

Overdetermined: Psychoanalysis and Solidarity

*P*sychoanalysis makes its debut in a scene of disappointed solidarity. In 1895, Freud closes the text that inaugurates the talking cure, *Studies on Hysteria*, by playing out a conversation that had become common with his early hysterical patients. “I have often been faced by this objection,” Freud admits, then recounts the hysteric’s grievance: “Why, you tell me yourself that my illness is probably connected with my circumstances and the events in my life. You cannot alter these in any way. How do you propose to help me, then?” (305). Her frustration with psychoanalysis is twofold. If the fundamental discovery supporting a psychoanalytic method is that hysterics “*suffer mainly from reminiscences*” (7)—and that the reason the past resurges in painful symptoms is that it has been repressed and rendered unconscious, translated into a psychical system about which even the analyst’s insights are limited and error prone—how can Freud possibly alleviate her suffering? However cathartic, psychoanalysis cannot change the past where it locates the source of present pain; it cannot even claim to fully access or ascertain it. If the talking cure offers solidarity in establishing a shared desire to better someone’s life, is it a hollow bond? All talk, no action?

At the heart of the hysteric's complaint is also a challenge to the talking cure's constrained scope, the individual. If her illness is precipitated by repressive social "circumstances," how can a method limited to her lone inner life liberate her from systemic domination? Psychoanalysis cannot abolish or bring to justice the patriarchal social order it profoundly links to hysterical misery. If neither her past nor her circumstances can change "in any way," is analysis designed to placate her into consenting and bending to a world she cannot bear? In practice, is Freud's solidarity with the repressive and exploitative conditions that exacerbate hysterical pain, or with her unconscious struggle against them? Whose side is psychoanalysis on?

Freud's response is famously deflating. "No doubt fate would find it easier than I do to relieve you of your illness," he allows, though what he can offer is better than nothing: "[Y]ou will be able to convince yourself that much will be gained if we succeed in transforming your hysterical misery into common unhappiness." If what she wants is to seamlessly assimilate into social life, to feel perfectly at peace with her past, at home with her family, and unconflicted by her desires, she's in the wrong consulting room. In lieu of total cure, Freud proposes unending but ordinary unhappiness, a sense of despair, however basic or vulgar (*gemeines*), in common with others. While he does not reject the grounds for the hysteric's critique—psychoanalysis can neither materially alter the past nor upend the social conditions that drove her to a breaking point—Freud's answer reframes the hysteric's individual pain in collective terms. All share in unhappiness because what we have in common, psychoanalysis proclaims, is an unconscious. And existing with an unconscious puts us all fundamentally at odds with psychic and social demands of assimilation and unconflicted contentment.

The hysteric's pain is more acutely and miserably symptomatic because she is, as Rebecca Colesworthy puts it, "the one for whom exploitation has become intolerable" (36). Unable to eradicate her pain,¹ psychoanalysis pursues its articulation; the talking cure aims to make her life somewhat more bearable not by bending her to or concealing repressive and exploitative psychosocial conditions, but by constructing a therapeutic relation and space where she can put her conflict into words. What the early hysterics reveal to Freud (because he learns this from them) is not an outbreak of personal suffering or individualized pathology in a group of women, but an intersubjective condition that makes it impossible to tolerate their "circumstances" and pushes back against them. The psychological substrate of the unconscious—which, as Freud realizes, structures and drives the hysteric's convulsive intolerance of her exploitation—organizes us all.

Motivated by the hysteric's desire for a better life and Freud's commitment to the social dimension of the psyche, this special issue considers psychoanalysis—theory and clinic—as the grounds for solidarity and political community, from the consulting room to the picket line. In this introduction, I extend the discussion above of the curative and social limitations of psychoanalysis by digging into a term—*overdetermination*—that has structured the psychoanalytic social bond from the origins of the talking cure. I then consider what our unhappiness in common might generate, or foreclose, for collective bonds of solidarity beyond the consulting room. I conclude by threading the essays in this issue together, illuminating common associations, drives, critiques, and commitments.

A Tremendous Nexus of Wishes

From the talking cure's earliest days, Freud and Josef Breuer find that the panoply of hysterical symptoms, which appear to resolutely defy sense making, coalesce around a repressed unconscious idea or memory (the "pathogenic nucleus") of which "the most important" characteristic is its overdetermination ("Psychotherapy" 289). Psychoanalysis is built on the insight that "the principal feature in the aetiology of the neuroses [is] that their genesis is as a rule overdetermined, that several factors must come together to produce this result" (263).² Four years later, in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud names overdetermination the "first condition" supporting the presence of an unconscious dream-thought in the dream content, restressing his earlier finding that "*a hysterical symptom develops only where the fulfilments of two opposing wishes, arising each from a different psychical system, are able to converge in a single expression*" through their "overdetermination" (326n1, 569). Lacan, too, emphasizes how the concept links the re/discovery or invention³ of the unconscious to the function and field of psychoanalysis, reiterating that for "a symptom, whether neurotic or not, to be considered to come under psychoanalytic psychopathology, Freud insists on the minimum of overdetermination constituted by a double meaning-symbol of a defunct conflict beyond its function in a *no less symbolic* present conflict" ("Function" 222). Overdetermination makes it possible to construct an explanatory, if not also imperfectly curative method organized around the symbolic order of what Naomi Schor calls "the vast field of insignificance which Freud undertook to reclaim" (77)—nonsensical symptoms, convulsive eruptions, strings of throwaway words, inane parapraxes, details of partially and often poorly recovered dreams.

Kandinskyesque, Freud figures the symbolic logic of symptoms as a line with a “dynamic character,” “a broken line which would pass along the most roundabout paths from the surface to the deepest layers and back,” “—a line resembling the zig-zag line in the solution of a Knight’s Move problem, which cuts across the squares of the diagram of the chess-board” (“Psychotherapy” 289). But it’s more than that:

The logical chain corresponds not only to a zig-zag, twisted line, but rather to a ramifying system of lines and more particularly to a converging one. It contains nodal points at which two or more threads meet and thereafter proceed as one; and as a rule several threads which run independently, or which are connected at various points by side-paths, debouch into the nucleus. To put this in other words, it is very remarkable how often a symptom is determined in several ways, is “overdetermined.” (290)

Beyond the crisscrossing webs that trace the angular paths of a knight’s tour, where a single line threads the board in intersecting but never interlocking designs (they don’t “proceed as one”), overdetermination in Freud’s proleptically modernist simile requires not one but several lines interacting across an expanded multidimensional plane (they travel and morph in time); they intersect at “nodal points” and, unlike the lines across the game board, transform when they meet, at times merging and producing new lines that diverge to form new nodes. Freud is driving home the point that there is not one convergent node—one memory at the root of any symptom, dream sequence, repetition, or associative thread—but many, intersected by other memories, fantasies, and ideas. The “nucleus” is not a causal center from which all the lines emerge but a spot where “as a rule” they eventually converge: more of a hole burrowed by overlapping cuts than a definitive point of genesis.

Overdetermination describes how unconscious thought is organized through multiple and shifting arrangements of meaning that intersect and interact, producing new chains that disperse in different directions. Dreams and symptoms formally tighten and negotiate between these layered paths of often contradictory unconscious content, which, for the purposes of psychoanalysis, explains why they contain multiple meanings that allow for multiple “correct” interpretations. Yet (and this is important), as Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis point out, overdetermination “does not mean that the dream or symptom may be interpreted in an infinite number of ways” and is “not merely the absence of a unique exhaustive meaning”

(292). Overdetermination is a “positive characteristic” that describes constructions from unconscious thought—not just how many or few interpretations exist—for which, paradoxically, “the lack of determination is more fundamental” (292). Freud’s most enduring metaphor for overdetermination, the “navel of the dream,” emphasizes its indeterminacy:

There is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream’s navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this meshwork is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium. (Interpretation 525)

Freud redraws his striped plane, this time an unruly “meshwork” that interpretations aim to disentangle and rethread. But at a certain point the analyst’s capacities are overwhelmed; he gets caught in the net. Here, Freud explicitly figures the nucleus as a hole, the navel into which all the interlocking paths cut, impossible to trace as they branch out of and into a void. This is why, as Schor writes, “psychoanalysis’s threefold totalizing aim—to say all, to hear all, to interpret all—is doomed to failure from the outset” (81). One could add “to cure all” to the list. Because this work takes place in an analytical setting, the impossibility of completely capturing and interpreting unconscious thought extends to the impossibility of cure in psychoanalysis. Even when a satisfying interpretation succeeds in quelling a hysterical symptom, Freud warns analysts that new symptoms can (and probably will) emerge, even preparing analysts for the inevitable “depressing feeling of being faced by a Sisyphean task” (“Psychotherapy” 263).

As a general rule, subjects of the unconscious are unhappy and incomplete. This common condition—our determination by the absence of a determinate cause, our organizing schema an unresolvable nexus of proliferating contradictions that rewards our attempts to resolve them (and civilization is a patterning of such attempts) with pain, illness, and violence—is the unhappy basis for psychoanalysis. What psychoanalysis adds to the

mix is the symbolic space for working in and speaking those contradictions, discontinuities, and absent causes. Still, with unhappiness as its curative horizon, psychoanalysis deserves—indeed, it requires—the hysteric’s challenge: what, and whom, is it for? Bruno Bosteels sees Freud’s response to the hysteric as admitting to the talking cure’s both therapeutic and political limitations. Bosteels argues that the admission to the impossibility of cure ultimately precludes Freud’s “revolutionary insights” from serving politically liberatory ends (244). Even though the unhappy ambition of analysis could teach subjects “to adapt to the radical impossibility of adaptation,” Bosteels maintains that “the final lesson is one of the acceptance or recognition of the human being’s essential finitude, rather than an attempt [. . .] to overcome the limits posed by it.” In this account, psychoanalysis is paralyzed before its own contradictions, between the “emancipatory radicalism” of the unconscious and the adaptive pragmatism of its therapeutic practice.

Yet there is no inconsistency between the “radicalism” of unconscious desire (Bosteels offers the socially subversive universalism of polymorphous perversion as an example) and “common unhappiness.” The former is the condition for the latter. The contradiction between the two does not internally paralyze psychoanalysis because it’s the common antagonism that animates the psychoanalytic subject in the first place; it’s precisely the point. Even polymorphous perversion—an initial basis for the drive theory of sexuality as discontinuous with reproductive instincts and secure object attachments (including attachment to the self)—isn’t fit to topple the cultural status quo; what it reveals qua drive is that installing nature (or anything at all) as determinate cause of a sexuality repressed by cultural norms is bound to fail, so no coherent political program of happily liberated sex lives for all will do.⁴ Such is the basis of our shared, ordinary, unending unhappiness. Contra the claim that psychoanalysis has a practically adaptive function, Jacqueline Rose explains that the “starting-point of psychoanalysis” is the rejection of the idea that “the internalization of norms is assumed roughly to work” because the “failure of identity” is not a personal failure but the condition of psychic life with an unconscious (*Sexuality* 90). The relationship between psychoanalysis and emancipatory political projects like feminism begins, Rose argues, “with its recognition that there is a resistance to identity at the heart of psychic life”—that hysteria, for example, is not “a peculiar property” of some women because it is “more than a fact of individual pathology that most women do not painlessly slip into their role as women” (91). The unconscious is the psychoanalytic basis for delimiting if not outright refusing the antisocial, depoliticizing logic of “individual pathology”

because it universalizes “psychic division”—not only the condition of our collective failure to “painlessly slip” into social roles but the condition of an inner life whose protests against exploitation call for social care and have the capacity to generate meaning, the power to demand and produce new symbolic practices and bonds.

In the coda that closes Seminar XIX, Lacan affirms that psychoanalysis, while it cannot cure psychic division or its unhappy effects, does in fact have a *binding* function rooted in an ethical relation. Lacan argues that the analyst’s work is based on a relation to “something that is called the human being” (. . . or *Worse* 199). “All in all,” Lacan asks, “what was the essential thing that Freud introduced? He introduced the dimension of over-determination” (200). Overdetermination structures “the essence of discourse” in psychoanalysis as constituted beyond “what is said” (which lacks determinate causality), such that the work inheres in the “fact of saying” (205). In the consulting room, the body acts as “support” of jouissance, which “means very precisely that the body is not on its own, that there is another one” (201). Beyond what is said, the “fact of saying” *with* another organizes the articulation of desire: “It’s discourse. It’s a matter of relationships, which hold each and every one of you together with people who are not necessarily the people here” (205).⁵ Analysis functions as “relationship, *religiō*, social binding”—*religiō* invoking a sense of ethical duty, dependability, and care underlying the analytical social bond. Through a bond generated by “the fact of saying” the overdetermined spillages of the unconscious, the analytical relationship opens a discursive space for fantasy beyond reality, which links the divided subject with the object *a*—the overdetermined cause of desire, generated in and through discourse.

Making the case for these bonds of the consulting room—between patient and analyst, fantasy and reality, desire and subject—Lacan recounts a trip to Rome, where he viewed Lucio Fontana’s slashed copper slabs (most likely the artist’s *Concetto spaziale*, *New York* series from the early ’60s). The works impress Lacan with their “gripping [*saissant*] effect”—“an effect,” he adds, “in which I recognize myself full well” (. . . or *Worse* 206). It’s the effect of the works’ “*squarcio*”⁶—a rip or “gash”—that seizes him. “It produces an effect for those who are a little sensitive,” Lacan explains: “The first person who comes along, especially if she is of the feminine sex, can experience a little wobbling [*petite vacillation*].” The cuts scratched along the copper slates evoke the split at the heart of subjectivity—which, like Freud’s dream navel, marks the spot where knowledge and sense-making glitch—and produce a vertiginous effect in the “sensitive” viewer who, like

Lacan, recognizes herself in the cut. Psychoanalysis is the work of forging a bond—through a discourse that locates a cut in place of a determinate cause—from the wobbly effect of recognition in lack, of identification with the impossibility of identity without a hole. The concept of overdetermination, as Joan Copjec writes, means that psychoanalysis fundamentally recognizes “the subject’s *under-determination*”:

As subjects we cannot trace backward from condition to condition until we arrive at some “lonely hour of the last instance” (as Althusser would later put it) where a cause operated alone to determine our actions. [. . .] What is essential is not the substitution of a plurality of causes for a single one but the fact that sex as cause cannot be located in any positive phenomenon, word or object, but is manifest in negative phenomena exclusively: lapses, interruptions that index a discontinuity or jamming of the causal chain. (“Sexual” 32)⁷

Sex names the absence at the heart of the subject that short-circuits the explanatory powers of biology and culture. Searching for answers, the subject will always stumble on and into this glaring cut. Following Copjec, the present absence of sex in the subject means that at the “core of her being” psychoanalysis finds something that “cannot be owned or encompassed by the individual subject,” something that “can never be put on display because it is nothing other than the teetering, unsettling displacement which permanently throws the subject’s identity off balance” (34, 39). Division is the basis of the social bond in psychoanalysis because the subject’s discontinuity with herself is coextensive with her division from others. Psychoanalysis puts the subject to grips with the disorienting, wobbly effects of intersubjectivity.

Lacan concludes the seminar by asking what binds the analyst to the patient, beyond being two bodies in a room. Against the analyst in the role of master, chiding the patient for “not being sufficiently sexuated, for not enjoying well enough,” Lacan speculates that the relation is more like that of a brother (210). Lacan admits that the language of brotherhood, so entwined with the history of republicanism, has grown somewhat tired (several years after the eruptions of May 1968).⁸ Yet psychoanalytic discourse provides a possibility for activating the latent universalism of the fraternal relation:

The term frère is splashed across every wall. Liberté, égalité, fraternité. But I ask you, at the cultural point we’ve reached, with whom are we brothers? With whom are we brothers in any other

discourse besides the analytic discourse? Is the boss the brother of the worker? Does it not strike you that this word brother is precisely the one to which the analytic discourse affords its presence, if only in that it brings it back to what are called family affairs? If you think this is simply to avoid class struggle then you are mistaken. It has to do with many other things besides the family racket. We are brothers with our patient in that, like him, we are sons of discourse. (210)

It is notable that Lacan is not here providing a full theory of political solidarity. He merely gestures toward class struggle, a phenomenon more typically associated with solidarity than psychoanalysis.⁹ Nor does he articulate a full-blown immanent critique of political *fraternité*—that project is at least as old as the Haitian revolution with its still-reverberating critique of the bankruptcy of European universalism—or of un/brotherly social reproduction under capitalism. What Lacan does do, however, is turn the patient—for indeed that is the “wrong word” (211) for him—into a brother, creating a new ethical relation grounded not through the literal “family racket,” but in the illocutionary “fact of saying” the subject’s internal division.

But what kind of brothers are these? Lacan’s analyst is a slightly laughable figure, a “piece of crap” who in the act of interpreting *with* the patient-brother is inspired by him, while the analysand is refigured as the one who propels the work of analysis (211). Lest he leave us with a “saccharine treat,” though, Lacan turns from this harmonious picture to warn of the “backlash” sure to be generated by a discourse, psychoanalysis, that combines an unmooring of sex with a “fraternity of bodies”: “[I]t’s not just about painting a rose-tinted future, you should know that what is on the rise, the ultimate consequences of which we have still not seen, and which is rooted in the body, in the fraternity of bodies, is racism.” In this parting mention of racism, Lacan tempers his “reassertion” of the “value of the word *brother*” by evoking the double valence of brotherhood, long associated in myth and history not solely with camaraderie and solidarity but with patricidal, tribal, and misogynist violence. He admits that he has so far failed to “mention the Father,” whose symbolically unifying function organizes universal bonds between subjects. Like the signifier and its founding absence, such bonds cover over an originary lack, a loss that is symptomatically repressed in order to enforce the Father’s tyrannical rule as the guarantor of knowledge.¹⁰ As the story goes, the Father’s real or psychical return compromises the brothers’ momentary solidarity by reinstalling a social order (which was

never exactly abolished) grounded on guilt, prohibition, and the threat of social exclusion (see note 10).

Unlike the uncastrated Father, the analyst considers himself “a split thing.” Antithetical to the reactionary “backlash” that seeks to reinstate the Father as the guarantor of knowledge (of a determinate or not-negative social order where the object has not been lost), the psychoanalytic bond is forged through a process of destabilizing knowledge in the discursive relation through the structure of overdetermination. As we have been exploring, overdetermination is characterized by a central absence or loss that marks the differential character of the signifier—which, for Lacan, is embodied in the consulting room by the analyst as the excessive object *a* (as opposed to the mythic Father). The bond between “sons of discourse” depends not only on this splitting of knowledge by installing an indeterminate object in its place but in positioning the “analysand” as the one who can interpret *with* and “uplift” the analyst. Even though the imperfectly curative framework of psychoanalysis, transference, is based on the patient’s supposition of the analyst’s knowledge—of the analyst as subject-supposed-to-know—Lacan emphasizes that “to be worthy of transference” the analyst’s knowledge “can be questioned as such” (210). Indeed, like anything *supposed* to be or do or have anything else, the subject *supposed* to know does not in fact know a thing. We could say, following Lacan’s lead, that he doesn’t know crap.

To align itself with the patient’s unconscious refusal of exploitative conditions, psychoanalysis must produce a discourse that undermines the coordinates of repression and its reactionary backlashes, even if it means letting go of the ambition of total cure, of seamless and contented adaptation. As Hortense Spillers qualifies, any analysis worth undertaking must seek “to unhook the psychoanalytic hermeneutic from its rigorous curative framework and try to recover it in a free-floating realm of self-didactic possibility that might decentralize and disperse the knowing one” (733–34). To function on its own grounds, the analyst’s discourse must sustain the brotherly bond with the analysand—perhaps better thought of as a sister, the hysteric, who introduces the dimension of overdetermination to Freud and Breuer—without reacting against the difficulties of division by installing a master (or a Father) in the analyst’s seat. In fact, it’s precisely by insisting on “the radical indeterminacy of human desires and subjectivity,” as Anne Cheng writes, that psychoanalysis becomes “crucial to political inquiry into the life and effects of power” (91). By upending any version of cure as “change or transformation in linear temporality” (toward unconflicted happiness,

for example), “psychoanalysis teaches us that change *is* the condition of subjectivity and, as such, the precondition for political relations.”

Psychoanalysis is the work of constructing and sustaining a link—“relationship, *religiō*, social binding”—of care and ethical commitment between divided subjects and between their overdetermined desires. A way to gravely misunderstand this process, though, as both Lacan and Hannah Zeavin warn, is through what Lacan calls the order of “*bon sentiments*” (. . . or *Worse* 204) and Zeavin pinpoints as “empathy” (*Distance* 229). Upheld “as an eternal ethical value” especially associated with the perfectly all-knowing and ever understanding figure of the therapist, empathy is exactly the wrong goal because it strives toward a feeling of cohesion between self and other (and self and self) that, as Saidiya Hartman writes, “fails to expand the space of the other but merely places the self in its stead” (qtd. in Zeavin 229). When it fails to seal up the subject’s internal and external divisions, empathy “allows for the categorical denial of humanity where it cannot be produced” (230); it inspires a backlash against the subject’s (and the social relation’s) failure to cohere *all* by excluding *some* from “what should be a collective form of care.” What psychoanalysis must strive and indeed fight for, as Zeavin indicates, is “something like solidarity.”

Fantasizing something like solidarity radiating from a patch of blank canvas, T. J. Clark describes Cézanne’s *Les Grandes Baigneuses* (the one in the Philadelphia Museum of Art) as transmitting Freud’s concept of overdetermination through a collective of bodies bonded in care and desire. In the painting reside a group of bathers, nude, gathered by a riverbank, sitting and lying and bathing together, framed by a triangular canopy of trees; throughout, splashed along the bodies and the wild that frames them, little absent nodes, splotches of blank canvas. Clark spots something of Freud’s here, in a field of vision marked by the evidence of nothing, where it is clear to Clark that the painting’s “unfinishedness *is* its definitiveness” (114). In the middle of the ground, a blank patch holds the attention of three bathers, who collect around it, hands and gazes extending toward it, toward one another. Clark muses on what they’re so taken by, what it is they’re grasping for together, and why:

I think of the three figures in the painting’s center, with arms reaching down to an unformed patchwork of marks on the ground—from which the bare canvas shines triumphantly—as embodying care. For what precisely we are not shown, and should not guess. They reach out so tentatively, attentively, almost

recoiling from contact before it is made; touching, comforting, paying homage. A tremendous nexus of wishes is in play here. To have what they are attending to be absence, or lack, or any such formula, seems to me to ditch the best side of Freud—the side summed up in the word “overdetermination.” They seem so confident of the absent center’s infinite generative powers. As if they were drawing the whole figurative world of the picture, themselves included, out of the primed canvas’s positivity. What word will do here—positive or negative, high or low, abstract or lumpishly concrete—to register Cézanne’s sense of matter at ground zero? (114)

A “tremendous” but indeterminate “nexus of wishes” traverses the painting’s navel, linking the figures that surround and reach toward it, toward one another. Here, Clark finds the embodiment of a profoundly social bond organized around something there and not there, as Clark’s ambivalence around the formality of the “unformed patchwork” makes evident. Is it all, or nothing? From the chasm, Clark demands something other than “absence, or lack, or any such formula,” which fall short of describing the expansive energy of being-with—of “*care*”—that unfurls from this splash of canvas. Absence misses the point that overdetermination captures, for Clark, with its insistence on the “generative powers” of desire concentrated in the painting’s traumatic nucleus. Overdetermination does, indeed, characterize this absence (it is, despite what may flow to and from it, a formalized cut in the landscape). When I look at the opening around which the three bathers commune, I feel the explosion of this tremendous nexus of desire and connection and solidarity coalescing a community of bodies—and, with that, a little wobbling.

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Any solidarity worth having demands collective mobilization toward a better, more justly distributed world—for all. But the place of psychoanalysis in all of this begs the question: if what we have in common is division within ourselves, a built-in loss coextensive with the social-symbolic order, what kind of shared future can psychoanalytic subjects build? In “Femininity and Its Discontents,” Rose voices the important tactical challenge that psychic division and the failure of identity posed for feminists grappling with psychoanalytic theory while working to build political coalitions: “Feminists could legitimately object that the notion of

psychic fragmentation was of little immediate political advantage to women struggling for the first time to find a voice, and trying to bring together the dissociated components of their life into a political programme” (94). In order to gain symbolic traction and political power, do liberatory projects require coherent expressions of the personal and of social harmony that psychoanalysis repudiates? Does solidarity demand some form of positive—not unhappy—image of a shared future? Finding camaraderie in psychic division and common suffering could approach what Jason Read calls “negative solidarity,” a sense that unhappiness is what we *should* have in common, which in turn frames progressive programs (like social benefits and debt cancellation) as unjust and even elitist, since they relieve undeserving others of the misery and alienation in which we are supposed to share. However committed to common misery, such a worldview, steeped in *ressentiment*, is built on the fantasy of a life and social order that existed before some traumatic loss or downturn, blaming the other who threatens to enjoy the forsaken object or scarce resource as responsible for its devastation in the first place. In other words, this is not the common unhappiness of the unconscious because it is not constitutive of the subject; such a position grounds itself in the fantasy of a mythic past without loss or antagonism.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Franz Fanon frames “solidarity with a given past” not as a nostalgic drive to resuscitate a lost world invulnerable to lack, but as a commitment to a shared historicity between “myself and my fellow man, to fight with all my life and all my strength so that never again would people be enslaved on this earth. It is not the black world that governs my behavior. My black skin is not a repository for specific values” (202). Against the exclusionary structure of colonialism, Fanon saw solidarity stemming not from relation but from *nonrelation*, from the failure of identitarian projects of domination to articulate or contain the universal social bonds of emancipatory struggle. Following Fanon, Todd McGowan makes the case for “solidarity as a universal value” that “alienates me from my particular identity” such that “I take the side of those alien to me” (*Universality* 9). Because the unconscious excludes the individual from herself—installing a gap between desire and reality—and that scission extends to the social order, the subject internally contains the framework for this kind of universal solidarity. Modeled after the unconscious, McGowan’s is a “solidarity of nonbelonging” whose singular principle is that it “cannot exclude anyone” (69). Here, the unhappiness that haunts the subject of psychoanalysis has a universalizing function that is irreconcilable with the *ressentiment* of “negative solidarity,” which fantasizes an other who enjoys

at one's expense or exclusion and without whom one could have been whole, or cured.

Insisting on the unhappy universality of the unconscious, psychoanalysis recognizes in the subject what Jodi Dean calls an “enabling split” (“Lacan” 135). The subject’s “non-identity” extends to the party or coalition, which works as a mechanism for activating and organizing the social nonrelation. In such groups, the personal fails to coincide or cohere with the collective, but rather than disabling solidarity, this condition “enables each to be more and less than what they are, for each to enable, rupture, and exceed the other.” Inherently deindividuated and depersonalized, the psychoanalytic subject is unidentical with herself because she contains something in her that is more than her, something always already *in excess* of the individual. Likewise, the social nonrelation operates in excess of reality, never quite coinciding with it, and thus positioning us *to give to the collective that which we cannot possess*—and, in turn, to demand the impossible from it. This desire for something that by definition cannot be grasped and that exceeds the sum total of the individual elements of our worlds and lives is an inherently political demand—or, as Andrea Long Chu more elegantly puts it, “the desire for a universal is synonymous with having a politics at all.”

Yet, this desire must be sustained. As Chu lays out, we can see a breakdown in the universalism of initially emancipatory political projects with so-called gender critical feminism. In one of the “feminist” backlashes against trans people, what was initially collective power through an avowal of shared lack (“woman” names a constructed, often contradictory category that no one can completely live up to and of which there is no singular, definitive experience) devolves into the desire to enforce an exclusion (some can “have” this lack, while others cannot). In other words, for these thinkers, trans women can’t not be women in the way that only cis women can’t. There’s a symbolic elevation of lack as a strict category with clear-cut criteria that can be ascertained and possessed rather than as an internally contradictory condition that exceeds the subject and can therefore be collectively mobilized to articulate expansive, universally emancipatory desires. In this case, an initially liberatory project grounded on common exclusion and lack can foreclose rather than enable solidarity. Chu writes,

Cis women hate when trans women envy them, perhaps because they cannot imagine that they are in possession of anything worth envying. We have this, at least, in common: two kinds of women, with two kinds of self-loathing, locked in adjacent rooms, each

pressing her ear up against the wall to listen for the other's presence, fearing a rival but terrified to be alone. For my part, cousin: I don't want what you have, I want the way in which you don't have it. I don't envy your plenitude; I envy your void.

Chu articulates the misdirected pain—and hatred—some women feel when they interpret another's desire for collective belonging and solidarity as a threat to their own. They fail to understand this uncomfortable moment of misrecognition—of losing a sense of ownership over the contours of one's identity when faced with another's (and one's own) desire—as the *basis* for a truly universal solidarity built on belonging through common nonbelonging. Instead, they respond with what Rochelle DuFord calls “antisocial solidarity,” turning the aim of identification with others into one of “domination or oppression” and transforming “feminist” collectivity into a “permanently exclusive and exclusionary organization” (9–10). What ensues is a reactionary position grounded on the refusal of universality, a refusal of our lack in common. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty explains, when women are “constituted as a coherent group”—rather than one based on the failure of coherence, on nonidentity—“sexual difference becomes coterminous with female subordination, and power is automatically defined in binary terms,” a form of belonging that is, crucially, “ineffectual in designing strategies to combat oppressions” (344). Here, the desire for a universal is replaced by a desire, grounded in hatred and expressed in violence, to exclude. But “having a politics at all” is coterminous with the desire for a universal, and, as Chu concludes, “the universal can only be glimpsed by being cut into. This is the substance of any politics with a hole in it—a pink universal, invisible except where the skin breaks or opens blindly on its own onto risk, or sunlight, or someone else's tongue.” As Chu puts it, universality must be construed as lack. This negative space, where the subject breaks open, where she fails to cohere with herself, is both what makes her vulnerable to others and what opens her up to the possibility (so long as she sustains the desire for a universal, her political being) of a social bond, to being with others in solidarity.

Solidarity breaks down when we seek to see our desire seamlessly reflected in our and others' individual self-interest (a fantasy of which psychoanalysis divests us wholesale). As bell hooks has elaborated at length, solidarity can only be sustained through difference; the dissolution of difference spells death for emancipatory projects because it limits their scope and makes the collective contingent on mutual “support” through identification, which is flimsy and can be “easily withdrawn” (138). “Solidarity,” hooks

writes, “requires sustained, ongoing commitment. In feminist movement, there is need for diversity, disagreement and difference if we are to grow” (138). Rebecca Wanzo names this kind of expansive social bond—that not only avows difference but organizes through it—“feminist scaled solidarity,” which both acknowledges that interactions across institutions and interests will be limited and riven by conflict, and, in the same move, “expanding our notion of what kinds of coalitions and solutions are possible” (31). Any collective action instrumentalized toward common good must not only acknowledge but mobilize the contradictions of our desires. This is precisely how Dean, for example, thinks of camaraderie as the basis for a social bond grounded in desire that exceeds, and often conflicts with, individual interests. As Dean puts it, comradeship “binds action, and in this binding, this solidarity, it collectivizes and directs action in light of a shared vision for the future” (2). On the other hand, when we bond through a set of given individual interests and determined identities—including through allyship, or what hooks calls “support”—the mechanism that binds us is so “obvious” and coherent that politics and collectives don’t need to be formed, and no effort is called on to act on and sustain the desire for a better world (20). Dean equates “the attachment to individual identity” with “our political incapacity” under capitalism, which encourages allyship in maintaining a coherent and individually fitted identity *over and against* solidarity across “comrades struggling together to change the world” (22).

Capitalism creates, as McGowan argues, “a breeding ground” for these kinds of “identitarian struggles,” which can often “paint themselves as anti-capitalist” while collapsing political action into the construction and legitimation of identities, actively dismantling the conditions for the emergence of collective emancipatory struggle (*Universality* 25). Via Lacan, Alenka Zupančič sees capitalist exploitation operating through a “privatization of the negative,” turning our common nonrelation—the “enabling split” that engenders a politics of universal solidarity—into a source of productivity, profit, and exploitation we are instructed to enjoy, having our nonrelation sold back to us as particular relations and identities (31). As capitalism transforms our common unhappiness into a set of personalized cures for it, the lack psychoanalysis discovers at the heart of the subject remains acutely exploitable. Per Zupančič, psychoanalysis offers a language and space for the subject to grapple with the contradictions that capitalist “relations” attempt to resolve; psychoanalysis “bores a hole” back where the subject’s division was foreclosed, compelling the subject “to ‘reconstruct’ herself as part of this contradiction, as directly implied in it” (66). As we have been

exploring, this contradiction (which capitalism attempts to resolve by disavowing the nonrelation), positions the individual as “*intrinsically* social” because “others, and our relation to them, as well as social relations more generally, are already implied in it.” As Samo Tomšič proposes in *The Capitalist Unconscious*, the “minimal localisation of the political dimension of psychoanalysis” lies in its insistence on a “return of negativity” into discursive relations (152). The only form of psychoanalysis that capitalism can tolerate must work against such a process by assuming “the demands of the market”—“reintegration of individuals, adaptation, strengthening of the ego, reduction of ‘disorders,’ strategies that in the end support the capitalist fantasy of an uncastrated subject”—by abolishing the unconscious as the condition of the subject’s constitutive division.

Psychoanalysis instigates a “return of negativity” by addressing the symptom as a form of protest against the foreclosure and exploitation of this “*intrinsically* social” dimension of psychic life. The analytic frame imposes a distance between the subject and antisocial injunctions to abandon or commodify or repress her division, such that the session is designed to, as Copjec claims, bring to light “the ethical necessity” of such a process: “It is always and only in this division of the subject on which psychoanalysis insists, not simply because the attempt to establish an ethics on the basis of its disavowel [sic] is *mistaken*, but—more importantly—because it is *unethical*” (“Sartorial” 81). For Copjec, the language of psychoanalysis implores us to sustain “a symbolic relation to the world” in excess of the individual and of reality (84). Copjec demonstrates how the rise of capitalistic utilitarianism in the nineteenth century, with its “functional definition” of the subject, replaces collective desire for sociality and solidarity with the other with a quest for “self-affirmation” through a “deterioration of the symbolic relation” wherein the internal “burden” of the subject—the internal division that extends to the social nonrelation—becomes externalized (85). Social relations become organized by an unethical disavowel of the social coordinates of subjectivity itself. The parapraxis in the passage above, “disavowel,” insists on the imbrication of the ethics of psychoanalysis with the illocutionary analytical relation, with its reclamation and transformation of an overdetermined symbolic order otherwise increasingly stripped of its social dimension. Tarrying with antagonism can, indeed, impose an unhappy burden, but what the injunction to forego our division tries to make us forget is that it is a burden of desire as social power, from which springs the ethical necessity of the subject’s sustained commitment to a truly universal solidarity.

Psychoanalysis, in Solidarity

Together, the contributions to this issue traverse the ties, torsions, and contradictions between psychoanalysis and solidarity. The opening pair of essays each consider solidarity in light of political economy and the symbolic order. In “Solidarity Words,” Anna Kornbluh makes an immanent critique of psychoanalytic political criticism that has been too quick to disparage the symbolic relation. In these accounts, the symbolic stands for the repressive domain of normative coherence under the undivided, indifferent sign of the law. Kornbluh diagnoses the all-too-common dismissal of the symbolic as being motivated by an “ecstasy of the unrepresentable” (48), the critical tendency to unmask the ideological trappings of the imaginary and look solely to the negativity of the real for liberatory possibility. Nevertheless, the demands of political organizing and collective meaning-making require symbolization. The radical contingency of the real does not on its own coalesce into the percussive rhythms and repetitions that fire up picket lines and protests. Our politics must embrace signification because, as Kornbluh repeats, “Solidarity is a word” (36). And psychoanalysis, too, is a word. Free association happens out loud. Most basically, the talking cure facilitates and mediates the construction of new words, new signifying links, new interpretations, new bonds. Kornbluh reminds us that not only does the analytic relation exist in and through words exchanged, but that psychoanalysis cuts into the symbolic to *construct into* the symbolic—not to escape or destroy it. “The signifier,” she writes, “capacitates creativity” (37). Here is the link between the psychoanalytic project and emancipatory politics: both formalize a bond forged in “a different order of symbolization” (42). “For what is solidarity,” Kornbluh asks, “other than the forming of a compact” and the “sustaining of that form” (43)?

Kornbluh’s interrogative definition suggests the beleaguered position of solidarity among the social bonds that characterize the present. In his essay, Samo Tomšič attends to the affective conditions under capitalism that produce varieties of *antisolidarity*. Setting out from Margaret Thatcher’s infamous proclamation that “there is no such thing as a society,” Tomšič argues that neoliberalism imposes an “ontological prohibition of the social” (“No Such” 54), installing an order of antisociality that pits sovereign individuals (and patriarchal family units) against one another as they compete for ever scarcer resources. Through its persistent hollowing out of the symbolic order into “relations of competition” where “difference is made toxic,” capitalism depletes the psychic conditions necessary for

solidarity (62). Yet in Freud's schema of internally divided subjects linked together by a symbolic order that exceeds them, Tomšič finds an undoing of Thatcher's dotted field of compartmentalized individuals. Far from denying social antagonism, Freud dialectically defines the social as the "conflicted relation [. . .] between sociality and antisociality" (59). For society to take shape, there must emerge a "predominance of the social bond (Eros) over the social unbond (drive of destruction)" (59), without any ultimate resolution of their contradictions. While the concept of *Unbehagen* is often read as signaling Freud's cynicism about culture, Tomšič argues that in the collective experience of unease and unrest Freud finds "a systemic and therefore shared affect," one that "confronts human beings with the necessity to form a bond" on a basis other than aggression (59). Solidarity is not the "mutual love" of reciprocal social cohesion, but a kind of psychic commons that must be tended by humans—united in their internal division—as the sole "foundation of a nonexploitative social bond" (62). If in politics solidarity names the bond between "a multiplicity of speaking bodies," in psychoanalysis the concept of transference designates the bond between *just two*, setting into motion the "affective work" of "solidarity between the analyst and the analysand" (67). Like politics and pedagogy, psychoanalysis is tasked with an impossible job: to provide "a social bond to the subjectivity deprived of the conditions of sociality" (67). And just as leaders and teachers can abuse relations of solidarity, so, too, can analysts abuse transference by exacerbating "exploitative relations tied to the figure of authority" (67). The ongoing work of psychoanalysis, as in political organizing and education, Tomšič argues, is to foster sites in which social behavior (Eros) predominates, so that boundaries can be negotiated in a way that assures "a nonexploitative affective bond between speaking bodies" (67).

The next three essays consider psychoanalytic boundary negotiation and the uses (and abuses) of analytic solidarity across a wide range of modalities: spatial, political, economic, affective, and legal. In "Psychoanalysis of the Excommunicated," Ankhi Mukherjee moves beyond the white, bourgeois assumptions of traditional psychoanalytic models in order to set our sights on a more expansive mode of psychoanalytic solidarity, one equipped to deal with displacement, exile, and racialized violence. For a blueprint, Mukherjee looks to the psychoanalytically oriented clinical and ethnographic work of Honey Oberoi Vahali with Tibetan refugees. In Vahali's work, the clinician actively generates an "intermediacy" between "the analytical and the material" that establishes crucial "common ground where psychic restitution and recovery may be contemplated in the face

of past or perpetual catastrophes” (75). Mukherjee argues that the classic Freudian model of trauma does not account for “perpetual catastrophes,” only past ones. In the case of Tibetan refugees, “departures from the site of the originary trauma—that of expulsion from the homeland—is fraught with new perplexities of risk, precarity, and insecurity” (86). Catastrophe, in other words, is continuous, and not solely expressed in the past’s recurrence through a set of legible, predictable symptoms. Whereas Freud locates the total death of the drive in an “elementary biological stage,” in a past severed from conscious life, for refugees such a state can be irrevocably ongoing, often painfully conscious (82). About one of Vahali’s Tibetan patients, Phunstok Dolma, Mukherjee writes: “How long can a people imagine an ancestral past and a lost homeland? All around her is death—her father’s, sister’s, brother’s—brutish endings to short, unfulfilled lives” (77). For Mukherjee, the lesson of Vahali’s treatment of Dolma is that clinicians must sustain an “analytic attitude” capable of treating symptoms not merely as the effects of personal history but as evidence of the “inextricability of history and psyche” (84).

It is to transgressive encounters of history in and through analysis that Rachel Greenspan turns in her essay. Taking from Fanon the insight that the consulting room and politics are distinct yet porous relational frames, Greenspan demonstrates the inability of the psychoanalytic frame to completely cordon off revolutionary consciousness. While formal psychoanalytic institutions fantasize the frame as “impervious” to history, as Greenspan writes, “the boundary of clinical space has always been unstable, particularly in situations of political crisis that psychoanalysis has endured across time and space” (93). Greenspan points to the example of Wulf Sachs’s unpaid—and thus frame-breaking from the start—therapeutic work with a South African man named John, originally recounted in *Black Hamlet* (1937). This account delineates John’s trajectory from political disengagement to solidarity with the Black liberation movement, facilitated by Sachs’s guidance. But the narrative of a “therapeutic shift in solidarity” works both ways, Greenspan shows, because Sachs is, in turn, “radicalized” by John in the course of their sessions. The analytic frame is thus unable to keep out the “forces of history and politics” (96), a failure unpalatable to psychoanalytic societies, with their formal commitment to “analytic neutrality,” even (or especially) in the face of political upheaval. In addition to Fanon and Sachs, Greenspan looks to the work of the leftist Argentine psychoanalyst Marie Langer and her supervisee, Juan Carlos Volnovich. Langer’s politics and

practice were informed by her reinterpretation of the collective patricide Freud narrates in *Totem and Taboo*, which she hailed as an act of “tabooed solidarity between *compañeros*” who chose to revolt against an exploitative tyrant (98). In exile from Argentina, Langer went on to rethink the analytical frame to emphasize her feminist commitment to “lateral family relations,” practicing group analysis and enjoining women to participate in “fraternal relations of political solidarity.” As Greenspan shows, Langer advocated for a “psychoanalytic praxis” that reframed the consulting room as a space where political subjectivity is forged, or inhibited. Volnovich extended his mentor’s legacy by treating persecuted leftist militants in 1970s Buenos Aires in public spaces such as parks and plazas, resisting the confines of the consulting room and exposing the myth of its safety and neutrality in times of political repression and police surveillance. Greenspan gives this kind of analysis a name, “guerrilla psychoanalysis.” Its exclusions challenged, solidarities expanded, and purpose renewed, psychoanalysis itself is transformed.

Yet, making the psychoanalytic frame more responsive to political and spatial contingencies should not spell its destruction. Like Greenspan, Hannah Zeavin insists that the frame is vital. Boundaries, Zeavin argues in an essay that reframes the origins of the talking cure, define psychoanalysis. Zeavin highlights how when Freud shifted from hypnotic suggestion—with its “haptics of persuasion”—to free association, the therapeutic frame was reconstituted on the very absence of the haptic (“No Touching” 114). Psychoanalysis thus originates with a boundary: “No touching.” But this is not, exactly, said. Zeavin unfolds the history of the negotiation (including certain violations) of this purposely fuzzy and, for some, fussy rule of the consulting room. From Anna O. onward, patients’ intimate advances and analysts’ insecurity around their own desire to reciprocate posed a serious methodological and ethical question for psychoanalysis—along with many missed opportunities to do something about it. As Zeavin uncovers, it wasn’t until psychoanalysis underwent its “feminization” with the rise of women analysts in the 1970s that, in America, an ethical prohibition around sexual contact was formally instituted. Zeavin explains how certain misogynistic assumptions that structured (and, to a degree, continue to structure) the psychoanalytic imaginary and establishment motivated the deferral of this boundary. Even though the prolonged lack of explicit regulation around physical intimacy would appear to indicate that such a prohibition is of secondary importance, Zeavin demonstrates how “no touching” is the fundamental condition for creating “analytic solidarity”—and, conversely, its

violation “the surest method for destroying it” (115). As a patient comes to believe in the curative role of a specific analyst’s love and care—perhaps even fantasizing about a physical relationship—the analyst should understand that transference happens in and through the framework of analysis itself and that their job is “working *in* the countertransference, instead of being worked by it” (117). Analytic solidarity emerges when a space for unconscious fantasy is created in the service of the analysand’s betterment. It is abused and broken when the analyst mismanages the consensual misrecognition that structures the consulting room, whether that room has four walls and a couch or is virtualized via cameras and screens.

Alex Colston and Todd McGowan train their sights on the conceptual resources that the psychoanalytic tradition offers for projects of political solidarity. Colston looks to the figure of the hysteric, whose embodiment of the sexual nonrelation is an unconscious “going on strike” against the social-symbolic order. Whereas Freud mythicized a primordial band of brothers who kill their father and then obsessively repent (and therefore psychically repeat) the violent act, Colston looks back before that founding deed and sees a group of hysterical siblings characterized by an unsatisfiable desire for love and united with their obsessive counterparts in a neurotic social bond. This sororal inversion of *Totem and Taboo* gives Colston an opening into the history of the present, in which the hysteric occupies a unique position of *protest vis-à-vis* the governing discourses and knowledge-producing institutions of capitalist modernity: “No one says, ‘No God, No Master,’ and means it quite like the hysteric” (157). Intervening in the scholarship on Lacan’s four discourses, Colston tracks the circuits of the hysteric’s desire as she makes the “long march through the institutions of her own discourse and the exploitative form of the university” (157). If *der lange Marsch* signified for certain strands of Marxism the hard work of building up technical and operational control of capitalist institutions, Colston sees the hysteric as prescribing the teardown of society’s “impossible” institutions: “Hysterics make desire reign, which exceeds governing institutions” (159). As he remarks in a telling footnote, “the hysteric is the only possible neurotic position capable of bearing the responsibility of insurrection against the master-signifier and succeeding it by helping society collectively succeed the institutions” that the master represents (171–72n19). The goal of succeeding the institutions with something better is crucial, since what the hysteric’s discourse of desiring and striking offers is, ultimately, constructive and not destructive of the social bond. As Lacan put it, “A strike is the most social thing there is in the whole world” (qtd. in Colston 147–48).

Todd McGowan articulates a point that Colston's hysteric understands well: Fantasy itself—a psychic dimension often marginalized by the demystifying protocols of consciousness raising on the left—is crucial to constructing politics. “By placing knowledge at the foreground,” McGowan writes, most leftist movements dismiss fantasy as the vehicle of ideology and, as a result, “cede the terrain of enjoyment” (“Mainstreaming” 178). Doing so is a strategic blunder because enjoyment, however disavowed, is a powerful and ever-present force in politics. Political movements are always fantasizing: narrativizing an interminable quest toward future objects and gains that can only be glimpsed. But there are better and worse ways to fantasize. Instead of collapsing the differences between emancipatory and reactionary politics because both deal in fantasy, McGowan distinguishes between the forms of fantasy they reproduce. Drawing on Freud's schema in *“A Child Is Being Beaten,”* McGowan demonstrates how the “emancipatory” form of fantasy puts the subject directly in the traumatic scene of enjoyment, rather than looking on from a distance as another enjoys. Reactionary fantasies, on the other hand, displace enjoyment from the subject onto an excessive and extraneous other who poses a threat to social order (recall conservative imagery of immigrants hoarding social benefits or sexually promiscuous women casually aborting babies). This separation protects the social order and allows the reactionary subject to repress the “determining role” of enjoyment within a capitalist system that he supports to his own detriment. Even if rightist fantasies are impossible or contradictory—deporting immigrants has as little to do with economic growth and justice as criminalizing abortion has to do with upholding the life and health of children—the rightist fantasy form is powerful because it is “consciously believable” and easily translated into a political program (185). All we must do is expel or incarcerate the other, *get them out of sight*. By contrast, emancipatory fantasy lets excess in and gazes at it directly. It implicates the subject in enjoyment and identifies this unconscious excess as part and parcel of social reality. This insight calls for aesthetic and political forms that refuse to distance themselves from fantasy. Just as our enjoyment of film noir depends not on the detective's professionalism but on his deep involvement in a corrupt, libidinal city—on his dirty hands, so to speak—and on the excessive yet magnetizing figure of the femme fatale, left politics requires a mode of critique that “doesn't aim at an outside, but that burrows itself within what it fights” (194).

Tracy McNulty and Fernanda Negrete's essays both engage the work of Willy Apollon, whose innovative contributions to Freudian metapsychology have, in key respects, been shaped by his treatment of psychotic

patients in Québec. If Apollon's clinical work with psychotics demonstrated that Freud's and Lacan's conditions for transference had been too narrow in their basic assumption of neuroticism, his more recent writings aim to open up the project of psychoanalysis even further. For Apollon, psychoanalysis must be "transcivilizational" in scope, aimed at advancing the "human quest" of analysts of all psychic formations, a quest that takes analysts beyond the limits of their own cultures and languages.

McNulty's interest lies with Apollon's insight that Freudian censorship (primary repression) targets the *feminine* and that this operation affects the bodies of women and men alike: "[T]he feminine is concerned with something at work in the body that cannot be addressed to others, that cannot be said" (201). The feminine dimension poses an existential and aesthetic challenge to civilization because it signifies the quest for *something else*—both with respect to sex (reproduction) and art (representation). Moving beyond Freud's often reductive goals for his women patients, McNulty weaves together a case study of one of her patients and a reflection on her experience as a *porteur* for an analyst-in-training undergoing the "Pass," a procedure pioneered in the late 1960s by Lacan. Seeking, like Apollon, the liberation of femininity in analysis—not its sacrifice to the symbolic castration of motherhood—McNulty zooms in on episodes in the final stages of analysis where fantasy is traversed. Such traversals involve both a separation from the censoring "cultural montage" and a liberation of the free human drive. McNulty's patient, dealing with the aftershocks of a miscarriage, breaks through the claustrophobic symptoms of her internal impasse between maternity and femininity when she experiences a "modification of her relation to the social link" (212–13). The patient's spontaneous act of publicly volunteering to organize a protest against an immigration ban (she is subsequently arrested for organizing an unlawful assembly) gives her a "new path" beyond her old blockages, a passage that is anchored in human solidarity. While McNulty is intellectually "struck" by her patient's traversal, she is literally stricken in her account of the Pass, experiencing a "spike" in her own body following the *passant's* frustrating transmission of something "unaddressable." This symptom is not unknown to McNulty, but its timing suggests that her own body has been, in a sense, infected, "pressed into the service of the *passant*" (217). Because McNulty and her fellow *porteur* have previously passed through fantasy traversal in their own analyses, they are able to recognize their symptoms as belonging to the *passant* and not themselves. Here is a "true intersubjective transmission," the capstone to an analysis that has demonstrated its ability to advance the collective human quest (217).

Fernanda Negrete, in turn, shows how the dynamics that make the Pass effective are to be found in deep time and *outside* of the intramural and extramural boundaries of psychoanalysis. From Apollon she takes a long view of human culture, citing his 300,000-year timeline that begins with the first signs of human aesthetic expression followed, much later on, by language. From Lacan she takes a generative view of the various professional ruptures that have occurred within psychoanalytic associations. The Pass emblemizes the analyst-in-training's "own capacity to act," to "authorize" themselves and create something new. At the same time, as Lacan indicates, the results of the Pass should be communicated not just to the school in question but also—in solidarity—to other psychoanalytic groups that may have acted in an exclusionary manner or otherwise estranged themselves. This professional solidarity is in support of the *passant's* ultimate solidarity, which must lie with their "singular quest" to arrive at their stubborn desire that remains even after the traversal of castration. Lacan's figure for this circular experience at the conclusion of analysis is the Möbius strip, which emblemizes the paradoxical outsideness of the subject, whose unconscious only emerges when the drive is liberated for the purposes of human creativity. Negrete calls this creativity the "plastic mode of work" (228), and she turns to the British artist Andy Goldsworthy for an extended illustration of how aesthetic acts—particularly those that involve the artist's body in practices of documentation and repetition—can provide a path for the unbound drive. Goldsworthy's ephemeral works, which reconfigure natural materials and frequently leave impressions of his body on the land, resonate with the prehistoric cave handprints of our ancestors. Like the experience of the Pass, these works prompt feelings of finitude and transience; they create impersonal yet human connections with the lives of unknown others. Negrete concludes with a reading of a nineteenth-century poem, inspired by the Sufi mystic Saadi, that figures the passage to *jouissance* as a voyage. The Pass—just like these examples from the plastic arts and poetry—is a journey, one that succeeds because it is driven by an aesthetic dimension of the human. As a "transindividual event," the Pass "verifies" that the analyst's desire is now bigger than themselves and can serve as "an ally to the dimension of the collective that has always been excluded and diverted by civilizations" (238).

In the closing contributions to this issue, Gila Ashtor and Ronjaanee Chatterjee locate intersubjective attachments and emergent collectives where critics seem only to find helpless individuals barely getting by, clinging to disappointing objects and identities, connecting with one another

in an ever thinning social sphere through a deadened, complacent empathy. In “Tender Pessimism,” Ashtor examines how affect and queer theorists, as well as the postcritical critics, integrate attachment models from object relations psychoanalysis without accounting for its metapsychological dimension. Correcting for what these critics see as a tradition in critical theory to callously pathologize “people who are simply trying to survive” in a world stacked against them (244), they borrow object relations models to render more “compassionate” interpretations. This turn is perhaps most influentially captured in Lauren Berlant’s concept of “cruel optimism”; in trying to explain why we want things that are bad for us, Berlant replaces desire (to satisfy internal drives beyond survival instincts) with an attachment to a “cluster of promises,” ideals we precariously cling to and ultimately fail to live up to as they paradoxically exacerbate our struggle to survive. Ashtor demonstrates how, by externalizing desire into a reduced attachment, cruel optimism excludes sexuality, producing an “erotophobic ideology” that “deprives people of their complex sexuality by sentimentalizing their attachment needs” (255). As Ashtor argues, the elision of sexuality, however untheorized, defines the politics of this interpretative model. Still, Ashtor warns that we should not simply rely “on psychoanalysis as a stable guarantor of sexual radicalism” without accounting for the metapsychological coordinates of any given theory (251). In Jean Laplanche’s model of “enlarged sexuality,” Ashtor finds an attachment theory that prioritizes sexuality by refusing to expel the other from the equation. For Laplanche, forming an attachment involves “a provocative and overwhelming encounter with otherness,” meaning: attachment is inherently intersubjective, traversed by the other’s unconscious and driven by desire that “seeks something in excess of satisfaction” (255). The politics here are clear: desiring beyond bare survival and adaptive “self-management,” the subject—even when she is struggling to survive, trapped in systems designed to decimate intersubjective life—is, profoundly, a social subject.

Chatterjee proceeds in exactly this direction by refusing to reduce desire to attachment and strip it of its social dimension. Theorizing love as an “intersubjective event” (262) that pushes the individual into collective action, Chatterjee puts pressure both on “reparative” theories of love as empathy or altruism and on cynical dismissals of love as the terrain of ideological and biological reproduction via the family. In a transference dynamic with the analyst, the analysand enters a love relation outside its “romantic or conjugal aspects” (269). Instead of reinscribing the subject within capitalistic dynamics of love-as-exchange, where relation turns on

a desire for possession and domination, analytic love forms a “lateral” relational structure in which both parties are “traversed” by something they “cannot readily incorporate” or own: the *objet petit a* of unconscious desire (269). Through Lacan’s formulation of love as “giving what you don’t have,” Chatterjee articulates the political dimension of analytic love “enacting a meaningful form of solidarity”—forging a commons based on our shared lack (269). Generated by transferential repetitions that rupture presumed knowledge, analytic love opens new paths of signification emanating from the subject’s singularity, an “irreducible uniqueness” that, unlike identity, cannot be owned or coopted. Chatterjee reads this political “horizon of love” in the writing of Toni Morrison and Dorothy Day, who “reach toward the sharing of what is incommensurate.” In addition to Lacan, Morrison, and Day, Chatterjee articulates models for love “as the site of praxis” in the theories of Alain Badiou, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Black feminist thinkers such as Rebecca Wanzo. These writers help us understand that love engenders political solidarity by situating the subject in a relational context that demands her encounter with something more than her—and demands action on behalf of this lack. Chatterjee sees such a relational practice explicitly enacted in psychoanalysis, which cuts into conscious knowledge to make room for the negative. In making space for unconscious desire, analysis transforms an encounter between others into “something larger than itself” (277).



“Sexual desires,” Freud declares in *Totem and Taboo*, “do not bind men but divide them” (144). The guilt-ridden fantasy that precariously undergirds but ultimately destroys the social bond between Freud’s mythical band of brothers is not only the patricidal act but the temptation that ostensibly drives it: possessing and subjugating the other, satisfying their desire by turning the women whose love they seek into personal property. Psychoanalytic discourse takes the subject *beyond* this antisocial nonbond grounded on a fantasy of possessing the other’s excess enjoyment, beyond “desire” and love as states akin to hypnotic suggestion and control—the very method of connecting with others that the talking cure rejects.¹¹ To the extent that psychoanalysis continues to offer something of value to the present moment, it is as a practice that models how to share something we do not fully possess—our unconscious—with an other we cannot fully know or control. In accounting for love’s misrecognitions, and in unraveling the stories that normative attachment tells about itself, psychoanalysis clears the ground for a *collective love* capable of generating sustained mutual action.

Writing in the moment of today's "pandemic seemingly without end," Rose speaks of emergent "forms of solidarity in life and in death" that psychoanalysis, an "unfinished project," can foster insofar as it gives a language to the overdetermined aspects of subjectivity, to our desire for something in excess of the possible ("To Die"). In a characteristic psychoanalytic reversal, our common unhappiness can surprise us into communication and creativity. Thinking of the way in which solidarity with new comrades demands "constant creation and construction," Fanon emphasizes "the real *leap*" of political being that "consists of introducing invention into life" (204). "I show solidarity with humanity," Fanon resolves, "provided I can go one step further."

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Notes

- 1 Immediately before the passage in question, which closes *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud makes this point by, in a rather striking analogy, comparing "cathartic psychotherapy with surgical intervention": "I have described my treatments as psychotherapeutic operations; and I have brought out their analogy with the opening up of a cavity filled with pus, the scraping out of a carious region, etc. An analogy of its kind finds its justification *not so much in the removal of what is pathological as in the establishment of conditions that are more likely to lead the course of the process in the direction of recovery*" ("Psychotherapy" 305; emphasis added).
- 2 This is the first published instance of the term *überdeterminiert* in Freud, while Breuer uses it in an earlier section of the text; see James Strachey's note in *Studies on Hysteria* (212n).
- 3 On the question of discovery versus invention—of the distinction between "science linked to cognition" and "scientific invention"—in psychoanalysis, see Tomšič, "The Technology of Jouissance," esp. 152–53.

- 4 For an elaboration on the question of sex and its noncoincidence with (and short-circuiting between) essentialist/biological and constructivist/cultural modalities of knowledge in psychoanalysis, see “It’s Getting Strange in Here . . .” in Alenka Zupančič’s *What Is Sex?*, esp. 12–19.
- It is as if the strong social pressure put on “natural sexuality” (copulation) to function as the norm were there to hide an abyssal negativity of natural sexuality itself, much more than to keep the supposedly disruptive partial drives away [. . .]. There seems to be something in nature itself that is dramatically wrong at this point. The problem is not simply that nature is “always-already cultural,” but rather than nature lacks something in order to be Nature (our Other) in the first place. Culture is not something that mediates, splits, denatures sexuality (as supposedly present in animals, for instance); it is being generated at the very locus where something in nature (as sexual nature) is lacking. (15)*
- See also Copjec, “The Sexual Compact.”
- 5 One might read Freud’s “Appendix C: Words and Things” in “The Unconscious” (1915) as making a version of this point. Freud describes the “security of our speech” as “overdetermined” (using the synonymous term, *überbestimmt*) insofar as we differentiate between words we speak—cognizing when one word has been said and it’s time to move to the next—by both waiting to sense the sound of our own speech as well as the “motor speech-presentation,” sensing the embodied motion of having spoken (211). Freud concludes that we can bear to lose one of these “determining factors,” as only one will do. Here, Freud links what Lacan would call “the fact of saying” to the phenomenological apprehension of the self as an other; situating the subject in a state of being *with* an other that involves potentially contradictory and unstable levels of interpretation and social connection, “the fact of saying” is overdetermined.
- 6 The Italian term recorded by Jacques-Alain Miller in the original French seminar is *spaccatura*, not *squarcio*, which appears in the English translation (230). The former signifies a split or division, while the latter more directly translates to “gash” and is specifically linked to Fontana’s works cutting on canvas and metal (and/or for Miller perhaps strikes the innuendo Lacan is unsubtly circling a bit more explicitly).
- 7 Copjec is referencing Althusser’s famous passage in “Contradiction and Overdetermination,” where, borrowing the term “overdetermination” partly from Freud, he writes (here evoking Freud’s oft-cited statement that the “*interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*” [*Interpretation* 608]):
- [O]verdetermination does not just refer to apparently unique and aberrant historical situations (Germany, for example), but is universal; the economic dialectic is never active in the pure state; in History, these instances, the superstructures, etc.—are never seen to step respectfully aside when their work is done or, when the Time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the “last instance” never comes. (113)*
- 8 For more on Lacan’s in/famous response to the student protests of May 1968 and the question of mastery, fraternity, universalist

politics, and the threat of racism and segregation in relation to affect in psychoanalytic discourses, see Copjec “May ’68, the Emotional Month.”

- 9 *Solidarité*, a French-coined word with juridical origins, diffuses into the sociopolitical domain and gains currency amid the trade unionism of the nineteenth century. See Hayward.
- 10 Lacan devises a word for the function of the Father: He *unigates*. This term has some conceptual background, which I will incompletely trace here. From Freud’s “*einzig Zug*” or only trait—the singular characteristic of a love object (typically following its loss) with which a subject symptomatically identifies—Lacan develops (especially in Seminar IX) what he calls the “unary trait” to designate the differential character of the signifier, its essential or singular trait being that of absence or loss (Lacan repeats part of this conceptual trajectory in Seminar XIX 107–8). In Seminar XIX (the text in question), Lacan names the function of the myth of the Father—within the field of the “*Unian*,” another neologism within the “*einzig Zug*” cluster (see 107–17)—that of *unigating*: He unites “all the women” “but precisely *pas toutes*, not all,” meaning the Father, like the signifier, has a unifying function through the construction of a universal organized around a crucial exclusion or negativity (that of Woman) (189–91). Crucially, though, to his sons (the brothers), this originary loss is repressed and appears as a positive universal (Father has all the women; all the women exist and what stands in the way of having them is a prohibition handed down by Father). Under the sign of the Father, the brothers’ social bond is formed around this exclusion (Father gets all the women

that they are excluded from enjoying), whose negative character they misrecognize (if they get rid of the Father, the women can be distributed among them). Socially organized around this misrecognition (projected initially by the tyrant Father to ensure his status as uncastrated ruler) of a negative for a positive universal, the brothers commit the violent acts: patricide and, I would add, the failure of a truly universal solidarity through their desire to *have* and redistribute the women as personal property.

- 11 Freud elaborates his thinking on the link between love and hypnotic suggestion at greater length—especially in relation to exclusionary group bonds beyond the couple dynamic that are based on in-group identification with a leader that inspires regressive fascination—in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). “From being in love to hypnosis,” Freud writes, “is evidently only a short step. The respects in which the two agree are obvious. There is the same humble subjection, the same compliance, the same absence of criticism, towards the hypnotist as towards the loved object. There is the same sapping of the subject’s own initiative; no one can doubt that the hypnotist has stepped into the place of the ego ideal. It is only that everything is even clearer and more intense in hypnosis, so that it would be more to the point to explain being in love by means of hypnosis than the other way round” (114). Connecting love to hypnosis, Freud then links the hypnotic state to group bonds: “Hypnosis is not a good object for comparison with a group formation, because it is truer to say that it is identical with it” (115). See 111–16, 142–45.

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