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Liberating Anger, Embodying Knowledge: A Comparative Study of María Lugones and Zen Master Hakuin

JEN McWEENY

This paper strengthens the theoretical ground of feminist analyses of anger by explaining how the angers of the oppressed are ways of knowing. Relying on insights created through the juxtaposition of Latina feminism and Zen Buddhism, I argue that these angers are special kinds of embodied perceptions that surface when there is a profound lack of fit between a particular bodily orientation and its framing world of sense. As openings to alternative sensibilities, these angers are transformative, liberatory, and deeply epistemological.

In recent decades, feminist philosophers have become increasingly attuned to the liberatory aspects of anger. Audre Lorde (1984a, 1984b), Naomi Scheman (1980), Marilyn Frye (1983), Uma Narayan (1988), Elizabeth V. Spelman (1989), Sue Campbell (1994), Wendy Donner (2002), María Lugones (2003), Diana Tietjens Meyers (2004), and Sylvia Burrow (2005) all ask us to reconsider the dominator's view of our angers, which sees them as irrational, unjustified, hyper-sensitive, and morally and epistemologically unproductive. In doing so, these philosophers encourage us to understand our angers as lucid and appropriate responses to sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, first-worldism, and other institutionalized oppressions. Such feminist analyses of anger are often grounded, either explicitly or implicitly, in the radical idea that *angry experience is a kind of knowing experience*.¹ Our angers empower us, because within them we know our own agency and self-worth (Frye 1983; Narayan 1988; Spelman 1989; Burrow 2005), we know we have been wronged (Frye 1983; Spelman 1989), we know the patterns and functions of the oppressive structures that work on us (Frye 1983; Narayan 1988; Campbell 1994;

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Lugones 2003; Meyers 2004), and we know revolutionary strategies for enacting different, liberatory kinds of existence (Lorde 1984b; Donner 2002; Lugones 2003).

My aim in this essay is to strengthen the theoretical ground of feminist analyses of anger by focusing on the epistemological mechanisms of angry experience. Rather than argue *that* angry experience must involve knowing experience, I offer a description of *how*, and by extension, *why* the angers of the oppressed are ways of knowing. In agreement with the idea that traditional pictures of self and mind have difficulty accommodating the emotionality of the oppressed (Scheman 1980; Meyers 2004), I situate my description between two extraordinary philosophers whose respective accounts of anger emerge within unorthodox ontological frameworks. Specifically, I compare María Lugones's account of "second-order anger" with Zen Master Hakuin Ekaku's descriptions of self-less anger.² Against the backdrops of Latina feminism and Rinzai Buddhism, we are able to make out two thoroughly embodied kinds of anger that do not vie for intelligibility within the confines of prevailing interpretations of reality. In virtue of their bodily and insubordinate characters, these angers are able to take stock of the ways in which cognitive content is and is not linked to the orienting perspective that renders that content visible, sensible, expressible, and within reach. As such, second-order and self-less angers constitute epistemological transformations in the angry person, and hence they also create possibilities for her liberation.

After first establishing Lugones's and Hakuin's respective theories, I go on to delineate the epistemological mechanisms of these angers by developing a perceptual theory that draws from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of operative intentionality. I then show how my "operative view" of anger can explain why the angers of the oppressed are ways of knowing without succumbing to some of the problems generated by the pluralistic ontologies of Lugones and Hakuin. In the final two sections, I explore various parallels between this epistemology of anger and the feminist comparative methodology that I employ in this essay.

LUGONES: SECOND-ORDER ANGER

In her essay "Hard-to-Handle Anger," Lugones writes of a kind of knowing anger that remains concealed to us if we consider it within the framework of an ontology that affirms a unitary self who is independent from an objective world. She explains this special type of "second-order" anger by contrasting it with "first-order" anger, which is more conducive to this traditional one self/one world ontology. According to Lugones, "first-order" anger is a communicative anger that vies for respect from the oppressor in the "official world of sense" (Lugones 2003, 108). First-order angers include the angers discussed by Frye and Spelman: righteous anger about having been treated unjustly or unfairly

(Frye 1983, 85–86), demanding anger that asks you to respect my domain and social position (Frye 1983, 87–90), and judgmental anger that blames another for wrongdoing (Spelman 1989, 266). As assertions of agency and claims to respect, first-order angers want *uptake*, that is, they want to be included and heeded in the prevailing world of sense. While first-order angers are epistemologically important because their successes and failures at getting uptake map our own social positions and those of others, they also express a certain futility in oppressive contexts. When a woman in a sexist society is angry in a first-order way, she is asking to be heard by the very world that marks her angers as inaudible precisely because they issue from a woman—a perceived subordinate who is expected to lack agency and respectability. First-order angers thus accommodate a one self/one world ontology, because the angry person attempts to fit her self into the given world by demanding respect and fair treatment from that world. Perhaps as a result of the connection between first-order angers and traditional ontology, most people are likely to identify their angers as first order, and our philosophical accounts of anger reflect this bias.

In contrast to first-order anger, Lugones describes “second-order” anger as a separatist, uncommunicative anger that recognizes that the angry self and the metaphysical presuppositions of the official world of sense are mutually exclusive. Here, we must remember that Lugones rejects a one self/one world ontology and instead subscribes to a pluralistic metaphysics where selves are multiple, as are the worlds that they inhabit and move between. Lugones’s metaphysics is based on a conception of space as “multiple, intersecting, contemporaneous realities” (Lugones 2003, 16) and on a conception of the oppressed person as a “world-traveler” who journeys between realities and selves in order to survive (16–26, 88–90). Within this fresh ontological apparatus, we are led to understand an experience of intense anger not as a stepping-outside of ourselves, but as “the anger of a self different from the one who is trying to make sense within the confines of official reality, a self who is doing the work of resistance” (104). Hence, the “second-order” label is appropriate for this type of anger, not because it is anger about being angry, as one entrenched in a one self/one world ontology might suspect, but because it is the anger of a different, “second” self. The very existence of this second self is fundamentally incompatible with the first world and with the first, subordinate self who survives in that world.

Lugones readily acknowledges that her pluralism is “ontologically problematic” (Lugones 2003, 89–91). On the one hand, Lugones claims that each person consists in a multiplicity of different selves and experiences these selves *as different*. On the other hand, although Lugones denies the existence of any “underlying I,” she affirms that a person is somehow able to identify each different self as “me.” In addition, Lugones observes that worlds of sense are distinct from one another and that these differences are real and not simply a

matter of interpretation (16). And yet, worlds of sense are permeable since they intersect, overlap, and trespass upon one another, and since people can inhabit more than one world at the same time (16, 88). We can now see that the problem generated by Lugones's ontology is a problem that accompanies any non-solipsistic, ontological pluralism: how do we make sense of a self that is at the same time both one and many, without subsuming one ontology into the other? Although Lugones intentionally leaves this question unanswered (89), we can nonetheless observe that her criteria for distinguishing one world from another should place her view somewhere between a strong pluralism that holds that worlds are numerically distinct and a weak pluralism that believes that simply having a "different take" on reality is a sufficient condition for defining a world.³

Given that Lugones's pluralism is neither strong nor weak, I argue that it is reasonable to identify what Lugones means by "world of sense" with another of her concepts, namely, "structure." In "Structure/Anti-Structure and Agency under Oppression," Lugones defines a structure as the patterned arrangements of practices, roles, concepts, and institutions within a given society that function as a means of construing and constituting persons (Lugones 2003, 60). For example, one structure could construe women of color as passive subordinates whereas another structure could construe them as active subjectivities. Because the practical demands of a structure constitute the "emotions, beliefs, norms, desires, and intentions" of the people who move within that structure, when a person shifts structures she also becomes a different self (60). Not only can a person live in more than one structure at the same time, she can also go in between structures and be without structure (61).

Thus described, Lugones's ontological pluralism beckons us to explore the spatiality of second-order anger: Where, in relation to the multiplicity of worlds, is second-order anger located? And which of our multiplicity of selves is capable of this emotion? At first glance, Lugones seems to be saying that second-order anger is the anger of a resistant self who inhabits a world of sense that is different from, or even opposed to, the structure that authorizes her oppression. However, upon closer examination, we find that the self of second-order anger is *not* a fully formed self. Rather, the angry self is an "in-between self" who is without structure and not yet tied to a world. Unlike first-order anger, second-order anger "decries the sense of the world that erases it" and begins to travel to alternative spaces apart from "harmful sense" (Lugones 2003, 111–14). The location of second-order anger, then, is *across*, rather than within, worlds of sense (33, 111, 115). We can thus infer that the self of second-order anger must inhabit what Lugones calls "the limen," a gap between universes of sense (59). The limen is a "creative preparation" and a "way of life" (Lugones 2006, 79, 83); it is the space/moment where we are most aware of our own multiplicity and where we are best able to see different structures critically

(Lugones 2003, 59). Temporally, second-order anger is forward-looking as it moves to create new liberatory sensibilities. Spatially, second-order anger lies between the first world of the dominators and the third world of the oppressed: it is a borderland territory that resists assimilation to either side.

When Gloria Anzaldúa writes of the “intimate terrorisms” of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and colonialist violence, she is expressing second-order anger. Her words are enraged and enflamed by her own bodily oppression and by the oppression of others:

The dark-skinned woman has been silenced, gagged, caged, bound in servitude with marriage, bludgeoned for 300 years, sterilized and castrated in the twentieth century. For 300 years she has been a slave, a force of cheap labor, colonized by the Spaniard, the Anglo, by her own people. . . . For 300 years she was invisible, she was not heard. . . . she concealed her fire; but she kept stoking the inner flame. . . . The spirit of the fire spurs her to fight for her own skin and a piece of ground to stand on, a ground from which to view the world—a perspective. . . . Battered and bruised she waits, her bruises throwing her back upon herself and the rhythmic pulse of the feminine. (Anzaldúa 1987/1999, 44–45)

The anger of the dark-skinned woman begins with various forms of collective bodily violation, which include bludgeoning, sterilization, silencing, and erasure. Colonization and imperialism, at the hands of both outsiders and intimates, cut off parts of the queer mestiza’s body/body of expression. Her subjectivity/objectification and existence/non-existence are erased by the patterned logics and material practices of non-contradiction, excluded middles, and either/or. Her anger is about being erased and disempowered by one or more worlds of sense (Lugones 2003, 114). The bruises that are the material and symbolic indications that her communications have received no uptake in prevailing structures throw her back on herself in isolation, as she fights to inhabit a different, not-yet-formed world of sense (and to find a different practice of expression) that is compatible with her own flourishing.

Attending to the spatiality of second-order anger helps us to see why Lugones would conceive of this anger as fundamentally epistemological. Second-order anger embodies a shift in perspective that allows us to perceive objects and their situating backgrounds differently than we do with the unitary vision of the official world of sense. In the limen, we experience objects as contextual and tied to “worlds,” rather than as simply given. In this respect, second-order anger embodies what Anzaldúa calls *la facultad*: “*La facultad* is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. It is an instant ‘sensing,’ a quick perception arrived

at without conscious reasoning. It is an acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak . . ." (Anzaldúa 1987/1999, 60). In contrast to arrogant perceptions and either/or reasonings that seek the destruction and assimilation of whatever is different or contradictory, second-order angers are "playful" perceptions whose content depends on our openness to uncertainty, indeterminacy, unruliness, and surprise. Indeed, risking our senses of self and the "ossified" meanings that make up their concomitant worlds are necessary conditions for experiencing second-order angers (Lugones 2003, 26). Consequently, the way of knowing that is enacted in second-order anger is a kind of "traveling"; it is a shift from being one self to being a different self (89). This epistemic process "isolates the resistant self in germination" (103), since cognitive content is rarely "cognitively straightforward" as it moves across worlds of sense (116–17). However, the separatist, incommunicative character of second-order anger is oriented by a hope for transformation and connection: the angry self's willingness to create new meanings that elude the logic of oppression—her ability to be playful—is a condition for the possibility of coalition-building activities like "world"-traveling, "complex communication" (Lugones 2006, 84), love, and liberation. By placing us in the limen, second-order angers give us the chance to renegotiate perceptual, social, and linguistic meanings to better accord with the fullness and complexity of reality, which includes its back side, even though this back side is invisible when viewed from the dominant, habitual perspective. Here, the angry self participates in a way of knowing that does not drive a wedge between the experiences of our resistant, germinating selves and the languages of their expression.

HAKUIN: ANGER WITHOUT SELF

Let us now travel to eighteenth-century Japan, where we will find depictions of a similarly insightful kind of anger in the writings of Zen Master Hakuin. Whereas we would expect a Buddhist to think of anger as a poison that binds a person to the delusions of the ego and other independent objects, Hakuin instead believes that some angers are actually conducive to enlightenment (Japanese: *satori*) and "liberation from suffering" (Sanskrit: *nirvāna*).⁴ This seeming inconsistency in Hakuin's account of anger is less pronounced when situated in the context of his Rinzai Buddhism.⁵ The Chinese Buddhist Linji (ca. 810–866), for whom the school of Rinzai Buddhism is named, is famous for incorporating thundering shouts, blows from his staff, physical beatings, and crude, evocative language into his teachings. In light of Zen's emphasis on the primacy of compassion within the teacher–student relationship, we should not jump to the conclusion that Linji's pedagogical techniques are themselves expressions of anger. Alternatively, these methods are best seen as ways of provoking and evoking anger in students so that they may learn. As such,

Rinzai pedagogy reflects an awareness that, in certain situations, emotions can be more effective than discourse or scripture at disrupting those habitual psychological patterns that bind a person to independent objects and to the determinism of the wheel of *karma*.

In the *Orategama*, Hakuin tells the story of the Zen priest Gudō Toshōku who goes to visit the monk Yōzan Rōshi to discuss his understanding of Zen.⁶ As the story goes, Yōzan responds to Gudō's query promptly with verbal abuse and beatings. At this, Gudō becomes quite angry:

Angered, Gudō went one very hot day to a grove of bamboo and sat in meditation without a stitch of clothing covering his body. At night great swarms of mosquitoes surrounded him and covered his skin with bites. Fighting at this time against the hideous itching, he gritted his teeth, clenched his fists, and simply sat as though mad. Several times he almost lost consciousness, but then unexpectedly he experienced a great enlightenment. (Yampolsky 1971b, 66)

In *Orategama Zokushū*, Hakuin again associates anger with enlightenment when he writes that the person who does not get angry “even when reviled” and who does not care “even if he is rejected” is a “torn rice bag, bloated from gorging himself on the swill of swine, an ignorant blind fool” (Yampolsky 1971b, 135). While this person without anger may mistakenly think his dispassion indicates an enlightened disavowal of the reality of the self, Hakuin points out that he is quite far from realizing *nirvana*'s no-self (135). Hakuin's portrayal of anger in these passages raises several questions: What is the nature of the relationship between Gudō's anger and his enlightenment? What kind of self is realized within this anger? And, how is Gudō's anger related to his embodiment?

We are likely familiar with one or more variants of the basic Buddhist idea that the unenlightened person and the enlightened person perceive reality differently from each other. The unenlightened person partakes in *samsara*, which is the cycle of daily repetitive existence that entails suffering, reincarnation, birth, and death. This person is committed to the existence of independent objects that persist through time, such as trees, pots, rocks, bodies, and selves. By contrast, the enlightened person experiences *nirvana* by attending to the interrelatedness, impermanence, indeterminacy, non-duality, and emptiness of all things. In other words, the enlightened person sees the individuations that divide reality into self-contained, persistent objects as illusions. Mahāyāna Buddhists like those of the Rinzai tradition believe that ultimately *nirvana* is *samsara*. This claim of identity avoids the hypocrisy of simultaneously advocating non-dual perception and positing a duality between ordinary life and enlightened life (Yampolsky 1971b, 75). Ethically speaking, it

also discourages students from believing that it is possible to transcend, and therefore withdraw from, worldly existence. However, in positing the identity of *nirvana* and *samsara*, Buddhist metaphysics encounters an ontological problem similar to the one generated by Lugones's ontological pluralism: How can reality be both unitary and plural at the same time? Unlike Lugones, Rinzai Buddhists address this problem by abandoning ontological pluralism in favor of an epistemological pluralism: *nirvana* and *samsara* are not two different realities, but are instead two different ways of engaging/perceiving one reality.

In contrast to other Buddhists, Rinzai Buddhists believe that all people are "originally enlightened" (Japanese: *hongaku*), but many are unable to "see into their own nature" (Japanese: *kenshō*), which is the indeterminate, relational, non-dual nature of reality (Yampolsky 1971b, 114). Thus, for Hakuin, enlightenment is not an uncommon state of mind that is attained through meditation; it is rather the interminable epistemological process of recognizing that you are not the self that you have come to believe you are. Hakuin repeatedly teaches that this recognition cannot be explained or transmitted, and that instead it is "just like knowing for yourself by drinking it whether the water is hot or cold" (145). This view of enlightenment not only highlights the role that embodied experience plays in reaching *nirvana*, but also emphasizes the Rinzai idea that there is no necessary causal connection between Zen teaching and practice and being enlightened. Rinzai Buddhists believe that enlightenment comes suddenly and spontaneously, as in Hakuin's many examples of people who experience enlightenment at the very moment of breaking a leg, cutting off an arm, being dehydrated by severe diarrhea, suffering from a spinal tumor, or being knocked on the head with a broom (Yampolsky 1971b, 65–67; Waddell 2001, 33–34).

Once a person first achieves non-dual perception, however, he must undertake "post-*satori* practice" in order to help him continually enact this enlightened way of perceiving in the face of considerable pressure to fall back into old habits of thinking dually (Waddell 2001, 48–62). Linji thus describes how "no-self" is realized within enlightenment: "He has neither form nor shape, neither root nor trunk; nor does he have a dwelling place; he is as lively as a fish leaping in the water, and performs his function in response to all situations. Only, the place of his functioning is not a locality" (Schloegl 1976, 30). This place of lively, spontaneous responsiveness is "no-place," because it is an indeterminate landscape that is fashioned by the coexistence of opposing ideas, words, and identities.⁷ Lacking determinate, individuated meanings, no-place is a place rich with epistemological possibilities, fluid and in motion, out of which a leaping fish could spring. Even though no-place is terrifying, because the continued existence of independent identities, including that of the self, finds no foothold, here we are "in a position to move in any direction" (Yampolsky 1971b, 59, 135).

When we better understand what Hakuin means by enlightenment, we are able to see that he is associating the kind of anger that is not attached to an individuated self (what, for brevity, we might term “self-less anger”) with the shift in perspective that is established through a person’s non-dual apprehension of reality, that is, through his inhabitation of no-place. In this respect, Gudō’s anger functions in much the same way that *koan* study does in the instruction of the Zen student. Examples of widely used *koans* in the Rinzai tradition include Hakuin’s famous *koan*, “Two hands clap and there is a sound, what is the sound of one hand?” and others, such as “What is your original face before your mother and father were born?”⁸ Because they embrace paradoxes, contradictions, and non sequiturs, *koans* frustrate intellectual, discursive thinking and, when pursued assiduously, can constitute an important break in the habit of committing to the dualistic, either/or ontologies that are entailed by the more conventional ways in which we use language. In addition, *koan* practice eschews the “retrospective reconstruction of reality” inherent in representational languages, concepts, and thoughts, and places the Zen student in the immediacy of the present moment (Kasulis 1981, 60). For this reason, enlightened understandings of *koans* are rarely given in analysis, but are instead *demonstrated* through shouting, hitting, grasping the master’s staff, and other activities. As instantiations of spontaneous responsiveness, improvisation, presentness, and openness to the flow of the world, these bodily orientations cut against the grain of dualistic logics and, as such, enact the student’s position at “no-place” that is both *nirvana* and *samsara*. Therefore, *koan* practice is best conceived as an expression of the non-dual perspective that is enlightenment, rather than as a cause of or a means to that enlightenment.

Like *koan* study, Gudō’s anger rejects dualistic thinking, either/or ontology, and the linguistic practices that are laced through both. In defiance of the slow-moving, meditative practices that Hakuin contemptuously refers to as “dead-sitting” or “silent illumination Zen,” Gudō’s anger, like a leaping fish, is a swift and present response that throbs with life and movement. As an embodied practice, Gudō’s anger is his letting go of his need to grasp the enlightened perspective through language and analysis. As such, Gudō’s anger is his demonstrated ability to move beyond *samsara* and its concomitant epistemological framework that sets the knower in opposition to the known. In this way, Gudō’s anger is his becoming involved in the experiential flow of the world and his perceiving, as the heat and mosquitoes mix his insides with the outside, the relationality of all things. Like a *koan*, his anger eats at the subject/object duality that is his skin. Gudō’s anger is the very incarnation of the lack of boundary between self and world; it is the place where the self is transformed and no-self is realized. Naked in the bamboo grove, Gudō becomes one with the world in the same sense that the Zen student “becomes one” with a par-

ticular *koan* and lets its non-dual perspective constitute his every activity (Yampolsky 1971b, 33–34).

The great insight that animates Hakuin’s account of self-less anger is that striving for the extirpation or suppression of our passions can sometimes heighten, rather than diminish, our capacities for dualistic thinking. This is why Hakuin tells us that “the very objects of the senses will be Zen meditation, and the five desires themselves will be the One Vehicle [that leads to seeing into one’s nature]” (Yampolsky 1971b, 36).⁹ Mindful of the identity of *nirvana* and *samsara*, Hakuin teaches that we must perceive the plurality and the unity, that is, the determinacy and indeterminacy, of experience at the same time. We best express our grasp of this whole and present reality within our everyday bodily practices, instead of through thoughts, language, or concepts that are seen as separable and temporally removed from experience. Self-less anger is thus a liberatory anger because, although it engages the same world that the unenlightened person engages, it does so in a non-dualistic way that is thoroughly incompatible with object-attachment, karmic bondage, and worldly suffering.

THE OPERATIVE VIEW OF ANGER

Having acquainted ourselves with Lugones’s and Hakuin’s accounts of anger and their respective ontologies, we are now well positioned to consider the epistemological mechanisms of these angers. Second-order anger is a knowing anger because it is a practical mode of traveling between cognitive frameworks, and hence it is a way of seeing the deep structures that constitute meanings and sense. Self-less anger is a knowing anger because it demonstrates, or embodies, being fully present in and mindful of the whole of reality, including those aspects of reality that exceed dualistic logics, languages, and actions. Although notably different in many respects, both angers are knowing experiences because they are insubordinate to conventional ways of being and thinking, and both angers are tied to transforming selves who come to know precisely because they engage fresh perspectives. In what follows, I suggest that thinking of these angers as perceptions that proceed in virtue of what Merleau-Ponty terms “operative intentionality” (1945/2002, xx, 158) can provide a more detailed description of their epistemological mechanisms.¹⁰ This in turn can help feminists explain *how* and *why* the angers of the oppressed are ways of knowing.

Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea that our minds’ directedness toward objects is a kind of mental state and instead claims that intentionality is, at base, an interactive, bodily process whereby meaningful perceptions of determinate objects emerge from indeterminate, ambiguous experience. Merleau-Ponty believes that intentionality arises because we are oriented toward a specific aspect of the world in a practical way; we are trying to accomplish something

like going for a walk, feeding ourselves, or communicating with another. The practical orientation that is entailed by our particular project, whatever it may be, is necessarily a taking up of a particular perspective with our bodies. In taking up this perspective with our bodies, we situate the intended aspect of the world against a certain background or “horizon” (Merleau-Ponty 1945/2002, 78, 117). Once this aspect is situated, “objects” such as a snake in the path, the drips of water from the faucet, or the frown of another become perceptible. When a determinate object has thus emerged, the dynamic process of creating its meaning then becomes “sedimented” as a result of maintaining our practical orientations over time and in virtue of the object’s capacity to cohere with the rest of our determinate, unified perceptions (150). Hence, we often forget that the object is a meaning that we negotiated through practical engagements that are situated by temporal, historical, social, cultural, and anatomical backgrounds, and so we experience the object as a thing-in-itself viewable from any perspective. However, we are not always able to sustain the perceptual constancy of an object. The snake that we perceived in the path turns out to be a coil of rope, the drips from the faucet are later identified as acorns falling on the tin roof, and another’s frown is soon recognized as an expression of pensive agreement. As our perceptions of Necker cubes and duck–rabbit pictures illustrate, reality is able to sustain multiple determinations and perspectives, although none can be sustained exhaustively and no two contradictory perspectives can be sustained at exactly the same time (36).

In contrast to our sedimented perceptions of physical objects, we should locate angry perceptions on the fluid, emergent side of Merleau-Ponty’s spectrum of intentionality. Unlike sedimented objects, thoughts, and words that possess definite boundaries, our angers are those original moments where meaning is *negotiated* (not discovered or created) through the coming-into-contact of body and world. Although other emotions and perceptions also involve meaning-negotiating activity, anger is distinctive due to the peculiar character of the activity that it involves. In particular, anger surfaces when there is a lack of fit between a certain bodily orientation (along with its concomitant cognitive perspective) and the world of sense within which this orientation/perspective is situated and framed. In the cases of second-order and self-less angers specifically, the lack of uptake is far more profound than that of other angers, because the bodily subjectivity of the angry person presents an overwhelming challenge to the logic and sensibility of its situating world of sense. Fueled by the implausibility of reconciliation between self and world, these angers separate the angry person’s experience of reality from her available frameworks for understanding that reality; they are *borderland perceptions*, where no one framework of meaning is able to get a foothold in sensibility at the expense of any another. Second-order and self-less angers thus lead us to negotiate new worlds of sense, new senses of self, or both.

Just as the operative character of perception best reveals itself when unified perceptions break down, as is the case with the experimental conditions and illnesses that Merleau-Ponty so frequently describes, second-order and self-less angers surface most easily in oppressive situations where the very subjectivity of the angry person contradicts the official world of sense. For example, the queer mestiza speaks English at school, or else she is rapped on the knuckles with a sharp ruler (Anzaldúa 1987/1999, 75). In this instance, the mestiza's way of moving her mouth, pronouncing her own name, and conceptualizing her own identity when speaking Spanish receive no uptake from the "American" world of sense. The queer mestiza's anger at this incompatibility is her experiencing the irresolvable tension between who she is and what the official world of sense will allow. Likewise, when the Zen master redirects the bodily orientation of his students with shouts and beatings, the master calls the student to be fully present in his body; he helps his student to *feel* the tension between his experience of reality as interrelated and impermanent (his experience of no-self) and the frameworks that the student possesses for describing and understanding that reality. Located in the limen and no-place, these angers grope around in the dark to find alternate compartments and subversive, bodily perspectives from which to better see, resist, and thrive. This feature of our angers explains why angers usually feel urgent and preoccupying: they are our struggles to make determinate what is unsettling and has yet to be decided.

The operative view of anger described above explains *how*, that is, by what process, our angers constitute ways of knowing, and thus it also helps us to see *why* we should think of our angers as fundamentally epistemological in nature. As experiences of disharmonies between our bodily orientations and the uptake they receive from their situating world of sense, our angers are our *realizations* of these dissonances, in the double senses of "realization" as "awareness" and "instantiation." Our angers thus demonstrate what we know when we attend to the tension and slack of those intentional threads that embed our practices within a world. As operative cognitions, these angers are fluid and structurally open enough to account for those aspects of reality that are multiple, complex, and indeterminate. And, because they are contemporaneous with what they seek to illuminate, angry cognitions do not risk distortion by being temporally removed from the experiences of reality that they intend. Moreover, the mechanisms of our angers centrally involve the epistemologically valuable skills of openness to surprise, inquisitiveness, responsiveness, body-trust, playfulness, experimentation, improvisation, and creativity.

We should not, however, misconstrue our angers to be mere causes of knowledge or mere dispositions to acquire knowledge. In taking up the practical struggles inherent in making sense of a self who overflows the boundaries of her situating framework, our angers embody the knowing that is formed by being in touch with reality, fully present and attuned to its constitutive rela-

tionships. While all of our angers are ways of knowing in this respect, second-order and self-less angers are *doubly* epistemological in nature because they specifically intend the deep structures of reality. In virtue of their ability to travel between worlds of sense, these angers function on a meta-epistemological level as witnessing players in the relational interactions that build objects and conceptual frameworks in tandem with one another. The angry self's inhabitation of these liminal locations re-orient her practical perspective and thus effects a radical epistemic shift in her perception. There is, quite literally, a *world* of difference between thinking of objects, people, and meanings as already determined and amenable to dualistic thinking, and thinking of them as negotiable, in-process, and always partially in excess of any retrospective reconstruction of them.

Let us now consider how this operative view of anger can bolster many of the claims articulated in contemporary feminist analyses of anger. According to the operative view, our angers realize the lack of fit between a practical orientation and a world of sense, and consequently expose the world of sense in question. As such, first-order and second-order angers expose the harmfulness and hypocrisy of the oppressive structures that work on us and the wrongs that have been done to us within the limits of a particular world of sense. In addition, the active, practical orientations that our angers entail fully express our obvious claims to agency and self-worth, even if our situating world of sense does not acknowledge these claims. We can also see why oppressed people would be especially prone to the practical struggles that constitute our angers: in a society where members of certain groups are thought to lack agency and respectability, most of the practices that these individuals undertake as *active subjects* will be out of sync with the society's established cognitive frameworks. Hence, the operative view can help to strengthen feminist views like Narayan's that associate the emotionality of the oppressed with an epistemic privilege in regard to the nature of oppression (Narayan 1988). Finally, Lorde's and Lugones's claims that within our angers we know revolutionary strategies for enacting liberatory languages, selves, and existences are easily accommodated by the operative view. Since the dissonance between a person's subjectivity and its world of sense is so profound that a reconciliation of the two is not pursued, the practical struggles involved in second-order and self-less angers entail traveling to places of possibility that are without structure and between worlds of sense.

COMPARING ANGERS

The comparative methodology that informs my articulation of the epistemology of anger presented here is one that practices this very epistemology. The philosophical juxtaposition of Lugones and Hakuin is itself a journeying to an

in-between space that is crisscrossed by many borders: East/West, North/South, man/woman, self/other, teacher/student, past/present, fact/value, mind/body, theory/practice, politics/spirituality, and reason/emotion. As such, this methodology, which is aptly termed “feminist comparative philosophy,” demonstrates the spatiality of second-order and self-less angers by insubordinately trekking through undisciplined, epistemologically fertile places. Feminist comparative philosophy is the practice of integrating feminist and non-Western philosophical traditions in an innovative way, while still being mindful of the unique particularity of each, in order to envision and enact a more liberatory world.¹¹ Recognizing the incompatibility of her specialized disciplinary training and the diversity of human experiences, the feminist comparative philosopher takes up the project of re-negotiating the philosophical structures of meaning, sense, and approbation that encapsulate her expression in order to make collective liberation possible.

There are abundant advantages to using feminist comparative methodologies when theorizing, not the least of which is that they emphasize the culturally dependent nature of ideas in a central way. Moreover, when resisting established logics, views, and disciplines, there is strength and strategy to be found in the diverse numbers entailed by unconventional coalitions. For example, exposing parallels between Lugones’s and Hakuin’s philosophies renders us less able to dismiss each in turn as “extremist,” incomprehensible, or outrageously religious or political. These important similarities include the beliefs that there is more than one way to know reality; that worldly suffering is tied to dualistic, individuating ways of knowing that are temporally removed from experience; that the self is acutely habituated to this either/or way of knowing and being; that the self can be liberated from this habituation by assuming unconventional, or insubordinate, practical orientations; and that the place of self-transformation is precarious and indeterminate, yet also the ground of hope and change. However, once put into conversation, it is the differences (both subtle and incommensurable) between these philosophies that spur our imaginations and push us further in our theoretical understandings. The in-between self of Latina feminism is not Zen Buddhism’s “no-self,” the limen of the borderlands is not *kenshō*’s no-place, forward-looking anger is not a self-less anger that is entirely within the present moment, “liberation” and “suffering” do not possess identical meanings in both contexts, and receiving “compassionate beatings” from a Zen master is *not at all* comparable to being beaten in the context of domestic abuse.

Situated by the juxtaposition of Lugones and Hakuin, we are not only able to see how the angers of the oppressed are ways of knowing, but we are also better able to maneuver the impasse that is suggested by the ontologically problematic nature of ambiguous subjectivities. As we observed earlier, Lugones’s philosophy is ontologically problematic because it claims *both* that a

person is a multiplicity of distinct selves, each of whom inhabits a different world, *and* that there is something that recognizes this plurality of selves as “me” and allows worlds to intersect spatially and temporally. Hakuin’s Buddhist account of anger provides us with an important key to this feminist problem because it indicates that by changing our habitual, bodily orientations, we can learn to be fully present to the non-dual, ambiguous aspects of reality, and thus we can learn to perceive the world differently. When we juxtapose the enlightened and unenlightened selves of Buddhism with Lugones’s resistant and oppressed selves, we are led to construe a self as a *system* of internally coherent, practical, bodily orientations.¹² Given this notion of “self,” it seems perfectly permissible to conceive of a person as having more than one self and as possibly having selves who are different from and contradictory to one another. On this view, opening and closing a jar, for example, would not illustrate a shift in selves even though they are opposing *practices*; both movements are part of the same *system* of practical orientations that includes the possibilities of my eating food from, storing pennies in, or otherwise using the jar. However, the oppressed self is different from the resistant self because carrying out the actions of a subordinate person involves engaging the body in a system of orientations (e.g., comportments of deference, surrender, invisibility, and so on) that are exactly contrary to the system that sustains liberatory actions. We can then rely on Merleau-Ponty’s theory of perception to help us understand how habitually engaging different systems of practical orientations actually constructs different, determinate worlds for us out of indeterminate, ambiguous experience. By conceiving of selves as *essentially* embodied, we move beyond Lugones’s ontological impasse: systems of practical orientations do create different selves and different worlds, but these distinct entities are connected through our bodies, which are those liminal spaces where our experiences of reality first get paired with a perspective, that is, with a framework for understanding that reality. Since our emotions are our primary ways of being present in our bodies, they are thus important ways of knowing the contours of what is real.

We have only just begun to explore the fruitfulness of the comparison between Lugones and Hakuin. Many more significant questions remain to be explored: Are “second-order” ways of knowing that take stock of the depth of reality always preferable to first-order ways of knowing? How should we choose among multiple or competing ways of knowing? How does the operative view of knowing support or complicate other epistemological theories, such as reliabilism, virtue epistemology, externalism, and epistemic contextualism? What kinds of forces, specifically, motivate us to assume one practical orientation rather than another? Are there contexts where the knowing that comes with anger could be antithetical to the angry person’s liberation and/or to collective liberation? Is the operative view of anger too dependent on suffering as a means to knowledge, transformation, and liberation?¹³ Which classical Buddhist problems can feminism speak to? And, does the inclusion of the Western,

canonically “legitimate” theories of Merleau-Ponty support or frustrate the feminist comparative methodology that guides this paper? Since feminist comparative philosophy cannot be sustained if it is practiced by only a few “undisciplined” thinkers, I leave these and other questions as urgent, reassuring invitations to engage in feminist comparative projects.

IMAGES OF ANGER

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject–object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended.

—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Keeping your tongues still and lips closed, how will you speak?

—Pai-chang’s *koan* from the *Pi-yen lu*

I have been angry all of my life, but only this year—my thirtieth year—have I really begun to experience second-order anger. When I ask myself what this anger is about, three vivid images come to mind. Lacking the bodily proximity to shock you with the thunder of the Zen Master’s shout, I speak the truth with images instead.

I am in my early teens and I have just arrived at a remote and uninhabited cay near the barrier reef off the southern coast of Belize. As I begin walking up the beach, the far horizon of the ocean water catches my eye. I see nothing determinate, but cannot avert my gaze from this one place in the water. Soon I recognize something black, but do not recognize it as anything I know. Is it driftwood, seaweed, or a surfacing fin? I still cannot place the thing, but now I know it is headed straight for me. I move out of its path and it likewise adjusts its direction to move to me. Now I can see the frenzied motion of a living thing. As it reaches the shore nearly ten feet from where I am standing, I realize what it is: a giant serpent—a boa constrictor—swimming in from some other, faraway island. It races up the beach with fluid, rhythmic movements just as I step out of its path. I stay a long time with the circular caverns that its body leaves in the sand.

It is years later and I am in graduate school taking a course on post-colonial women writers. I read June Jordan’s “Report from the Bahamas” for the first time and one of my selves who has never spoken before begins to speak. When Jordan’s writing offers me the image of Cathy (an Irish student) and Sokutu (a black South African woman) embracing each other, walking as sisters walk, whispering and sure of each other in their shared knowledge of alcoholism and domestic abuse, I start to see two different worlds of sense. The first world is the world of the academy, where I am white, privileged, serious, solitary, and well-spoken. Here I am a teacher, a colleague, and a mature adult. This is a world where I interpret every awful thing that has happened to me as bad luck or my

fault. This is also a world where nothing awful that has happened to me has ever affected me. I have proven that to myself in this world by being extremely successful at everything I do. This success proves to me that I have transcended my other world. It also proves my subordination.

The second world is the world of an Irish neighborhood on Boston's South Shore. It is a world of mechanics, carpenters, Vietnam vets, and working moms who are *always* nurses. Here I am someone who is 100% Irish before, or rather in place of, being white. Here I am Jenny McWeeny, a lively and loud, social self with a strong lower-class accent who swears and uses local language all the time, and who is indifferent to rules, restrictions, and discipline on her expression. Even in her least lively moments, this self has been called inappropriate, intense, over-excited, lacking in manners and etiquette, and uneducated by people in the first world. Even when her intensity revolves around a zest for living, as it does the majority of the time, her intensity is an affront to first-world people; it makes them squirm and self-identify as peaceful people who know how to "pick their battles." These are the things they say to discipline her. Luckily, my insubordinate self does not hear them.

This second world is a world where poverty, childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and alcoholism affect everyone. In this world, I am a man-self who survives through toughness, alcohol, athleticism, and education. Female subjectivity has always been unthinkable to me in this place. This unthinkability of the woman-self closes off options of having children and participating in feminine activities that I like such as cooking and sewing, and closes off options for many kinds of love and sex. And yet, I am a woman man-self here.

It is again even more years later. I am watching Martin Scorsese's film *The Departed* in order to clear my head and take a break from writing this essay. The film is about Irish organized crime in South Boston, and about the undercover people who move between this Irish criminal world and the world of the Boston State Police, who are also Irish. As I watch, I become nostalgic for the insubordinate self of this second world who is always ignored by my subordinate, academic self. In one scene, I watch Officer Dignam express the incommensurability between my two worlds as he reprimands his police trainee, Billy Costigan, with that familiar Boston-Irish style of speech—a speech that is intent on pushing the limits of yourself and another, on heightening the intensity of emotion, on privileging experience and presentness, rather than fidelity to the past. When his parents got divorced, Billy left Southie for Boston's wealthier and less-Irish North Shore where he attended private school and scored 1400 on his SAT's. Officer Dignam thinks that Billy has no right to return to the Irish world of the Boston State Police. His speech jabs at Billy as he says,

Fuckin' family's dug into the Southie projects like ticks, three-decker men at best. You, however, grew up on the North Shore,

well la-di-fuckin'-da. You were kind of a double-kid, I bet, right. Huh? One kid with your old man, one kid with your mother. You're upper-middle class during the weeks, then you're drop-pin' your "R's" and you're hangin' in the big bad Southie projects with your Daddy the fuckin' donkey on the weekends. I got that right? Yup. You have different accents? You did, didn't ya? You little fuckin' snake! You were like two different people!¹⁴

When I hear them, these words go right to the heart of me, exposing the warring divide between two of my most prominent selves. They help me to recognize the quick and swift discipline that I receive whenever I bring one self into the world of the other.

These three images give way to a final image. This is the image of my second-order anger. Having always imagined that I slithered unscathed through a space in the fence of rotting wood and rusty metal that separates my two worlds, I am surprised to find myself here, not like the glistening and vibrant serpent who crossed the ocean.¹⁵ I can now feel the lengthy wound that this fence of assault, abuse, alcoholism, and generations of colonization must have cut into the side of my body as I oscillated through it. Some of my organs are exposed; I still move and the wound is not fatal, but I feel everything in my body. And there is something else; when I passed between the fence, I stopped shedding my skin. But it still grows, of course. And so I am wrapped in a cocoon of decaying organic matter, with the organs tumbling out of my side. From the outside, it must be hard to see that I have a vibrant and lively body capable of making circular caverns in the sand. This is what my second-order anger is about. Marked by both worlds, and finally feeling these marks together, I rest quietly at the side of the fence, overheating in this cocoon of organic matter, shifting into a position where I can tolerate the pain in my left side. I am no longer angry about things that have happened in either of my two worlds. My anger is thus a roaring opening to a new world that is not yet determinate, that allows me to participate in meaning-making, that allows me to writhe my body up against it and to feel. This is the world that I will spring out of, brisk and lively, like a leaping fish. This is the world with a knowing that coexists with my dance.

NOTES

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Annual Roundtable on Latina Feminism in Cleveland, Ohio (April 2007) and at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Asian and Comparative Philosophy in Pacific Grove, California (June 2007).

1. Although the feminist philosophers mentioned above do associate *particular* kinds of anger with knowing experience, many hesitate to make the stronger claim that *all* angers are epistemic all of the time. For example, see Lorde 1984a, 152, and Lugones 2003, 105.

2. Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768) is one of Japan's greatest Zen Masters. He is most famous for his innovative reforms of Zen practice, which led to a widespread reversal in the decline of the Zen movement that occurred during Japan's medieval period. His best known achievements include developing a way to formalize *koan* practice within the Zen curriculum and bringing Zen to the masses through his insistence that Zen be practiced by people from all ranks of society. For a historical account of Hakuin's life and ideas, see Dumoulin 2005, 367–99.

3. The phrase “different take” comes from Ortega 2001, 11.

4. I am grateful to Graham Parkes for Parkes 1995, which introduced me to Hakuin's unorthodox theory of the emotions and sparked my initial interest in Rinzai Zen.

5. For excellent discussions of the place of anger in the wider tradition of Buddhism, see Goodman 2002, 366–68, and Vernezze 2008. See also Hershock 2003 for a thorough discussion of the role of emotion in Buddhism.

6. Gudō Toshōku (1579–1661) was a Zen priest of the Rinzai tradition whose lineage of Zen heirs can be traced directly to Hakuin (Yampolsky 1971a, 12).

7. The phrase “no-place” is used in Ruth F. Sasaki's translation of this passage in place of Schloegl's “not a locality” (Sasaki 1975, 15). See also Parkes's commentary on this passage (Parkes 1995, 222).

8. I cite G. Victor Sōgen Hori's translations of these popular *koans* (Hori 2000, 289–90).

9. I follow Parkes in adding what is contained in the brackets here (Parkes 1995, 224).

10. Although perceptual theories of emotion are not yet widespread in emotions theory, they have come to greater prominence in recent years. See, for example, Cataldi 1993, Mazis 1993, Charland 1996, Döring 2003, and Prinz 2004. In contrast to my view, however, most of these theories understand perception as a fundamentally representational, rather than practical, affair. Cataldi's and Mazis's theories are exceptions to this trend.

11. I created this definition jointly with Ashby Butnor. Importantly, this wording should not be interpreted as suggesting a mutually exclusive dichotomy between feminist and non-Western traditions. On the contrary, exposing the fluidity of these boundaries is an integral part of the practice of feminist comparative philosophy.

12. This idea is implicated in Lugones's work through her emphases on embodiment and praxis. See especially her essay “Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker/ *Estrategias Tácticas de la Callejera*” in Lugones 2003, 207–37.

13. I am grateful to Dianna Taylor for first posing this last question to me.

14. I read these words in an authentic Boston-Irish accent when I presented a version of this paper at the Second Annual Roundtable on Latina Feminism. I was thus able to *demonstrate* a shift between selves for the audience.

15. After having created this image, I realized that it closely parallels one of Anzaldúa's (see 1987/1999, 23–25). I had no knowledge of this similarity while I was writing and, at the time, had read *Borderlands/La Frontera* only once, more than six years before. This convergence is testimony to how important images of decolonization are to feminist movement.

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