

INTRODUCTION

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Race and the Relevance of Embodiment

Philosophy of race has explored many reasons for the history of race and racism within the context of a desire for empire building and within individual prejudices. Empire building and colonialism have been relegated more or less as untenable practices and ambitions. Most present-day societies legally prohibit intentional individual racism. So, to explain the persistence and tenacity of racism, philosophy of race has more recently focused on racism as embedded in the social/institutional structures of society and the subconscious and even unconscious levels of consciousness. Both these levels do not directly address the materiality of race. And yet both the social structural and the individual subconscious levels of analysis rely on perceiving the embodiment of race. A focus on race, on the material, the physical features of race may shed more light on racism's perseverance.

Adamantly insisting on the pivotal role of embodiment, Patricia Williams writes, “[t]he simple matter of the color of one’s skin so profoundly affects the way one is treated, so radically shapes what one is allowed to think and feel about this society, that the decision to generalize from such a division is valid.”¹ Because of the confluence of the materiality of the body with meanings and significations, embodiment is central to race.² The meanings of body features change historically (as well as which and how body features symbolize), but significations persistently saturate body features.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty writes, “[p]articlar racial myths and stereotypes change, but the underlying presence of a racial meaning system seems to be an anchoring point of American culture.”³ The color of one’s skin imparts meaning about the person’s intelligence or kinds of intelligence; the at times presumed (and projected) size and shape of various parts of the body communicate meaning about the person’s sexual prowess and hence, proximity to animality; the amounts of hair in different areas of the body transmit information about the person’s propensity toward violence. The egregious impact of these prevalent meanings of body features, with its accordance to the various degrees of the status of humanity, was attested to historically in our past of slavery, segregation, and immigration laws. Yet still not obvious is the lived reality of carrying forth every day in a body with its associated subjectivity. Every day, in the banal, minute interactions with members of society, one’s body sets the parameters for what constitutes the reasonable response from others. One’s body informs the rationale for the person who refuses to enter the same elevator.⁴ One’s body conveys one’s professional position when dressed in a pair of jeans and a T-shirt.⁵ One’s body displays one’s likelihood for punctuality.⁶ These intimate moments give rise to distinct experiences that accumulate into a particular life.

Embodiment in General

As central as embodiment appears to be in the question of race, philosophy of race has so far only limitedly explored the role of embodiment. At least part of the initial focus on the conscious intent and on the unconscious projections of racism to the neglect of the role of embodiment might reflect philosophy’s own dualistic theoretical history of dividing ideas and matter; thinking things and nonthinking things; consciousness and the body. This split reflects the philosophical tradition from Plato and Descartes, which not only insists on the possibility of such separation, but also prioritizes ideas, thought, and the inner workings of the subject. Because of this metaphysical distinction, and its prioritization of consciousness, the understandings of race and the analysis of racism may have underemphasized the role of embodiment because the body has been relegated to the status of unthinking matter.

Of course, a tradition in philosophy argues for metaphysical monism and denies any substantive distinctions between thinking beings and non-thinking beings. The most persuasive argument against dualism and de facto for monism is that if the world is metaphysically reducible to two kinds of

beings, how do the two beings—completely different in kind—have contact or awareness of each other?

Without insisting on either position here, much recent work argues that human beings' particular form of embodiment conditions cognitive processes. Human bodies' upright postures, human bodily distinctions of front and back, as well as the limitations of human body movements impact human cognitive connections. For example, Hubert Dreyfus has been arguing for a while now against mainstream cognitive theory's position that the mind functions through representations; the position that the mind relies on representations reflects dualist conceptions. Only with the complete separation of the mind and the body does the mind require a representation of what appears or occurs in the physical world.⁷ In place of these theories of mind's reliance on representations, Dreyfus argues that the form of the input conditioned by the materiality of the body directly influences thought. Referring to neural networks designed to simulate cognitive processes, he 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."⁸ In other words, this research suggests that embodiment inherently conditions thinking. Indeed, in philosophy of cognitive science, much work explores situated cognition, as extended, embodied, embedded, and amalgamated mind—all of these instances acknowledge the integral role of the material circumstances of consciousness.⁹ The mind and the body cannot be separated; they are reliant on each other. Hence, to disregard the role of the body in thinking—including thinking about race—in order to explore racism only as a product of thought as conscious or unconscious, does not suffice for understanding the embodied conditions of race and racism.

In feminist theory, even working within a dualistic framework, discussions have flourished focusing on the relation between the materiality of embodiment in regard to the nature of sex and the social construction of the cultural ideas circumscribing gender. Hence, it is not clear why race theory that works within philosophy's dualistic framework has not followed the trajectory of discussing the relation between the material embodiment of race and the constructed significations of race and racism. Instead, in race theory, metaphysical dualism and its prioritization of consciousness primarily leads to the neglect of embodiment.¹⁰ Admittedly, within feminist theory, debate continues as to what exactly constitutes the natural, biological difference that

distinguishes the sex of women from men. Interestingly, feminist theory still struggles with demarcating women from men, while simultaneously insisting that women are not determinately reducible to their biological capabilities. In the wake of a history in which women were denied participation in the sphere of public life based on the presumption that they could not develop as thinking beings because of their bodies, feminist theorists have de-emphasized the biological parameters as defining women and emphasized the socially constructed history that isolated them based on the presumed limited capacities of their bodies.¹¹ Accordingly, early feminist foremothers, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, argued that the education of women—and not their biological makeup—more greatly influences women’s development; Simone de Beauvoir succinctly stated, “women are made not born.” The early feminists emphasized the role of society in obfuscating the ability to see women’s true capabilities. Because of the need to emphasize the role of society in limiting women’s development, the role of nature and biology was de-emphasized.

More recently, Judith Butler writes, “‘sex’ is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled . . . In other words, ‘sex’ is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time.”¹² Her position that socially constituted matrixes of power discursively compel matter including sex into visibility questions the influence and importance of nature. Butler makes explicit the force of social norms not simply to mold nature as sex and subjectivity as gender, but the very parameters of nature and subjectivity. Nevertheless, she also aims to avoid depicting nature as purely passive—because of the common association of nature as the feminine. The success of this latter aim is unclear; Butler’s depiction of the materialization of sex has been contested. The most interesting contention addresses Butler’s metaphysical stance as not fully recognizing the implications of a metaphysics of process or becoming.¹³ Clearly, relying on biology to distinguish between men and women appears to be a challenge.

Of course, if socially constructed meanings compel matter and even construct subjectivity, the most well-known critique of Butler remains the question concerning the location of agency. This particular critique directed at Butler parallels philosophy’s treatment of materiality and embodiment. Following dualism’s tendency of attributing secondary status to nonthinking things, too much of an association with the matter of embodiment usually has been associated with disabling agency. Letitia Meynell writes, “[t]hrough the focus on marked and socialized bodies has been, at the same time, an expression of feminists’ deep political commitment to acknowledging and fostering the agency of marginalized political subjects, it is fair to say that

much feminist theory has engaged the issue of embodiment with an overwhelming focus on how oppressive practices constrain and damage agency. Although this focus has been indispensable to an adequate analysis of oppression, it has done little to show how the body is the ground for agency more positively conceived.¹⁴ Not only is the function of biology difficult to grasp, but too much of an association with embodiment has been conceived as threatening and damaging the possibilities of agency.

I am not so concerned with settling this debate between essentialism and social constructionism and whether sex or gender is more formidable. Instead, I only want to point out that within feminist theory, at least these two features, nature/materiality and culture/ideality persist as the parameters within which, around which, and against which feminist theory contends. In the aftermath of the eugenics movement, race theorists have wholeheartedly and eagerly given up that race relies on any biological or natural basis.¹⁵ As such, the discussion around race circumscribes only social construction, meanings, and ideas. Paralleling the framework of feminist philosophy in the discussion between sex and gender, the domain of philosophy of race, in a sense, is narrowed to being only about culture. Of course this makes sense, because as Linda Martín Alcoff explains, race is not a factor in the reproduction of the human species. She writes, “the variable of reproductive role provides a natural infrastructure for sexual difference that is qualitatively different from the surface differences of racial categories.”¹⁶ Because race in its natural or biological sense was relegated to the surface, race theory collapses into the misnomer that perhaps race will disappear in a future of brown people. Such a position leaves race theorists with the difficult task of arguing that, although there is no such thing as race (in the natural sense), race still functions because of the meanings of race (in the cultural sense). Philosophy of race is left in the difficult position of arguing for the importance of meanings about something that cannot actually be distinguishable in nature. Firmly situated within a dualistic philosophical tradition that already relegates the body as secondary to consciousness, the position that race has no significant biological basis adds to the difficulties within race theory when addressing the role of the body and the embodiment of race.

Embodiment in its Particularity

Within this theoretical history, the difficulty of addressing race as embodied is not surprising. There is a lack of conceptual space for speaking about the significance of the body in philosophy of race. Because this history confines

talking about embodiment in *general*, studying the relevance of embodiment in its *particularities*—the role of the specificities of body features—proves even more difficult.

Contained within this metaphysical framework where the defining aspect of subjects is their status as thinking beings, the social-political solution to understanding racism as conscious intent or as subconscious prejudice emphasizes equal treatment of all members of society and calls for recognizing the sameness of all human beings—hence, the strategy of color-blindness. But this insistence on the commonality of all human beings positions the distinguishing specificities of embodiment—the differences that perceptually distinguish race and sex—as secondary to human beings. This insistence on the identity of all human beings not only conceptually constrains theories of the role of embodiment, it also points to questionable moral and political conclusions—for it denies the possibility of positive, identity-affirming reasons to recognize distinguishable bodily differences. The insistence on commonality and identity of all human beings disregards the very parameters on which the significations of different body features rely. Such dismissal of embodiment in general, and additionally embodiment in its particularities, denies the prevalence and significance of socially constructed meanings about specific body features.

Recall that because of the confluence of body features and meanings, embodiment is central to race. As Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue, we construct and determine which features of the body symbolize race as well as the meanings/significations of the symbols. They write, “race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies . . . selection of these particular features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process.”¹⁷ In other words, the history of our society condition and construct the visibility of the differences of embodiment and the meanings of the particular features of the body. Because of these meaning-saturated particular body features and our visual sensibility that is conditioned to focus on these significations, the different racial groups undergo specific experiences. For as I said at the beginning of this introduction, based on particular body features, members of society gauge the appropriate interactions and responses to other people. In this way, the particularities of embodiment construct subjectivity, in all its varied, racialized differences.

Collecting these premises together, the solution of racism emphasizing the sameness of all people inadvertently denies the socially constructed

meanings of race. Combining this position of denying the existence and relevance of socially constructed meanings of race with the earlier position of the nonexistence of the biological differences of race results in the rather amazing conclusion that *race does not exist in any sense!*

To get a better sense of the relevance of race in the social construction of subjects, let me evoke Frantz Fanon's difference between externally and internally overdetermined subjectivity. Externally because of the visibility of the different features of one's body, others gauge the appropriate responses to one's embodiment—formatively constructing the experiences one encounters. Internally, an accumulation of such experiences and events builds into a personal history to develop one's sense of self. Heeding the existential dimension, the subject digests, filters, and makes sense of these series of experiences of the world. The essays in this collection elaborate precisely this juncture—illuminating how the meanings circumscribing embodiment constructs the experiences the subject encounters and consequently how the subject develops certain emotions, knowledge, ethical/moral postures, and sense of being-in-the-world. In this way, the specificities of embodiment are primary to subjectivity. Race does not lie as a superficial cover over the primary layer of common humanity; in a profoundly intimate sense, one lives race through the immediacy of the particular differences of one's embodiment.

Ironically, although I have taken pains to explain how philosophy neglects the material and the natural, because of the sedimentation of racial meaning into the very fabric and texture of society, members of society mistake the socially constructed meanings about features of the body as *natural*. One perceives, experiences, and lives the historical, cultural meanings of race as biological, materially real, and natural. Such phrenological impulses demonstrate the difficulty of eliminating the functioning of the specific differences of embodiment, and of sustaining in the social memory that the meanings of race are socially constructed as well as biologically insignificant.

In light of such phrenological impulses, philosophers of race have been arguing for understanding race as an ontological category. As Lewis Gordon explains, "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."¹⁸ Gordon advocates reconceiving ontology to account for this phenomenon where the socially constructed meanings of race have become so saturated into our being-in-the-world that we mistake the socially constructed as natural/biological. To describe the experience of race in present-day society, where members of

society mistake the socially constructed meanings of race as natural (much like gender compels sex), race theorists posit conceptualizing race in ontological terms.

Phenomenology

A phenomenological framework facilitates understanding the ontologizing relation between embodiment and race in this confluence between materiality and socially constructed meanings. The phenomenological framework aims to understand precisely the world as a relation between the natural and the cultural, the objective and the subjective, the thinking and the nonthinking beings. This relation, this space that phenomenology explores, is the site of racial meaning. Following the work of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty defines phenomenon as a “layer of living experience through which other people and things are first given to us.”¹⁹ Attending to the layer of living experience, the phenomenon of being-in-the-world, a phenomenological framework recognizes that all contact with the world occurs through negotiations between the intentions of the subject and the givens of the world, or rather that subjectivity and the world condition each other. This definition of phenomena operates on both the ontologic and the epistemic levels. Merleau-Ponty never separates the ontological and epistemological aspects of the subject and being-in-the-world: “‘What do I know?’ is not only ‘what is knowing?’ and not only ‘who am I?’ but finally: ‘what is there?’ and even: ‘what is the *there is*?’”²⁰ Although not all of the essays in this text utilize the Husserlian, Merleau-Pontian strain of phenomenology, all the essays explore precisely this interstice between the natural and the cultural, especially in light of how socially constructed meanings have sedimented to now appear mostly, if not purely, natural.

Within this phenomenal framework, let me elaborate a bit on Merleau-Ponty’s work because of his now quite famous prioritization of the subject as embodied. For although not all of the essays in this collection explore Merleau-Ponty’s theory on embodiment, they do all explore the implications of an embodied subjectivity. One’s experience of the world phenomenally occurs through embodiment, as Merleau-Ponty insists, “the alleged facts, the spatio-temporal individuals, are from the first mounted on the axes, the pivots, the dimensions, the generality of my body.”²¹ Moreover, one experiences the body phenomenally. One does not experience the entirety of the body at any one point; different parts of the body enter and exit one’s awareness in

facing one's various life projects. For example, when I practiced the breast-stroke more regularly in my swimming routine, I started noticing pain in my inner thighs, a section of my body I never paid any attention to before. In new endeavors, one may experience initial disappointment and discouragement with one's body but eventual pleasure and surprise at the new capabilities of one's body.

Merleau-Ponty does not naively situate the body in the world and assume that all bodies see and experience more or less the same thing. Instead, recognizing that all bodies are not exactly and entirely alike, he theorizes how each body's positioning in the world reflects the body's differences. In other words, Merleau-Ponty's attention to embodiment heeds not only the role of the body in general but its particularities. Because of the differences of the body, each individual's position within the world facilitates a unique perspective of the world. The uniqueness of each position does not derive solely from its spatial position; each body occupies a unique position in the world because each body builds up a horizon of immanent personal experiences. As such, each body's optimal distance for perception exhibits the subject's relation with the object of perception in the world. The uniqueness of each perspective has its benefits and drawbacks; Merleau-Ponty writes, the "*person who* perceives is not spread out before himself as a consciousness must be; he has historical density, he takes up a perceptual tradition and is faced with a present."²² Because of the differences of the body, each subject has her own unique blind spot; the subject cannot possess full self-consciousness of the situations of his or her own body at any moment.

Within a dualistic metaphysics, philosophy had abstracted away the differences among subjects, depicting subjects as replaceable, because the only important aspect of human beings is the status of thinking beings. In highlighting the role of the particularities of embodiment, Merleau-Ponty rescues each person for her unique perspective. Merleau-Ponty writes that each body and each "perception is mutable and only probable—it is, if one likes, only an *opinion*, what each perception, even if false, verifies, is the belongingness of each experience to the same world, their equal power to manifest it, *as possibilities of the same world*."²³ Because of the precariousness of individual perspectives, sole perspectives are at times dismissed as merely opinions. Merleau-Ponty rescues each opinion, by insisting that because of the singular position of each body within the world each body can contribute uniquely to knowledge of the world. Just as a friend in pointing to a specific feature of a scene introduces a new aspect, each body and its perspective holds the potential to further grasp the world.

The phenomenological structure initially depicts the negotiations between the intentions of the subject and the world, but phenomenology conceptualizes more than merely describing the embodied interactions of the situated subject. The phenomenological structure theorizes the possibility of agency, of existentially acting in the world. In contrast to the dualistic metaphysical stance where only thinking beings can act, and where the body as a nonthinking being cannot act, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology challenges this neat separation by insisting that only embodied subjects act in the world.

The ambiguities of the uniquely embodied subject in the world and the blindness associated with such a position demonstrate phenomenology's focus on situatedness and its constraints and possibilities for knowledge. In the ambiguity and the openness of phenomena lies the possibility of simultaneous separation and union, the particular and the general, multiplicity and unity, or identity in difference. Phenomenology, with Merleau-Ponty's appreciation for the particularities of embodiment, serves as an ideal framework for thinking about the meanings of the embodiments of race.

The Collection of Essays

The essays collected and organized here form a broad definition of phenomenology. More than probing the theoretical parameters of phenomenology, these essays actually do phenomenology by presenting the lived conditions of racialized subjects. In other words, the essays collected here engage in phenomenologically, describing the experience of subjects as the world bombards, coerces, and shapes them, and as they react, respond, and make meaningful their embodied lives. True to the phenomenological endeavor of first capturing one's state of being-in-the-world before making epistemic claims, these essays depict the very real circumstances within which racially embodied subjects negotiate their psychological, emotional, intellectual, and political agency within their social environs. Only by beginning with such descriptions can we endeavor toward knowledge that truly includes these subjects' realities.

This collection of essays attempts to represent a wide variety of racialized bodies, mostly in the United States. Of course, because of the inevitability of exclusion, a complete representation will remain always beyond comprehension. The essays address the embodiment of African Americans, Muslims, Asian Americans, Latinas, Jews, and White Americans. To an extent

the choice of these categories represents the members of the discipline of philosophy more than the general population at large. And I stay as close as possible to the author's classifying categories, respecting their rights and their abilities to describe the world and self-express themselves. Moreover, because racial categories change and evolve, I do not attempt to separate between racial or ethnic distinctions. This partly reflects attention to Omi and Winant's arguments against utilizing the idea of ethnicity. They argue that ethnicity and its emphasis on culture as the defining feature of race affiliates too closely with white immigration patterns in the United States. Such modeling after white immigration patterns detracts attention from the particular history of discrimination of racialized subjects, who did not follow traditional more voluntary immigration patterns, but experienced forced transnational moves or subjugation to colonialist practices without immigrating. In other words because ethnicity emphasizes culture, it does not consider the actual reasons for the different treatment of people—their racialized embodiment.²⁴ Of course, others have disagreed with Omi and Winant's position. But I find their arguments persuasive, especially because they acknowledge the role of the visible differences of embodiment. Each of these essays, with its concentration on a specific form of embodiment, focuses on questions that are urgent to each subjectivity.

The book begins with "Materializing Race" by Charles W. Mills, because it articulates the material basis of race. Mills argues for a particular conception of materiality—a materiality that recognizes the force of the sociopolitical—because of the sedimentation of historical meanings. Drawing from his earlier work in Marxist theory and the notion of subpersonhood, Mills elaborates on the political and economic history as material. Linda Martín Alcoff's book, *Visible Identities*, motivates Mills to insist on this material basis of race. For although Mills concedes a natural/biological primacy to sex because of sex's role in the reproduction of the species, he still insists on the materiality of race. The differences in skin color—in embodiment—originally served as the basis for granting some with personhood and others with subpersonhood. This original divide is not trivial, but rather structures the very material conditions of life in present-day society.

George Yancy's essay, "White Gazes: What It Feels Like to Be an Essence," illustrates the workings of perception, where vision already only occurs through the sedimentation of meanings. In this incredibly honest, present-day illustration of the theme of overdetermination in Frantz Fanon's work, Yancy depicts white racist perception in such mundane events as riding in elevators or watching movies. Clearly, the black subject still experiences

what Fanon explains as the fear of “seeing oneself laid out before one as a thing, as an essence.” Yancy conveys how present society’s history and structures of power produces an epistemology that ontologically conditions black lives. Yancy ends with some speculations on the possibility of the black body conditioning the white body’s being-in-the-world.

Turning away from a body mired in meanings, and turning to a body that remains obscure in its abstractness, Donna-Dale L. Marcano, in “Race/Gender and the Philosopher’s Body,” focuses on the philosopher’s body—a body circumscribed by openness and possibilities. Although historically, philosophers have had difficulty acknowledging their bodies, Marcano cleverly points out that such disdain for embodiment does not only reflect the philosopher’s absorption with meta-analysis. Rather, such ambivalence for the material conditions of their existence cloaks the social contexts, which delineate only certain bodies as philosophers. The image of the philosopher’s body is far from open ended; rather, it is so specifically associated with certain bodies—white males—that our society summarily denies other bodies as capable of intellectual or philosophical work. Marcano draws attention especially to a history of dismissal of the philosophical thinking from black female bodies.

Namita Goswami further explores the role of the embodiment of women of color in her chapter, “Among Family Woman: *Sati*, Postcolonial Feminism, and the Body.” Goswami points to women’s bodies as the defining feature that historically justified the association of women of color as closer to animality and nature than to humanity. Challenging whether we truly surpassed the colonial period into the postcolonial era, Goswami questions the bifurcation of white women and women of color that results in the homogenization of women of color. Evidence of such homogenization is the static focus on specific, overdetermined, so-called, third world practices, including *Sati*. Goswami explores Gayatri Spivak’s positioning of Bhubhaneswari’s *Sati*/suicide as a challenge to the reductive dualistic understanding of *Sati* as only forever caught between the possibilities that “White men are saving brown women from brown men” and “The women wanted to die.” In an interesting twist, instead of defending the humanity of women of color, she advocates for a reevaluation of the exceptionalism deemed onto the human and the cultural within the nature/culture divide. Through a focus on the natural remnants and stains of Bhubhaneswari’s body, Goswami rethinks humanity’s hubristic claim to surpass nature, and the body as natural.

Delving into the practices of the body, from idealization to emotion, David H. Kim, in his article, “Shame and Self-Revision in Asian American Assimilation,” examines the phenomenology of the affective dimensions of

embodiment. Kim depicts the phenomenology of emotion with the works of Michael Stocker and Peter Goldie. Kim carefully explores affect without reducing the experience of emotion to either solely a cognitive dimension nor to just the surface of bodies. Building from this basis, he applies the affective dimension of embodiment to the specific social political experiences of Asian Americans. Liberal orientalism in American society configures Asian American bodies to experience a distinctive form of racial xenophobia, because Asian American cultural practices are represented as exceptionally positive. More than the dangers of such exceptionalist portrayals of Asian Americans among other minority groups, Kim explains the dangers in the emotional development for Asian Americans. Within this political context, Kim situates Asian American assimilation practices in relation to the self-evaluative emotions of shame and self-contempt.

Alia Al-Saji builds on the phenomenology of affect in “A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing.” Henri Bergson posits that affect is felt when the body hesitates. Affective hesitation delays habitual action by making visible the sedimentation of habit by prefiguring and thus delaying habit into the anticipated future. The body waits before acting; in this waiting, the body remembers the past. Iris Marion Young earlier famously portrayed a hesitation among women as illustrative of the effects of social objectification that result in women’s body movements projecting contradictory intentions while performing teleological actions. Al-Saji carefully delineates a second hesitation, a hesitation that undergirds all human activity. Al-Saji evokes Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s explanation of an “activity that is not opposed to passivity, an agency that is also powerlessness” to argue that the insistence to see only through recalcitrant structures of racializing vision does not occur simply passively but willfully. The affective body hesitation that allows for a pause to examine the past and the future may disrupt the habituation of racializing vision.

In “Hometactics: Self-Mapping, Belonging, and the Home Question,” Mariana Ortega focuses on the multiplicitous subjectivity, a subjectivity whose phenomenological lived experience is divided—specifically Latina lesbians. Edwina Barvosa argues that Maria Lugones draws from the different aspects of herself for strategies to fulfill a self-integrative life project. In contrast, Ortega explores the possibility of a divided subjectivity—one that does not feel integrated and whole, who experiences internal strife, ambiguity, ambivalence, and contestation—exercising agency. Focusing specifically on the context of the home, and the difficulties the multiplicitous subjectivity has in finding safety, comfort, and peace even in this cherished sphere,

Ortega develops a notion of “hometactics” from Michel de Certeau’s work on tactics. Ortega posits “hometactics” in place of or in addition to Barvosa and Lugones’s emphasis on strategies. In tactics that appear within the temporariness and provocation of situations, Ortega steers clear of “strategies” that cannot quite be disentangled from present systems of power.

Edward S. Casey explains the lines and edges in the body of the nation state in “Walling Racialized Bodies Out: Border Versus Boundary at La Frontera.” Casey invites new thinking about this space between the United States and Mexico, by considering this edge through the lens of the difference between borders and boundaries. Borders, as products of human ideas, Casey explains, delineate clearly and crisply; boundaries rarely demarcate with any precision, being more porous in character. Although not immune to cultural machinations, boundaries are more a product of nature. Borders are distinctive from boundaries, but Casey points out that the two are indissociable from each other, while never becoming the other and dissolving their difference. Though the United States concentrates much effort into establishing the materiality of La Frontera, borders, as human-made entities, may function more powerfully in the discursive sense than in the physical material sense. This discursive force of La Frontera especially applies to the racialized bodies along this border.

Returning to the embodiment of people, Gail Weiss calls for carefully heeding the ambiguity of embodiments and subjectivities in “Pride and Prejudice: Ambiguous Racial, Religious, and Ethnic Identities of Jewish Bodies.” Focusing specifically on the Jewish subject, and the well-known assignation of Jews as internally overdetermined, Weiss explains that overdetermination does not solely, oppressively eliminate agency but can allow for the free association and cross-fertilization of ideas about Jewish identity. In contrast to Frantz Fanon’s and Jean-Paul Sartre’s sense of overdetermination that depicts the Jewish subject as only reacting to the negative, reductive, essentializing descriptions of the anti-Semite, Weiss argues that Sigmund Freud’s original sense of overdetermination connotes the multiple possibilities of free association. Weiss points to more recent works depicting the Jewish identity for better models of overdetermination that illustrates the ambiguous reactions of both prejudice and pride.

Moving finally toward white embodiment, I, in “Body Movement and Responsibility for a Situation,” counter a strong argument against affirmative action, that individuals should not be held responsible for the actions of their ancestors. Hence, whites today should not be punished for acts committed by their forefathers. Lee begins by explaining Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s

understanding that body movement generates space and time, and his definition of freedom as entailing responsibility for one's entire situation. Lee argues that these two phenomenological insights support the position of the radical whiteness theorists who recognize the ethical responsibility for situations not of one's own making and accountability for the results of more than one's immediate personal conscious decisions and actions. Because of our specific history, whites have developed a particular embodiment and body movement that generates spaces and times that can only be characterized as more comfortable and more enabling to whites.

In the last and final essay, "The Future of Whiteness," Linda Martín Alcoff, examines the conditions for including whites in a future where people of color constitute the majority. In contrast to the facile dismissal of whites as uncomplicatedly untrustworthy because of the historical positioning of whites as the dominant, "master" figures, Alcoff phenomenologically outlines the changing subjective experiences of whiteness now. She insists that, presently, whites experience alienation and a double consciousness that has usually only been associated with people of color. Hence, she does not relegate whites to cluelessness and "vanguardism." Alcoff carefully maintains that the epistemic importance of the alienation of the subjective experience of whites does not arise simply from class divides and class analysis. Alcoff resists determinist assumptions about whiteness, and rather acknowledges ambiguity in whiteness.

Through a phenomenological exploration of various racialized subjectivities, this collection of essays aims to explore the relation between embodiment and race. I hope that it succeeds in highlighting and forwarding this dimension of the philosophy of race.

Notes

1. Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 256. Similarly, Deidre E. Davis astutely writes that "[w]e cannot hope to understand the meaning of a person's experiences, including her experiences of oppression, without first thinking of her as embodied and second thinking about the particular meanings assigned to that embodiment." ("The Harm that has No Name: Street Harassment, Embodiment, and African American Women," in *Critical Race Feminism*, ed. Adrien Katherine Wing [New York: New York University Press, 1997], 192. She cites Elizabeth V. Spelman's *Inessential Woman*:

- Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1988], 129–130.
2. Feminist theorists have explored the relations between the materiality of the body and gendered meaning more thoroughly. Among the books that discuss this are Dorothea Olkowski and Gail Weiss, eds. *Feminist Interpretations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty* (University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006); Gail Weiss, *Body Images: Embodiment as Intercorporeality* (New York: Routledge, 1999); and Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience, "Throwing Like a Girl," and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also chapters in the following books: Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Shannon Sullivan, *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Maria Lupe Davidson, Kathryn Gynes, and Donna Dale Marciano, *Convergences: Black Feminism and Continental Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010).
 3. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 23.
 4. See Taunya Lovell Banks, "Two Life Stories: Reflections of One Black Woman Law Professor," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, ed. Kimberle Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas (New York: The New Press, 1995).
 5. See Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Defining Genealogies: Feminist Reflections on Being South Asian in North America," in *Making More Waves: New Writing by Asian American Women*, eds. Elaine H. Kim, Lilia V. Villanueva, and Asian Women United of California (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997). See also, Adrien Katherine Wing, "Brief Reflections Toward a Multiplicative Theory and Praxis of Being," *Critical Race Feminism*, ed. Adrien Katherine Wing (New York: New York University Press, 1997).
 6. See Karen J. Hossfeld, "Hiring Immigrant Women: Silicon Valley's 'Simple Formula,'" in *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, ed. Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).
 7. Hubert Dreyfus writes, "[i]n 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.” (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).
8. *Ibid.*, 135–136.
 9. See Mark Rowlands, *The New Science of the Mind: From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010); Robert D. Rupert, *Cognitive Systems and the Extended Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). See also, Henrik Bruun and Richard Langlais, “On the Embodied Nature of Action,” *Acta Sociologica*, 46, no. 1 (2003): 31–40.
 10. The following three are noticeable exceptions. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markman (New York: Grove Press, 1967). George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008). Linda Martin Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
 11. Interestingly, here we did not need cognitive science to affirm that the body influences the mind.
 12. Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 1.
 13. See Linda Martin Alcoff, chapter six, “The Metaphysics of Gender and Sexual Difference,” *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), where she discusses Sally Haslanger’s critique of Butler via a post-Quinean metaphysics. See also Claire Colebrook, “From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings: The Feminist Philosophy of Lloyd, Grosz, and Gatens,” *Hypatia* 15, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 76–93.
 14. Letitia Meynell, “Introduction to Embodiment and Agency,” *Embodiment and Agency*, ed. Sue Campbell, Letitia Meynell, and Susan Sherwin (State College Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 9.
 15. To be specific, scientists do not utilize the typological conception of race because “[it] is estimated that humans are identical 99.9% of our DNA.” (Lisa Gannett, “Racism and Human Genome Diversity Research: The Ethical Limits of ‘Population Thinking,’” *Philosophy of Science* 68, no. 3 (Sept. 2001): 487). Instead, race is conceptualized as populations. “Race on this account [typology], was recognized to be a social construct, that would be left to social scientists. For ontological reasons, then, human

genome diversity research is said to be non-racist because it studies populations, not races” (Gannett, 481). Interestingly, Lisa Gannett argues that such population thinking in science still does not avoid racism (see 490).

16. Alcoff, *Visible*, 165. See also 135–136 and 172.
17. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 55.
18. Lewis R. Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), 133. See also Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), 9–13; Michael D. Barber, *Equality and Diversity: Phenomenological Investigations of Prejudice and Discrimination* (New York: Humanity Books, 2001), 110; Linda Martin Alcoff, “Philosophy and Racial Identity,” *Philosophy Today* 41 (Spring 1997): 68–69; and Falguni A. Sheth, *Toward a Political Philosophy of Race* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), chapter 1. They articulate similar positions.
19. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (Great Britain: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 57.
20. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 129. Author’s italics.
21. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 114.
22. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 238.
23. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible*, 41.
24. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 16–20.1.