FEMINIST PHENOMENOLOGY FUTURES

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17 IDENTITY-IN-DIFFERENCE TO AVOID INDIFFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION: THE THREAT OF ABSOLUTE DIFFERENCE

Sexual and racial differences matter. Indeed, rejecting facile understandings of sameness at the heart of universalism, philosophers of race speculate that racial differences are ontologically relevant. At the same time, absolute difference can slip into indifference. For example, Glen Loury points to disparate statistics among racial groups that occasion no alarm from the majority populations.[1] As Maria Lugones describes such indifference, "The more independent I am, the more independent I am left to be. Their world and their integrity do not require me at all."[2] My concern is that although we have yet to fully understand what difference means and what difference difference makes, absolute sameness and absolute difference are not true to phenomenological experience. Hence, I focus on the idea that although differences matter, recognizing our commonality is just as important. This essay provides a brief history of the philosophical relation between identity and difference from its metaphysical origins in monism and dualism to G.W.F. Hegel's first formulation of a dialectical relation between identity and difference. I present four relations of identity-in-difference within Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. The phenomenological idea of identity-in-difference prevails in Merleau-Ponty's later works and functions at least nascently in his earlier works, in both its epistemic and ontologic sense. Keeping in mind this phenomenological sense of identity-in-difference with its emphasis on integration and tension, I argue for upholding the value of both difference and sameness in developing our understandings of race.

THE ONTOLOGIZING DIFFERENCE OF RACE

A widely accepted approach in race theory positions race as socially constructed. Recently, race theorists explain that such social/cultural meanings about race have sedimented so as to not only be seen as natural but to also effectively function as natural. Jeremy Weate writes, "Instead of remaining an *historical* ascription of identity (albeit a false one applied by a white mythos), the schema becomes 'naturalized' as a *condition* skin. The epidermal marks the stage where historical construction and contingency is effaced and replaced with the facticity of flesh."[3] Racial markers are so embedded in our social world that we no longer recognize these meanings as social constructions. Lewis Gordon insists that the process of naturalizing what is socially constructed makes an ontological difference: "Ontology can be regarded not only as a study of what 'is' the case, but also a study of *what is treated as being the case* and *what is realized as the contradiction of being the case*. . . . Ontologies often ascribe necessity instead of contingency to being."[4] Gordon understands ontology as including this phenomenon of treating the socially constructed understandings of race as natural because of the very real human condition in which we cannot distinguish the cultural and the natural. The cultural interweaves and embeds with the natural as they influence each other.

Advocacy of this understanding of ontology—an ontology of race—has been building within philosophy of race.[5] One particular expression that emphasizes race as difference lies in subaltern studies. Gareth Williams writes about the challenge to the efforts of colonized subjects and their descendants to remember a different history—the subalterns' history. He states, "The knowability and representability of subaltern experience—of its moments of violence, of suffering, and of many of the scars left behind by the histories of domination—is actively suppressed within the time horizon of capital itself."[6] The postcolonial period thrives on an epistemic drive that demands focusing only on the seeming advancements of capitalism. As such, history cannot help but erase—must erase—the narratives of the lives of people who do not support these grand developmentalist narratives, the lives of people who did not benefit from the so-called advancements of development and capitalism. Against forces that prioritize such a unified history, Williams and other postcolonial writers address the epistemic difficulty of conveying subaltern experiences as a distinctly separate history that cannot be wrapped within the hegemonic developmentalist narrative of history. Consistent with the post-structuralist struggle against totalizing narratives, Williams demands recognition of absolute difference—a different history and consequently different lives—and he warily regards any attempts at

recognizing sameness because of its unavoidable subsumption into the dominant history.[7]

I find these positions incredibly persuasive. But with Weate's and Gordon's conclusion that racial differences constitute ontological differences and Williams's insistence on the different histories and lives of the colonized, I am concerned that these positions threaten the possibility of racially distinct subjects sharing a social horizon, living in the same world, and communicating with one another. I fear that these positions lend themselves to an understanding of racially different individuals as living radically separate lives.

THE RELEVANCE OF DIFFERENCES OF THE BODY

In contrast to the Cartesian tradition's tendency to separate the material conditions of subjectivity from thought, Merleau-Ponty scholars have argued that the particularities of human embodiment influence our cognitive development and capabilities. Perhaps most prominent among these figures is Hubert Dreyfus, who maintains that human bodies' upright postures, human bodily distinctions of front and back, as well as the limitations of human body movements impact human beings' cognitive development.[8] Dreyfus explains that the form of the input, as constrained by the material structure of the body, directly influences thought. Referring to neural networks designed to simulate cognitive processes, Dreyfus writes:

> The body-dependence of shared generalizations puts disembodied neural networks at a serious disadvantage when it comes to learning to cope in the human world. Nothing is more alien to our form of life than a network with no varying degrees of access, no up-down, front-back orientation, no preferred way of moving, such as moving forward more easily than backward, and no emotional response to its failures and successes.[9]

In other words, research with neural networks shows that embodiment intrinsically conditions cognitive development and thinking. In recent philosophy of cognitive science, much work explores cognition as extended, embodied, embedded, enactive, and amalgamated—all of this research acknowledges the integral tie of the material circumstances of consciousness.[10] The mind and the body cannot be separated; they are not different in kind. The mind does not completely or solely control the body; human embodiment conditions and structures thinking.

More than the general features of human embodiment such as two-leggedness, race theorists focus on the specific differences in embodiment, especially as reflected in the bodily differences of race. For, after all, these specific features

of the body figure as "an entire orientation, a framework" for living subjectivity.[11] Gordon's dispute with Kwame Appiah centers precisely on the distinction between the primary/essential features of the human being and the secondary/contingent/accidental features. Gordon writes, "The problem Appiah sees with racism, that it fails to respect the abstract feature of a human being, misses the point about racism that it involves hating others in the flesh, which is a failure to respect important, supposedly contingent features of a human being."[12] Gordon challenges Appiah's prioritization of the abstract features that define all humanity over the specific features of the body that serve as the symbols of racial differences.[13]

Gordon holds that the particular or secondary features of sex and race play a significant role in social life. The question remains as to which of the two—the general or the specific features—condition cognition more. The Hegelian insight that history flows through the interchange between what human beings conceive as necessary and contingent at different periods clarifies the arbitrariness of the attribution of certain body features as primary and other body features as secondary. The attribution of certain body features as primary and others as secondary only reflects history up to the present.

IDENTITY-IN-DIFFERENCE

The two conclusions I've reached so far are these: (1) the sedimentation of socially constructed meanings about race effectively function as natural; as such, the differences of race are ontologically significant; and (2) human embodiment conditions thinking, and thus the specificities of human embodiment may also impact cognition. As persuasive as these conclusions might be, I fear that they lead to the threat that racially and sexually different subjects not only inhabit different worlds but also think differently. The flow of time could only hermeneutically reinforce and exaggerate these differences. Although it is important to dispel facile assumptions of similarity in claims about universal truths, I do not endorse the idea that differently racialized and sexualized people live in different worlds and hence in isolation from one another.

Uma Narayan warns us that too much of an emphasis on difference "ignores the degree to which cultural imperialism often proceeds by means of an 'insistence on Difference,' by a projection of Imaginary 'differences' that constitute one's Others as Other, rather than via an 'insistence on Sameness.' Failing to see that 'cultural imperialism' can involve both sorts of problems, attempts to avoid the Scylla of 'Sameness' often result in moves that leave one foundering on the Charybdis of 'Difference.'"[14] In heeding Narayan's warning,

let me clarify that racial and sexual differences matter, but the differences do not matter so much that they disconnect our relations with each other forever.

It is not clear exactly when philosophy birthed the idea of an identity-in-difference. Its first appearance might have been in Hegel's work *The Science of Logic*. Clearly it lies within the old debate between monism and dualism, with its slippery-slope slide into the one and the many. As Paul Weiss states, "To say nothing more than 'One' is not yet[,] as Plato long ago observed, to say anything of significance. Yet to say 'One is' is already to have said two things, and in fact to have made a distinction between Unity and Being."[15] Identity has had many incarnations: as the one, synthesis, concurrence, similarity, resemblance, consistency, or unity. Difference has also had numerous incarnations: as self-diremption, dualism, multiplicity, or the many. Perhaps the best-known instantiation of this idea sits firmly within the discussion between essence and accident in Aristotle's work.[16] By admitting the distinction between essence and accident, Aristotle reveals his interest in difference, acknowledging difference to explain change and permanence.[17] Essences are permanent; accidents change. This relationship poses an epistemic problem. Hegel insists that essences/thought must reveal themselves in the accidents/being. Hegel introduces the notion of an identity-in-difference in the dialectic movement of history between spirit and matter. With a dialectical relationship, he avoids prioritizing monism or dualism—the one or the many.

To insist not simply on a relation between identity and difference but on an identity-in-difference recognizes immediacy in their connection. Hence in place of adhering to a dialectic relation between identity and difference, where time separates identity and difference, the condition of identity-in-difference holds no such separation. As Weiss states, "The defenders of the doctrine of Identity in Difference recognize the fact that despite their diversity the One and the Many are not alien to one another in meaning or in being."[18] The immediacy of this relation frustrates some philosophers, even while motivating others.

Clearly Merleau-Ponty finds the structure of identity-in-difference enigmatic. In *The Visible and the Invisible*, he describes Hegel's dialectical movement as profound but having limitations. He writes, "Take the profound idea of *self-mediation* (médiation par soi), of a movement through which each term ceases to be itself in order to realize itself, breaks up, opens up, negates itself, in order to realize itself. It can remain pure only if the mediating term and the mediated term—which are 'the same'—are yet not the same in the sense of identity."[19] Dialectically, identity-in-difference maintains a connection/tension between the complete transcendence of the world and the total immanence of subjects in that world. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology conceptualizes the

relation of identity-in-difference otherwise. He writes in the working notes of *The Visible and the Invisible*, "That the same be the other than the other, and identity difference of difference—this 1) does not realize a surpassing, or dialectic in the Hegelian sense; 2) is realized on the spot, by encroachment, thickness, *spatiality*."[20] The second account of identity-in-difference is phenomenological. The phenomenological sense of identity-in-difference remains nascent throughout his texts—for example, in his explanations of the gestalt framework for perception and experience, and in his descriptions of embodiment and body movement that aim to avoid conceptualizing the body as either just physical/natural or the manifestations of the mind. In his last text, identity-in-difference centers on the chiasmatic relation of the visible and the invisible or the touching touched and in the element of flesh. With the structure of an identity-in-difference, Merleau-Ponty theorizes an encroachment between the particular and the general, simultaneous separation and union, and an immediate relation between being and becoming, as well as permanence and change.

To establish identity Merleau-Ponty does not rely upon the sixteenth-century constancy hypothesis, a one-to-one concordance between objects in the world and the subject's vision and representation. There is no resort to an identity of some atomistic, elemental, positive, core features. As Martin Dillon writes, within a phenomenal relation the "attribution of identity need not entail identity of attributes, and mis-identification and uncertainty become conceivable possibilities. . . . It also renders enduring identity intrinsically ambiguous."[21]

What kind of identity does Merleau-Ponty posit? As opposed to upholding an absolute identity, he posits an identity that is fragilely upheld by its surroundings, situation, place, context, and time—the horizon of the world. Joseph Rouse describes this relation between identity and its phenomenal field as "a transcendental field; its structures are immune to empirical revision because they are presupposed by it. Yet there is no principled way . . . to distinguish such 'structures' from what they structure."[22] In other words, the horizon plays a pivotal role in establishing identity. Identity cannot be recognized without the structuring context. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "The mediating term and the mediated term—which are 'the same'—are yet not the same in the sense of identity: for then, in the absence of all difference, there would be no mediation, movement, transformation; one would remain in full positivity."[23] Such an identity is an identity-in-difference.

In favor of the concept of identity-in-difference, let me elaborate four instantiations. First, Merleau-Ponty insists on the occurrence of a daily small miracle—that human beings can concur about seeing the same object, because

perception performs a miracle. Somehow "in the course of perceptual experience, I shall be presented with an indefinite set of concordant views."[24] Given the differences in embodiment for each subject, as well as their position and perspective in the horizon, they still see and refer to the same object or scenery. Sharing the perception of an item in the world demonstrates an insistence that in our difference we reach agreement and see the same object. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "There is—and I know it very well if I become impatient with him—a kind of demand that what I see be seen by him also. . . . The thing imposes itself not as true for every intellect, but as real for every subject who is standing where I am."[25] Without this agreement, one questions whether one has actually seen the object, whether something is wrong with oneself or the other, or whether some illusion has occurred. In other words, perception performs a miracle and reaches agreement, even without completely understanding exactly how multiple perspectives coincide.

In the second instantiation, Merleau-Ponty describes the experience of embodiment as an identity-in-difference. Drew Leder elaborates three senses of embodiment. First, the distinction between the experience of the phenomenal and the objective body: "There is a 'divergence' (*écart*), a 'fission,' that stops the phenomenal and objective body from quite merging. Yet this is an identity-in-difference. The two sides of the body are not ontologically separate categories."[26] In a very important sense, the experience of one's physical body transcends one. It remains in difference. Leder captures this identity-in-difference in his description of the experience of a particular yet common material feature of our body: "My own blood belongs as much to the world as to me: enfolded into my body, it is never quite mine."[27] Second, one's perception of one's own body and the visceral experience of one's own body never quite coincide: "'Flesh and blood' expresses well the chiasmatic identity-in-difference of perceptual and visceral life."[28] Although one's own body as perceived and experienced by oneself seem to be one and the same, the two do not quite overlap. This is a familiar dissonance. Consider the well-known shock most people experience when unexpectedly encountering their own reflection in a mirror. Finally, according to Leder, one's own body as seen by others and the visceral experience of one's own body never quite coincide. Leder writes, "While phenomenologically distinct, the visceral circuit is intertwined, an identity-in-difference, with that of the body-as-visibility."[29] Although it is the same body, one's own experience and the other's perception of one's body inevitably diverge. Leder's three senses of identity-in-difference in embodiment demonstrate that embodiment is never an essential or intrinsic identity, but an identity that lies within the limits of its horizon, an identity-in-difference.

Merleau-Ponty's third instantiation of identity-in-difference addresses Paul Ricoeur's concern with an enduring identity. Ricoeur's problem centers on how to determine that an adult is the same human being as the child she once was. This question becomes especially relevant with respect to promise keeping. How does one identify a human being and hold her to a past promise when she has undergone changes in body, in personality, and in mind? Let me begin by acknowledging that Edmund Husserl shows that the ego is not "a little tag-end of the world,"[30] and that the ego upholds an identity-in-difference structure in that although the ego undergoes changes, it nevertheless maintains a connection, a recognition of itself through its changes.[31] Ricoeur begins with simple delineations between the sameness and the difference of one's identity: "*Idem* refers to a notion of identity based on Sameness. . . . *Ipse*, described as Selfhood, can incorporate change within a recognizable entity."[32] Recognizing the tendency of the ego to assume self-transparency, Ricoeur provides two reasons why the ego can reach out of these dangers. First, he insists, the "self can be the source of its own insight."[33] Second, the process of constructing a narrative can provide insight into oneself, "based on Freud's clinical work with individuals whose cure involves making narrative sense of the fragments of memory and stories that disorder their sense of identity. . . . Ricoeur notes that the subject comes to self-knowledge through the construction of a 'coherent and acceptable story' about himself."[34] Ricoeur insists that the self is not simply and forever trapped within her own narcissism or self-denial, but that she can move toward self-understanding. With a practice/methodology that provides access to self-knowledge, Ricoeur's work insists on the possibility of identifying the self through change. In place of a dualistic understanding, the sense of identity within narratives can be thought in terms of its indistinguishability in "the structure from what it structures." Merleau-Ponty's work affirms Ricoeur's position that promise keeping can be solved insofar as each person dwells within a horizon of personal history.

Finally, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology never begins with subjects existing in complete isolation from each other—resulting in the skeptical problem of accessing other subjects. He insists that no human being lives in isolation, completely outside the purview of the experience of others. The conditions of birth highlight the impossibility of a life lived in complete isolation. Associated with this biological impossibility is the epistemic impossibility of the philosophic claim to know absolute difference. Because his subjects are embodied and situated in the world, not only does Merleau-Ponty respect each subject's unique perspective but also his phenomenology maintains a connection with other subjects. As Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen write, "If the phe-

nomenology of perception brings about a displacement of the *cogito* from the personal, 'I' to the prepersonal 'one' (*l'on*), it likewise opens up a space of collective social existence between the first- and the third-person points of view."[35] Merleau-Ponty's position against absolute alterity denies the extremes of complete separation and union in our contact with others.

Some critics express the doubt that the structure of identity-in-difference can escape from the totalizing force of identity. Because narcissistic slippages enwrap all perception and experience, some theorists have argued that the relation between identity and difference cannot really recognize true difference; sameness subsumes all difference.[36]

I do not want to defend the dualistic and dialectical relation between identity and difference but, rather, to affirm the phenomenological structure of identity-in-difference. The idea that the structure of identity-in-difference totalizes may originate from an understanding of this structure as static. If the structure of identity-in-difference in itself develops, in that both the identity and the difference change, this becoming at the heart of the structure should properly alleviate the fear of totality.

In place of the idea that essences are somehow ready-made, that which serves as the identity or the difference does not and need not preexist the subject. Michael Baur writes, "Any distinction between the Essential and the Unessential remains a matter of perspective, and so 'the same content can therefore be regarded now as Essential and again as Unessential.'"[37] In other words, depending on the occasion, that which functions as the identity and that which functions as the difference changes. For perception, for experience of the body, for determining identity relations in time, and for experience of the other—all of these relations determine the essential and the unessential.[38] For within the phenomenological field, "every context is nonsaturable."[39] Within the structure of phenomena, of course, nothing is fully within or without our existential control. In the intersubjective context, one of the most important reasons for changes, in defining identity and difference is the role of another subject.

CONCLUSION

With the threat that the socially constructed differences of race are ontologizing and that the specificities of embodiment impact cognition, difference makes a difference, but we cannot lose sight of the shared features of humanity. Without an understanding of our common humanity, signs of indifference prevail regarding people considered to be different. Let me illustrate this. Glen Loury's definition of stigma is an alarming disparity in some social indicator

within a specific population group that does not indicate something wrong in "our" society, only that something has gone wrong in "their" community. We have known for the last twenty years at least that "there are 650,000 young black men in the United States penal system today, or approximately 23% of all black men between the ages of 20 and 29 . . . [and] only 450,000 young black men are enrolled in colleges today," yet such statistics are not understood as signaling that something has gone wrong in society as a whole, only that something has gone wrong in "their" communities.[40]

Weate's and Gordon's analyses of the ontologizing consequences of the social and political situation suggest that ontology and politics are not separate. As such, much like the motivations for metaphysically and phenomenologically exploring a relation between the one and the many, or between permanence and change, perhaps we should consider our social and political conditions to be a relation between identity and difference, or identity-in-difference. By evoking the phenomenological notion of identity-in-difference, our relations with one another facilitate both an appreciation of our shared plight as well as a respect for our differences. By keeping the relation of identity-in-difference in mind, we could attend to the balance between unity and multiplicity necessary within a polity.

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NOTES

1. Glen Loury, *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 83.

2. Maria Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception," *Hypatia* 2, no. 2 (1987): 7.

3. Jeremy Weate, "Fanon, Merleau-Ponty, and the Difference of Phenomenology," in *Race*, ed. Robert Bernasconi, 174–75 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001).

4. Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and AntiBlack Racism* (Amherst, MA: Humanity Books, 1999): 133. George Yancy also voices this sedimentation of racial meanings as, "a process of *ontologization*, a process where the *being* of the Black body (and the white body) undergoes a process of radical transformation. This involves the process whereby the historically and culturally contingent markings of the Black/White body are transformed into intrinsically natural eternal dispositions." See George Yancy, "'Seeing Blackness' from within the Manichean Divide," in *White on White/Black on Black*, ed. George Yancy (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 248.

5. Linda Martín Alcoff writes, "There is a visual registry operating in social relations which is socially constructed, historically evolving, and culturally variegated but

nonetheless powerfully determinant over individual experiences and choices. . . . This visual registry cannot be fully or adequately described except in ontological terms, because the difference that racializing identities has made is an ontologizing difference, that is, a difference at the most basic level concerning knowledge and subjectivity, being and thinking." See Linda Martín Alcoff, "Philosophy and Racial Identity," *Philosophy Today* 41 (Spring 1997): 68–69. See also Charles W. Mills and his insistence that the difference of race is an ontologizing category. Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 9–13.

Other areas of philosophy articulate this understanding of the inextricable interrelatedness between the natural and the cultural. Feminist theorists, evolutionary theorists, and animal studies theorists speculate similar co-constituted structures. With the growing acceptance of the inseparability of the social and the natural, and their influence upon each other, philosophy of race clearly does not uniquely posit that social/cultural meanings sediment into human considerations of nature if not nature itself. See Susan Bordo, "Does Size Matter?," in *Revealing Male Bodies*, ed. Nancy Tuana et. al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 33. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone writes, "The methodological significance of the hyphenated adjective, existential-evolutionary, can be capsulized in the simplest way perhaps by quoting from Merleau-Ponty's posthumous work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, and saying that there, 'reversibility . . . is the ultimate truth." See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, "Existential Fit and Evolutionary Continuities," *Synthese* 66 (1986): 232.

6. Gareth Williams, "Subalternity and the Neoliberal *Habitus*: Thinking Insurrection on the El Salvador/South Central Interface," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 1, no. 1 (2000): 140. He cites Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today," *Representations* 37 (1992).

7. Williams exhibits suspicion of any attempts at drawing sameness, referring to notions of hybridity as "death work." He writes, "Identity and difference falter before the radical undecidability of hybrid like-being. Moreover, it appears to be through likebeing that we enter the affective, corporeal, and ontological borderlands of collective identity/difference's other side: namely, opaque resemblance, open exposure, and active contagion. . . . After all, the origin of being-in-common in the transnational order is nothing more than the death work of immanence and of communion." See Williams, "Subalternity and the Neoliberal *Habitus*," 162. I worry that Williams's eschewing of hybridity does not provide space for any positive accounts of the lives of the many hyphenated and mixed subjects today and upholds a troubling notion of purity.

Such emphasis on unknowable difference parallels poststructuralist positions such as that of Luce Irigaray, who insists on the existence of ontological "difference." Elizabeth Grosz elaborates, writing, "When it comes to the otherness of the other (whether woman for man, man for woman, or any others) the subject is necessarily unable to see that otherness. We see nothing in the difference because difference itself cannot be grasped, made present; hence I remain blind to—but equally unable to hear or feel—a body that is sexed differently." Irigaray and Grosz hold that difference itself is unperceivable; one cannot perceive complete difference, difference in a radical sense. See Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 106.

8. Hubert Dreyfus writes, "In opposition to mainline cognitive science, which assumes that intelligent behavior must be based on representations in the mind or brain, Merleau-Ponty holds that the most basic sort of intelligent behavior, skillful coping, can

and must be understood without recourse to any type of representation." See Hubert Dreyfus, "Merleau-Ponty and Recent Cognitive Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 129.

9. Ibid., 135–36.

10. See Mark Rowlands, *The New Science of the Mind: From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010); Robert Rupert, *Cognitive Systems and the Extended Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); H. Bruun and R. Langlais, "On the Embodied Nature of Action," *Acta Sociologica* 46, no. 1 (2003): 31–40.

11. Elizabeth Grosz, "Merleau-Ponty and Irigaray in the Flesh," in *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, ed. Dorothea Olkowski and James M. Morley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 162. See also Mills, *Blackness Visible*, 13. Gail Weiss makes a parallel point: "We cannot refrain from the 'project of gender' even if we do not deliberately 'intend' gender as our project, insofar as we live and express our genders through our bodies. . . . Gender is a lived bodily project and hence is an integral component of human existence." See Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 140–41.

12. Gordon, *Bad Faith and AntiBlack Racism*, 69.

13. At this point, recall that feminists critical of Merleau-Ponty, especially Judith Butler and Shannon Sullivan, argue that to reduce human embodiment to an anonymous subjectivity is too abstract and does not depict the very real lives of women. In other words, a significant number of voices within feminist and race theory argue that the so-called secondary/contingent features of embodiment may matter significantly in social life. Butler defends Merleau-Ponty in other respects. See Butler, "Sexual Difference as a Question of Ethics: Alterities of the Flesh in Irigaray and Merleau-Ponty," in *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Dorothea Olkowski and Gail Weiss, 107–125 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

14. Uma Narayan, "Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism," in *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World*, ed. Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 83. Recall also in the last chapter of *Black Skins White Masks*, Frantz Fanon declares that he is a Frenchman, and that "I am a man, and what I have to recapture is the whole of the past of the world. . . . Every time a man has contributed to the victory of the dignity of the spirit, every time a man has said no to an attempt to subjugate his fellows, I have felt solidarity with his act. In no way should I derive my basic purpose from the past of the people of color." He aims to "reach out for the universal." Clearly, Fanon focuses on the sameness of blacks and whites as long as both fight for the humanity of all. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 197, 226.

15. Paul Weiss, "On Being Together," *Review of Metaphysics* 9, no. 3 (1956): 391.

16. Irving M. Copi, "Essence and Accident," *Journal of Philosophy* 51, no. 23 (1954): 706–719.

17. Ibid., 707.

18. Weiss, "On Being Together," 400.

19. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 92.

20. Ibid., 264.

21. Martin Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997), 76.

22. Joseph Rouse, "Merleau-Ponty's Existential Conception of Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 285, 287. Rouse continues to describe scientific theories as functioning similarly—that is, following phenomenological logic, not strict analytic logic. Sounding very much like Thomas Kuhn's articulation of the relation between theory and facts, Rouse writes, "Theories thus occupy an ambiguous place between us and the world. They seem to be objects with properties independent of us (we discover rather than invest their implications, for example). Yet we also use them to explore the world and, in doing so, incorporate them into our own capacities, much as a blind man incorporates his cane."

23. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and the Invisible*, 92.

24. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1996), 185.

25. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Primacy of Perception," in *The Primacy of Perception*, ed. and trans. James M. Edie (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 17.

26. Drew Leder, "A Proposed Supplement to Merleau-Ponty," *Human Studies* 13, no. 3 (1990): 210.

27. Ibid., 214.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 213.

30. David R. Cerbone, *Understanding Phenomenology* (Chesham, UK: Acumen Publishing, 2006), 33.

31. John B. Brough, "Time and the One and the Many (In Husserl's Bernauer Manuscripts on Time Consciousness)," *Philosophy Today*, SPEP Supplement (2002): 142.

32. Patrick Crowley, "Paul Ricoeur: The Concept of Narrative Identity, the Trace of Autobiography," *Paragraph* 26, no. 3 (2003): 1.

33. Ibid., 3.

34. Ibid.

35. Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen, introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17. Drew Leder also confirms this inherent intersubjectivity in the phenomenological structure: "World and self still lack their full depth, however, until reference is made to another chiasmatic relation: that which connects me to other perceivers. My perspective and that of the other intertwine in mutual validation, while never quite coinciding." See Leder, "Proposed Supplement," 211.

36. See Peter Hallward, "Edouard Glissant between the Singular and the Specific," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 11, no. 2 (1998). See also Krzysztof Ziarek, *The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, the Avant-Garde, and the Event* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

37. Michael Baur, "Sublating Kant and the Old Metaphysics: A Reading of the Transition from Being to Essence in Hegel's Logic," *Owl of Minerva: Quarterly Journal of the Hegel Society of America* 29, no. 2 (1998): 149.

38. Let me quote Gallagher one more time to substantiate my position here, particularly with regard to perception, but I am confident he would agree with me with regard

to body movement as well. Gallagher's explanation of perception illustrates how the act of perception in effect chooses the essence: "Where must an object be located within my perceptual field to afford an optimal perception? It depends on the sense modality with which I perceive, and on the purpose of my perception." Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 140. See also T.L.S. Sprigge, "Personal and Impersonal Identity: A Reply to Oderberg," *Mind* 98, no. 392 (1989): 610.

39. Leonard Lawlor, "Dialectic and Iterability: The Confrontation between Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida," *Philosophy Today* 32, no. 3 (1988): 182. Lawlor specifically refers to the work of Ricoeur and Derrida here, but clearly both philosophers work within phenomenology.

40. Patricia J. Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 189–90.

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