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Gendered Failures in Extrinsic Emotional Regulation; Or, Why Telling a Woman to “Relax” or a Young Boy to “Stop Crying Like a Girl” Is Not a Good Idea

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ABSTRACT I argue that gendered stereotypes, gendered emotions and attitudes, and display rules can influence extrinsic regulation stages, making failure points likely to occur in gendered-context and for reasons that the emotion regulation literature has not given adequate attention to. As a result, I argue for ‘feminist emotional intelligence’ as a way to help escape these failures. Feminist emotional intelligence, on my view, is a nonideal ability-based approach that equips a person to effectively reason about emotions through an intersectional lens and use emotions to inform how we think and react to the world. This includes being attuned to the ways in which the world and our emotional lives are structured by and favors men. It stresses the need to be attuned to, as well as resist and challenge gender-based stereotypes and attitudes around emotions, paying close attention to the ways those stereotypes, norms, and attitudes differ across race, class, ethnicity, et cetera.

INTRODUCTION

In their 2019 work, Yuki Nozaki and Moira Mikolajczak argue that although most scholarly literature on emotional regulation (ER) focuses on intrinsic emotional regulation, research is needed for extrinsic emotional regulation. They then engage in the latter project by laying out a model of processes at which extrinsic emotional regulation occurs, highlighting the failure points that emotion regulators can hit along the way. Although the authors use two unidentified individuals as examples to highlight the processes and failure points of extrinsic ER, I’ll argue that the make-up of these particular identities are important because social identities and social context help explain why certain failures often arise in extrinsic ER stages—explanations that are not provided by Nozaki and Mikolajczak or central in other accounts of emotional regulation. I’ll argue that these failure points are influenced by social factors such as gender. This can also explain why well-intentioned strategies that could influence regulatees’ emotions are not given uptake but are often resisted by them through

additional emotions and attitudes. I'll then argue for, what I refer to as, 'feminist emotional intelligence' as a way to help escape these failures.

I begin first in section 1 by describing emotional regulation, paying close attention to the identification, selection, and implementation stages of extrinsic ER as well as the failure points that can arise at each stage. I then explore in section 2 the ways in which gender can influence what occurs in these stages as well as the failure points that can arise, particularly, as a result of gendered emotions and attitudes, stereotypes, and emotion display rules. In section 3 I provide an account of feminist emotional intelligence. I describe how it differs from emotional intelligence and can help regulators escape the failure points described in section 2.

I. FEATURES, STAGES, AND FAILURES OF EXTRINSIC ER

The process of emotional regulation is concerned with regulating or controlling emotions. However, there are two ways in which this can be done: intrinsically and extrinsically. Intrinsic emotional regulation focuses on how the person experiencing the emotion (regulatee) can shape how they themselves experience or express it. Techniques that are often employed to aid in anger management, for example, often focus on intrinsic emotional regulation. Regulatees are often encouraged to leave the situation, engage in a creative project, play a sport, write their feelings down, or join a protest. When the ancient stoic Seneca recommends people to avoid certain professions that may arouse anger or avoid being hungry or tired (since these can lead people to be angry), he was recommending intrinsic emotional regulation.

But there is also extrinsic emotional regulation. Extrinsic emotional regulation occurs when a person (regulator) attempts to regulate another person's emotions. Techniques may include getting someone to look at the bright side, telling them to breathe, or encouraging them to attend a party in order to cheer them up. Extrinsic emotional regulation is also found in the ancient tradition. When Greek physician and philosopher Galen in his essay "On the Diagnosis and Care of the Passions of the Soul" describes in great detail the role of the moral critic for those who are angry, he is pointing to extrinsic emotional regulation (Galen 1963). The critic, for Galen, is not someone who is dear to us but someone who is wise, disciplined, and not prone to flattery. This critic is supposed to point out when you are angry. Galen's moral critic also helps us to see how intrinsic and extrinsic ER can combine. According to Galen, the angry person is to check in with the critic constantly to see if the critic recognizes anger in him. It is important that critics are truth-tellers and are not prone to flattery because the potentially angry person needs the truth. Once this critic corrects the angry person, he is to receive it with gratitude. This will make it possible for others to be willing to correct him too. This correction is what will free the person from the harms of anger (5.5–8).¹

Extrinsic emotional regulation—defined as “an action performed with the goal of influencing another person's emotion trajectory; [with the] ... aim to decrease or increase either negative emotion or positive emotion”—has three features, according to Nozaki

¹ See also Galen 6.10, 6.12, 6.13.

and Mikolajczak, that distinguishes it from other constructs. The three features include (1) The regulator must have the goal of influencing another person's emotion trajectory; (2) An extrinsic ER goal can either decrease or increase negative or positive emotions; and (3) The regulator must take action to influence the regulatee's emotion trajectory based on the extrinsic ER goal (2019, 3–6). The authors then lay out an extended process model of extrinsic ER that includes certain stages, along with failure points that can occur in each stage.

In the *identification stage*, a person perceives that a person (a friend for example) is experiencing an emotion and evaluates whether the emotion needs to be regulated. If they decide that it does, they then activate a goal that can help the friend. If I perceive that you are sad and you are sad because your job application was rejected, I then evaluate the need to calm you down and I activate the extrinsic goal of cheering you up. This goal will then trigger the *selection stage*. In this stage, I think of a variety of strategies that could influence your sad emotion. I also evaluate the cost and benefits of implementing a particular strategy and determine which strategy should be used. In other words, I think about the ways in which I can cheer you up. Perhaps I could tell a joke, take you to a party, give you that gift you've always wanted, or gossip about the organization that rejected you. In this stage, I weigh the costs and benefits of each. This then triggers the *implementation stage*. In the implementation stage, I execute a particular strategy such as telling a joke.

Things do not always go perfect in these stages. Nozaki and Mikolajczak provide failure points that can occur in each stage. For example, I can perceive an inaccurate emotion in the identification stage. I may think you are sad when you are actually indifferent. I can also have an inappropriate ER goal in this stage. I may think you need to let go of your sadness, when you actually need to embrace it. In the selection stage, I may choose an unsuitable strategy. I may take you to a party that I know employees of the organization will attend. Or I may give you a gift that reminds you of the job opportunity that was not offered to you. In the implementation stage, I may give up too quickly. When telling a joke that doesn't work, I may decide to stop trying to help you regulate your emotions all together.

The examples I have provided of you and I are quite vague. Nozaki and Mikolajczak uses the term 'partners' to provide examples of how the stages and failures above play out. We do not know in either case, the class, race, or gender of *both* the regulator and the regulatee. However, I shall argue that if we look much closer at their identities as well as the social context in which they find themselves, the identities and context will provide us with other reasons for why these failure points can and often occur at the identification, selection, and implementation stages. In section 2, I will explain how gender can influence the aforementioned failure points.

I will mainly address how failure points arise when the regulator is a man and the regulatee is a woman. However, this is not to imply that only men can fail at these stages. Because women can also hold gendered stereotypes, give in to gendered norms, as well as enforce patriarchy, they too can hit these failure points. However, because we live in a patriarchal society (a society that is structured by and favors men) I will explain how emotional regulation in this social context affects women in unique ways when men are regulators. Also, we should not think that only women will be regulatees in such a context. Because there are gendered emotional norms that affect men and

boys, regulators will also encounter failures influenced by gender when regulatees are men and boys.

II. WHY GENDER MATTERS

In this section I shall argue that failure points that arise in the extrinsic ER stages can be influenced by gender. Thus, within a gendered context, we have extra reasons to be cautious throughout the stages. The gendered influence on these failure points may also explain why there is often lack of uptake and resistance by regulatees when certain extrinsic ER strategies are used. I will proceed first by explaining the relationship between gender and emotion, paying particular attention to gendered stereotypes, gendered emotions, and emotion display rules. I will then apply this to failure points in extrinsic ER stages.

There are stereotypes as it relates to gender and emotions. For example, many believe that women are more emotional than men. However, research shows that when men and women actually self-report their individual emotional life, there are no sex differences. The emotions that people think women experience more of are gender-specific. Women are thought to experience fear or sadness more than men (Brody and Hall 2008). And to be fearful is viewed as ‘acting like a girl’. A male regulator who is influenced by these gendered stereotypes may inaccurately perceive the emotions of a woman regulatee. This may not be best explained by low emotional intelligence simpliciter as Nozaki and Mikolajczak claim. Rather, the inaccurate perception could be the result of unconscious or conscious gendered stereotypes.

These gendered stereotypes can influence failure points at several stages. Let’s begin with the identification stage. If a man stereotypically thinks a woman is more emotional at a particular time because she is a woman, he may then misperceive her emotions. He might think she is experiencing an emotion (e.g., sadness) or a particular level of emotion (e.g., high degrees of sadness)—not because she is in fact providing external reasons to him that would support the assumption but—because she is a woman, so she *must* be experiencing it. As a result, he may inaccurately identify the emotion due to the gendered stereotype.

A male regulator may also fail to accurately perceive the emotions of women because men are often more prone to read more negatively in the faces of women. For example, neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett (2016) analyzes what has been called *Resting Bitch Face* or RBF. She argues that although RBF is a neutral face (meaning that it does not express any emotion) it is often read as anger. Why do people read it as negative? Barrett explains that people use the gender of a woman to see more negativity in her face. And since women are often accused of acting bitchy, people are prone to interpret women’s neutral faces as displaying ‘bitchy adjacent emotions’ like anger, discontent, and disgust when those emotions are not there. RBF can influence failure points at the identification stage. A man may think that a woman with this neutral face is actually angry when she is not. In this way, he misidentifies her emotion. But RBF can also influence other stages.

If a man misinterprets a woman’s RBF as being an angry face, he may then judge that the situation does not warrant the anger. Since he now thinks that the emotion is unfitting, he may select a strategy that targets the inaccurate but now judged-to-be-

unfitting emotion. One of the most common strategies used in this instance—one that is as commonly expressed on the streets as it is in the workplace—is encouraging a woman to smile. Let’s call this the “smile, lady” expressive strategy. This expressive strategy is chosen in the *selection stage*. And it is chosen because the male regulator might see a woman displaying RBF and interpret it not as neutral but negative. This expressive strategy need not be chosen specifically for sexist or misogynistic ends in order to fail. The regulator could have intentions of making the woman feel better by flattering her. However, it is nonetheless a strategy that is influenced by gendered stereotypes. It can, thereby, result in the failure point of inappropriate strategies.

Women often report that when they are instructed to ‘smile, lady’ by men, they are not actually experiencing any negative emotions. In a recent survey of 500 women, 98 percent of them reported being told to smile at work. Fifteen percent noted the occurrence happens on a weekly basis. Most women are offended that their emotions are not only misread but misinterpreted in ways that are asymmetrical from the ways that men are (Byte 2019). They recognize that men’s faces are never read in ways that prompt instructions for them to smile. Most men may even be surprised by this offense. Once again, male regulators may have good intentions when resorting to this expressive strategy. However, they are unaware that their inaccurate emotion perception, influenced by gender stereotypes, can contribute to a lack of uptake by women since women often report being angry at the expressive strategy. Although they may not have been angry before, the expressive strategy provides reasons for them to be angry now. This explains why some women report to either not smiling or (as a way to escape punishment) prompting a fake smile but still being offended nonetheless.

However, even if a man’s perception of the emotion is correct, telling a woman to smile could still cause offense for several reasons. First, a strategy like expressive suppression is often made in the command sense. Women are not being *asked* to smile or cheer up. They are being *commanded* to do so. This can provide reasons for offense. If misogyny is the “law enforcement branch of a patriarchal order, which has the overall function of policing and enforcing its governing norms and expectations” as philosopher Kate Manne argues, then telling a woman to smile can be heard as a ‘patriarchal police order’ of sorts (2018, 78). It can communicate that women *should* smile and they should smile—instead of experience the perceived negative emotion—because (as many have documented) happy and pretty women are believed to exist for the male gaze. It is not surprising that women who report being told to smile often feel a lack of control over their own presentation (Schwantes 2019). The command, no matter how accurate, can make women feel that their bodily presentation is not within their control but rather in the hands of men who make the command. This explains why some women do not obey the command, ignore it, or express displeasure at the suggestion.

Women also report of not only being told to smile but to also relax. This is another example of a common gendered expressive suppression strategy as well as, I will argue, an inappropriate strategy chosen in the selection stage. This kind of strategy falls under the broad category of response modulation. However, as Nozaki and Mikolajczak mention, expressive suppression strategies in general are likely to be ineffective. The authors suggest instead that regulators use more empathetic regulation modulation strategies such as telling the regulatee that they understand how she feels instead of telling her what not to feel. But there are specific reasons why an expressive suppression

directive like ‘relax’ is ineffective, often directed at women, and resisted by women. These reasons are worth exploring.

First, similar to the ‘smile, lady’ expressive strategy, relax is also a command. For the reasons I cite above, commands of these types make women feel that their bodies and emotions are not within their control. These commands are often heard as policing and enforcing mechanisms for women to stay in their place in a patriarchal society. Also, commanding a woman to relax tells her what to do and does not allow her to respond to reasons to modulate her emotional response. The former option is not only misogynistic but it minimizes the autonomy of a woman regulatee. The latter option, however, allows her to express her autonomy.

Women report to being told to relax when they are expressing their opinions passionately or advocating for themselves in ways that may express anger, for example. Why are women often the targets of this strategy? If women are perceived as irrational because they are women (more on this below), then when they express certain emotions they will be perceived as having no rational (or moral) ground to have them. They will be accused of overreacting. In addition, due to the stereotype that women are irrational, women’s ‘passionate’ arguments will also be perceived as irrational too. When a woman’s claims are difficult to attack on rational grounds, a male regulator may go for the easy target: her emotions—by telling her to relax. He does this instead of providing a counterargument for why her opinion should not be taken into consideration or why she is not deserving of a raise. Since stereotypes around women’s rationality and emotionality abound, she may *appear* to be a fitting target of the strategy.

‘Relax’ as an expressive suppression strategy also has a certain communicative force when conveyed to women. When the command is made, it can communicate blame on the person who is not relaxed as opposed to the wrongdoer whose actions may have ignited her emotional response. It can also communicate that she should stop objecting to something that she may indeed have a right to object (Doll 2018).

The strategy is often met with the response “I am relaxed.” This reply demonstrates the strategy’s lack of uptake by women. If a woman thinks she is not overreacting and, thus, does not need to calm down but she is still told to stop overreacting, then she will have reasons to think her emotions and expressions are being misperceived and misunderstood. Realizing that a person has failed to recognize and understand your emotions can be disappointing. But it can also be cause for offense if you think the regulator has the misperception because you are a woman.

One might object that this all complicates rules for who can practice extrinsic emotional regulation. Here, an interlocutor might point out that if what we say to others could be gendered in offensive ways, should men even engage in the project of trying to help women regulate their emotions? Perhaps this should only be left up to women.

I do not think this should be the solution. As I mention at the end of section 1, men are not the only ones who can fail during these stages. Inappropriate strategies can also be employed by women regulators to women and men regulatees. More importantly, we are in different relationships with others across gendered lines. Since extrinsic ER can be viewed as a way of providing care or helping others, we should not leave this job up to women nor should we deny men the opportunity to express this care to women. While I understand the worry, I think we should look at the nature of these

commands and what they in fact communicate a little more. The command to smile is not a command to feel a particular emotion. The ‘smile, lady’ expressive strategy seems to be more concerned with *presenting* an emotion rather than actually experiencing it. One might wonder then, why this presentation is so important. The woman herself cannot see the smile. We can reasonably conclude, therefore, that the presentation is for those who look at her and not for herself, thus her resistance to the suggestion. But this need not be the case. There are other strategies that the male regulator can employ that can escape these failures.

The existence of display rules can also impact failure points in ER goal setting within the identification stage. ER goal setting occurs when the regulator considers what goal to achieve in response to the emotion perception. Inappropriate ER goal setting occurs when the regulator does not properly consider the costs and benefits of maintaining versus regulating the emotion of a woman. Since there are gendered norms around emotions, a male regulator evaluating whether a woman should maintain or regulate her emotions may be skewed by these emotional gendered norms.

When we view certain emotions as acceptable for one gender but not acceptable for others, we have encountered gendered emotions. In US culture for example, women are expected to feel sadness and fear. And are often rewarded with understanding and security as a result. However, men are not expected to display sadness or fear. When they do, they are often punished with accusations of weakness. Therefore, women are more free to display or express sadness and fear, while men are not.

Men are expected to feel anger. And they are often rewarded with understanding as a result. However, women are not expected to display anger. When they do, they are often punished with accusations of being a bitch or too aggressive. Therefore, men are more free to display or express their anger, while women are not. An example of this latter analogy is found in US law. Heat-of-passion defenses are applied differently to men than women. When Robert Elliot was convicted for killing his brother, the Supreme Court of Connecticut overturned his sentence by citing Elliot’s “intense feelings” that overwhelmed his intrinsic emotional regulation. On the other hand, when African American female defendant Jean Banks killed her partner after years of abuse at his hand and in self-defense, she was convicted of second-degree murder. As Barrett writes:

Anger is stereotypically normal for men because they are supposed to be aggressors. Women are supposed to be victims, and good victims shouldn’t become angry; they’re supposed to be afraid. Women are punished for expressing anger—they lose respect, pay, and perhaps even their jobs.... When people perceive emotion in a man, they usually attribute it to his situation, but when they perceive emotion in a woman, they connect it to her personality. She’s a bitch, but he’s just having a bad day. (2017, 227–28)

If she is not perceived as a bitch when she is angry, there is the risk in the *identification stage* that a woman will be perceived as crazy. As I use the term, ‘crazy’ refers to an emotional state in which the regulatee, according to the regulator, is experiencing an unfit emotion. In the case of anger, perhaps it is thought that the unjust event did not happen. Perhaps the situation does not fit the emotional state. Maybe it is thought that given the circumstances, the regulatee should experience disappointment but not anger.

Based on this perception, a male regulator may reason that the former is apparent to rational others but not apparent to the regulatee because she is irrational. On this view, her emotions are too intense for her to reflect on reasons or for her to be open to revising her judgments of the event so that her emotions can be managed. And this occurs because she is a woman and women are by nature irrational or more irrational than men. This makes women extremely vulnerable to the crazy perception—an inaccurate perception that occurs in the identification stage of extrinsic ER.

The crazy, irrational stereotype can also influence failure points in the *implementation stage*. When a man fails to help a woman regulate her emotions, he may stop after the first attempt and blame his failure on the woman's 'natural' irrational state. And this failure will be thought not to occur because of an error on his part, but because the woman is crazy. She, thus, lacks the ability to respond to any reasonable strategy and this may be thought to justify the failure of unachieved implementation.

But there is another gendered source of the failure point of unachieved implementation. Nozaki and Mikolajczak note that the unachieved implementation can occur due to a lack of confidence in implementing the strategy. A person might not be confident that encouraging the sad friend to go to a party will actually work. And this may affect their performance in persuading the friend to attend. The authors then suggest that higher confidence is likely to prevent failure at this stage. They also claim that higher confidence will be found in those with higher emotional intelligence. I do not think that this is necessarily so. Higher confidence may be found in those—not with higher emotional intelligence but—who are conditioned to have higher confidence given their gender. This higher confidence usually transitions to overconfidence. As I will argue in section 3, this is evidence of low feminist emotional intelligence, not high emotional intelligence. But let's briefly explore how overconfidence is influenced by gender and how such overconfidence can contribute to the failure point of unachieved implementation.

Just as emotions are gendered, so are attitudes. Men are generally more overconfident than women. Research shows that women are not less confident than men. Rather they are less overconfident than men (Cho 2017). This is due to gender socialization. Men and boys are often conditioned to think they are smarter and they have a tendency to unconsciously inflate their performance (Reuben, Sapienza, and Zingales 2019). Given this socialization, it is likely that a male regulator might think his strategies should and will always work when used with women regulatees. With this attitude, they may be resistant to accepting that their strategies—when implemented—are actually not effective since accepting this fact may expose them to the fact that they had no rational reason to be overconfident. They are, as a result, likely to give up quickly in the implementation stage. This is not to suggest that this kind of failure point can only occur in relation to female regulatees. The male regulator might also be overconfident when dealing with male regulatees too. However, the woman case is distinct for two reasons: (1) The male regulator, due to socialization, may think that he is smarter than the woman because he is male and this gives him extra reasons to be overconfident; and (2) Due to the perception of women as irrational, he might maintain his confidence and blame his failure on her being 'crazy'.

In sum, extrinsic ER has three stages: identification, selection, and implementation. According to this model, a regulator first perceives an emotion of a regulatee and

evaluates if it needs to be regulated. If it does, the regulator activates a goal that can help the regulatee and then selects a strategy. The regulator then implements that strategy. But there are failure points that can occur along the way such as inaccurate emotion perception in the identification stage, unsuitable strategy choice in the selection stage, and unachieved implementation in the implementation stage. However, I have shown how gendered stereotypes, gendered emotions and attitudes, and display rules can influence these regulation stages, making the failure points likely to occur in gendered-contexts and for reasons that the emotion regulation literature has not given adequate attention to. However, as I will argue in what follows, regulators' failure fates are not sealed. There is something that regulators can do about it. I will suggest that regulators develop high feminist emotional intelligence.

III. FEMINIST EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

In this section I will argue that 'feminist emotional intelligence'—and not emotional intelligence, simpliciter—is a way to help prevent the failure points that I explore in section 2. I begin first by briefly explaining emotional intelligence. I then go on to provide an account of what I describe as 'feminist emotional intelligence' or FEI. I describe FEI as a nonideal ability-based approach that takes into account not only individual characteristics when responding to regulatees, but the gendered context that both regulatee and regulator live in. I will then go on to explain how feminist emotional intelligence can help regulators escape failure points that are influenced by gender.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence is the “ability to carry out accurate reasoning focused on emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought” (Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade 2008, 527). There are several theoretical approaches to the study of emotional intelligence (EI). Here, I will focus on the ability model since my account of feminist emotional intelligence will be theorized according to it. There are two general approaches within this ability model: specific-ability approach and integrative-model approach to emotional intelligence. I will briefly explain them in what follows, as well as their measurements and what results are able to predict.

According to the specific-ability approach there are specific skills that aid in emotional intelligence. Such skills include perceptual accuracy (e.g., particular nonverbal expressions such as facial expressions, postures, and tones), emotional facilitation (e.g., knowing how to include or exclude emotion to facilitate thought), emotional understanding (e.g., accurate appraisal of emotions and describing one's own feelings), and emotion management (e.g., having emotional self-control). On this approach, EI is assessed by measuring the ability to recognize facial expressions or describe one's feelings.

According to the integrative approach, EI is based on the joining of abilities from the four areas of skills above: “(a) accurately perceiving emotion, (b) using emotions to facilitate thought, (c) understanding emotion, and (d) managing emotion” (Mayer and Salovey 1997; Mayer et al. 2003). As opposed to focusing on specific abilities, the integrative approach joins abilities to assess EI. Thus, EI may be measured by asking

participants to identify a sad face *and* match the sad face to a specific situation thus producing an integrative measure of EI.

Although the outcomes of EI are somewhat mixed there are correlations found between having high EI (based on certain measurements) and interpersonal and workplace success. For example, among children and adolescents, EI positively correlates with good social relations (Eisenberg 2000). The ability to recognize emotion in faces and tones correlate with relationship well-being. Some measurements (i.e., MSCEIT) found that partners with individual low EI also experienced lowered relationship quality (Brackett et al. 2005). Elfenbein et al. (2007) found that Emotion Recognition Accuracy predicted a modest but consistent rise in workplace effectiveness.

FEMINIST EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Feminist emotional intelligence, on my view, is the ability to effectively reason about emotions through an intersectional lens and use emotions to inform how we think and react to the world. This includes being attuned to the ways in which the world and our emotional lives are structured by and favor men. It stresses the need to be attuned to, as well as resist and challenge gender-based stereotypes and attitudes around emotions, paying close attention to the ways those stereotypes and attitudes differ across race, class, ethnicity, et cetera. Feminist emotional intelligence is not an emotional intelligence that women naturally have. Rather, it is a set of skills that are developed by individuals. As I describe below, outcomes of FEI will include escaping failure points that are prone to arise in a gendered context.

FEI differs from emotional intelligence in several ways. First, what is central to feminist emotional intelligence is a particular attunement to the ways in which gender can impact the knowledge we get about emotions and also how we respond according to it. Second, FEI is an ability model that entails specific skills. Lots of these skills are what EI requires such as perceptual accuracy and emotional understanding. However, in order for these abilities to effectively inform extrinsic emotional regulation, they require other ‘social’ skills. The social skills found in feminist emotional intelligence include but are not limited to: the ability to recognize asymmetrical gendered emotion norms across identities; knowledge of the ways in which power operates; recognition of one’s own biases; and knowledge of strategies for how to counteract biases. Examples are needed to further illuminate my account.

Consider a man who is about to engage in extrinsic emotional regulation as he begins to evaluate the emotions of a black woman. In order to do this effectively, it will require—according to the literature—perceptual accuracy. He must perceive her emotions accurately. This is distinctly important for extrinsic emotion regulation. In order to perceive her emotions, he may use tone recognition to inform his thinking. He might think because her tone is harsh, she is being aggressive. He might then conclude, based on her tone, that she is in an angry, aggressive state. However, a person with feminist emotional intelligence—given that they are attuned to the ways in which gendered norms around race operate, as well as stereotypes—will be cautious in reaching such a conclusion. He will first be aware of the ‘angry black woman’ stereotype, a trope that legal scholars Trina Jones and Kimberly Jade Norwood describe as the following:

She is out of control, disagreeable, overly aggressive, physically threatening, loud (even when she speaks softly), and to be feared. She will not stay in her “place.” She is not human. Importantly, the “Angry ... Woman” label is assigned almost exclusively to Black women. The salience of this trope comes from the combination of blackness and non-conforming femininity. (2017, 2049)

If he has feminist emotional intelligence he will not only rely on a black woman’s tone (given that perception of this is often viewed in racial terms) to decide if she is angry. He might also rely on other evidence, such as facial expressions or her own testimony before he reaches his conclusion. If he puts in practice this skill, we can say that he has feminist emotional intelligence, and is using FEI to inform extrinsic emotional regulation. On the other hand, we can say that a regulator lacks FEI if he uses conscious or unconscious stereotypes of black women as overly aggressive, threatening, loud, and animalistic to inform his perception of her emotions. He will also lack it if he, in response to a black woman exercising her voice, uses these stereotypes as reasons to blame her for his own aggression against her.

In addition, a person with feminist emotional intelligence will be careful with expressive suppression strategies. For example, he will either not tell a young sad boy to “stop crying like a girl”; correct himself when saying it; or apologize after he has done so. And he will do this because he recognizes the gendered emotional stereotype and display rules that underly the suggestion and the unreasonable restriction this creates for young boys to express and identify what they feel. This will also be a reason why he will resist the adage that ‘men don’t cry’ when he is alone and feeling sad.

A person with feminist emotional intelligence will be patient when listening to women who are emotionally expressing how they feel without him feeling the need to—as a default—accuse them of being overemotional or irrational. He will do this because he is aware that rationality does not conflict with emotionality and he understands that just as men have the right to express their anger women, no matter their background, should also have the same opportunity.

In the above examples, I primarily address specific skills that are quite analogous to the specific-skill approach of EI. But a person can also combine or integrate the skills of FEI to regulate the emotions of others as well as behave in ways that do not reify certain power relations. I will use the phenomenon of ‘white tears’ to highlight this point.

In her 2018 book *Eloquent Rage*, scholar Brittney Cooper defines white-girl tears as the following:

White girls usually cry white tears after they have done something hella racist and then been called out by the offended party for doing so. To shift blame and claim victimhood, they start to cry. The world falls apart as people rush to their defense. All knowledge of the fact that they are the ones who caused the problem escapes the notice of everyone except the person or people they disrespected. It’s a phenomenon that Black folks know well. (172–73)

There are different forms of white tears according to Robin DiAngelo (2018) and white women tears in racial settings are just one form. DiAngelo claims that white tears are in response to white fragility—a perception of any attempt to connect “[whites] to the

system of racism as an unsettling and unfair moral offense [It] includes emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation Though white fragility is triggered by discomfort and anxiety, it is born of superiority and entitlement ... it is a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of white advantage” (2018, 2).

On her view, white tears in response to white fragility can often “effectively reinscrib[e] rather than ameliorat[e] racism.” DiAngelo provides the following personal example:

A black man who was struggling to express a point referred to himself as stupid. My co-facilitator, a black woman, gently countered that he was not stupid but that society would have him believe that he was. As she was explaining the power of internalized racism, a white woman interrupted with, “What he was trying to say was ...” When my co-facilitator pointed out that the white woman had reinforced the racist idea that she could best speak for a black man, the woman erupted in tears. The training came to a complete halt as most of the room rushed to comfort her and angrily accuse the black facilitator of unfairness. (Even though the participants were there to learn how racism works, how dare the facilitator point out an example of how racism works!) Meanwhile, the black man she had spoken for was left alone to watch her receive comfort. (2018, 133)

In this example, ‘the room’ is participating in extrinsic emotion regulation. They are perceiving that the woman is sad based on her tears. In response, they choose a strategy with the goal of comforting her. And it will appear that they are relying on the skills of perceptual accuracy. We might admit, based on an integrative approach, that they display emotional intelligence due to the fact that they are combining the skills of perceptual accuracy and emotional understanding and using it to inform their extrinsic ER. But it may also appear that they have feminist emotional intelligence. And we might think they do because they are not dismissing her emotions because she is a woman nor are they perceiving her as overemotional or irrational.

However, as I have stated above, feminist emotional intelligence has an intersectional lens. The fact that they are angrily accusing the black facilitator of unfairness and leaving the black man—who was the target of the offense and perhaps also experiencing an emotion in response to it—alone to watch them comfort her, shows that the EI is not an FEI, as I describe it, since it is ‘reinscribing rather than ameliorating racism’. As Cooper claims, in contexts like these, “when white girls cry, every other girl’s tears cease to matter” (2018, 199).

However, we might say that a feminist emotional intelligence would exist if they perceived that the woman was sad due to the presence of her tears. But this is not enough. They would also recognize that white fragility was the cause of it. They would apply their knowledge of the ways in which power operates in the context of race—a context in which the emotions of whites are often unreasonably given more uptake than the emotions of minority groups. And this knowledge and recognition would help them determine how they should assess the white woman’s emotions, whose emotions they should prioritize, and how they should respond.

Feminist emotional intelligence, thus, is measured both by what we can do (i.e., recognize power and apply social knowledge) *and* what we resist doing (i.e., reinscribing

racism and patriarchal norms). And the skills such as perceptual accuracy and emotional understanding are informed and strengthened by other skills such as social recognition and attunement of different kinds; social knowledge applicability; the ability to revise one's thoughts and actions; and the resistance of destructive social norms and the social behaviors that are informed by them.

Does a person have to be a feminist to have a feminist emotional intelligence? I want to resist answering this question in the affirmative or negative for several reasons. First, the labeling of who is or is not a feminist, who can be one, how do we separate the real ones from the fake ones, is a contentious one. I am not committed to nor do I have a stake in setting up any necessary or sufficient conditions for the label of feminist. What I am interested in here, is laying out what I think will aid in minimizing failure points in ER and I believe a certain kind of emotional intelligence is required to help in this. I call this EI feminist. I am much more concerned with labeling the approach as 'feminist' than in labeling the person who has it as a 'feminist'.

That is not to say that I do not think that a certain *kind of person* is more likely to have, maintain, and improve their feminist emotional intelligence and use it to inform their extrinsic ER. This person will likely lack white fragility or is able to resist it; have low biases or are willing to resist them; and possess certain kinds of moral and intellectual virtues such as courage and intellectual humility.

FEI AND FAILURE POINTS

How can FEI help escape the failure points influenced by gender that I mention in section 2? I have implicitly answered this question above, but here I will make my claims much more explicit.

Recall, failure points can occur in the identification, selection, and implementation stages. Failure points include inaccurately perceiving the emotions of others in the identification stage; choosing the wrong strategy in the selection stage; and giving up too quickly in the implementation stage. I have argued that these failure points can be influenced by gender. A regulator can inaccurately perceive a woman as angry because of Resting Bitch Face or a black woman as angry due to tropes and stereotypes of the angry black woman. A regulator may fail to access properly if the emotion should be regulated due to their belief that certain emotions should only be expressed by men and others by women. A regulator may also fail to implement their strategies because they think that women are not responsive to reasons because they are, by nature, too emotional. To escape these failure points, one need not only an emotional intelligence, but as I have argued, a feminist emotional intelligence. In what follows, I will describe how FEI can help counter the aforementioned failures.

A feminist emotional intelligence can help regulators escape failure points in the identification stage. If FEI is the ability to be aware of certain gendered stereotypes, then a regulator will not interpret the neutral face of a woman as angry or read a black woman's emotional experiences as aggressive, as a default. Rather, she would rely on other signs (instead of stereotypes) in order to determine if the person is experiencing a particular emotion.

A feminist emotional intelligence can also help regulators escape failure points in the selection stage. This will occur because the regulator will not evaluate emotions

based on display rules—rules that are often gendered and racially asymmetrical. She is less likely to misidentify whose emotions should be regulated and who should be attended to by applying her knowledge of how power can play out in certain instances. If FEI is the ability to recognize asymmetrical gendered emotion norms across identities then a regulator, in recognizing that we do not tell men to smile, will not think that we should command a woman to smile.

A regulator will adequately be able to weigh the costs and benefits of particular strategies with an attunement to how the social world in fact works, and her strategies will be influenced by this. She will be less likely to fail, as a result. She is more likely to conclude that white tears should be regulated, for example. And the regulator is less likely to select the wrong strategy. Instead of responding to white tears with comfort, she will challenge white people. Instead of choosing to ignore people of color's emotions, she will decide to comfort them.

Lastly, a feminist emotional intelligence can help escape failure points in the implementation stage. A regulator with FEI will not give up too quickly or fail to implement the above strategies because she is too overconfident or does not think that certain people can respond to reasons based on their social identities. She will be humble, patient, and sensitive enough to perhaps try other strategies the regulatee is likely to respond to.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that feminist emotional intelligence is a way to help escape some of the failure points that can occur in extrinsic emotional intelligence; failure points that are influenced by gender. However, one ought not think that FEI is something that you can obtain and always have a grasp of. Like any skill, a person who has FEI can lose it, get rusty, or perform it better in some contexts than in others. Those with feminist emotional intelligence are not immune from what ails other people who possess certain skill sets. Consequently, I see FEI as a set of skills that are in constant need of being sharpened, improved, put into use, and assessed. Lack of this constant refinement will not escape failure points but lead to more. It will be advantageous for regulators to keep this in mind.

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