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Contents

Indigenous women, reproductive justice and Indigenous feminisms: A narrative

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Abstract: This article establishes a discussion of colonial history in Canada and its impact on Indigenous mothering. Drawing on the works of feminists Andrea Smith and Sheila McManus, among others, I examine the use of sexual violence as one aspect of colonial efforts to control the reproduction of all women in Canada, but particularly Indigenous women. Beginning in the early 20th century, I examine a number of ways wherein Indigenous mothers and mothering were delegitimated in Canada. From forced sterilization, to Christian residential schools, and to what is now referred to as "the sixties scoop in Canada", I speak to the strong social forces that undercut Indigenous mothering in Canada. Have established the problem, I then speak to the resistance and struggles of Indigenous feminisms to redefine and reclaim Indigenous mothering practices in the face of the day-to-day of colonialism of Canada.

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Preamble

As a white-settler, poststructural feminist living and working on the prairie, I have come to know myself differently. I did not always live on the prairie, but came to the skies and the wind later in my life. On the prairie you get to know both very well. It was on the prairie as well that I was more fully introduced to and schooled in Indigenous critical theory and Indigenous feminisms, and for this I am always grateful and ever mindful that the knowledge I was offered is not mine to keep; it is to be share. In this chapter, then, I share what I have learned, but put that learning into my own forms of expression, which leaves me accountable for my story, and not my teachers.

Introduction

Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (that is North America) have endured long years of colonization that has taken multiple forms, but in all manifestations was intent on removing Indigenous peoples from Turtle Island renamed the land Canada and United States. White-settler governments were formed, nations built and Indigenous peoples colonized. And, although treaties were made between Indigenous peoples and white-settler governments, the peoples of Turtle Island had been deceived: Every letter, note, policy, and act was oriented toward the erasure of Indigeneity. Some of these efforts took the form of defining "Indian" identity, education, and health care. These efforts were resisted over the hundreds of years of colonialism and Indigenous identities have survived and indeed have resurged in the recent past.

This article examines how colonial governments sought to erase Indigeneity, but in particular I will pay attention to efforts focused on Indigenous girls and women. I do this as Indigenous girls and women were/are central to giving birth to the new generations, something white-settler governments were cognizant of. To consider the erasure of Indigeneity through girls and women, I will look at three manifestations of colonial

dominance: government conferred identity, the residential/industrial school complex, and health care, all instances where gender came into play and Indigenous mothering came under specific attack. By denying Indigenous women the capacity to confer Indigenous identity, by traumatizing Indigenous girls, by manipulating Indigenous girl's and women's bodies and by abducting children from Indigenous mothers, the colonial states of Canada and United States attempted to wipe out Indigenous communities. Such attempts did not go unchallenged and the final sections of this article discusses resilience and forms of resistance along with the critical engagement of colonialism by Indigenous feminisms.

Colonization, gender ideology and Indigenous Identity

The gender orthodoxies of Indigenous socio-cultural formations of North America that Eurowestern colonists encountered often reflected what is called gender equivalency: that is, an integrated set of practices, attitudes and beliefs with regard to gender wherein all gender, although variant, are seen to be equivalent in value. These gender equivalent relations were based on social roles, cultural/spiritual knowledge, relations with the environment, affiliations with the spiritual, and gendered expertise.[2] Different genders have particular expertise related to specific areas of knowledge such as healing, herb lore, food stuffs, stories, sings, rites, planting, time, science and technology, and so forth. The equivalency of gender operated in tandem with a world view of interrelatedness wherein all life and non-life were connected and therefore shared in importance. Knowledge, be it ritual, ecological, spiritual, technological, historical, sociological, political and so forth, was deemed significant regardless who held it.[3]

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2   Will Roscoe, *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth Genders in Native North America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

3   Although a two-sex model (that is female and male only) may be at the base of some gender orthodoxies, both female and male are understood to be equivalent or have equal value. Now this is an ideal and may not have reflected the day-today of Indigenous peoples. An ideal is that which social relations are mapped out upon, although certainly the ideal emerges from

However, with contact, colonization and white-settler occupation of Turtle Island, Indigenous peoples were located as the "other", and a significant aspect of the othering was formulated by recourse to (idealized) European gender ideologies that were represented as normative and subsequently imposed on Indigenous peoples.[4] Sheila McManus writes of the colonization of the Blackfoot peoples (Siksika/Blackfoot, Pikuni/Peigan, Kainah/Blood) of the western US and Canada:

> Containing the Blackfoot on small patches of land with herds of cattle and European-style dwellings was only one set of goals Canadian and American officials shared when it came to reshaping the Blackfeet into a more acceptable (or at least invisible) piece of the nation. They also wanted to alter the gender norms of adults at a more fundamental level. Officials wanted to end polygamous marriages; make aboriginal women behave like submissive, domesticated Euro-North American women; and make aboriginal men behave like farmers, all of which involved imposing their own ideas of appropriate femininity and masculinity.[5]

By the mid-1800s settlement was the dominate form of colonization as evidenced by the US Homestead Act of 1862 and the Canadian Dominion Lands Act of 1871. Both Acts meant the appropriation of Indigenous lands, but also included was a process of "domestication" and/or annihilation of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Domestication took the form of the imposition of European gender ideologies upon Aboriginal peoples. For colonization to be successful, it was necessary to dismantle the gender fluidity and equivalent gender relations among Indigenous

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the social body itself. Again, as with any gender ideology, or any ideology for that matter, there is a dialectal (tension between two interacting forces, ideas or elements) relationship wherein knowledge shapes the social and the social shapes knowledge, and ideology therein.

4   There were, of course, variations of gender orthodoxy found among colonizers, often shaped by national and religious affiliations such as British-Anglican, Scottish-Presbyterian, or French Catholic, among others.

5   Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 97.

peoples: divide and conquer was/is a frequently practiced hegemonic strategy.

Still, the play of power is a two-way street and although certainly the colonizer had the majority of power, contact with Indigenous peoples in the late 1800s, particularly Indigenous women, may well have laid the ground for early feminism. Seneca (Iroquois) women were present at the Seneca Falls Convention held in New York, July nineteenth to the twentieth ,1848 and supported white-settler women's bid for the vote. The feminist Lucretia Mott, with other like-minded Quaker women rights activists at the conference, drew on her discussions with Seneca women to shape her contribution toward a definition of women 's rights.[6]

During the early centuries of colonization Indigenous women of Turtle Island often acted as liaisons between Indigenous and white-settler governing bodies and were authoritative in both groups.[7] Nanye-hi/ Nancy Ward (1738-1822), for example, sought to find peace between the Cherokee and white settlers. Ward has been named the Beloved Woman by the Cherokee because of her bravery in battle. As the Beloved Woman she had say over prisoners of war as well as participated in negotiations between Cherokee and white-settlers. However, over time and under pressure of white-settler, pro-masculine governments, Cherokee social organization shifted toward a more patriarchal model and Nanye-hi was the last woman to be name the Beloved Woman.[8]

Relations between Indigenous peoples and white-settlers moved between conflict and a tense peace as land was appropriated and Indigenous people forcibly moved off their lands to reserves, as Indigenous people were starved into submission, as the military became a means of

6   Nancy Hewitt, "Re-Rooting American Women's Activism: Global Perspectives on 1848," in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, Carole R. McCann and Seung-kyung Kim (UK: Routledge, 2013), 37.

7   Nancy Shoemaker, "Introduction," in *Negotiators of Change: Historical Perspectives on Native American Women*, ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1–25.

8   Theda Perdue, *Cherokee Women: Gender and Cultural Change 1700–1835* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

the governance of Indigenous peoples, and as Indigenous peoples were marked by race and economic status and defined as unequal because of their so-called "savagery", their lack of one of the Christianities ("heathens"), and their orality. Indigenous women, who had moved between the two groups were redefined as seducers and pariah by white settlers and betrayers by some Indigenous peoples.[9] Nanye-hi's last declaration to the chief's council was to tell them not to part with any more land, but her words were ignored and in 1819, three years before her death, her town was ceded and she moved to Ocoee Valley where she ran an Inn until her death in 1822.[10]

Over time, and in connection with the second wave of colonization and with the arrival of white-settler women, the status of Indigenous women became increasingly precarious in white settler societies. Missionaries and white women spoke avidly against liaisons between Indigenous women and white fur-traders, while British and French law did not recognize these marriages and so often the fur traders would return to Europe and leave behind their Indigenous wives, children, relatives and friends. In the middle and later period of settlement and appropriation of land (17-18th centuries), the marriage of primarily male settlers with Indigenous women was frowned upon and by the late 19th and early 20th centuries made illegal throughout the United States in miscegenation laws.[11] With the imposition of white-settler gender ideologies, the coming of missionaries and white-settler women, the status of Indig-

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9   Denise Henning, "Yes, My Daughter, We Are Cherokee Women," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing, 2007), 187–98; Grace Ouellette, ed., *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal. Women's Activism* (Halifax, NS: Fernwood Press, 2002), 36.

10 Theda Perdue, "Nancy Ward (1738?-1822)," in *Portraits of American Women: From Settlement to the Present*, G. J. Barker-Benfield and Catherine Clinton (New York; London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 83–100.

11 Anna Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," *Hypatia* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 162–81 *"Beyond the Pale": Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization*. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4640067.

enous women as viable, powerful, and informed members of Indigenous society began a downward spiral. In the social stratification of the new colonies, Indigenous women were placed at the bottom and oppression was enacted upon Indigenous women by white men, white women, and subsequently Indigenous men.

Prior to the Indian Act of 1876, there had been a gradual shift toward tightening up and regulating all things related to the Indigenous peoples of Canada. For example, in "An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada" passed in 1850, referring to occupation of reserve lands, the definition of Indigenous included "all those of Indian blood and their descendants, non-Indians who have married Indians living on the designated lands, and even persons adopted in infancy by Indians".[12] Within a year this legislation became more restrictive and denied non-Indigenous men who married Indigenous women the right to claim status, but status could be acquired by non-Indigenous woman who married Indigenous men. The descendants of these intermarriages who resided on reserve land would be thought of as Indigenous regardless of the status of the female spouse. It is at this juncture that Indigenous status was developed within patrilineal systems of identity and inheritance.

The concept of enfranchisement was introduced in 1857 through an act that continued to encourage the gradual "civilization," as white-settlers deemed it, of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The act applied to both upper and lower Canada and gave voting rights to Indigenous adult men who, if they sought enfranchisement, lost their Indigenous status. Instead they would operate within white settler society, although they would still receive land and a sum of money equal to that of members of the band and they could continue to live on reserve land. The spouse and children of an enfranchised Indigenous adult man were also

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12 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Canada, Rene Dussault, and Georges Erasmus, *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, Volume 4, Perspectives and realities (Ottawa: Federal and Provincial Royal Commissions, Commissions of Inquiry, and Reports, 1996), 24, Http://hdl.handle.net/1974/6874.

enfranchised when he was and they also lost their Indigenous status. Equally though, neither could vote, and the "enfranchised" Indigenous woman did not receive a share of reserve land, as at this time the effort was to ensure Indigenous women were properly submissive to their husbands.[13] If the man died, for example, and if there were no children, she could inherit his estate and live on the land until her death whereupon ownership of the land would revert to the Crown. This is part of the "Gradual Civilization Act" wherein white settler governments became the legal body that determined Indigenous status or who was or was not Indigenous.[14]

In the "Gradual Enfranchisement Act" of 1869 Indigenous women continued to lose their rights. Operating within white-settler masculine hegemony, Indigenous women were explicitly denied the right to vote in band elections since voting was restricted to adult men only, as it was in white-settler society. Further, drawing from the Gradual Civilization Act, an Indigenous woman who married an Indigenous man from another band lost membership in her home band, as did her children who became members of the husband/father's band. No similar provisions applied to Indigenous men who married non-Indigenous women and nor did they lose treaty payments. In these two acts covering the period between 1850 and 1869 Indigenous women lost social, political, and economic power/status and faced the intersection of colonial, racial and sexual discriminated in Canada. They essentially lost the right to produce Indigenous children: only Indigenous men could do that.

The Indian Act of 1876 instituted Indigenous women's status as subordinate to that of Indigenous men. The method of tracing descent through the male, or the patrilineal line, was imposed upon the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Practices, found among the Iroquois confederacy of the Great Lakes region of Canada, the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian of British Columbia, for example, traced descent through the mother's line (matrilineal), while clan mothers were powerful women. Identity and status

13   McManus, *The Line Which Separates*.

14   Canada, Dussault, and Erasmus, *Perspectives and Realities*, 24.

confirmed on men of the group and their sons was/is a white-settler practice imposed on Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.[15]

By 1920 the amendments to the Indian Act of 1876 located the majority of power in the office of the superintendent general at the expense of band councils. Where band councils had continued in a number of locations to provide Indigenous women with treaty annuity payments and band money distributions, in order that these women could remain linked with their bands, the amendment to the Indian Act removed this power from the band and lodged it in the hands of the superintendent general of Indigenous Affairs. A further amendment introduced at this time forced the enfranchisement of any "Indigenous, male or female, found to be fit for enfranchisement along with his or her children".[16]

In 1951 the Indian Act was revised again and a number of provisions were introduced effected the lives of Indigenous women. The Indian Act used the language of blood to identify and establish Indigenous status. In this amendment the language of registration was also used in order to confer Indigenous status. Those registered as Indians would be the only persons to be recognized as Indian and therefore able to occupy reserve land and receive treaty annuity payments and band money distribution. Many, then, who had been involuntarily enfranchised, or mistakenly struck from band membership, or overlooked under this rule could not qualify for status. They would have had to have been registered with the band in order to secure Indian status.[17]

Secondly, the double mother rule was applied. In this ruling a child lost status at age twenty-one if his or her mother and grandmother had

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15   Joyce Green, "Canaries in the Mines of Citizenship: Indian Women in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 34, no. 4 (2001): 723; Carrie Bourassa, Kim McKay-McNabb, and Mary Hampton, "Racism, Sexism, and Colonialism: The Impact on the Health of Aboriginal Women in Canada," in *First Voices: An Aboriginal Women's Reader*, eds. Patricia A. Monture and Patricia D. McGuire (Toronto: Inanna Publications and Educations, 2009), 296–97.

16   Canada, Dussault, and Erasmus, *Perspectives and Realities*, 29.

17   Green, "Canaries in the Mines of Citizenship," 723.

obtained status only through marriage to a man with Indigenous status. The logic here appears to have been that after two generations in which a non-Indigenous person had married into an Indigenous community, any children of the 2nd generation marriage should be removed on the basis of their mixed culture and blood. But this also had further ramifications. Those women who were Indigenous, but who had lost status under Canadian law, their children and/or grandchildren also lost status: Identity was conferred through the paternal line and not the maternal line. The masculine hegemonic blinders of the government caused immense grief to Indigenous peoples of both genders.[18]

Between the year of 1951 and 1985, during the emergence of mid-twentieth century feminisms, there was a growing awareness of inequality and the lack of civil rights. By the 1960s the Black civil rights movement, the American Indian Movement, the Anti-war movement, the women's movements, and the push for the decolonization of once colonized countries formed to challenge the social structures that dominated their lives. They challenged racism, sexism, and colonialism inherent to the legal, political, educational, and religious institutions of Canada and United States. For example, in final report of the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, the Commission expressed a concern with the

> special kind of discrimination under the terms of the Indian Act. ...the loss of Indigenous status, or enfranchisement, implies that rights and privileges given to a member of a band… will be denied to that person…enfranchisement or deletion of the name of an Indian from the Indian Registry is much more frequent for women than men.[19]

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18 Bourassa, McKay-McNabb, and Hampton, "Racism, Sexism, and Colonialism: The Impact on the Health of Aboriginal Women in Canada," 297–98; Canada, Dussault, and Erasmus, *Perspectives and Realities*, 37; Green, "Canaries in the Mines of Citizenship," 724–25; Joyce Green, "Balancing Strategies: Aboriginal Women and Constitutional Rights in Canada," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Winnipeg; London UK: Fernwood Publishing; Zed Books, 2007), 146.

19 *Report of the Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, Volume 4, Chapter 2* (Ottawa:

The commission recommended that the Act be amended to allow Indigenous women to retain their status even if they married non-Indigenous men, and furthermore that their children share their status. However, it would take more time and numerous legal trials in Canada before the white-settler, masculinist Indian Act was toppled. Indigenous women, supported by some feminist groups in Canada, but particularly by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, challenged the Indian Act and the discrimination Indigenous women faced.

Because of the 1982 amendment to the Constitution, which then incorporated the Canadian Charter of the Bill of Rights and Freedoms, the government was forced to deal with its exclusion of Indigenous women in the Indian Act.[20] The charter states in Section 15 that "every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability." This came into effect in April of 1985 and shortly thereafter Bill C31 (1985) amended various parts of the Indian Act and those who had lost Indigenous status because of marriage were now able to reclaim it. Indigenous women were able to once again confer Indigenous identity upon their children.

Industrial and Residential Schools: "Never enough to eat"

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries boarding schools rather than schools on the reserves became the norm in Canada and the US. The effort was, as many of the staff of the Christian-run schools enacted, "to take the Indian out of the girl or boy". The history of these schools and their abuse of Indigenous children has become part of mainstream knowledge particularly in light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada. For over one hundred years residential and industrial schools were touted as good, and therefore necessary, for Indigenous children to attend. This remained the case well after it was realized that

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Government of Canada, 1996).

20   Green, "Balancing Strategies," 150–51.

Indigenous children were abused, some to their deaths, in these schools. As for the parents of the children, resistance to their children being taken away was often met with starvation or imprisonment.

Working with Christian institutional authorities, the Canadian and US federal governments determined that the best course of action to assimilate, and therefore erase, Indigenous peoples, was through their children. Education, like health care, was a treaty right, but instead of governments providing education they instead set up mechanisms intent on "kill[ing] the Indian in order to save the man".[21] Although initially there had been on-reserve and/or local schools, boarding schools became the preferred choice for governments and Christian institutions agreed to develop these boarding schools, particularly in light of the effort to ensure that Indigenous peoples converted to one of the Christianities. Indeed, there had been a general agreement between Anglican and Catholics in some locations of Canada as to jurisdictional oversight of Indigenous peoples.[22] Whether Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, or United Church these religious institutions worked with governments to produce an extensive systemic structure for the eradication of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the 2008 Boarding School Healing Project exposed the horrendous abuse and exploitation in these institutions. In Canada off-reserve residential schools began in 1879, were thriving in the 1920s and early 1930s and finally closed in 1984. Over these years they had housed approximately one third of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.[23] In United States off-reserve industrial schools began about the same time as Canada with the founding of the Carlise Indian School in Pennsylvania (1879). The school was founded by Captain Richard Pratt, the military man who authored the phrase "Kill the Indian in order to save the man". Residential/In-

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21   Madeline Engel, Norma Kolko Phillips, and Frances A. DellaCava, "Indigenous Children's Rights," *International Journal of Children's Rights* 20 (2012): 281.

22   Trevor John Williams, "Compulsive Measures: Resisting Residential Schools at One-Arrow Reserve, 1889–1896," *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 34, no. 2 (2014): 3–4.

23   Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava. "Indigenous children's rights", 280.

dustrial schools were harsh environments and in them many Indigenous children died. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the death rate for children in residential schools was almost five times higher than the general death rate of non-residential school children.[24] David Adam's in *Education for extinction* also notes that boarding schools in the US although not properly recording deaths of students were sites for the transmission of communicative diseases such as tuberculosis.[25] Madeline Engel, Norma Phillips and Frances DellaCava write that:

> In Canada, the schools were overcrowded, students were malnourished and, according to government records, communicable diseases, especially tuberculosis, resulted in death rates of 40 percent to almost 70 percent in one decade (BSHP, 2008, p. 5). Even in the early 1900s an overall death rate of 24 percent characterized the boarding school population.[26]

Having separate Indigenous children from their parents, these schools further prevented siblings from interacting with each other in order to further ensure that the children would leave behind their Indigenous ways of being. Indigenous posture, hair, mannerisms languages, dress, interactions, games, and knowledge were emphatically suppressed in order to emplace a not-quite-citizen worker who would work cheaply and efficiently for white-settlers. Typically the kind of education taught Indigenous girls domestic work and Indigenous boys manual labour.[27] Vibrant and essential Indigenous knowledge was represented as back-

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24 *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Ottawa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 93.

25 David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 132–33.

26 Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava. Indigenous children's rights, 280.

27 Andrea Smith, *Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools: A Comparative Study* (New York, NY: Secretariat of the United Nations, Permanent forum on Indigenous issues, 2008).

ward and pagan,[28] and severely repressed in the schools. Interaction between Indigenous children was so heavily monitored and repressed that children were taught to repress their care for others and not to respond to their pain:

> Of her time at Alberni Residential School, Irma Bos remembers the school was 'a sad place to have gone, cause kids used to cry, cry at night . . . and I remember that . . . sometimes another girl would get into bed with whoever was crying' just to, to comfort them. And ahh, the supervisor used to come in and . . .they'd [the comforters] get strapped or hit'.[29]

Kindness, gentleness, concern, curiosity, even humour - all qualities of good parenting - were disciplined from the children. So harsh were the conditions over the one-hundred and fifty years of the operation of residential/industrial schools that many Indigenous children brought their own lives to an end: death was better than the boarding school:

> Stephen Kakfwi, who attended Grollier Hall in Inuvik and Grandin College in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, said this lack of compassion affected the way students treated one another. "No hugs, nothing, no comfort. Everything that, I think, happened in the residential schools, we picked it up: we didn't get any hugs; you ain't going to get one out of me I'll tell you that." Victoria McIntosh said that life at the Fort Alexander, Manitoba, school taught her not to trust anyone. "You learn not to cry anymore. You just get harder. And yeah, you learn to shut down.[30]

Family separation, sibling separation, and gender separation were mechanisms by which the white-settler residential/industrial school system sought to control Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. The separate sphere gender ideology of the early 20th century separated the male and female

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28 Williams, "Compulsive Measures: Resisting Residential Schools at One-Arrow Reserve, 1889–1896."

29 Sarah de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms: The Material and Experienced Places of British Columbia's Residential Schools," *The Canadian Geographer / Le G´Eographe Canadien* 51, no. 3 (2007): 353.

30 *Honouring the Truth*, 42–43.

with one, the male, prepared the public sphere and the other, the female, for the domestic sphere. In this model of family formation, the patriarch ruled the family with the support and obedience from the wife/mother. This, of course, was an ideal promoted by white-settler men, whose lives did not often reflect the kind of gender reality they sought to impose on Indigenous peoples. Gender organization among Indigenous peoples of Canada and the US varied but tended to operate in a balanced fashion so that females, males and other genders had status within the social body and made decisions and contributions to it. Women could and did make decisions for themselves and moved about freely within their communities. Such movement, however, was perceived as highly problematic as, Sheila McManus writes, the Canadian state was perplexed by the autonomy and freedom of movement of Indigenous women and disapprovingly called it promiscuity.[31] The separate spheres gender ideologies of the French and English, Christian white-settlers were treated as normative and in this, then, necessary for Indigenous peoples to adopt if they were to become "civilized". Hierarchy and power-over were normative to most Eurowestern social systems and therefore deemed normative to proper human evolution (See also[32] and[33]).

Starvation and inedible food were part of the lives of Indigenous children in residential schools in Canada and the US. Parents of children frequently complained of their children's physical condition as they were "underfed and severely malnourished".[34] John Milloy writes "[m]any children at too many schools...lived out their lives ... "ill-feed and ill-clothed and turned out into the cold to work"; they were trapped, "unhappy with a feeling of slavery existing in their minds, no aims, no feelings" and no way to escape except in "thought" - in their imagination

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31 McManus, *The Line Which Separates*, 99.

32   de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms."

33   Smith, *Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools*.

34   Ian Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 46, no. 91 (Mai-May 2013): 149.

and memories of home".[35] Children endured starvation rations and mal-nourishment which led to vulnerability to illnesses such as the flu or tu-berculosis.[36] And, even, as tuberculosis swept through residential schools where not only food was insufficient in amount and poor in quality, the states of the schools themselves were a problem: most had been badly located with little shelter, they had been poorly constructed, and as time went on were often in disrepair.[37]

Residential and industrial schools also acted as "natural laborato-ries"[38] where so-called scientific research was conducted. In 1947 Lionel Pett, director of the Nutrition Services Division and nutritional scientist, for example, planned a project that would involve Indigenous children in residential schools. This was done without their knowledge or permis-sion or that of their parents. His study sought to find a way to provide the necessary nutrition to Indigenous children while not substantially increasing food costs.[39] He chose six residential schools and through a system of intervention and non-intervention examined the effects of the lack of nutrition and vitamins such as A, B, and C in children over five years. His study consisted of a non-interventive control group and an interventive research group. The control group, although found to be equally deficient in vitamins and food, were not given supplements or increased food rations. The research group were given both. The control group was maintained in a state of malnourishment for five years so that

35 John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 110.

36 Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952," 149.

37 Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System*; Canada, Dussault, and Erasmus, *Perspectives and Realities*; de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms"; Smith, *Indigenous Peoples and Boarding Schools*.

38 Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 109.

39 Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952," 160.

Pett and his research could chart the effects. They even went so far as to ensure children in the control group did not receive dental care over the period of the study as it would have interfered with the results of the study.[40]

Other kinds of abuse were also common in residential schools and took every imagined form. Coercion and violence were common place as children were punished for infractions determined by the staff of the schools. The government did not institute regulations concerning physical punishment of the children until 1937 whereupon a circular had been sent out speaking to proper procedures.[41] It did little, however, to prevent the abuse and neglect of Indigenous children in the schools. John Milloy's study of residential schools in Canada catalogues the abuse and notes the connection between punishment, running away and death seen in the tragedy of eight-year-old Duncan Sticks who, in 1902, froze to death fleeing physical punishment by staff at Williams Lake Industrial School in British Columbia. Four young boys in 1937 fled from brutality, this time from in the Lejac Residential School, British Columbia, only to freeze to death as well.[42] The children were found in light clothing, one without shoes.

Sexual violence was one of the abuses children fled when running away from residential schools. Young children were preyed upon by staff, religious and lay, as well as by older students who themselves had been abused by staff when young. Jean Oakes, an elder of the Nekaneet people of Saskatchewan, commented to Candace Savage that "[t]hese nuns and priests, they use to treat girls bad. The nuns would be holding the girls, and the priests there".[43] Sarah de Leeuw writes that "Aborigi-

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40 Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952," 162–63.

41 Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System*, 140.

42 Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System*, 142–43.

43 Candace Savage, *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory from a Prairie Land-*

nal girls and young women were particularly susceptible to the bodily implication of colonialism....It should perhaps come as no little surprise that the testimonies of former residential school students include (albeit very scant) recollections of pregnancy and abortion within the schools".[44] With the sterilization acts in British Columbia and Alberta, school officials could also sterilize any Indigenous children under their charge further dealing with unwanted pregnancies. Sterilization of groups of children could occur once they reach puberty.[45]

Indigenous parents who sought to intervene were often criminalized themselves. Indigenous parents frequently resisted residential schools for their children, but the Canadian and US government had made it illegal for Indigenous patents not to send their children to residential schools. The primary intention of the schools was not an education, but assimilation and therefore the push for governments to ensure schooling. Efforts to force Indigenous peoples to send their children to boarding schools amounted to rations being withheld until children were given over.[46] In one instance an older woman, whose rations had been withheld, finally turned her children over to Qu'Appelle Industrial School in Saskatchewan only to die several days later from starvation and tuberculosis.[47] By 1920 Indigenous parents who did not turn their children over faced criminal charges,[48] while children who refused to go could be

scape (Vancouver, Toronto, Berkeley: Greystone Books, 2012), 165.

44 de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms," 349–50.

45 Leonardo Pegoraro, "Second-Rate Victims: The Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Peoples in the USA and Canada," *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 2 (2015): 162. DOI:10.1080/2201473X.2014.955947.

46 Williams, "Compulsive Measures: Resisting Residential Schools at One-Arrow Reserve, 1889–1896," 201; Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928*, 211.

47 Williams, "Compulsive Measures: Resisting Residential Schools at One-Arrow Reserve, 1889–1896," 202.

48 Sarah de Leeuw, "'If Anything is to Be Done with the Indian, We Must Catch Him Very Young': Colonial Constructions of Aboriginal Children and the Geographies of Indian Residential Schooling in British Columbia, Canada," *Children's Geographies* 7, no. 2 (2009): 130. doi:10.1080/14733280902798837.

charged with truancy and sent to a reformatory; a place possibly more violence than the boarding schools.[49] Indigenous parents resisted the governments but in the face of starvation and jail, and as their children faced the threat of reform schools, they reluctantly turned their children over. The governments and associated Christian Institutions were a primary means by which to disrupt Indigenous parenting; a mechanism in their efforts to "kill the Indian". As Mary-Ellen Kelm argues:

> A major function of the residential schools, according to Frank Pedley, deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs in 1902, was "the removal of pupils from the retrogressive influence of home life. Central to this view was the notion that Aboriginal parents were negligent parents and especially that unassimilated Native women made poor mothers. Advocates of residential schools frequently failed to recognize that Aboriginal parents were, in many cases, simply doing the best they could under impoverished conditions; conditions that were due, in fact, to the impact of governmental decisions and the influences of settler society.[50]

When residential schools began to close their doors in the 1960s - officially closed in 1969 in Canada by the federal government, but in the US most were closed by 2007 - the next government intervention Indigenous parents faced was called the "1960s baby-scoop", which actually lasted until the late 1980s in Canada.[51] The removal of Indigenous children from their homes for adoption reflected the continuing belief of white-settler governments that Indigenous parents, particularly mothers, were unfit. This determination of unfitness was measured in part by the degree of assimilation into Eurowestern social organizations, and in particular to the assimilation of white-settler gender ideology of the

49   Alexander Pisciotta, "Race, Sex, and Rehabilitation: A Study of Differential Treatment in the Juvenile Reformatory, 1825–1900," *Crime and Delinquency* 29, no. 2 (1983): 254–69.

50   Mary-Ellen Kelm, "A Scandalous Procession': Residential Schooling and the Shaping of Aboriginal Bodies," *Native Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (1996): 55–56.

51   Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava, "Indigenous children's rights, 287; *Honouring the Truth*, 68-69

subordination and domesticity of the female/feminine to the dominating male/masculine.[52]

In Canada the "baby-scoop" that operated for close to three decades was based on colonialist, racist, and often misguided views about Indigenous peoples of Canada. Indigenous mothers, fathers, and families had children removed for reasons such as poverty; a situation imposed on them by the same government removing their children. Indigenous culture and language continued to be viewed as problematic, as was Indigenous women's autonomy, particularly sexual autonomy, which continued to be viewed as inappropriate and for these reason as well as others children, many infants and toddlers, were taken away from their mothers. We read in the summary of Truth and Reconciliation that "[i]n 1977, Aboriginal children accounted for 44% of the children in care in Alberta, 51% of the children in care in Saskatchewan, and 60% of the children in care in Manitoba".[53] Engels, Phillips and DellaCava indicate that, citing P. Johnston, over 11,000 Indigenous children in Canada were taken from their homes by provincial social workers.[54] Although this problem was made apparent and steps taken to prevent adoptions of Indigenous children in the 1980s, Indigenous children continue to removed from their homes, but rather than adoption fosters homes, often multiple homes, have come into play.[55]

United States has also a long history of orphanages for Indigenous children a result of infection and death of Indigenous peoples. As in Canada, the industrial school system was a place where Indigenous children were placed should their parents die: extended family relations were never considered as such relations represented a less civilized state in the view of white-settler ideology. In 1958 the Indian Adoption Project was established and it operated until 1967. Over this period seven hundred Indigenous children were placed in non-Indigenous homes, and

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52 Smith, *Conquest*, 37.

53 *Honouring the Truth*, 69.

54 Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava, "Indigenous children's rights", 288.

55 Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava, "Indigenous children's rights", 289.

although adopted ceased, removal and foster care have not. Engels, Phillips and DellaCava write that:

> In South Dakota, Native American children constituted 7 percent of the population, but comprised 54 percent of children placed in adoptive homes by the Department of Public Welfare; and in Wisconsin, Indian children were separated from their parents at a rate 1,600 times than that of non-Indian children.[56]

Indigenous girls and women and sterilization

Even if some 19th century white-settler feminists learned from and worked with Indigenous women, what would become mainstream feminism was white-settler and was shaped by the knowledge systems of the time. White-settler feminism fell prey to the narrative of colonialism that combined Indigeneity, racism, heteronormativity, and Christianity to produce the figure of the colonialist Indigenous subject who was in need of civilizing. And, if that failed, then the Indigenous "other" would be allowed to "die off", although this "dying off" frequently took the form of murder enacted through warfare, slaughter, starvation, and contracted illnesses. The American Secretary of the Interior Henry Teller wrote in 1883 that, "[c]ontact has come between the settler and the Indian in all parts of the country. Civilization and savagery cannot dwell together... [the Indigenous person] must adopt the 'white man's ways' or be swept away by the vices of savage life ..." (in[57]).

Nellie McClung along with Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, and Irene Parlby, the "famous five" were also Eugenicists and held to the view of the necessity for the purification of the human species in order to achieve proper human evolution.[58] Mixed with

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56   Engel, Phillips, and DellaCava, "Indigenous children's Rights", 290.

57   McManus, *The Line Which Separates*, 63.

58   Erin L. Moss, Henderikus J. Stam, and Diane Kattevilder, "From Suffrage to Sterilization: Eugenics and the Women's Movement in 20th Century Alberta," *Canadian Psychology* 54, no. 2 (2013): 109. http://search.proquest.com/docview/1394237716?accountid=13480; Karen Stote, "The Coercive Steriliza-

early 20th century Social Darwinism, Eugenics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the necessity to cleanse and purify the social body in order that human evolution arrive at its proper end in history. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sociology, medicine, biology, legal studies and other sites for the production of knowledge such as Christian institutions in Canada (and the Eurowest) assumed that there was racial distinction between classes and races of people. This way of thinking was actively engaged, for example, by the "famous five" who were central to passing the 1928 Sterilization Act in Alberta.[59] They may have secured personhood for women, but those women were white and elite. They also opposed the immigration of those classified as non-whites.

Eugenics, enacted by the medical establishment in Canada, was manifested in one form as the sterilization of peoples considered to be drains on the nation and its resources. The feeble-minded (closely linked to the feminine since the female was intellectually incapable), the criminal, the insane, the "moron", the destitute, all were used against Indigenous peoples of North America.[60] US and Canadian governments could deny active efforts to reduce Indigenous populations through recourse to the above categories as reasons why Indigenous women (and men to a lesser degree) were "legally" sterilized well into the 1970s.

The sterilization of the Indigenous women of Turtle Island was practiced in both United States and Canada from the outset of colonization in one form or another. Colonization in both the US and Canada was a process of elimination and assimilation. Such practices, many felt, would ensure the demise of Indigenous peoples, and it was not until the 1900s with concrete evidence of an increase in Indigenous populations that other means of control, sterilization, were brought into play.[61] As Leonardo

tion of Aboriginal Women in Canada," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 36, no. 3 (2012): 144–45, n.19.

59 Moss, Stam, and Kattevilder, "From Suffrage to Sterilization: Eugenics and the Women's Movement in 20th Century Alberta."

60 Stote, "The Coercive Sterilization of Aboriginal Women in Canada," 125.

61 D. Marie Ralstin-Lewis, "The Continued Struggle Against Genocide: Indigenous Women's Reproductive Rights," *Wicazo Sa Review* 20, no. 1 (Spring

Pegoraro writes " The 'surgical' solution or 'eugenocide', as Philip Reilly and Edwin Black respectively called it, began its legal history when J. Frank Hanly, Governor of Indiana, on 9 April 1907 signed a law authorizing the compulsory sterilization of any criminal, idiot, rapist, or mentally demented".[62] Each of these socially constructed categories was loosely defined and applied in order to target certain demographic groups in the United States and Canada. Anna Stubblefield comments that:

> J. Langdon Down, whose name is still invoked in the classification of "Down Syndrome," based his understanding of intellectual deficiency on theories like Chambers's. Expounding upon his original 1866 publication, "Ethnic Classification of Idiots," Down wrote, "I was struck by the remarkable resemblance of feeble-minded children to the various ethnic types of the human family." He proceeded to discuss white feeble-minded children who, "from some deteriorating influence" had been "removed into another ethnic type" and therefore resembled so-called Negro, Malay, North American Indian, or Mongolian people....[63]

Indigenous peoples were marked as uncivilized, impure, and perceived as a general threat to white-settler social formations. And, if a threat, then they needed to be controlled, and control was effected, in large measure, through recourse to the bodies of those humans marked as female/feminine[64] although certainly Indigenous boys and men were also sterilized in line with these racist views. Lewis Terman, a Stanford psychologist, leading expert in developing intelligence tests, and supporter of Eugenics wrote in his 1916 text *The measure of intelligence*:

> Their dullness seems to be racial, or at least inherent in the family stocks from which they come. The fact that one meets

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　　　2005): 77.

62　Pegoraro, "Second-Rate Victims: The Forced Sterilization of Indigenous Peoples in the USA and Canada," 163.

63　Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," 171.

64　Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," 178–79.

this type with such extraordinary frequency among Indians, Mexicans, and negroes [sic] suggests quite forcibly that the whole question of racial differences in mental traits will have to be taken up anew and by experimental methods…Children of this group should be segregated in special classes and be given instruction which is concrete and practical. They cannot master abstractions, but they often can be made efficient workers, able to look out for themselves. There is no possibility at present of convincing society that they should not be allowed to reproduce, although from a eugenic point of view they constitute a grave problem because of their unusually prolific breeding.[65]

Anna Stubblefield writes that in the area of family studies, feeble-mindedness was linked to morality and subsequently became the means to "deal with" the moral problems of "pauperism, sexual promiscuity, criminality, and vagabondage".[66] Over decades from the 1920s until the 1950s Eugenics flourished in Eurowestern knowledge systems shaping medicine, the law, the government, and the general population who were told repeatedly by respected authorities that Indigenous peoples, and all peoples marked by race were deficient.[67]

In Canada Alberta and British Columbia established a sexual sterilization act that was in legal effect from 1928 until 1972 and 1933-1973 respectively. Other provinces in Canada did not have an explicit sterilization act, but equally engaged in the practice of the coercive sterilization within the framework of Eugenics. The process was, like in the US, one of declaring the individual incompetent, not difficult with women, and even less so for Indigenous women, and if reproductive then measures were taken to ensure the individual did not reproduce or further reproduce. In 1937, in order to ensure that governments were not implicated in

65   Miroslav Chávez-García, "Testing at Whittier School, 1890–1920," *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (May 2007): 217–18.

66   Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," 125.

67   Stubblefield, "'Beyond the Pale': Tainted Whiteness, Cognitive Disability, and Eugenic Sterilization," 163.

racial genocide, the act was amended so that consent prior to sterilization was necessary; but consent from those deemed "mentally defective" was not necessary. As Karen Stote comments, "the proportion of Aboriginal peoples sterilized by the Act rose steadily from 1939 onward, tripling from 1949-1959....consent for sterilization was only sought in 17 percent of Aboriginal cases. More than 77 percent were defined as mentally defective and hence their consent was not needed".[68]

The criteria of mental defectiveness were broad and included judgements with regard to morality. In the frame of Eugenics and later "population control" (1950s-1980s) sexual activity outside of the boundary of marriage, promiscuity and unwillingness to be subordinate to white-settlers, particularly men, were criteria that signified the individual as mentally defective. Doctors' letters used in trial transcripts draw on the trope of the sexual promiscuous Indian woman to legitimate their sterilization of Indigenous women. Seen in physician records, waywardness or promiscuity is a primary criterion for the sterilization of women in general, and Indigenous women in particular. The Supervisor of Social Services wrote a summary to the Eugenics Board concerning an Indigenous woman in his care:

> Patient is a mental defective, with numerous behaviour problems, particularly being promiscuous and associating with undesirables. Sterilization is, therefore, strongly recommended to prevent patient from having illegitimate children which the community would have to care for and for whom it would be very difficult to find foster homes. (in[69])

Improper sexual behaviour, including same sex relations, could locate one, if racialized or Indigenous in the medical industrial complex, as Barbara Gurr names it.[70]

Sterilization did not come to an end when Eugenics slipped quietly away into the night. Population control, shaped in line with Thomas Mal-

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68   Stote, "The Coercive Sterilization of Aboriginal Women in Canada," 120–21.

69   Stote, "The Coercive Sterilization of Aboriginal Women in Canada," 122.

70   Barbara Gurr, *Reproductive Justice: The Politics of Health Care for Native American Women* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 35.

thus' essay "On the principle of population" (1798). This essay provided the basis for the theory and practice of population control in United States conducted through such methods as the sterilization of Indigenous peoples as a so-called undesirable population: undesirable in large part because they stood in the way of access to minerals on reserve lands, and to whom the government owed resources as part of treaty agreements. And, once again although both Indigenous males and females were targeted, reproductive Indigenous girls and women were the primary targets.

In United States the Indian Health Services (IHS) became a primary site for the sterilization of Indigenous women. Work done by the group Women of All Red Nations, by Indigenous feminist Wilma Mankiller, and academics Myla Vicenti Carpio, Jane Lawrence, Andrea Smith, and Karen Stote, among others, made apparent how Indigenous women had a higher incident of sterilization, many of which were done without knowledge or consent or were coercively done. It has been estimated that forty-two percent of reproductive Indigenous women of the US were sterilized between 1968 and 1982.[71] So many Indigenous women were sterilization in the US that Myla Vicenti Carpio[72] speaks of a generation that was lost, while Marie Ralstin-Lewis writes:

> From 1970 to 1980, the birthrate for Indian women fell at a rate seven times greater than that of white women. This dramatic statistic indicates that the sterilization and birth control campaign was significantly more than an attack on women in general: it was a systematic program aimed at reducing the Native population, or genocide.[73]

Carpio has argued that the Eugenics of pre-World War II was translated into population control and although the discourse shifted, the outcomes

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71 Gurr, *Reproductive Justice: The Politics of Health Care for Native American Women*, 125.

72 Myla Vicenti Carpio, "The Lost Generation: American Indian Women and Sterilization Abuse," *Social Justice* 31, no. 4 (98) (2004): 40–53.

73 Ralstin-Lewis, "The Continued Struggle Against Genocide: Indigenous Women's Reproductive Rights," 72.

did not.[74] Andrea Smith, among other Indigenous scholars of United States, has argued that the sterilization of Indigenous women was a direct effort of the US government to deal with the so-called Indian problem. Sterilization was promoted to Indigenous women (and women of colour in general in the US) during the 1960s and 1970s as a method of birth control. Other Indigenous women were sterilized without their knowledge, sterilized just after a birth, or were sterilized as a measure to deal with another problem.[75]

Reproductive health care in the United States for Indigenous women, and women of colour, has been and continues to be problematic. Limited health care combined with limited resources embedded in a neocolonial context of United States has meant that Indigenous people's health care, rooted in eugenics and population control, has not been medicine for their best interests. Instead, health care was the means by which to control, experiment on and reduce the number of Indigenous peoples. According to Jane Lawrence, drawing on a study of IHS physicians performing sterilizations in the mid-1970s:

> the majority...were white, Euro-American males who believed that they were helping society by limiting the number of births in low-income, minority families.... Some of them did not believe that American Indian and other minority women had the intelligence to use other methods of birth control effectively and that there were already too many minority individuals causing problems in the nation, including the Black Panthers and the American Indian Movement.[76]

Resistance to Sterilization is a defining aspect of Indigenous women's reproductive justice[77] and one aspect of their roles as mothers. Governments in an effort to reduce Indigenous populations targeted Indigenous

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74 Carpio, "The Lost Generation: American Indian Women and Sterilization Abuse," 40.

75 Smith, *Conquest*, 80–83.

76 Jane Lawrence, "The Indian Health Service and the Sterilization of Native American Women," *American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (Simmer 2000): 410.

77 Jael Silliman, et al., *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2004), 105.

women's bodies as the site of control, but what was also targeted was their capacity as knowledge and history bearers. This attack came in the form of creating a rupture between generations; between grandmothers, mothers, aunts, and daughters in the removal of Indigenous children from their homes. The baby-scoop not only followed closely upon Indigenous women's resistance to sterilization, it also followed upon the closure of residential schools in Canada; another site for the destruction of Indigenous mothering.

Resilience in the face of white-settler colonization

In the face of hundreds of years of colonization and oppression, Indigenous peoples have managed to overcome efforts to erase them as the peoples of Turtle Island. Mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers, and aunts and uncles spoke their stories and in so doing ensured the continuance of narrative ties that link the generations over many centuries regardless of the residential/industrial school complex. John Adams wrote in his text *Education for extinction* that among the Indigenous students of the boarding schools there were "clandestine acts of cultural preservation"[78] enacted through the art of story-telling. In the night Indigenous children told stories to each other that they had heard from elders. Francis La Flesche recalls how "he and his Omaha friends regularly retreated to a small storeroom, where by candlelight they told stories and ate pemmican secured by secret raids on nearby camps." Another survivor of the boarding school system commented that "[e]ven when we were in school we used to think about our own people and our own ways. Someone in the dormitory would start telling a Coyote story".[79] James Miller also notes this resistance writing that "[p]robably the best symbol of Native resistance to the intrusive and oppressive nature of residential schools was found in the persistence of traditional cultural

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78 Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928*, 233.

79 Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875–1928*, 233.

practices, such as dancing among the Plains peoples and potlatch on the Pacific".[80]

Food was also a site of resistance. Marilyn Iwama writes:

> Removing children from their homes was central to realizing assimilation: confinement interrupted the transmission of culture in each nation. Traditional food practices went underground, and students were nourished by their food only in memory or during family visits. At Christmas or summer vacation, mothers and grandmothers would stuff the little ones with bannock and jam and hot tea and roast meat and potatoes and fresh sweet berries.[81]

Bev Sellars writes in *They called me number one* of the terrible food, often inedible, fed to the children, food the priests and nuns did not share with them. Children resisted eating the often rotten and/or spoiled food, but were forced regardless some were clearly made ill by it. Children learned how to conceal and get rid of inedible food, but this left them hungry. Sellars writes they "went on their Sunday walks in the spring and fall... often stopp[ing] to fill our empty bellies with edible plants and berries. We had grown up on the land and had gone with our grandmothers to pick berries and with our grandfathers to hunt".[82] Food and stories were the some of the means by which children resistance assimilation and countered the abuse they experienced in their daily lives in these schools. It was a way to hold in memory their families, their mothers, and their ways of life.

Indigenous women persisted in their mothering in the face of Eurowestern colonialism and its efforts to erase their Indigenous identity, to sterilize Indigenous girls and women, and to remove from them their abilities to impart Indigenous knowledge, language, culture, and parenting and

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80   James Robert Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 372–73.

81   Marilyn Iwama, "'At Dawn, Our Bellies Full': Teaching Tales of Food and Resistance from Residential Schools and Internment Camps in Canada," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 21, no. 3 (2000): 244. doi:10.1080/713678981.

82   Bev Sellars, *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School* (Vancouver, BC: Talon Books, 2013), 57.

reproductive health care practices. There was long resistance to colonial efforts to undercut Indigeneity and family relations, but this resistance could not prevent ruptures occurring between families and communities. However, complete erasure and disruption of Indigenous family and community relations could not be realized by white-settler, while Indigenous peoples have storied the atrocities enacted on, and resisted by, them:

> "As a mother," Jenny explains: one of the most important tasks that I have undertaken is the role of creating identity in my children. ...I have chosen to introduce culture first, and allow this to guide all other aspects of their individual identity. For far too long, my extended and immediate family has had our culture taken away, by banning our culture and the use of our language. I guess you could say that I have turned the tables and made 100% certain that my children have seen and heard and tested every aspect of their cultural identity. And then the other elements of their unique identities can be shaped by their decisions.[83]

Indigenous women and mothers were cast as improper and unfit in colonial discourses, but it is precisely these identities that Indigenous women have reclaimed and redefined. Indeed, Kim Anderson writes "it was the emotional intelligence of mothering that really transformed me into an Indigenous feminist".[84]

Indigenous feminisms

White-settler first wave feminism in the United States took a page from Indigenous women's social, political, economic, and sexual autonomy. And although early feminists drew inspiration from Indigenous wom-

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83 Paul Kershaw and Tammy Harkey, "The Politics of Power in Care-Giving for Identity: Insights for Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation," *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 18, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 584.

84 Kim Anderson, "Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist," in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, eds. Cheryl Suzack, et al. (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), 83.

en,[85] most counted themselves among the colonists. If they were sympathetic to Indigenous women, they still tended to see them as less capable in light of being Indigenous. With Eugenics dominating Eurowestern white-settler societies and Christianities pronounced as the truth, Indigenous systems of belief and practice were cast as pagan, heathen, and the practice of deviltry. Christian white-settler feminists, then, did not see Indigenous women of Turtle Island as their allies, at best they were their "wards". Feminisms of the 19th and early 20th centuries emerged in and were shaped by both imperialism and colonialism, but more than this, they came to "see themselves as colonizers".[86]

Locating themselves as colonialists meant that white-settler feminists participated in negation of and active destruction of Indigenous socio-cultural systems: instead of "kill the Indian to save the man" their refrain might have been "kill the Squaw to save the woman". It would not be until the second women's movement that white-settler feminisms began to act in support of Indigenous women as they struggled against colonial governments. Wilma Mankiller (1945-2010), of Cherokee background and Mary Two-Axe Early (b. 1911), a Mohawk woman, are two such Indigenous feminist activists who challenged colonial governments on behalf of Indigenous women. Wilma Mankiller successfully took up the position of chief in a masculinist-oriented band. Her efforts, she writes, opened the door for young Cherokee women.[87] Mary Two-Axe Early, on the other hand, was among a number of Indigenous women, who successfully challenged the gender bias of the Canadian Indian Act and secured the passing of the 1985 Bill C-31.[88]

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85 Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism: Sovereignty and Social Change," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing Zed Books, 2007), 96–97.

86 Nancy Forestell, "Mrs. Canada Goes Global: Canadian First Wave Feminism Revisited," *Atlantis* 30, no. 1 (2005): 10.

87 Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (New York: St Martin's Griffin, 1993), 246.

88 Mary Two-Axe Early, "Indian Rights for Indian Women," in *Women, Feminism and Development / Femmes, Féminisme et Développement*, eds. Huguette Dagenais and Denise Piché (Montreal PQ: McGill-Queen's University Press,

There are, like other feminisms, multiple Indigenous feminisms, but they share certain concerns, such as the impact of colonization. Indigenous feminisms share concerns with other racialized feminists in white-settler contexts such as coerced sterilization. Indigenous feminisms also share concerns with white-settler feminisms such as the sexualization of girls and women's bodies. These shared concerns allow Indigenous feminisms to work in coalition with other feminist groups.[89]

Indigenous feminisms made apparent, along with Black, Chicana, and postcolonial and anti-racist feminisms, the necessity to analyze power not only in terms of sexism, but sexism intersected with colonialism and racism: "Indian women mobilized a specific discourse of rights from the intersections of human and civil rights, feminism, and Native sovereignty politics to historicize and define their goals to end gender-based discrimination and violence within their communities".[90] This was required, Andrea Smith argues, because:

> when a Native woman suffers abuse, this abuse is not just an attack on her identity as a woman, but on her identity as Native. The issues of colonial, race, and gender oppression cannot be separated. This explains why, in my experience as a rape crisis counselor, every Native survivor I ever counseled said to me at one point, "I wish I was no longer Indian." Women of color do not just face quantitatively more issues when they suffer violence (that is, less media attention, language barriers, lack of support in the judicial system, etc.) but their experience is qualitatively different from that of white women.[91]

1994), 429.

89 Joyce Green, "Taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism," in *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, ed. Joyce Green (Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing Zed Books, 2007), 24.

90 Joanne Barker, "Gender, Sovereignty, and the Discourse of Rights in Native Women's Activism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 128–29.

91 Andrea Smith, "Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples," *Hypatia, Indigenous Women in the Americas* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 71.

White-settler, masculine-oriented hegemonies upheld masculine privilege, but this privilege was further defined in terms of whiteness, Christianity, and economic status. In order to expose for critical thought particular forms of power deployed, an intersectional analysis came into play. Intersectionality, as method, was develop in a number of different feminist locations, but most explicitly by women of colour in United States. An intersectional analysis, for example, will not ignore differences and asks how colonization, racism and gender intersect so that Indigenous women in Canada and the US experience higher levels of sexual violence than white-settler women. Mary Ellen Kelm writes, following Jean Barman, that "sexuality was the crucible of aboriginal-European relations and the source of their most profound contradictions. As the objects of desire and disgust, aboriginal women in the Canadian and US colonial landscapes found themselves in a precarious position...".[92] The intersection of gender, colonialism and race are also evidenced in the significantly higher levels of sterilization experienced by Indigenous women even today.[93] As white-settler women marched for access to abortion and the choice whether to have a child, women of colour and Indigenous women struggled to ensure they can have a child.

A significant aspect of the work of Indigenous feminisms is the full exposure of past and present colonialism, the implications, and the resistance enacted by Indigenous peoples. Part of this is to expose the residential and industrial school efforts to erase Indigeneity and the targeting the bodies of girls and women as primary places to achieve this. Indigenous men, on the other hand, were attacked through their masculinity seen as ensavaged by the autonomous Indigenous woman and mother. Shari Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack write:

> [f]or Indigenous women colonization has involved their removal from positions of power, the replacement of traditional

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92 Mary-Ellen Kelm, "Diagnosing the Discursive Indian: Medicine, Gender, and the ''Dying Race''," *Ethnohistory* 52, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 388.

93 Laura Briggs, et al., "Roundtable: Reproductive Technologies and Reproductive Justice," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 34, no. 3 (2013): 102–25.

gender roles with Western patriarchal practices, the exertion of colonial control over Indigenous communities through the management of women's bodies, and sexual violence.[94]

Jael Silliman, Marlene Fried, Loretta Ross, and Elena Gutiérrez, write that [f]or Native American activists, reproductive rights include the essential right to pass along their culture.[95] It is necessary to expose and assess the long history of violence enacted on Indigenous peoples, and often done with recourse to gender and mothering. Dividing Indigenous peoples along the lines of gender (and Indigeneity), and idealizing hierarchy, competition, and dominance were all mechanisms of colonization even as they were presented as "uplifting" Indigenous peoples. These threads of history are woven through the social fabric of Canada and United States and must be unraveled and closely examined and then rewoven into stories of strong Indigenous women.[96] Renate Eigenbrod writes that:

> literature about childhood in residential schools, seemingly about victimization, reclaims the power of the imagination in order "to assert our presence in the face of erasure" ... thus evoking survival, resistance, and continuance of cultures against colonial policies aimed at the annihilation of Indigenous presence most aggressively in the residential schools.[97]

Huhndorf and Suzack indicate that Indigenous feminist incursions in the past allow for a reclamation of a denied past that included women occupying positions of power within their social organizations.[98] Examining

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94 Shari M. Huhndorf and Cheryl Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," in *Indigenous Feminism*, in *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture*, Cheryl Suzack, et al. (Vancouver; Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), 1.

95 Silliman, et al., *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice*, 106.

96 Anderson, "Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist," 89.

97 Renate Eigenbrod, "'For the Child Taken, for the Parent Left Behind': Residential School Narratives as Acts of 'Survivance'," *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 38, no. 3–4 (September/December 2012): 280.

98 Huhndorf and Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," 1.

the past Indigenous feminisms make apparent that colonization was/is gendered, and therefore requires a gendered analysis.[99]

Indigenous feminisms also consider the interactions between all life on the earth, and the interaction between the earth and all life. Indigenous feminist Kim Anderson writes that "Indigenous feminism is linked to a foundational principle in Indigenous societies - that is, the profound reverence for life....Native Societies, our land-based societies, were much more engaged with ways of honouring and nurturing life - all life".[100] With life there is also land, and Indigenous feminisms take into account "land rights, sovereignty, and the state's systematic erasure of the cultural practices of native peoples".[101]

The Eurowestern entrenchment in a narrow identity - the individual - has also been imposed on Indigenous peoples in multiple ways, from residential/industrial schools, the allotment of individual farms under Dawes Act in the US,[102] to the Indian Act that defined who was and was not an Indian. Resisting this narrow vision of identity as singular and alone is a political act of Indigenous feminisms, as is the rejection of a rigid gender ideology that privileges male/masculine over female/feminine or limits them to just two kinds. They contend such gender constructions have been imposed by colonial systems. Wilma Mankiller writes that the Cherokee are, with her as chief, "returning the balance to the role of women in our tribe", something lost under the pressure of colonialism.[103]

Returning to this balanced way of life means dealing with sexual violence. Indigenous feminisms address this violence enacted by the state, by groups, and by persons. Violence against Indigenous women is cen-

99 Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez, "Nunavut: Whose Homeland? Whose Voices," in *First Voices: An Aboriginal Women's Reader*, Patricia A Monture and Patricia D. McGuire (Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2099), 145–46.

100 Anderson, "Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist," 82.

101 Huhndorf and Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," 6.

102 Mankiller and Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*, 5.

103 Mankiller and Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*, 246.

tral to the social justice agenda that shape Indigenous feminist practices.[104] Andrea Smith writes that:

The reason Native women are constantly marginalized in male-dominated discourses about racism and colonialism and white-dominated discourses about sexism is the inability of both discourses to address the inextricable relationship between gender violence and colonialism. That is, the issue is not simply that violence against women happens during colonization, but that the colonial process is itself structured by sexual violence. Native nations cannot decolonize themselves until they address gender violence, because colonization has succeeded through this kind of violence.[105]

Indigenous feminisms argue that all Indigenous women have the inherent right to "their body and path in life".... "self-governance" ...."an economic base and resources"...and "a distinct identity, history and culture".[106] Reproductive justice, for Indigenous women - as women of colour in a racist context - emphasizes "reproductive justice" as opposed to the term "choice" arguing that "choice" obscures the kinds of struggles women of colour, Indigenous women face.[107]

The inherent right to body and path in life engages body and life as if they are intertwined rather than separate and bifurcated. Indigenous feminisms reject a dualistic view of life. White-settler binary oppositions, Andrea Smith argues in her text *Conquest*, locate the Indigenous (female) body as "dirty," they are considered sexually violable and rapable ...",[108] while the proper white-settler (female) body is "clean" and "pure" and not sexually violable. In the binary oppositional system two of something are situated in an oppositional relationship with value given to one over and against the other. So, for example, nature and culture are connected

104 Huhndorf and Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," 7.

105 Andrea Smith, "Introduction: Native Women and State Violence," *Social Justice* 31, no. 4 (2004): 1.

106 Smith, "Native American Feminism," 124–25.

107 Kimala Price, "What is Reproductive Justice?" *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 10, no. 2 (2010): 42–65.

108 Smith, *Conquest*, 9–10.

in an oppositional relationship with nature given negative value (-) over again culture, which is given positive value (+). Such binary logic, argues Indigenous feminisms, is part of the systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

Indigenous feminisms are multiple, just as white-settler or black feminisms are multiple.[109] Indigenous feminists' insights are shaped by their various locations throughout Turtle Island and by their communities which are integral to their feminisms. Indigenous feminisms are contextualized in their communities and are not external or in adversus to them, even if they are critical of their communities. Wilma Mankiller challenged the masculine orientation of the Cherokee band council when she became chief. Doing this, she saw herself having restored the balance that once had been there.[110] As an Indigenous feminist, Mankiller's agenda of social justice for her people meant that girls too had a chance to enter into the politics of their band councils.

In the neocolonial context of Canada and United States, the effort to erase Indigenous identities, the residential/industrial complex, the surveillance, control and sterilization of Indigenous girls and women have shaped Indigenous mothering in particular and parenting in general. Denied Indigenous identity, Indigenous women/feminists fought back and secured it for themselves and their children. Enclosed in cold, punishing residential/industrial schools they managed to share stories that helped to sustain their Indigenous identities.

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109 Huhndorf and Suzack, "Indigenous Feminism: Theorizing the Issues," 3.

110 Mankiller and Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*, 159, 246.

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Boredom, Objectivity and the Picture of Solidarity

Brian Price[1]

Abstract: In this paper, I argue that objectivity can only be accessed in state of boredom and that genuine experiences of boredom are as rare as they are brief. To do so, I look at Adorno's description of "objective desperation," in his essay "Free Time." In arguing for a limited version of objectivity, I emphasize the significance of Richard Rorty's belief in solidarity as a suitable replacement for appeals to truth and objectivity and as a pragmatic reckoning with Adorno's skepticism.

What I would like to propose here is an idea about objectivity; namely, that objectivity can only be accessed in a state of boredom. And boredom, like the objectivity to which it provides access, is an experience that is as rare as it is short-lived; truncated as the experience of boredom is by thought. Boredom ceases at the very moment in which we acknowledge to ourselves that we are bored. However, in claiming that boredom ceases in the moment of self-reflection, I do not mean to imply that reflection restores us to a state of enthrallment that boredom has interrupted. The quality of the thought that delivers us from boredom, and thus from objectivity, need not be decisive, in this context, nor even indicated; all that matters is that thinking occur, or that it can. What I am after is a way of understanding a claim that Adorno makes about boredom in "Free Time," where he describes boredom as "objective desperation."[2] What intrigues me about this phrase is something that is per-

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2   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," in *The Culture Industry*, trans. Gordon Finlayson and Nicholas Walker (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 192.

haps slightly different from what Adorno had in mind, at least insofar as "desperation" indicates, in my telling, the affective registration of the consciousness of objectivity in the moment of its dawning, which also marks the moment of its disappearance. Boredom is a phenomenal experience of an extremely limited duration in which we do not know what to do or how to think about the fact that we do not know what to do. Closer to Adorno's conception—though not entirely close, either—would be an identification of objective desperation as the moment in which we begin to alleviate the all-encompassing enigma of the objects, including other people, which surround us and that includes us as just one more object among other objects. In relating boredom to objectivity—indeed, in claiming that our only access to objectivity can be had in a necessarily temporally limited experience of boredom—it should be evident that any project that depends on a claim of objectivity is fated for failure.

I. Boredom and Objectivity

One of the simplest if also most important ways of seeing that problem is to consider the trouble that objectivity—coincident as it is with boredom—raises for political theory and for real politics. In this respect, I have in mind Richard Rorty's "Solidarity or Objectivity?" in which he rather importantly proposes that the desire for objectivity may very well be a fact of human nature, but the pursuit of objectivity itself has to be understood in paradoxical terms as the human effort to transcend the limits of human community; to determine, in metaphysical terms, what the essence of the human might be, in which case there will be nothing left of the human in the human. Or as Rorty put it, such desire is, ultimately, to be read as an attempt to conceptualize the human as "standing in immediate relation to a non-human reality."[3] What Rorty prefers instead is a thoroughly pragmatic conception of human community, in which case the quest for objectivity is abandoned in favor of an experi-

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3   Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 21.

ence of solidarity, which only comes into play if we give up on an idea about human nature, about human *essence*. That is to say, we have to give up on our attempt to define the human in order to *be* human. Or as Rorty explains, "For pragmatists, the desire for objectivity is not the desire to escape the limitations of one's community, but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of 'us' as far as we can. Insofar as pragmatists make a distinction between knowledge and opinion, it is simply the distinction between topics on which such agreement is relatively easy to get and topics on which agreement is relatively hard to get."[4] He continues: "As a partisan of solidarity, his [the pragmatist's] account of the value of cooperative human community has only an ethical base, not an epistemological or metaphysical one."[5] What importantly comes forward, for our purposes here (if not elsewhere), are two related issues: first, that if objectivity is opposed by solidarity, then any effort to reach objectivity is not only an attempt to overcome the human, but is also an attempt to overcome politics, or the struggle for agreement within a community that corresponds to the lived needs of that community. This is what I take Anat Matar to mean, for instance, when she claims that "Truth is political."[6] Second, if objectivity can only be accessed in a state of boredom, and boredom is rare and temporally clipped by thought, then we would seem to give up on the possibility of community, of solidarity, of politics, at the moment when we need it most, which is to say, nearly all of the time. Or to put it another way, if institution building—and institutional maintenance—is a pragmatic process that depends on solidarity, which is something other than conviction (which only ever rudely mimics objectivity, anyway), and that asks us to decide between what we can agree on easily and what we cannot, then any appeal made to an institution in the name of objectivity will simply cancel out the very need we have *for* institutions. I take that need to consist, as John Searle has argued, in the distribution of tasks

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4 Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 23

5 Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 24

6 Anat Matar, *The Poverty of Ethics* (London and New York: Verso, 2022), 252.

and competences that allows for human flourishing, which is something other than total autonomy, knowing that the existence of any community means that one can neither do everything for oneself, nor need to do everything for oneself.[7] Institutions, even legal ones, do not depend on an epistemological grounding. They depend more, to borrow Rorty's way of putting it, "on *phronesis* than codification."[8]

In speaking of human community and solidarity—or even merely of Rorty—we would already seem to be a long way from Adorno. And yet, Adorno's description of boredom in "Free Time," emerges at a moment in which he is contemplating political apathy, which is where his conception of boredom may very well meet Rorty's concern about objectivity. Adorno's essay is concerned with free time as a reification, with how free time is determined by its opposite, labour time, to the extent that there may be no real difference between them. As Adorno says:

> Free time depends on the totality of social conditions, which continues to hold people under its spell. Neither in their work nor in their consciousness do people dispose of genuine freedom over themselves. Even those conciliatory sociologies which use the term 'role' as a key recognize this fact, in so far as the term itself, borrowed from the domain of the theatre, suggests that the existence foisted upon people by society is identical neither with people as they are in themselves nor with all that they could be.[9]

Central to Adorno's identification of free time as the extension of labour time—or the time in which "organized freedom is compulsory"[10]—is his discussion of the hobby, the taking of up a role. If the hobby is a role that one chooses as a way of experiencing freedom, it is important to emphasize that it is a choice made from a selection offered by others, which makes of hobby acquisition a paradoxical act, insofar as we seek

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7   See John Searle, *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

8   Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 25

9   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 187.

10   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 190.

the immediate in what has already been mediated. And yet, as Adorno observes, free time, and the acquisition of a hobby, is "that human condition which sees itself as the opposite of reification, the oasis of unmediated life within a completely mediated total system, has itself been reified like the rigid distinction between labour time and free time."[11] His examples include camping—as an industry that profits on the idea of freedom, and also sunbathing, as an experience that is meant to serve, by virtue of the bronzing one submits to, as testament, upon one's return to work, that one has sufficiently enjoyed one's holiday. Adorno importantly says of the latter: "The act of dozing in the sun marks the culmination of a crucial element of free time under present conditions—boredom."[12] Following Adorno, then, we can say that boredom marks the beginning, at least potentially, of a recognition that what we think is different from what has been thought for us.

This is where things get interesting. Following his discussion of the hobby, Adorno picks up on the idea of political apathy, in which boredom and objectivity are related. He says:

> If people were able to make their own decisions about themselves and their lives, if they were not caught up in a realm of the eversame, they would not have to be bored. Boredom is the reflection of objective dullness. As such it is in a similar position to political apathy. The most compelling reason for apathy is the by no means unjustified feeling of the masses that political participation within the sphere society grants them, and this holds true for all political systems in the world today, can alter their actual existence only minimally. Failing to discern the relevance of politics to their own interests, they retreat from all political activity. The well-founded or indeed neurotic feeling of powerlessness is intimately bound up with boredom: boredom is objective desperation.[13]

What interests me is how we might consider the relation between two statements about boredom, especially since both relate boredom to ob-

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11   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 189.

12   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 191.

13   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 192.

jectivity, albeit in different ways: first, that "boredom is a reflection of objective dullness," and second that "boredom is objective desperation." What, in the end, does the movement between these two ideas about boredom indicate for politics, or the political apathy that Adorno acknowledges as reasonable, given the context of a fully administered world?

Let's begin, then, with the first statement about boredom, that it is an expression of objective dullness. The example of dullness that Adorno has already given by way of the hobby is sunbathing, in which case, the sunbather does not experience freedom beneath the sun and away from work, but is stifled instead by a role that is at odds with self-determination, or seriousness, so much so that one forgets the difference between performer and performance. At the beginning of the essay, Adorno complains about being asked if he has any hobbies. After admitting that he is always shocked by the question, Adorno tells us that: "I have no hobby. Not that I am the kind of workaholic who is incapable of doing anything with his time but applying himself industriously to the required task. But, as far as my activities beyond the bounds of my recognized profession are concerned, I take them all, without exception, seriously."[14] By seriousness, Adorno indicates something akin to what shows itself in the child, prior to the moment in which the bourgeois parent works to extinguish what the unrestrained child shows; namely, "the unruliness of mind which [is] incompatible with the efficient division of human life."[15] So, in this sense, it is not so hard to understand boredom as a form of dullness, and the sunbather's freedom as stymied by the industry that made the awareness of the look of freedom possible in the first place. More difficult is to fathom why, or how, Adorno decides to think of boredom as a reflection of *objective* dullness. What, in other words, does objectivity have to do with dullness?

One answer to this question can be found in *Against Epistemology*, Adorno's critique of the "whereupon in general" of phenomenology.

14   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 188

15   Theodor Adorno, "Free Time," 190

Adorno is concerned there to demonstrate the way that formal logic attempts to give us a picture of the object in general. In Adorno's view, formal logic can only do so because it is concerned less with the complications of matter—at least insofar as we might regard matter independently of method—than it is with propositions, which are themselves uniquely subject to the clarifying laws of non-contradiction, in a way that matter can never cleanly abide. In this sense, objectivity—or the object in general—is itself a reification, since what it says of any object can be seen in none of the objects in particular. Rather, any conception of the object in general, Adorno tells us, follows from the supposition of a synthesis that suppresses the subjective moment that makes synthesis possible in the first place. He says: "By suppressing the subjective moment, thinking, as the condition of logic, Husserl also conjures away the objective, the subject matter of thought which is inscrutable in thought. Its place is taken by unilluminated thought which is thus extended to objectivity directly."[16] So, there are, then, two conceptions of objectivity on offer here. The latter understands objectivity as unilluminated thought, and corresponds in this way to the objective dullness of Adorno's sunbathers. This is, obviously, not a notion of objectivity as unmediated access to the things themselves, nor is it an understanding of objectivity as that which transcends justified belief. Rather, objectivity as unilluminated thought is a general way of thinking, which follows from a logical proposition detached from the objects that it nevertheless synthesizes. In a fully administered world, objectivity is the offer of an unmediated experience in the altogether mediated. The experience of objectivity is thus conceived as the reification of a formal logic that we, nevertheless, experience as sense perception, and sense perception, as Adorno puts it, as the "passive registering of something purely objective."[17] If boredom is a reflection of objective dullness, then we can describe boredom and objectivity in the same terms as the passive registration of the world in sensuous terms,

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16   Theodor Adorno, *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*, trans. Willis Domingo (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013), 67.

17   Ibid.

the immediacy of which covers over the thought that not only makes synthesis possible, but that might also—and importantly—run the risk of short-circuiting the logic of objectivity that depends on a fidelity to the law of non-contradiction. Perhaps what the sunbather begins to detect is that nebulous, if also determining, zone that propels boredom—as a reflection of objective *dullness*—to boredom as objective *desperation*, in that what the sunbather begins to notice is that her experience of the sun produces not joy but a conflict in the self, which itself remains uncleanly divided between the efficient division of human life, and what it is that she may begin to see, if only vaguely, as the presence of her own unruly mind.

This is not to suggest that what Adorno is involved in here is a simple contrast between the subjective and the objective, the real and the reified. Indeed, he says rather importantly in *Against Epistemology* that "Mediacy is not a positive assertion about being but rather a directive to cognition not to comfort itself with such positivity."[18] Recall that in the previously cited passage from *Against Epistemology*, Adorno defines objectivity as "the subject matter of thought which is inscrutable in thought," which is also what he accuses Husserl of having veiled for the sake of formal logic. If objectivity is the subject of thought that remains inscrutable in thought, then wherever thinking occurs, objectivity—which cannot be seen or known—does the work of mediacy; indeed, objectivity may simply be mediacy, since it, too, serves as a directive to cognition to not comfort itself with positivity.

For this reason, it is ultimately not possible to say of Adorno that he conceives of boredom as our access to objectivity; or at least, if we do say so, then only insofar as boredom follows from the dulled positivity of a formal logic, or the compulsory organization of freedom. However, if the objectivity that matters to Adorno is the work of mediacy, in which the subject of thought remains inscrutable in thought, then it does give us a way of understanding the movement from dullness to desperation. And in that way, we might also say that Adorno was a little too quick to offer

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18   Theodor Adorno, *Against Epistemology*, 24

his sympathy for the political apathy of the sunbather—unless we were to presume that objectivity as the dulled positivity of formal logic, and its attendant reification by culture industries, is somehow more powerful than thought, more powerful than what cannot be predicted in or for human life. The most obvious reason for saying that is given in Adorno's critique of formal logic, which is to say, that the law of non-contradiction only holds as related propositions that are independent, ultimately, of the diverse array of objects that formal logic nevertheless intends to submit to a synthesis that will become sense. This is precisely where Adorno's conception of objectivity meets with Rorty's dismissal of it as the human attempt to transcend the human, to see the human standing in a constitutive relation to the non-human and also why Rorty prefers solidarity to objectivity. Likewise, if we regard objectivity, as Adorno does, as the subject of thought that remains inscrutable in thought, then the question is no longer, as it was for Rorty, objectivity or solidarity, but objectivity as the condition of possibility for solidarity. Objective desperation describes the movement from the dullness of formal logic to the mediacy that prevents thought from reification or positivity, in which case objectivity may not be, as Rorty surmised, the attempt to overcome the human. Dialectical as it is in Adorno's conception, mediacy—objectivity—may be what is most human in the human and thus is but a short step from solidarity, or the end of apathy; however, for this same reason, mediacy may also be what is required of the disruption of an instance of solidarity that is no longer compelled by reasons other than the ones that made convergence possible in the first place.

In this respect, the work of mediacy, which prevents thought from comforting itself in positivity, might present real trouble for the experience of agreement, for the decision we will no doubt face about what can be easily reconciled from what cannot be so easily reconciled. And yet, what solidarity requires most is the ongoing reflection on what agreement means: how far it extends, and how long it should last. Mediacy may simply be, in this sense, what stands in the way of both apathy *and* a repressive totality. Thus, if boredom is objective desperation—indeed

if boredom shades into objectivity—what boredom describes is the beginning of a negativity that had been too long dulled by positivity; or, thought's return.

Interestingly, in the same essay, Rorty describes the impossibility of describing other cultures on the basis of formal logic. For Rorty, the trouble is that "Alternative geometries are irreconcilable because they have axiomatic structures, and contradictory axioms. They are *designed* to be irreconcilable. Cultures are not so designed, and do not have axiomatic structures."[19] The pragmatic response to formal logic, which is slightly different from Adorno's, then, goes as follows. Rorty writes: "To use Nuerath's familiar analogy, we can *understand* the revolutionary's suggestion that a sailable boat can't be made out of the planks which make up ours, and that we must abandon ship. But we cannot take his suggestion seriously. We cannot take it as a rule for action, so it is not a live option."[20] We can understand it but we cannot take it seriously, precisely because it is axiomatic; the revolutionary cannot see any logic other than his own as anything but contradicted, lest the other place those same planks in the same ways. That is to say, it is not a live option because we *can* use those planks—have no reason to believe that the essence of the wood is the same as that which animates the actions of the counter-revolutionary, and that any use of that wood will lead us into the realm of the contradicted. Such a view requires that we diminish the role of reflection so that the standing term, revolution, becomes a form of practical reason, in which case things will be in the only place they can be. Objectively speaking, we know that solidarity does not consist in fidelity to a state of non-contradiction and the strenuous assertion of certainty, not the least of which is because solidarity only emerges when our concept of an object is already detached from material existence. Rather, solidarity, as Rorty imagines, is what results from the ongoing reflection on both *what we have agreed to* and also on the necessary limits of any instance of agreement.

19   Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 26.
20   Richard Rorty, "Solidarity or Objectivity?" 29.

II. Acting Badly in the Rare Instant

One conclusion that can be drawn, at this point, is simply to say that Rorty's preference for solidarity over objectivity is enabled by the very process Adorno describes when he understands objectivity as the work of mediacy, when both are understood as "the subject matter of thought which is inscrutable in thought." In this sense, we also can say that the movement from boredom as a reflection of objective dullness to an experience of boredom as objective desperation describes the moment in which we become aware that we have been confusing objectivity with reification, so much so that the re-emergence of reflective activity emerges in the form of a crisis. What "desperation" indicates most strongly is an impossible mode of recognition, insofar as that which restores thought also disrupts boredom, which is simple enough. More difficult is that if the subject matter of thought is inscrutable in thought then we have to understand objectivity as what is always other than what we picture when we think; thought, in this regard, is not so much divided against itself as it is elusive; never shaped or held by what we picture when we think, or even what we think when we look at pictures. But if we follow Adorno to this point, then solidarity will necessarily be undone by virtue of what made it possible to begin with, as I have previously indicated: mediacy, at least insofar as mediacy, as a mode of negativity, never ceases so long as thought is present.

I am presuming, of course, that solidarity supposes that the time of agreement is already greater, longer, than what thought makes possible; or, simply *is*, for Adorno. One reason or putting it this way is to extend the suggestion I made earlier: that any political project—or for that matter, any ethical relation—that depends on objectivity is doomed to fail. And perhaps, by way of Adorno, we can say that it fails twice, from both sides of the ledger, so to speak. But there may be another way of casting the relation between boredom and objectivity, still. For this reason, then, I want to turn back to my opening provocation, which is also my hypothesis: namely, that *objectivity can only be accessed in a state of boredom. And*

boredom, like the objectivity to which it provides access, is an experience that is as rare as it is short-lived; truncated as the experience of boredom is by thought.

One of the sources of the provocation as I imagine it and as I am attempting to articulate it here comes from a 2006 film called *Sleeping Dogs Lie*, directed by Bobcat Golthwaite. The film has not gained an audience, as far as I can tell, and the reasons are not so difficult to imagine. *Sleeping Dogs Lie* is before all else an unrelenting indictment of male hysteria as a form of obtuse and indeed obdurate imagining. The film tells the story of a young woman in her twenties named Amy and the secret that she feels she has to keep from any serious boyfriend. The film begins as Amy divulges her secret in voice-over, which is to say, to the audience, but not the boyfriend. In this sequence, Amy confesses that when in college she decided to give her dog a blow job—doesn't know why she did it, says she was just bored. Beneath the confession give in voice-over, we see the remembered moment—Amy reading, becoming bored, and watching her dog roll over onto his back, but never the act itself. Shortly after this introductory scene is one in which Amy's boyfriend, John, proposes to her. At what appears to be the end of the evening, we see them both in bed and John asks Amy to tell him about the craziest sexual experience that she's ever had. Amy pauses, clearly reflecting on the stakes of answering the question honestly. She then looks in the other direction, as if for help, at a picture on her nightstand which features Amy and another young woman, her friend and former college roommate. She then turns back to John and tells him that one night in college she and her roommate slept together. In other words, what she does first is to reflect on what the stakes of answering honestly would be, then decides against doing so; she then looks for an alternative scenario, and thus at the picture of a female friend, which is crucially indicated as a material object that gives rise to the immaterial image that Amy will imagine and then feature for John, who is clearly looking for a heteronormative image of erotic transgression; or, one might say an image of eros that they can come to agreement on *as* erotic *because* conventional. Or so he seems to hope. Later in the film, when the couple goes to the home of Amy's parents, John

repeats the question, wanting—or so he thinks that he thinks—to go further; to be more transgressive, to be more erotic, as if the erotic were the pictorial equivalent to an ever-increasing tolerance to drugs. After John confesses to what he takes to be his darkest sexual secret—that when he was a teenager, a group of boys ejaculated on a cookie, which he was then forced to eat—Amy decides to tell the truth, comforted as she is, let's say, by negativity. As soon as she does, John goes into an emotional tailspin and expresses his revulsion. Often. Meanwhile, it should be added that during this conversation, which takes place in the family garage, Amy's meth-addicted brother was listening from the rafters and tells the family the following day what she had said and done, which quickly leads to her estrangement from the mother and the father. John will eventually disappear, too, though not without a series of extended and unreflective recriminations of Amy's so-called transgression.

Once gone, John is soon replaced by a new love interest, Ed, a friend and colleague at the primary school they both teach at. Ed presents himself as a sensitive and ethically upright alternative to John, and Golthwaite is quick to indicate to us that Ed's relationship with Amy began as an affair, which he justified to himself on the grounds that his wife was also cheating on him. After a brief break-up, Ed and Amy reunite for a walk in the park that will lead to the renewal of their relationship. However, Ed knows that Amy has a secret that she has vowed that she cannot tell, no matter how much he wants to know it; no matter how convinced he is that he can take it. Indeed, he tells her that she scares him, that the secret scares him. In attempting to clear the air, Ed insists on knowing what the secret is as a condition of truthfulness, which he believes to be the foundation of a good relationship; swears that he will understand no matter what the secret turns out to be. Amy pauses and perhaps we worry along with her that she will say it again; perhaps we hope that she does. Just after Ed insists on knowing, Golthwaite cuts to a shot of Ed's dog and then to Amy. Before she can answer, however, Ed tells her not to worry: he knows what it is. She got pregnant when with John, he says, and when things went badly she got an abortion, which is why her

parents have broken with her. Ed, of course, confessed in advance that he loves pornography and masturbates constantly, as if to level the field. That is to say, he offers an image of his own transgression that is about as transgressive as Amy's imagined story about sleeping with her roommate. Once Ed presents his scenario of the secret, Amy agrees that he got it right, and in that sense would appear to see clearly that there can be no convergence between them; no solidarity, unless, of course, she continues to keep the secret, which in this case means agreeing that Ed has already discerned it. Indeed, just shortly after the agreement, we see the couple walking in the park and pausing to smile at a mother and child, as if in affirmation of the secret come to light. At which point we hear Amy offer her view of ethics, namely, that she thinks the more we attempt to live up to the lies we tell the better we are.

Another way of saying all of this, to return to Rorty's suggestion about the pragmatist's relation to objectivity and truth, albeit with a major modification, is that in order to come to an agreement, at least one of the two must not actually believe what they agree to. Likewise, what this example suggests—and I think it is a powerful one by virtue of what is so ordinary about it—is that solidarity may not depend on agreement, if agreement necessarily implies that in the absence of truth and objectivity, we have the same reason and motive for agreeing about something. Solidarity may in fact be possible when the reasons we give ourselves for agreement are the same even though our motives for doing so are not. One could of course object quickly and say that any genuine experience of intimacy must be predicated on objectivity: the clear look at what cannot be told differently than it is or was. This is what Ed thinks that he thinks. And there is good reason to say so insofar as the ending of the film does at least indicate, however skeptically, that the bond of love can only be sealed by a reification, in which case at least one will live always in protection of what cannot be featured for the other under any condition. And the problem is, as I mentioned at the outset, ultimately about male hysteria—about what these heteronormative men must picture for themselves in order to remain attracted to the other, and despite the fact

that what truth requires in every appeal they make to it is a fiction. This is what Amy clearly knows. By fictional image, here, I mean an image derived from a material object that is modified, aspectually, by desire or belief—much as any role played by an actor includes the overlay of two identities; the fictional persona and the body of the actor herself.

If I have taken you through a rough account of the progression of the narrative of *Sleeping Dogs Lie* I have done so in order to understand better the reason that Amy gives to herself—and also to us—in the opening sequence of the film for giving her dog a blow job, as you've seen. *I don't know why*, she says, *maybe it was just out of boredom.* Rather importantly, the reason that she gives herself, which is that there was no reason, was not borne of a pathology, in this case, a defining impulse for beastiality; nor does the act stand for her as a point of ongoing shame, since the experience does not, in Bernard Williams's terms, indicate a gap between what she thinks and what she thinks she thinks, which is how Williams very famously described the experience and productivity of shame—productive insofar as the gap between action and self-image may very well give us a new and more precise picture of who we truly are, or have become.[21] For Amy, the act led to no necessary work of extended self-reflection simply because the impulse was brief and isolable and thus the opposite of ongoing; indescribable, for that same reason, in the more familiar terms of a drive or disavowal. What Amy describes as an effect of boredom is what I want to propose as the rare instant of objectivity. She did what she did because, as she says, she was bored, and boredom is what occurs, in my account, anyway, when we do not know why we are doing what we are doing, nor how to make sense of ourselves in and with our surroundings. Boredom disappears just as soon as we begin to give ourselves a reason for what we have only briefly experienced as an instant-without-reason or reflection; or, for that matter, mere interest. Perhaps ironically, boredom thus conceived dovetails with what Bernard Williams has described in critical terms as the analytical philosopher's

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21 Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

preference for the *disquotation principle* of truth and objectivity, "to the effect," he says, "that P is true if and only P."[22] In other words, if truth is unconditioned it has no use of analogy, representation, or reflection: P is true if and only P. One need not attempt quotation: what is true is objectively present, insofar as objectively present in this case implies that ordinary acts of picturing are only ever imprecise supplements to P. And probably for most proponents of the disquotation principle, any image—mental, material or some combination of both—is precisely what truth and objectivity disciplines itself against. So let's go ahead and agree with those proponents for now, since what happens in the rare *instance* of objectivity, which follows from the brief *instant* of boredom, is also impervious to ethical reflection; at least for the one who experiences boredom and thus the brief flash of objectivity. Of course, to do so we will have to resist the impulse to remind any proponent of the disquotation principle of truth and objectivity that as symbolic notation, "P" already intervenes in the objectivity it nevertheless means to indicate. Perhaps what this tells us most of all is that ethical reflection can only be said to follow from thought's return, and not from what has been experienced directly and only briefly; at least not solely.

Unlike Adorno and Rorty, then, what I want to suggest is that objectivity is indeed possible under the model of the disquotation principle, so long as we never call it that; and so long as we never reflect from within an experience of objectivity on the experience of objectivity. The bad news for objectivity, in turn, is that it implies thoughtlessness—though I do not mean "thoughtless" in a moral sense, even though what happens in the rare instant of objectivity may be all too easy to submit to moral judgment. *Sleeping Dogs Lie* presses on this point emphatically. And for this reason, I share in the skepticism that both Adorno and Rorty, each in their own way, indicate about the role of objectivity for politics. Perhaps the simplest way of saying this is that if objectivity can only be accessed in a state of boredom, as I suppose to be the case, and boredom is an

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22 Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1985), 143.

experience much rarer than we typically suppose it to be, then what objectivity indicates most plainly is the absence of all relation. There is no politics without relation, so objectivity thus conceived bears no relation to the political or the ethical. And anyway, we do not need it to, since a genuine experience of boredom is incredibly rare. We do not need politics in every single instant or instance of our lives. This is, I presume, why Amy does not recriminate herself for the act of giving her dog a blow job; she regrets the telling, clearly, but not the doing. Or at least if she does, she never says so; what went worse there, in other words, is what was pictured by others, which stems from telling not from doing.

So, what, then, about solidarity? One the hand, what I wish to preserve in Adorno's conception of objectivity as mediacy is the movement from objective dullness to objective desperation. But where objective dullness for Adorno indicates a reification, I want to insist on the disquotation principle of objectivity. The difference, then, is that the movement from dullness to desperation is one from the rare instant of the non-relational to the relational—to politics, to ethics; to thought itself. But that movement is not progressive; it does not depend, as it does for Adorno, on the negation of thought by what reins inscrutable to thought. Objectivity is something more like a parenthesis without language, without letters; or the exceedingly rare instant of the image-less. On the one hand, objectivity—as it is accessed only briefly and in a state of boredom—presents an outside to judgement that follows from picturing, or when we modify in our mind's eye the image derived from a material object (including most importantly people) to explanatory scenarios to which we were not directly present. I also happen to take this as a normative description of consciousness, of thinking—both when it goes well and when it goes awry. There is no beyond the picture; just more picturing, and more reflecting on pictures. But what Amy seems to know is that objectivity is incommunicable because it places no limit on what gets communicated. One way to test this is to try and ask someone to be as bored as you are, or even if they are, at this moment, *as* bored as you are. It's not possible. In asking, the experience is already over, which is what the "as" indi-

cates. In asking the question, or in being asked it, we are already back to the realm of relationality. The parenthetical site of objectivity, then, is not a truthful referent that grounds agreement, at least insofar as or when agreement supposes that motive and reason are in a relation of identity. Rather, what the rare instant of objectivity has to offer Amy is the opportunity to know that agreement and truth may very well part ways, since understanding is inexplicably linked to picturing, just as picturing is inexplicably linked to the objects that we all are for other people. And if boredom gives us access to objectivity, it does so precisely as what cannot be experienced by another in the same way, which is why, in the end, objectivity matters little to ethics or politics. What it can do, perhaps, is give us a clearer indication of the difference between motive and reason in any instance of agreement. Whether that is also possible for love—whether love can be understood as a form of solidarity—is, I suppose, another matter.

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Approaching Nostalgia through Critical Theory

Silvia Pierosara[1]

Abstract: This contribution aims at proposing a Critical Theory of nostalgia from an ethical standpoint. The topic of nostalgia deserves to be investigated to the extent that nowadays we are witnessing a widespread "nostalgification". Its pervasiveness is apparent even in the contemporary marketing strategies, or ways of life, but, an even more worrying aspect, the rhetoric of nostalgia has also spread in the public sphere and has become a common reference for neo-authoritarian regimes and for the so-called "illiberal democracies". Such instrumentalization deserves a close investigation and an inquiry concerning the deep reasons and the roots of this overwhelming return. Upon a closer look, indeed, nostalgia can be traced back to processes of memory, history and our attitudes toward the past, and, more generally, to temporality. The Critical Theory of society is born with the intention of diagnosing the social pathologies of an epoch and of particular forms of life and to remedy them first of all by understanding, also at an interdisciplinary level, their causes and correlations with other phenomena and, if possible, to find a solution that reduces suffering and leads towards emancipated forms of life freed from oppression. For this methodological approach, Critical Theory can be useful in understanding the social phenomena, both individual and collective, that can be traced back to nostalgia, and in verifying whether within these phenomena there are exclusively regressive drives to be contained or whether it can contain the seeds for a rethinking of contemporary social ties, to eliminate suffering and imagine emancipated forms of life.

0. Introduction

This contribution aims at proposing a Critical Theory of nostalgia from an ethical standpoint. The topic of nostalgia deserves to be investigated

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to the extent that nowadays we are witnessing a widespread "nostalgifica-tion", if not an "overdose of nostalgia",[2] as a cultural and popular phenom-enon. At a first glance, its pervasiveness is apparent even in the contem-porary marketing strategies, or ways of life, but, an even more worrying aspect, the rhetoric of nostalgia has also spread in the public sphere and has become a common reference for neo-authoritarian regimes and for the so-called "illiberal democracies". Such instrumentalization deserves a close in-vestigation and an inquiry concerning the deep reasons and the roots of this overwhelming return. Upon a closer look, indeed, nostalgia can be traced back to processes of memory (both at a personal and public level), history and our attitudes toward the past, and, more generally, to temporality.

The methodological assumption that guides this contribution is that a cultural, social, political phenomenon like nostalgia cannot be ignored, but must be listened, understood, analyzed in its dangerousness[3], and the critical analysis of mass and public phenomena is one of the explicit aims of the Critical Theory of Society according to its initial intentions.[4] Indeed, it aims at understanding, locating, and assessing the consequenc-

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2   Olivia Angé, David Berliner (eds), *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 2015), 6, 2.

3   See Roberto Mordacci, *Ritorno a utopia*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2020)

4   Famously, Horkheimer's manifesto of Critical Theory highlights the non-neutrality of Critical Theory, its relationship with experience and the consequent non-separateness of subject and object of research, and its emancipatory dimension. Furthermore, Horkheimer is very clear about the necessity of thinking about a form of transmission within Critical Theory whose contents cannot be generalized, since they are not outside the his-tory of temporality, and each epoch needs its particular way of criticizing society, identifying the oppressed and the oppressors, imagining liberating solutions for people and society as a whole. Thus, here I refer to Critical Theory in a broad sense: it can be defined as a transformative approach to social and political reality, which investigates social pathologies, identifies them through a plural analysis of cultural, psychological, social, economic, political phenomena, and tries to propose alternative ways of emancipation and freedom from domination. Critical Theory, nonetheless, uses also a par-ticular methodology, starting from its critique to the Weberian *Wertfreiheit* of the social sciences. See Max Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory", in Max Horkheimer, *Critical Theory. Selected Essays*, translated by Matthew O'Connell and others, (New York: Continuum, 2002), 188-252.

es of historical tendencies as for their oppressive or, vice versa, emancipating power, with a transformative approach to the social and political dynamics, and with an interdisciplinary glance. Thus, nostalgia can be investigated at an interdisciplinary level, since it calls into question psychology, history, memory studies, philosophy, ethics, political science, anthropology. To the extent that nostalgia can be defined as a regressive feeling, usually associated with authenticity, identitarian politics and policies based on supposed common cultural roots, it doubtlessly constitutes a threat to democratic forms of life, inclusive politics, pluralism.

There is also a thematic reason to trace nostalgia back to Critical Theory: not only is Critical Theory fundamental to make a diagnosis of the social pathologies of our contemporary nostalgic societies and politics, but a positive, or less negative, assessment of nostalgia could be found in the early Frankfurt School tradition of Critical Theory, with particular reference to Benjamin, Horkheimer, Adorno. Nostalgia can be considered, from the standpoint of Critical Theory, as a regressive feeling usually reflected in conservative, identitarian, politics. Because of its relatedness to oppressive forms of life, it is clear that it should be monitored, detected, instead of being ignored or overlooked, or relegated to a folklore or fashion phenomenon. On the other hand, evidence can be found of the possibility to positively consider nostalgia starting from the early spokespersons of Critical Theory. In particular, it is possible to trace a critique of nostalgia as the pathology of a society that wants to return to a golden age lost in the past, but it is also possible to find the possibility of reading nostalgia as a critical sentiment towards progress and as oriented towards an unprecedented future to which one aspires, a nostalgia, in other words, of justice and solidarity, together with the idea that nostalgia can be listed among the antidotes to instrumental reason and among the ways of slowing down and containing progress. What can we maintain of nostalgia in order to better understand society and prevent, when possible, catastrophic outcomes? What can be rescued of nostalgia in terms of critique of progress and the possibility to orient such feeling towards the future, instead of an irremediably gone past?

We could summarize as follows: the Critical Theory of society is born with the intention of diagnosing the social pathologies of an epoch and of particular forms of life and to remedy them first of all by understanding, also at an interdisciplinary level, their causes and correlations with other phenomena and, if possible, to find a solution that reduces suffering and leads towards emancipated forms of life freed from oppression.

For this methodological approach, Critical Theory can be useful in understanding the social phenomena, both individual and collective, that can be traced back to nostalgia, and in verifying whether within these phenomena there are exclusively regressive drives to be contained or whether it can contain the seeds for a rethinking of contemporary social ties, to eliminate suffering and imagine emancipated forms of life.

To unveil limits and potentials of the phenomena linked to nostalgia, I will proceed in three steps: I propose a brief history of nostalgia, in order to show its historicity and its shift from contextuality to universality; secondly, I attempt at a critique of nostalgia using the lens of Critical Theory; third, I briefly refer to the critical role that nostalgia could play in contemporary societies, starting from a re-reading of some famous passages of the first generation Critical Theory thinkers. In referring to the authors of the first Critical Theory generation, I do not intend to provide an exhaustive survey of the occurrences of the term 'nostalgia'. Rather, I will identify some textual places that can inspire a different, yet critical, reading of nostalgia as a historical, social and political phenomenon, and as an affective tonality. Finally, I will give an example of what I consider a critical and reflective use of nostalgia.

1. Some historical notes

The term «nostalgia» was coined by a physician from Mulhouse, Johannes Hofer, in 1678, and was considered a disease for a long time, at least until Karl Jaspers's *Heimweh und Verbrechen*.

Such a disease affected Swiss soldiers far from home. Nostalgia as a pathology is described as a lack of initiative due to the longing for home: it translates the German *Heimweh*, homesickness, as Rousseau echoes the

word *Heimweh* by using the French *hemvé* with reference to the traditional song of Swiss shepherds, the *Ranz de vaches*.

In the nostalgic patient, vital spirits obsessively produce images of home and impair his/her agency by absolutizing his/her belonging. It is no accident that the term (not the feeling) was coined precisely when the idea of historical progress emerged. Paraphrasing Foucault, we could say that nostalgia is not only a disease, but also a fault, in the age of the triumph of personal initiative and progress.

Nostalgia's gradual acquisition of a sense of ambivalence and possibility can be traced back to different time periods. During the Enlightenment, nostalgia was considered to be an illness that stopped or slowed the march of progress. During the Romantic period, nostalgia was revived by poets and philosophers to refer to the tension toward totality, infinitude, origins, and authenticity. This philosophical paradigm shift was recorded by the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, according to which the feeling of nostalgia—German *Sehnsucht*—[5]can be traced back to a tension, a desire vividly described and experienced by Romantic philosophers, who felt nostalgia for the infinite, the eternal, and the absolute in the sense that they wished for them, but were simultaneously aware that such a dimension was not reachable, an impossibility that provoked suffering, but also desire. Between Johannes Hofer from Mulhouse and the Romantics, Kant recognized that nostalgia does not deal with space, but rather with time, an unavoidably lost time. It is worth mentioning that nostalgia was the topic of the dissertation thesis of Karl Jaspers, who recognized in it a motive for crimes of young girls who worked far from their home as servants in upper class families. Incidentally, Heidegger, one of Adorno's sworn enemies, took an interest in the subject of nostalgia by commenting on a fragment by Novalis. He deduced a very positive view of this feeling. Moreover, it is worth referring, albeit quickly, to Jankélévitch and

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5   To be precise, the dictionary also contains the headword nostalgia, which translates the German *Heimweh*. It is as if the German language keeps track of the structural ambivalence of nostalgia, between identity closure and openness to the infinite.

his work entitled *L'irreversible et la nostalgie*, in which he distinguishes between two different modes of the experience of nostalgia. Jankélévitch notes that nostalgia is closely related to the irreversibility of the transitoriness of our experience of time. Nostalgia seems to be rooted in the desire to slow time, and somehow block what the author terms "futurition". Nonetheless, this appeal to the past indeed hides a desire for the future, since nostalgia tells of a condition of desire, lack, and openness. The author further distinguished between closed and open nostalgia. As for the first, "the elementary form of nostalgia, at once the simplest and the most optimistic, is that in which the return is capable of exhaustively compensating for the departure",[6] (Jankélévitch, 1972: 349), while for open nostalgia, "if the longing for return is a symptom of closed nostalgia, the disappointment that grips the nostalgic and the endless wiggling that follows this disappointment are a symptom of open nostalgia".[7]

To summarize: there is an historical moment in which, due to its link with time, and to its being considered a pathology, the interest of scholars in nostalgia extended not only to cultural and socio-political aspects, but also to more strictly philosophical, ontological, existential ones. Thus, in order to fully understand why this feeling is so appealing, the critical theorist must recognize that nostalgia is closely linked with the personal, intimate experience of time, history, and memory, to the extent that it refers to the past and the ways we try to recover or retain it. These two dimensions can easily find their connection in the use of memories and histories, inasmuch as the rhetoric of nostalgia is rooted in personal memories and can influence, manipulate and instrumentalize them, as well as the suffering implied in them. On a more sinister note, it can be

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6   Vladimir Jankélévitch, *L'irreversible et la nostalgie*, (Paris : Flammarion, 1983²), 349.

7   Jankélévitch, *L'irreversible et la nostalgie*, 360. Nostalgia can be a feeling of discrepancy, of uneasiness with respect to the experience of time, and it can become pathological if the transitoriness of time is not at all accepted (see Rudolf Bernet, "Heimweh und Nostalgie", in "*Pathos*". *Konturen eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs*, ed. Kathrin Busch, Iris Därmann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 113-114).

weaponized to idealize the past and defend rigid identities and a sense of entitlement or destiny, all at the expense of the common good.

Following the fortunes of nostalgia to the present day, we can note the emergence of an ambivalence in its interpretation. This ambivalence is in some ways reminiscent of the one above between Enlightenment and Romanticism. Nowadays, the concept of nostalgia has entered the collective discourse and many studies have been devoted to it, especially within contemporary phenomenology.[8] Today nostalgia occurs in a wide range of contexts, from nostalgia for a golden age or a *Heimat* (homeland), to the current idea of solastalgia,[9] to mention two examples. Nostalgia is alternatively seen as a conservative feeling, as the sentimental side of populism and far-right movements spreading across Europe and beyond, especially by scholars coming from social and political studies,[10] or as a way of resisting and "provincializing" the mainstream narrative of a progressive history, thus leaving room for the "heteroglossia" of the experiences of time and "heteroglossic memory".[11] Despite being closely related to a precise context (the fall of URSS), this ambivalence can be found also in Svetlana Boym, who famously distinguished between "restorative" and "reflective nostalgia".[12]

A brief analysis of the usages of nostalgia in political science reveals that nostalgia is frequently associated with regressive sentiments, political conservatism, restoration, and reactionary views and policies; it

8   See James H. Hart, "Towards a Phenomenology of Nostalgia", *Man and World* 6 (1973); Berthold Molden, "Resistant Past versus Mnemonic Hegemony: On the Power Relations of Collective Memory", *Memory Studies* 9 no. 2 (2016).

9   See Glenn Albrecht, *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2019).

10 See Georg Betz, Carol Johnson, "Against the Current – Stemming the Tide: The Nostalgic Ideology of the Contemporary Radical Populist Right" *Journal of Political Ideologies* 4 no. 3 (2004), 311-327; Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2017).

11 William Cunningham-Bissel, "Afterword. On Anthropology's Nostalgia – Looking Back, Seeing Ahead, in Olivia Angé, David Berliner (eds), *Anthropology and Nostalgia*, (New York and Oxford: Berghan Books, 2015).

12 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

is also endemic to populism. In a recent dictionary on social passions, edited by Gloria Origgi, we read that "the social dimension of nostalgic passions is one of the core elements of the populisms that are shaking up the 21st century political scene".[13] According to the socio-political and cultural analysis of Mark Lilla, the feeling of nostalgia can be channeled and weaponized on a political level, since it is a "very potent political motivator, maybe far more potent than hope. Hopes can be disappointed. Nostalgia is irrefutable" (Lilla, 2019: 13).[14]

In accordance with the words used by Lilla, the dichotomy between nostalgia and hope was also pointed out by Norocel, Hellström, and Jørgensen (ed. 2020), according to whom "*nostalgia is a master frame underpinned by these frames of cultural difference* […] *Hope is the opposite master frame, which is often associated with movements that build their identity around progressive narratives that embrace solidarity and diversity*" (5). This assessment of how nostalgia operates in the socio-political sphere forms the basis for further exploration of its inner workings on philosophical and (to a lesser extent) psychological levels, since it is through understanding its root causes that we can hope to prevent its dangerous consequences. To accomplish this, as mentioned, I will draw upon the methodology of Critical Theory and apply its diagnostic approach to nostalgia.

2. From a critique of nostalgia…

Adopting a Critical Theory methodology means coming to terms with cultural, economic, social, psychological, political readings of nostalgia in order to criticize it and unveil its pitfalls and its potential destructiveness (see Mordacci 2020). I argue that conservative uses of nostalgia are tuned to a past that never happened as we remember it; they appeal to a golden age fueled by a rhetoric of the purity of origins, of the sacredness of roots. Indeed, the conservative uses of nostalgia seem to embody such overtones of homogeneity and fusion according to which from a psycho-

13 Gloria Origgi (ed.), *Passions sociales*, (Paris: Puf, 2019), 418.

14 Mark Lilla, *Il naufragio della ragione. Reazione politica e nostalgia moderna*, (Venezia: Marsilio, 2019).

analytical viewpoint they mask a death drive and from a political one they distort memory and history in service of xenophobia and racism. Thus, conservative nostalgia has real "negative" potential.

A cluster of concepts, feelings, and forms of memory is related to the experience of nostalgia. Among them: regression, fusional states, from a psychological standpoint; identitarian prejudge, invention of the past, manipulation of memories and histories, from a socio-political and historian perspective; illusion of a totality exchanged for infinity, demonization of a structural incompleteness, from an ontological and broadly existential viewpoint.

Furthermore, using some of the categories elaborated by the tradition of Critical Theory, such cluster of concepts refers back to the idea of a reified past that can be possessed, that one can regain possession of. If the past, or, worse, the origins, are thought of as objects, they can be considered as exclusively linked to a subject who possesses and has the right to use them, to an identity, whether personal or collective. As objects, memories and the past can be instrumentally treated and used. To be sure, feelings and attitudes traceable back to nostalgia are used, manipulated, and channeled against different cultural groups and communities, to the extent that the past is considered something defined once and for all and as belonging to a group rather than to another.

Nostalgia has long been considered a disease, a pathology. It has been criticized and seen as an impairment of human's capacity of looking forward and orientation towards the future. Such critique can be deepened, motivated, and further explored through the concept of «restorative nostalgia», which can be associated to the concept of "imagined sameness".[15]

If we take the critique to nostalgia seriously, we must say that the feeling of nostalgia is directed towards a state of fusion, indistinction, sameness, continuity, linearity, that ignores differentiation – both at a personal and social level – and does not accept the transience of time that always implies fragmentation, pluralization, emergence of new possibil-

15 Marianne Gullestad, "Invisible Fences. Egalitarianism, Nationalism and Racism". *The Royal Anthropological Institute*, 8 no. 1 (2002), 45.

ities, even though in a non-teleological sense (Boym 2002). The wish to recompose a lost unity – with the mother and the original community as well –, apart from being violent, as Levinas teaches us, gives rise to at least two distinct risks: the distortion of personal imagination, which leads to a deception of memory (the imagined past is always better than the real one); the instrumentalization of nostalgia on a social and political level. These two levels are intertwined. Indeed, the use of nostalgia, which provides the illusion of retaining something that is not retainable – and maybe never existed –, can be considered as a social pathology. If an amount of nostalgia can be considered as a physiological "reaction against the irreversible",[16] this natural feeling needs to be elaborated and supervised, since it can easily shift into a container of fears coming from perceived threats to identity and continuity, and it can be instrumentalized (Davis 1979).[17] The current uses and abuses of nostalgia have their roots in what the abovementioned distinction made by Boym between "restorative nostalgia" and the the "reflective" one: "Restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home […] Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition" (xviii).[18] We could sum up by highlighting the necessity of a critique of nostalgia as a social pathology.

To sum up, psychological, political, and philosophical views converge in criticizing nostalgia to the extent that it is a sort of regression, an attempt to gain or reacquire a monolithic, immutable identity that we can consider exclusively ours. Going back to a psychological standpoint, we experience the world starting with a constitutive lack, and we often exchange this lack for a loss. Precisely when we do not recognize a lack and interpret it as a loss,[19] we tend to fill in a void to reconstruct fictitious and

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16   Jankélevitch, *L'irreversible et la nostalgie*, 299.

17   See Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday. A Sociology of Nostalgia*, (New York: Free Press, 1979).

18   Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii.

19   See Slavoj Žižek, "Melancholy and the Act"**, C**ritical Inquiry, 26 no. 4 (2000): 657-681.

fusional identities. If this applies to our everyday experience, it is at least in part also valid for our experience of the past; some traces of it can be considered really lost, but the past in itself, as a state of completeness without any lack, has never existed as such. From a socio-political perspective, "Nostalgia […] marks a longing for a lost time, or place marked by completeness and plenitude; it imagines some harmonious state that exists before some fall or decline […]".[20] Nostalgia is frequently considered conservative: a yearning for times past before the fall from some imagined pure or perfect state or sense of identity that has – the story often goes – somehow been sullied by an encounter with the other. According to such perspectives, the anti-utopian direction of nostalgia (think of Bauman's *Retrotopia*), goes hand in hand with its political conservatism and with regressive attitudes in personal lives. Last but not least, the same framework applies to the ontological and existential viewpoint: we do not come from a past condition of completeness and accomplishment; human vicissitudes are structurally incomplete to the extent that they are expressions of finite beings. They are accomplished in the sense that they are completed. The idea that it is possible to restore a unity and a completeness in the sense of plenitude is misleading, since it contradicts human finitude, even if there is a sense in which human actions are complete, in the fact that they are passed by.

The regressive potential of nostalgia should be fully grasped in its dangerousness, and, as Critical Theory teaches, this applies to personal as well as social and political bonds, by virtue of the relationship that we all have with the past, and with its memory. The contemporary phenomenon of nostalgia, so my argument could be summarized, is closely related to the fear of the difference, of change, of the encounter with the other, and to the refusal to accept the human finitude and the idea of a past unavoidably completed, but still claiming justice for future generations. Only with a serious approach towards the risks of nostalgia can the – eventual – critical and emancipatory potential of nostalgia be explored.

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20 Joseph Winters, *Hope Draped in Black. Race, Melancholy, and the Agony of Progress*, (Durham, Duke University Press, 2016), 248.

3. … To nostalgia as critique? Or: Is there a positive meaning and function of nostalgia in our understanding of time and in our making history?

I will start this section with a couple of suggestions made by Boym: are "nostalgic manifestations side effects, of the teleology of progress"?[21] Is there a «reflective nostalgia» that «dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity» (xvii)? In order to be used as a critical tool, nostalgia should be recognized as potentially reflective, as a mediated feeling and approach to what is absent, and not only as an immediate feeling aimed at restoring something unavoidably lost or never existed as such. This also implies, as we will see, a reversal of imagination. Here I propose a path that starts from some contemporary suggestions and positive reconsiderations of the topic of nostalgia and I end up with a reference to the early spokespersons of Critical Theory.

There are several ways to articulate nostalgia from a philosophical perspective. The first is linked to temporality and traces back to the human and ontological condition (think of the abovementioned authors like Heidegger, Jaspers, Jankélévitch); the second is related to the philosophy of history and issues of progress; and the third is more specifically related to ethics. In all these cases, the relationship between humans and memory is implicitly involved, both at the individual and collective level, since it deals with the construction and reconstruction of identities. Here I focus on the relationship between nostalgia and the philosophy of history, and to some ethical implications of such feeling as related to memory and history. In order to assess the critical potential of nostalgia with reference to the philosophy of history, I take a cue from some reflections made by the first generation thinkers of the Frankfurt School: in Benjamin, on the one hand, nostalgia can be seen, even if not explicitly,

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21   Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 10.

as an "immanent critique of the concept of progress",[22] on the other, as something that deals with the desire of continuity:

> And so, from time immemorial, historical narration has simply picked out an object from this continuous succession. But it has done so without foundation, as an expedient; and its first thought was then always to reinsert the object into the continuum, which it would create anew through empathy".[23] The angel looking back the ruins and trying to hear the cries of the past sufferings testifies to a form of nostalgia that acts as a braking force, a disorienting feeling which tells us that the past is gone, but its being past does not mean that it is reconciled, peaceful, nor that it exclusively belongs to someone as an object or as something closed in itself and complete. Horkheimer echoes Benjamin's critique of progress.

Referring to the end of exploitation, he writes: "such an outcome is not a further acceleration of progress, but a qualitative leap out of the dimension of progress."[24] But continuity is a problematic concept, if not an illusion. Assuming such a perspective, according to which nostalgia is an obstacle to progress, and, at the same time, a brake acting to slow down the irresistible march forward of history and its progressive narration, Benjamin criticizes progress and relates such critique to the temporal experience, which is not so linear as believed. With those assumptions, it is worth coming back to the famous Horkheimer's letter to Benjamin: "The determination of incompleteness is idealistic if completeness is not comprised within it. Past injustice has occurred and is completed. The slain are really slain... If one takes the lack of closure entirely seriously, one must believe in the Last Judgment… Perhaps, with regard to incompleteness, there is a difference between the positive and the negative, so that only the injustice, the horror, the sufferings of the past are irrepara-

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22 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Heiland, Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge (MA): The Belknap Press, 1999), 476.

23 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 475.

24 Max Horkheimer, "The Authoritarian State", *Telos. Critical Theory of the Contemporary*, 15 (1973), 12. See also Michael Löwy, "Un saut hors du progress. L'hommage de Horkheimer à Benjamin", *Archives de philosophie*, 9 (1986): 225-229.

ble. The justice practiced, the joys, the works, have a different relation to time, for their positive character is largely negated by the transience of things".[25]

Here is Benjamin's comment: "The corrective to this line of thinking may be found in the consideration that history is not simply a science but also and not least a form of remembrance <Eingedenken>. What science has 'determined', remembrance can modify. Such mindfulness can make the incomplete (happiness) into something complete, and the complete (suffering) into something incomplete. That is theology; but in remembrance we have an experience that forbids us to conceive of history as fundamentally atheological, little as it may be granted us to try to write it with immediately theological concepts".[26] Here lies the possibility of reading nostalgia as a critical tool oriented to the future. Nostalgia, then, should not be aimed at reconciling something unreconciliable, but, rather, at understanding the past as unavoidably gone, with all the suffering completed and impossible to heal, but worth being recalled as well, in order to act differently in the future, and by giving voice to the events and the people that need redemption. All this comes together with a severe critique of progress as one of the most destructive causes of suffering, death, and ruins. Such quest for redemption cannot be satisfied, but it is a story worth being narrated in order to configure the "longing for the Infinite and for complete justice"[27] within an immanent frame, capable of

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25 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 471.

26 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 471.

27 Here I refer only to the "horizontal", "immanent", dimension of nostalgia in Horkheimer, leaving aside its transcendent dimension, which becomes apparent in his *Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderem*, (Hamburg: Furche, 1970). it is beyond the scope of this contribution to explore the reception of horkheimer's thought and the criticism of conservatism, directed precisely at his later writings, which refer to the theme of nostalgia. however, i would like to point out the problem and, above all, emphasize that some authors have also found a nostalgic outlook, a reference to the feeling of *Sehnsucht*, in the texts of the young Horkheimer, which is mostly traced back to his reading of Schopenhauer's works. See Brian J. Shaw, "Reason, Nostalgia, and Eschatology in the Critical Theory of Max Horkheimer", *The Journal of Politics*, 47 no. 1 (1985): 160-181); Patrizia Miggiano, "Influenze schopenhaueriane nella *Sehnsucht*

imagining and prefiguring radically new futures. Imagination, thus, can be reversed: from a pathological state, it becomes a critical tool that gives voice to the unheard, without illusions. It is not able to heal wounds, but it can be able to transform the present and anticipate the future.

For Benjamin, remembrance has the power to modify incompleteness. For both, the past is irreparably gone, and neither thinks that a return would be healing. To assess the virtues – if any – of nostalgia, both warnings should be considered: the completeness of suffering that comes to terms with the wish for totality; and the imaginative power of remembrance that may leave space for another kind of nostalgia, directed to the future and capable of learning from the past, not simply to redeem the sufferers, but not to repeat that suffering. Last, but not least, it is worth highlighting the emergence of a "physiological"[28] concept of nostalgia aimed at "justice practiced", "joys", and positive experiences. Only if we are able to take lack seriously can nostalgia act as a motivator for the claim for justice, based on past sufferings; not to redeem them, but rather, to think a radically different future anew. What is gone is unavoidably gone; what lacks structurally lacks, but a sensitive glance toward the past gives the opportunity to re-open the past, not to repeat it, but to feed the future.

Analogously, according to Adorno, the only "ethical" way to experience time is related to redemption: this does not mean that redemption is guaranteed or certain. Rather, we should live and act "as if" redemption existed. He writes: "Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."[29]

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del giovane Horkheimer", *Revista Voluntas. Estudios sobre Schopenhauer* 8 no. 1 (2017): 84-115.

28   My use of the word "physiology" as opposed to "pathology" is metaphorical: to some extent, it is "normal" to feel nostalgia, but, if it becomes the prevailing feeling towards the passing of time, it can become pathological and impair the capacity of imagining and building different futures.

29   Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia. Reflections from Damaged Life*, translated

Walter Benjamin, in his *Berlin Childhood*, speaks of nostalgia as something to be contained, a well-intentioned but deleterious force, like a vaccine administered to a healthy individual: "I sought to limit its effect through insight into the irretrievability – not the contingent biographical but the necessary social irretrievability – of the past".[30] He argues that this irretrievability is essential because it provides the necessary detachment to both perceive nostalgia and resist being engulfed by it: "We can never entirely recover what has been forgotten. And this is perhaps a good thing […] the more deeply what has been forgotten lies buried within us, the better we understand this longing". This detachment also enables us to selectively incorporate behaviors and forge a way forward, "[…] everyone has encountered certain things which occasioned more lasting habits than other things. Through them, each person developed those capabilities which helped to determine the course of his life".[31]

The impossibility of recovering all that has been forgotten helps going out from the logic of possession and articulating the issue of identity from the standpoint of something similar to the *Unheimlich*. Nostalgia should be something disorienting, not something aimed at recovering wholeness, entirety, totality, or at reconquering a right of possession over some pieces of the past. According to Benjamin, longing makes sense only if we do not recover everything from the past, and in that absence lies its force and understandability. The forgotten is intermingled with the present, this means that absence is interweaved with presence and we cannot but live by burdening it, without desperately trying to fill it in. The places where we lived in the past preserve the forgotten as a casket and the images of those places make an alliance with the forgotten, which is able to open up our memories to always different interpretations and to include them within the tissue of our present experiences. This take on the past is traceable back to the impossibility to make the past an object to manipulate or simply

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by E.F.N. Jephcott, (London: Verso, 1974), 247.

30   Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, translated by Howard Helland, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 37.

31   Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, 140.

to possess, as previously mentioned. It is very difficult to establish what, in the past, is ours and what is referred to someone other than us. This impossibility to determine definite boundaries is precisely what Benjamin maintains when he refers to the ambivalence of the feeling of nostalgia. By doing so, he provides us with the elements to criticize nostalgia and recognize some potentialities in it, if liberated from the phantom of possession.

The reference to Benjamin allows for a further articulation of the forms and meanings of nostalgia. First, nostalgia deals with the irreversibility of time and it is somewhat unavoidable, to the extent that we could speak of a nostalgic condition; second, there is a nostalgia which confuses loss and lack. There is a nostalgia for loss, since something is really lost, but it has to be relativized and not absolutized, because each loss recalls our constitutive lack, and poses into question our finitude. When our experience of loss substitutes the acceptance of a constitutive lack, we unavoidably will be compelled to restore a condition of completeness, mined by a loss. The fair weight of loss,[32] and the nostalgia that comes with it, can be worked through only if separated from the constitutive lack, and only if this latter is accepted as a human trait, as each experience of the "other" is an illusionary encounter with her or him, or with the world. So what we feel nostalgia for is exactly the time passed by, besides the faces, the flavors, the images impressed in us. There is nostalgia that does not aim to regain an accomplishment or return to a past considered unmodifiable. From this standpoint, one could hardly agree more with Pontalis, according to whom "The longing that nostalgia carries is not so much the desire for a still eternity but for ever new births".[33]

This is where the need for a critical analysis of nostalgia becomes even more evident. A legitimate need for shelter becomes pathological when it switches to self-destruction. In *Berlin Childhood*, Benjamin writes: "Thus, like a mollusc in the shell, I had my abode in the nine-

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32 Lacan and his followers would say that loss of the other is impossible, since we never experience the other as such.

33 Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *Finestre*, translated by Laura Mercuri, (Roma: E/O, 2001), 39.

teenth century, which now lies hollow before me like an empty shell. I hold it to my ear".[34]

Commenting on Benjamin's image of the shell as the original form of all dwelling, Judith Kasper in her book on trauma and nostalgia, notes: "The womb simultaneously represents the image of the ideal dwelling and the epitome of disturbing darkness. In the attempt to cleave once and for all from his unsettling, carnal, and animal side, a substitution takes place: the body is replaced by things, the womb with case".[35] A reification of the original feeling of nostalgia is at stake here, a removal and a substitution are taking place. It is always potentially dangerous to seek shelter by returning to the past rather than constructing something new with others. Nostalgia is a proof of the human need to find shelter, especially in "dark times".[36] This feeling can lead to a distortion of the past and home where they are imagined as comfortable shelters, better than they actually were.

Cases and shells represent an externalization of nostalgia, the reification of a void, and the attempt to circumscribe it within a close space. Nostalgia, on the contrary, comes from within and cannot be extinguished but only borne.

Another ambivalence of nostalgia lies in its relation with time. As mentioned, nostalgia is problematic when it fails to acknowledge the transience of time and leads to actions aimed at regaining past conditions or situations. However, this feeling could also contain traces of something different, something that could be defined as awareness and sadness in the face of the transience of time. For nostalgia to reach this point, it needs to be worked through as an immediate feeling. Nostalgia is not only a restorative feeling aimed at repairing unavoidable damage caused almost by transitoriness. It is and should be used as a "critical"

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34   Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, 132.

35   Judith Kaspers, *Trauma e nostalgia. Per una lettura del concetto di* Heimat, Marietti: Genova, 2021), 33.

36   For an interesting reading of the relationship between dwelling, nostalgia as a regressive feeling, and identitarian attitudes, see Petar Bojanić, "At Home, at Mine (*chez moi*). Return to Oneself", *New Philologies*, 6 no. 1 (2021): 146-157).

feeling, aimed at entering into discussion the linearity and unavoidability of progress and time, together with the persuasion that coming back is always possible in the sense of making the same mistakes and provoking suffering. There is a side of nostalgia that is dangerous, to the extent that it is attracted toward what provoked suffering among individuals or communities, provided that it imagines an original state of unity, completeness, that someone threatened and mined from outside. Only the awareness that this attraction could be destructive can transform nostalgia into a critical feeling that accompanies time and our experience in the world and with others. The structural lack makes it impossible to experience wholeness, and nostalgia is the capacity to live with the lack, without trying to fill it in with surrogates of meaning and sense, and to reverse it from a desperate glance to the inert past to the hopeful imagination of a liberated and just future. Simultaneously, nostalgia indicates a way of coming to terms with memory and history: and history is in no way a coherent and cumulative path towards justice. We can avoid the risk of perpetrating injustice only by starting anew and trying to relativize the idea of happiness as wholeness.

Finally, Walter Benjamin relates nostalgia to a liberating attempt towards the past, whose aim is to collect new revolutionary forces. This perspective on nostalgia opened up the possibility of a critical rather than triumphant philosophy of history: indeed, nostalgia has the capacity to reject static histories and invite us to re-open unexplored possibilities. It can enable the imagining of different futures, one where sufferers' experiences have a place and can be refigured. It can resist both progressive and conservative adages: that the future will inevitably be better than the past, and that the past was innately better than the future and should be repeated.[37] Such revolutionary force of nostalgia has been famously

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37 With respect to such a perspective on the philosophy of history, some ideas of Christopher Lasch are useful to locate nostalgia between regression and progression. He writes: "Nostalgic representations of the past evoke a time irretrievably lost and for that reason timeless and unchanging. Strictly speaking, nostalgia does not entail the exercise of memory at all, since the past it idealizes stands outside time, frozen in unchanging perfection" (Christopher

highlighted by the work of Löwy and colleagues concerning revolution and melancholia.

If we consider Walter Benjamin and his philosophy of history, it is precisely the suffering of people swallowed by the past that can be a motivator for emancipation in the present toward a more just future: here nostalgia is the condition of redemptive actions toward suffering and injustices, the ruins left by the triumphant march of history. In Benjamin, the assumption of an irreversible past seems substituted by something like the reversibility of time. Therefore, according to him, nostalgia or some forms of it can be seen as a force open to the future.

The paradoxical trait of the human temporal experience is evident here: on the one hand, it is irreversible and what is gone is unavoidably gone; on the other, even in the way in which we recall events, rewriting the past so as to include traces of it in the future is always possible, and this gesture is an act of imaginative transfiguration. Both the idea of an irremediable transience of time and the idea that some slivers from the past can be retrieved, not as they were, but as we imagine they had been, are not only incompatible but reflect the inner functioning of memory and our relation with the "real", a relation that is always mediated. Thus, the work of memory and the texture of nostalgia are not something added from an external perspective, but are an integral part of our relationship with the world. This does not mean renouncing the truth, but acknowledging its social and relational construction, open to the plurality of memories and histories.

Following this line of thought, nostalgic memories should not be acritically accepted or valued, but they should at least be carefully listened, especially when they come from subaltern or marginalized groups. According to Atia and Davis, "Students of memory have often been inclined to look sympathetically upon informal, communal projects of remembrance, particularly among subordinate or marginal groups and in cases where that group memory has not readily been legitimated by more

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Lasch, "Memory and Nostalgia, Gratitude and Pathos", *Salmagundi* 85-86 (1990), 18).

rigid kinds of historiographic understanding. Nostalgia can be a potent form of such subaltern memory. At the same time, if the value of this kind of recollection stems in part from its rich particularity and sincerity, then its most urgent need may be to free itself from the unexamined clichés of nostalgic thinking".[38] "If 'nostalgia' names the particular emotion or way of thinking that arises from a deeply felt encounter between our personal continuities and discontinuities, then nostalgic emotion might be nothing less than the felt awareness of how identity is entangled with difference".[39]

Nostalgia is then a form of subaltern memory to take care of, and such openness to the "other" is inherently ethical; a sign that linearity of time should be at least renegotiated, without this meaning any deceptive attempt to gain, conquer totality, sameness, final reconciliation. If seen as a tool that fosters a non-linear interpretation of the past, nostalgia can be directed both to the past and to the future. With reference to the past, nostalgia is a tool that helps to link continuities and discontinuities and manage the latter in a constructive way. It helps also to re-open the past: "nostalgic individuals may equally, in the face of a present that seems overly fixed, static, and monolithic, long for a past in which things could be put into play, opened up, moved about, or simply given a little breathing space".[40]

These virtualities of nostalgia can be actualized only with the following precautions: the relation of individuals and groups with the past should be guided by the awareness of the *nonidentical* (Adorno 2004: 120).[41] This means that continuities always go hand in hand with discontinuities; so do identities and differences; what is lost is unavoidably lost and unrecoverable as such, and trying to resurrect it means striving for a

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38   Nadia Atia, Jeremy Davis, "Nostalgia and the Shapes of History", *Memory Studies* 3 no. 3 (2010), 181.

39   Atia, Davis, "Nostalgia and the Shapes of History", 184.

40   Stuart Tannock, "Nostalgia Critique", *Cultural Studies*, 9 no. 3 (1995): 456.

41   Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, translated by E.B. Ashton, (London-New York: Routledge, 2004), 120.

totality that is not human. A reflectively nostalgic approach towards the past, in order to be effective, needs to dialogue with the historians and their knowledge of archives, which are relevant for what they preserve and for what they do not contain. This proximity with the historians is vital in order to avoid deception and self-deception. Listening to the past does not imply trying to rescue it from all the already given pain and suffering or to heal the wounds maybe turned into scars but, rather, to exercise a sort of «critical fabulation» (Hartman 2008: 11). Imagination is no longer pathologically but reflectively used.

Nostalgia could thus be considered a useful tool to find a balance between the despair toward the possibility of justice in the future, even if it is experienced in a counterfactual way, and the imaginary and blind hope that happiness can only be contained in the past. Reflective nostalgia is aware that happiness as wholeness never happened in the past, that experiences of happiness will never happen in a manner identical to the past, and that experiences of suffering can be repeated in their atrocity. If the good is something creatively new, evil can more easily tend to repeat. The good can vary and surprise, while the bad, in its impersonality and banality, can repeat itself close to what happened in the past. Imagination can act as a faculty that helps open up new possibilities or vice versa, as a pitfall that deceives subjects into shaping the past according to their desires. Therefore, the uses of nostalgia in reconstructing the past and designing the future are closely related to the uses of imagination. This is the reason why the link between nostalgia and imagination is worthy of further exploration.

4. Toward an Imaginative Nostalgia

Avoiding the risks of identitarian nostalgia is possible if we decenter our expectations and address them to the future. The past does not come back, but if the difference is accepted and nostalgia is read as a signal of such different accounts of memory, it can be useful not to repeat tragedies.

A critical and "reflective" nostalgia can be liberating since it emancipates societies, memories, and histories from the burden of progress

which produces victims, ruins, marginalized people. It can be liberating and inclusive, and there lies its critical potential, especially if we think of the migrant nostalgic identities. Finally, critical nostalgia can serve also to revolutionary aims, since it leaves room for the imagination of a redeemed future.[42] Thus, there can be a kind of nostalgia that is aware of our transitoriness, one that comes to terms with the impossibility of going back, and knows that what we imagine of the past – either if we directly experienced it or not – is never the same as what really happened. This kind of "reflecting nostalgia" is worth listening to, especially when there is the possibility of letting subaltern memories emerge. However, using nostalgia in this sense is conditioned upon accepting lack and absence as such, without trying to deny or substitute lost relationships, belongings, memberships, with imposed bonds.

A final reference is worth being made to some analogies between nostalgia and imagination, with the aim of recognizing their critical import. Imagination can be described as a *pharmakon* that fluctuates between a poison or an antidote, depending on the consideration of identity that lies behind the intentionality of nostalgia. It is a poison when used to manipulate the past to appear to be blissful and perfect. It is an antidote when it makes space for subaltern memories and divergent accounts of the past that lead to a pluralistic and polyphonic image of identity. A consideration of identity as something always already given, then lost, and possibly regained does not consider the inherent perturbing, non-identical quality of human identity.

This is why in these last, while not conclusive, remarks, I point out that imagination can also become openness to a better future by liberating the possibility of a "critical fabulation". Tracing back the concept of fabulation to Latin rhetorical studies (namely Cicero and Quintilian), I propose a reading of Saidiya Hartman's idea of "critical fabulation" as an exam-

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42 See Michael Löwy, Robert Sayre, *Révolte et mélancholie: Le Romantisme à contre-courante de la modernité* (Paris : Payot, 1992). See also Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi (ed.), *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future*, (Plainsboro: Associated University Press, 2009).

ple of positive use of nostalgia in an "emancipatory," "forward-looking" perspective. When we become aware that we do not know what happened, we can liberate imagination and try to narrate suffering as we imagine it, thus creating a place for mourning, letting unknown people exist in some way, without any healing claim. She writes: "the intention here isn't anything as miraculous as recovering the lives of the enslaved or redeeming the dead […]. Narrative restraint, the refusal to fill in the gap and provide closure, is a requirement of this method".[43]

This methodology implies a consideration of nostalgia that goes beyond a pathology of the imagination towards a feeling of something unavoidably lost, which is why we should persist in giving voice to it. Only in this way can nostalgia be of service to a future that is different from the past and emancipated from the suffering that it contains. The first question could be: what if the idea of a lost past, of a lost home, was used to motivate and justify contemporary emancipatory paths of subaltern categories, not to regain a complete unity, but rather to build solidarity-oriented communities anew? This could apply mostly to migrant identities, which are always the outcome of a negotiation.[44] An example of this is Saidiya Hartman's book *Lose Your Mother* (2007) where she narrates her travel to Ghana to trace a community that never existed as she had imagined it. She expected to find people who shared the same historical trauma, and who were united through their affiliation with slaves. As she discovered that the truth was something entirely different, her first feeling was the loss of the imagined community she had hoped to reunite with. It was only by starting with this awareness that she managed to imagine and narrate the actual suffering of the slaves, their journeys, and their nostalgia for home. A home that never existed as such. With this reading in mind, some authors highlighted both the social and racial origin of the nostalgic depression[45] and, on the other hand, the joy of

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43 Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in two Acts", *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 11-12.

44 See Andreea Deciu Ritivoi, *Yesterday's Self. Nostalgia and the Immigrant Identity* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

45 See Ann Cvetkovich, *Depression: A Public Feeling*, (Durham: Duke University

nostalgia and the idea that in some cases this feeling is used to construct bonds that are not asphyxiated, but welcoming communities oriented to the practices of solidarity. An example is the concept of afro-nostalgia coined by Badia Ahad-Legardy.[46]

In Hartman's work, it is clear that nostalgia is the progressive becoming aware of an origin that is impossible to rediscover. Traces disappear; past injustice and past happiness, under certain circumstances can only be imagined, but imagination should not be used to retrieve a totality or a sense of pure wholeness impermeable to difference. On the contrary, imagination should liberate unexplored potentialities that take shape and are visualized in the present and for the future. The past recalled is a legacy to be rethought, from which to walk away, or be reshaped to make justice possible. The idea and practice of critical fabulation are analogous to the work of a critical nostalgia. The practices of imaginative and critical fabulation, if implemented, could become a useful antidote to the pervasiveness of the identitarian uses of nostalgia, and for practicing a democracy which is capable of understanding and recognizing people's feelings.

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Pandora, Destined to see the Illuminated, not the Light[1]

Sonia Arribas[2]

Abstract. *Pandora* is a festival drama (a "*Festspiel*") written by Goethe right before he penned *Elective Affinities*. Although it is not very well known, this unfinished piece has nevertheless received attention by several thinkers. In this essay, I comment on and analyse *Pandora* drawing from the critical approach by Adorno and Benjamin to literary work. I also acknowledge the distinction between allegory and the symbolic, as Goethe conceived it. First, I review the Germanist studies on *Pandora* and take their main motives into consideration. Then, I examine the philosophical interpretations of *Pandora*, which I consider place the emphasis on its allegorical function. Finally, focusing precisely on the role of the goddess Pandora (the absent centre in the work), I show that the writing in this piece inches towards the symbolic.

Introduction

As is well known, while producing his works, Goethe meticulously reflected on different forms of writing and modes of literary expression. These reflections also addressed the variety of expressive mechanisms (of meaning, meaninglessness, novelty, temporality, and more) that every genre or style (novel, *Bildungsroman*, elegy, poetry, memoirs, fantasy tales, love letters, theatre, the epic and the dramatic, and more) could have in order to create vastly different effects from one another. In his

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radical experimentation with writing, Goethe's fidelity to poetic language at the expense of the communicative led him to explore the idea of a type of writing –which he called "symbolic"– that consisted of a text that can be read and has meaning, but of which nothing can be interpreted, a product of the imagination that inches towards the infinite…[3]

In his essay "On the Final Scene of Faust" (1959) Adorno analyses down to the smallest detail how this scene was written and provides an account of this experimentation that Goethe took to the limit in relation to what could be called the crisis of communication and interpretation: that of the search for possible meanings or intentions in literary works. Yet, Adorno also warns against nihilism or the total negation of meaning, as this can easily morph into its opposite, in other words, into a mere affirmative message and the illusion of substance. Adorno claims that the interpretation of a text should be oriented by a kind of "neither-nor", a type of "neither deny nor believe"[4]: not from a sceptical position, but rather by approaching the profane text as if it contained something of the holy within it, something transcendent albeit profoundly hidden. Language as such thus has pre-eminence over communication.

Goethe's late style does not radically break with communication, nor does it aspire to the idea of pure and autonomous language (for example, with respect to the language of commerce). What it does is convert sullied language into poetic language. It is in this precise transformation where that hidden transcendent element lies. Adorno speaks of how writing can "catch fire" when a run-down expression that has been turned into a metaphor by repeated use can once again be read literally[5].

3   Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1968), 124: [1113]: "Symbolism transforms an object of perception into an idea, the idea into an image, and does it in such a way that the idea always remains infinitely operative and unattainable so that even if it is put into words in all languages, it still remains inexpressible".

4   Theodor Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 123.

5   Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 124.

He also writes of how Goethe turns banal or sorrowful expressions –such as, for example, "Blitz, der flammend niederschlug, / Die Atmosphäre zu verbessern, / Die Gift und Dunst im Busen trug" (lines 11876-81) ["the lightning that struck, flaming, / to improve the atmosphere / that harbored poison and fumes in its bosom"]"[6]– into sublime images of a transformative nature, as close to catastrophe as to the possibility of blessing and glory. "The extremes meet"[7], writes Adorno. He also mentions the way in which specific pejorative slogans and expressions (for instance, in Goethe's time "Weichlich" could mean femininity as effeminate) are elevated until they once again become literal, relying both on adverbs that point to the erotic, as well as words about divine love.

Adorno writes about the way in which Goethe managed to eliminate the illusion of natural discourse from his writing, using archaic forms of words, for instance, by inserting the vowel "e" after the particle "ab" or "mit" of an adjective. This recourse cannot be explained merely from a philological standpoint by claiming that Goethe was employing "Middle High German". Adorno reads these additions as marks of the minute distance that lies between the sublime and the ridiculous. Goethe traversed an extremely narrow path that stands between good and bad writing, always just about to fall into the latter. According to Adorno, it is precisely that "about to fall" without ever doing so, that placement at the edge of the abyss, that is the key to Goethe's poetic mastery. The redemption of writing is found precisely in that moment of danger[8]. Adorno also notes how Goethe, for example, removes the "h" from the word "Abraham", thereby transforming this Old Testament name into one of a nomadic tribal chieftain, thus uprooting it from the tradition, turning the promised land of the patriarch into a prehistoric world that is also our present at the same time[9].

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6   Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, verses 11876-81, 448, *apud.*, Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 126.

7   Adorno, 127

8   Adorno, 128.

9   Adorno, 126.

Why does this all turn out so beautiful? Adorno writes: "Perhaps it resembles most closely the feeling of breathing freely in fresh air. It is not an unmediated sense of the infinite but rather arises where it goes beyond something finite, limited. Its relationship to the finite keeps it from evaporating into empty cosmic enthusiasm"[10]. Adorno points to Goethe's critique of Romanticism, though in a highly precise manner he also indicates Goethe's aspiration to transcendence, his aim to overcome the natural limits by means of highly specific expressions. This enterprise is similar to what Hegel conceived of as the Idea: "Limitation as a precondition of greatness"[11].

The final scene takes place in the undefined space of a "forest, cliff, and desert waste", a countryside taken from a mythical context said to be sacred. This space is home to animals, angels, blessed children, spirits and other characters. The scene is divided hierarchically and ascendingly as if there were successive levels. Water falls abundantly –"a thousand brooks"– between the rocks, and nature is depicted anthropomorphically as a figure of movement itself. The forest sways, the waves jump, the cavern protects, and lions are friendly. Goethe writes about eternal love, the infinite creation that flows and overflows all boundaries. Love however can become a flood and end up in a deep abyss. Rising above this picture is the Queen of Heaven, the Supreme Sovereign of the world, like a mystery. Here, Adorno sees a landscape that expresses "its own creation story allegorically", that is, as a fixed image, as "this becoming, enclosed within the landscape". This is the language of natural history that names fallen existence as love, and by doing so, it catches "a glimpse of the reconciliation of the natural. Through remembrance of its own natural being, it rises above its submission to nature"[12].

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10   Adorno, 127.

11   Adorno, 128. Also, Adorno, 127: "Greatness itself becomes experienceable in what it surpasses; this is not the least of the ways in which Goethe is a kindred spirit to Hegel's Idea".

12   Adorno, 127.

Pandora and Faust's final scene

Based on Adorno's reflections on poetic language and the parallels that he sees between Goethe's stylistic greatness and the Hegelian Idea in the final scene of *Faust*, below I want to focus on the "*Festspiel*" or festival drama of *Pandora*[13]. To do so, I will draw inspiration both from Adorno as well as from Benjamin's approach to the critique of a work of art as he outlined it in the first pages of his essay on Goethe's *Elective Affinities*. Here, Benjamin claims that in every great work of art, the material or objective content is intimately intertwined with its truth content. The former is accessed through careful commentary on the text, its infinite details, and its central motifs. When the text is alive for us, when it involves, in short, a work of immortal art, then the literary critic's reading can make its truth content spring forth among the material content. This is what is revealed with each successive approach to the work of art thanks to historical perspective, as there is more "moving truth than resting truth, more the temporal effect than the eternal being"[14]. Benjamin uses an image that very likely inspired Adorno's notion of interpretation:

> If, to use a simile, one views the growing work as a burning funeral pyre, then the commentator stands before it like a chemist, the critic like an alchemist. Whereas, for the former, wood and ash remain the sole objects of his analysis, for the latter on the flame itself preserves an enigma: that of what is alive. Thus, the critic inquires into the truth, whose living flame continues to burn over the heavy logs of what is past and the light ashes of what has been experienced[15].

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13 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Pandora", in *Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden*, Band 5. Dramatische Dichtungen III, (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1998), 332-365.

14 Walter Benjamin, "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*", in *Selected Writings, Volume I. 1913-1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 298.

15 Benjamin, "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*", 298.

Following Adorno and Benjamin's orientation, I will begin this reading with a detailed commentary on Pandora in light of some Germanist studies that have become relevant in the interpretations of this fragment. These will bring us to closer to the central motifs of the work. Then I will review the philosophical analyses conducted on Pandora. In this case the goal is to take note of the main conceptual connections which, according to philosophers, run throughout the work, endowing it with a unitary form and a certain aspiration to wholeness. If we were to adhere to Goethe's terminology, the thesis that I will defend is that the philosophical approaches tend to make an allegorical reading of the work. As Goethe writes in [1112]: "Allegory transforms an object of perception into a concept, the concept into an image, but in such a way that the concept continues to remain circumscribed and completely available and expressible within the image"[16]. In [435] the author provides greater detail into the difference between allegory and the symbolic:

> There is a great difference between a poet seeking the particular for the universal, and seeing the universal in the particular. The one gives rise to Allegory, where the particular serves only as instance or example of the general; but the other is the true nature of Poetry, namely, the expression of the particular without any thought of, or reference to, the general. If a man grasps the particular vividly, he also grasps the general, without being aware of it at the time; or he may make the discovery long afterwards[17].

Finally, I will conclude with possible pathways towards the truth content that continues to shine for us today between the lines of this enigmatic work of art. This truth content surely escaped Goethe's intention, however it is clearly revealed to us today thanks to historical distance. If Goethe sought to sketch the allegorical and unitarian image of the reconciliation of humanity, hope or freedom in *Pandora*, what today appears to us is instead something of the order of the symbolic, that is, also following Goethe's terminology here, an inexhaustible poetic expression, one that

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16   Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 124.

17   Goethe, 124.

cannot be reduced to a single meaning, a "lebendig-augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen" ("a vivid, instantaneous revelation of the Inscrutable")[18]. My thesis will be that the symbolic strength of this festival drama springs precisely from Pandora, the main character as goddess and woman who remains absent from the composition. Next, from philological commentary to philosophical analysis and beyond, from the allegorical to the symbolic, we will traverse through the successive and necessary layers that we must enter in order to reread *Pandora* today and thus touch the "transcendent but profoundly hidden" element that it contains.

Goethe started writing *Pandora* in the autumn of 1807 –it is thus at the same time as *Faust I* and prior to *Elective Affinities*– a moment that scholars have traditionally deemed as inaugurating his post-classical period due to the level of difficulty and linguistic experimentation that characterise it. The *Festspiel* was a piece commissioned by three of Goethe's friends for the recently founded journal *Prometheus*. Benjamin refers to this moment of Goethe's writing in the following fashion: "There came that direction of classicism which sought to grasp not so much the ethical and historical as the mythic and philological. Its thought did not bear on the evolving ideas but on the formed contents preserved in life and language"[19]. *Pandora* has been undervalued by some scholars, but over time more and more have come to appreciate it. As evidence of the former, in Spain for instance, Carlos García Gual has written the following about it: "It is not difficult to share the opinion of scholars who have noted the minimal dramatic interest in the work. As a tragedy *Pandora* is 'a drama without merit'"[20]. As evidence of the high esteem that others have for *Pandora*, I can cite two highly convincing quotes by Karl Kraus: "the greatest German poem, and the most unknown"; "a primordial forest of the creation of language". Of

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18 Goethe, 79.

19 Benjamin, "Goethe's *Elective Affinities*", 298.

20 Carlos Garcia Gual, "La reivindicación de Epimeteo en 'El retorno de Pandora' (1808) y su significado en la obra de Goethe", in *Homenaje a Pedro Sainz Rodríguez. Tomo II. Estudios de Lengua y Literatura*, (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1986), 289.

all Goethe's production, in fact, Karl Kraus only paid attention to *Pandora* and to *Faust II***.** He considered the disinterest of the German culture of his time for *Pandora* as a clear sign of its lack of refinement[21]:

> Ich führe Sie in den Urwald der Sprachschöpfung, denn ich lese Goethes *Pandora*, das größte und unbekannteste deutsche Gedicht, und ich möchte der Hoffnung Ausdruck geben, daß seine schwere Herrlichkeit es mit dem Mißklang des Zeitalters aufnehmen werde, um das solcher Sprache entwohnte Gehör zu überwältigen[22].

The renowned translator of *Pandora*, Michael Hamburger, also praised the work: "The true legacy of Goethe's career in the theater is not to be found in his own time or even in the century following his death, but rather in more recent experimental productions of modern and post-modern theater, especially where performances of Faust II have been achieved with genuine popular success"[23]. Adorno did not write directly about *Pandora*, though he alluded to it in different places. The title of this article is the epigraph of his text "The Essay as Form"[24].

In June 1808, Goethe brought the first part that we preserve today to be printed, and at the beginning, just after the list of characters, he left the following note: "Der Schuplatz wird im großem Stil nach Poussinischer Weise gedacht" ("The scene is designed in the grand style of Poussin"). He never managed to write the continuation, that is, the second act that would represent Pandora's happy return together to her husband: *Pandores Wiederkunft*. Goethe was already nearly sixty years old and in the midst of an unhappy time in his life, after Schiller's death and Napo-

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21 Wilma Abeles Iggers, *Karl Kraus: A Viennese Critic of the Twentieth Century*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 65.

22 Karl Kraus, *Vorlesung, Goethe-Feier, Theater Der Dichtung*, Programme of 8 May 1932: https://www.kraus.wienbibliothek.at/content/vorlesungspro-gramm-karl-kraus-goethe-feier [consulted: 11 March 2019].

23 Michael Hamburger, "Preface", in *Verse Plays and Epic, Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 8, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), xi.

24 Theodor Adorno, "The Essay as Form", in *Notes to Literature*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholson, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 29.

leon's invasion of Weimar.

As Dora and Erwin Panofsky remind us in their classic book on the successive incarnations of the myth of Pandora in Western culture, *Pandora's Box*, Goethe had already written about Pandora previously, in 1773, at age 24, in a dramatic fragment dedicated to Prometheus that was only published in 1833[25]. Prometheus is an artist who defies God and creates mankind. He had two sides, one as a prolific genius and another as a rebel who faced off against the gods and criticised moral orders and established values[26]. Pandora features prominently in this piece. She is a child who one day witnesses her friend Myra in a sensual embrace with her lover Arabar. She runs home, both exhilarated and horrified, to tell her father. Prometheus tells her that "the cause of love is certainly death", a phrase that summarises the proximity between intensity and the extinction of life. A bit more than thirty years later, however, this child has been transformed into *Pandora*, into a symbol of rejection. Meanwhile, Prometheus has gone from being the most exalted representative of the mankind the creator to become that which is only concerned by action and utility. This was the moment in time in which Goethe met Amalia in Karlsbad. Amalia was the mother of Ulrike von Leveztow, who at the time was only two years old. Goethe was attracted to Amalia, and in his diaries, he wrote about her as if she were the reincarnation of the goddess Pandora. But Amalia disappeared furtively and Goethe, in despair, started writing the *"Festspiel"* that concerns us. In the work, Pandora abandons her lover after a time of shared happiness, leaving behind a profound sadness only mitigated by the hope of her return. The idea is that Pandora will gloriously return, something that never took shape on paper.

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25 Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, *Pandora's Box. The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956), 122-123. According to Gadamer, the work was published without Goethe's consent by Jacobi. In their opinion, the work made a great impression on Lessing, because it confirmed his pantheistic vision of the world.

26 Henri Lichtenberger, "Pandore", in *Goethe: études publiées pour le centenaire de sa mort*, *Faculté de Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg*, (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres"), 358.

Pandora unfolds in a series of opposite pairings. First are the contrasting gods (Epimetheus and Prometheus), then the two daughters that Epimetheus had with Pandora (Elpore and Epimeleia) along with Prometheus's son, Phileros. There is also of course Pandora, who lends her name to the title of the piece and of whom it speaks, yet who never appears. We know that Prometheus rejected Pandora in the past, that Epimetheus later married her, that they had two daughters, and that afterwards Pandora –while still his wife– eventually left taking Elpore along with her, who appears to her father in the form of the morning star. Epimetheus has been yearning for Pandora ever since. We also know that Pandora opened her box when they were still together, and that it was only full of wonders (not of evils), which left Epimetheus hopelessly intoxicated and enamoured with his wife forever.

Indeed, the goddess Pandora never appears in the piece. This could suggest the following formal and narrative composition in a highly schematic fashion: like a pyramid from far away to close up, from top to bottom, Pandora is at the peak, she is named but she is not there. In the distant background we find Epimetheus and Prometheus, while the rest of the characters appear in a closer position, as if the entire ensemble were a stream of life that springs forth from the summit. At this lower level we are witnesses to Epimeleia's love for her cousin Phileros. Epimeleia is raped by a shepherd and Phileros takes revenge. Yet Phileros is jealous and nearly kills Epimeleia in one of his explosive outbursts. Phileros's father urges him to throw himself off a cliff, but he is saved in the midst of his fall by the action of Eos, the dawn, the messenger of Helios and the herald of the will of the gods. Dolphins bring him to the beach, and he ultimately emerges as a young Dionysus surrounded by a retinue. As to Epimeleia, she is saved from the flames into which the shepherd had thrown her. She reunites with her lover; the two represent the overcoming of the sorrowful conflicts that had devastated the previous generation. Eos bids Prometheus farewell with words that hint that the gods are the ones who ultimately grace humans with gifts.

The verses continue in a strange, artificial non-communicative language, as if they were in free fall. Goethe mixes classic metric forms with

modern rhythms, iambic trimeters and choral odes, dactylic and trochaic verses, extreme lyricism, and simple chants. The formal composition of the piece, if we were to take into consideration the part that ultimately was not written, would have had the structure of a Romantic-style tripartite myth: a time of a lost past, a fall, and a subsequent salvation that rises up higher than the starting point. However, as we do not have that second part, one could argue that the existing structure runs in parallel with the structure of the last scene of Faust as analysed by Adorno, as both have a cascading layout[27].

Antithesis and unity in *Pandora*

In the tradition of the Germanist studies on *Pandora*, attention has typically been paid to how the text unfolds in layers that appear as central in the work, and also to the figure of the goddess and the final element that unifies everything. The opposition between the titans has been interpreted in vastly different ways, summarised as such by one of Goethe's biographers, John Williams:

> It can be, and has been, read in cultural terms as the tension between the progressive ethos of the Enlightenment, the technological optimism of the *philosophes* with their dictionary of *arts et métiers*, and the passive sentimentalism of Rousseauistic *Empfindsamkeit*. It might be seen prophetically in terms of a proto-Marxist doctrine of alienation, of the enslavement of labour and the exploitation of a workforce in the name of a ruthless 'Promethean' work ethic, the only present alternative to which is an existence of futile quasi-aristocratic inactivity and idleness. It has been deciphered more specifically as the historical confrontation between Napoleonic military aggression and the passivity of Prussia before and after the Battle of Jena: the play was written in the years immediately following the nadir of Prussian history in 1806.[28]

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27 For a connection between Pandora and Goethe's beloved idea of the metamorphosis, cf. Julia S. Happ, "Goethes Pandorensgeschenke: «Gestalten Umgestalten» oder Metamorphosen der Pandora»", *Goethe-Jahrbuch* 127, (2010): 70-81.

28 John R. Williams, *The Life of Goethe. A Critical Biography*, (Oxford: Blackwell,

The more classic interpretations of *Pandora* focus on the conflict between Epimetheus and Prometheus: between the one who looks to the past and reminisces (Epimetheus) and the one who always casts his gaze with anticipation on the future (Prometheus). Epimetheus is nostalgic and inactive, he neither takes decisions nor lives in the present. He always has a memory to anchor himself to, the memory of the happiness he experienced in the past alongside Pandora. He also feels anxious for the lover's impending return. He wonders about what might have been yet has not come to be, and he is afraid of the future. He is sorrowful both on Earth and in the heavens.

Along this same interpretative line, the poetic character of Epimetheus (his sentimentality) is contrasted with Prometheus's practical-minded nature (his industriousness and his unlimited drive for expansion)[29]. This series of contrasts is repeated in various characters at different times throughout Goethe's oeuvre: Werther and Albert, Egmont and Orange, Orestes and Pylades, Tasso and Antonio. (Goethe himself told his friend Zelter in June 1811 that he felt divided like the gods in the piece between one poetic side and another more utilitarian side)[30]. Yet the characteristic element of *Pandora* is that the contradictions in it give the essential shape to how the piece itself is crafted: the two characters are placed on the stage one in front of the other, splitting it in two. On Epimetheus's side nature is harmoniously tended by human hands, its gardens and orchards contribute to a delicate, orderly beauty. The people live in homes and practice horticulture. On Prometheus's side nature has been altered

1998), 181. Within this series of curious interpretations, it would be important to include a recent one, which is not sufficiently well-founded in my opinion, that claims that *Pandora* represents the international world order of Goethe's time, the transformation of the political world into aesthetic appearance: Chenxi Tang, "Literary Form and International World Order in Goethe: From *Iphigenie* to *Pandora*", in *Goethe Yearbook*, 25, (2018): 183-201.

29 Herbert Lindenberger, "Goethe's Pandora: An Interpretation", *German Life and Letters* 8, (1955): 111-120.

30 Rüdiger Zafransky, *Goethe: Life as a Work of Art*, (New York: Liveright, 2017), 784-5: "Alas, I seem to myself a double herm, one of whose masks resembles Prometheus, the other Epimetheus, and neither of them … able to smile."

and dominated by industry; nature is only viewed through the lens of its ability to serve as a provider of raw materials. The inhabitants of this part of the world –mostly warriors and blacksmiths– live in grotesque spaces, stripped of symmetry. There is no place for beauty here, only for labour dedicated to useful things.

Epimetheus is introspective, he does not distinguish between sleep and wakefulness, and he yearns to reach the state of grace and the happiness he lost after Pandora's departure. He is untethered from reality, instead he continually sees how his imagination overflows, becoming mere daydream and delusion. Prometheus, on the contrary, is the *homo faber* who acts on nature and aspires to material progress. He has employees whom he supervises. He is fascinated by craftsmanship and work. For Prometheus, imagination is secondary compared to creation, but his vision of the world is also quite partial and restrictive.

Both in the figure of Epimetheus, as well as in that of the piece in its entirety, the Germanist studies have paid attention to the fact that imagination is considered the most fundamental power. Epimetheus allows himself to be swept away by his imagination, but is overwhelmed by the memories of the past; he suffers, but he does not manage to transform his distress into something beautiful and elevated by means of art, in images and symbols: "he possesses potentially the imagination of an artist, without ever being able to cure the malady of his soul by creating an objective work of art and thus to come to terms with himself and the world"[31].

Imagination is also split into opposite extremes. The two daughters of Epimetheus and Pandora, Elpore (hope) and Epimeleia (care, concern) are the two aspects into which imagination is divided. Imagination consists not only of creating images and artistic forms, it also resides in the capacity to transcend existence, whether reminiscing about scenes from

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31 Heinz Moenkemeyer, "Polar Forms of the Imagination in Goethe's «Pandora»", *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 57, no. 2, (April 1958): 281. See also the connection between imagination and memory in: Gerhart von Graevenitz, "Erinnerungsbild und Geschichte. Geschichtsphilosophie in Vicos «Neuer Wissenschaft» und in Goethes «Pandora»", *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 217, (2010): 70-81, esp. 79-81.

the past or anticipating future moments. In this sense, the two sisters represent two attributes of dislocation with regard to the present brought on by the power of imagination. Epimeleia has inherited her father's tendency to dwell too much about the past, often with despair. Like him, she also suffers from the discordance she perceives between the overflowing and unlimited world of the imagination on the one hand and the limitations of the real world on the other. Sometimes, however, she manages to free herself from those limits through poetic creation. For her part, Elpore moves freely between heaven and Earth and is always restless. As to hope, it has an illusory point that can occasionally turn into disillusionment. Though luminous and full of life, this other form of imagination is associated with her sister: sometimes, when it is active, it is the best remedy to combat worry, but it can also be hollow and fleeting.

Pandora never ends up appearing, yet her absence fulfils an essential function to the structure, giving shape to the main motifs of the piece: "Providing a form for the transitory flow of experience, she manifests herself upon earth in nature, art and music; and on her return to earth she will institute a «golden age»"[32]. Located at the apex of all the oppositions that occur in the lower levels, Pandora reconciles them as a final synthesis or unity of the composition. The world becomes poetic thanks to her. Pandora would be pure and absolute imagination, that which neither falls short due to its dependence on the prosaic, nor gets swept away in delirium. She is a figure that represents the humanitarian ideals of a better future[33], and embodies art and aesthetic appearance, the elevation of humanity from a purely materialistic level (where we find workers following Prometheus's orders), up to the highest level of the configuration of images[34]. She is also associated with the erotic and with harmonious forms. The culmination of *Pandora* by the goddess who gives the piece its name does not consist of passively contemplating the image, but rather of the active creation of beautiful forms and orders.

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32   Lindenberger, "Goethe's Pandora: An Interpretation", 116.

33   Lindenberger, 116-117.

34   Lindenberger, 116-117.

In her book *Goethe's Allegories of Identity*, Jane K. Brown puts forth the central thesis that Pandora is an allegory of identity: a series of encounters, conflicts, and misunderstandings between opposite beings who, over time, end up discovering and recognising each other. This is a Hegelian process through which the two titans initially face each other in an unconscious state to later awaken to consciousness, to a higher synthesis and a complementary relationship between them[35]. Dora and Erwin Panofsky highlight the notes that Goethe left concerning Pandora's return which never came to be. The second act would have started with a mysterious urn that descends from the sky, and Pandora herself would have fought against those who incite violence and brought with her joy and happiness. Afterwards, a kingdom of tranquillity would have been inaugurated under the aegis of Beauty. The box would finally have been opened with science, art, and more springing forth, while Epimetheus would have ascended to the sky in the company of his beloved[36]. The Panofskys place these traits of Goethe's *Pandora* within the long tradition that dates back to the ancient world: in the times of Aeschylus, Pandora had represented the arts required to make life more pleasant on Earth. They also highlight that according to Plutarch the gifts that Zeus gave to Pandora were synonymous with the myriad blessings (love, wealth) needed for a happy life. Finally, they recall how Pandora personifies pleasure in Porphyry.

Pandora and philosophy

Delving deeper into the infinite layers of *Pandora*, next I will review what different philosophers have written about the work. I will try to show that all of them, whether or not they explicitly state it as such, share the thesis that, in Goethe's writing, the traditional myth of Pandora becomes a dark and strange philosophical allegory, overloaded with symbolism that bears little relation to the original myth. In other words, in *Pandora* the essential

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35 Jane K. Brown, *Goethe's Allegories of Identity*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 75-76.

36 Panofsky and Panofsky, *Pandora's Box*, 129.

role given to the image is realised in favour of the search for the general and the concept. The concepts in play would be: the manifestation of the Neo-Platonic One (Cassirer), the portrayal of hope (Bloch), humanity's reconciliation with itself (Gadamer), and modern freedom (Wellbery).

Ernst Cassirer penned a highly influential essay on *Pandora*. In it, he takes Goethe's idea –held precisely starting from the point of his literary journey in which he conceived the *"Festspiel"*– that one must write with an orientation "mehr in Generelle" ("more in general") instead of doing so in relation to "Varietät und Individualität" ("variety and individuality") as the key for approaching the text[37]. The general in Goethe, however, does not mean abstract, nor is it a merely theoretical point of view. Instead, it is an orientation towards the entirety that the sentiment of life expresses in a highly specific sense: life with its infinite contradictions and its diverse stages, the attention to the senses and images, and decision and action. With this premise, Cassirer differentiates two different levels in *Pandora*: on the one side, an allegorical level featuring the two titans Prometheus and Epimetheus, and the absent figure of Pandora; and another dramatic side centred on the figures of Phileros and Epimeleia. By allegorical, Cassirer precisely understands this writing of the general in the Goethean sense, and that is the level I will focus on for a moment.

Since his youth, Goethe's literature was populated by contrasting characters, and he himself was characterised in life for having split into opposites with masks that he could put on and take off: the young and the old, the poor and the rich, the intellectual and the sensitive, the indecisive and the resolute, and more. Cassirer situates *Pandora* with regard to the entirety of Goethe's work, and in reference to his particular world, simultaneously emphasising that one must avoid any type of theoretical approach that seeks to find a unified meaning in it. *Pandora* is situated between two eras: crafted as the zenith of his classicist period, yet it simultaneously points to when Goethe surpasses this period. In it, as the inauguration of the elder Goethe's style, according to Cassirer, all these

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37   Ernst Cassirer, "Goethes Pandora", in *Idee und Gestalt. Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Kleist,* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), 9.

oppositions and disguises that run throughout his previous works are framed within an allegorical totality through which they are represented as symbolic images elevated to the powers of life in general: "dies alles sind für Goethe jetzt keine bloß begrifflichen Sonderungen mehr, sondern es sind selbst beseelte und gefühlte Einheiten"[38].

How did Goethe manage to portray unity? Cassirer considers the formal structure and symbolism of the piece as expressions of Neo-Platonism. Pandora never appears, but she is the One from whom the two lower levels (the gods) emanate: the level of Prometheus and Epimetheus, first, and that of their children, later drawn in the midst of a free fall. Cassirer justifies his reading based on the fact that in 1805 Goethe had started to read the *Enneads* by Plotinus –whom he referred to as the "old mystic"– and in particular he had delved into the sections that deal with the intelligible Beauty: V, book viii, cap. 1. What interested Goethe from these passages is the Idea. The Idea provides matter with form and makes it indivisible with respect to beauty. Yet at the same time the Idea remains untouched as eternal and one, to the extent that its essence never unravels into multiplicity: "So behält das Urbild stets die unendliche Vollkommenheit gegenüber dem sinnlichstofflichen Abbild; als das Zeugende gegenüber dem Gezeugten"[39]. In Cassirer's judgement, Goethe translated the externalisation or alienation of the self ("*Selbstentäußerung*") from the One, its fall from intelligible essence, into the necessary development and self-revelation[40]. Here, where Plotinus gave priority to the transcendence of the absolute, Goethe exalted the immanence of his vital poetic sentiment and the image of the world.

As Cassirer also notes, Schelling himself claimed that Goethe had managed to realise in life –with his literature and his research on nature– what Plotinus had conceived in philosophy[41]. Thus, in *Pandora*,

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38 Cassirer, "Goethes Pandora", 30.

39 Cassirer, 15.

40 Cassirer, 15.

41 Cassirer also claims that Schelling's doctrine on "intellectual intuition" ("*intellektuelle Anschauung*") is the attempt to bring to the philosophical and con-

the form of the goddess does not belong to a supracelestial orbit, rather she is found "mitten in der Dynamik des Lebens, in der Gestaltung und Umgestaltung der Natur, im Rauschen der Welle und im Wandel und den sichtbaren Umrissen der Körper"[42]. Pandora is the eternal that takes shape between the things that happen, not only those of nature, but also those produced and aspired to by human beings, the things that make us grieve and those that make us happy. Her image is in line with that life-affirming orientation that Goethe imposed on himself, as he confessed in *Poetry and Truth*: that everything that made him happy, but also everything that worried him, or which kept him busy in some way, had to be converted into an image or a poem, in order to reach an agreement with himself through them. Concerning Goethe's life mission, Cassirer takes note of the phrase that lends the title to this article: "Erleuchtetes zu sehen, nicht das Licht" ("To see the illuminated, but not the light"), an allusion to Pandora's immersion in the becoming. The complete verse, recited by Prometheus, in reference to the dawn, reads:

> So tritt sie lieblich hervor, erfreulich immerfort; Gewöhnet Erdgeborner schwaches Auge sanft, Daß nicht vor Helios Pfeil erblinde mein Geschlecht, Bestimmt Erleuchtetes zu sehen, nicht das Licht[43].

Moreover, Cassirer also emphasises that terrible feeling of loss, longing, rupture, and yearning for recovery that permeates Epimetheus, and impregnates the "*Festspiel*" in its entirety: "Einzeln schafft sich Blum' und Blume Durch das Grüne Raum und Platz. Pflückend gehe ich und verliere das Gepflückte. Schnell entschwindet's. Rose, brech' ich Deine Schöne, Lilie, Du bist schon dahin!"[44]. Indeed, for Epimetheus everything in this world lacks value unless it serves the "höchste Gut".

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ceptual plane that which he had glimpsed as effective in Goethe's life and poetry. Cassirer, 16.

42   Cassirer, 17.

43   Goethe, "Pandora", verses 956-7, 362.

44   Goethe, verses 149-154, 337

In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch compares Hesiod's demonic *Pandora* with the subsequent Hellenistic version (of which Goethe is heir) in which Pandora becomes mysterious and her box is only full of gifts. In his judgement, this is the only truth, to the extent that "hope is the good thing that remains for men, which has in no way already ripened but which has also in no way been destroyed"[45]. According to Bloch, Pandora is like philosophy: the perspective of opening to change, the latency in the world of something better, the belief in the world as something inconclusive. Bloch justifies this comparison by noting that the box is opened after the dark of the night storm had passed with the clear clouds of day following on the horizon.

Georg Gadamer also writes a few pages to *Pandora* in an article dedicated to Goethe's unfinished dramatic works presenting the notion that

> "Everything unfinished points beyond itself to that which is
> still missing, to that which alone could confer meaning on the
> completed work"[46].

Even fragmentary art represents an experience that aspires to a meaningful whole. Gadamer claims that we have to approach the fragmentary work *Pandora* as if its expression of the poetic spirit contained a hidden secret that gives us the key to its wholeness. He suggests that what Goethe aimed to:

> show that the constant hidden presence of the titanic element,
> the continual threat to man's spirit by the darkness of elemental forces belongs to the very essence of human destiny. There
> is no direct path to enlightenment that can lead man to his
> high calling. What human beings struggle to free themselves
> from is precisely themselves[47].

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45 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope, Volume I*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996), 335.

46 Georg Gadamer, "On the Course of Human Spiritual Development: Studies on Goethe's Unfinished Writings", i*n Literature and Philosophy in Dialogue: Essay in German Literary Theory*, (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 41.

47 Gadamer, "On the Course of Human Spiritual Development", 41.

According to Gadamer, what remains of the piece should give us a clue about what the final development could have been. Unlike Cassirer, Gadamer claims that there are no traces of Neo-Platonism in *Pandora*, but rather a representation of humanity in its elevation towards the loftiest ideals. He also highlights that the central figure of the piece is Epimetheus who, despite his misfortune, takes the first step on the path to self-discovery. Gadamer also highlights that the gift of science and art that the box will bring to humanity represents the ultimate achievement of overcoming the vulgar prehistoric world of the conflicts between the titans, the ultimate reconciliation of all polar opposites: "But this happens not by revealing some secret or other; they are themselves the mystery where all truth is hidden"[48]. This ascension towards the summit is possible not thanks to Prometheus's industrious activity, but rather due to the festival and celebration that give shape to the entire piece, as well as through the transformation of the past into an image. Goethe is the creator par excellence of poetic expression, which, in Gadamer's judgement, includes the expression of personal experience. Gadamer's hermeneutic presupposes that "the being of text and reader are fused in the experience of a circular dialogue between them, a dialogue circumscribed by the hermeneutic circle"[49], and through which the reader approaches the text with a series of questions and prejudices, and the text provides responses[50]. The last verses recited by Eon are the culmination of this representation of human culture and suggest the "response to the entire work"[51]:

> Was zu wünschen ist, ihr unten fühlt es;
> Was zu geben sei, die wissen's droben.
> Groß beginnet ihr Titanen; aber leiten

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48 Gadamer, 45.

49 John Pizer, "Gadamer's Reading of Goethe", *Philosophy and Literature* 15, no. 2, (October 1991): 271.

50 Gadamer uses one of Goethe's terms to synthetically explain the hermeneutic procedure: "This is of course the hermeneutic *Urphänomen*, that there is no possible statement that is not understood as an answer to a question". Cf. Georg Gadamer, "Weiterentwicklungen", in *Gesammelte Werke*, Band 2, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), 226.

51 Gadamer, "On the Course of Human Spiritual Development", 46.

> Zu dem ewig Guten, ewig Schönen,
> Ist der Götter Werk; die laβt gewähren[52].

Recently, David Wellbery has argued in favour of a strong connection between Hegel and Goethe's *Pandora* that will help us address Adorno's note from another angle with regard to this piece. According to this viewpoint, one can establish connections between the aspiration to the poetic image of classic and post-classic Goethe and the Hegelian Idea. According to Wellbery, the parallels occur due to the fact that both authors portray the concept of freedom: while Goethe realises it through the imagination, Hegel does so in conceptual terms through a dialectic development[53]. Thus, Wellbery delves into several of Goethe's works, from the unfinished *Prometheus,* to *Egmont*, *Hermann und Dorothea*, until reaching *Pandora*. In all of them he finds a constant concern to seek out the image and proper form of freedom. In fact, Wellbery partially criticises Cassirer's reading of *Pandora* asking: "What was the purpose of those cascades of verse that the bereft Epimetheus brings forth from out of his sorrow? Is he just fixated on a philosophically naïve concept of the Idea such that it could coincide with or be seized in «a single image»?"[54]. Wellbery argues that if we adhere to the language and internal coherence of the work, what we find is not only an abstract image of the Idea, but rather a manner of expression of the dialectic of freedom, in the style of Hegel. Form and content, composition, and theme, are indivisible in Goethe. As in Hegel, *Pandora* highlights that freedom is the unity of the universal and the particular, of concept and existence. The goddess Pandora is thus the incarnation of this unity. She is the One who gives unity to the world and who grants beauty to an ideal, but only in that Pandora is self-divided.

According to Wellbery, the two titans are incarnations of historical structures of the consciousness: that of Prometheus, directed towards

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52   Goethe, "Pandora", verses 1083-1086, 365.

53   David Wellbery, "The Imagination of Freedom: Goethe and Hegel as Contemporaries", in *Goethe's Ghosts: Reading and the Persistence of Literature*, (Rochester, New York: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 217-238.

54   Wellbery, "The Imagination of Freedom", 225.

industrial and instrumental production, and that of Epimetheus, consumed between nostalgia and longing "Goethe offers […] something like a mythic account of modern consciousness in its characteristic diremption"[55]. Pandora is the modern Idea torn asunder between two opposite, insufficient and partial conceptions of freedom.

In terms of Pandora, the brothers also maintain opposite relationships. Prometheus rejects Pandora and, in doing so, he refuses the substantive beauty and the wholeness that she symbolises, obsessed as he is by the tangible, the useful, and boundless expansion. This is freedom conceived here as an expansive force and brute imposition; of a rationality channelled towards the instrumental and, ultimately, towards war. Epimetheus for his part affirms the infinitude, the ideal, the substantive beauty of Pandora, as such he not only loves and yearns for her, but he also takes part in her essence. His nostalgia, by not allowing himself any consolation, and by insisting on rejecting the finite empirical world and mundane experiences, becomes something pathological. The celebration of love for Pandora is his only raison d'être, but she is not a real being of flesh and blood, but rather the metaphysical idea of infinitude:

> We might call it metaphysics after metaphysics; or melancholia as metaphysics; perhaps even a negative theology of love. But whatever term we choose, the point is that Goethe diagnoses this as a position within the dialectic of modern consciousness, the elegiac counterpart to Prometheus's robust finitism, and thus as a misconstrual, falsification, or distortion of the Idea[56].

Pandora and courtly love

Pandora's general tone, as we have indicated, is tinged by Epimetheus's disconsolate longing. Pining for a lover is a frequent motif throughout Goethe's work, starting with *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, of course. Wellbery mentions this aspect of *Pandora*, the "celebration of the beloved in the cult of her absence", and places it in the long tradition of European

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55   Wellbery, 226.

56   Wellbery, 231-232.

poetry that dates back to the troubadours, and to the *dolce stil novo* of Cavalcanti and Dante, until reaching the phenomenon of Petrarchism[57]. In *Seminar 7. Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan provided a solid account of that discourse that began in the 12th century, that of courtly love, which was subsequently employed in European literature until reaching, we would say, Goethe. In it, the beloved is inaccessible, as an obstacle is always built around her that surrounds and isolates her: "The object involved, the feminine object, is introduced oddly enough through the door of privation or of inaccessibility"[58].

Epimetheus languidly and eternally longs for Pandora's return. Pandora is unreachable as a desired object and in her perfection, she is elevated to the highest pedestal by her lover. We know almost nothing of her. She is a "feminine object […] emptied of all real substance"[59], but in the end we only know of her because she brings the gifts of science and art. It is important to recall here that, in his later years, Goethe produced a marvellous series of courtly love poems in 1823 after his marriage proposal to the young Ulrike von Levetzow was rejected: *Marienbad Elegy*, which ends with an intentional allusion to the myth of Pandora:

> Mir ist das All, ich bin mir selbst verloren,
> Der ich noch erst den Göttern Liebling war;
> Sie prüften mich, verliehen mir Pandoren,
> So reich an Gütern, reicher an Gefahr;
> Sie drängten mich zum gabeseligen Munde,
> Sie trennen mich – und richten mich zugrunde[60].

I believe that this vision of courtly love also partially underlies what Rolf Tiedemann has written about *Pandora*, although in his case he never openly states it. In any case, Tiedemann takes note of Goethe's saying according to which "*Pandora* sowohl als *die Wahlverwandtschaften* drü-

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57   Wellbery, 231.

58   Jacques Lacan, *Seminar Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959- 1960* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 149.

59   Lacan, *Seminar Book VII*, 149.

60   Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Elegie", in *Sämtliche Gedichte. Zweiter Teil*, (Nördlingen: München, 1961), 117.

cken das schmerzliche Gefühl der Entbehrung aus"[61]. He reads the work drawing inspiration perhaps too heavily from certain famous aspects of Adorno and Benjamin's philosophies. Above all he criticises Gadamer's interpretation, as he believes it is absurd to appeal to the return of a redeemed humanity in a country where the horrors of Auschwitz had just taken place (Gadamer published his text in 1949).

First, Tiedemann analyses the dualism between Epimetheus and Prometheus in light of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and considers that if Goethe resorts to myth, it is because the modern subject is covered by a mythical or fatal layer (destiny) that restricts him in his longing for freedom. Second, he takes the Adorno's idea that in both Hegel and in Goethe the subject comes not through a narcissistic relationship with oneself, but rather through "*Entäußerung"*, the externalisation –the stripping away of something, and the surrender to something that is not oneself. This refers to an entire series of polar opposite and embodied categories of Goethe's thinking– for example, "inhale" and "exhale", "contraction" and "distension", "systole" and "diastole" –which allude to a series of physical rhythms that the subject has to experience in the arduous process of maturing[62]. Third, he outlines an interpretation of *Pandora* in light of the philosophy of history, but a history that is not fated to progress, but rather plagued by ruins:

> From the outset, it has been recognised that this piece addresses the process of the constitution of culture; yet in reality it does not deal with a separate sphere such as culture, but rather with society as a whole in its objective laws. As long as a meaningful structure that points to a certain progress could be ascertained in history, a notion which both Hegel's idealism and Marx's materialism presuppose, the march of history was appropriately expressed with the theme of *Pandora*. However, what must have contributed to turning *Pandora* into a philosophy of history *contre cœur* by its author was the historical skep-

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61 Rolf Tiedemann, "Pandora oder Mythos als Aufklärung", in *Abenteuer anschauender Vernunft. Essay über die Philosophie Goethes*, (München: Edition text + kritik, 2014), 117.

62 Tiedemann, "Pandora oder Mythos als Aufklärung", 116-117.

ticism that characterised Goethe throughout his life, nourished in no small part by his own experiences as a resolute politician in a small late-stage absolutist state, but even more so by the bloodshed during the French Revolution and the nascent formation of German nationalism, which would prove far more bloodthirsty than all the Jacobin guillotines combined, a fact that neither its adversary Goethe nor its supporters, from Kleist to Arnim, could have suspected[63].

Prometheus is the man of action, the one who dominates nature and deems it antagonistic to mankind: "He seems to be a kind of prehistoric neoliberal", who "has read his Hobbes, and understands social life in all instances as *bellum omnium contra omnes*"[64]. For him, all goods are exchangeable, to the extent that he is only interested in their value for exchange, not use. Tiedemann places Goethe on the side of Epimetheus, someone who does not seek to dominate objects, to make them identical to himself, but whose contemplative relationship with the world and with the past makes him impotent.

What about Pandora? Pandora, Epimetheus's wife, is the realisation of the Idea of Beauty and of the unity that would unite subject and object. She is the happiness that Epimetheus had in the past, something lost forever. She only exists in a prehistoric time. Epimetheus's memory of Pandora and the love that he still feels for her, foretells something of the messianic status. Pandora is just a memory, a lost Paradise whose return is desired but never achieved. "She represents, as an incarnation of Beauty, the aesthetic image as such"[65]. She points beyond the concept and philosophy to the advent of the final salvation: "Goethe conceptualizes in *Pandora* the utopic in the constellation of hope and love"[66]. Finally, concerning this utopian component, Tiedemann takes into consideration that Pandora is not just another character in the drama, and consequently she could never truly return. She is a "symbol of art itself", and the

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63 Tiedemann, 119.

64 Tiedemann, 121.

65 Tiedemann, 133.

66 Tiedemann, 131.

"myth of paradise regained"[67], but she can never be realised as such. She must remain merely as the image of something that would be possible and that would confront the real, an image of freedom versus necessity, the illusory and always uncertain reparation of history's catastrophes. Tiedemann also cites a reference by Adorno to Pandora: "Adorno calls this image of utopia «the rush, the drive to the most extreme heights, like Pandora»"[68].

Pandora and the impossibility of reconciliation

Let us now return to what Adorno wrote about the final scene of *Faust* concerning that possible connection between Goethe and Hegel that we previously saw about the Idea. Adorno highlights the aspiration to transcendence or infinitude based on the experience of the limited and the finite. He writes that "limitation as a precondition of greatness has its social aspect, in Goethe as in Hegel: the bourgeois as mediation of the absolute"[69]. Here he highlights the expression in *Faust* –which Goethe wrote in quotation marks– "He who makes an effort, striving, we can redeem"[70], in other words, bourgeois asceticism. Immediately afterwards, Adorno also underscores another sentence by Goethe "And if indeed love has partaken of him from above, the blessed host will meet him with a hearty welcome"[71]. The bourgeois is mediation of the absolute, in fact, but with an important nuance, that is, that "the number of nights of love is not computed in heaven"[72]. The world, our world, is bourgeois (the world in which everything can be computed abstractly, the world of calculation and profit), yet Goethe's viewpoint from which he writes

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67 Tiedemann, 134.

68 Tiedemann, 137, *apud*. Theodor Adorno, *Nachgelassene Schriften*, I/1: Beethoven, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), 55.

69 Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 128.

70 Goethe, *Faust,* verses 11936-7, *apud*., Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 128.

71 Goethe, verses 11938-41, *apud*., Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 128.

72 Adorno, "On the Final Scene of Faust", 128.

is not bourgeois, as he speaks from the perspective of a non-computable or exchangeable love. Here resides the "humaneness" ("*Humanität*") of Goethe's writing (and also Hegel's): indicating that a "world beyond exchange would be one in which no one participating in an exchange would be cheated of what belonged to him"[73]. The Hegelian Idea implicit in Goethe is bourgeois mediation, but he also simultaneously leaves the "non identical"[74] alone through love, that is, by means of the non-computable nights of love.

Adorno's text concludes with certain reflections on *Faust* as a figure which at this point in the work is no longer the one who was previously in the piece, but rather someone who has become non-identical to himself. "Perhaps Faust is saved because he is no longer the person who signed the pact; perhaps the wisdom of this play, which is a play in pieces, a "Stück in Stücken," lies in knowing how little the human being is identical to himself, how light and tiny this "immortal part" of him is that is carried off as though it were nothing"[75]. Hence, Faust no longer remembers the erstwhile Faust or the horrors that he had to face. The only thing that remains in his memory is Gretchen, the incomparable. Adorno writes dizzyingly: he places her as a *Mater gloriosa*, a mother; immediately after, however, he contradicts himself by claiming that this feeling of being protected (by a mother) has also vanished in the piece.

Now we return to *Pandora*, and we seek inspiration in the "infraction" and "violence of logic" captured by Adorno in the final scene of *Faust*, to discern whether they also occur in the "*Festspiel*". This would involve seeing whether in Pandora there is something of that thematised Idea as the non-identical, that which "is carried off as though it were nothing", the return from the forgotten. This would also involve seeing whether Pandora only has the status of an allegory, or if, as Tiedemann suggests, it also transfigures into the symbolic. Pandora is everywhere, she is spoken of incessantly, but she is not there. The striking aspect is that her

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73   Adorno, 128.

74   Adorno, 129.

75   Adorno, 130.

presence and absence do not constitute a series of episodic appearances and disappearances of comings and goings, for example, like those of the main character of Goethe's story *The New Melusina* included in *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*. Pandora's presence and absence coexist. The being of Pandora in fact violates logic. She is the one who ensures that the piece is not merely an expression of Neo-Platonism, as Cassirer had claimed. Nor can we say that *Pandora* is only a sign of hope, as Bloch does. Nor does Gadamer's proposal, i.e., *Pandora* as a response to the question of human destiny as an aspiration to aesthetic ideals, seem to be the final word on *Pandora*. We could say the same of Wellbery's reading concerning Goethe's Hegelianism as an articulation of the modern concept of freedom. All these interpretations do not grasp that Pandora gives a name precisely to the inconsistency of philosophical knowledge, of *all* philosophical knowledge.

We know that Pandora is Epimetheus's wife, that one day she disappeared, and that she is outside the piece, yet at the same time she is felt everywhere. Pandora is rejected by one titan (Prometheus) and loved by another (Epimetheus). Epimetheus places Pandora as a desired and impossible object, and furthermore as a mother (as Adorno does somewhat with Gretchen at the end of his text). In fact, Pandora is a mother, but maternity no longer concerns her. Why did she leave? Why does she not appear? Taking these questions seriously involves going beyond Pandora as an object desired by Epimetheus, it involves thinking of her from another perspective that is not Epimetheus's standpoint, in other words, from a point of view that is not only that of courtly love, which is always aimed towards the past or towards the future.

The play does not explain the reason why Pandora is not there, but the most fundamental aspect –about which no one has written– is that no one wonders why. She shares in the properties (the famous box), but we also do not know whether or not the gifts remain of interest to her. We only know of her what we are told, but something in her remains outside all those statements. In fact, when they refer to Pandora, they are speaking of themselves.

To conclude, perhaps, we would have to take the fact that Goethe could not finish the piece very seriously. It is said that it was due to a conflict among the publishers of *Prometheus*, the journal in which it was to be published. In my opinion, this was rather proof of the insurmountable difficulty that he encountered, the impossibility to give form to reconciliation. He possibly sought to write an allegory that brought together and put an end to the oppositions running throughout the piece, yet unwittingly, by leaving it unfinished, what he did is turn his piece into a symbolic one[76]. How did that happen? By placing Pandora –a woman– between the "centre and absence"[77] of the piece, inexorably inching her towards the infinite.

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76 Machosky explains the difference between symbol and allegory in Goethe in Brenda Machosky, "Reconsidering Allegory and Symbol: Benjamin and Goethe", in *Structures of Appearing: Allegory and the Work of Literature*, (Fordham: Fordham University Press, 2012), 155-180.

77 I use the title of the book by M. Bassols, *Lo femenino, entre centro y ausencia*, (Buenos Aires: Grama, 2004). This is an expression that Lacan in turn taken from a poem by Henri Michaux.

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Manufactured Recognition[1]

Douglas Giles[2]

Abstract: Awareness of the power of social recognition has been percolating in philosophy since Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1700s. In recent decades, Axel Honneth's work on struggles for recognition[3] has brought attention to the need for critical theory to consider the importance of social recognition's role in social life. Receiving recognition is essential for developing a healthy sense of oneself and one's place in society, but there are also negative aspects to recognition. Honneth has noted the dangers of our need for recognition but has focused on a historical study of theoretical concepts of recognition.[4] This paper combines the observations of Rousseau with Honneth's to offer a critical theory framework for identifying manufactured recognition—negative behaviors that arise from individuals' need for social recognition. Understanding the various phenomena of manufactured recognition leads to a better understanding of injustices and social conflicts.

Social recognition involves the attitudes and practices by which we approve and affirm each other. Recognition norms inform us as to what traits and behaviors we should value in other people. When we witness those traits in someone, we recognize that person as someone deserving of consideration as a good person or as a friend. Recognition theory was initiated by G.W.F. Hegel and is based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's observations concerning our dependence on social affirmation. Axel Honneth incorporated a Hegelian structure of recognition into critical theory in his attempt to understand the moral injuries people suffer at the hands of social injustice.

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3 Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (London: Polity, 2003). Axel Honneth, *Disrespect* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2007).

4 Axel Honneth, *Recognition: A Chapter in the History of European Ideas.* Trans. Joseph Ganahl (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

There are two principal concepts in Honneth's recognition theory.

Socialization: The first is that individuals are socialized into a life-world of recognition norms that prescribe how we should respond to the behaviors of others. Social norms tell us what is expected of us, from moral behavior to social niceties, creating shared communal bonds and enabling us to find our place in society.

Positive relation-to-self: The second is that receiving recognition on the basis of recognition norms enables an individual to develop a positive "relation-to-self"—one's sense of who one is and can be, and most importantly, one's autonomy to be able to determine one's own desires and intentions. We are defined by our relations with others, and to have successful healthy relations with ourselves and with others we need the acknowledgment and approval of others.

Thus, individuals desire and need both to receive and to give recognition to achieve their aims in society. When we receive recognition and enter into relations of mutual recognition with others, we develop an identity, both internally and externally. Honneth holds that a person who does not receive recognition suffers moral injuries that damage the person's sense of self.[5]

Struggles for Recognition

Honneth argues that most social movements for justice are in fact struggles for recognition. Even social conflicts over resources or political power are at their heart struggles based on the concern that moral values are not being reflected in actual recognition relations. Groups denied rights or integrity seek to reestablish relations of mutual recognition. The Black Lives Matter movement is a recent example. Yes, this group is struggling for legal rights, but at the heart of their movement is the struggle for recognition—that they are human beings who deserve to be treated according to the moral values in which society claims it believes but is not fully extending to Black people. That denial of recognition of Black peo-

5   Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition.* Honneth, *Disrespect.*

ple is what Honneth calls a "pathology of reason."[6] It should be obvious that Blacks are people with the same rights as other people. However, he claims, capitalism (among other social power structures) has distorted people's ability to reason about moral relations and norms, leading to a failure to identify misrecognition.

Key to Honneth's conception of struggles for recognition is that when people are misrecognized, in other words, suffer experiences of injustice, they suffer moral injuries that will motivate them to struggle for recognition. Honneth thinks of struggles for recognition as occurring within political movements. This is too narrow of a view. I argued previously[7] that Honneth is thinking of only transformational struggles—efforts to change legal and political recognition norms—and that he is not giving enough weight to affirmational struggles—the everyday process of individuals continually affirming their practical identities within their social groups. We all are, in myriad ways, continually thinking and acting in accordance with our society's recognition norms to succeed in our personal projects and to fit in with our social groups. We need the recognition that we fit in and are acceptable, and this is our continual affirmational struggle for recognition.

Honneth admits that when individuals do not receive recognition from the dominant social structures, countercultures can offer some compensation for a lack of recognition. He states that the unequal distribution of justice and opportunities for recognition in the dominant culture can lead to "a counterculture of compensatory respect" for people.[8] In this way, people can find alternative forms of recognition that they are not receiving from the dominant social structures.

Honneth explores this no further, and I think that is a missed opportunity. Recognition is a human need. People are dependent on recognition

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6   Axel Honneth, *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1007). 2007.

7   Douglas Giles, *Rethinking Misrecognition and Struggles for Recognition: Critical Theory Beyond Honneth* (Prague: Insert Philosophy, 2020).

8   Honneth, *Disrespect*, 93-94.

from others to be included in society, to develop an identity, and to feel good about themselves. As with all human needs and desires, people seek out recognition, and when people do not receive recognition, they will continue to seek it out. Subcultures are one alternate way to seek recognition, but subcultures are not the only way.

Because affirmational struggles are from birth a constant in human life, people learn various ways to achieve recognition from their peers. This situation is natural, but there are healthy and unhealthy ways by which people seek to achieve recognition. As a society, we can and should recognize people who act according to social norms. This is healthy for individuals and society; indeed, it is a large part of what being a society means. However, people will go to extra lengths, and not always in positive or healthy ways, to get recognition if it is not forthcoming.

We need to add to recognition theory the concept of manufactured recognition. By manufactured recognition, I mean acts that are specifically designed to receive recognition that are outside of standard procedures. To help explain this, I draw on a concept used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Rousseau's Observations on *Amour-Propre*

Rousseau's most familiar quote is "Man is born free and everywhere is in chains." Later in that paragraph, Rousseau says this—"… the social order is a sacred right, which is the basis of all other rights. Nevertheless, this right does not come from nature, and must therefore be founded on conventions."[9]

In referencing social conventions, Rousseau establishes that the social order is artificial. A set of social relations made France a civilized society, but Rousseau saw civilized society as a prison. Its structure of social norms chained people, restricting their true expression, instead encouraging people to concentrate on the approval of others to maintain their social status.

This social pressure created in people the artificial state of *amour-propre*. Rousseau adopted the concept of *amour-propre* from François de La

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9   Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Of The Social Contract*. Trans. Quintin Hoare (Penguin, 2012).

Rochefoucauld, who identified it as people's impetuous desires to be regarded as an exemplary person.[10] Rochefoucauld did not use the term "recognition," but he clearly was thinking the same idea in saying that people crave approval and admiration from others. The problem, he found, is that we crave approval so much that we feign or exaggerate characteristics to win approval and admiration from others. We become so used to disguising ourselves from others that we end up disguising ourselves from ourselves.

Rousseau adopted Rochefoucauld's concept of *amour-propre* and defined it as the approval and esteem that must come from others. Rousseau held that because the social order and its norms were creations of human civilization, the striving that is *amour-propre* was a second nature and not part of humans' first nature. He argued that *amour-propre* was not natural self-love or *amour de soi*, a concept he took from Augustine. Rousseau claimed that *amour de soi* was compatible with happiness but that *amour-propre* corrupted individuals and led to misery and vice by forcing them to compare themselves continually with one another to gain social status.

Manufactured Recognition

Some critics of recognition, such as Kelly Oliver,[11] have focused on the negative aspects of recognition, seeing is as a form of domination. Oliver considers recognition to be a social power that can be used to dominate and oppress people, offsetting its positive aspects of identity and community formation. Many of the negative aspects of recognition that Rousseau, Oliver, and others have observed fits under what I am calling "manufactured recognition." The needs and desires to win approval and admiration from others are strong, and when they are not forthcoming, people will manufacture traits to gain social status.

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10 François de La Rochefoucauld, *Collected Maxims and Other Reflections*. Trans. E.H. and A.M. Blackmore and Francine Giguere (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

11 Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

Some people, and perhaps all of us at some times, feel a lack of recognition and thus feel the need to compensate for that lack of notice and respect in some way. Honneth seems to limit compensatory respect to countercultures, but the desire for compensatory respect is an attitude and action that any individual can undertake. When one feels a lack of recognition from others, one can compensate by engaging in acts with the intension of elevating oneself. This type of behavior is manufactured recognition rather than natural mutual recognition because it is a self-serving self-recognition that an individual creates for him- or herself that transcends and interrupts the natural constellation of recognition relations.

I am defining manufactured recognition as acts undertaken beyond standard procedures with the intention of gaining status recognition. Submitting a dissertation to receive the recognition of a degree is not manufactured in this sense because it is an act performed within a standardized procedure. Acts of manufactured recognition are in some way outside of proper actions, but where that line should be drawn between proper and improper, standard and manufactured, is a complex question. What is clear is that manufactured recognition seeks to win esteem recognition through artificial means, similar to the concept of *amour-propre*. In some ways, manufactured recognition is a stage performance or a game. It is an act.

Natural recognition is intersubjective. Heikki Ikäheimo states that recognition relations that are based on sincere care for others are sincere expressions of our humanity. These relations are horizontal, natural intersubjective relations of mutual respect that, more than any other social activity, cultivate self-realization and autonomy, and, thus, justice. As Ikäheimo concludes, "social relations imbued with mutual unconditional or 'genuinely personifying' recognition are the ideally free relations for norm-governed beings like us."[12]

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12 Heikki Ikäheimo, "Conceptualizing Causes for Lack of Recognition: Capacities, Costs and Understanding," *Studies in Social & Political Thought* 25 – Special Issue: Pathologies of Recognition (2015):38.

Manufactured recognition is different from horizontal intersubjective relations. It instead seeks to elevate one's status over that of others. Acts of manufactured recognition are constructed using social norms such as bending prevailing norms of honor or esteem that elevate individuals who display certain traits. It distorts and often inverts the relation between behavior and the rewards of recognition. Therefore, it is a distortion of affirmational struggles.

Traditionally, high status was associated with certain individuals who were by their birthright worthy of honor and greater social esteem than others. The European feudal order was a power structure buttressed by social norms that gave recognition to a noble class. People at all levels of feudal society were socialized into recognition norms that approved and affirmed their birth status, granting greater esteem and privilege to those of noble birth. Rochefoucauld, writing at the time of Louis XIV, belonged to a prominent noble family but decided to critique the noble power structure and observed the negative effects of *amour-propre*. The feudal order was gradually transitioning into modern society in Rousseau's and Hegel's times but remained structured on class distinctions. Traditional ideas of social status lingered, and still today, wealth and fame engender a sense of a person deserving greater recognition than that afforded others.

In today's consumerist society, one may not have social wealth and power, but one can have at least some of the trappings of it. Plus, ideas of being "fashionable" and "on trend" have developed as new forms of social status. One can literally buy recognition by purchasing the right clothes, the right car, and not just a luxury watch but an X brand watch and by appearing at the right restaurants, clubs, or social gatherings, and so on. Corporations that produce consumer goods and services know this and are quite eager to sell this form of social status recognition. Recognition is for sale, which individuals can exploit to manufacture recognition.

Beyond self-aggrandizement seeking to gain admiration from others, manufactured recognition also asserts one's superiority over oth-

ers. Healthy self-esteem does not require the lessening of others, but the structure of manufactured recognition is "I have X and you don't; therefore, I deserve more recognition than you." X can be a material item, a physical or mental skill, a belief or creed, or a social affiliation. The emphasis is less on solidarity with others and more on separation from others. If individuals cannot easily manufacture a sense of their own recognition, they can try to make themselves feel respectable by judging others as unrespectable. One can feel better about oneself despite being poor because at least one does not drink, one's daughter does not have a tattoo, or one is not a gossip like *those* people are. Marginalized whites can still feel superior to any Black person, an insecurity-driven bigotry that is easily exploited by corporate media and politicians.

It is not only those who are misrecognized who seek to manufacture recognition. The middle-class couple leading a comfortable life may desire to appear more wealthy and better connected. Men may attempt what they believe to be esteem-worthy expressions of masculinity such as acts that demean women or bully others. Parents may push their children to excel in sports or the arts or to get into a prestigious school more to increase their own social distinction than for the child's benefit. Engaged in these attitudes, people are willing to bend or break moral rules and the norms of society to win artificial recognition from others.

Manufactured Recognition and Critical Theory

Manufactured recognition is relevant for critical theory because people's attempts at self-aggrandizement and superiority create injustices on two social levels. One is the microsocial level of interpersonal relations, including the examples mentioned. This is a level of social interaction often neglected in critical theory but one that deserves more attention. At the macrosocial level, political and social movements often include large-scale manufactured recognition.

So-called populist movements, better understood as right-wing reactionary movements, are typified by attempts to attain recognition by circumventing standard norms and procedures. They use artificial means

of elevating their social status by demeaning others. Examples are nativist movements that circumvent the recognition norms that value people for their honesty and integrity and substitute the manufactured recognition norm that values people for their country of birth. This is a pathological use of the social mechanism of recognition, inventing artificial recognition norms to discriminate against others. What social injustices are caused by attempts at manufactured recognition is a worthy question for critical theory to explore.

At all levels of society, manufactured recognition attempts to affirm oneself by alienating and separating oneself from others. Like-minded individuals who seek to manufacture recognition in similar ways can form subcultures to share their manufactured mutual recognition that excludes and denigrates others. Such a subculture may lack the social power to discriminate against others but can still misrecognize nonmembers and cut off recognition relations with them.

The pathological attitudes and behaviors of manufactured recognition differ from healthy senses of pride or self-realization. Manufactured recognition attempts to create a feeling of recognition that is not tied to healthy identity relations. The recognition generated is independent of intersubjective recognition and even demanded of others. Individuals constructing attitudes of manufactured recognition can become hostile if they feel their efforts are not being acknowledged by others.

Manufactured recognition is what critical theory understands as a social pathology because it is autonomous from other individuals and identity relations with them. The artificial recognition norms may be oblivious to other individuals, or it may be a demand on them. Manufactured recognition disrupts healthy identity relations in that it makes the relationship one-way, the perpetrator feeling no reciprocal obligation to others, instead being condescending and demanding acknowledgment of the artificial recognition norms.

We can think further about how manufactured recognition manifests in society with a basic typology distinguishing external and internal acts of manufactured recognition.

External actions are actions directed at an external and perhaps public audience to gain recognition from others. These external acts can occur at any level, from the microsocial level of interpersonal relationships to the macrosocial level of international relations. I further distinguish between acts of self-aggrandizement and acts of projecting power.

Aggrandizing acts say, "look at me," such as bragging, showing off wealth, and other forms of seeking undue attention. Artificial self-aggrandizement can be merely annoying, but it can also interfere with positive interpersonal relations, ranging from speaking too loudly in a conversation to ego-gratification stunts interrupting a social event to large-scale publicity campaigns.

Projecting power includes acts of intimidation and violence intending to assert superiority over others and instill fear in others. Acts of bullying are examples, from a playground bully to a political leader threatening adversaries. How many acts of injustice are committed by people with the intent to manufacture greater recognition for themselves?

Internal acts are not intended as much for a public audience but aim to increase one's own self-recognition. An example would be the "slacktivism" of "liking" the page of a cause on Facebook. The act does not work toward justice; it is simply behavior to make oneself feel better. Internal acts such as these private acts of self-aggrandizement still lead to feelings of no further obligations to others.

Critical theory should consider to what extent manufactured recognition contributes to social conflict and injustices. What a culture or subculture tolerates as manufactured recognition can tell us something significant about that culture or subculture. I believe that understanding this dimension of human behavior will lead us to deeper understandings in social and political philosophy.

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The lively voice of Critical Theory

Berlin Journal of Critical Theory (BJCT) is a peer-reviewed journal which is published in both electronic and print formats by Xenomoi Verlag in Berlin. The goal is to focus on the critical theory of the first generation of the Frankfurt School and to extend their theories to our age. Unfortunately, it seems that most of the concerns and theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt School are neglected in its second and third generations.

We believe that the theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt School are still capable of explaining many social, cultural, and political problems of our time. However, in some cases, we need to revise those theories. For example, the culture industry in our time can also work with a different mechanism from that described by Adorno and Horkheimer. In our age, the majorities can access the media and even respond to the messages which they receive – this is something which was not possible in Adorno and Horkheimer's time. But this doesn't mean that the culture industry's domination is over. Thus, we may need to revise the theory of the culture industry to explain the new forms of cultural domination in our age.

Therefore, we are planning to link the theories of the first generation of the Frankfurt school to the problems of our age. This means that we are looking for original and high-quality articles in the field of critical theory. To reach our goals, we gathered some of the leading scholars of critical theory in our editorial board to select the best articles for this journal.