

# Capitalism's Care Problem

*Some Traces, Fixes, and Patches*

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## Capitalism's Care Problem

That capitalism has a care problem is by no means a new observation. Evidence abounds, and makeshift solutions are everywhere apparent.<sup>1</sup> Here are just a few.

At the university library where I have currently sought a quiet place to work, it's finals week. A set of enormous posters promoting a smartphone app that connects despondent students to phone counselors frame the elevators on the ground floor, where for years the most despairing students would land after leaping from the upper levels of the building to their deaths (fig. 1). The university, contravening the wishes of the building's superstar architect, has installed decorative barriers to prevent the jumping option, but if this signage is any indication, the anguish has not abated.<sup>2</sup> Therapy is expensive and time-consuming, and often out of reach for college students. Campus counseling services are understaffed and overbooked.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps an app can help. For the techno-optimists among (or within) us, algorithmic solutions to social problems are a tantalizing fix.

At another nearby university a multiyear battle over health care benefits resulted in, amid many cuts to faculty and staff medical benefits, the creation of an entirely new administrative position, a wellness coordinator, whose task is to promote faculty and staff well-being so as to decrease the high cost of (dis)stressed faculty and staff who require costly pharmacological interventions and one-on-one treatments for their strained hearts and minds. The person who fills this role, a well-intentioned individual of integrity and good cheer, promotes fitness challenges and provides nutritional newsletters. She works tirelessly to foster a culture of wellness



Figure 1. The first time I encountered the NYU Bobst Library signage promoting a newly launched mental health mobile application was in early December 2018. These images were captured on February 17, 2019, with more recent adjacent posters for a labor history event. This signage has since been removed. Photographs courtesy of the author.

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that includes yoga classes, mindfulness meditation, and other tools touted to promote work-life balance. The wellness coordinator is powerless to demand childcare and eldercare subsidies that might ease the most readily visible stressors among employees. From a managerial point of view, the wellness coordinator position is a reasonable solution.<sup>4</sup> Countless scientific studies tout the benefits of exercises, mindfulness, yoga, prayer, hugs, and vitamins. Yet even when such studies are later discredited, anecdotal accounts rule our discourses: people swear by their own fixes to the care problem.<sup>5</sup>

Some in our academic communities, particularly recent graduate students who face the dismal academic job market, or those on the “alt-ac” (alternative-academic) track (aka jobs with no opportunity for tenure or other forms of long-term job security), may seek the counsel of costly academic coaches who occupy a specialty niche in the burgeoning field of personal coaching.<sup>6</sup> Many report excellent results, but only when they are forthcoming enough to admit retaining such services. The stigma of turning to self-help fixes continues to haunt the halls of academe, where the ghost of the lone scholarly genius still rattles about among fading traditions of professorial mentoring and academic patronage. But for those who dare to recognize their predicament in the neoliberal university—and can afford the investment—they claim a little coaching care can go a long way. The most successful of these academic life coaches have codified their tips in a best-selling volume (i.e., best-selling in the subcategory of academic advice) and adopted the use of online platforms to bring down the price point of providing such care. Wherever you live and work, whether in academe (as I do) or elsewhere, the problem of care or, more accurately, the problem of the lack thereof—the care deficit—can be traced in various fixes and patches.

There are good reasons that examples of capitalism’s care problems abound: these sorts of problems are what social theorists call “structural.” They are not the sort of problems that individuals bring upon themselves, nor do they yield easily to individual solutions. Instead, structural problems are baked in to the ways we organize production and reproduction.<sup>7</sup> Care labor is simply too expensive when market principles are applied to every aspect of daily life. The peculiar (if shortsighted) genius of capitalism’s structures and innovations, among them wage slavery (binding the individual human’s survival and well-being to the commodity form, i.e., rendering human labor as a commodity), mass production, automation, and artificial intelligence, simply aren’t up to the tasks of providing care.<sup>8</sup>

Part of the trouble with care labor is that it often requires individual attention, often in one-to-one, or one-to-few, ratios. Infant care, childcare, eldercare, medical care for those who are ailing or infirm, and provisions for those who require long-term care and supports (e.g., the disabled

or differently abled) are social needs that are not readily resolved in a system that relies on commoditized labor.<sup>9</sup> Economies of scale are notoriously difficult to apply to care work. While capitalism is exceptionally good at producing a surfeit of things, it has yet to provide a system that reduces the labor time required for care.

Lack of scalability leads to cost problems. Since the cost of goods and services is relative, as the cost of mass-producible products drop (due to the aforementioned scalability in mass production), the cost of care, in relative terms, increases. Along with this issue of relative value, corporate capitalism's demand for profit renders health care, rehabilitative care, and long-term care unaffordable. The recurrent stories of adjunct professors dying in the midst of medical crises for lack of health care are compounded crises: a broken for-profit health care system intersects with higher education's cost-reduction strategy of relying on the super-discounted labor of contingent faculty who live in exhaustion and penury.<sup>10</sup>

Even the informal global supply chains that move impoverished women from developing areas of the globe (or from poor populations in the United States) to provide care labor in the homes of affluent families can't resolve capitalism's care problem. Such migrant care labor (which in some respects mirrors the chattel slave trade that built US economic pre-eminence in the nineteenth century) can't solve the care problem; it can only displace it—who provides cares for your care provider's child while they care for yours? For the word *child* you can substitute anyone in your intimate sphere who requires care around the clock and anyone from the provider's intimate sphere whose care needs are unmet or poorly met.<sup>11</sup> Without the unwaged or discounted wages of women, the care economy would be (and in many cases has been) crashing.

Given the large-scale entry of US women into the paid labor markets that accompanied the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, the care crisis has escalated and has been cast as a work-life balance problem throughout US and western European societies. With the ascendancy of neoliberal market principles over the past four decades, the care crisis, like the global calamity of climate change, has escalated. Political theorist Nancy Fraser observes that capitalism relies on the twin fantasies of boundless supplies of care (traditionally in the form of women's unpaid labor in the home, though more recently in the movement of low-wage care workers from one part of the globe to another) and limitless natural resources on what is now clearly a finite and destabilized planet.<sup>12</sup>

Were our current economic system of patriarchal, racialized capitalism unable to enlist, elicit, or forcibly extract the unwaged labor of women and the many others (typically, but not always, people of color) from whom it has historically demanded uncompensated or barely compensated care work, the so-called care economy, already a patchwork

of fragile accommodations, would collapse.<sup>13</sup> That is, were everyone to refuse the discounting of the labor of those who educate our children, care for our elders, and attend to the goods and services that simplify our overworked schedules (from fast food delivery to drop-off laundry), then the capital accumulation in our system of expansive economies would founder and run aground.

But the collapse of this system is not likely to happen anytime soon. For the moment the system responds to these challenges in sometimes unexpected, makeshift ways.<sup>14</sup> Capitalism remains, as Fraser writes elsewhere, a “cunning” system that responds with considerable agility to its own internal contradictions.<sup>15</sup> With its hacks, patches, and other fixes, capitalism rumbles, sputters, and sometimes zooms along toward its own demise.

Some have begun to argue that the ubiquity of capitalism’s care problem creates an opening. As an issue that affects nearly everyone, the care crisis provides (as with global climate change) a focal point for political organizing and engagement.<sup>16</sup> My contribution here to this conversation is twofold: I trace the care crisis as it is reflected and refracted in popular self-improvement literature that has emerged in the context of an unfolding neoliberal agenda, and then I offer an example of what I call a “patch”: the efforts to remedy an individual care crisis that led to union mobilization at an academic institution.

### **Neoliberal Self-Improvement Fixes: From Having It All to Not Giving a Fuck**

Academic career coaching and the cottage industry of academic advice books provide fine examples of classic American self-help solutions: when a system is straining from the contradictions of capitalism, a standard quick fix is to hold up individual solutions and strategies for problems that are economic and structural. Typically, such remedies harness the can-do spirit of American bootstrapping individualism with tool kits that combine a rhetoric of entrepreneurialism, the routines and regimes of time management, and the latest research from motivational psychology.

Consequent to the technological affordances of one-to-many educational platforms (webinars and various video-streaming services) and the availability of horizontal many-to-many social networking platforms (Facebook is most prevalent, but there are always new, usually short-lived other options, such as mightynetwork.com), academic career and other self-improvement advisers and coaches seek to engage in economies of scale by delivering their advice in the form of a monologue while relying on online communities they foster to provide additional sources of advice, attention, and ongoing care. Critiques of the ethics of such services have

emerged in higher education news venues, with some calling academic coaches the “war profiteers of the collapsing academic job market.”<sup>17</sup>

This new niche market of academic coaching warrants its own focused consideration but, by virtue of its relatively recent emergence, doesn’t provide a long enough historical window to track the unfolding crisis of care as it developed in the wake of second-wave feminism. What serves my purposes more robustly is a look at the mainstream self-improvement literature aimed at resolving the issues of the work-life balance or, as sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild put it, the “time bind.” This is a project that I pursued in greater depth in *Self-Help, Inc.* but will briefly revisit, extend, and update here, as I work toward identifying the outlines of radical care.<sup>18</sup>

### **Having It All and Loving Too Much: Market Principles Jump the Tracks**

When Helen Gurley Brown’s 1982 best seller headlined and popularized the phrase *having it all*, she could not have known how deeply this concept—at once capacious and rapacious—would resonate among American women. Published at the outset of the neoliberalist era (under policies that would then be named simply as Reaganomics and Thatcherism) Brown’s *Having It All* popularized the notion that hardworking, striving, upwardly mobile women could have it all. In real terms, that continued to mean, for all but those who could afford childcare and housekeeping services, that they would attempt to *do* it all.

Buoyed by the middle-class feminist demand for equal pay and increased opportunities for women’s participation in the paid labor force, American women swelled the ranks of the labor market. The trouble was, of course, that the institutional changes that could mitigate the new shortage of labor for care at home were not in place; most still aren’t. Affordable childcare and childcare subsidies, flexible work time, paid maternity and family leaves, and other provisions for care were elusive, and they remain so.<sup>19</sup> In what historian Kirsten Swinth recently called “feminism’s forgotten fight” and sociologist Lynn S. Chancer names feminism’s “stall,” feminist scholars have been revisiting how second-wave feminism has not worked out so well for women who struggle to balance second and third shifts at work and at home.<sup>20</sup>

In this context, the audience (or market, in the language of neoliberalism) for Brown’s advice was primed. But Brown also had an exceptional talent for assessing the problems American women faced and coming up with remedies that conformed to the work ethic that underpins capitalism while upsetting sexual mores. Her 1962 *Sex and the Single Girl* was part Hugh Hefner, part Moll Flanders. Brown’s advice was simple: parlay sexual favors into workplace advantage, work exponentially harder than

anyone else, and marry up. Her formula challenged the moral window dressing of gender-based inequality (the “nice girls don’t” imperative) while leaving the economic basis of women’s exploitation intact.

Two decades after *Sex and the Single Girl*, Brown updated her advice: to the advice of “marry up” and “make as much money as possible,” she added, if you can’t avoid childbearing, at least avoid child-rearing—by paying someone to take care of them. But perhaps most important for our consideration, Brown counseled her readers to treat time and energy as a kind of currency to be managed in a mental ledger sheet. Brown’s advice to women relied on the emerging supply chain of global care labor while advancing the *mentalité* that accompanied and supported the financialization of daily life.<sup>21</sup>

Friendship, Brown advises, calls for “reciprocal trade.” She notes that “everything costs something. . . . You may be a friend who gives selflessly, endlessly—money and gifts as well as counsel and cheer, without wanting a thing in return—but hold on a minute—you should want something in return. You hold that person’s marker.”<sup>22</sup> But while one is supposed to keep a careful accounting of one’s emotional investments, particularly in friendships, one ought to be generous and giving in a professional context:

Being too niggardly and selective about what assignments you’ll accept—“but I’m not getting paid to do that!”—is like being too skimpy with how much love you are going to give out in life: it may be better to over invest. It may seem that people are “using you” but actually it’s the other way around—you are using them. Do get credit if you can—no use coming in on Saturday to straighten the files if no one ever knows you were there. Just don’t be too stingy with your “free labor” for bosses or coworkers.<sup>23</sup>

Only a few years later, in 1989, another best-selling advice author, Stephen Covey, would present a time management system that incorporates Brown’s idea of an “emotional bank account” and extend this to an audience of both women and men.<sup>24</sup>

How did Brown arrive at her particular and timely advice to women entering the era of neoliberalism? As a woman from an exceptionally impoverished background, Brown had to navigate the conflicts between professional and personal life rather differently than a man of her generation would have; as such, she represents an advance guard position in the elimination of boundaries between professional and public life. Other circumstances also drove Brown’s pragmatic approach. As a young woman she faced the challenge of providing care and resources for both her disabled sister and her unemployed mother. As the sole provider for a relative with a disability, Brown knew firsthand both the urgency and the unremitting necessity of providing care, as well as the temporal and

financial costs of meeting that demand.<sup>25</sup> Decades before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) and the provisions of Supplemental Security Income (1974), with extremely limited social and economic supports for persons with disabilities, the demands of caring for a family member with a disability were formidable.<sup>26</sup> (In fact, they still are, even as disability activists have successfully pushed for some advances.) It was in this personal and social context that Brown developed her own no-holds-barred, bourgeois sexual mores be damned, approach to surviving and thriving.

Digging deep into the problem of the commoditized nature of care and challenging that system would not provide her with an immediate solution to her own care responsibilities and financial challenges. But adhering to the ethos of individual upward mobility while challenging the conservative sexual mores (which were beginning to crumble around her) allowed Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl* to appear as a "revolutionary" advice manual for making money and "landing your man" while leaving unchanged the heteronormative and ableist economic norms that led to her own plight. *Having It All* followed the *Single Girl* formula: condemn the restrictive mores that aim to limit sexuality to marriage but leave the economic underpinnings of the care crisis unchanged. While radical feminist social thinkers and activists such as Silvia Federici pushed for wages for housework, universal childcare, and other solutions to the emerging care crisis, Brown pushed against the cultural mores of stay-at-home motherhood while leaving the economic dimensions of the emerging crisis buried.<sup>27</sup>

Contemporaneous with Brown's econometric advice for feminine flourishing in the new regimes of neoliberalism, another thread of advice was emerging: the emergence of the concept of codependence and admonitions to women to avoid "loving too much." If the shift of women's care labor in the home to their "productive labor" at work (i.e., labor that counts in labor statistics) was the economic basis of the emergence of a crisis of care in late twentieth-century America, the rhetoric of codependence and loving too much was part of the propaganda that devalued emotional labor in the intimate sphere.<sup>28</sup> As I've observed elsewhere:

With codependence the public logic of commercial exchange was proposed as the solution to the private dynamics of personal relationships. Giving to another, viewed as an entry on a ledger sheet, had to be balanced. If one gave with no regard for return, one fell into the trap of codependency. Women who gave too much or "loved too much" could never "have it all." Instead, their generosity—previously a characteristic particularly valued in women—set them up for a negative balance sheet and a life without fulfillment.<sup>29</sup>

Viewed in light of the changes in the economic dynamics of the family, questions emerged about how much women invested in their intimate

relationships (which were nearly always imagined as heterosexual). If one was no longer dependent on a male breadwinner, then perhaps the slavish devotion and gooly-eyed flirtation in the intimate sphere of dating was wasted energy that could more effectively be directed to the workplace or other pursuits.

Some feminists, such as Susan Faludi, argued that the rise of a literature focused on women's ostensible neediness was part of an orchestrated backlash against women's increased power and prominence in the labor force. In the literature of "loving too much" the portrait presented was that of women who were achieving success in the professional world but (perhaps as a result) whose personal lives were in ruins. Others argued the concept of codependency is little more than the pathologization of a culture of caring in a gendered division of labor where the provision of routine, daily care work has long been delegated to females.<sup>30</sup>

The development of the concept of codependency was determined by multiple factors and underscores the tensions created by the increased emphasis on labor force participation for women. Even as Helen Gurley Brown portrayed a world in which women could have both a successful, usually glamorous career *and* a fulfilling (if childless or nanny-provisioned) personal life, an extensive literature—including Robin Norwood's 1985 *Women Who Love Too Much: When You Keep Wishing and Hoping He'll Change* and Susan Forward and Joan Torre's 1986 *Men Who Hate Women and the Women Who Love Them*—suggested that women's personal lives were in disarray.<sup>31</sup>

Hochschild observed that feminism had been "abducted" to legitimate the encroachment of a market logic on the private sphere. Values from the commercial sector had jumped the tracks, hurling market values into intimate life. The concept of codependency, a construct that reframed generosity in the context of caring as a form of pathology, was little more than the application of market values to one's capacity to care or a further commoditization in the intimate sphere. Hochschild notes that "the authors of advice books act as emotional investment counselors. They do readings of broad social conditions and recommend to readers of various types, how, how much and in whom to 'invest' emotional attention."<sup>32</sup> Hochschild was right, both in her general point regarding the move of market logics and in her apt naming of advice writers as "emotional investment counselors": life coaching does indeed emerge from financial coaching, as I discuss next. Rather than opening the way to radical and capacious forms of care, the financialization of care (both metaphorically and practically) led to the hoarding or stockpiling of care, or what came to be called "extreme self-care."

## The Rise of Personal Coaching and the Concept of Extreme Self-Care

Life coaching developed, quite literally, from the rise of personal financial advisers and counselors. Personal financial and retirement advice became necessary as neoliberalist policies regarding retirement shifted from traditional pension retirement benefits managed through unions and large employers to the individually funded and managed 401(k) and 403(b) retirement investment plans that put individual workers, typically untrained in finance and investment strategy, in charge of their own retirement funds. In response to this radically privatized retirement model, a new career path emerged: financial planners to provide advice on self-funding retirement. And from their ranks emerged an even newer personal service industry: personal or life coaching.

The first to make note of this development was personal financial adviser and best-selling author Suze Orman, whose late 1990s best-selling financial planning books provided an insider's take on how to insulate oneself and one's family from financial hardship even in the face of neoliberal structural adjustments. Like many of the successful advice givers, Orman was a keen observer of social trends, and even somewhat self-conscious in her practice: "Like most Certified Financial Planner professionals," she wrote, "I started my practice to help other people with their money, but as time went on, I realized that it was far more than their money (or lack of it) that needed attention."<sup>33</sup>

As rational economic principles were being applied to the private sphere, as Social Security was raided by Congress in the effort to feign a balanced budget, and as corporations seized upon the new opportunity to off-load their traditional responsibility to retirees by phasing out pensions and introducing riskier individual retirement investments, financial counselors were particularly well positioned to observe the need for personal coaching. As journalist Helaine Olen has chronicled, financial advice guides and wealth accumulation schemes, always a staple of the self-help industry, burgeoned.<sup>34</sup> Orman again: "It's as if the language of money has pervaded our culture in a new way and is imploring us to listen."<sup>35</sup> Neoliberal policies, with an imperative of pushing the principles of market economics into every corner of lives, contributed to the fusion of psychological and financial counseling. Orman could see this unfolding, even if she lacked the political analysis to understand the disastrous effects of this transposition.<sup>36</sup>

While Orman stayed close to her roots in financial advising, a few pathbreaking financial advisers set out to reposition themselves as life coaches. Two of the most successful were Thomas Leonard and Cheryl Richardson. Leonard is widely considered to be the founder of the life coaching industry. In 1992 he created Coach University to establish train-

ing programs for individuals who aspired to develop coaching careers. Four years later he founded the International Coach Federation, a membership organization for coaches that provides standards and credentialing for the emergent industry.<sup>37</sup> He was also the original provider of online self-help coaching services through his entity coachville.com.

Leonard introduced the idea of “extreme self-care” in 1996, in an online coaching program that he developed as he attempted to recuperate from the exhaustion he experienced after starting Coach University. While Leonard became a legend in the field of coaching, he never became a household name. Instead, his most successful student, author Cheryl Richardson, delivered the concept of “extreme self-care” to households across the country with a June 12, 2000, appearance on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*’s lifestyle makeover series “Energy Drains” to launch her first book, *Take Time for Your Life*.<sup>38</sup>

Exhausted American women seized on Richardson’s idea that they must take care of themselves first, and two of Richardson’s books rose to the *New York Times* best-seller list shortly after her Oprah appearance. While extreme self-care is often ridiculed owing to its seemingly ridiculous solutions to the care crisis—take a bubble bath, get a massage, light a candle and have a cup of tea—its popularity was a bellwether for the still unfolding care crisis.

Leonard’s premise for his program of extreme self-care is that, when one’s needs are met and exceeded, one has reserves, and thus others will find such an individual attractive and appealing, and that individual will have a relatively simple time continuing to meet, and exceed, his or her own needs. Leonard’s own practice of extreme self-care advocated an emphasis on the words *extreme* and *radical*, as he wrote in his initial version of the plan:

The key word in the program title is Extreme. For me, self care was always a good idea, but I couldn’t get very interested in it until I could get a picture of how to make a comprehensive—and for me—radical change. During the transition, I was supported by 10 health care professionals—including a physician, coach, nutritionist, therapist, Rolfer and others. Everyone has their own way of working this program, so please adapt it to meet your needs.<sup>39</sup>

Leonard’s own iteration of the program—which required a team of ten professionals and others—is something few can afford. Though he is careful to note that users should adapt the program to their needs, he is silent on the need to adapt the program to one’s resources. And, as might be expected, Leonard’s view of radical change, like most self-improvement advice, focuses exclusively on individual well-being and ignores the social and economic context of radical inequality in the distribution of care

resources. Rather than offering a model for genuinely radical care, Leonard expanded the view prevalent in the self-help industry: care should be directed back to the self rather than to those in our communities and those with greater need. When care is a commodity, the trickle-down fantasies of market economics are applied.

In the context of the late 1990s—after the first wave of middle management downsizing and amid the rising availability of internet-based resources—Leonard provided these programs online free of charge at the coachville.com platform he created.<sup>40</sup> Simultaneously, he launched a multimillion-dollar coaching industry that provided downsized professional workers with new entrepreneurial careers in the care economy.

The coaching industry sidestepped the temporal investments typically required of individuals in the care industry (e.g., advanced degrees in psychology or social work) and undermined the value of these professions in a deskilling of those certified and licensed professions. Although Leonard developed training institutes and credentialing programs, life coaching remains an unregulated industry.<sup>41</sup> Its own entities provide certification, but no specific credential or licensure is required to claim the status of life coach.

Life coaching didn't provide radical care, but it set out to provide readily available, scalable programs of care via technological affordances that emerged in this period. It worked with checklists and schemas and in many ways set the stage for self-improvement's more recent iterations in the discourse of life hacking.<sup>42</sup>

### **Life Hacking and Not Giving a Fuck: Quick Fixes, Cyborg Minds, and Finitude**

While life coaching relied on the affordances of an early internet to distribute its ideas and materials, life hacking draws on the language, ethos, and work styles of tech industries to tackle the life problems that have proliferated with the speedups required under contemporary capitalism.

Life hacking deploys approaches from the culture of coding: when a software application has some sort of problem, developers don't start over from scratch; they find the bug, fix the specific issue, and move on to the next crash or fail that needs a fix. Life hacking, like code hacking, isn't focused on overhauling the system; it aims for quick and viable fixes. The iterative culture of technology development provided the context in which productivity consultant David Allen developed his best-selling 2001 time management book, *Getting Things Done*. GTD, as the program has been shorthand, initially gained popularity in communities of technologists in Silicon Valley before emerging as one of the most influential time management books of the first decade of the new millennium. Allen draws on

the popular metaphor of the mind's similarity to the architecture of the computer.<sup>43</sup>

The short-term-memory part of your mind—the part that tends to hold all of the incomplete, undecided, and unorganized “stuff”—functions much like RAM on a personal computer. Your conscious mind, like the computer screen, is a focusing tool, not a storage space. You can think about only two or three things at one. But the incomplete items are still being stored in short-term memory space. And as with RAM, there's limited capacity; there only so much “stuff” you can store in there and still have that part of your brain function at a high level. Most people walk around with their RAM bursting at the seams. They're constantly distracted, their focus disturbed by their own internal mental overload.<sup>44</sup>

The solution Allen offers is a time-tested one: write a list. List making allows the life hacker to store data and “operating instructions” offline—freeing up neurological RAM and bandwidth for tasks immediately at hand. Habits and routines are understood as neurological automation that saves effort and attention much as subroutines simplify computer code.

In a recently released book on the emergence of the culture of life hacking, communications scholar Joseph Reagle examines this new thread in self-improvement culture. Life hacking, along with relying on the metaphors of the mind as machine and life as a game, takes the infiltration of market values into the most personal and intimate spheres to new levels. Reagle describes the self-improvement software application Beeminder, built to cultivate motivation in its users by creating a system of accountability: wagering against oneself (or rather against the app) that you'll complete some behavior, be it go to the gym five days in a row or do twenty minutes of Zen meditation in the morning.<sup>45</sup> If one “stays on track,” not much happens, but if a Beeminder user fails to adhere to a plan, the app collects on the bet. “What is Beeminder?” asks the product's promotional copy: “It reminds you with a sting!” Beeminder makes it possible to outsource ones' motivation to an app; the application monetizes your motivation.

Beeminder's inventors—and the founders of the company that builds its profits on its subscribers' failed willpower—have also created another innovation in the intimate sphere of family life. Bethany Soule and Daniel Reeves, who trained in computational game theory and machine learning and “work[ed] on incentive systems” at a major technology firm, have also set up a system called Yootling, an interpersonal auction system to determine who will take on various tasks, whose preferences will be determinative in a new purchase, or who will tuck their kids in on any given night.<sup>46</sup>

Each player sets up a financial account and bids on the various activities of a shared life. If the trash needs taking out, each player bids secretly

on what they'd pay the other to do the task. The "winner" of the auction pays the loser to take on the task. Their economic approach has, as Reagle notes, also emerged in a marriage self-help book: Paula Szuchman and Jenny Anderson's *Spousonomics: Using Economics to Master Love, Marriage, and Dirty Dishes*.

Life hacking, in this instance, takes the form of a monetizing hack; it "gamifies" the common problem of establishing an equitable household division of labor. That is, it sets out to redistribute care labor by recombining existing social practices (turn taking and the form of the auction) to ensure what appears, at least on the surface, to be an equitable (and perhaps entertaining) distribution of household labor.

Alas, whether and how the Yootling game addresses the longstanding gendered inequities in women's earnings in the labor market remains a question. One wonders how an equitable distribution could be maintained if the reality of women's lower wages were to enter the equation. Perhaps the Yootlers artificially level the playing field by operating with the same starting balance in their accounts, or by employing a ratio to adjust wage disparities, attempting to firewall traditional gendered disparities in wages, salaries, and overall net worth.

One of the innovations of David Allen's *Getting Things Done* was the recommendation that to-do lists not be cluttered with tasks and desires that are not immediately relevant. Allen suggests having a category called "Someday Maybe" on one's list of priorities, a section set aside for desires and plans not immediately on the horizon. Rather than fantasizing about that beach house or year of traveling around the world, those sort of big dreams are not eliminated from one's list but are officially placed on the back burner. Allen's model for a life lived well is grounded in the notion that one's energetic resources and one's life span remain finite.

Elsewhere in the vast landscape of late capitalist self-help literature, another discursive thread refuses notions of finitude. The "dream life" to-do lists and vision boards of New Age self-literature, most clearly exemplified by Australian film producer and writer Rhonda Byrnes's 2006 internationally best-selling video *The Secret*, push against the notions of limits and reason. This particular thread, initially found in American uplift literature but now gone global, emerged in the Gilded Age with "New Thought" spirituality and flourished in the United States from the 1950s through the present in the "prosperity gospels" of both evangelical leaders and self-help writers.<sup>47</sup>

The notion that an inexhaustible supply was available to everyone who could maintain a positive outlook soothed the anxieties of Gilded Age economic volatility and later buoyed those facing Depression-era despair. New Thought and its successors in New Age discourses run counter to the encroachment of market-driven values into self-help discourses and,

indeed, into every facet of daily life. At the same time, they extend capitalism's most foundational fantasies, of unlimited growth and infinite supplies of natural resources, including care labor. Thus, as offensive as the application of market-driven principles to personal life may seem (and may be), any insistence on finitude, as in Allen's GTD, affords a counterpoint to the fantasies of ever available supply.

In a literature where time, attention, and care are recognized as finite resources, prioritizing takes on a new importance. This turn is evident in Mark Manson's 2016 best seller *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life*. Building on the life philosophy that he's popularized on his blogging platform (markmanson.net), Manson cuts to the chase: life is short, and you have only so many fucks to give. Choose them carefully, he advises, "because if you go around caring about everything and everyone without conscious thought or choice—well then you're going to get fucked."<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the current US First Lady, who boarded *Air Force One* to depart for a photo-op at a detention center for migrant children seized from their parents wearing her infamous khaki "I really don't care, do u?" jacket from the Zara retail clothing line, Manson is not arguing for not caring. Manson advocates being extremely conscious about what one cares about—after consulting with oneself over one's own misconceptions, misassumptions, and values. While Manson's title certainly resonates with the contemptuous culture of cruelty that characterizes our current moment, he's actually making the case for finitude. There's no mystical source of limitless abundance in this worldview.

A year before Manson's book launched, author and longtime book industry professional Sarah Knight launched her book series No Fucks Given with the 2016 best-selling *The Life-Changing Magic of Not Giving a Fuck*. The title's reference to Marie Kondo's 2014 international best-selling decluttering guide, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, coupled with the self-help publishing industry's recent embrace of attention-grabbing expletives, positioned the book for easy reception. Kondo has been the industry's most prominent advocate of finitude, promoting the notion that one should carefully curate one's belongings, as having more things brings "less joy." Finitude is finally in fashion.

Self-improvement trends that eschew the fantasy of endlessly renewable resources require readers to imagine that care requires time and energy and that human time and energy are likewise bounded. The market-driven image of the emotional ledger sheet, the idea of "holding someone's tab," the social acceptability of saying one has "no more fucks to give" offend traditional sentiments about intimate life and friendship. But in bringing these terms into the intimate sphere or emotional sphere, they chip away at the fantasy that care, love, and attention are in infinite

supply. Perhaps with an equitable distribution of resources—care, attention, and material resources—there would be no need for a fantasy of infinite supply.<sup>49</sup>

### **Radical Care: From Patches to Self-Renewing Forms of Social Solidarity**

Capitalism's care problem leaves anticapitalists and other social justice advocates with an even more difficult problem: how to develop new forms of care provision that refuse racist, patriarchal, capitalist schemes for supply. How do we create new forms of relationship or, as Donna Haraway would say, new forms of kinship?<sup>50</sup> What new forms of sociality and care might be possible? How do we ensure that we do not rely on the discounting of labor based on the traditional gendered and racial social hierarchies, on the fantasies of self-sufficient individuals whose self-making work of maximizing capacities and potential will insulate them from a devastating lack of community, or on the fantasy of an "infinite supply" for those who stay positive? Examples of these new types of relationships, these patches to the care problem, are emerging continuously.<sup>51</sup>

And imagining and creating those forms of interrelationship and social solidarity is the larger project of this issue of *Social Text* and the work ahead. This work can be guided by following Haraway's advice of "staying with the trouble." It will demand both improvisation and ingenuity, and at the same time it promises to be what fully engaged, unalienated labor can be: exuberant, demanding, exhilarating, and, often, simply fun. If it is not all of these things, it will fail.

I have no secret recipe, or five-point plan, or seven habits for this undertaking. Chance and improvisation, careful observation and the willingness to act on principle, and a sense of community or solidarity can all be key to the success of any such undertaking. What I do have is an anecdote about radical care from the intersection of the most traditional forms of reproduction, childbearing and -rearing, and the world of social reproduction, in contingent faculty labor, where I once ran into some trouble.

Conceiving (in the biological sense) at what was then called an advanced maternal age had its challenges, and when my partner and I had arrived to a viable pregnancy, we had not concealed our happiness. Thus, this pregnancy was common knowledge in the university setting where my adjunct faculty income had long supplemented the salary of my full-time nonprofit day job. I had been a part-time faculty member for nearly a decade; my courses were set and routine. The compensation for the courses was so low that I did not rely on the income.

In retrospect, mine seemed (inaccurately) to be an unusual context: work in this setting was not alienated, and my engagement, while not protected by the affordances of tenure, had gradually become what Karl

Marx would call a “realm of freedom”: a social location removed from economic necessity and thus unmarked by alienation.<sup>52</sup> For me, teaching was a pleasure.

And as the income from my day job increased and teaching wages were stagnant (and thus ever more nominal), the compensation for teaching became less and less relevant. Labor wasn’t being extracted for subsistence.<sup>53</sup> Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello’s term “the new spirit of capitalism” characterizes such shifts: the meaningfulness of the work itself provides motivation that had once been compelled by economic necessity.<sup>54</sup>

Capitalism’s contradictions, in particular its catastrophes, can yield these sorts of inadvertent spaces of generativity, akin to the landscapes that anthropologist Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing chronicles: sites of ecological devastation where sought-after delicacies, Matsutake mushrooms, flourish among the pine tree ruins of clear-cut old-growth forests.<sup>55</sup> And as the university is notably its own sort of ruins, teaching in this context was so poorly compensated that the fundamental arrangement that ties labor to employment—that the labor should support a livelihood—had fallen away.<sup>56</sup> Teaching had become less a profession or labor than an avocation. But as is so often the case under capitalism, even exploitation has its limits.

Although time-intensive parenting was close on the horizon, I had no plans of giving up my space of freedom; I fully intended to keep teaching for pleasure (for wages that would not have even approached the cost of even the lowest-wage childcare). Of course, this was an unsustainable fantasy. I had perhaps also fallen under the spell of some of the fantasies of infinite supply and miraculous maternal capacity that our cultural industry churns out. Surely it would all simply work out, and I would continue to enjoy the pleasures of teaching unencumbered by the temporal, physical, and thus economic demands of caring for an infant.

Given this, you might imagine my surprise when a colleague and friend, another female part-time faculty member, called me one evening near the end of what was my third trimester to share with me that all my spring courses had been offered to her. When she’d asked the faculty administrator who had scheduled the courses if I was okay with not teaching in the spring, she was told, “Of course, she’s having a baby—she won’t be able to teach anymore; she won’t have any time for it.” Of course, I paraphrase now, but all of this was news to me. I’d never had a conversation about dropping my courses. But fortunately for me, the friend who phoned to share this had declined to step into my courses without first consulting with me.

The surprises on this phone call kept on coming. My friend offered what was momentarily a riddle: “Isn’t it hilarious that the university has

just offered the courses of one pregnant woman who is about to deliver to another pregnant woman who'll be delivering just six weeks later?"

Yes, my friend was also pregnant—nearly as advanced in her pregnancy as I was in mine—but she had been a good bit more realistic about institutional paternalism and pregnancy discrimination. She had concealed her pregnancy. Just days earlier she had slipped into a faculty meeting in an oversize man's coat and kept her file folders over her lap to ensure that her pregnancy would go unnoticed until the last possible moment. Yes, in the late 1990s women were still concealing pregnancies in the workplace to protect their livelihoods. I'm quite sure that many still do.

When our laughter subsided, a problem remained. Now there were two pregnant faculty members who had each expected to be teaching two courses, but only two courses in total were scheduled in their areas of expertise. This was a problem for us and also for our administrative colleague who had made the decision to reassign my classes. The administrator of the program was a feminist and usually an ally. The planned hand-off of my usual teaching schedule to my colleague was well intentioned, even if the lack of consultation made for a good bit more than bad optics.

The problems, these troubles, were solved in something that might look like some feminist inversion of the parable of the loaves and fishes. In a rare moment of administrative improvisation, our program's director devised a patch: my colleague and I would coteach the courses at our usual levels of compensation. Two teachers, two courses, four salaries—and, given adjunct compensation levels, still a bargain for the university in question.

Although this was the late 1990s, thirty years into the second wave of feminism, we had no access to anything approaching maternity leave, and that situation has scarcely changed for US American women. What we had was the possibility of an accommodation, a prepolitical solution to the problem born of one pregnant woman's unwillingness to poach the courses of another pregnant woman, and of a feminist program administrator's willingness to remedy a lapse in judgment. We had our own fix, an instant iron-on patch held in place by the invisible adhesive of feminist solidarity. Add a little heat and the patch sticks.

There were fascinating unintended consequences from this fragile fix. Few activities are more effective in fostering social solidarity than coteaching with infants in tow. The friendship that my colleague and I shared started to jump the traditional kinship boundaries. Each of our biological families were hundreds (in my case, thousands) of miles away. Sororal affiliation (aka sisterhood, as we once said), without biological kinship, is a formidable and scalable force.

But the patch peeled off quickly. The following semester, my col-

league found her own teaching swiftly downsized: a course she was scheduled to teach was canceled less than three hours before she was slated to take the subway into Manhattan to teach it. Her childcare arrangements for the evening were already in place. Our contracts had no cancellation or “kill” fee, and she’d been counting on the paycheck; teaching had always been a profession and livelihood for her. And in this case, there could be no makeshift fix or patch.

Within our faculty community, in our particular work world, this event was both polarizing and what social movement theorists would call “mobilizing.”<sup>57</sup> I resigned when I was asked to no longer use part-time faculty labor conditions as an example of exploitation when teaching sections from Marx’s *Capital*. When my tiny realm of freedom and my sense of meaningfulness in the work ceased, so did my reason for remaining on the job. And many part-time faculty, like my colleague and myself, who had embarked on parenting while continuing to teach in untenable conditions, began meeting with union organizers. Several years later, and thanks to the hard work (let’s be sure to not call this work “tireless efforts,” as it was both exhausting and exhilarating) of many committed faculty members and labor organizers, the institution’s adjunct faculty union was certified.

So herein emerges a valuable lesson in the politics of care labor as they unfold under Boltanski and Chiapello’s new spirit of capitalism: the meaningfulness of any particular employment can evaporate suddenly in the face of the recognition of inexcusable injustice and inequality (the untenable working conditions of contingent labor) or with the emergence of new care responsibilities. When such meaning evaporates, motivation dissolves just as quickly.

The problem of care (of how adjuncts, who were earning abysmal wages and also embarking on parenting, would make a viable living) precipitated a long overdue faculty labor organizing campaign. Friendship, nonbiological sisterhood, social solidarity—the intersubjectivity that makes one person’s canceled class everyone’s canceled class—precipitated an institutional shift. Certainly, other conditions were in place that made this mobilization possible, perhaps most important, the already existing labor organizing of the graduate teaching assistants at this institution. But what sparked the organizing of an adjunct faculty union at a major institution was a crisis of care.

And therein lies the good news. The ubiquity of personal care catastrophes—and most are vastly more disastrous than the ones my colleague and I encountered—can and do open spaces for political mobilization, and sometimes for legal recourse.<sup>58</sup> If, as feminist and critical disability scholars Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp argue, a burgeoning population of persons with disabilities promises that capitalism’s care problem will only

continue to grow and thus create even more opportunities for political mobilization, then the care crisis is an opportunity.<sup>59</sup>

Tracing capitalism's unfolding care problem—looking at its failed fixes and our own improvised patches—can offer a space of hope. For as wily (to borrow from Nancy Fraser's useful description<sup>60</sup>) as capitalism and its systems of fixes and patches can be, they also inevitably fail. And in the process, when the fixes are revealed as contradictory and our one-off patches no longer adhere, these failures can and must be met by the principled refusals and ingenuity of our communities. Challenging the fixes, making the patches, and most important, finding, opening, and cultivating the spaces for mobilizations are the only sort of self-care that can help any of us. Self-care turns radical when it's turned inside out.

## Notes

More than a few thanks are due to the people behind the scenes on this article. It would not have occurred to me to revisit my early research on self-help culture if the editors of this issue—Hi'ilei Julia Hobart and Tamara Kneese—had not sent their provocative and timely proposal on radical care to the *Social Text* editorial collective. I am indebted to them for their vision, leadership, and patience. To Anna McCarthy, a longtime *Social Text* collective member and editor, my deepest thanks for both your comments and your encouragement to revisit my work on labor and self-improvement culture and join this endeavor. To the manuscript's reviewers, my huge thanks for the comments and leads that have enhanced the work: they were both generous and capacious. And finally, to *Social Text*'s editor David Sartorius and managing editor Marie Buck, along with Hi'ilei, Tamara, Anna, and the reviewers, my immense gratitude for staying with me as I worked to craft this article while recovering from a concussion. My whack on the side of the head was an emergent bit of trouble, and they stayed with me. Their generosity, evidenced in flexibility and accommodations all along the way, was a model of radical care. Had I thought of it sooner, perhaps I would have simply written about their graciousness as another patch and opening. Once you start looking for it, once you have a name for it, the opportunities for radical care appear everywhere.

1. For an expansive list of feminist theorists exploring various aspects of the care crisis, see Fraser, "Contradictions of Capital and Care," 99–100, esp. 100n2; and Ehrenreich and Hochschild, *Global Woman*.

2. While working at this university in the 1990s, I had heard from a number of librarians that the clarity and placement of something as simple as the library's signage could not be remedied due to very specific stipulations in the university's contract with architects Philip Johnson and Richard Foster. The gravity of a series of student suicides, and perhaps their occurrence after Johnson's 2005 death, resulted in alterations to the interiors. For reflections on the university's architectural remediation of this particular locus of student despair, see Hogarty, "NYU Library's Artful Veil"; Paramaguru, "NYU's Brilliant Design"; and Taylor, "Natural Enemy of the Librarian."

3. My evidence on this emerges from the confidential reports from students where I teach, as well as reports from colleagues I know who work in campus counseling at

other institutions, which are also confidential. While the conservative American Psychological Association downplays the increasing needs for psychological services on campuses by overlooking how short-staffed most college and university counseling centers have become—and how needs have increased in the present political environment—they have at least begun to ask questions about counseling capacity. Xiao, “Are We in Crisis?”

4. Even as this article is in production, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* questions the effectiveness of corporate wellness programs. See Song and Baicker, “Effect of a Workplace Wellness Program”; and Abelson, “Employee Wellness Programs Yield Little Benefit.” Those that engage economic incentives are particularly dubious. See Thirumurthy, Asch, and Volpp, “Uncertain Effect of Financial Incentives.”

5. The following studies debunk the mythology of positive psychology or religious cures: Coyne and Tennen, “Positive Psychology in Cancer Care”; Sloan, Bagarella, and Powell, “Religion, Spirituality, and Medicine”; and Sloan et al., “Should Physicians Prescribe Religious Activities?” See also the best seller responsible for debunking the positive psychology myth: Ehrenreich, *Bright-Sided*.

6. See, e.g., Karen Kelsky’s website The Professor Is In ([www.theprofessorisin.com](http://www.theprofessorisin.com)).

7. These are examples of care challenges faced by those privileged enough to occupy spaces in higher education (even if it means accumulating staggering debt to secure that education). Likewise, these examples include those who have access to health care, even if they are enrolled in costly plans with mazes of in- and out-of-network providers, copays and coinsurance, exclusions or denials, or entangled in countless hours of “administrivia.” These examples are by no means representative; rather, they are evocative, pulled from my social location and thus readily in mind. I invite you to take a quick look around you, whatever your context, for the signs of the care crisis in your life, family, and community. I’ll wager that you don’t need to look very far or very hard and that the magnitude of the crises you and your community face is inversely proportionate to the community’s level of access to various forms of capital.

8. Fraser, *Fortunes of Feminism*; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, *Global Woman*, 1–15.

9. Likewise, education, another component of the social reproduction of labor, has operated as a form of care labor with somewhat higher ratios, for example, the traditional classroom where one paid teacher sees to the education of twenty-five, thirty, or sometimes more students. The emergence of online and distance learning attenuated these ratios even further, increasing racial and economic inequality. Cottom, *Lower Ed*.

10. For two well-known examples of part-time university faculty dying immiserated, see Anderson, “What Really Happened to Margaret Mary Vojtko?”; Harris, “Death of an Adjunct”; Flaherty, “Newspaper Column on ‘Death of an Adjunct’”; and Sanchez, “Sad Death of an Adjunct Professor.”

11. Ehrenreich and Hochschild, *Global Woman*; Oishi, *Women in Motion*; Tadiar, *Things Fall Away*.

12. Fraser is particularly clear on this point in an interview in *Dissent*: Leonard and Fraser, “Capitalism’s Crisis of Care.”

13. Ehrenreich and Hochschild, *Global Woman*, 1–15.

14. In a moving *New York Times* opinion piece, Nona Willis Aronowitz recounts how her father, Stanley, one of this journal’s founders, relies on the affordances of Amazon’s swift delivery in the wake of a stroke. Capitalism, wily and sticky, catches

us all: few can elude a system that snares us with our own embodied vulnerabilities. Aronowitz, “Hate Amazon? Try Living without It.”

15. Fraser, *Unruly Practices*, 71.

16. The care problem affects us all, even if disproportionately, save those who can afford to pay for a staff to attend to their care needs. But sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild contends that even those who have the resources to manage their own care crises may suffer from a new kind of alienation as they “outsource their lives.” Hochschild, *Outsourced Self*.

17. Field, “Academe Is a New Green Pasture for Consultants.”

18. While I seldom revisit prior publications, a convergence of circumstances made that appropriate in this instance (see acknowledgments).

19. Swinth, *Feminism’s Forgotten Fight*.

20. Hochschild, *Time Bind*; Chancer, *Rise and Stall of American Feminism*.

21. Martin, *Financialization of Daily Life*.

22. Brown, *Having It All*, 307.

23. Brown, *Having It All*, 29.

24. Covey, *Seven Habits*, 177.

25. Scanlon, *Bad Girls Go Everywhere*, 12–14; McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.*, 86.

26. Davis, *Enabling Acts*; Nielsen, *Disability History*, 161, 180–81.

27. Federici, *Wages against Housework*, 74–87.

28. McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.*, 88–91.

29. McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.*, 88

30. Faludi, *Backlash*; Anderson, “A Critical Analysis of the Concept of Codependency”; Hochschild, “Commercial Spirit.”

31. See also Cowin and Kinder, *Smart Women, Foolish Choices*.

32. Hochschild, “Commercial Spirit,” 12.

33. Orman, *Nine Steps*, 2.

34. Olen, *Pound Foolish*.

35. Orman, *Nine Steps*, xi.

36. Orman attempts to soften her financial focus by counseling her readers to “put people first,” followed by things, and only then money (*Nine Steps*, 131).

37. CoachInc.com, “CoachInc.com Accredited Programs Information”; International Coach Federation, “History of ICF.”

38. For a closer analysis of this *Oprah Winfrey Show* episode, see McGee, *Self-Help, Inc.*, 104–7.

39. Leonard, “Extreme Self Care Program.”

40. At this point the coachville.com domain leads to the practice of another coach, but poorly maintained remnants of Leonard’s work can be found there and on the International Coach Federation website ([www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)).

41. Indeed, the unregulated nature of the self-improvement industry has led to the deaths of individuals seeking personal improvement or transformation. The 2009 deaths of Kirby Brown, James Shore, and Liz Neuman in a pseudo-Native American “sweat lodge” ritual led to the trial, conviction, and prison term of New Age motivational entrepreneur James Arthur Ray (Lovett, “James Ray, Self-Help Guru, Is Sentenced to Prison”). The family of sweat-lodge victim Kirby Brown has initiated a move for state regulation of the self-improvement industry. See [www.seeksafely.org](http://www.seeksafely.org) (accessed April 18, 2019).

42. If space allowed I would guide the reader through some of my favorite documents from these programs, including the list of 1,001 “tolerations” that Leonard asks his readers to review and, if relevant, eliminate from their lives. The list of tolerations is no longer easy to find on the internet, as the list of Leonard’s programs

on the International Coach Federation site is a graveyard of broken links, but it's well worth a read as a startling array of what we would now dismiss as "First-World problems." One of the last places online that this artifact can be found is Leonard, "1001 Tolerations."

43. Maltz, *Psycho-Cybernetics*.

44. Allen, *Getting Things Done*, 22.

45. Reagle, *Hacking Life*, 57.

46. Reagle, *Hacking Life*, 119–21.

47. See, e.g., Hill, *Think and Grow Rich*; or Ponder, *Dynamic Laws of Prosperity*.

One of the best examples of the nineteenth-century roots of the prosperity Gospel is Conwell, *Acres of Diamonds*.

48. Manson, *Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck*, 15.

49. One endeavor that aimed to find an egalitarian form to remedy inequities and shortages of caring attention is Harvey Jackins's reevaluation cocounseling movement. Jackins and his organization had aimed to accomplish this by creating one-on-one and small-group counseling settings where individuals trained in the cocounseling method each counseled one another and thus aimed to solve the shortage of attention or emotional recognition that Jackins contends most of us experience under capitalism. This organization continues its work under the leadership of Tim Jackins, the founder's son. See the Re-evaluation Counseling website ([www.rc.org](http://www.rc.org)) and Jackins, *Fundamentals of Co-counseling Manual*.

50. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

51. For example, Lisa Duggan and Anna McCarthy's 2018 essay "Cancer Twins" chronicles their new kinship formation forged amid concurrent cancer diagnoses and treatment. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha demonstrates the vitality of queer-crip communities of care in *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*, where she describes the emergence of the Creating Collective Access project and the work of Sins Invalid, which are both queer, crip, and antiracist spaces of mutual support and recognition. New forms of sociality emerge from both emergent and transient increased care requirements and from the ongoing and individual care needs of all kinds of body-minds.

52. As Marx notes: "In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production" ("Capital Vol. III").

53. Citing Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, in *Work's Intimacy* Melissa Gregg observes that some workers, in particular creative workers working "flexibly"—from their homes or coffee shops—experience their labor as unalienated, as work is tied to identity.

54. Boltanski and Chiapello, *New Spirit of Capitalism*, 76.

55. Tsing (*Mushroom at the End of the World*) tells the story of how the industrial clearing of old-growth forests gave way to pine forests, which in turn are an ideal site for the flourishing of prized matsutake mushrooms.

56. Readings, *University in Ruins*.

57. While many social movement theorists are working on resource mobilization theories, some of the most instructive work concerns the mobilization of emotion and aesthetics. See Jasper, *Art of Moral Protest*; Jasper, *Emotions of Protest*; and Boyd and Mitchell, *Beautiful Trouble*.

58. As one example, in the recent class action lawsuit against UnitedHealth Group for denial of mental health benefits, UnitedHealth Group lost the case. Abelson, "Mental Health Treatment Denied."

59. Ginsburg and Rapp, “Disability Publics.”

60. Fraser’s description of capitalism’s versatility as “wily” first appears in her essay questioning deconstruction’s role in diminishing the impact of the political (“The French Derrideans,” 131). More recently, this apt language resurfaces in a recent manifesto of which Fraser is a coauthor (Arruzza et al., *Feminism for the 99 Percent*, 61).

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