



# COLLOQUIUM

## E.M. Hernandez



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3:00-5:00 pm



HIB 55

### Moral Shock and Trans "Worlds" of Sense

It is not uncommon, when faced with a morally bad action, to find oneself at a loss for what to do. The behavior is so offensive that we end up shocked by it, even if we fully expect such behavior from the relevant agents. This is what Katie Stockdale calls “moral shock;” the experience of bewilderment in the face of some moral act that conflicts with one’s normative outlook. Building on her work, I explore trans people’s experience of moral shock, how it reminds us of our lack of belonging in the dominant “world” of sense and the possibility for chronic, cyclical shock which adds to our burnout. Given that trans people’s very existence comes into conflict with most people’s belief in the existence of only two immutable genders, we are uniquely positioned to experience a lot of conflict between our existence and other people’s beliefs about society, creating the perfect conditions for shock. Since moral shock is emotionally exhausting, and trans people experience a lot of it, this contributes to trans burnout—the systemically disproportionate experience of emotional exhaustion brought on by surviving in a transphobic culture. By connecting these two ideas, moral shock and trans burnout, I illustrate how those on the margins of society face systemic barriers to emotional health, creating a collective responsibility to change the “worlds” we live in.

### BIO

- E.M. Hernandez is a philosopher currently serving as a UC President's Post-doctoral Fellow at UC Irvine.
- They are the author of numerous papers and an upcoming chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Applied Philosophy of Language*, titled, "How to Do Things with Gendered Words" (w/ Archie Crowley). Current projects include topics on politics, ethics, and morality.
- Their research spans Ethics, Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Race, Feminist Philosophy & Trans Philosophy

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