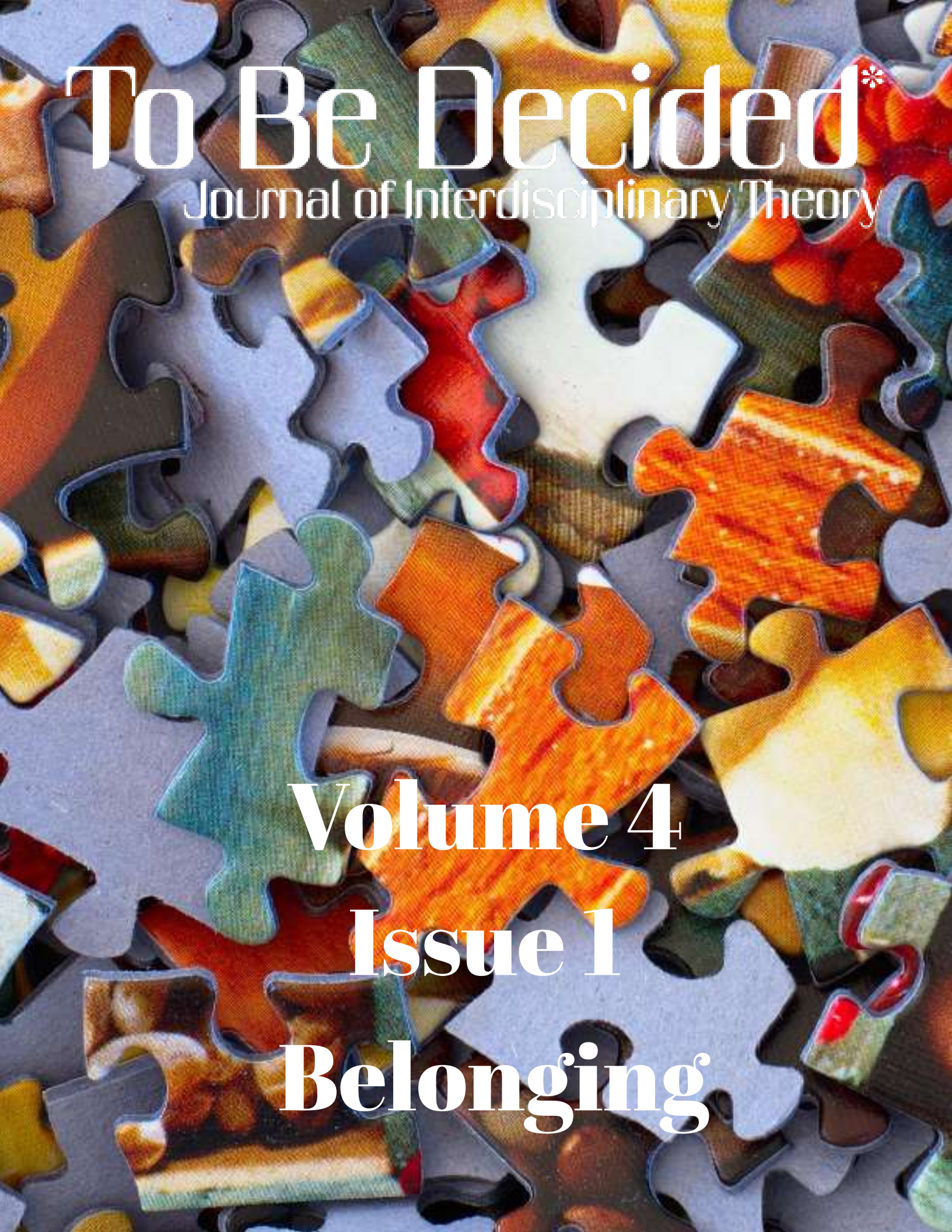

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Belonging

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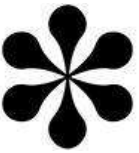

To Be Decided*

Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory

Volume 4: Belonging

Contrasting conformities

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Acknowledgements

When we released the call for papers for our fourth issue, we hoped that the theme of belonging would resonate with graduate students across the country who, much like us, were trying to find their place in the world. To our delight, others were in fact thinking about belonging and its role through their unique lenses. It is therefore essential to acknowledge and thank those who ensured that we had a place to belong while creating this timely issue.

First and foremost, we need to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the authors who provided content for this year's publication. Thank you for embarking on this journey with us, for your commitment to the review process, and your willingness to share your work with us. We also need to thank all those who volunteered to review, who offered constructive and generous feedback in their efforts to cultivate academic excellence.

We are also greatly indebted to the faculty, as well as our cohorts, at Acadia's Social and Political Thought program. Their mentorship and constant encouragement proved invaluable. We would additionally like to acknowledge our editorial predecessors whose work at TBD* provided us with a pathway towards publication. Without their efforts, this issue would not be possible.

Editors' Introduction

Belonging is as much a part of the human experience as any other feeling or emotion. We are constantly questioning where we belong in the world and where we fit in, operating under the assumption that belonging is inevitable. But belonging also has its limitations, creating a narrative of insider versus outsider which leads to a set of more complicated questions such as: can those who come from the outside belong once they come inside? How do modes of power shape societies and effect who is allowed/supposed to belong? These questions, and many more, are at the heart of this issue of *To Be Decided**

Our first piece, "Belonging as Capacity: Strengthening Bonds in the Era of Neoliberal Governmentality" by Gabrielle Desgagné theorizes belonging within the context of neoliberalism in North America. Drawing on an Indigenous epistemology, Desgagné theorizes how the feeling of belonging capacitates. That is, how belonging to a community fosters a sense of happiness and acceptance even within the era of neoliberal governmentality which governs bodies by governing less. She provides rich examples into the Indigenous experience of belonging, noting that when an individual has a sense of belonging, they are better able to strengthen bonds with their sense of self and with others. Her analysis brings a unique definition of belonging to this issue, while emphasizing the importance of acknowledging that belonging is a feeling that crosses cultural barriers.

Likewise, in her article "Internalized Homophobia and the Rules of Feeling" Jillian Nauss unpacks how institutions of belonging are often the very same institutions that isolate, marginalize and peripheralize

human beings. Situated within the dramaturgical theory of Erving Goffman and the concepts of feelings and feeling rules developed by Arlie Hochschild, Nauss theorizes internalized homophobia as an embodiment of the values that are held by the institutions of the family, friends and churches – three institutions that are supposed to function as supportive environments but often display a hatred towards anything that deviates from the heteronormative script. Nauss reminds us that despite a growing awareness and acceptance of queer identity, these institutions often times do not foster a community of belongingness and instead force queer individuals to internalize their feelings and emotions in order to preserve the status quo.

Our third contribution comes from Erica Kunimoto and is entitled *Mediating Eros: The Structure and Relations of Erotic Participation in Plato and Plutarch.* In this article, Kunimoto explores the transformative possibilities present in the *eros*. Using Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, and Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom,* Kunimoto demonstrates the various ways in which erotic openings involve a degree of mediation in their striving for the beautiful or immortal. In raising questions about the individual transformative potential in the face of something objective, *Mediating Eros* asks us to consider how participation and mediation effects, and reflects, on both the lover and beloved – both parties of a relationship.

Finally, our final contribution to this issue, *A Life of Death: Necropolitics and Indigenous Women in Canada* by William Hollingshead mobilizes Achilles Mbembé's concept of *necropolitics* in the context of the Canadian settler-colonial state and its treatment of Indigenous women. Extending the sovereign's right over life, Hollingshead makes evident the Canadian state's manufacturing of, and apparent right over,

death. An indictment of the colonial state, it is demonstrated that an existence preoccupied with violence and death is produced through colonial-patriarchal legislation and language meant to dehumanize the already excluded.

*To Be Decided** Journal of Interdisciplinary Theory
Managing Editors
Jason Penney and Justin Currie

Belonging as Capacity: Strengthening Bonds in the Era of Neoliberal Governmentality

Gabrielle Desgagné
M.A. in Sociology
at Concordia University

"Living within such political and cultural contexts, it is remembering ceremony, returning to homelands and liberation from the myths of colonialism that are the decolonizing imperatives."[1]

– *Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous"*

If emotions are central to human thinking and culture, they take form and are deployed in very different contexts across space and time.[2] Where early Western societies in North America had clearer guidelines regarding social behavior and rested on welfare states to ensure economic control, these transformed societies, now characterized by a neoliberal ideology, encourage a private market economy and individual decision-making to attain personal achievement and happiness. This decision-making is given more space as long as one repeatedly strives to orient themselves within the choices they face in a

[1] Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel, "Being Indigenous: Resurgences against Contemporary Colonialism," *Government and Opposition* 40, no. 4 (September 2005): 601.

[2] James Jasper, "Feeling-Thinking: Emotions as Central to Culture," in *Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research*, eds. Britta Baumgarten et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.23-24.

social context shaped by a form of sociopolitical power that Michel Foucault coined governmentality.[3] Literature in the social sciences has long disapproved neoliberal governmentality's use of human happiness as another tool to further capitalism.[4] The disproportionate promotion of individualism that such a neoliberal system encourages ironically contrasts with its consequence, namely a socioenvironmental crisis born out of a globalized capitalist and imperialist economy favouring a small elite. Moreover, in a highly criticized political climate of corruption and ongoing colonial policies in North America towards First Peoples, the welfare and valued emotional norms of happiness and self-realization that North American governing bodies put forth appear doubtful. This is especially the case when these norms are analyzed through a sociological perspective of emotionality resting on an Indigenous epistemology.

From this theoretical framework and situated within the contemporary context of neoliberal governmentality in North America bearing a colonial legacy, this article stands as a reaction to this context, and seeks alternatives of social solidarity inside and outside of it.[5] I will argue that belongingness capacitates people in this precise sociopolitical conjuncture that produces a detrimental emotional norm for many. The

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[3] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault,* eds. Graham Burchell et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87-104.

[4] Sam Binkley, "Happiness, Positive Psychology and the Program of Neoliberal Governmentality," *Subjectivity* 4, no.4 (December 2011): 377.

[5] I situate in this work as a Québécoise sociologist whose cultural and in smaller proportion genealogical heritage is the result of coexistence between French, Acadian, Wendat and Mi'kmaq peoples.

consequences of such a dynamic suggests a need for a more empowering emotional norm, which I tentatively frame as belonging.[6] To better understand the feeling of belonging as capacity, I draw from cultural elements of safety and the notions of embodiment and identity that it entails. I then address the neoliberal governmentality conjuncture of North America and its related emotional norms affecting people's emotional states, contrasting these norms' consequences with belonging's potential. Throughout the text, the culturally and politically explicit belongingness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada provides sociological examples of this emotional norm in action against a legacy of colonial policies in the neoliberal governmentality era. In developing this reasoning, I hope to address contemporary social issues of collective anxiety among and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies through the analysis of capacitating emotional states.

Belongingness as a Capacitating Guideline[7]

As a concept and emotion, belonging has unique guidelines based on the specific cultural context in which one resides. This is demonstrated in Arlie Hochschild's concept of feeling rules which shows that emotionality is regulated in each society through internalized emotional scripts or guidelines. These scripts guide action by stating *how* one should feel, *when*, and in which appropriate *context*

[6] I emphasize this North American location for in other contexts and states, belonging is at times a coercive tool of social control.

[7] I wish to address a special thanks to Dr. Valérie de Courville Nicol, from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University, who generously provided fine distinctions regarding her embodied in/capacity theory in this article.

according to an appropriate *intensity*.[8] Broadly defined in Valérie de Courville Nicol's embodied in/capacity theory, any emotional experience driven by desire refers to an "agential capacity," while any emotional experience driven by fear refers to an "agential incapacity," but where the form of one dialectically implies the other.[9] Capacity is therefore theorized as an ability, as a necessarily embodied feeling that structures agency and also the care for oneself, others, and the wider web of forces with which we interact.[10] Any given feeling lived as a capacity is therefore capacitating, and it capacitates – it empowers – social agents experiencing it because it is driven by desire, which will orient these agents towards emotional security. Desire also stems from fear that helps us define specific emotional danger(s) in a capacitating way.[11]

In De Courville Nicol's work, she produces examples of "emotional norm-pair" concepts to illustrate their practical features and social situatedness; meaning that when we feel individually or collectively stuck, change in our emotional experience of problems will help orient other means of exercising power.[12] In this work I build on her concept of "rejection/belonging", which designates the felt

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[8] Arlie Hochschild, "Feeling Rules," in *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 56-75.

[9] Valérie de Courville Nicol, *Social Economies of Fear and Desire: Emotional Regulation, Emotion Management, and Embodied Autonomy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 25. Note that the author's in/capacity theory is not dualistic; the constant dialectical tension between fear and desire is seen as an expression as well as condition of aliveness.

[10] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 11, 170.

[11] De Courville Nicol, email message to author, March 1st, 2019.

[12] De Courville Nicol, email message to author, March 1st, 2019.

in/capacity "to prevent being marginalized by others."[13] The object of desire would be the act of not being marginalized, and the solution to the problem behind this object might be, among others, practices of acceptance and inclusion. From there, the meaning of the feeling of belonging is necessary to develop a discussion on its main capacitating characteristics and potential either as a feeling or feeling rule.

The feeling of belonging is generally understood as the feeling of acceptance, of 'fitting in' and being part of some element, alive or not. Belongingness can therefore be defined as the feeling associated with close or intimate relationships and can be related to notions of possession (belongings), familiarity, intimacy, nearness, and even inseparability.[14] The aims of belonging can also change over time, either willingly or under influence. In this sense, Benedict Anderson's take on belonging to communities as social constructions, nonetheless real constructions, is telling. From his perspective, "imagined communities" refer to nations perceived as the communities to which one belongs; they encompass physical space and contact because belongingness exists, despite the fact that one might not know or meet the vast majority of one's fellow-members, within all communities. That is, imagined

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[13] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 31. Note that the author defines emotional norm-pair concepts dialectically rather than dualistically.

[14] "Belonging," Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, last modified July 14, 2018, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/belonging?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld. The broad use of the object(s) of belonging for the purpose of this analysis is that they are multiple, including but not limited to any living entity; territory or place; family; community; nation; culture; occupational group; or lifestyle. Therefore, the feeling is often implemented through the thoughts and memories that these objects trigger, the intensity of the subjective identification to the aforementioned and through the lived realities and material conditions they refer to.

communities bear a form of horizontal solidarity evident through various inequalities that may still exist within these communities.[15]

Keeping this constructionist perspective in mind, the need for belonging is visible from a very early age and is felt by people both at the interpersonal and group levels. This need refers to the motivation that one has "to feel connected to and be accepted by other people."[16] In fact, George H. Mead's notion of the self as social, later followed by C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination, informs the present understanding of belongingness wherein the individual having feelings is always tied to history and to a wider social context in which they are situated.[17] For Mead, the self and even societies only become because of the prior presence of social acts (interactions). The feeling of belonging is therefore tied to the social realm in addition to the personal feeling.
Importantly, belonging is also interpreted through the ecological. The circular worldviews of First Peoples, for instance, function on the principle of belongingness in that people belong to the land rather than the other way around as per anthropocentric worldviews. Marie Battiste (Mi'kmaq) and James Sa'ke'j Henderson (Chikasaw/Cheyenne) explain that the ecological kinship bears a praised relationship with all forms of life, and that all Indigenous heritage is an *ensemble* of relationships

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[15] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 5-7.

[16] John Levine and Michael Hogg, *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations,* vol. 2 (Thousand Oaks, SAGE Reference, 2010), 295.

[17] Charles George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a SocialBehaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962 [1934]), xi-xxvi; Charles Wright Mills, "The Promise," in *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 3-24.

involving responsibility towards forms of life rather than material or immaterial possessions.[18] In this sense, there is another relevant way to look at belonging's definition and associated social feeling rule. Métis writer Michel Noël stunningly narrates that for the Innu people of Québec's Côte-Nord and southern Labrador, we must preserve everything that is beautiful, that is, anything or anyone that *is in its place* ("tout ce qui est à sa place"). For instance, the Mishtashipu river that flows from the north and ends its course in St. Lawrence river.[19] This means that we must preserve everything that *belongs* to its place and in order to do so we must primarily feel this belonging relationship. These definitions introduce the feeling of belonging and its relational aspect as having some potential to capacitate people at different personal, social and ecological levels in the current neoliberal era. The following significant characteristics of belonging: safety, embodiment and identity, unpack this argument.

The emotional norm-pair "rejection/belonging" is part of a list of emotional norms having a danger prevention orientation (others have either a confrontational or avoidant orientation) belonging to the emotions of "worry/safety."[20] If safety is what capacitates and belonging falls in that category, the latter can be seen as a felt capacity to relate to what is known and deemed safe; as a kind of landmark that tells people how to navigate through the numerous choices they have to make within the social context in which one belongs. Safety and knowledge therefore characterize the feeling of belonging since it brings a person

[18] Marie Battiste and Sa'ke'j Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: a Global Challenge* (Saskatoon: Purich, 2000), 5-10.

[19] Michel Noël, *Le Peintre et l'Amérindien* (Québec : Les Éditions GID, 2014), 29.

[20] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 38.

(or collective) back to their 'reference pool', either cultural, spiritual, ecological, occupational, or otherwise.

In her discussion of culture's relevance for emotional analysis, Ann Swidler refers to culture – commonly associated with belongingness – as a "repertoire" or "tool kit" in which people pick and select parts depending on the situation at hand.[21] From this perspective, there is a dialectical relationship in which culture impacts people, and people also 'use' culture as an aid. This is evident in the case of belonging to Indigenous cultures, as it can further cultural revitalization or identity affirmation. For instance, by turning to census data as Frank Trovato and Anatole Romaniuk do, the demographic increase of First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations in Canada over the past century reached 49% between 1996 and 2011.[22] This increase can be attributed not only to better sanitary conditions and longer lifespan but also to the significant factor of "ethnic shift" or "ethnic mobility" which refers to claiming one's Indigenous affiliation for the first time in the official census.[23] From Swidler's perspective, this would mean that belonging to Indigenous cultures as "tool kits" actually helps people securing the continuity and revitalization of such cultures. In this case, the relation of belonging to something ensures some degree of safety.

We tend to claim that we belong *to* or *with* something (in French, *j'appartiens à*), that is, there is a relationship implied in belongingness. As the basic assumptions about what belonging means

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[21] Ann Swidler, "Cultured Capacities and Strategies of Action," in *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), 71-88.

[22] Frank Trovato and Anatole Romaniuk, *Aboriginal Populations: Social, Demographic, and Epidemiological Perspectives* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2014), 327.

[23] Trovato and Romaniuk, 327-29.

might imply, it encompasses the feeling of relating to and connecting with something, even at the embodied and cellular level. This relationship can be felt through corporeality, which is a requirement for emotionality.[24] In this way, the body and bodily feelings are central to making and experiencing meaning.[25] Indeed, Alannah Young Leon (Anishnabe Cree) et al.'s discussion on the role of the body in the decolonizing process emphasizes how "embodiment refers to the double sense of the body as both experiencing living in the world and as a context for knowing about the world".[26] They discuss various decolonizing pedagogies with Indigenous participants using the body "to constantly reaffirm embodied connection to relations," that is, ancestry, places, water bodies or animals connected to participants.[27]

Ian Burkitt also puts forth the importance of the body in experiencing emotions by referring to metaphors as having a bodily connection to reality. In this way, "bursting with pride" can be felt with a sensation of expansion because one belongs to a socially honoured group.[28] Belongingness is thus felt as something capacitating directly through the body. Considering for instance, visual perception, the imprinting phenomenon speaks to this propensity to belong and to tie. It occurs when newborns visually recognize their primary caregivers

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[24] Peter Freund, "The Expressive Body: a Common Ground for the Sociology of Emotions and Health and Illness," *Sociology of Health and Illness* 12, no.4 (December 1990): 462.

[25] Ian Burkitt, "Emotions and the Body: Emotions and the Body in Neuroscience," in *Emotions and Social Relations* (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 51.

[26] Alannah Young Leon et al., "Embodying Decolonization," *Alternative* 10, no 1 (March 2014): 69.

[27] Leon et al.," 74.

[28] Burkitt, "Emotions," 74.

before any other stimuli when they are learning to see, ensuring their survival. Moreover, the visual system functions through memory, recognition and association of what is already known; we learn to see throughout our life because of what we recognize.[29] This is also related to safety regarding what is known. If vision works on recognition and association, and each person experiences meaning and emotions through embodiment, including belonging, then the propensity to belong and to tie is physically experienced as a felt capacity that orients action, just as vision orients action to ensure survival. This felt capacity can be juxtaposed in social settings as well because the embodied sense of belonging participates in orienting social action on the premises of personal knowledge and connections.

Moreover, the feeling of belonging is one that reinforces and maintains one's identity. John Locke's vision of identity, later followed by social realists, was that of a continuous sense of self over time which provides a subjective sense of who we are.[30] Identity can then be something that needs to be reproduced over time. Belonging enhances this timely process so long as the person identifies with what they belong to. For instance, whenever I am asked 'where I come from', my response – being born in south-eastern Québec, a part of the ancestral Abenaki territory, implying that I belong to this region – has the effect to reinforce my continuous sense of self *since birth* in relation to this location.

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[29] James Enns, *The Thinking Eye the Seeing Brain: Explorations in Visual Cognition* (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004):338-47.

[30] John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity. Identité et Différence," in *John Locke. Identité et Différence. L'Invention de la Conscience*, ed. Étienne Balibar (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998), 132-79.

Conversely, many accounts of imperialism and colonialism's effects such as acculturation and territorial dispossession, that is, the removing of belongingness, proves that belonging has its capacitating features. This can be seen through the high rates of suicide particularly among young Inuit and First Nations in British Columbia, a population that sees exponentially more deaths by suicide than any other part of the general Canadian population.[31] Echoing Locke's notion of identity as a sense of self over time, Michael Chandler et al. have shown that Indigenous communities in Canada who experience the lowest rates of suicide among their youth are the ones who ensure their *cultural continuity* through implementing their *own* active social measures to *hold* the community together – that is, a possession of the means to implement their continuity as a community to which they belong.[32] In this sense, belongingness to an Indigenous identity is also a strong source of pride and well-being for many. For instance, in Jennifer Rountree and Addie Smith's literature review of Indigenous familial and youth well-being based on the frame of the medicine wheel's four directions, results showed the essential indicators that were identified by Indigenous respondents across the globe: in the "mind quadrant" (mental and emotional capacity towards healing and well-being), high levels of "ethnic pride" were reported in relation to language which "provides a sense of belonging" especially for the Sámi.[33] Also, "cultural

[31] Michael Chandler et al. "Personal Persistence, Identity, and Suicide: a Study of Native and Non-Native North American Adolescents," *Monographs for the Society for Research in Child Development*, 68, no. 2 (June 2003): 32.

[32] Chandler et al., 1-73.

[33] Jennifer Rountree and Addie Smith, "Strength-Based Well-Being Indicators for Indigenous Children and Families: A Literature Review of Indigenous Communities'

identity/sense of belonging to cultural group" was the most cited indicator in this quadrant; it refers to community engagement and "being part of a place and having a greater purpose."[34] This suggests that belongingness is felt as a capacity in to reference to how identity is shaped through community.

William Reddy's notion of emotives is also useful when considering belonging's relation to identity. Emotives are defined as emotional verbal utterances that attempt to communicate what is felt from within, failing to fully represent it but nevertheless essential to social life. These utterances are influenced by and come to affect the feeling(s) they refer to.[35] For example, when expressing the feeling of belonging, this feeling is being affected within the person, making them identify even more with what they belong to. Emotives, including utterances of belongingness, are 'allowed' by North American social norms and align with an Indigenous worldview, suggesting a shared capacitating social frame. These utterances of belongingness are in fact a prerequisite of encounters, and often trust, among Indigenous peoples whose homeland is Turtle Island (North America). Given their very clear tribal connections transmitted through oral history, "Who is your family? Where do you come from? What are your names?" are inquiries that take place before any other political or economic business/event in

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Identified Well-Being Indicators," *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research,* 23, no. 3 (2016): 213-15.

[34] Rountree and Smith, 214-15.

[35] William Reddy, "Against Constructionism: The Historical Ethnography of Emotions," *Current Anthropology,* 38, no. 3 (June 1999): 331.

order to understand from where the person is situated when thinking and acting.[36]

As an emotional state based on bonding, belonging presents three significant characteristics that imply a capacitating frame for being and acting in the world. They are: safety, embodiment and identity marker. The continuous and embodied sense of self tied to a given object that is known provides some degree of safety. In short, the necessarily embodied feeling of belonging through connections provides safety and the continuity of one's identity. Belonging is therefore necessary for survival as was shown with visual perception. Consider now the present social context in which it can deploy its capacitating potential.

Dominant Social Playground: Neoliberal Governmentality in North America

Starting in the 1970s in Western societies and spreading globally after the Cold War, the ideology of neoliberalism advocates a state that favours transferring its economic control to private markets. Neoliberalism emerged as an answer to the contradictions of a capitalist system and fed itself on the premise of inevitability, differing from the previous 'welfare' states that ensured relative economic control and stability.[37] I theorize the feeling of belonging in reaction to a neoliberal frame since it is distinct from a capitalist frame: neoliberalism builds on

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[36] Marlene Burchill et al., "Reflections on 'Aboriginalising' the Research Process: 'Hunting and Gathering' as a Focus Group Methodology," *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies,* 4, no. 2 (2011): 33.

[37] Miguel Centeno and Joseph Cohen, "Neoliberalism." Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology, last modified May 15, 2015, https://doi-org.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0234.

human welfare linked to maximized capital, as though they come hand in hand, whereas capitalism is not concerned with human 'flourishing.' A neoliberal state's discourse puts forth individual responsibility in all domains, and the institutional and discursive power is subtle enough that people come to regulate themselves and others without being explicitly coerced into doing so. This implicit regulation is linked to what Foucault called governmentality. Population – its welfare, its aspirations, its increase of wealth, health, and so on – is the main target and end of the state as a distinct form of power. From the ideological turn in the fifteenth century, when it became more important to manage than to discipline a population, emerged a complex and supposedly rational power centralized in governments.[38] Foucault's compelling critique of governmentality as a pervasive and calculated form of power that "disposes of things" rather than imposes the law sheds light on the great disparity between a government disposing of 'its' subjects for their well-being and these subjects experiencing this 'disposal.'[39] Under the cover of a rational management of people's well-being, this may rather be thought about as the interests of an elite class being sought after which, in fact, was a motive behind the legalized assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Euro-American culture through the residential school system. This, of course, was guised under the assumption that Euro-American culture was superior and more 'civilized,' hence a requirement for the 'emancipation' of Indigenous peoples.

[38] Foucault, "Governmentality," 100-03.

[39] Foucault, "Governmentality," 95.

In Sam Binkley's analysis of the "happiness movement" coming hand in hand with neoliberal governmentality, he argues that the result of such a governmentality is that individuals cultivate features similar to those of a "wider economic rationality," that is, entrepreneurship and autonomous states of being.[40] Happiness as a standard to reach is in fact an emotional instrument to bring about economic freedom and self-interest in this context. Neoliberal governmentality functions through institutions, practices and discourses that avoid disclosing any rule that limits individuals' potential; it is "the art of governing less."[41] It appears that valuing people's autonomy under such a form of power means ignoring and even depreciating the dynamics of belonging to communities and territories, and that this autonomy only favours an economically powerful elite regardless of its fellow living beings' condition. In addition to the development of 'economic' individuality, another result of neoliberal governmentality is that the subtle government regulation in fact leads people to constantly watch their own behaviour and that of others.

Building on Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory of role-playing in society, Peter Freund describes a kind of stress that comes with social self-regulation, namely dramaturgical stress, which notably affects one's neurohormonal activity. The "schizokinesis […] as physical expression of this split [between what one feels and what one displays out of social conformity]" can become a chronic response to stress in social settings.[42] Pressure to engage in decision-making to reach the perfect state of happiness and self-realization in a regime of *laisser-faire*

[40] Binkley, "Happiness," 382.

[41] Binkley, "Happiness," 382-83.

[42] Freund, "The Expressive Body," 469.

cherished by neoliberal governmentality, and the feeling that fulfillment is never present, resonates with Émile Durkheim's notion of anomic suicide. He wrote "No living being can be happy or even exist unless his needs are sufficiently proportioned to his means."[43] In this way, belonging symbolizes the fact that there *is* enough, and that needs equate to means because of its material, realist character grounded in existing relationships. Durkheim's sociology of suicide shows that maintaining life means maintaining bonds of belonging because suicide has "kindred ties." Egoistic suicide occurs when one does not see the *basis* for existence in life, while anomic suicide occurs when social *guidelines* are *absent* from one's life thus feeding a cycle of endless desires and dissatisfaction.[44] As an alternative to anomie, Monica Greco and Paul Stenner's discussion on the rise of an affective society through media points out that having a public sphere for emotionality is a way to ventilate moral problems "in the absence of traditional community frameworks."[45] Especially in the social climate of North America, where the focus is on performing personal achievement and happiness, in other words, tools that feed the neoliberal dynamic, belonging is significantly capacitating over many other emotional states. To illustrate this argument, the predominant feeling rules of happiness and self-realization favoured by dominant North American societies are analyzed below in order to contrast their (in)capacitating potential with that of belonging.

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[43] Emile Durkheim, "Egoistic and Anomic Suicide," in *Readings in Social Theory,* ed. James Farganis (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 1998), 82.

[44] Durkheim, 89.

[45] Monica Greco and Paul Stenner, "Introduction: Emotion and Social Science," in *Emotions, A Social Science Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008), 3.

In her analysis of embodied in/capacity, De Courville Nicol conceptualizes happiness in its dialectical relationship to sadness as the emotional "capacity to prevent the loss of a force to which the self is attached."[46] There is attachment as with belonging, but the substance of this attachment can be volatile. In this sense, Sara Ahmed's work *The Promise of Happiness* sheds light on the precarious and private experience of happiness that is promised by tangible or intangible elements, which she names "happy objects."[47] These objects, such as the family, feed affect, intentionality and judgement as well as moral values regarding what is deemed good and what leads to happiness – although what leads to happiness may not necessarily be accessible to all depending on socioeconomic status. In addition to the fact that neoliberal governmentality rests on the abstract normative ideal of reaching happiness, Ahmed's work highlights how the pressure to reach happiness *also* comes from materiality and concepts; this feeling rule is both privately and collectively embedded in everyday life. Individuals believe they have to make the right choices to reach personal happiness and to come in contact with the 'right' happy objects. If they do not or think they do not make the right choices, they are quickly reminded of their incompetence, unworthiness, or inappropriateness, which suggests an easily incapacitating social emotional norm in this context. In North America, especially in the United States, there is a tendency to conflate a given feeling state with self-esteem. For example, if one feels sad or is

[46] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 38.

[47] Sara Ahmed, "Happy Objects," in *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 19-49.

experiencing depression, one *is* unworthy.[48] Similar to Freund's notion of schizokinesis, Hochschild demonstrates that the failure reminder and its consequences stem from how someone actually feels in relation to what they are supposed to feel in a given situation. She calls these feelings "misfitting feelings" since they depart from the official feeling rules of a given society.[49]

Doubtlessly, misfitting feelings may be related to belongingness as one may be expected to maintain belongingness to a given group but in fact does not wish to; nevertheless, belonging may be more durable than happiness in the neoliberal governmentality era. Belonging is anchored in an embodied knowledge of the past, present, and even potential future (i.e. something that is grounded in someone's reality and sense of continuity in time, ensuring some degree of capacity). Alfred (Kanien'kehà:ka) and Corntassel (Cherokee) advocate their peoples' reconnection to the "terrain and geography of their Indigenous heritage" to secure continuity and strength that is independent from colonial governmental power.[50] As a subjective and suggestive ideal, happiness has a precarious character, especially in a socioeconomic system that mostly favours elites. For Ahmed, happy moods do not necessarily last, and happiness can even be "perverted" since it does not "reside," or belong, within things or people.[51] Belonging, on the other hand, implies an immediate security provided

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[48] John Hewitt et al., "Is it Me or is it Prozac? Antidepressants and the Construction of the Self," in *Pathology and the Postmodern: Mental Illness as Discourse and Experience,* ed. Dwight Fee (London: Sage, 2000), 163-85.

[49] Hochschild, "Feeling Rules," 59-63.

[50] Alfred and Corntassel, "Being Indigenous," 613.

[51] Ahmed, *Promise*, 43-44.

by connections. What also distinguishes this feeling from happiness in terms of capacity is belonging's very often *given* aspect deriving from relationships. We necessarily belong to some groups as soon as we are born. Following Mead's understanding of the self deriving from sociality, it appears that belongingness is already there, and not an ideal; this means less occurrences of dissonance and constant dissatisfaction. I am not implying that individuals are mere puppets solely constructed by a normative society that chose to whom they must belong; but rather that where personal responsibility towards happiness falls on the shoulders of individuals, whatever their socioeconomic situation is, and therefore generates significant anxiety, belongingness alleviates such responsibility due to its given character. However, happiness can be a capacitating feeling rule at times with its potential of transmission to other people and orientating aspect, but mostly so when coupled with belonging: the family as a happy object is for instance "one that binds and is binding."[52]

There is an additional remark on belonging's capacitating accessibility that stands out in Mead's work. He states that there is a direct connection among all who belong to a social group. That is, we have the possibility to have an inner response to our "social self" (the way we behave in social settings) as varied as our social environment is, so long as we adopt another's role in thought. "In this way we will play the roles of all our group."[53] This accessible character also applies when contrasting belonging with the feeling rule of self-realization –

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[52] Ahmed, *Promise*, 45.

[53] Georges Herbert Mead, "The Social Self", *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods* 10, (1913): 375-77, https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Mead/pubs/Mead_1913.html.

intertwined with the feeling rule of happiness – that prevails in the neoliberal governmentality era and that seemingly ignores this connection to the social.

A brief historical portrait of emotional regulation following De Courville Nicol's in/capacity theory helps to contextualize self-realization as a feeling rule. Modernity was concerned with a regime, or "emotional economy," mostly based on a dynamic of discipline to reach civility and to dissociate from any desire deemed inappropriate. On the other hand, advanced modernity's regime is one of self-realization that drives people towards empowerment.[54] The American Dream in the United States symbolizes such an emotional economy. Large scale shifts from one emotional regime to another means moving from a state of felt incapacity toward capacity.[55] In other words, the self-realization regime became the new capacity in response to the limitations of self-discipline but seems to have shifted as of late into a state of incapacity with the advent of global capitalism and neoliberalism that only benefit a small powerful elite.

The array of decisions and performances that are demanded by a regime of self-realization may further agency and pride in the case of success, especially for the wealthier in capital and status. The elite can materially afford to make numerous and 'right' choices. However, choices are often more limited for people having a lower income, meaning more occurrences of failure in an emotional economy of self-realization. As Freund further discussed, 'low' social status increases the potential of unpleasant emotionality (sadness, helplessness, self-

[54] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 162-65.

[55] De Courville Nicol, 163.

blame…), because social means of protection in relation to such a status is more friable than those of 'high' social status.[56] The given character of belongingness therefore alleviates the obligation to succeed and the ensuing anxiety when failing. Consciously choosing to belong as well as the pride of belonging are accessible without performance, hence, it capacitates people, especially those of a 'lower' social status or those who have been marginalized by colonial and imperialist structures.

On the other hand, with its material character, belongingness necessarily carries relationships and a consciousness of these relationships – it calls for solidarity that may set limits in terms of personal self-realization. Knowing where one stands in the ecological order and to whom or what one is attached unveils the illusion of endless possibilities, transcendence and even megalomania. If belongingness reinforces and grounds identity, one does not need to look for constant self-satisfaction and reinvention, whatever the effect on other living beings. Goffman's strategic analysis of social interaction puts forth the dynamics of interdependence involving mutual awareness of the other, identifying social actors' specific "basic moves" among a never-ending ballet in which an actor strategically takes into consideration another actor's point of view, the other actor doing the same, and so forth.[57] Experiencing this mutual awareness along with the feeling of belonging strengthens actual or potential commonalities and mutual respect even if one's interest is always considered, whereas under the regime of self-realization, one's interactions are ultimately self-oriented, somehow instrumentalizing the person with whom one

[56] Freund, "The Expressive Body," 452-77.

[57] Erving Goffman, *Strategic Interaction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 137.

interacts. Indeed, consideration of that person's point of view seems to serve the only purpose of satisfying one's own endeavors. As Binkley states, individuals "act strategically to develop themselves and their qualities as human capital within a field of competitive actors, seeking opportunity and advantage."[58]

One could counter the argument of belonging as capacity to suggest that belongingness means dependence, conformity, limitation, and that the individual self-realization that is so meaningful in North American societies is being compromised by belongingness. One could even induce a dichotomy of Western and Indigenous cultures' feeling rules and worldviews, so that reconciling these is hardly possible. I claim that belongingness cannot be such a limiting thing, because experiencing it means that there is a *voluntary* and *conscious* identification to something or some life form. It is an "agential capacity" driven by desire.[59] Nevertheless, feeling limited because of one's bonds merely means a desire for detachment or independence. Indeed, De Courville Nicol's concept of emotional "rejection/belonging" suggests that the dialectic state of incapacity related to belonging as capacity might be rejection rather than dependence, where the feeling of being rejected is the "fear triggered by the perception that one lacks the capacity to prevent being marginalized by others."[60] If we extrapolate, societies deprived of feeling rules of belongingness would probably be post-anomic and self-destructive. In this way, belongingness sociologically presents itself as an easily available framework for people

[58] Binkley, "Happiness," 382-83.

[59] De Courville Nicol, *Social Economies,* 25.

[60] De Courville Nicol, 39.

in general and a securing way to face the array of choices, the challenge to self-esteem and the pressure to follow feeling rules of happiness and self-realization under the neoliberal governmentality era. More than a way to tackle these social issues, it significantly and additionally capacitates people. Either in the form of a feeling rule or embodied experience, it strengthens bonds between people, things and places. Indigenous belongingness and recognition evidently align with the decolonizing concern and resurgence fusing throughout Canada's nation-state; this feeling capacitates First Nations, Métis and Inuit to exercise cultural, territorial and political sovereignty and interact with non-Indigenous peoples on equal grounds. It additionally brings non-Indigenous peoples to be conscious of and reflect on their own sense of belonging within a current settler-Indigenous relationship that feeds privilege and inequality. Thus, feeling rules of belongingness are a wise choice, if not of vital importance, considering the actual climate of resurgence and 'reconciliation' between Indigenous and Euro-American nations in Canada, whose geopolitical situation and future are anything but certain. Belonging to the land, thus caring for it, could even be a merging point of social solidarity.

From a sociological perspective of emotionality resting on an Indigenous epistemology, I have attempted to demonstrate that the feeling of belonging can produce significant capacity in the contemporary North American context of neoliberal governmentality imbued with a colonial legacy. As a possible avenue to overcome the collective anxiety that characterizes this context, belonging bears a capacitating potential as a feeling and feeling rule since it implies safety, embodiment and identity in contrast with the more volatile and vague feeling rules of happiness and self-realization propelled by mainstream

society. The next step would be to address concrete ways in which belongingness can be reinforced from within and in active resistance to the neoliberal context in order to alleviate collective anxiety and colonialism's consequences.

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Internalized Homophobia and the Rules of Feeling

Jillian Nauss
M.A. in Sociology
at Concordia University

It is no secret that people of the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, etc.) community[1] continue to face discrimination despite advances in acceptance throughout modernity.[2] In North America, the queer community has been isolated, pathologized, and the subject of social scrutiny.[3] The queer community has constantly been subjected to homophobia as the heterosexual community is considered superior, natural, and normal by popular discourse.[4] These alienating attitudes toward the queer community often result in stereotypes and stigma which are adopted by popular

[1] For the purposes of this essay, this community will be referred to as the queer community, which will include, but is not limited to, any individual who does not identify as straight, or any individual who is not solely attracted to the opposite sex

[2] Alexander Sink & Dana Mastro, "Mediated Contact With Gay Men as a Predictor of Modern Homonegativity: An Analysis of Exposure to Characters Appearing on Television Between 2000 and 2015." *Communication Reports* 32, no. 2 (2018): 78. 10.1080/08934215.2017; John L. Theodore et al., "Psychometrics of an Internalized Homophobia Instrument for Men." *Journal of Homosexuality* 60 (2013): 559. 10.1080/00918369.2013.760304

[3] Bryce McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services* 20, no. 4 (2008): 355. 10.1080/10538720802310741; Philip Derbyshire, "A Measure of Queer." *Critical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1994): 40-41.

[4] Derbyshire, "A Measure of Queer," 41.

opinion as truth.[5] In this light, homophobia can be understood as "an extreme fear of an object or situation characterized by avoidance strategies;" however, more specifically, homophobia "connotes irrational fear of homosexual acts, persons, or sentiments".[6] Thus, in more simplistic terms, homophobia is the avoidance of anything or anyone who is not considered heterosexual. With that being said, this article will explore how individuals in the queer community face pressures to conform to social norms, and how institutions in place in North American society dictate the importance of heterosexual attraction. Due to this, individuals who experience same-sex attraction change their behaviours to fit into social norms and police their own feelings to ensure they are maintaining these norms in order to "pass" or "fit in" to society. Upon seeing and experiencing continued homophobia in the social world, queer individuals govern themselves and internalize this homophobia.[7] This suggests that, because they deviate from social values, the queer community is often excluded from any sense of belonging within their society. Considering the literature on the subject within the North American perspective, there are three prominent institutions by which this internalized homophobia is not only maintained but reinforced: family, friends, and churches. Therefore, this article seeks to examine how queer individuals correct their behaviour and emotions within these institutions.

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[5] Derbyshire, 41.

[6] Didi Khayatt, "What's to Fear: Calling Homophobia into Question." *McGill Journal of Education* 41, no. 2 (2006): 136.

[7] Matthew R. Chester et al., "Gay Men's Experiences Coming Out Online: A Qualitative Study." *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Service* 28, no. 4 (2016): 322-323. 10.1080/10538720/2016/1221785

As mentioned above, discrimination faced by the queer community often leads to an internalization of the public's homophobia.[8] Internalization refers to queer individuals' learned hatred for themselves due to their sexuality. As a result, the queer community develops a feeling of self-hatred for not fitting into social expectations.[9] This is evident in Matthew R. Chester et al.'s study on gay men's experiences coming out online, where they found that queer participants felt shameful about their sexuality due to other peoples' perceptions about what it means not to be straight.[10] Additionally, in Bryce McDavitt et al.'s study about how gay and bisexual men cope with heterosexism, one participant said that he "[felt] guilty for bringing shame to the family by being gay."[11] As a result, this shame can begin to affect many aspects and relationships in a queer individual's life.[12]

The theoretical framework used in this article will be based on Erving Goffman's presentation of the self and Arlie Russell Hochschild's feeling rules. Therefore, this essay will follow social

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[8] Sink & Mastro, "Mediated Contact With Gay Men as a Predictor of Modern Homonegativity: An Analysis of Exposure to Characters Appearing on Television Between 2000 and 2015," 78.

[9] Deborah Gould. "Rock the Boat, Don't Rock the Boat, Baby: Ambivalence and the Emergence of Militant AIDS Activism," in *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements,* eds. Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, & Francesca Polletta (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 137.

[10] Chester et al., "Gay Men's Experiences Coming Out Online: A Qualitative Study," 322-323.

[11] McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism," 373.

[12] Chester et al., "Gay Men's Experiences Coming Out Online: A Qualitative Study," 323-324; Theodore et al., "Psychometrics of an Internalized Homophobia Instrument for Men," 568.

constructionist understandings of emotions, behaviours, and social norms. This means that these aspects of life are not assumed to be innate, but instead are learned through the society in which the individual is raised and lives. Goffman's presentation of the self argues that when interacting with other people, an individual will put on a performance in order to convince the other person that the individual is something that they may not actually be.[13] What Goffman had in mind was that the individual will present a performance that reiterates the appearance, mannerisms, language, and so on that renders their character different from their authentic self to fit what they believe to be socially acceptable.[14] Additionally, Hochschild's work on emotions examines how individuals regulate their emotions, specifically when these emotions are not authentic, or are not an individual's true emotions.[15] Hochschild explains that "[f]eeling rules are what guide emotion[s] by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges."[16] Specifically, feeling rules create an emotion system that works privately. This means that "we intervene in [our own] feelings in order to shape them".[17] By intervening in one's own feelings, the individual can acknowledge appropriate and inappropriate emotions. Hochschild argues that feeling rules act as the

[13] Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (United States: Anchor Books, 1959), 10.

[14] Goffman, 10.

[15] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (United States: The University of California Press, 1983), 57.

[16] Hochschild, 56.

[17] Hochschild, 57.

bridge between what one is feeling and what one should feel.[18] This bridge involves a conscious effort to transform one's emotions, while the feeling rules which cause this transformation are, in fact, unconscious.

These ideas, put forth by Goffman and Hochschild, will be used to unpack how queer individuals act during encounters with homophobia. In other words, Goffman and Hochschild present unique frameworks to understand how queer individuals change their behaviour to contradict how they may feel internally. These theories can therefore be used to understand the internalized homophobia experienced by queer individuals in different institutions. Because most North American societies are heteronormative, homosexual attraction goes against societal standards; and in order to navigate relationships, queer individuals must change their emotions and behaviours to meet the appropriate heterosexual expectations and confrontations.

Parents and Family

Parents and families are the first institutions that anyone is exposed to. This is typically where one is socialized and thus where they learn social norms, values, and beliefs concerning their identity within society. It is important to consider the family when examining internalized homophobia because, unlike other marginalized groups such as victims of racism, queer individuals may lack familial experience and support.[19] Parents and the family can often reinforce the importance that society places on heteronormativity, especially if they are unaware of their family members' sexualities.[20] This heterosexism

[18] Hochschild, 57.

[19] McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism," 356.

[20] McDavitt et al., 356.

can lead queer individuals to feeling isolated or excluded by their parents and other family members, especially with a lack of support. These heteronormative attitudes can be especially stressful for queer youth as they are dependent on their families for emotional and financial support.[21] However, it is also important to consider how the general public may react towards the family due to an individual's sexuality. For this reason, both the feeling rules and performance involved in protecting the queer individual (as well as the family itself) will be examined.

One example of an event where queer individuals feel obligated to "pass" in order to fit into heteronormative ideals is the family gathering.[22] Although it is true that many queer individuals feel guilt, shame, or frustration as a result of hiding their sexual identity from their families, experiencing these feelings as a way to pass is more important than admitting their sexuality to their family.[23] Hochschild refers to this process as suppression, where many queer individuals must suppress these emotions in order to carry on in their interactions with other people.[24] Unlike Hochschild, Goffman would call this idealization, wherein an individual's "performance is, in a sense, 'socialized,' molded and modified to fit into the understanding and expectations of the society in which it is presented."[25] Thus, these individuals are regulating their own feelings and emotions during these

[21] McDavitt et al., 360.

[22] McDavitt et al., 365.

[23] McDavitt et al., 365.

[24] Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," 561.

[25] Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life,* 22-23.

interactions in order to pass as straight; or, in other words, they change their performance to fit into heteronormative ideals.

In their study, Chester et al. describe how many queer individuals are concerned about the "negative reactions, judgment, stigmatization, or rejection" they may face from their parents and families once they come out.[26] In McDavitt et al.'s study, one respondent felt like he was living a lie when family members would ask why he did not have a girlfriend, but he would not tell them it was because he was gay.[27] As a result of this hiding feeling, queer individuals internalize these potentially negative reactions to their own sexuality and suppress any potential for positive reactions. This means that rather than being open and accepting of themselves, queer individuals may begin to accept negative reactions from their family members and transfer these negative reactions onto themselves. Thus, these individuals put on a performance in order to maintain appropriate feeling rules especially related to their sexualities.

Although many respondents in McDavitt et al.'s study claimed to have partaken in this performative process and have used suppression as a self-protective strategy,[28] many queer respondents also reported using suppression techniques to protect their family members. In Chester et al.'s study, one respondent said "I didn't want a bunch of people reaching out to my mom in this difficult time. That just irritated

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[26] Chester et al., "Gay Men's Experiences Coming Out Online: A Qualitative Study," 332.

[27] McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism," 366.

[28] McDavitt et al., 365.

me. I didn't want her to have to reason or explain or justify."[29] This comment highlights the emphasis dominant values place on being heteronormative in a so-called postmodern world. Furthermore, this suggests that queer individuals suppress emotions surrounding their sexuality to potentially protect themselves from their families, but also to protect their families from other people who have hatred towards the queer community. This again suggests that queer individuals must consider the effects of sharing their sexuality with others due to homophobia. Thus, this heteronormative performance must not only convince the individual of their displayed sexuality, but also their audience.[30] By using feeling rules as the script for their performance, queer individuals are able to maintain a heterosexual façade in the presence of their family members in order to ensure that no one becomes alerted to their true homosexuality. By suppressing their true desires, queer individuals continue to be reminded that their sexuality is not considered normal nor overly accepted in North American culture. This means that homophobia can become internalized to the point that the individual also sees their homosexuality as harmful.[31] Their performance is no longer only a desire to present themselves in a certain way, but also becomes an outlet for the individual to manage their homophobia towards themselves.

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[29] Chester et al., "Disparities in Depressive Symptoms Between Heterosexual and Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth in a Dutch Cohort: The TRAILS Study," 325.

[30] Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*, 10.

[31] Goffman, 10.

Friends

Although the family plays a significant role in one's socialization, friends also play an important role in shaping how one sees and interprets the world and themselves. Therefore, it is also important to consider the influence that friends have on contributing to or dismantling internalized homophobia. It is essential here to differentiate the institutions of family and friends from one another. The biggest difference between one's friends and family is the matter of choice; one can choose their friends, while there is typically little choice involved in one's family. Therefore, the relationship that an individual has with their friends may differ greatly from the relationship that they have with their family. On the other hand, much like the family, friends often provide a significant amount of emotional support, and therefore can have a critical influence on how a queer individual experiences homophobia, whether that hatred be from other people or self-directed.

In their study on internalized homophobia and stigma, Jae Puckett et al. found that many queer respondents to their survey reported that they would feel uncomfortable if their heterosexual-identifying friends knew their sexual orientation, and also reported being afraid that their friends would not want to continue their friendship if they knew their sexual orientation.[32] This highlights how queer individuals have associated fear with their sexuality, and as a result, are afraid to share their sexuality with other people in their lives. It can be argued that this fear has been manifested due to society's own homophobia, and is then transferred to the queer individuals

[32] Jae Puckett et al., "Internalized Homophobia and Perceived Stigma: A Validation Study of Stigma Measures in a Sample of Young Men Who Have Sex with Men," *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 14 (2017): 8, 10.1007/s13178-016-0258-5

themselves. This fear results in queer individuals feeling isolated and excluded from society because they may believe that their friends hold similar views. In turn, due to the belief that friends hold homophobic beliefs and attitudes, queer individuals may further internalize these perceptions and believe that they do not belong to their friend group. Respondents to Puckett et al.'s study reported that their fear was of stereotyped perceptions that their friends may hold towards queer individuals. Several statements were made such as:

> "7. Whenever I tell my straight friends about my sexual orientation, I worry they will try to remember things about me that appear to fit the stereotype of a homosexual.
>
> 18. When I think about coming out to a straight friend, I worry that she or he might watch me to see if I do things that are stereotypically homosexual.
>
> 21. I try to look masculine in order to avoid people's rejection.
>
> 22. When I think about coming out to a straight friend, I'm afraid they will pay more attention to my body movements and voice than to me, the person."[33]

These statements suggest just how aware gay men are of their performance when they are around their friends. Because society values heterosexuality and devalues other sexualities, so-called queer traits are often undesirable and thus members of the queer community often change their self-presentation. As Goffman explains, changing the performance of one's part functions "to define the situation for those

[33] Puckett et al., 8.

who observe the performance".[34] This means that out of fear, queer individuals change their behaviour in order to appear 'straighter,' ensuring that their behaviour allows them to belong to a heteronormative society. Hochschild highlights the need for this performance by explaining that different cultures and social groups may use and recognize feeling rules differently.[35] This means that different friend groups could recognize homosexual attraction in different ways making it is necessary for the queer individual to know how their friends recognize the queer community.[36] This suggests that queer individuals must regulate their behaviour and feelings in front of friends in order to avoid cues[37] that they experience homosexual attraction. Because the queer individual is constantly changing their mannerisms in order to avoid giving their friends certain cues of homosexuality, the individual may begin to see their queer-coded mannerisms negatively as well. This emphasizes that friends, although not always intentionally, reinforce the experience of internalized homophobia as their queer friends attempt to maintain an acceptable performance.

That is not to say there are not exceptions. As Chester et al. found that queer respondents in their survey reported having positive experiences in coming out to their friends.[38] Some respondents explained that keeping their sexuality hidden or constantly policing

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[34] Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life,* 13.

[35] Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, 57.

[36] Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life,* 33.

[37] Cue refers to the collective understanding of queer performance, including appearance, mannerisms, and speech; Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* 10.

[38] Chester et al., "Gay Men's Experiences Coming Out Online: A Qualitative Study," 324.

themselves influenced their interactions with other people.[39] However, one respondent described his experience of coming out as:

> "It was a slow weight off my shoulder. I felt like I was more connected with that person then, and they knew. You know, it's kind of your deepest darkest hidden secret, so you feel like you can be yourself with them. And that was important to form relationships, friendships."[40]

According to Hochschild, this feeling of relief would signify a decrease in the amount of cognitive, bodily, and expressive emotion work the individual has to engage in.[41] In other words, upon coming out as gay to his friends, this individual no longer felt the need to abide by heteronormative social expectations. This suggests that once people are comfortable telling their straight-identifying friends about their sexuality, they no longer feel the need to continue their performance, and with supportive friends, they would likely be able to overcome any internalized homophobia they may be experiencing.

It can therefore be seen that friends can provide a significant amount of support for queer individuals despite the reality that they can also reinforce society's homophobic beliefs. Many queer-identifying individuals avoid revealing their sexuality to their friends due to fears of rejection or abiding by society's stereotypes as a result of homophobia. In turn, these individuals work to conceal their true emotions and self-police their actions and appearances to avoid conforming to these

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[39] Chester et al., 324.

[40] Chester et al., 324.

[41] Arlie R. Hochschild, "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure," *American Journal of Sociology* 85, no. 3 (1979): 561, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778583

harmful stereotypes. This concealment further perpetrates to the queer individual the belief that non-heterosexuality is wrong. However, once queer individuals do share their sexual orientation with their friends, they are able to find relief due to the new capacity of their feeling rules and the ability to lessen their performance and live more authentically.

Religious Organizations

Churches, as institutions in society, govern many aspects of one's life and have a strong influence on their beliefs and behaviours. Because this article is written in a North American context, Christian churches will be the focus as the literature points to Christianity as the most commonly discussed organized religion in debates surrounding queer identity. With this in mind, it is important to note that heterosexuality is highly valued within the Christian church, while non-heterosexuality is not always tolerated. Therefore, in most churches, it can be assumed that individuals who identify as queer likely have a difficult time integrating their sexuality into their religious practices. Due to this high priority placed on heterosexuality, it is important to examine how the church, as an institution, reinforces homophobia and creates internalized homophobia in its members. Because the church has its own rules regarding appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and feelings, it is especially important to explore how queer individuals may have to put on a performance that intensifies their internalized homophobia in this setting.

In their study, McDavitt et al. found that while respondents reported heterosexist messages in religious settings, this did not stop them from going to church, but instead they chose to keep their

sexuality hidden.[42] Many respondents described feeling uncomfortable, but they still valued their relationship with God and therefore chose to continue to attend church.[43] However, including feeling uncomfortable, other respondents described how they felt the needed to pass as straight while at church, and would not wear stereotypically gay clothing in order to avoid embarrassment or being stared at by straight men.[44] One respondent described his experience at church with another gay friend as:

> We always feel stares coming out at us, so we always get embarrassed … We like [to wear] bright colours and a lot of guys don't … At church I have to extra dress down. Like, I just have to try to look straight … I just go to church and I sit there and I listen to what's going on and that's it, we leave, it's like another hour that I have to hide, I guess.[45]

This represents the power that the church has over individual lives. The church has power over its members though the use of coercion (e.g. being ex-communicated), while leaders of the church have status over the members of the church (i.e. members of the church look up to and follow what the leader says) and from here, emotions can be changed or maintained.[46] This means that if a leader of a church says that

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[42] McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism," 366.

[43] McDavitt et al., 366.

[44] McDavitt et al., 366.

[45] McDavitt et al., 366.

[46] Peggy A. Thoits, "The Sociology of Emotions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 15 (1989): 325, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2083229

homosexuality is wrong (or even forbidden), members of the church must abide by this rule in order to belong to the community. This was also seen from another respondent in McDavitt et al.'s study, who explained, "I was going to a church called Church of Christ, and that church really helped a lot to kind of see God as a loving God. But they also helped [me] hate myself more, in the sense of that I hated the gay part of me."[47] This shows that while the church allowed him to have a better understanding of God, it prevented him from accepting who he was, thus internalizing the church's own homophobia.

From these examples, it can be argued that Christianity does not always allow non-heterosexual people to fully participate in and practice their faith within the church due to their sexuality. Queer individuals have to act and appear straight while they attend church to avoid unwanted confrontation and to feel a sense of belonging. This, once again, follows Goffman's argument that an individual must change their behaviour in order to act in ways that others will accept.[48] By wearing clothes that are not bright in colour to church, for example, queer individuals are abiding by what Goffman calls dramatic realization.[49] This means that based on their appearance alone, queer individuals are ensuring that their non-heterosexuality is not questioned as soon as they are seen at church. This shows that the individual's performance needs to acknowledge 'mirco' details that corroborate with their straight-passing performance. This invisible hatred is passed down throughout the church so that queer individuals learn, even

[47] McDavitt et al., "Strategies Used by Gay and Bisexual Young Men to Cope with Heterosexism," 373.

[48] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,* 20.

[49] Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 19.*

unconsciously, that the rule of the church is to discriminate against queer people. Hochschild's feeling rules can be applied to this example by acknowledging that the church creates and enforces its congregation's emotions towards a marginalized group. Otherwise said, the feeling rules within the church are created in such a way as to forbid tolerance towards the queer community. Based on this assumption, it is inevitable that queer people will take this hatred and inflict it upon themselves as the rules dictate they do. Thus, it can be seen that the church plays an active role as an institution in society in that it creates rules that must be followed, and further supports the internalized hatred towards queer communities present in today's society.

Concluding Remarks

This article was concerned with exploring how queer individuals regulate their behaviour and emotions in order to maintain social norms within certain institutions. More specifically, this article sought to unpack how the family, friends, and the church serve to reinforce homophobic practices. In order to analyze previously existing research, this article used the theoretical foundations of Goffman's presentation of the self and Hochschild's feeling rules. By allowing these two theories to work alongside each other, this article could acknowledge the performative nature of appropriate feelings. Due to heteronormative social expectations, many queer individuals experience feelings of isolation that alienate them from their own society. The family creates an environment where queer individuals learn firsthand if homosexual attraction is acceptable or feared. As a result, queer individuals who have learned that homosexual attraction is something to be hated and feared will begin putting on a heterosexual performance

in order to reassure family members that they are conforming to social norms. These rules can again be seen in friendships, where groups of friends dictate what is appropriate among their group membership. Queer individuals must continue to behave in ways that are coded as heterosexual. Perhaps more formally, it can be argued that the church projects a message of homophobia, which leads to the self-hatred of its own members. By changing some aspects of their appearances to look 'straighter,' queer individuals are able to camouflage into heterosexual society based on quick judgements alone. Without these small changes, queer individuals may leave cues towards their actual sexuality, thus eliminating the need for their performance, but attracting unwanted attention due to their deviation from the norm. Through this analysis, this article can conclude that the performance of feeling rules does perpetrate homophobia and internalized homophobia in the institutions of family, friends, and religious organizations. Finally, this article provides evidence that the very institutions that are meant to provide support and security simultaneously isolate members of their very own communities. That is, members learn that if they deviate from the norm, they will struggle to find a space to belong to within their greater community.

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Mediating Eros: The Structure and Relations of Erotic Participation in Plato and Plutarch

Erica M. Kunimoto
M.A. in Political Theory
at University of Calgary

Introduction

Within ancient philosophy, both Plato and Plutarch engage deeply with erotics, and in particular the transformative possibilities present within eros. This transformative process occurs when eros or desire compels us to open ourselves to the beautiful—a divine standard which all desire aims towards. Generally, it is through this opening of ourselves to the beautiful that we can participate in the immortal, for we seek to transform ourselves in a way that brings us into closer contact with the beautiful. The exact relationship between eros and the Beautiful for particular individuals—the lover or the beloved—will be problematized through an examination of eros in Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus.* In these texts, the Beautiful is mediated by eros, which we move towards and participate in, thereby transforming ourselves to become something we are not. At the same time, the extent of one's participation within eros—what I call relations of participation—are unequal for Plato. While the beautiful is mediated through eros for the lover, eros for the beloved is always twice removed from the beautiful itself. Within Platonic philosophy, several explanations have attempted to address the reasoning behind what I have identified as relational

inequality. For Gregory Vlastos, the root of relational inequality lies within the lover, as one who instrumentalizes another in the pursuit of beauty.[1] For Frisbee Sheffield, relational inequality stems from the lover acting as a guide, wherein the lover relays the divine back to other human being(s).[2] Understood in this way, the lover is motivated by their own desire for beauty, and only possibly their care for others as well.[3] It is my contention that relational inequality is rooted within a particular structure of mediation—that is, the *way* in which eros is mediated by the beautiful—which brings particular relations of participation into being. In order to address the problem of distinguishing transformative erotic relationships from non-erotic ones, we must examine the relations of participation underpinning relationships. In exploring this problem, I ask: how can a structure of mediation open or close possibilities for transformative participation, for both partners, within erotic relationships? In carrying this project out, I consider the structures of mediation foundational to Plato's account of eros, and the relations of participation that underpin each structure of mediation. Thus, I explore how the mediation of eros and erotic participation impacts one's understanding of themselves as being connected to, or cut off from, the Beautiful.

This paper moves through three main stages. First, I look to the *Symposium,* perhaps Plato's most famous outline of ideas of love and erotics. It is in this text that Plato offers an understanding of eros as in-

[1] Vlastos, Gregory. *Platonic Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 8.

[2] Sheffield, Frisbee. *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 182.

[3] Sheffield, Frisbee. *Plato's Symposium: The Ethics of Desire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 182.

betweenness from which a particular structure of mediation follows. For the lover, eros is mediated by the beautiful, while for the beloved, eros must first be mediated by an openness to honour. From these starting points, I trace the possibilities for erotic participation available to the lover and beloved, and the implications of these participatory relations for their respective self-understandings. Second, I look to the *Phaedrus,* where Plato revisits the *Symposium's* themes of love and eros, and presents an account of eros as recollection. For the lover, eros remains mediated by the beautiful, but this occurs through the remembrance of beauty rather than a gradual process of coming to know the beautiful in its truest form. For the beloved who is less capable of recollection, eros is first mediated through the lover. Despite Plato's efforts to bring both lover and beloved into closer contact with the beautiful in the *Phaedrus*, I show that unequal relations of participation persist throughout both of his works. Finally, I analyze Plutarch's particular account of marriage in *Advice to the Bride and Groom*, in order to reveal the structure of erotic mediation underpinning it. I argue that this structure of mediation can preserve eros as a transformative education of the self for both partners, bringing mutual relations of participation into being.

Symposium

Eros as In-Betweenness

In the *Symposium*, eros is understood as in-betweenness. For Plato, there is an interval between the beautiful and human beings— a space between wisdom and ignorance, or fullness and lack— and this

interval is called eros[4]. While the beautiful is in need of nothing, human lives are marked by lack.[5] Through eros, we are compelled to fulfil this lack, as we participate in an inherently generative movement towards the beautiful. By nature of being a dialectic, the erotic relationship between humans and the beautiful is an inherently generative one, for each movement towards the beautiful generates further movement towards it. If this movement were not an inherently generative one, then we would no longer be human beings, for we would no longer be in a relationship with the beautiful—we would *be* the beautiful. As finite beings who are not the divine, humans can only be these finite humans in relation to something infinite. Those who are capable come to the understanding that in order to increasingly participate in the "always being" of the beautiful, we cannot remain "the same forever".[6] Through a perpetual cycle of coming to be and perishing, we simultaneously create and destroy our self-understanding.[7] That is, eros is transformative, because in the recognition that the self we are does not possess the beautiful, we are compelled to pursue the beautiful we can never fully be, and in this pursuit, we leave behind our old self-understanding.[8] Through this transformative compulsion of eros, human beings participate in something immortal, coming into progressively closer contact with the beautiful, without ever attaining the status of the beautiful itself.[9] Given that human beings strive

[4] Plato, *Symposium,* trans. Seth Bernardete (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 202a—e.

[5] Plato, 204a—b.

[6] Plato, 208a.

[7] Plato, 207d—208a.

[8] Plato, 207d—e.

[9] Plato, 210c—e.

towards the beautiful because we are *not* the beautiful, eros must always mediated by something. A crucial point of consideration within Platonic erotics, then, is the shape that erotic mediation takes. Ultimately, it is through the shape of mediation that a structure of erotic participation is created. Further, it is within this structure of erotic participation that one is opened to, or closed off from, possibilities of transformation that move one towards beauty.

Eros Through the Ladder of Love

Although eros is a cyclical movement mapped onto a linear progression towards the beautiful in the ladder of love. Initially, eros as in-betweenness is lived out in the erotic relationship between lover and beloved, and Plato traces this relationship through the imagery of birth. Beginning with the lover, as one who is already receptive to the beautiful and thus "pregnant in his soul", the lover will seek to engender and "give birth in the beautiful".[10] That which the lover births can be understood through Diotima's ladder of love, wherein the lover gradually pursues articulations of the beautiful that come into increasingly closer contact with the beautiful itself.[11] On the ladder's first rung, the lover perceives the physical beauty of a boy and, through struggle, comes to birth a beautiful speech that he directs towards this beloved.[12] Similar to the open receptiveness of the lover to the beautiful, the beloved must also demonstrate a receptiveness at this moment. It is my interpretation, however, that the nature of this initial openness is different. For the beloved, an openness to the lover's speech is really an

[10] Plato, 209a, 209c—d.

[11] Plato, 210c.

[12] Plato, 210a.

openness to the love of honour, for the beloved chooses to receive a speech that affirms their self-understanding as a conventionally beautiful boy.[13] For Plato, the beloved's self-understanding is first brought into being through a nomos[14] which *creates* the body of the beautiful boy as a possible site of erotic beauty, for it is the nomos, rather than the divine, which dictates male relationships as the model of erotics. As a result, the lover's speech affirms a beauty in the boy that has already been affirmed by the nomos, and which the beloved already understands as belonging to himself. In sum, eros is mediated differently for the lover and beloved, and the result of these different starting points of mediation will be unequal relations of participation within their relationship.

For the lover, eros is always first mediated through a desire for contact with the beautiful. As a result, the birth of the lover's first speech will only open possibilities for transformative participation within the beautiful. By birthing a speech for the beautiful boy, the lover recognizes a quality that the beloved possesses.[15] When the lover begets speeches about beautiful qualities, they realize they are no longer speaking about the beloved alone, for these qualities are applicable to more than a particular beloved.[16] In this way, the lover's first speech generates an upwards movement, as they go beyond a love for their beloved boy, to a love for *all* human bodies.[17] This upwards action transforms the lover, who comes to see that the self they are does not

[13] Plato, 210a.

[14] The nomos is that which is customary.

[15] Plato, 210b—c.

[16] Plato, 210b—c.

[17] Plato, 210b—c.

fully possess the beautiful, and they leave their old self behind in the pursuit of beauty. The lover gradually ascends Diotima's ladder—initially through their love of a particular body, to the loveable qualities of many bodies, laws, and sciences—and each movement presents fuller possibilities of transformative contact with the beautiful, until the lover gazes briefly upon the final form of beauty.[18] As the erotic experiences of the lover become more abstract, the difference between their mediated experiences and the beautiful become less. Of course, one cannot become this final form of beauty, but the most philosophic of lovers will have the capacity to comprehend his relation to it, once he ascends Diotima's ladder.

Mediated through a love of honour, the beloved's first contact with eros only necessitates participation through an openness to the speech being received. On the first rung of Diotima's ladder, eros does not yet generate upwards transformative action for the beloved in the way it does for the lover. Since the beloved's first contact with the lover only affirms their self-understanding as a beautiful boy, there is not yet any impetus for the beloved to change. When the lover begins to birth speeches directed at the qualities of many bodies, however, the beloved is no longer affirmed as *this* particular beautiful boy.[19] Indeed, the lover may love bodies that the nomos rejects as possible sites of erotic beauty, but will be loved nonetheless, for virtue of a shared quality with the beautiful boy. A change in the beloved's self-understanding only comes through the *lover's* first movement up the ladder of love, for this is the first moment when the beloved's deficiencies are recalled to them.

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[18] Plato, 210c.

[19] Plato, 210b—c.

We see this in Socrates' beloved Alcibiades, who in each speech following the first is awakened to his deficiencies, and a desire to fulfil this lack through an attentiveness to himself rather than the nomos[20]. For the beloved, however, there is great difficulty in this self-transformation. While Alcibiades knows what Socrates' speeches compel him to do, and even admits that he is "incapable of contradicting" what Socrates "commands", he continually fails to transform himself and remains frozen in a state of "enslavement".[21] That is, Alcibiades' clings to the understanding that his specialness belongs to him alone, and interprets his experience as one of enslavement to the nomos that affirms his specialness. Since the nomos understands erotic relationships through an active/passive dichotomy—wherein one active partner pursues the passive other, Alcibiades does not undergo personal transformation. Given that the nomos' erotic categories are the foundation for Alcibiades self understanding, he is unable to move beyond them and interpret his experiences in relation to eros as the active-passive pursuit of beauty. Consequently, Alcibiades attempts to transform himself by pursuing physical gratification with Socrates, instead of tending to the possibilities for beauty present within his soul.

In order for a beloved to participate in eros they must relinquish the self-understanding with which they began, as well as the closeness to the lover through which they were affirmed. For Plato, an ideal beloved interprets each movement away from themselves as a movement towards the virtues opening them to beauty. Through this disposition, the beloved is prepared to participate in a higher order

[20] Plato, 216b.

[21] Plato, 216b, 215e.

when they become lovers themselves.[22] Until then, the lover "leads the beloved" through the ladder of love and births speeches that the beloved ought to remain receptive to. The difficulty for the beloved is that their erotic participation entails an openness to the painful demands of the lover's speeches. In the case of the lover, coming to be involves the perishing of past ideas of the beautiful. For the beloved, coming to be involves the perishing of all lived attachments to the world that sustain them as the self the lover once loved. Transformative participation is akin to self-destruction or self-loss for the beloved, as their connection to the embodied lover, the city, and the self they recognize as a self, will all perish if they are to remain receptive to the lover's speeches. While the beloved ought to see their connection to the beautiful in this receptiveness, they interpret their participation as a falling away of their self, as that which is *not* the beautiful. From this conflicted situation we see the difficulty a beloved undertakes in order to transform, and why Alcibiades laments that life is "not worth living" in this position.[23]

While it appears as though both lover and beloved move towards increasingly unmediated contact with the beautiful, the relations of participation underlying Plato's account suggest otherwise. For both lover and beloved, eros comes from outside the self. The starting points of mediation, however, lead each to interpret their experience of transformation in a different way. For the beloved, eros was mediated in a way that began with honor and self affirmation, meaning the process of erotic transformation was experienced as a self-destruction. For the lover, eros was mediated through the beautiful,

[22] Plato, 210c.

[23] Plato, 216a.

wherein each erotic transformation brought forth a more complete articulation of the beautiful for the lover to strive towards. Therefore, the lover experienced their transformation as the attainment of a more complete understanding of the self, in relation to beauty. Overall, while Plato maintains that both lover and beloved will participate in the immortal through a nurturing of that which has been generated in common, eros is mediated differently for the lover and beloved, which results in unequal relations of participation.

Although this analysis speaks to the experience of the *ideal* Socratic beloved, there is another dimension of Alcibiades' erotic experience to consider. While Alcibiades does participate in eros through a mediating structure that begins with honor, he also participates in a way that Diotima does not account for. Likening Socrates to Silenus, the woodland god who reveals wisdom, Alcibiades recalls the time that he saw the divine "images within" Socrates.[24] Although Alcibiades reverts to the nomos here, as he plots to possess the beautiful by possessing Socrates via physical gratification, he is only spurred to this action because of the beautiful he sees in Socrates.[25] One can consider that Alcibiades' erotic experiences are mediated not just through honor, but through the beautiful as well. In an awareness of this, Plato seems to reorient the starting point of erotic mediation in the *Phaedrus,* to establish a cosmic connection to the beautiful for both lover and beloved.

[24] Plato, 217a.

[25] Plato, 217a—c.

Phaedrus

Eros as Recollection

In taking up this problem of unequal participation, Plato introduces an understanding of eros as recollection in the *Phaedrus.* This, in turn, brings a new structure of erotic mediation into being. Ultimately, and despite the different starting points of eros in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, both structures of mediation produce a dynamic of participation that limits the beloved's participation in the beautiful, and ability to understand themselves as being in contact with it. Although there are other works which speak to recollection, the *Phaedrus* most fully elaborates recollection in regards to the metaphysics of love.[26] The *Phaedrus* follows the *Symposium* in its thematization of the lover's guidance of the beloved [27] Tracing eros through the myth of the winged soul, Plato describes the connection between humans and the divine. Similar to the *Symposium,* there remains an interval between the beautiful and the human that eros can assist us in travelling. Unlike eros as in-betweenness, eros as recollection moves us from "here to there" through remembrance.[28] While immortal souls reside in the place of being and gaze upon the forms and nourish their wing with the beautiful, mortal souls live in the place of becoming where they can

[26] Khan, Charles, 'Plato on Recollection', in a Companion to Plato, ed. Hugh H, Benson (Williston: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 125.

[27] Gordon, Jill. *Plato's Erotic World from Cosmic Origins to Human Death* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 167.

[28] Plato, *Phaedrus,* trans. Stephen Scully (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), 250e.

hold the potential of flight.[29] For Plato, not all mortal souls will be capable of flight, let alone a sustained one, and a hierarchy of souls follows as a result.[30] The best souls will be able to see the truth behind their embodied experiences and stay aloft. Taken upwards, they pattern themselves after the Gods and remain on a divine path.[31] Most souls, however, will "lack the means" to see the truth behind their experiences, and their souls will lose their feathers as they fall to earth.[32]

The souls with the means to gaze upon the forms are known as "lover[s] of wisdom", "lover[s] of beauty," or "lover[s] of something musical and erotic" in earthly life.[33] Having seen true beauty in the past, they perceive earthly beauty as a reminder of the divine truth that lies beyond, and their soul grows wings as they connect upwards to the heavens.[34] In descending order, the remaining souls become rulers, politicians, gymnasts or doctors, prophets, poets, farmers, sophists and tyrants.[35] While those souls concerned with thought and virtue demonstrate a nearer connection to the divine, those concerned with human judgment, the body or imitation are subordinate. In the context of erotic relationships, the lover's soul will always be higher than the beloved's, for they see the divine more clearly. In what follows, I examine the shape of mediation that emerges from an understanding of eros as recollection, and discern the relations of participation that result for both lover and beloved.

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[29] Plato, 246c—247c.

[30] Plato, 248a—248c.

[31] Plato, 248a—248c.

[32] Plato, 248b.

[33] Plato, 248d—e.

[34] Plato, 249e—d.

[35] Plato, 248d—e.

Eros Through the Simulacrum of Love

For the philosophic lover, eros conducts them to the beautiful through recollection. They easily distinguish physical beauty as a reminder of "those things which our soul once saw" while travelling among the Gods.[36] To most human beings, the philosophic lover appears mad, for they continually look upwards in their memory of the Gods while remaining situated here on earth.[37] In contrast, the beloved's soul has little or no memory of the heavenly forms, and their perception of earthly beauty does not easily connect them to the divine things that lie beyond.[38] In order for the beloved to move towards beauty, the beautiful is mediated through the lover.

The erotic relationship between lover and beloved is refigured in the *Phaedrus*, as Plato attempts to bring the lover and beloved into closer contact with the beautiful. As such, the process of coming to be changes. Instead of being a cyclical process mapped onto the linear ladder of love, eros becomes a completely linear process. For the philosophic lover, eros no longer generates a cycle that brings progressively fuller understandings of the self into being. Rather than pursue an understanding of the beautiful through a dialectical process, the lover recalls the beautiful as that which has already been seen. As the one who has known divine things most deeply, the philosophic lover experiences erotic desire as a deeper desire for the beautiful. In the *Symposium*, each of the lovers' experiences along the ladder of love are briefly understood *as* the beautiful, before leading to a fuller

[36] Plato, 249c.

[37] Plato, 249c—e.

[38] Plato, 250e.

interpretation of the beautiful that leaves former experiences behind. A lover only births a speech about and for a beloved boy, if in that moment, they understand the beloved as truly being beautiful. In contrast, every experience that the lover has in the *Phaedrus* is instantaneously separated from the truth, "like a lightning bolt".[39]

A lover in the *Phaedrus* can never affirm a particular beloved as that particular beloved, at any stage in the erotic relationship. While in the *Symposium*, a particular beloved is required in order to generate the first upwards movement of eros, erotic ascent in the *Phaedrus* can begin without any beloved at all. For Diotima, the sight of a beautiful boy led the lover to an appreciation of a higher form of beauty. In the *Phaedrus,* the mere sight of a beautiful boy *as a physical boy* cannot be erotic in itself, for it is only in the rapid separation of the beautiful from the boy that the experience is erotic. The beloved only impacts the lover's self-understanding to the extent that he is a reminder of the beautiful, which the lover already understands as belonging to himself.

On one hand, disregarding the importance of a particular beloved would seem to address the problem of honor-mediated eros in the *Symposium*. At the same time, one loses the only possibility that a lover might love their particular beloved as *that* embodied being. The only way a lover feels desire for a beloved in the *Phaedrus*, is to first see them as something other than the self that they are. According to Plato, each lover chooses a God after "his own tastes", and fashions their beloved after this god.[40] By sculpting and fitting the beloved into this divine ideal, the lover can then honor the beloved as a god.[41] As the

[39] Plato, 254c.

[40] Plato, 252d—e.

[41] Plato, 252d—e.

lover honors the beloved in this way, their feigned desire will eventually become real, for "the lover is no longer pretending but truly feels his servitude".[42] In loving the beloved, the lover ultimately loves the divine, and because the lover is divinely possessed, the lover does not feel far from himself.

This structure of mediation for the lover then dictates the possibilities of participation in the beautiful for the beloved. Although the lover sees divine beauty through thought, the beloved does not have the "means" to interpret their experiences in the same way.[43] The beloved can only experience eros through a receptiveness to the lover. Upon first embodied encounter, the lover takes in the beauty of the beloved, and as the lover recalls divine beauty, desire flows into them like a stream. The lover is gradually filled with desire, and as the excess flows out, it enters the beloved's eyes before moving to their soul.[44] The beloved is now in love, though they do not recognize it as love. Similarly, the beloved does not realize that in the lover, they are seeing themselves "as though in a mirror," for the lover reflects the beauty of the beloved back to them.[45]

Since the lover is the one who generates the inflow of desire into the beloved, the beloved experiences an "image or copy of love" in the lover's absence—a simulacrum of the lover's love.[46] Even though the starting point of mediation changes in *Phaedrus*, the beloved's participation within the beautiful is confined to the experience of love as

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[42] Plato, 255a—b.

[43] Plato, 255d.

[44] Plato, 255d.

[45] Plato, 255d—e.

[46] Plato, 255d—e.

a simulacrum. Whereas the lover consciously recollects the truth behind earthly beauty and transposes this pattern onto the beloved, shaping them in accordance with it, the extent of the beloved's participation in the beautiful is in their openness to being shaped. Through obedience to the lover, the beloved is made better, for the lover acts in accordance with the beautiful, rather than the beloved's individual desires.

Over time, Plato asserts, the beloved will approach the lover seeking physical gratification.[47] The philosophic lover will resist these advances, and because of the *lover's* resistance to physical gratification, *both* are able love a blessed life.[48] While the beloved is transformed through the lover— for they only see themselves in the lover if this reflected beauty belongs to them—they remain unconscious of their transformation.[49] They see the beautiful in the lover without recognizing that this beauty is divine, and connected to them as well. For instance, Alcibiades experiences himself as a copy of love who cannot separate the beautiful from the Socrates. This inability to escape the simulacrum of love means Alcibiades cannot move past the notion that he must possess Socrates in order to remain in contact with the beautiful. Alcibiades feels he must be near Socrates in order to be near beauty.[50] Since eros is always mediated through the lover for the beloved, the nature of their participation within the beautiful remains limited as well. While the lover understands themselves as being in contact with the beautiful, the beloved is transformed to be brought into contact with the beautiful. This transformation depends on the

[47] Plato, 256a—b.

[48] Plato, 256a—b.

[49] Plato, 255d—e.

[50] Plato 217a.

lover, and the beloved is never brought to an awareness that the beauty they see in the lover also belongs to them.

Overall, eros must be mediated if we are to experience transformative changes in our self-understanding, wherein we interpret our experiences as belonging to the beautiful. Although Plato provides immense insight into eros and the structures that ought to mediate it, his emphasis on the beautiful leaves underlying relations of participation relatively unexamined. Here, an unequal dynamic of erotic participation persists within the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus.* In order to fully understand the impact of eros on the self-understanding of erotic partners, one ought to interrogate these relations of participation. In the next section, I consider an alternative to Plato through Plutarch, who preserves the insight of eros as transformative education, while remaining attentive to the possibilities of participation for both partners.

Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom*: Eros as Harmonization Through Marriage

In this section, I argue that Plutarch's writing on marriage in *Advice to the Bride and Groom* illustrate a structure of erotic mediation which holds important insights for equality in erotic relationships. Specifically, I argue that by conceptualizing this structure of mediation as a good, Plutarch's marital relationship allows both partners to participate equally within an erotic relationship. Here, the good is distinct from the beautiful in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, in that I take marriage to be concerned with the good of what eros is— harmonized unity as an end in itself. Despite these differences, Plutarch preserves the idea that a structure of erotic mediation must be based on

something that is greater than either individual, in order for both to participate within it. By presenting a new structure of mediation as harmonization, Plutarch also brings forth new ways for partners to participate within something "greater" than both—in this case, marriage.

According Plutarch, marriage has a "natural unity", for it only comes into being through the relationship between marital partners, and it is only through this relationship that marriage is sustained.[51] Within marriage, partners act in respect to a unity that is greater than themselves, and yet, only possible because of their participation within it. By understanding marriage as a good to be shared in, marital partners move beyond their individual experiences, and towards an objective one. Plutarch maintains that marriage begins not with individual experiences of pleasure or physical beauty, but with the virtues and character that will sustain a shared life through an openness to one another.[52] As that which educates, marriage also nurtures and sustains the character of its' marital partners, for without virtuous dispositions, one closes themselves off from participation in the good.[53] Transformation here is mutual, for each partner shapes the other as they shape themselves, and both seek to transform themselves in relation to the unity they share in together. Hence, the relations of participation stemming from Plutarch's conception of eros ought not make one partner unequally dependent on the other.

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[51] Plutarch, *Advice to the Bride and Groom and a Consolation to His Wife*, trans. Donald Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 10.

[52] Plutarch, 6.

[53] Plutarch, 8.

Plutarch's use of music as an analogy illustrates an erotic structure that could be called harmonization. If eros is like music, the whole of a sound can only be harmonic if each note understands its relation to the other.[54] The beautiful sound, as the greater unity which is marriage, requires both partners to adjust themselves in respect to the other, in order to bring this unity into being. Always in respect to their marital life, each partner shares in the day to day feelings, quirks and desires of the other—at least, to the extent that embracing them facilitates an openness to the other, rather than a closing off from them.[55] Through marriage, partners simultaneously teach and learn from one another, actions that are appropriate to the nurturing of a martial life.[56] At the same time, the fruitfulness of this conceptualization is called into question when Plutarch maintains that when, "two notes are struck together, the melody belongs to the lower note," such that marriage "displays" the "leadership and decision of the husband".[57] Further, the sharing of spousal resources is likened to wine, wherein even if the "wife contributes the greater part" to the drink, the wine is still "called the husband's".[58] At this point, the structure of participation that follows from Plutarch's account of marriage appears to contradict the idea of harmonization he was setting up, and thus, the problem of unequal erotic participation persists.

Upon further examination, it appears that the gendered inequality apparent within Plutarch's account of marriage exists outside

[54] Plutarch, 6.

[55] Plutarch, 7.

[56] Plutarch, 7.

[57] Plutarch, 6.

[58] Plutarch, 8.

of the concept of eros as harmonization. In order for a melody to exist, two notes first transform themselves in relation to the other—they are "struck together".[59] That which *actually* sustains the unity of marriage is the active participation of both partners, while a "display" of the husband's leadership is nothing more than what appears to be the case.[60] In regards to common resources, the same logic follows, for these only become common through the contribution of both partners. They are "called" the husband's even though they *actually* belong to the marriage, and thus, both partners.[61] In sum, gender inequality seems incidental to marriage for Plutarch, given that the truth of marriage lies in the participatory relations underpinning it. Here, these participatory relations remain equal, and inequality is introduced as a consequence of how the relations are represented. In spite of this contradiction in Plutarch's account, we can still preserve the central insights he has to offer in regards to eros as harmonization.

For Plutarch, participation in marriage requires that both partners take their bearings from each other. When marriage is taken to be a good, the act of taking your bearings from each other is also the act of taking your bearings from the good. In contrast, Plato's account has the lover takes their bearings from the beautiful, while the beloved takes their bearings from honor or the lover, in order to take their bearings from the beautiful. It is not only important that the lover knows how to interpret their experience, it is necessary that both partners are capable of interpreting their experiences in relation to their marital life. Hence, Plutarch presents a solution to mediated eros that does not depend

[59] Plutarch, 6.

[60] Plutarch, 6.

[61] Plutarch, 8.

solely on a Platonic understanding of the beautiful, nor on convention. In other words, regardless of whether a martial relation conforms with conventional norms or not, the relation is only truly marital if both partners are actively participating in the shared marriage. While Platonic eros or convention takes the truth of erotic relationships to be the beautiful or mere appearance, respectively, the truth of Plutarch's marital relationship lies within the relations of participation themselves.

Plutarch's account of marriage is valuable to examine, because it is the structure of mediation and its resulting relation of equality which is the crucial point of concern. That is, Plutarch's idea of marriage relies upon a deeper structure of erotic mediation which hinges upon equal relations of participation. Not all martial relationships will include relational equality, and certain relationships outside of marriage may bring relations of equal participation into being. By understanding that the truth of a marital relationship lies in the internal relations of participation, we can distinguish between relationships on a deeper level. For instance, we can effectively critique situations that appear outwardly as a marriage, but rely upon unequal relations of participation that subordinate one partner to the other. In sum, While the erotic structure of mediation in *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* remained fundamentally unequal for Plato, Plutarch changes the very ground of participation in order to secure relational equality.

Conclusion

Overall, both Plato and Plutarch provide robust accounts of eros, and each speaks to the central importance of mediation in eros. By mediating eros through the beautiful or the good, both Plato and Plutarch emphasize the importance of acting in accordance to an

objective standard outside of ourselves, so that we can interpret our actions in relation to this deeper structure. While all three dialogues speak to erotic mediation, they present this structure of mediation in different ways. For Plato, the lover always remains in contact with the beautiful, while the beloved has this contact mediated in a way that makes participation destructive, limited, or both. In addressing this problem of unequal erotic participation, one can look to Plutarch's *Advice to the Bride and Groom,* where the structure of erotic mediation is marriage, and both partners participate within it as an objective good, creating possibilities for transformation remain open to both.

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A Life of Death: Necropolitics and Indigenous Women in Canada

William E. Hollingshead
M.A. in Sociology
at Queen's University

The Canadian state, and the European colonies prior to Confederation, have maintained a historically tumultuous relationship with Indigenous nations. Originally, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 brought forth language signifying respect and recognition of the political autonomy of Indigenous peoples by the British monarchy.[1] However, as the Canadian landscape altered dramatically, so too did the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Formal legislature enacted by the Canadian state enabled legally formalized policies of cultural assimilation and paternalistic domination in order to produce an environment of similitude. A Canadian state official once famously decreed that the infamous residential school system must "Kill the Indian in the child."[2] The state, as the authoritative purveyor of violence, has wielded the dominion over the subjects confined within particular territorial boundaries through the codification of legislation to maintain order and structure. For Indigenous peoples as a broad entity, this experience of political subjugation has been particularly

[1] Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ministry of Supply and Services Canada. *People to People, Nation to Nation: Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* [Ottawa, ON], 1996. (http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637).

[2] Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *People to People, Nation to Nation*, n.p.

traumatizing. The legal inscription of Eurocentric and patriarchal ideologies in Indigenous communities post-Contact has deleteriously affected Indigenous women through diminishment, infantilization, and marginalization of their social, legal, and cultural statuses.[3] Academics have situated the disproportionate volume of intimate-partner violence experienced by Indigenous women as inextricably connected to marginalizing legislature of the Canadian state.[4] Canada, as a settler-colonial state, has exercised 'necropolitical' power over the lives of Indigenous subjects – particularly Indigenous women – through socio-legal apparatuses propagating colonial discourse to maintain hegemonic governance that banishes the colonized to a state of exception. In assessing such a statement, this essay will apply Achille Mbembé's theory of 'necropolitics' to situate the expendability of Indigenous women and their lives as a function of state power to demarcate and delineate who may live, and who may die.

Mbembé's notion of the necropolitical is primarily an extension, and re-formulation of Foucault's biopower, in service of the biopolitical, which posited that the social body regulates and manages subjugated bodies through the expenditure of power over life.[5] In modern-capitalist societies, biopower functions as a productive, regulatory unit determined to generate life through ensuring the

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[3] Rashmi Goel, "No Women at the Center: The Use of the Canadian Sentencing Circle in Domestic Violence Cases," *Wisconsin Women's Law Journal* 293 (2000): 309.

[4] Emma Larocque, "Violence in Aboriginal Communities," in *The Path to Healing: Report of the National Roundtable on Aboriginal Health and Social Issues* (Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, 1993), 75.

[5] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978), 140.

existence of its population.[6] In modern-capitalist societies, power operates diffusely in a decentralized manner that disciplines and shapes the conduct of subjects. Power in this sense permeates all social relations.[7] However, Foucault is quick to mention that the biopolitical production of life is synonymous with the destruction of life that threatens the continuance of the social body.[8] In contrast, biopower operates repressively within sovereign states (e.g. monarchist states, bureaucratic states). The sovereign maintains biopower over citizens through the explicit repression of populations to maintain political autonomy.[9] Historically, the sovereign state monopolized the right of life and death, by inflicting death upon those who challenged the autonomy of the sovereign through violation of law or code.[10] As such, the sovereign state is primarily concerned with replicating the existence of its population through the infliction of punishment upon biopower to political environments of explicit violence and domination, predominantly exploring late modern colonial territories, contemporary war zones, and acts of martyrdom.[11] If Foucault is concerned with the biopolitical production of life, Mbembé is concerned with the necropolitical manufacturing of death.[12] More specifically, how does the sovereign state exercise the right to kill? What are the dynamics of power underlying this right over death?

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[6] Foucault, 139.

[7] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 2 (1982), 789.

[8] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 136.

[9] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 90.

[10] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 135.

[11] Achilles Mbembé, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003), 11-40.

[12] Mbembé, 11.

Underlining the sovereign's manufacturing of death are complex questions of who may continue to live, and who must die. As Mbembé states, race is implicated within the processes of death in Western societies, as it produces a framework for what constitutes humanity, and consequently sub-humanity.[13] For those relegated into the sub-human category, their existence is particularly limited through the negation and manipulation of agency by sovereign states.[14] The negation of humanity is often undertaken through a non-coherent methodology which may involve the denial of political status and property, spatial restrictions, or legal discrimination.[15] The development of sub-humanity by the sovereign may be normalized through the dissemination of racist ideologies.[16] In colonial temporalities subsequent to the Enlightenment era, scientific discourse has significantly contributed to the production of race and racist expressions as truths of the world.[17]

While such policies may not necessitate death in the biological sense, they do maintain an exposure to death socially, and through the potential to infliction of violence upon the marginalized entity. Mbembé demonstrates through the work of theorists such as Foucault, Arendt, and Agamben that the concentration camps of the Holocaust

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[13] Mbembé, 17.

[14] While this essay is situated within the space of Canada, the necropolitical subjugation of non-White actors is manifested across a plethora of nations in the Americas and Global South that have been exposed to settler-colonialism.

[15] Mbembé, 26.

[16] Mbembé, 18.

[17] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London, UK: Pluto Press, 1986), 120.

represent the most complete example of the necropolitical.[18] In addition to the Holocaust, Mbembé also references plantation slavery in the southern states of America and late-modern colonial occupations as sites of necropolitical governance. Within each of these examples, the Jewish individual, the African-American slave, and the colonized subject all became framed as a threat to the mortality of the sovereign body politic. As such, their existence as the 'other' in relation to the majority is subject to legitimate questioning.

The necropolitical flourishes through the 'state of exception'.[19] The state of exception, as a theoretical tool, is an environment whereby specific subjects have their political status divested, and are exposed to 'bare life' or a state of pure biological life.[20] Historically, the enacting of the state of exception occurs through totalitarian governments in a time of social-political turmoil to suspend civil liberties, in an effort to establish a semblance of order.[21] However, such a state of exception may be prolonged, and have become embedded within the realities of the modern state.[22] In conceptualizing the state of exception, gender and race exist as categorizing labels to establish hierarchy of which subjectivities are relevant in the political sense, and what are not.[23] It is

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[18] Mbembé, "Necropolitics," 12.

[19] Geraldine Pratt, "Abandoned Women and Spaces of the Exception," *Antipode* 37, no. 5 (2005): 1054.

[20] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005): 2

[21] Agamben, 2.

[22] Agamben, 2.

[23] Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995): 8.

those deemed not politically relevant, who are exposed to the space of death: the fringe to which Indigenous women occupy.

Colonialism associates with the concept of necropower, and the necropolitical, through the construction of race as an identifiable social category, and the social-Darwinian ideologies that support the existence of racial hierarchy in the colonized state. In the Canadian context, the deconstruction of the Indigenous subject occurs at their pre-Contact existence, to which they become a site for assimilation through the introduction of 'humanity', as defined by the colonizer. However, the absence of gender within Mbembé's formulation of the necropolitical in relation to colonialism represents a gap, which some post-colonial feminist scholars have attempted to fill.[24] The domination of the setter-colonial state is predicated upon the continuation of hegemonic white-superiority and Eurocentrism that rests upon the intersections of discourse on race, gender, class, and sexuality.[25] As such, any interrogation of the settler-colonial state must be cognizant of the prevalence of racialized, gendered discourse within state apparatuses that function as a form of necropower. This essay utilizes critical discourse analysis (CDA) as it analyzes the discursive nature of power to replicate dominance for particular social groups over others.[26] CDA critically reviews the manner in which language, text, and cognition operate as a function of power to control, demarcate, and marginalize

[24] Lena C. Palacios. "Racialized and Gendered Necropower in Canadian News and Legal Discourse," *Feminist Formations* 26, no. 1 (2014), 4.

[25] Palacios, 4.

[26] Teun A. van Dijk, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 252.

subjugated populations under hegemonic structures of governance.[27] The manner in which colonial, racist, and sexist discourse becomes institutionally codified or institutionally normative are of particular relevance to this essay.

The inscription of misogynistic interpretations of the Indigenous female are quite well represented within the social histories of Canada, contributing heavily to the degradation of this population.[28] The contemporary statistics are staggering: in 2009, 13% of Indigenous females, aged 15 or older, reported being violently victimized.[29] This translates to Indigenous women being three times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be violently victimized.[30] The statistics regarding murdered Indigenous women are difficult to compile due to inconsistences in the police reporting of the victim's Indigenous status; however, research conducted through non-governmental organizations places this number in the hundreds.[31] Inferring from these statistics, a reality is constructed whereby Mbembé's 'death-worlds' are produced from the expenditure of necropower on behalf of the state. Occupying these aforementioned 'death-worlds' are Indigenous women.

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[27] van Dijk, 254.

[28] Sherene Razack. "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George," in *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*, ed. S. Razack (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 2002), 127.

[29] Shannon Brennan. *Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces, 2009*. Catalogue no. 85-002-X. (Ottawa, ON): Statistics Canada, 2011. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2011001/article/11439-eng.pdf.

[30] Brennan, n.p.

[31] Native Women's Association of Canada quoted in Brennan, *Violent victimization of Aboriginal women*, n.p.

To contextualize this bounded territory, one must review the historical actions of the Canadian state. Prior to European contact, many Indigenous societies maintained matriarchal structures of power, whereby Indigenous women were socially revered and possessed political power.[32] For example, in numerous pre-Contact societies Indigenous women held the rank of chief, participated in political assemblies of their respective nation, and elected their sons for chieftainship.[33] In addition, many pre-Contact societies maintained matrilineal genealogies that traced one's descent through their mother's ancestry.[34] However, post-Contact societies saw the installation of Eurocentric patriarchal systems, which represented gendered forms of governance that centralized social power within the hands of males. This was in opposition to egalitarian Indigenous social systems.[35] Furthermore, amendments to the Indian Act in the mid-19th century decreed patrilineal endowment of indigeneity, or status-hood, to Indigenous women occurred through their Indigenous father or husband.[36] As such, Indigenous women who married non-status men, lost their identity (as well as Indigenous status for any children born from this relationship) as Indian, defined through Canadian law. Thus, the state became the sole authorizer of cultural identity, through legislation that explicitly supported patrilineal cultural identification.

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[32] Anne McGillivray and Brenda Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time: Intimate Violence, Aboriginal Women, and the Justice System* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto), 131.

[33] Verna Kirkness, "Emerging Native Woman," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 2, no. 2 (1987): 411.

[34] Kirkness, 410.

[35] McGillivray and Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time*, 131.

[36] McGillivray and Comaskey, 131.

Defining indigeneity in relation to an Indigenous women's father or husband left many non-status women vulnerable. For example, Indigenous women who lost their status were obligated to abandon their reserve with their non-status children.[37] Abandonment of their reserve meant a disconnection from their cultural settings, which hampered the transmission of Indigenous cultural values to non-status Indigenous children.[38] In 1985, amendments made in Bill C-31 re-established the Indigenous status of these women.[39] However, by this time, estimates show some 25, 000 women had their Indigenous status rescinded, thus signifying what Bonita Lawrence deemed 'statistical genocide'.[40] The state's authority to legally delineate cultural authenticity is integral to the survival of the Indigenous identity as an enfranchised entity. The settler-state exerts necropower through the symbolic 'death' of Indigenous status within these female subjects, and the subsequent disturbance of intergenerational transfers of cultural values to her children. Simultaneously, this expenditure of necropower discursively embeds European, Victorian-era logics that normalize the subordination of women through paternalistic control.[41]

In the late-19th century, the state adopted a 'pass' system for Indigenous peoples living on reserve territories. This law asserted that Indigenous peoples could not leave their land without first receiving the

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[37] Lilianne Ernestine Krosenbrink-Gelissen, *Sexual Equality as an Aboriginal Right, The Native Women's Association of Canada and the Constitutional Process on Aboriginal Matters, 1982-1987,* (Saarbrücken: Verlag Breitenback, 1991), 61.

[38] Krosenbrink-Gelissen, *Sexual Equality as an Aboriginal Right*, 62.

[39] Scott Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011), 63.

[40] Bonita Lawrence quoted in Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism," 63.

[41] Krosenbrink-Gelissen, *Sexual Equality as an Aboriginal Right*, 51.

proper documentation from a state-sanctioned 'Indian agent'.[42] The rationale behind this law was multi-faceted, but one ostensible purpose was for the state to enforce limitations on the physical movements of Indigenous women on reserve – who were 'bereft of character' – in order to prevent the moral corruption of white men in the surrounding communities.[43] The governance of the state spatially restricted and confined Indigenous peoples in a paternalistic display of authority, operating through explicit terms of race and gender. Of further concern to this issue, is the consideration of the gendered movements of Indigenous bodies off reserve territories. For example, while Indigenous men frequently leave the reserve land to explore further economic opportunities, Indigenous women often leave such a space to escape violence.[44] Therefore, being spatially bound produced a state-sanctioned environment whereby Indigenous women became inescapably subject to violence. Spaces of degradation consequently become internalized and naturalized, as evidenced through statements made by Indigenous women such as this: "In the reserve just like, everybody had black eyes, walking around, all the ladies, all black. I thought that's the life… Nobody don't say nothing."[45] The dominion of the state over Indigenous female subjects dictates their susceptibility to death, whereby the repealing of their humanity can occur. Characterized by their sub-humanity through the discourse of the colonizer, which instrumentally operate under a continuum of gender and race, Indigenous females exist on the boundaries of the Canadian territory.

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[42] Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice," 131.

[43] Razack, 131.

[44] Emma LaRoque quoted in McGillivray and Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time*, 134.

[45] McGillivray and Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time*, 8.

The production of enclaves and the restriction of movement is integral to the necropolitical project of colonial powers.[46] The 'savage' is isolated to a geographical space intended to house the racialized, poor subjects.[47] These enclaves represent spaces of exception whereby the law functions differentially.[48] This aforementioned suppression of movement signifies the colonizer's recourse to gendered, sexualized productions of the Indigenous female subject to ensure the morality of the white man remains uncompromised. In doing so, the state simultaneously exposes the Indigenous women to exacerbated rates of intimate partner violence.

The perpetuation of gendered violence is traceable to the diffusion of white-European patriarchal values to Indigenous societies post-Contact. Indigenous forms of interpersonal violence relate to aggressive assimilatory practices, such as the residential school system that forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families, where they faced systemic abuse to conform to Christian norms.[49] In turn, these violently traumatic experiences became internalized as 'normal' and transferred inter-generationally across Indigenous populations.[50] The diffusion of European gender systems remains a significant contributing factor in the presence of intimate-partner violence within contemporary Indigenous communities. For example, British law in the 19th century determined that a husband may cause physical harm to his wife, with the caveat that such 'discipline' must not be expressed in a

[46] Mbembé, "Necropolitics," 20.

[47] Palacios, "Racialized and Gendered Necropower," 20.

[48] Mbembé, "Necropolitics," 13.

[49] McGillivray and Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time*, 131.

[50] McGillivray and Comaskey, 132.

"cruel or violent manner."[51] In the Canadian context, prior to 1983, the *Criminal Code* granted immunity for sexual assault within marriages.[52] The mandates of such Eurocentric, patriarchal constructions of laws are clear: the expressed consent of the state for men to commit violence against women.

The permeation of intimate partner violence within Indigenous communities as a consequential effect of assimilatory state policy is evident through pre-Contact illustrations of gender relations. Although contested, the oral histories of many Indigenous nations suggest that intimate partner violence did not occur, or occurred substantially less frequently prior to European settlement.[53] When violence against women occurred in pre-Contact societies, sanctions were swift, community-based, and centered upon the restoration of balance.[54] In causally substantiating the disproportionate appearance of intimate-partner violence in Indigenous communities, one cannot ignore the significance of deleterious assimilatory actions that diminished the status of traditional Indigenous values. The propulsion of patriarchal gender imbalances circumscribed a beleaguered status upon Indigenous women that consecrated their subordinated role in the post-colonial Canadian society. The Canadian settler-state's socio-legal apparatuses refrainment of empowering the racialized, gendered, Indigenous female subject represents an expression of necropower. The

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[51] Kathleen E. Mahoney, "The Legal Treatment of Spousal Abuse: A Case of Sex Discrimination," *University of New Brunswick Law Journal* 41, (1992), 24.

[52] Mahoney, 24.

[53] Larocque, "Violence in Aboriginal Communities," 75.

[54] Jennifer Koshan, "Aboriginal Women, Justice, and the Charter," *University of British Columbia Law Review* 32, no. 1, (1998), 30.

colonial-settler state produces communities of gendered, racialized violence and death, and rationalizes the battering of colonized subjects as necessary to imposing humanity through the discursive inscription of the colonizer's logics.[55]

The sexualization of Indigenous women is a second pervasive narrative present within Canadian legal apparatuses. Historical evidence suggests that government officials in the Northwest Territories coerced Indigenous women into sexual activity by withholding necessary ration materials from the reserve community.[56] State police, such as the Northwest Mounted Police, also engaged in sexual misconduct through coercing Indigenous women whose families were starving.[57] The characterization of Indigenous women through their sexualities constructed them as amoral, deviant, and sexually promiscuous.[58] The dominant media structure historically reproduced colonial depictions of Indigenous women through sexualizing their identities. The discourse surrounding female missing and murdered Indigenous sex-workers frequently presents negative accounts of their lives.[59] Indigenous female sex-workers are individualized, and portrayed as addicted, diseased, transient, vermin-like pests[60], who "got what they deserved."[61]

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[55] Mbembé, "Necropolitics," 24.

[56] Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice," 132.

[57] Razack, 132.

[58] Razack, 142.

[59] Pratt, "Abandoned Women and Spaces of the Exception," 1058; Yasmin Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young, "Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31 no. 4 (2006): 899; Susan Strega et al., "Never Innocent Victims: Street Sex Workers in Canada," *Violence Against Women* 20, no. 1 (2014): 13.

[60] Strega et al., "Never Innocent Victims," 13.

[61] Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice," 131.

Intentionally obfuscating the pervasive nature of violence silences any meaningful discussion of the socio-legal colonial histories that underlie these territories of violence. As such, the circumstances that the victimization of Indigenous women occurs is buried. Such an approach fundamentally erases the historical results of colonialism, which establishes environments of abject identities. These media narratives are representative of the language of the colonizer, whose effect is to reproduce their power, and consequently their domination over the colonized. Dehumanizing media frameworks contribute to popular imagery of the "savage", and thus contribute to normative social geographies whereby the deaths of the colonized remain unquestioned.

In relation to the persistent suppression and marginalization of Indigenous females, historically, it is relevant to consider how such colonized voices remain silenced today, particularly in terms of violence and the criminal justice system. In 1996, the Canadian government assented Bill C-41 to law, which brought forth a comprehensive restructuring of criminal sentencing law. Nestled within this Bill, was the introduction of Section 718.2(e) of the *Criminal Code*, which implored sentencing judges to evaluate the historical injustices committed against Indigenous peoples, to their discretion, and to consider all available alternative sanctions to incarceration for Indigenous offenders. Ostensibly, this legislative reform would provide a level of reprieve for the historical legacies of setter colonialism, assimilation, and cultural genocide at the level of criminal sentencing. However, feminist scholars and activists sharply criticize the application

of Section 718.2(e) in criminal cases of intimate partner violence.[62] Of crucial importance is the silencing of Indigenous women and their voices within the alternative sentencing process.[63]

A frequently employed tactic to non-traditional Western criminal sentencing is that of the judicially convened sentencing circle. Briefly, the authorization of the sentencing circle rests within discretion of the sentencing judge. Legal precedence suggests numerous circumstances conducive to the authorization of the sentencing circle, including the offender's admission of guilt, the willingness of engagement by members of the community, including that of the victim, and availability of recognized community stakeholders.[64] Upon the commencement of the circle, participating members convey their knowledge of the situation in question. Thus, the circle produces a forum in which an appropriate sentence can be established and imposed upon the offender. Sentences are frequently non-custodial, and may involve traditional Indigenous components such as banishment from the community, or practices of spirituality involving community elders.[65] The circles present themselves spatially in a non-hierarchal matter, to which all members are purported to feel empowered to

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[62] Rashmi Goel, "No Women at the Center: The Use of the Canadian Sentencing Circle in Domestic Violence Cases," *Wisconsin Women's Law Journal* 15 (2000): 294-334; Angela Cameron, "Sentencing Circles and Intimate Violence." *Canadian Journal of Women and Law* 18, no. 2 (2006): 479-512; Emma Cunliffe and Angela Cameron, "Writing the Circle: Judicially Convened Sentencing Circles and the Textual Organization of Criminal Justice," *Canadian Journal of Women and Law* 19, no. 1 (2007): 1-35.

[63] Goel, "No Women at the Center," 294-334; Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 479-512; Cunliffe and Cameron, "Writing the Circle," 1-35.

[64] Goel, "No Women at the Center," 319.

[65] Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 484.

participate within the process. Despite the non-hierarchal framing of the circle, it is the presiding judge who may impose the unanimously agreed upon sentence. They simultaneously hold the authority to abort such a sentence, and impose what they deem appropriate.[66]

Canadian case law involving sentencing circles demonstrates that the role of the Indigenous female victim is severely limited.[67] For example, the textual accounts of sentencing decisions often elucidate intimate partner violence through gender-neutral terms, which fails to distinguish upon the oft-gendered experiences of intimate partner violence.[68] In addition, the sentencing circle has faced criticism for being a solely holistic approach to offender rehabilitation, with little consideration afforded to the victim of violence.[69] In one particular example, a sentencing judge alluded to the fact that the "…primary purpose of the circle is to help an accused change lifestyles. The presence of the survivor is not crucial".[70] As such, it is no surprise that the sparse literature regarding the participation of Indigenous women in sentencing circles, illustrates a space in which participation is severely limited, or the victim is unequivocally absent in participation. Furthermore, the language of those representing the Canadian criminal justice system in Canada, presents a discourse in which intimate partner violence is individualized, and is ignorant of the fundamental power differences extant within intimate partner violence, and Indigenous

[66] Goel, "No Women at the Center," 314.

[67] Goel, 323.

[68] Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 488.

[69] Goel, No Women at the Center," 325.

[70] *R v. Taylor* quoted in Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 503.

communities.[71] This is quite paradoxical, as the cited clause, Section 718.2(e), is characteristically dependent upon assessing the histories of colonialism that are complicit in the production of contemporary spaces of violence; yet, concurrently trivializes the pattern of intimate partner violence existent within Indigenous communities. The annulment of Indigenous female survivors of intimate-partner violence signifies a relegation of their narrative in institutional discourse. They become characterized as passive subjects that are acted upon, and in relation to the violence perpetrated by their male partner. Symbolically, their discursive absence acts as a form of social death, whereby their presence within the circle does not influence the healing process, despite their intimate relation to the crime itself. This textual or physical absence from the sentencing circle is indicative of a unique state of exception provides differential rights to different actors within the same space.[72] Despite being Indigenous people's subjectification as colonized beings, Indigenous men are salvageable through non-Western methods of rehabilitation, while the survivor of violence remains silenced. Thus, the legal apparatuses of the Canadian-settler state operate sentencing circles through the continuation patriarchal-colonial discourses that subordinated Indigenous women to Indigenous men.

The authoritative decision of sentencing circles and their language represent a hegemonic account of intimate partner violence, and thus reflect an environment that bears the inscription of rigorously gendered and racialized conceptions of the Indigenous women. Victimized Indigenous women have had their voices wholly restricted to

[71] Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 493.

[72] Mbembé, "Necropolitics," 26.

silence through their histories of violence.[73] In addition, their spaces of 'community' simultaneously bear the practices of patriarchy born from histories of cultural genocide. Through coercive practices of victim blaming, Indigenous female victims are told to internalize and privatize such violence.[74] Finally, the state legitimizes such violence through inaction and the failure to recognize the lived experiences of battered Indigenous women. They are discounted within seemingly 'traditional' practices of sentencing circles, and absent within the institutional accounts.[75] In their totality, the action of intimate partner violence, and the community and institutional responses, conceive a landscape whereby Indigenous women remain unprotected by their local political and legal apparatuses; and as such, have their subjectivities framed to acknowledge that violence can, and *will* be inflicted upon them. Existing in a state of precariousness, Indigenous women are subsumed by the necropolitical governance of the state. Furthermore, their existence is firmly entrenched on the fringe of the Canadian political environment, to which they are lodged in a state of exception: abandoned by the state, although not officially excluded.[76] Their abandonment is an ongoing process of history, whereby the discursive construction of Indigenous women by colonial-era logics of gender and race, and hierarchically ranks their subjectivities as invaluable. Through the conceptualization of Indigenous women as gendered and racialized bodies, they occupy the lowest stratum of Canadian society. The colonial-settler state of Canada refuses to acknowledge these voices to

[73] Cameron, "Sentencing Circles," 492.

[74] McGillivray and Comaskey, *Black Eyes All of the Time*, 143.

[75] Cunliffe and Cameron, "Writing the Circle," 3.

[76] Pratt, "Abandoned Women and Spaces of the Exception," 1054.

illuminate their traumatic experiences, as evidenced through their absence in institutional legal processes, and their texts.

The being of Indigenous women is too frequently formulaic of an existence preoccupied with the ubiquity of violence and death. Their identity is conceptualized through the histories of the colonizer: the colonizing ideologies and languages systematically dehumanize Indigenous women, whereby these bodies may be dominated and punished. A demarcation of apparent value has been set forth through historical precedent, and the contemporary verdict elaborates itself in similar terms: the lives of Indigenous women may be subject to death. While the verdict has remained, the appeal has entered the public realm, and the opposition to this subjection of death has grown. It is hopeful that current waves of Indigenous feminist activism brings forth a discourse to deconstruct the colonizer's history, and imprint definitively that the lives of Indigenous women do, in fact, have value.

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Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia
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