

Reframing the Boundaries

Thinking the Political

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Transforming Politics with Merleau-Ponty: Thinking beyond the State, edited by Jérôme

Melançon

Transforming Politics with Merleau-Ponty

Thinking beyond the State

Edited by
Jérôme Melançon

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Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

6 Tinworth Street, London SE11 5AL, United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Melançon, Jérôme, 1981 – editor.
Title: Transforming politics with Merleau-Ponty : thinking beyond the state /
Edited by Jérôme Melançon.
Description: Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield, [2021] | Series: Reframing the boundaries: thinking the political | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021009164 (print) | LCCN 2021009165 (ebook) |
ISBN 9781538153086 (cloth) | ISBN 9781538153093 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 1908–1961—Political and social views. |
Political science—Philosophy.
Classification: LCC JC261 .M47 T73 2021 (print) | LCC JC261.M47 (ebook) |
DDC 320.01—dc23
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021009164>
LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2021009165>

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

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Chapter 2

The Possibility of Emotional Appropriateness for Groups Identified with a Temperament

Emily S. Lee

Recent work in the philosophy of emotion focuses on challenging dualistic conceptualizations about emotion. Three of the most obvious dualisms are the following: (1) emotion opposes or obstructs reason; (2) emotion is subjective, while reason is objective; (3) emotion lies internal to the subject, privy of the subject, in contrast to the externality of reason, with the possibility for public scrutiny. With challenges to these dualisms, one of the more interesting questions that has surfaced is the idea of emotional appropriateness in contexts. If emotion does not counter reason and is open for public scrutiny, then we can explore emotional appropriateness in contexts.

Amid these recent questions with challenges to the dualistic positioning of emotion against reason, I want to consider the understanding that different group identities develop specific emotional temperaments, that members of different group identities have a proclivity toward specific emotional reactions. A widely held belief in the United States (but I suspect elsewhere as well) associates racialized groups with specific emotions—such as African American women with anger, Latin American people with excitability, and Asian Americans with stoicism. Alison Bailey writes, “Black women are often characterized as angry simply for existing, as if anger is woven into our breath and our skin’ . . . Listeners implicitly assign anger to speakers’ words based on their social identity.”¹ Clearly these emotional attributions are essentialistic, and hence racist. But this response is too easy. The acknowledgment that emotion lies both internally in the subject and externally in the world opens the possibility of attributing an emotional temperament to a population group. For to the extent one cultivates emotional temperaments

from habitually responding to a series of experiences in the world, and to the extent that members of groups with visibly identifiable body features likely undergo a series of similar experiences, these emotional attributions to specific group identities present a kernel of truth.

Challenges to the dualistic positioning of emotion, and newly conceiving emotion as both internal and external—challenges in the right direction—open these interesting questions regarding emotional appropriateness and the association of identity groups with emotional temperaments. Yet if identity groups develop emotional temperaments, this condition makes exercising the appropriate emotion in contexts difficult. If an identity group has an emotional temperament, can they really be accountable for emotionally appropriate behavior? This chapter explores the relation between these two ideas, to better understand the function of stereotypes based on emotions.

I trace the parameters of this exploration within Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, especially his last work, *The Visible and The Invisible*. The structure of the visible and invisible wonderfully captures the chiasmatic intertwined relationship of the internal and the external. I argued previously that the structure of emotion follows the chiasmatic intertwining between the invisible, internality of the subject, and the visible, external, situatedness of the subject in the world.² Although Merleau-Ponty recognizes the role of the world and the situations one finds oneself, he also implicates the subject in this state of chiasmatic entwinement. I explore this interstice between the internality of the subject and the influences of the external world to better understand the possibility of emotional appropriateness for group identities associated with, stereotyped as, prone toward specific emotional reactions.

This chapter consists of four sections: first, I present Merleau-Ponty's structure of the visible and the invisible. Second, I briefly explain the chiasmatically intertwined structure of emotion as both internal to the subject and external in the world. Third, the chapter explores the idea of identity groups developing an emotional temperament. Only in understanding emotional structure as both internal and external can we understand that members of identity groups may develop an identifiably similar emotional temperament because of the history of shared experiences. The fourth and final section considers the idea of emotional appropriateness. Only in letting go the idea of emotion as subjective and admitting the influences of the context, the situation, and the world can we discuss the rationality or the moral appropriateness of emotions. I conclude the chapter by exploring the consequences for racialized identities whose history of experiences motivate a specific emotional temperament and whether developing a shared recognizable emotional temperament challenges the possibility of appropriate emotions.

MERLEAU-PONTY'S PARAMETERS

Let us turn to Merleau-Ponty's structure of the visible and the invisible to better understand emotion's structure as overcoming dualism, as both internally in the subject and externally in the world. Challenging dualistic thinking in general, Merleau-Ponty's work makes several controversial maneuvers. First, he conceptualizes the ontological as embodied. Such an ontological conceptualization requires that he always hold forth a relation between the material and the idea. Second, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the importance of the experiences of embodied subjects. He writes, "[i]t is to experience therefore that the ultimate ontological power belongs."³ Merleau-Ponty takes experience seriously. Experience in its complex form, which is usually abandoned for its inability to be absorbed into a universal analysis, serves as the site for meaning.⁴ Third, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological framework is a philosophy of becoming. Merleau-Ponty's system separates away from a philosophy of being, toward a philosophy of becoming.⁵ Merleau-Ponty searches for the possibility of movement, of change, and of development, particularly human development. Emotional becoming is surely a centerpiece within human development.

In his last unfinished work, Merleau-Ponty offers an ontology that attempts to transcend dualistic thinking and dualistic conceptual structures. Of course, the text analyzes perception radically different from the traditional understanding of perception; but the text also forwards an ontological theory. The most commonly understood and perhaps the simplest way to understand the structure of the visible and the invisible is as the body and the mind, the object and the subject. In the divide between the visible and the invisible, the invisible plays a pivotal role in the presentation of the visible. As the subject, the invisible is oneself, the self who cannot be seen in the act of looking upon the object. As the subject, the invisible is "that which we forget because we are part of the ground."⁶ As the subject, James Phillips associates the invisible with the unconscious.⁷ But the invisible is much more than simply mind or subject; such a conception aligns much more with Merleau-Ponty's earlier texts, including the *Phenomenology of Perception*. The invisible is as Phillips indicates the "nucleus of meaning-structures," the "nuclei of signification."⁸ Or, the invisible is, as Henri Maldiney writes, "the depth of the world . . . the unexpected of the world."⁹

The medium of the relation between the visible and the invisible Merleau-Ponty names as the *flesh*. "The flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance, to designate it, we should need the old term 'element' . . . in the sense of a general thing, a midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea."¹⁰ Visibility is the incredible moment when body and mind; subject and object; internal and external; signification and signified, coincide. The flesh

accomplishes this feat Merleau-Ponty writes, by folding back on itself. As Shannon Sullivan elaborates, "the 'folding' of which gives birth to both subject and object and their interpenetration. Thus, the notion of flesh speaks to us of the intertwining of an exchange ('chiasm') between the subject and the object which results in a fundamental ambiguity and possible reciprocity between them."¹¹ With the notion of the flesh, Merleau-Ponty collapses traditional, sacred dualities. Alphonso Lingis beautifully states, "this intertwining, this chiasm effected across the substance of the flesh is the inaugural event of visibility."¹²

Within the shimmering between the visible and the invisible, through the medium of the flesh that crosses dualistic ontologies, perception occurs.¹³ The shimmering ensues between the intentionality of the subject and the transcendence of the object. The intentionality of the subject reflects the subject's pre-reflective direction toward and within the givenness of the world.¹⁴ The transcendence of the perceived thing, as Renaud Barbaras eloquently elaborates, "does not qualify a relation to the subject but, indeed, the way of being of the perceived thing. Consequently, we should say that it is because the perceived thing is intrinsically distant—that is, exists as transcendence—that it makes possible a relation with a perceiving subject."¹⁵

The shimmering occurs also within the function of time. Hence, Gail Weiss depicts the dialogue as, "[t]ranscendence as a sense of openness to future projects as an existence-for-itself and immanence as a sense of rootedness to the past stemming from one's objectification as a being-for-others."¹⁶ The shimmering occurs not only within the vacillation of movement between the subject and the object, but within a vacillation inherent in the subject herself living in the present within the immanence of one's past and facing one's transcendental future self. Perception occurs, amazingly enough, traversing dualities, through this heavy thickness of time and space. Perception occurs through a haze of ambiguity.

The structure of the visible and the invisible clarifies the intimacy of the relation between the visible features of the body and the invisible meanings that appear natural. The two are so entangled that one cannot see without the intertwining of the two. Perception occurs across the dualism of materiality and ideas. Recognition, perception of something as something, occurs with a specific and certain intertwining of the matter of the world and its meaning structures.

EMOTION'S CHIASMATIC STRUCTURE BETWEEN THE SUBJECT AND THE WORLD

In recognizing that emotion crosses dualistic structures, in recognizing the subjectivity and reason of emotion, Merleau-Ponty's structure of the visible

and the invisible serves as a very helpful framework. I have utilized this framework in a past work to explain emotion's structure as both internal to the subject and external in the world, following the works of Kym Maclaren,¹⁷ David Kim,¹⁸ and Alia Al-Saji.¹⁹ The world is laden with emotion; people do not experience emotion without a context, without a situation motivating the emotions. Emotion is already interstitially entangled with the world, for only in this sense do events matter to human beings.²⁰ Emotion lies in the chiasmic interstices between the subject and the world.

Emotion depicts the intertwining of my subjectivity and the world, in the phenomenological understanding of the intertwining of the materiality of my embodiment and the significations in the world, the visible and the invisible. Here I focus especially on two points: (1) Maclaren's concern with emotional tension; and (2) Kim's conclusion that the relation between emotion and the world as "world-constituting in addition to being world-disclosing."²¹ Maclaren highlights emotional tension because moments of emotional tension reveal that although emotion lies externally in the world, emotion does not simply reflect the world; rather, these moments of emotional tension reveal the subject as at odds with the world. But instead of succumbing to the idea that emotion is internal to the subject, Maclaren describes emotional tension "as a struggle not with some inner aspect of ourselves at odds with our grasp on reality, but with that very grasp on reality."²² I read Maclaren as arguing that emotional tension explains Kim's clarification that emotion constitutes the world, not only discloses the world. The nondualistic, chiasmic structure of emotion implies that emotion not only depicts the world, but makes the world. If emotion only reveals the world, such an understanding of emotion implies the separateness of emotion and the world. Rather, emotion, as entangled with the world, interprets the happenings in the world.

Recognizing emotion as chiasmatically situated between the subject and the world as to be world disclosing and world constituting, previously, I followed the nondualistic structure of emotion to position emotions as revealing and also constituting the subject. Understanding that emotions do not oppose reason, and hence emotions do not prohibit agency and freedom, validating one's emotions, including the so-called negative emotions, constitutes one's subjectivity. Emotions form an integral part of subjectivity. Emotions not only reveal a subject's character, but form a subject.

For example, previously I wrote about the emotion of anger with the supporters of Donald Trump. My emotion of anger at the people who enable Trump demonstrate both that I do not accept Trump's actions as just (a judgment/constitution about the world) and that I am a person who does not believe that Trump represents the ideals of fairness or honesty (a judgment/constitution about myself). The emotion does not simply reveal the world and me, for not everyone shares the belief or the emotional stance that the world

is unjust with Trump as president. Rather, my emotional stance about the current circumstances constitutes the world and me.

EMOTIONAL TEMPERAMENT OF GROUP IDENTITIES

In recognizing the nondualistic structure of emotion, let me turn to the question of group identities, specifically racialized identities, as possessing an emotional temperament. Cheshire Calhoun argues for the existence of an emotional biography. Arguing for the similarities between belief statements and emotional statements, she writes,

[i]f, as I have argued, what occupies our thinking, what we accept as true, and our patterns of knowledge and ignorance are often tied to personal biography, then what we believe cannot be cleanly separated from who we are. . . . On the other hand, I have argued that emotions, even appropriate ones, are always tied to biographically subjective beliefs.²³

Calhoun forwards that both belief and emotional statements reflect a person's biography.

Although Calhoun's idea is relatively recent, paralleling this idea of an individual emotional biography, the idea that group identities possess emotional temperaments is quite commonplace, as demonstrated in my introductory quotations. The idea functions as a common stereotype, one that elicit challenges. In addition to Bailey's quote from Roxanne Gay expressing frustrations of such essentialistic associations of black women with anger, Elizabeth Spelman points out a very real problem with associations of the emotional temperament of anger to black women. She writes that expressions of anger,

while focusing on the specific condition of Black women in the United States, perhaps especially poor Black women in the United States, is taken to be proof positive of one's having caved in to treacly, fuzzy-headed PC thinking (except when accusing that particular group of being welfare queens), focusing on white men, more particularly angry white men, is taken to be a sure sign of having one's finger on the serious political pulse of the nation.²⁴

In other words, Spelman explains that because of the belief that black women as a group have the emotional temperament of anger, black women's expressions of anger are not seriously regarded. On the other hand, our society takes white male anger seriously because white men, as a group, do not have the emotional temperament of anger. Without the emotional temperament of anger, if white men express anger, it must be genuine, with good reason. This is indeed a serious problem.

The idea that racialized identities possess emotional temperaments lies so deeply embedded among our social meaning structures that Jose Esteban Munoz forwards the existence of a "national affect." While speculating on the wide variety of identifying features for Latin American, he writes, "[w]hat unites and consolidates oppositional groups is not simply the fact of identity but the way in which they perform affect, especially in relation to an official 'national affect' that is aligned with a hegemonic class . . . there is an official, but no less powerfully entrenched, national affect."²⁵ Acknowledging the difficulty, if not hopelessness, of contesting or denying the deeply entrenched attributions of an emotional temperament with the Latino/a identity group, in as a response strategy, Munoz advocates embracing the association of an affect with a racialized identity group. So, members outside of an identity group do not solely attribute an emotional temperament to the group; but at least in the case of Munoz, members internal to the group recognize an emotional temperament to their own group.

Bailey, Spelman and Munoz find such attributions of emotional temperament to a group identity abhorrent. They assume that such attributions are essentialistic and as such racist. Like so much about stereotypes and overdeterminations, such essentialisms prohibit, inhibit, and limit the agency and freedom of the members of the group identity. But this may not be the end of the story, because to the extent that one's biography influences one's emotional statements, as Calhoun writes, the possibility that members of a group identity develop an emotional temperament may have a kernel of truth.

A relation exists between individuals and their group identities. An understanding of the self as somehow possessing an inner essential static core regardless of one's surroundings, perseveres only with the old largely disregarded conception of the self as individualistic, unique, and separate from a community. Even careful readings of the existential traditions recognize that the self cannot live in a vacuum and does not hold a core but rather develops in negotiation with others, and hence is always in process. The self, as being-in-the-world, becomes in relation with others in the social meaning horizon. One's group sets the parameters against which to compare and to distinguish one's sense of self.

On the epistemic level, Lynn Hankinson Nelson concludes that one knows as a group first, and then claims knowledge as an individual. Nelson writes, "[m]y claims to know are subject to community criteria, public notions of what constitutes evidence, so that, in an important sense, I *can* know only what *we* know, for some *we*."²⁶ Nelson persuasively argues that with a coherentist conception of knowledge, claims to know cannot arise initially individually. Even if one discovers or creates something new, the "new" knowledge must undergo community confirmation and justification in order to become accepted as knowledge.

Not only does the self develop in relation to one's group epistemically, but one's relation with others fulfills a psychic purpose for the self as well. Linda Martin Alcoff argues that every individual "needs to feel a connection to a community, to a history, and to a human project larger than his or her own life. Without this connection, we are bereft of a concern for the future or an investment in the fate of our community. Nihilism is the result."²⁷ Individualism—an insistence on valorizing independence, once upheld as a model of human emotional and psychological development—no longer holds an enigmatic status. Hence with acknowledgment that the self is in process, knowing oneself and existentially and psychically heeding oneself require allegiance and negotiation to one's community, to one's group identity.

Acknowledging the relation between individuals and their group identity, for minority or racialized subjects, their group identity more often overwhelms the individual identity. A group identity is overdetermined if a defining condition of the group identity results in reductive treatments of the individual members as indistinguishable from the group identity. Frantz Fanon famously said it best when he claimed that he is held responsible "for my body, my race, my ancestors."²⁸ Hence why phenomenologists of race, including myself, emphasize that racism hinges on the visible features of the body.²⁹ Through the visible differences of the body, one conjectures about the invisible differences of the person. Yet human bodies have visibly similar features as well as visibly different features. Racism and sexism highlight certain body features that are made to appear *natural*.³⁰

With the understanding that individuals always live and develop in relation to their group identities, and with the understanding that racialized and gendered individuals are especially subject to external, visible overdeterminations with their group identities; these two propositions lend credence to the possibility that members of racialized groups are likely to undergo similar experiences, in other words experience similar life trajectories. Racialized subjects encounter similar experiences because of the visibility of their embodiment. A series of similar experiences grow into similar biographies.³¹ The likelihood develops—increases—that these members of racialized group identities may develop a pattern, a sediment of emotional responses, if not absolutely or universally the same, but similar, emotional temperaments.

Bailey, although clearly bemoaning the association of black women with a proclivity toward anger, nevertheless continues in the same article to explain the role of a group identity's shared history that contributes to developing an emotional temperament. She writes:

I believe that some angers are inherited along with the historical traumas of colonized and oppressed peoples and the "worlds" that gave rise to that ancestral

anger. As Lorde observes, "Every Black woman in America lives her life somewhere along a wide curve of ancient and unexpressed angers." Members of oppressed/silenced/resisting/angry communities have collective memories of their suffering, and that historical trauma and pain shapes the contours of their collective anger.³²

Bailey concludes with a position that aligns with Munoz that "[a]nger's abiding historical nature suggests that the differences between and among our lived identities are as affective as they are social and cultural, and that 'various historically coherent groups 'feel differently' and navigate the material world on a different emotional register'."³³ In other words, Bailey points to history to suggest the possibility that members of a group identity develop a similar emotional temperament.

Recognizing the structure of emotion as not simply internal to the subject, but chiasmatically external in the world provides the framework for the possibility that members of a group identity may share an emotional temperament. Recognizing that individual subjects do not simply have an essentialistic core that eventually expresses itself, but, rather, that subjectivity develops in relation with others, within a context, and in negotiation with the circumstances of the world, it is highly likely that members of a group identity share a history and because their visible embodiment share similar experiences. As such, members of a group identity ultimately may develop a similar emotional temperament.

This is a difficult admittance because I share with Spelman, Bailey, and Munoz the concern that such essentialistic emotional attributions (that black women more often express anger, Latin Americans tend to be excitable, and Asian Americans resort to stoicism) lend toward dismissing the very real injustices and circumstances in the world that provoke such emotions. In addition, admitting a temperament may emphasize inadvertently the subjectivity, the internality of the emotion, the natural proclivity of emotions. These are very real concerns. For each group identity, the specificity of their emotional temperament represents a certain history of experiences and provokes different consequences. Whereas society does not take African Americans' and Latin Americans' emotions seriously, most of society does not even notice the emotions of Asian Americans. The dominant view of the emotional temperament of Asian American women may not be stoicism because of characterizations of women as emotional, but they are usually invisible, anyway.

The question remains whether individuals outside of a group identity surmise these emotional tendencies about whom they consider as others as a means of essentialistically dismissing the concerns of the group identity or whether individuals within a group identity self-characterize themselves as tending toward these emotions. Considering the internal/external structure of

emotion—both are likely. With these meaning structures prevailing in society, members internal to the group identity may self-describe their emotional temperament as aligning with their group identity.

EMOTIONAL APPROPRIATENESS

With admittance of the possibility that members of a group identity develop an emotional temperament, I turn to the question of emotional appropriateness. Accepting the nondualistic structure of emotion opens up this possibility of publicly scrutinizing the rationality and the morality of emotions. But if members of a group identity tend toward developing a similar emotional temperament, are these individuals temperamentally inhibited from expressing appropriate emotions? Does the development of an emotional temperament suggest confinement from expressing the appropriate emotion in certain contexts?

Calhoun explains Ronald DeSousa's analysis of appropriate emotions. To determine emotional appropriateness, DeSousa refers to paradigm scenarios, but these paradigm scenarios do not have a rigid criteria for emotional appropriateness, because

a wide variety of emotional paradigm scenarios may fit a given context. The scenarios for anger, humility, and fortitude may equally fit a scene of public reprimand. Where there is this flexibility, DeSousa suggests we choose the most appropriate scenario by looking at both the consequences of adopting one paradigm over another (fortitude may preserve relationships, while anger destroys them) as well as cultural rankings of paradigms (fortitude is a virtue, anger is not).³⁴

Calhoun argues for adding to DeSousa's list, emotional temperament. She writes, "[w]hile considering the consequences and cultural rankings of paradigms may partly determine emotional response when more than one paradigm fits our situation, our own emotional temperaments also play a role."³⁵ To DeSousa's consequential and cultural criteria of determining emotional appropriateness, Calhoun insists on adding emotional temperament from a subject's biography. I agree with Calhoun here especially following my earlier analysis admitting the possibility that members of identity groups may develop a similar emotional temperament.

Bennett W. Helms's suggestion complements DeSousa and Calhoun's criteria. DeSousa's criterion takes on a third-person perspective (probably aiming for some sense of objectivity). But recognizing the nondualistic structure of emotion, I read Helm's criterion of emotional appropriateness from the first-person perspective, for oneself. In this regard, Helms writes, "[e]

motional appropriateness, however, also requires that the evaluation be made in light of what is truly significant to one—that is, in light of what one truly cares about."³⁶ Helms traverses the divide between DeSousa and Calhoun.

Against this background about emotional appropriateness in paradigm scenarios, let me posit Munoz's analysis that "there is an unofficial, but no less powerfully entrenched, national affect."³⁷ He continues,

I contend that this "official" national affect, a mode of being in the world primarily associated with white middle-class subjectivity, reads most ethnic affect as inappropriate. . . . This game is rigged insofar as it is meant to block access to freedom to those who cannot inhabit or at least mimic certain affective rhythms that have been preordained as acceptable. From the vantage point of this national affect, *Latina/o* affect appears over the top and excessive.³⁸

Munoz argues that there is an affective hegemony, a hegemony in regard to emotional appropriateness. Munoz asserts that dominant identities control this affective hegemony; in the United States, the dominant identity is white. Consequently, white affective temperament serves as the backdrop to gauge the emotional appropriateness of all other identity groups. Because of the existence of an affective hegemony, Munoz writes, "[m]inoritarian identity has much to do with certain subjects' inability to act properly within majoritarian scripts and scenarios."³⁹

How does the idea of emotional hegemony reframe DeSousa, Calhoun, and Helm's analysis of emotional appropriateness in paradigm scenarios? At the very least, Munoz's analysis implies that DeSousa's cultural criterion has an overwhelming influence. More than this, Munoz's position beckons for considering a broader background, a historically enlightened horizon rather than a narrower, context-driven, paradigm scenario in pondering questions about emotional appropriateness. With considerations of a broader context, Munoz points out that a certain affective registry dominates, and this affective registry aligns with white identities, ultimately situating racialized identities' emotional temperaments as inevitably inappropriate. In this regard, recognizing the existence of a hegemonic emotional register suggests that the worry is not simply the truth value of associating an emotional temperament to racialized identities.

But in view of a historical horizon, in admitting the very real possibility that racialized identities may develop a similar emotional temperament, the worry is that racialized identities internally question feeling the emotions. The worry lies not simply in incorrect, essentialistic, external to the group attributions of emotional temperament. But the concern lies internal to the subject—in breeding self-doubt, self-distrust of one's own emotions as inappropriate. Recall, my earlier position that in recognizing the nondualistic

chiasmatic structure of emotion, emotion discloses and constitutes the world and the self. In other words, the concern centers around questioning oneself, questioning what one truly cares about. I think because of this worry of self-distrust of one's own emotions, Munoz affirms the Latina/o affective registry. He writes, "[i]t is not so much that the Latina/o affect performance is so excessive, but that the affective performance of normative whiteness is minimalist to the point of emotional impoverishment. . . . At this moment in history it seems especially important to position whiteness as lack."⁴⁰

What are the consequences for group identities with different emotional temperaments? Considering Munoz's position of the existence of an affective hegemony, from an external standpoint, racialized identities are destined to possess inappropriate emotions. From an internal standpoint, racialized identities face the challenges of self-doubt in subject formation.

THE FLOW OF EMOTIONS

Let me end with a reminder that emotions change, that emotional temperament are not permanent. Paying heed to Fanon's analysis that racializing affect is rigid, racializing affect is stuck. Al-Saji writes, "[a]ffective ankylosis' conveys, at once, the rigidity, immobility and numbing that characterize racializing affects; it explains the recalcitrance of these affects. The *rigidity* of racializing affect can be witnessed in its temporality, for this affect is not only frozen in its response but repetitive in its form."⁴¹ As my emotions constitute the world and me, I understand that rigidly holding onto these emotions does not allow room for growth. Emotions must flow.

How do emotions change? Three possible means for change are engagement with other people, hesitation, and different emotions. Maclaren forwards the role of others to promote emotional metamorphoses. As much as others cause emotional tension; others also model means for emotional metamorphoses. She writes, "[e]motion is not an internal conscious event, but rather the experience of a tension within our reality that puts into question our place in reality. . . . Other people play an essential role in producing such a constrained situation . . . others can lend us new existential resources for making sense of our situation."⁴² Our immediate community matters.

Al-Saji recommends hesitation in these moments to staid emotions. Al-Saji details five ways in which hesitation reconfigures affect, but I cite only the last:

To hesitate is to delay and to make affect wait. The incompleteness, both of affect and of that which to affect responds, is here felt. To wait is to testify that time makes a difference for experience, that all is not given in the present. To

wait . . . is not only to be open to a futurity that escapes prediction, but also to a past that can be dynamically transformed through the passage of events, and that grounds the creative potential of events. This breaks with the closure of the past and the predetermination of the future found in racialization.⁴³

Hesitation can change emotions.

Keith Oatley and Maja Djikic follow William James's understanding of emotion and insists that "emotions can have effects on emotions. One emotion can transform to another. . . . Or to use another metaphor, emotions can succeed each other as in the plot of a story. There can be a beginning in an emotion, a middle of vicissitudes and tribulations, and an end in which a new emotional centre becomes stable. Some stories that take on heroic proportions are indeed stories of new emotional centres being attained in life."⁴⁴ These words suggest not only that emotion effects emotion but that emotion's horizon flows.

In other words, emotions and emotional temperaments are not permanent. As much as this chapter explains the possibility of different identity groups developing distinctive emotional temperaments, in concluding by emphasizing the importance of the flow of emotions, this chapter ends with a call for openness to emotional developments. Such openness, admits the possibility of the white emotional range to dominate, especially because of the hegemony of the white emotional range.⁴⁵ Calls for openness are subject to the resedimentation of normalized patterns, perhaps nowhere more adamantly than in regards to emotional reactions. With awareness of this possibility, let me also admit that I do not advocate developing any particular emotional temperament over another. Philosophy of emotion discusses this question extensively. Here, I want to just note that human beings' range of emotions serve different functions. Recognizing the value of the flow of emotions, without rigid adherence to a narrow range of emotions, when subjects start feeling differently about events, perhaps we can start perceiving and thinking differently about each other. In this way, we can start troubling the persistent hold of stereotypes.

CONCLUSION

With increased acceptance of the complex structure of emotion as both internal to the subject and also external in the world, a phenomenological framework facilitates understanding emotion as both disclosing and constituting the world and the subject. Such an understanding of emotion better explains the precarious position of recognizing external attributions of a racialized identity with an emotional temperament as essentialistic with problematic consequences, and admitting the possibility of a kernel of truth in such attributions because of a shared history, and because of undergoing similar experiences.

In other words, a likelihood exists for racialized identity groups to develop similar emotional temperaments.

In recognizing that emotions are not simply individualistic, private, and subjective to the person, but chiasmic, phenomenologically motivated by the world and yet revealing and constituting the world, emotions as objective are open to judgment and discussion in negotiation with others. In recognizing the externality of emotion, and that emotion does not oppose reason, morality, and public discourse, this chapter recognizes why the question of emotional appropriateness surfaces. But this chapter calls for recognizing that, like most questions regarding rationality and morality, discussion about emotional appropriateness occurs against a background of normalized reason and morality. Recall Charles Mills's work describing the epistemic hegemony established in the racial contract. He writes, "[t]here is an understanding about what counts as a correct, objective interpretation of the world, and for agreeing to this view, one is '(contractually)' granted full cognitive standing in the polity, the official epistemic community."⁴⁶ In parallel form, Munoz's work asserts a background of normalized emotion, an emotional hegemony of white identities' emotional register, such that determinations of emotional appropriateness align with the norms of white emotional rhythms casting racialized identities' emotional registers as inappropriate. In these discussions about appropriate emotions, I advise recognizing that like so many of the Western white world's hegemony on reason, the Western white world has a hegemony on the appropriate emotional register, occluding the emotional registry of racialized emotions not only externally but also ultimately internally within the self.

NOTES

1. Alison Bailey, "On Anger, Silence, and Epistemic Injustice," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 84 (2018): 99. She cites Roxane Gay, "Who Gets to Be Angry," *The New York Times* (June 10, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/12/opinion/sunday/who-gets-to-be-angry.html>.
2. See Emily S. Lee, "A Phenomenology of Seeing and Affect in a Polarized Climate," *Race as Phenomena: Between Phenomenology and Philosophy of Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019): 107–124.
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 110.
4. See Eirizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 94–95.
5. Renaud Barbaras, "Perception and Movement: The End of the Metaphysical Approach," *Chiasm, Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000): 80.

6. Dorothea Olkowski, "The Continuum of Interiority and Exteriority in the Thought of Merleau-Ponty," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999): 11. The mind and all that are ineffable and ethereal are usually associated with the invisible, whereas the body and all that are sensuous and concrete are traditionally relegated to the world of matter, the visible.
7. James Phillips, "From the Unseen to the Invisible: M-P's Sorbonne Lectures as Preparation for His Later Thought," *Merleau-Ponty, Interiority and Exteriority, Psychic Life and the World*, eds. Dorothea Olkowski and James Morley (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999): 80.
8. Phillips, "From the Unseen to the Invisible," 80.
9. Henri Maldiney, "Flesh and Verb in the Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty," *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000): 56.
10. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 144.
11. Shannon Sullivan, "Domination and Dialogue in Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*," *Hypatia*, 12, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 9.
12. Alphonso Lingis, "Translator's Preface," *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968): lvi.
13. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor, "Introduction: The Value of Flesh: Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy and the Modernism/Postmodernism Debate," *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, eds. Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000): 3–4.
14. Martina Reuter, "Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Pre-Reflective Intentionality," *Synthese*, 118 (1999): 77.
15. Barbaras, "Perception and Movement," 82.
16. Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1990): 10.
17. Kym Maclaren, "Emotional Metamorphoses: The Role of Others in Becoming a Subject," *Embodiment and Agency*, eds. Sue Campbell, Letitia Meynell, and Susan Sherwin (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009). Maclaren writes, "the world, as it gives itself to us in perception, prior to any thought or reflection about the world, is emotionally meaningful" (28–29).
18. David Haekwon Kim, "Shame and Self-Revision in Asian American Assimilation," *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014). Kim writes that because of emotion, "[s]omething matters or has import in a dangerous way, offensive way, or an intriguing way precisely because of the types of feeling found in fear, resentment, or curiosity. If there was no feeling, nothing would matter to us" (113). Or as Kim concludes, "[f]eeling and worldly imports are facets of the same structure" (114).
19. Alia Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (Albany: SUNY Press, 2014). Al-Saji writes, "the structure of affect undermines several dichotomous schemas: it lies at the hinge of passivity-activity, but also inside-outside, or more accurately, self-affect and hetero-affect" (146).

20. I read Bennett W. Helm as agreeing with this understanding of the structure of emotion as internal and external when he writes, "Emotions generally are evaluations of their objects in terms of their significance or importance to the subject. Thus, in being angry one is evaluating the object of one's anger as offensive, where such offensiveness is the particular kind of significance at issue in anger." "Integration and Fragmentation of the Self," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 34, no. 1 (1996): 52.

21. Kim, "Shame and Self-Revision," 115.
22. Maclaren, "Emotional Metamorphoses," 33.
23. Cheshire Calhoun, "Subjectivity and Emotion," *Philosophical Forum*, 20 (1989): 208.
24. Elizabeth Spelman, "Anger: The Diary," *Wicked Pleasures*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999): 124.
25. Jose Esteban Munoz, "Feeling Brown: Ethnicity and Affect in Ricardo Bracho's 'The Sweetest Hangover (And Other STDs),'" *Theatre Journal*, 52, no. 1 (Mar. 2000): 68–69. He continues, "Citizenship is negotiated within a contested national sphere in which performances of affect counter each other in a contest that can be described as 'official' national affect versus emergent immigrant" (69).
26. Lynn Hankinson Nelson, *Who Knows from Quine to a Feminist Empiricism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 255.
27. Linda Martin Alcoff, *Visible Identity: Race, Gender and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 207.
28. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 112.
29. I can cite extensively in this regard. Consider Patricia Williams, who recounts her experiences publishing an article explicating her now-quite-famous case of her denied entrance to a Benetton store. Williams writes that the editors erased all references to the fact that she is a black woman, effectively erasing all means for understanding that she was denied entrance because of racism. Williams writes "[w]hat was most interesting to me in this experience was how the blind application of principles of neutrality, through the device of omission, acted either to make me look crazy or to make the reader participate in old habits of cultural bias" (*The Alchemy of Race and Rights* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991], 48). See my analysis of this scenario in "Madness and Judiciousness: A Phenomenological Reading of a Black Woman's Encounter with a Saleschild," *Convergences: Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy*, edited by Maria Lupe Davidson, Kathryn Gines, and Donna-Dale Marcano (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010): 237–248.
30. But, Merleau-Ponty argues, every individual is responsible for every instantiation of the accepted belief. Every interaction and experience are opportunities to affirm or to deny a shared belief. He writes, a naturalized knowledge "is not an inert mass in the depths of our consciousness . . . what is acquired is truly acquired only if it is taken up again in a fresh momentum of thought." One engages in recalling, beckoning, and focusing on such body features. Pointing to the naturalized status of the visibly different body features does not suffice, individual acceptance, individual involvement matters (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1962], 130).

31. This is consistent with Calhoun's position that biographical experiences contribute to an emotional biography. She writes, "[b]ecause we have such widely varied biographies, we are exposed and disposed to widely varied forms of conceptualizing the world. That means not only differences in the terms through which we think, but also differences in what we notice, remember, and forget, or in what gets conceptually elaborated or dropped" (201–2).

32. Bailey, "On Anger, Silence," 107. She cites, Audre Lorde, "Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger," *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde (Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1984), 145.
33. Bailey, "On Anger, Silence," 107. She cites Munoz, "Feeling Brown," 70.
34. Calhoun, "Subjectivity and Emotion," 206.
35. Calhoun, "Subjectivity and Emotion," 206.
36. Helm, "Integration and Fragmentation," 52.
37. Munoz, "Feeling Brown," 69.
38. Munoz, "Feeling Brown," 69.
39. Munoz, "Feeling Brown," 70. As such, Munoz describes his project as "In lieu of viewing racial or ethnic difference as solely cultural, I aim to describe how race and ethnicity can be understood as 'affective difference,' by which I mean the ways in which various historically coherent groups 'feel' differently and navigate the material world on a different emotional register" (70).
40. Munoz, "Feeling Brown," 70.
41. Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation," 141.
42. Maclaren, "Emotional Metamorphoses," 42.
43. Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation," 148.
44. Keith Oatley and Maja Djikic, "Emotions and Transformation: Varieties of Experience of Identity," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 9 no. 9-10 (2002): 113–14. This article adheres too much to an internalist view of emotion, although it recognizes the influence of the world on emotion. For example, they write, "in our world, transformations may come from inner movements, but many more occur from the press of outside events" (114).
45. Thank you Jérôme Melançon for this point.
46. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1997), 17–18.

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