object of potential disagreement but as background information for the audience.

Although the interviewer and Gario are noticeably working together here, they also set the stage for an upcoming fight over constituency. The request for a court ban of the parade was originally submitted by a collectivity of activists, but the interviewer's talk consistently singles Gario out as an individual stancetaker. Upon first inspection, Gario's responses suggest acceptance of this curtailing of his constituency (see, for example, the double round of choreographed *wat jou betreft/mij betreft* "as far as you are/I am concerned" in lines 012/14 and 017/19 and his characterization of the alleged colonial reenacts as 'something I object against' in line 029). However, his elaboration in lines 019/027 also playfully exploits the contrast between the talk-internal identities provided by the panel format (the assumption that each panelist individually endorses a specific

stance) and the 'wider' identity categories the panelists perceptibly embody. His view of BP as a colonial reenactment evokes the historical categories of 'enslaved person' and 'colonizer/owner,' allocating the latter to his (all white) co-panelists. In this way, Gario's elaboration underscores that he is the only person of color around the table, eliciting the structural subordination to which the latter have historically been subjected. Although the utterance outwardly endorses the interviewer's individualizing efforts, his simultaneous invocation of these historical categories suggests that this endorsement only refers to his 'local' role of 'animator/author' (Goffman 1981), while the stance itself is shared by a wider constituency.

The interviewer ignores these historical categories and their playful ambiguity, instead making his curtailing of Gario's constituency explicit:

```
030   INT:  Ja. .h (Ja-) dat is zoals jij het (0.2) ervaart.
031         (0.3)
032   QG:   Dat is: zo- is: zoals het ei:genlijk is::.
033   INT:  Nou- >Nou: ja maar de vraag is [(toch) of de mensen die]
034   QG:                                  [hh: hh: hh:]
035         hh: [↑hh:]
036   INT:      [die:] eh hhh:
037   QG:   >↑HH HH HHA HHA [HH HH]
038   INT:                  [die Sinterklaas] vieren,
039   QG:   .hh HH HH [.hhh HH
040   INT:            [de: de- mensen die- die- dat vieren in
041         huiselijke kring, >of op school of wat dan ook, of die (0.2)
042         d- (0.2) dat als intentie en bedoeling hebben.
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Translation:

```
030   INT:  Yes. .h (Ye-) that's how you (0.2) experience it.
031         (0.3)
032   QG:   That is: how- is: how it a:ctually is::.
033   INT:  Well- >We:ll yes but the question is [whether the people]
034   QG:                                        [hh: hh: hh:]
035         hh: [↑hh:]
036   INT:      [who:] eh hhh:
037   QG:   >↑HH HH HHA HHA [HH HH]
038   INT:                  [celebrate] Saint Nicholas,
039   QG:   .hh HH HH [.hhh HH
040   INT:            [the: the- people who- who- celebrate it
041         at home, >or at school or wherever, whether they (0.2)
042         d- (0.2) do have that intention and do mean it that way.
```

The interviewer's paraphrase and implicit validation of Gario's stance as reflecting 'personal experience' (line 030) may sequentially be heard as 'only' a partial agreement and as forecasting upcoming disagreement (Pomerantz 1984, 71). This is also how Gario responds to it. In line 032, he preemptively challenges the interviewer, partially recycling the latter's *dat is zoals jij het ervaart* "that's how you experience it" to assert that his stance is empirically grounded (*zoals het eigenlijk is* "how it actually is"). Now that the budding difference of opinion is laid on the table, the interviewer formulates the substance of his disagreement in lines 033/42, balancing Gario's 'individual' appreciation with the intentions of the reenactors: "But the question is whether the people who celebrate Saint Nicholas [...] do have that

intention and do mean it that way." Gario laughs almost immediately, underscoring the predictability of the 'racism requires intent' trope.

The interviewer's deracializing, intention-centered evaluation of the BP stance object comes with an equally 'individualizing' analysis of the BP debate. The interviewer is not necessarily expressing a personal opinion here. Utterance 033/42 is a typical interview question, balancing adversarialness and impartiality by confronting the interviewee with a critical third-party statement (Clayman and Heritage 2002). In this case, the interviewer apparently 'animates' (Goffman 1981) an 'already circulating' counterargument, presumably issued in response to 'already circulating' criticisms. Having curtailed Gario's constituency, the interviewer here poses as a 'neutral mediator' in an ongoing dialogue, in which individualized 'owners of perceptions' participate on an equal footing with individualized 'owners of intentions.' In this way, he frames the panel interview as part of a broader societal debate, using the interview's PF, in which stancetakers individually 'own' their stance, as the model for that debate. The implied communicative equality between 'victims' and 'perpetrators' – and the suggestion that stances are located in the individual – conceals the fact that individual perceptions of racism may have structural origins, being shaped by collective experiences of insubordination based on skin color.

In lines 043/4 below, Gario retorts that his negative evaluation is not based on the perpetrators' intentions but on the impact of the reenactments (without specifying exactly who is affected). The interviewer requalifies this as an equally personal appreciation (line 046), after which Gario starts unpacking his constituency (from 047 onwards):

```
043   QG:    ==Het ↑gaat mij niet om de intentie van de mensen.
044          Het [gaat mij] om de impact.
045   INT:       [Nee (daarvoor-)]
046   INT:   ==Zoals jij het ervaart. °Be[doel je dus.°
047   QG:                          [Nou het ehm Zoals ik
048          het ervaart, zoals: (.) de bui::tenwereld het ervaart, zoals
049          ehm (.) kinderen die van school rennen en zeggen
050          he ik ben .hh voor >vieze Zwarte Piet uitgemaakt
051          en thuis het huid van hun lichaam afschrobben,
052          .hh [zoals oudere mensen die elk jaar ↑thuisblijven=
053   INT:      [mhm,
054   QG:    =in die periode omdat ze niet naar buiten willen gaan,
055          er zijn zo:veel verschillende mensen die .hhh uhm
056          gekwetst worden, en het (.) f::eit dat .h de stem: van
057          de d:onkere mens >of de donkere Nederlander in Nederland
058          niet gehoord wordt, daar moet wat aan ge↑daan worden.
059          [Al ↑ta:chtig jaar hebben we het over .h (0.3) dit=
060   INT:   [°Ja:°
061   QG:    =fenomeen, [Hoezo: (.) kunnen we daar niet gewoon=
062   INT:             [Ja.
063   QG:    =van afstappen.
064   INT:   Ja.
065          (0.3)
066          Heb jij het zelf- (1.1) Overkomt het jou: of je:: familie dat
067          je:: zo [direct geassocieerd wordt met dit soort e::h
```

Translation:

```
043   QG:   ==I'm ↑not concerned with people's intentions.
044         I'm [concerned] with the impact.
045   INT:      [No (for that-)]
046   INT:   ==The way you experience it. °You [mean.°
047   QG:                                    [Well it- ehm The way I
048         experience it, the wa:y (.) the ou::tside world experiences it, the way
049         ehm (.) like kids running home from school saying
050         he I've been called .hh >dirty Black Pete
051         and who are scrubbing off the skin from their body,
052         .hh [like elderly people who stay at ↑home each year=
053   INT:      [mhm,
054   QG:   =in that period because they don't want to go out,
055         there are so: many people who .hhh uhm
056         are hurt, and the (.) f::act that .h the voice of
057         the d:ark human person >or the dark Dutchman is not being heard
058         in the Netherlands, something should be ↑done about that.
059         [More than ↑ei:ghty years we are talking .h (0.3) about this=
060   INT:  [°Yes:°
061   QG:   =phenomenon, [Ho:w (.) can't we just=
062   INT:               [Yes.
063   QG:   =drop that.
064   INT:  Yes.
065         (0.3)
066         Did you yourself- (1.1) Does it happen to you: or you::r family
067         that you::'re [so closely associated with this kind of e::h
```

Line 047 transforms the interviewer's *zoals jij het ervaart* "the way you experience it" into the first item of a list (Jefferson 1990) of people who share this negative appreciation. The second item refers to the bad press BP received in the Anglo-Saxon world and 'externalizes' this negative interpretation by attributing it to 'the outside world' (Edwards 2003). Items three and four contain descriptions of deviant behavior illustrating how the reenactments affect age groups at the beginning and end of the life cycle, suggesting demographic completeness and the idea that an entire population is affected. Race and skin color form an integral part of these descriptions (*kinderen die … het huid van hun lichaam afschrobben* "kids… scrubbing off the skin from their body," line 051). The list underscores the inadequacy of the 'racism requires intent' trope (by emphasizing the systematic, structural impact of the reenactments), and simultaneously demonstrates that Gario's stance is indeed shared by a larger constituency. In doing so, it also projects an unspecified quantity of preceding 'shadow conversations' (Irvine 1996) in which constituency members presumably shared their sorrow with Gario. In lines 056/8, Gario adds a further layer to this diachronic recontextualization, complementing the list with a call to action: "[The] voice of the dark human person, or the dark Dutchman, is not heard in the Netherlands, something should be done about that." The call evokes an additional discursive constellation, comprising prior (non-)interactions in which members of the Dutch majority failed to register the grievances of Gario's constituency. This failure/refusal is negatively evaluated, thus stashing a metastance (on the majority's communicative non-conduct) on top of his initial stance on BP.

The call and its invoked dialogical field metapragmatically reframe the encounter in complex, multilayered ways. First, they propose an alternative stance object for the panel interview, redirecting attention from the 'true nature' of BP to mainstream society's persistent refusal to engage in dialogue with minority members. The latter concurrently sets up a normative framework for evaluating co-panelists' anticipated stancetaking: Will they, as representatives of the former 'slave owners,' be ready to break with this discursive marginalization? In addition, the call reaches out beyond the interview table, creating an opportunity for the audience to align with Gario's criticism. Here, Gario solicits alignment beyond his original constituency, as affiliating with his moral position does not require membership of the marginalized minority he represents. The ongoing encounter (and the BP court case that prompted it) is hereby transformed into an 'alignment event' for Dutch society in its entirety.

Gario's metastancing does not enlist double-voicing for conveying this negative evaluation, but makes explicit its own normative framework. The self-repair in line 057 (*de donkere mens, of de donkere Nederlander* "the dark human person, or the dark *Dutchman*") and the addition *in Nederland* "in the Netherlands" in line 058 ground the evaluation in an image of the Netherlands as a formal democratic framework, a normative discursive space delineated by Dutch citizenship in which citizens of different origins can participate equally. Through the maximally-inclusive 'we' in line 061, Gario's subsequent *kunnen we daar niet gewoon van afstappen* "can't we just drop that" claims membership in this discursive space, while simultaneously pointing out that most co-inhabitants fail to accept this normative requirement, and continue to equate citizenship with cultural belonging.

In lines 066/7, the interviewer inquires whether Gario has been personally involved in such racist incidents, ignoring Gario's postcolonial take and focusing on investment (the animator – constituency relationship) instead. The self-repair and the question's incompleteness index its delicate nature, which is related to the face-threatening nature of such racist experiences but also reflects the potentially problematic nature of the question itself: To maintain his privileged epistemic status (the interview's 'engine'; Heritage 2012) and the idea that his constituency is collectively affected, Gario must be able to demonstrate an *individual* record of personal harm. Thus, he describes (not reproduced here) how he was publicly insulted after his arrest at the 2011 Dordrecht parade. However, his activism was triggered earlier, by a telephone call in which his mother expressed her agony after a co-worker had called her BP in front of a customer. Stating that symbolic violence affected someone in his environment strikes a careful balance between demonstrating personal harm and underscoring the 'out-thereness' of the phenomenon, preempting possible objections that his activism might be rooted in personal trauma or a private pathology (Edwards 2003). The phone call also illus-

trates the interlacing of commitment and constituency and the intrinsically inter-
textual nature of stancetaking on behalf of wider collectivities.

4.   Subsequent metastancing

The metastance expressed by Gario's call to action did not target local stance
work by the panelists but stances assumed by nameless participants in a remote,
entailed dialogical field. This quickly changes, however, the moment the inter-
viewer turns to the other panelists. In lines 131/3 below, he introduces Westbroek
as the next speaker with an allusion to a Nicholas song that he released in the
eighties (*Sinterklaas Sinterklaas* "Saint Nicholas Saint Nicholas," line 133). Unlike
Gario, who at this stage restricted himself to reviewing 'passed on information,'
Westbroek immediately takes over the floor with an extended 'apology' for having
unwittingly offended his opponent:

```
            ((72 lines omitted))
130   INT:  Goed. .hh > Laten we even langs de tafel gaan,
131         want e:h [Henk Westbroek, jij bent- bekend van veel,=
132   HW:           [°Ja::.°
133   INT:  =.hh bijvoorbeeld ↑ook van Sinterklaas Sinterklaas,
134         en (.) [na↑tuu::rlijk (.) Zwarte Piet.]
135   QG:          [hh: hh: hh: hh:]
136   HW:   ==[Ja: ik heb eh inderdaad een grote poging gedaan=
137   QG:     [HH HH hh
138   HW:   =om de sla:vernij te herintrodu↑ce:ren in Nederland.
139         [((audience laughs))
140         [(0.4)
141   HW:   ↑Maar het is nie gelukt.
142   INT:  ==[Neen.
            ((15 lines omitted))
158   HW:          [(Maar ik)] ben nu-.h Ik wist het niet, he. Ik vraag
159         (0.2) diepe verontschuldiging, .hh [Want ik heb nooit-=
160   QG:                                       [↑Nou. Dank u (x).
161   HW:   =ik heb nooit geweten dat ik (.) mensen daar ↑zo mee
162         onder hun- mee op hun ziel trapte.
163   INT:  Maar (ze- Maar-) [Maar nu-
164   HW:                    [Met het woord Zwarte Piet.
```

Translation:

```
            ((72 lines omitted))
130   INT:  Okay. .hh > Let's make a quick tour around the table,
131         because e:h [Henk Westbroek, you are- famous for many things,=
132   HW:              [°Ye::s.°
133   INT:  =.hh in↑cluding "Saint Nicholas Saint Nicholas,"
134         and (.) [of↑cou::rse (.) Black Pete.]
135   QG:           [hh: hh: hh: hh:]
136   HW:   ==[Ye:s I eh indeed undertook a major attempt=
137   QG:     [HH HH hh
138   HW:   =to ↑reintroduce sla:very in the Netherlands.
139         [((audience laughs))
140         [(0.4)
141   HW:   But it did ↑not succeed.
142   INT:  ==[No.
            ((15 lines omitted))
158   HW:          [(But I)] am now-.h I didn't know, huh. I
```

```
159          (0.2) deeply apologize, .hh [Because I never-=
160   QG:                              [↑Well. (Thanks).
161   HW:   =I never realized that I (.) inflicted ↑so much
162         suffering on people.
163   INT:  But (they- But-) [But now-
164   HW:                    [With the word Black Pete.
```

At first glance, the apology indexes Westbroek's shifting metastance on the favorable appreciation of BP expressed in his old Nicholas song. The serial interview arrangement requires his contribution to be formally addressed to the interviewer, but the apology's overall orientation to Gario's prior stance performance is inescapable. It recycles Gario's description of the role-play as a colonial reenactment ('an attempt to reintroduce slavery,' line 138), while the claim of prior ignorance (lines 148, 158) suggests that the shifting metastance is occasioned by the 'new information' Gario provided. However, Westbroek is not simply going along with Gario. First, the apology openly contradicts his role as Gario's designated opponent. This is aggravated by the grotesque nature of his characterization of the song as 'an attempt to reintroduce slavery' (line 138), the addition that it 'did not succeed' (line 141), and the apology's generally sobbing character. Together, the 'ostensible insincerity' of the apology's oddities and exaggerations suggest an encompassing evaluative frame, shared by speaker and audience, from which to appraise its insincere content (Clift 1999). Westbroek is here thus double-voicing his own discourse. The scope of this external fame is not confined to the apology alone but also includes Gario's complaint (which it partially recycled), which now becomes the object of metastancing. The studio responds enthusiastically, corroborating Vandergriff's (2012) observation that metastancing-through-double-voicing is a powerful resource for commanding audience alignment.

From there on, Westbroek drops all irony but engages with Gario's stance content-wise, advancing an alternative, deracialized evaluation of BP. In lines 169/70 below, he adopts a variant of the 'racism requires racist intent' trope for dismissing the incidents Gario reported as individual abuses of an otherwise neutral denotational form:

```
165   INT:  ==Maar nu toch even serieus. Je hoort dat Qui- Quinsy
166         een aan[tal voorbeelden] geeft hh va- vanuit (.) eigen=
167   HW:          [°Ja:::.°]
168   INT:  =fa↑milie, (.) en omgeving, (.) .hhh [(x)
169   HW:                                        [↑Elk woord kan
170         tot scheldwoord verworden.
171         (0.3)
172   QG:   No[u maar dit gaat-
173   HW:     [IK BEDOEL HET WOORD ALLOCHTOON, .hh
174   INT:  ==°Ja[:.°
```

Translation:

```
165   INT:  ==But now seriously. You heard Qui- Quinsy
166         giving so[me examples] hh fr- from (.) his own=
167   HW:            [ °Ye:::s.° ]
```

```
168   INT:  =↑family, (.) and env↓ironment, (.) .hhh [(x)
169   HW:                                            [↑Each word can
170         degenerate into abuse.
171         (0.3)
172   QG:   No[w but this is about-
173   HW:     [I MEAN THE WORD ALLOCHTHONE, .hh
174   INT:  ==°Ye[:s.°
```

Starting in line 172, the panelists no longer channel their disagreement through the interviewer but directly target one another, and the panel interview escalates into direct confrontation (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 313ff). Westbroek consistently addresses the content of Gario's stance but overlays his argument with facial and postural displays of irritation. He repeatedly raises his voice and delivers his account of the neutral origins of 'the word allochthone' (not reproduced here) in a punctuated, staccato fashion. These displays of agitation will, in turn, become the object of metastancing, eventually leading to a new diachronic recontextualization of the encounter through stance accretion.

Reasserting control over the floor and recycling his invitation to comment on the incidents reported by Gario, the interviewer (in line 221 below) reformulates Westbroek's unruliness as indexing emotional distress. Westbroek instantly disengages from the confrontation with Gario and produces a corresponding 'internal' account for his emotionality. Here, he metapragmatically qualifies Gario's talk as *gezeur* "whining" (line 225):

```
            ((43 lines omitted))
218   INT:  Henk? (.) Even [terug naar Zwarte Piet.
219   QG:                  [hh (.) hh hh hh
220   HW:   ==Ja:: ik [bedoe:l
221   INT:           [>Ja ik begrijp je emotie. [Maar eh [(>Quinsy=
222   HW:                                       [Emo:tie ↑weet je
223   QG:                               [hh hh    [↑thh hh hh
224   INT:  =heeft- >Quinsy) [heeft een aa:ntal voorbeelden gegeven]=
225   HW:                    [↑E:LK JAAR komt dit GEZEU:R.]
226   INT:  van mensen die-< zijn moeder in het bijzonder, die zich
227         zwaar gekwetst voelden.
```

Translation:

```
((43 lines omitted))
218   INT:  Henk? (.) Let us [return to Black Pete.
219   QG:                    [hh (.) hh hh hh
220   HW:   ==Ye:s I [mea:n
221   INT:           [>Yes I understand your emotion. [But eh [(>Quinsy=
222   HW:                                             [Emo:tion ↑you know
223   QG:                               [hh hh  [↑hh hh hh
224   INT:  =gave- >Quinsy) [gave so:me examples]=
225   HW:                   [↑E:ACH YEAR there is this WHI:NING.]
226   INT:  of people who-< his mother in particular, who
227         felt seriously hurt.
```

In this jointly negotiated interpretation of his emotionality, Westbroek elaborates his pejorative assessment of Gario's prior stance. He recontextualizes his own intermittent displays of irritation as indexing a metastance, triggered by the accreted character of Gario's stancetaking. Referring to Gario's talk as 'whining'

calls attention to its delivery characteristics while ignoring its content, thereby disqualifying it as unjustified. The claim that it recurs annually suggests predictability and a rehearsed, rote-like character. In this way, Westbroek casts Gario's local stance performance as reflecting a preexisting pattern, involving a wider cohort of BP critics. Comparing it with the interviewer's opening question for Gario (lines 033/42) shows that the 'racism requires intent' trope can scaffold multiple dialogical fields. The interviewer's question framed the BP debate as an exchange between individualized stanceholders, concealing historical experiences of insubordination but maintaining the idea of a dialogue across opinions. Westbroek's performance, however, unequivocally denies the legitimacy of criticism, and the dialogue legitimate it projects includes only like-minded stancetakers. But apart from this boundary marking, the dialogical field remains opaque. No clues are offered concerning the identity of the cohort to which Gario belongs, and the normative framework for rejecting Gario's accreted stance is not explicated.

Westbroek's response to the interviewer's turn 221/7 reiterates his earlier remarks about the intrinsic neutrality of presumably offensive lexical items (not reproduced here). Now Gario engages in metastancing, refocusing on Westbroek's state of agitation:

```
            ((6 lines omitted))
234   QG:                        [Het ↑gaat niet om het
235        ↑woord, mijnheer, (0.8) Westbroek. (.) Het gaat om het feit
236        dat wij ↑constant de stemmen van mensen die gekwetst
237        worden niet als- volwaardige stemmen zien.
238   HW:  Ja maar- [Ik- Ik-
239   QG:           [Het gaat om het feit dat wij hier in Nederland
240        nog steeds (.) .h zo: boo:s worden op het moment dat ik zeg
241        van he:: dit klopt niet. [En terwijl de rest van de wereld=
242   PW:                           [m↑hm.
243   HW:                           [Ik wordt ↑nooit boos.
244   QG:  =dat ook zegt. .h ↑U- ↑U loopt net te ↑schreeuwen hier op-
245        op [teevee.
246   HW:     [Te schreeuwen? [Omdat u ↑onzin verkondigt mijnheer.]
247   QG:                    [Ja ik ↑weet- dat is ook] uw uw ↑shtick,
248        dus dat doet u ook wel, maar het gaat er om dat wij hier in
249        Nederland beseffen dat ↑Nederlanderschap ↑niet- een witte
250        huidskleur betekent.
```

Translation:

```
((6 lines omitted))
234   QG:                        [It ↑is not about the
235        ↑word, mister, (0.8) Westbroek. (.) It is about the fact
236        that we ↑constantly refuse to regard the voices of people who
237        are hurt as- legitimate voices.
238   HW:  Yes but- [I- I-
239   QG:           [It is about the fact that we in the Netherlands
240        still (.) .h get so: a:ngry the moment I say
241        he::y something's wrong here. [While the rest of the world=
242   PW:                                [m↑hm.
243   HW:                                [I ↑never get angry.
244   QG:  =says exactly the same. .h ↑YOU- ↑YOU're ↑screaming live-
245        on [television.
246   HW:     [Screaming? [Because you're talking ↑nonsense sir.]
247   QG:                [↑Yes I know- it is also] your your ↑shtick,
```

```
248        so you're doing just that, but it is about us here in
249        the Netherlands realizing that ↑Dutchness does ↑not- mean
250        white skin.
```

As in the call to action, Gario reformulates the stance object as Dutch society's persistent inability to take victims seriously (lines 235/7) and its unreasonable, enraged response to legitimate criticism (lines 239/44). Both are grounded in the collective failure to accept that participation in the democratic debate should not be curtailed by ethnicity or skin color (lines 248/50; again, note the maximally-inclusive 'we'). In passing, Gario also produces a metastance on Westbroek. His interruption in lines 244/5 suggests that Westbroek's agitation (which was itself a metastance, as Westbroek indicated in lines 222/59) harbors an accreted stance. It thereby connects Westbroek's shouting to both an individual biographical identity (*uw shtick* "your shtick," 247) and a larger demographical category (cf. Damari 2010) comprising that part of Dutch society which still equates citizenship with cultural belonging. In this way, Gario renders Westbroek's constituency explicit and emphasizes their shared psychological 'investment' in this accreted stance (anger), thus suggesting conditioning and a lack of critical self-reflection.

5.   Concluding remarks

The stancetaking patterns in Gario and Westbroek's contributions demonstrate that the so-called 'BP debate' is also a *metapragmatic* debate that problematizes the terms and conditions of the debate itself. Already in the first node of the gradually escalating dialogical network, the panelists are anchoring their stancetaking in contrasting dialogical fields. They recontextualize the interview into divergent trajectories of earlier/future encounters, each entailing a distinct distribution of socio-cultural and demographic identity categories and a corresponding normative framework for appropriate conduct. In this way, their stancetaking vividly illustrates that identities and subject positions are articulated in discursive spaces made up of multiple voices, discourses, and conversations (Angermuller 2011), a process that involves a high degree of reflexivity (Zienkowski 2017).

The analysis also revealed considerable differences in the way the panelists make these field available. Both use denotational resources and 'reportive' metapragmatic regimentation (Silverstein 1993) for anchoring their stance and for laminating the interview's PF. However, these attempts to unpack stancetaking by means of explicit, denotational language in turn mobilize indexical and iconic (Silverstein 1993, 2003) properties of talk. At this point, there are considerable differences between the participants. Gario explicitly formulated the evaluation of his stance object, his constituency, and the normative framework for metas-

tancing, relying heavily on denotational language. In comparison, Westbroek's double-voiced apology leaves a great deal unsaid. Though rich with emotion displays highlighting the intensity of his commitment ('psychological' investment), it does not claim to represent a wider constituency ('sociological' investment) and merely apologizes for a 'personal' error. Westbroek also neglects to explicate the normative framework for his pejorative metastance. Instead, he maximally exploits the alignment potential of double-voicing to ensure his words resonate with the audience, counting on their ability to decode the staged insincerity of his performance and assuming that they will accept the implicit normative framework on which it is founded.

Evidence from discourses in support of BP circulating on various online forums provides a useful lens through which we may start interpreting this asymmetry. According to Hilhorst and Hermes (2015), these online discourses exhibit Laclau's 'populist' logic of articulation dichotomizing the social field into 'us' and 'them.' The BP figure, they argue, represents "just the tip of the iceberg: it comes to signify all that White, stereotypical Dutch have had to swallow" (2015, 10), ranging from Muslim headscarves to rising petrol prices. In our case, however, explicit invocations of 'shared Dutchness' are conspicuously absent. Westbroek's stancetaking left the phenomenal content of the projected dialogical field largely opaque. His emphasis on predictability, which alludes to a wider cohort of BP critics, and the suggestion that the latter are outside the realm of those with whom one can sensibly communicate are the only traces of Laclau's dichotomizing logic.

Westbroek's self-restraint, remarkable given his agitation, might be another case of 'seeing how far you can go' without being branded racist, which illustrates how discourses circulate across public and private spheres with various degrees of explicitness (De Cillia et al. 1999). In this case, however, there seems to be more going on than tacit self-censorship. The contours of a more forceful explanation emerge once we accept that, for Westbroek, *not explicating* the dialogical field supporting his stance may constitute a viable way of connecting to the audience *because of the sense of we-ness it communicates*. Westbroek ostensibly counts on the audience's ability to decode his ironical performance and embodied irritation as iconic displays indexing shared belonging. The very fact that he is able to mobilize these indexical and iconic resources, and that he can exploit the multimodal affordances of live television for anchoring his stance, itself reinforces this indexed sense of we-ness.

This leaves unanswered the question of why Gario apparently 'fails' to tap into this iconic and indexical potential. Here, we should consider how the micro level of stancetaking is implicated in broader patterns of social inequality and examine its role in the reproduction of power arrangements, distributions of symbolic resources, and the ideologies supporting them. Others have demon-

strated how inviting recipients to align with a stance and stance attributions may reproduce systems of social distinction (Jaworski and Thurlow 2009) or disseminate normative ideologies (Coupland and Coupland 2009). The ability to get one's stance across is unevenly distributed and subject to institutionalized power arrangements (Jaffe 2009), with some participants effectively "only having a stance to lose" (Irvine 2009). Our analysis adds to this body of literature that power arrangements may also affect the ways in which stances are crafted, influencing both the selection of mobilized resources and the ways in which they are incrementally put to use. Our findings suggest an inverse correlation between (a) the apparent need to explicate the dialogical field into which one inscribes one's stance and (b) whether the notion of we-ness evoked by that field is consistent with prevailing hegemonic understandings of the public realm. In this context, hegemony translates into specific 'thresholds of visibility' (Brighenti 2007) associated with a particular dialogical field, which in turn affects how speakers communicate their stance. If, like Westbroek, one anchors one's stancetaking in a discursive space that restricts legitimate participation to those with whom one shares a sense of cultural belonging, one can exploit the indexical modality of talk for communicating such anchoring. If, like Gario, one's stancetaking evokes a dialogical field that problematizes conventional conceptualizations of the public realm (in this case, by prioritizing citizenship over cultural belonging), one should be prepared to invest in explicit, denotational discursive work.

The notion of visibility threshold implies a visual-spatial perspective on the public realm that is particularly useful here. First, it enables us to theorize the 'immediacy' of hegemonic we-ness, that is, the fact that its invocation through stancetaking requires little denotational discursive work, in conjunction with the 'concealment' it implies, that is, the fact that it limits speaking rights to those who inhabit this universe of shared Dutchness and co-endorse accepted interpretations of BP. Thus, Westbroek polices the boundary of his projected dialogue by mobilizing indexical resources and by simultaneously censuring the legitimacy of arguments that can be invoked. (Intentionalist understandings of racism play a gatekeeping role here and work in conjunction with the instruction to take the content of cultural traditions at face value. Later on, for example, Westbroek explicitly referred to Saint Nicholas as 'a friendly old man' to invalidate accusations of racism.) Immediacy and concealment go hand in hand, and in this sense the threshold of visibility delineates a zone of simultaneous in- and exclusion 'from within' which Westbroek appears to be communicating.

Second, this visual imagery allows us to conceptualize discursive struggles over hegemony in terms of the need to 'take a step backwards' away from these zones of inclusion/exclusion and articulate a vision of the public realm 'in its totality.' The degree of referential 'explicitness' required for anchoring stancetak-

ing in a non-hegemonic understanding of the public realm does not signal that one is 'not in tune' with mainstream participants' iconic and indexical procedures for signaling belonging. Rather, it reflects the need to contextualize hegemonic notions of the public realm and to locate them in historic patterns of discursive marginalization involving multiple constituencies and trajectories.

Although this paper examined a single case, there are reasons to assume that it taps into a phenomenon with a wider distribution. Others have noted the curious use of 'tradition-internal' arguments for deracializing BP, such as 'BP is black due to the chimney soot,' (Helsloot 2012; Pijl and Goulordava 2014; Zienkowski 2017). Our analysis suggests that this may fit into a broader logic connecting local stancetaking to translocal patterns of hegemony. As we saw, the hegemonic nature of Dutch we-ness translates into stancetaking characterized by a typical blend of 'speaking from within' (resorting to indexicality for signaling inclusion) and 'refusing to look beyond' (limiting legitimate interpretation to literal content and tradition-internal accounts). This emerging pattern may have a wider distribution. Take, for example, the statement "BP is black, and I cannot change that, because his name is BP" by Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte two weeks later, on October 18. The statement combined a comparable refusal to engage in a dialogue with the implicit recruitment of audience alignment (mockery) and insisting on a literal meaning of tradition, represented here by the semantic content of BP's name. In this sense, it epitomized a similar constellation of (in)visibilities, characterized by 'speaking from within' while simultaneously 'refusing to look beyond.'

It appears, then, that we have come across an additional mechanism through which prevailing power distributions may impinge on local stancetaking processes. Du Bois (2007, 164) noted that not all elements of the stance triangle need to be overtly expressed in linguistic form. The case at hand suggests that the extent to which this is the case may reflect the hegemonic character of the notion of we-ness in which stancetaking metapragmatically anchors itself. This adds yet another dimension to the complex process through which stancetaking is implicated in the reproduction of value and hierarchy.

Acknowledgements

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