

Research in Sexualities

THE SEXUAL/POLITICAL

FREUD WITH MARX, FANON, FOUCAULT

Lorenzo Bernini

Translated by Matthew Zundel



The Sexual/Political

The Sexual/Political engages with contemporary political issues in sexuality through a survey of modern philosophy, psychoanalytic thought, 20th-century political theory, and more recent queer philosophies.

The book investigates how the sexual has perturbed philosophical, political, and psychoanalytic thought and how this has fed into discrimination against the LGBTQI community. It analyses the social stigmas applied to public and private sexual acts and the psychopolitical processes leading to the prevalence of neo-fascist populism in Italy and the world. Tracing the history of sexuality through Freud, Marx, Fanon, and Foucault, among many others, Bernini considers why the sexual has always been an exceptionally difficult object to consider in political theory.

This book will be of key interest to scholars in queer theory; antisocial theory; psychoanalysis and politics; drive theory; political philosophy; critical theory; LGBTQIA+ issues; gender and sexuality studies; and Italian studies.

Lorenzo Bernini is Professor of Political Philosophy at the University of Verona, and one of the most important voices in the Italian queer debate. He founded the Research Centre PoliTeSse (Politics and Theories of Sexuality) which he now directs, and he is also one of the founders of GIFTS, the Italian network of gender, intersex, feminist, transfeminist, and sexuality studies. Among his books are *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory* (2017) and *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn* (2019).

Matthew Zundel is Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow with the Core Curriculum at New York University, where they also received their PhD in Italian Studies. Their research concerns the intersection of queerness, social movements, theory, and literature in 20th-century Italy. They have published on the work of Mario Mieli and Pier Paolo Pasolini alongside translations of Italian political philosophy from Luciano Parinetto to Andrea Righi. They are currently working on a book project about the materialist roots of Italian queer and feminist social thought in the 1970s.

Research in Sexualities

The Body in French Queer Thought from Wittig to Preciado
Queer Permeability
Elliot Evans

Straight Skin, Gay Masks and Pretending to be Gay on Screen
Gilad Padva

Aggression in Pornography
Myths and Realities
Eran Shor and Kimberly Seida

The Sexual/Political
Freud with Marx, Fanon, Foucault
Lorenzo Bernini

For more information about this series, please visit: <https://www.routledge.com/Research-in-Sexualities/book-series/RIS>

The Sexual/Political

Freud with Marx, Fanon, Foucault

Lorenzo Bernini

Translated by Matthew Zundel



ROUTLEDGE

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2024
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN
and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa
business*

© 2024 Lorenzo Bernini

The right of Lorenzo Bernini and Matthew Zundel to be identified as the author and translator of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives 4.0 license.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Italian edition published by Edizioni ETS 2019

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-46984-3 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-46987-4 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-38407-6 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003384076

Typeset in Sabon
by MPS Limited, Dehradun



An electronic version of this book is freely available, thanks to the support of libraries working with Knowledge Unlatched (KU). KU is a collaborative initiative designed to make high quality books Open Access for the public good. The Open Access ISBN for this book is 978-1-003-38407-6. More information about the initiative and links to the Open Access version can be found at www.knowledgeunlatched.org.

Queerness would seem to be, in large part,
an emphasis on the inextricability of the
sexual and the political, although its theorists often understand
the connection in a peculiarly nonsexual way.

Leo Bersani, *Homos*



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Contents

<i>Figure 1: Photography by Michele Longo</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Translator's Preface</i>	<i>x</i>
Introduction to the English Edition	1
Prologue: <i>Merde alors!</i>	16
PART I	
Freud	43
1 The Pig Roast	45
1.1 <i>The Curse of the Übermensch</i>	45
1.2 <i>Crimina Carnis Contra Naturam</i>	48
1.3 <i>The Political Body in the Boudoir</i>	50
2 Feel Your Way with Freud	61
2.1 <i>To Do Justice</i>	61
2.2 <i>The Phases of (Hetero)Sexual Development</i>	64
2.3 <i>The Perverse Sexual, or the Drive</i>	68
3 Sigmund on the Couch	81
3.1 <i>The Forbidden Step</i>	81
3.2 <i>Demons</i>	85
3.3 <i>Again and Again</i>	89

PART II	
With Marx, Fanon, Foucault	111
4	Foreclosures 113
4.1	<i>Bodies in Alliance without Sex</i> 114
4.2	<i>The (Hetero)Sexual Revolution</i> 119
4.3	<i>Hedonistic Resistances</i> 126
5	Flying Anuses, or of Another Tradition 145
5.1	<i>In the Name of Anna</i> 147
5.2	<i>Elements of a Pansexual Critique</i> 152
5.3	<i>The Golden Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge</i> 160
6	The Sexual/Political 182
6.1	<i>Foucault without Organs</i> 182
6.2	<i>Bastardized Space</i> 190
6.3	<i>Caliban's Phallus</i> 194
	Epilogue: Hyenas in the Sauna 223
	<i>Bibliography</i> 248
	<i>Index</i> 266



Figure 1 Cacca Pound: Merda (Dany culo). Or: Freud in Trieste.

Source: Photography by Michele Longo.

Translator's Preface

The title of this text, *The Sexual/Political*, may strike English-speaking readers as unusual. The terms “sexual” and “political” are typically used as adjectives, while here they are joined together by a definite article into a singular nominal form. Indeed, even the original Italian title, *Il sessuale politico*, sounds strange in everyday Italian. In its common use, *politico* can be used in two principal ways: (1) as an adjective signifying a relation to politics, the art of governance, management of the state, or the administration of public life in general and (2) as a noun indicating the complex of social life and its tacit rules, the public sphere, or more simply a person who does politics—a politician. Meanwhile, in ordinary Italian usage, *sessuale* is resolutely an adjective denoting that which regards biological, physiological, psychological, and behavioral characteristics, processes, and activities as they relate to sex (however capaciously defined).

Because of this grammatical dilemma, I used “sexual/political” as a placeholder title until I could find a better solution. In the end, this turned out to be a fortuitous decision. Under its definitions of “sexual, adj.” (in English the substantive form of “sexual” exists, but it is a biological term referring to an organism that holds the capacity for reproduction set in contrast to terms like “asexual,” “parthenogenetic,” or “vegetative”), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) lists a series of compound terms that includes the “sexual-political” as an adjective “of, relating to, or concerning sexual politics.” Indeed, early in the process of translation, I had thought to use “Sexual Politics” itself as a title—however this felt too close to a mode of thinking about the politics of sexuality that grew prominent in the late 1960s through the 1980s.¹ In her by now classic text of that generation of feminist scholarship, *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett uses politics in a broad yet still somewhat narrow sense to refer to “power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.”² Her use of sexual as linked to politics refers less to sexual acts than to sex as a category of gender (indeed, her study is a classic because it is one of the first widely read studies to argue that sexual difference is socially constructed and that “biological sex” and “gender identification” are distinct phenomena),

whereby the relation between “males” and “females” is one of dominance and subordination.

To my surprise, the *OED* notes that the first time “sexual-political” appears as a hyphenated pair in English is in Millett’s study. She uses it in her chapter “Sexual Revolution” where she includes a digression while discussing Friedrich Engels’s and Johann Jakob Bachofen’s respective theories of the historical evolution of the patriarchal social order. In her view, Engels and his sources—one of which is Bachofen’s study of ancient matriarchal societies (*Mutterrecht*, or “Mother Right”)—fail to adequately account for the genesis of the patriarchy as a dominant sociopolitical structure, which he views as primarily arising out of “sexual associations” (e.g. from promiscuity and group marriages to pairing and monogamous marriage). Millett then turns to a reading of Aeschylus’s tragic trilogy, the *Oresteia*, which Bachofen uses to discuss the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy as based in the knowledge of paternity and patrilineage. She writes:

Realizing the importance of the cause for this shift or change in the character of sexual association, realizing too the important role of early religion in connection with sexuality, Bachofen looked to myth and literature for evidence of how early society construed biological events in terms one might call sexual-political.³

Here she notes that Bachofen uses the *Oresteia* as evidence for the process of making the biological event of reproduction into a socio-historical event that inaugurates the sexual-political, by which she means “sexual politics,” or the hierarchical socio-cultural power dynamics conditioned by gender. Curious about the logical leap that he takes in making this claim, she notes further that both Bachofen and Engels claim that women allowed for this instantiation of their subjection because they sought relief from the burden of sexuality. In this way, she observes that both the “matriarchal school” of historians, which includes Bachofen and Engels, and the “patriarchal school”⁴ were “repelled or made uneasy by the prospect of unregulated sexual activity.”⁵

Part of what made translating the title *The Sexual/Political* a challenge was because Bernini’s argument is not necessarily about the political arrangement that forms in relation to gender hierarchies or sexual activity. Instead, he explicates this dark-sided aspect of sexual life—digging into the philosophical roots of what incites in both these patriarchal and matriarchal schools an aversion to the idea of unregulated sexual activity—the unbridling of a wild region of the human that borders on the inhuman that is the sexual. *The Sexual/Political* then, joined with a / and a definite article, does not refer to the more broad-based category of “sexual politics.” It is the fusion of two terms that have complex philosophical antecedents: the “sexual,” which comes from Leo Bersani’s reading of Jean Laplanche’s

re-reading of Freud, and the “political,” which can be recognized in German political philosopher Carl Schmitt’s writing on the “concept of the political.”

Laplanche conceptualizes the “sexual” as the “enlarged” theory of sexuality that emerges in Freud’s writing firmly rooted in, but not reducible to, his original theses on infantile sexuality. The term itself is a direct citation of the original German that Freud uses, *Sexual*, which often appears as an adjective linked to a noun like in *Sexualtheorie* (sexual theory), instead of the contemporary French spelling, *le sexuel*. It is difficult in English to grasp the significance of Laplanche’s neologism because of the linguistic context of this original movement: using *le sexuel* in French contrasts with the more everyday French use of *le sexuel*, while in English, *the sexual* is orthographically identical to Freud’s German, thus obscuring its theoretical implications. Laplanche’s English translators have attempted to resolve this issue by italicizing *sexual* and indicating that the term should be pronounced with an elongated “a” sound—“*abl*.”⁶ I have not carried over this italicization in large part because while Bernini’s use of “sexual” originates with Laplanche, it is not reducible to it.

Here Bernini’s reading of Freud begins with the moments in his writing on sexuality where he hits a wall in understanding: Freud is ever returning to the question of sexuality, the problems associated with the telos of reproductive instinct and the disturbances that continue to come out in the sexual lives of his patients or in case studies. The problem of how the human undergoes sexual excitation (is it an instinct that begins from within? is it a force that arrives from without?) remains obscure for Freud. This confusion is what Laplanche calls the *sexual*: it is what evades rationality in sexuality, what contests the teleological sense of reproduction, and with them both the functional and evolutionary theories of sexuality. Part and parcel of this definition of the sexual is Freud’s notion of *Trieb*, or drive, which was mistranslated in the original English version of Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* by James Strachey as “instinct.” The drive is a synonym for the sexual. Laplanche notes that the drive differs from the instinct not on the level of the somatic vs the psychic; rather, the drive is acquired while instinct is innate. Bernini takes this one step further to demonstrate that “the sexual drive grafts onto the sexual instinct and remains implanted on the surface of the body.” Thus, borrowing Gilbert Simondon’s term, he argues that Freud’s conception of sexuality does not rest within an individual, but is “transindividual,” whereby it is implanted onto the body through touch during infancy.

What then of the second part of the title pair—political? In part, the political aspect comes from queer theorist Bersani’s observation in *Homos*, which also serves as the epigraph to this book, that the category of queerness seems to be “an emphasis on the inextricability of the sexual and the political,” yet more often than not the sexual aspect is removed, or foreclosed, from writing on queerness. The foreclosure of the sexual, the drive, points to a problem in political philosophy precisely because it is an antisocial force (this is as true for Bersani as it is for his fellow “anti-social”

queer theorist Lee Edelman, as it is for Hobbes and Kant, who Bernini discusses in the first chapter) that is also necessarily enmeshed in the social. The sexual is therefore political *because* it is unpolitical. As Bernini writes in Chapter 6: “The sexual [...] is one of the causes of civilization’s discontents, which, despite all the efforts that can be made in the attempt to repress it, is repeatedly destined to disturb civilization.” Here the reference is Freud again, but a Freud who Bernini reads within a lineage of political philosophers, from Hobbes to Carl Schmitt. Indeed, Schmitt makes a prevalent appearance in Chapter 3 in comparison to Freud. Both of them, Bernini argues, overcome Hobbes’s pessimistic categorization of humans as “wolves” toward each other. In his essay “The Concept of the Political,” Schmitt argues that political actions and motives can all be boiled down to a distinction between friend (*Freund*) and enemy (*Feind*). In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud too provides a political argument that war and aggression between singular human beings are suspended by the formation of political communities, only to be re-established between those political communities. Key to both of their formulations—made in roughly the same years as the Nazis rose to power in Germany (and notably on two opposite sides of that power dynamic with Schmitt joining the Nazi party and Freud, Jewish, fleeing the country)—is that the stranger is deemed an enemy, and a shared enemy becomes one of the strongest forms of social bonds.

Beyond the title, I wanted to make some further clarifications about translation decisions throughout the text. For technical conceptual vocabulary, I have relied on long-established English terminology. This includes terms like *godimento*, which corresponds to the French *jouissance*, and in English is often translated as “enjoyment.” It also includes *perturbante*, which is the Italian translation of the German psychoanalytic term *Unheimlich*, commonly translated into English as “uncanny.” I have also, in conversation with the author, made two decisions regarding the recurring terms *eccitazione*, which Bernini often uses to describe a subjective state that the sexual drive aims to incite, and *singolo*. For the former I have gone with “excitation” rather than “excitement,” even though Bersani, for instance, uses both when writing about the sexual. I did this mostly because “excitement” elicits an image of joy in anticipation of something in English, and “excitation” is somewhat more mechanistic because of its use in the field of physics, which feels truer to the affective state sought after with the sexual drive. I have translated the latter as “singular subject,” rather than the more direct “individual.” This decision has to do especially with the argument that Bernini makes around the sexual’s disruption of sovereign subjectivity, which has long been reified in political philosophy under the name of individualism. The choice of using “singular subject” instead of “individual” emphasizes this interruption of sovereignty while still noting the fact of a distinct singular subject *in relation*, one which makes up groups, collectives, and communities (all of which come with their own philosophical and semantic baggage as well), and which at the same time emerges from groups, collectives, and

communities that precede them as their transindividual matrix. However, when Bernini does refer to the subject as thought through the prism of individualism (e.g. the “liberal” subject), he uses the Italian *individuo*, which in English becomes “individual.” And finally, central to this book’s core argument is Freud’s use of the terms *Trieb* (drive) and *Instinkt* (instinct); in Italian, *pulsione* and *istinto*. The same distinction is not made in the Italian translation of Freud’s *Three Essays* because the original German does not include any major use of the term *Instinkt*.⁷ Despite this, I have still used Strachey’s translations throughout the text, and have replaced any mention of “instinct” with “drive.”

Matthew Zundel
New York
January 2023

Notes

- 1 One influential example is Carole Vance’s edited collection *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), which originated as a conference called “Towards a Politics of Sexuality” at Barnard College in April 1982, and which contains essays that use the term “sexual politics” or the “politics of sexuality,” including Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” Carole Vance, “Pleasure and Danger: Towards a Politics of Sexuality,” and Alice Echols’s “The Taming of the Id: Feminist Sexual Politics, 1968–1983.”
- 2 Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 23.
- 3 Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 112.
- 4 According to Millett, the “patriarchal school” “takes the patriarchal family to be the primordial form of human social organization, tribe, nation, etc.,” while the “matriarchal school” argues “that patriarchal rule was preceded by some form of matriarchal rule, where mother-right, the ‘female principle,’ or fertility dominated social and religious life.” Two examples she singles out for the former are Sir Henry Maine’s 1861 study *Ancient Law*, and Edward Westermarck’s *The History of Human Marriage*, published in 1891, while for the latter, aside from Engels and Bachofen, she mentions Louis Henry Morgan’s *Ancient Society* (1877), Robert Briffault’s *The Mothers* (1927), John F. McLennan’s *Primitive Marriage* (1865), and Alexis Giraud-Teulon’s *Les Origines de la Famille* (1874). See Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 108–109.
- 5 Millett, *Sexual Politics*, 115, fn. 129.
- 6 See the editor’s note in the foreword to Jean Laplanche, *Freud and the Sexual: Essays 2000–2006*, ed. John Fletcher, trans. John Fletcher, Jonathan House, and Nicholas Ray (New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011), 1.
- 7 In his recent English translation of the original 1905 edition, Ulrike Kistner writes: “The term *Instinkt* does not occur in *Drei Abhandlungen*—or rather, it is used only once, as an adjective, and then by way of comparison.” Ulrike Kistner, “Translating the First Edition of Freud’s *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*,” in Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality: The 1905 Edition*, eds. Philippe Van Haute and Herman Westerink, trans. Ulrike Kistner (London: Verso, 2016), lxxix.

Introduction to the English Edition

The Italian edition of this book, its first edition, was published at the end of 2019. Only three years have passed since then, but it seems as though a geological era has gone by. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the brutal killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 (another, and not the last, in the countless murders of Black Americans perpetrated by the police, which has in turn triggered a transnational anti-racist mobilization that has also reached Italy), the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 (which has symbolically concluded the twenty-year season of conflicts that followed the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001), the Russian invasion of the Ukraine beginning on February 24, 2022 (another in long line of wars in our time, but this time quite close to Europe, and one that defies the international global order established in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989): all of these have been event-breaks. Deaths, too many deaths, that mark a before and after in public debate, in the political imaginary, in reality. To update this text in light of everything that has happened would be too much work for an introduction. However, it is at least worthwhile to try to test some of the theses that are argued in the book with the time that has passed in mind.

The presentations of and discussions about *The Sexual/Political* that I held in Italy, online during the months of lock-down, then in-person in academic and social movement environments, in institutional and informal situations, together with the acute exchanges that I had with my translator Matthew Zundel (whom I wholeheartedly thank), have been helpful in focalizing what certainly could sound banal. What I have written is strongly influenced by what I am: not only by my ethnic, geographic, sexual, and gendered positionality but also by my professional and generational positions. The book looks to the past, to the history of philosophical, psychoanalytic, and queer thought, from the specific present of a cis-gender (but not so cisgender), middle-aged, white, Italian, gay university professor who faces a rapidly changing world, in the span of whose life to change has also been, and radically, his role in society.

The undeniable achievements that have been won on the juridical level in many countries of the world over the past few decades, among which is Italy,

2 *Introduction to the English Edition*

can today persuade LGBTQIA+ youth to think that they can occupy a central position in the social, and LGBTQIA+ activist youth (above all when they engage in a form of “keyboard” activism which confers upon movements a form of serial individualism and not collective action) to even be able to occupy the position of the sovereign: the position of the legislator who prescribes rigid rules of behavior and language not only to themselves but also to everyone, and at the same time the position of the judge who distributes sanctions, censoring and ridiculing on social media those who do not respect those rules. The experimentation with other ways of life, the construction of minority social spaces, the invention of new forms of subjectivity and community which were necessary when I was young—to use an expression of Judith Butler’s¹—to make queer existence “livable” on the margins or in the interstices of cis-heterosexual society alone, seems to have given way to the repetition of already given formulas, which propose certainty and stability instead of producing doubts and transformations, which pose solutions rather than problems, which propose only one point of view instead of multiple, which claims to be universal when looking at differences. The appropriate identity category to define oneself and others through the correct use of each letter of the LGBTQIA+ acronym and other terms, the right pronouns and the right ending to indicate gender even in the case of non-binary people,² the suspension of judgment with respect to the intransitive truths that an object declares about themselves, the sex positive and body positive rhetoric according to which every sexual practice is equally valid, every body equally beautiful and—provided there is consent—the sexual is fully pacified with the social, without problems of aesthetics or morality or structural injustice. Such rhetoric considers the political questions that involve sexuality to be, if anything, conjunctural, caused by forms of intersectional oppression—of gender, of class, of racialization, of disabilitization, etc.—of a contingent character that would be in our power to resolve by struggling against injustice. Faith, ultimately in the Marxist sense, prevails in the possibility of liberation and full reconciliation of the private and the public, of the singular and the general. Without rest, without unconscious—without tragedy.

When faced with this optimism of the will, the return of Freud proposed in my book, more than being pessimistic, could appear outdated. And it probably is—as outdated as my middle age. At the beginning of the last century, the founder of psychoanalysis argued that social life is based on the sublimation and the expulsion of the sexual, of which the taboo of anal enjoyment is the symbol.³ He also argued that, consequently, there exists an unavoidable discontent for the human in society, a neurotic discontent (also) caused by this renunciation.⁴ But after the sexual revolution of the 1970s, whose long wake has brought us to the sex-positive rhetoric of today, where such a revolution has taken place, who would still speak of repressive societies? Freud maintained that neurosis is the opposite of perversion: today, in the United States, in Europe, in Italy, who would still call

themselves neurotic? Are we still neurotic? Can we still call ourselves neurotic? Or by now do we—are we? can we?—only know to call ourselves perverse? Already by 1972, in an important conference in Milan, Lacan argued that in advanced capitalist societies the repressive imperative of tradition has been replaced by an imperative to enjoyment,⁵ the same imperative which according to Massimo Recalcati cuts the breaks from the drive and stifles desire.⁶ But is that really what he claims? Do we live today in a society of widespread perversion? Are we no longer repressed, but perverse, and therefore free? Are we no longer repressed, but perverse, and for this very reason not free?

As you will read in the fifth chapter, in 1972, the same year in which Lacan held his conference in Milan and three years after the rebellion at the Stonewall Inn in New York, the first public demonstration of the Italian gay liberation movement was held in Sanremo. A small group of very courageous lesbians and very courageous gays, plus Mario Mieli who today we would call non-binary, protested an International Sexological Conference where “reparative therapies” to cure homosexuality and transsexuality were being proposed.⁷ I was born a year later in 1973. In the almost fifty years that have passed since then—which, as you might have guessed, is a lot of time for me, making me feel old, but it is very little time in historical terms—the feminist and LGBTQIA+ revolution has not only assailed the juridical but also the symbolic order. This revolution has caused important effects which we cannot but celebrate, but at the same time, we must consider recent and therefore fragile achievements, without confusing them with a definitive and unchanging reconfiguration of reality (if an example is needed, then the United States Supreme Court’s ruling in June 2022 that abolished the *Roe v. Wade* decision, which in 1973 had declared abortion a constitutional right, clearly demonstrates this). In any case, the world has truly changed, and me with it—I have seen it with my own eyes. In 1990, the World Health Organization (WHO) took homosexuality off the list of mental disorders (when I was seventeen, I discovered that I was not afflicted with a psychiatric sickness). Finally, in 2019, transgender identity was also depathologized, and is now referred to as “gender incongruence.”⁸ In Italy it has been possible to change the state record of one’s gender since 1982. It has been possible to do this without recourse to genital surgery since 2015, while lesbian and gay couples have been able to enter into civil unions since 2016—even if they can neither get married nor adopt children. All of this has had significant repercussions in Italy’s collective consciousness and in political debate and has determined new rifts between the right and the left, which have overlapped with and sometimes replaced their differing positions on the problems of economic inequality and social justice. Such events have also, however, brought about new and unprecedented convergences.

And so, in August of 2021, after the United States withdrew its troops from Afghanistan, it was easy for many (myself included) to condemn the oppression of women and sexual minorities perpetrated by the Taliban. And in

4 *Introduction to the English Edition*

February of 2022, it was easy for many, in many cases, the same people, not only to condemn but also to ridicule the grotesque rhetoric of the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all of Russia, a rhetoric which was then taken up by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who had justified the war in Ukraine by arguing for the necessity to preserve Christian Russian culture from gay pride. In the face of these outbursts of sexism and homo-lesbo-trans-pan-negativity, we felt comforted by the idea of a secular Europe, where gender equality is in full force, where lesbians and gays have been integrated through the right to marriage, where younger generations are ever-more sexually free, ever-more sexually uninhibited, ever-more sexually fluid. Yet, we must acknowledge that the possibility of this comfort has been generated only in the past fifty years. In medicine, in law, in politics—and then through the market, as not only Massimo Recalcati has emphasized but also Paul B. Preciado who defines our present moment as the Pharmocopornographic Era.⁹

In fact, it is through the market that the repressive imperative of tradition has been overturned into the neoliberal imperative to enjoyment, from which sexual transgression is neither repressed nor inhibited, but provoked and put in service of profit. Today the internet saturates our lives with pornography. The pill, anxiety medication, anti-depressants, PrEP and PEP, hormones, Beta blockers, assisted reproductive therapies, Viagra, methamphetamines, GHB, chemsex: all of this chemical equipment today saturates our sexed bodies. Many currently argue that prostitution is work like any other, even in countries—like Italy—where from a legal standpoint, it is not. For vast swaths of the population, sex-positive thinking is, indeed, mainstream. We tell ourselves, a very problematic “we,” a “we” in quotation marks, which, to be clear, includes neither the Taliban nor the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow—we tell ourselves that for this “we,” the sexual is no longer a political or personal problem. Is this not the society we live in, the one in which LGBTQIA+ youth can feel fully integrated, to the point of assuming a position of sovereignty? What if instead it was the society we like to tell ourselves we live in?

In my view, we live in an assemblage of heterogeneous, and sometimes contradictory, planes of reality (which has probably always been the case, but today more than ever). On one of these planes, sex positive common sense essentially convinces us that it is possible to completely reconcile the sexual subject with the social subject. However, on another plane—with all due respect to Lacan and Preciado—civilization’s discontent continues to play out as in the time of good-old Freud. If the first function of the political is the creation of the social bond, the social bond still edifies itself at the expense of the sexual through its repression and sublimation. Despite all that has happened in only fifty years, despite the sacred victories of feminism and the LGBTQIA+ movements, in our hyper-hedonistic societies, the sexual is still neurotically expelled from the social through the identification of scapegoats who are elected as its representatives. And this is also carried out “by us,” in the “civilized West”: the sexual also continues to be used by us to

exclude the “other,” to make them into monsters, to make them abject. The prologue with which this book opens and the epilogue with which it closes offer eloquent rhetorical examples of sexual abjection that have been widespread in contemporary political debate, which at the same time are aimed at sexual minorities and racialized migrant subjects. As you will read, these examples are taken from the public speeches of the Federal Secretary of the Lega party, Matteo Salvini, the protagonist of the populist period of Italian politics that has been suspended by the outbreak of the pandemic.

When I wrote the epilogue in September of 2019, I wondered if Salvini’s break with Giuseppe Conte’s government and the establishment of a second government under Conte also supported by the center-left parties would have weakened or strengthened right-wing populism in Italy in the long run. After almost three years, following the fall of the united national government lead by ex-president of the Central European Bank Mario Draghi, which followed Conte’s government so as to manage the economic and social crisis cause by the pandemic,¹⁰ I can confirm that the risk of a victory by the right-wing parties in the next elections has risen. However, it will probably not be Salvini who leads the right-wing coalition as prime minister (whose aspirations are to return to the position of Minister of the Interior), but instead to Giorgia Meloni, leader of the far-right Fratelli d’Italia (Brothers of Italy) party, heir to historical Fascism. Remaining in the opposition to the Draghi government, which, however, the Lega has supported until this latest crisis, Fratelli d’Italia has in fact become the most preferred party for Italians according to polls. Italy could therefore have its first woman prime minister, who is certainly not a feminist, but who is certainly intersectional in her defense of white cis-heterosexuality. In fact, Giorgia Meloni, who in a meeting held in Marbella on June 13, 2022, in support of the Spanish party Vox, has summed up the political program of the transnational extreme right by yelling out some simple hateful words as a slogan, her neck swollen with anger:

There are no possible compromises; either we say yes or no. Yes to natural families—no the LGBT lobby! Yes to sexual identity—no to gender ideology! Yes to the culture of life—no to the abyss of death! Yes to the universality of the cross—no to Islamist violence! Yes to secure borders—no to mass immigration! Yes to the work of our citizens—no to big international finance! Yes to the sovereignty of the people—no to the bureaucrats in Brussels! Yes to our civilization—no to those who wish to destroy it!¹¹

The homo-lesbo-bi-trans-pan-negativity, (anti-abortionist) male chauvinism, and (anti-immigration) racism included in this populist proclamation, equal to the Salvinian rhetoric which has been more extensively examined in this book, are evidently not the business of others, but belong to “us,” are products of “our (Western) civilization,” as Meloni correctly emphasizes. It is the same for the anti-LGBT propaganda of the Kirill, which is a continuation

6 Introduction to the English Edition

of that massive transnational campaign against the so-called gender ideology or LGBT ideology launched in the 1990s to which Meloni explicitly refers—a campaign that had its main driving force not in the Orthodox Church of the East, but in the Catholic Church of the West. I say more about this campaign, or crusade, in the prologue and epilogue. I also discuss the transnational *kermesse* of homo-lesbo-bi-trans-pan-negativity, of male chauvinism, and racism that is the World Congress of Families, which in 2019—I repeat, only three years ago—was held not in Moscow, but in Verona. The event opened with the blessing of the city’s bishop, Giuseppe Zenti, and had among its speakers not only Dimitriv Smirnov, the right hand of the Kirill, but also, indeed, Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni.

Verona is the city where I live and work. In June 2022, after fifteen years, it elected a center-left mayor, Damiano Tommasi—who benefited from the split between two other mayoral candidates on the right—yet it remains “a laboratory [Italian] city of the extreme right.”¹² A city where the presence of a political philosopher at the university who studies sexuality and holds courses in psychoanalysis and queer theory could not go by unnoticed. Indeed, in 2010, a year after I was hired, letters began to appear in the local newspaper *L’Arena* from mothers concerned about what their children were learning from my lessons. The traditionalist Catholic club, Christus Rex, an offshoot of the extra-parliamentary neo-fascist party Forza Nuova, issued a protest statement in which I was defined as a “professore di frocismo militante” (professor of militant faggotism)—which, when I think about it, is a pretty fitting description of who I am, which I do not dislike at all! Meanwhile in 2017 the honorable Massimiliano Fedriga, a deputy of the Lega, filed a parliamentary inquiry to ask for an account of my teachings at the university, where, among other things, we read that “Lorenzo Bernini,” in addition to being a “researcher in political philosophy, author of gender studies and queer theory (for which there would be no single way of being men and women, but a multiplicity of identities and experiences),” is a permanent presence in many gay pride festivals” (what a scandal!). A year earlier, while I was giving a lecture, in front of the entrance to the university, a flyer had been distributed which ended with these words: “Lotta Studentesca [Student Struggle, the youth organization of Forza Nuova] will be present wherever there is a need to bring our youth and the institutions that promote culture back on the right track.”¹³

This sort of protest is probably not surprising when it comes from extreme right groups that resemble historical fascism. What may be even more surprising is that even the University of Verona’s rector, Nicola Sartor, who in 2006 had been the undersecretary to the Ministry of Economics and Finance in the center-left government led by Romano Prodi, let me know with various reprimands that the narrative of the “wrong track” has some basis in fact. It might also shock us to know that when in May 2018 Forza Nuova announced that they would have prevented “even with the use of force” the revealing of the conference

“Richiedenti asilo: Orientamento sessuale e identità di genere” (Asylum Seekers: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), which was co-organized by the research center that I founded and directed¹⁴ in cooperation with associations that advocate for migrant and LGBTQI+ people; the very same rector reacted by suspending the conference. He issued a note with ambivalent tones to the press, in which, instead of merely condemning the threats of the neo-fascist group, he covertly reproached those who had organized the initiative and put Forza Nuova and the advocacy associations involved on the same level. In the document one reads, in fact, that the conference, dedicated to “politically and ethically controversial themes,” “left the [off-track?] scientific environment and became the terrain of conflict and above all the research of visibility for different activists of various stripes.”¹⁵ Perhaps this too is fascism, another fascism, different from the neo-fascisms that remake themselves in the image of historical Fascism—an “Ur-fascism” or “Eternal fascism”—to use a definition from Umberto Eco that I explain a bit further on¹⁶—which can come from both the right and the left, a fascism that cannot be eliminated from civilization, what Edelman calls “the fascism of the Baby’s face.”¹⁷ According to this idea, children, young people, even those who are university students must be protected from the sexual, and also from the personifications of it, including that militant faggotist Professor Bernini. I think this is what left-wing rector Sartor thought; who is certainly in good company. In this regard, it is interesting, for example, to reflect on what happened more recently not in backward-thinking Verona, but in forward-thinking Milan, in the prestigious Italian cultural institution of the Triennale.

On the 23rd International Exposition of the Decorative Arts, the Triennale had invited me to hold a conference on the theme of my research within their broader public programming, where at first no problem emerged having to do with being on the “wrong track.” Then, however, an issue arose. The title that I had proposed, in line with my book and in homage to Jean Laplanche (who as you will read, has a central role in the book),¹⁸ was indeed “Sessuale” (Sexual), and in the days leading up to the conference I was asked to change it. The request, however, did not come directly from the Triennale, but from the sponsor of the initiative, the private banking company Franklin Templeton Investments. An issue altogether other than sex positivity! An issue, moreover, other than capital which profits from transgression! What I have grasped from my experience as a middle-aged gay, together with my experience as a professor at an Italian university, is that again—and again, and again—the sexual continues to represent a negative force in our society: a force to which the institution in obeying their sponsors on the “right track” (straight?), must respond with a “no.” Why? The definitive title that I then gave the conference, not so heroically bowing to censorship, even if it was my second choice, ended up fitting well (thanks, censorship). Because still today, and perhaps this has always been the case, the sexual, insofar as sex is sex epitomized by the anus, continues to represent “The Black Hole” (here we find the final title of the

8 *Introduction to the English Edition*

event) of subjectivity, an anguish of the self that the subject cannot accept, and that it therefore projects onto the other.¹⁹ Onto sexual minorities, as those who read this book will learn from Mario Mieli, Leo Bersani, and Lee Edelman, starting from gay men and their anuses. Onto racialized minorities, as those who read this book will learn from Frantz Fanon, starting from the racist anus of white men. Additionally, through an interesting liberal contortion, it is an anguish that is also projected onto the “enemies of the West” that come from the East or the South, onto a “them” that is different from “us”: onto the Talibans, the Islamists, the Orthodox, onto Putin, and Kirill, bearers of a culture of sexual repression, of a disorder of sexuality—of the sexual as such, which is, in the last instance, disorder itself—from which “we” the civilized West, champions of LGBTQIA+ rights, would have long since freed ourselves.

It seems to me, then, that even a certain contemporary sex positive common sense, the heir of the sexual revolution of the 1970s, which has become mainstream in our society at the very moment in which the sexual denies the negative, essentially continues to perpetuate a process that in the book I call, following Lacan, the “foreclosure” of the sexual from political thought.²⁰ This happens by exchanging transgression—for profit—with law, by exchanging subversion of the gender binary, the revolution of the cis-heterosexual symbolic order, for a liberation of the sexual itself. And even what is happening today in the form of symbolic revolution, as much as it is of great importance, is fundamentally something that has always happened. In all ages, in all places, all societies and all singular subjects have always tried to contain the uncanny force of the sexual to make it more acceptable to the Ego; they have always tried to shape this force into forms that it has always eluded and continues to. The strictly binary and heterosexist interpretation of male and female defined by their reciprocal attraction, the limitation of that attraction in monogamous marriage, and in the last instance in reproductive coitus are solutions devised by cultural traditions to attempt, in vain, to fill the hole of the sexual with meaning: the meaning of reproduction, of love, of the projection of the family and the species in the future, of the Child. Yet even the emergence and the social recognition of homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, non-binary, genderfluid, genderqueer identities and intersex bodies and subjectivities are attempts to give form to the sexual. So too, above all, for civil partnerships and same-sex marriage. In short, lesbians and gays have not proved to be very original in pursuing their social inclusion, their entry into civilization, through the acquisition of the right to marriage, which we call civil rights.

Personally, I have been struck by the fact that in Italy, in May 2020, during the first relaxation of the lockdown measures that were imposed following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, gay and lesbian partners involved in a civil union were rightly considered to be “joint” (*congiunto*), one of those people that would be allowed to meet when you could not go

out to meet anyone else.²¹ In the 1980s and the early 1990s during the outbreak of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, when there was neither PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) nor PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis), nor even anti-retroviral drug therapies, things went quite differently. I remember it well because these were the years when I became sexually active: AIDS had made literal the threat that anal penetration between men represents in the imaginary of hetero men.²² Gay men became living symbols (living for how long?) of death itself. In the period that it took to pass from one pandemic to another,²³ from the early 1980s to 2020, beyond advances made in medicine—like antiretroviral therapies, PEP, and PrEP—civil rights have undoubtedly freed gay men from the stigma of being plague-bearers. What a strange fate for gay men (for me), in less than forty years, to go from representatives of the anal sexual, of the disorder of the relational, to representatives of love and of the conjugal order. Yet is integration into heterosexual society as good hubbies, even as good surrogacy daddies for little ones, really the same thing as being integrated as gay? What elements, experiences, and traumas of homosexual existence still remain unrepresentable today, and even more unrepresentable when faced with a model of the good life that would want all gays as good hubbies and good daddies? Do gay fathers have an anus?

In any case it, is a fact that where civil rights are gained, sexual minorities find themselves reckoning with the phantoms of the sexual in a new way, which positions them in front of unprecedented alternatives. Today it is possible, even in Italy, to see gay and lesbian couples put themselves on display to defend the secularism of the state from the anti-gender campaigns of orthodox, protestant, and Catholic churches; but also to defend the borders of the nation from migrants who are considered to be bearers of cultures that are both backward, sexist, and homolesbobitran-span-negative as well as sexually disordered (the myth of the black rapist that Fanon analyzes,²⁴ and that of the sexually available black woman denounced by Angela Davis,²⁵ remain relevant today)—perhaps they too are against the professors who corrupt their children with queer theories at university. Today it is possible, even in Italy, to hear socially integrated, college-educated, professionally fulfilled, trans women ask for the closure of borders to trans sex workers from abroad. The stigma of the sexual is always there, under the fascism of the Baby's face, just as it was in the time of old Freud. But we, always that “we” in scare quotes, delude ourselves that we can get away with an easy passing of the obscene baton.

A final and definitive example to understand the scandal that the sexual continues to perform today, both for society and for the ego, is revenge porn, which in 2019 became a specific crime in Italy classified as “the illicit dissemination of images or video of sexual organs or with sexually explicit content that is intended to remain private without the consent of the persons represented.”²⁶ The legal definition rightly insists on the violation of consent. But in revenge porn the decisive issue does not seem to me to be the

violation of consent: if a video in which you are sucking on an ice-cream cone, or if a video of you sucking on something else, is disseminated without your consent, you would understand that this is not the same thing. Why is the circulation of images portraying us while we have sex so intolerable? So intolerable that, in Italy as elsewhere, there have been women who, following the circulation of such images, killed themselves? Because the sexual drive is a death drive, as Laplanche, Bersani, and Edelman—and in a certain sense also Freud—argue. Because today we find that the eruption of the sexual, every time, still leads to the symbolic suicide of the civilized self.

In short, *The Sexual/Political* can be read as an invitation that not only calls us to overcome repressive rhetoric and homo-lesbo-bi-trans-pan-negativity—this is too easy. It is also an invitation to momentarily suspend the sex-positive rhetoric that we have become so fond of today. And to take on all of the senseless weight of the negativity of the sexual, that we do so much to avoid, as constitutive of a common human experience. When this book was first published, the philosopher and psychoanalyst Anne Dufourmantelle, with whom it is in close dialogue beginning in the first chapter,²⁷ had already been gone for two years—since August 21, 2017—as the result of a benevolent and dramatic death: she was a theorist of risk who died attempting to save two children from the waves of the sea. On February 20, 2020, we also lost Leo Bersani, the queer theorist who, in insisting on the structurally masochistic character of the sexual, has influenced my reading of Freud and my writing throughout this text more than anyone else. To think the human with Dufourmantelle and Bersani, starting from the sexual and the anal, means to think the human as a receptive and penetrable body,²⁸ crossed through by air and food just as it is by the uncanny force of the drive that comes from its exterior, in an ecological relation with society and the environment, open to the other and to the world, requiring care, and therefore exposed to the harm of others, exposed to sickness and accidents; a body that is vulnerable—mortal. To think the human with the tools of psychoanalysis, and not only those of intersectionality which are more popular today, means to problematize the sovereign subject of the western tradition through the subject of the unconscious, which is a relational, transindividual, subject; not at all a master over themselves. It means to privilege disidentification over identity, as the grafting point of a type of thinking that is critical, doubtful, not hetero-determined by pre-established positions, nor overdetermined by simplistic logics of deployment. It means to reflect on the possibility of activating, beginning with the recognition of a common ontological masochism, a radical ethical posture of recognition of the primacy of the other over the self.²⁹

To think the sexual starting from the anal, as I propose in this book, means to recognize that the sexual excites us greatly and disturbs us greatly—disgusts us greatly; that the sexual is filthy and that it affects all of us;³⁰ that all of us are, also, filthy. To accept this simple fact can be the trigger to a political ethics of tolerance: to understand that the abjection

present in me and in the other does not make the other, just as it does not make me, an abject being. I realize that tolerance may seem to be a modest invitation. LGBTQIA+ activists of the newer generations could be outraged by so little. But we live in dark times: times of crisis, times of upheavals and migrations, times of war, times in which poverty increases, and with it the resentment that nourishes right-wing populism, times of tragedy in which it is all but too easy to find an enemy on whom to project the negativity that we harbor in ourselves. And then, come to think of it, in dark times like these, to the far-sighted eyes of the middle-aged gay professor that I am, tolerance does not appear to be modest at all.

In memory of Anne Dufourmantelle and Leo Bersani.
Castiglioncello, July 2022

Notes

- 1 See, for instance, Judith Butler and Frédéric Worms, *The Livable and the Unlivable* (New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming 2023), Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), and Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004).
- 2 For the last few years in Italy, different proposals have been put forward to introduce a word ending that is neither male nor female [trans.—it should be noted here that, in Italian, all endings to nouns and adjectives correspond to either the masculine or the feminine grammatical gender], which may be used in the singular for non-binary subjects, and in the plural, in place of the over-reaching masculine plural ending (i.e. “i”) to indicate groups made up of people of different genders [trans.—in Italian the masculine plural ending always overrides the feminine when there is a male-identified person in the group, even if there is only one male-identified person in a group made up of many more female-identified people]. Toward this end the symbols “@” or “*,” which do not have any specific verbal pronunciation, have been added to the feminine “a” ending (the plural of which is “e”) and the masculine “o” ending (the plural of which is “i”). Additionally, in both written and spoken Italian, the vowel “u,” which has no gender associations in Italian, has been added. Though these proposals have remained for the most part limited to the LGBTQIA+ community and the spheres of social movements, where they are used provocatively with pride and irony, the most recent proposal to use the middle central vowel of the international phonetic alphabet, the schwa “ə,” made headlines in the general public opinion and became the subject of media debate, creating strong opposition in the network and provoking negative reactions from linguists and intellectuals, even on the left. On the one hand, today there are those who take up the flag of inclusive politics, on the other, there are those who take this move as the symbol of a presumed dictatorship of the politically correct. See the online petition: “Lo schwa (ə)? No, grazie. Pro lingua nostra”: <https://www.change.org/p/lo-schwa-%C9%99-no-grazie-pro-lingua-nostra>, and above all: Vera Gheno, *Chiamami così: Normalità, diversità e tutte le parole nel mezzo* (Trento: il Margine, 2022).
- 3 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SE 7. Unless otherwise noted all citations of Freud come from James Strachey's English standard edition following the citation style here. The references section of each chapter and final bibliography include the full standard edition citation followed by the cited individual pieces.

12 Introduction to the English Edition

- 4 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21.
- 5 Jacques Lacan, “Milano, 12 maggio: Du discours psychanalytique,” in *Lacan in Italia / Lacan en Italie* (Milano: La Salamandra, 1978).
- 6 Massimo Recalcati, *The Telemachus Complex: Parents and Children after the Decline of the Father*, trans. Alice Kilgarrieff (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019).
- 7 It is no coincidence that this first protest by what today we would call Italian LGBTQIA+ movements turned against the medical-psychiatric institution and not against the state institution. Unlike what happened elsewhere, in Italy, there were no laws against sodomy which these groups would have asked to be repealed. When the Kingdom of Italy was established in 1861, it initially assumed the pre-existing penal code of the Kingdom of Sardinia, which did punish non-procreative sexual acts. However, the southern territories of the former Kingdom of the Two Sicilies were exempt from this rule, due to the deep-seated racist prejudice according to which the southern populations had an irretrievably licentious character and would have been unable to follow it. This legal anomaly was remedied in 1890, when sodomy ceased to be considered a crime throughout the national territory. Not even Fascist Italy legally punished non-heterosexual acts. During Mussolini’s twenty-year reign, however, non-cis-heterosexual people were subjected to the administrative procedure of confinement, which was also imposed on trans people for many years throughout the postwar period.
- 8 For more on this, see note 28 in Chapter 5.
- 9 See Paul B. Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture and Biopolitics* (New York: Zone Books, 2014), Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013), Paul B. Preciado, *Can the Monster Speak? Report to an Academy of Psychoanalysts*, trans. Frank Wynne (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2021).
- 10 The political life of the Italian Republic has always been characterized by great instability, and the eighteenth legislature—began in March 2018—is no exception. In August 2019, the Lega abandoned the Conte government, but the prime minister received a second mandate, also supported by the center-left, and remained in office until February 2021, when the wide-ranging government led by Draghi was established, which relied on the entire arc of parliament, and therefore also the Lega, with the exception of the Fratelli d’Italia (Brothers of Italy) party on the right and the small Sinistra italiana (Italian Left) party on the left. The Draghi government then ended in July of 2022: the Lega also withdrew its support from it, and new elections were called.
- 11 The video, which was posted to several websites, can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMad7nLO3OM&ab_channel=CorrieredellaSera.
- 12 On this point, see Paolo Berizzi’s study, *È gradita la camicia nera. Verona, la città laboratorio dell’estrema destra tra l’Italia e l’Europa* (Milano: Rizzoli, 2021).
- 13 Following this event, Forza Nuova, in the person of its leaders Roberto Fiore and Giuliano Castellino, was found responsible in the trial regarding the devastation of the national headquarters of the main left-wing trade union CGIL (Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro—Italian General Confederation of Labor), which took place on October 9, 2021, on the occasion of the demonstration against the containment of pandemic measures. The act had a particular symbolic value because in 1921 Mussolini’s rise to power was preceded by assaults on trade unions.
- 14 Il centro PoliTeSse—Center for Politics and Theories of Sexuality (<https://sites.dsu.univr.it/politesse/>).
- 15 I speak more about these episodes in the prefaces to the English translations of my books, *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*, trans. Julia Heim

- (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) and *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*, trans. Michela Baldo and Elena Basile (London, New York: Routledge, 2020). To protest the cancellation of the conference, a group was promptly organized under the rectorate to defend it, and many associations from all over Italy and university research centers disseminated statements. In the end, the French daily *Libération* and the Italian daily *Il Manifesto* each published an open letter signed by more than one-hundred and fifty internationally acclaimed academics in just a few days—including Etienne Balibar, Judith Butler, Lee Edelman, Christine Delphy, Éric Fassin, David M. Halperin, Paul B. Preciado, Chiara Saraceno, and Joan W. Scott.
- 16 Umberto Eco, “Ur-Fascism,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>. Umberto Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno* (Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2017).
 - 17 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Dive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 75.
 - 18 Jean Laplanche, *Freud and the Sexual: 2000–2006*, ed. John Fletcher, trans. John Fletcher, Jonathan House, Nicholas Ray (New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011).
 - 19 To put the conference in dialogue with the general title for the International Exposition *Unknown Unknowns: An Introduction to Mysteries*, the complete title that I had proposed was *Sessuale: Impossibile introduzione a un mistero nell’umano* (Sexual: An Impossible Introduction to a Mystery of the Human). I then reformulated it as *Il buco nero: Impossibile introduzione a un mistero nell’umano* (The Black Hole: An Impossible Introduction to a Mystery of the Human / <https://triennale.org/eventi/sconosciuto-sconosciuti>), masking it as a title for an astrophysics conference, even if the black hole that I spoke about was, clearly, the anus. During the conference, I talked about the censorship; the Triennale seemed to appreciate the irony—I am not sure if the same could be said about the sponsor.
 - 20 Jacques Lacan, “Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses,” in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: WW Norton, 1993).
 - 21 The Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers (DPCM) announced on April 26, 2020, established for the first time a gradual relaxing of the restrictive measures introduces on March 11, 2020, valid through May 4, 2020. The ability to visit “joint” people was added to the already established reasons—work, health, strict necessity—for moving around outside of one’s home. For other reflections on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Italian political philosophy, see my chapter “Out of the Choir: Bodies Inclined on the Playboy,” in *Rethinking Life: Italian Philosophy in Precarious Times*, ed. Silvia Benso (Albany: SUNY Press, 2022), 53–70.
 - 22 Here I borrow this thesis from Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” in *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).
 - 23 We would do well to remember that the AIDS epidemic is not over: if today it is possible in wealthy countries to control HIV infections with antiretroviral therapies and to even protect oneself preventively with Pre-exposure Prophylaxis, or successively with Post-Exposure Prophylaxis, access to these pharmaceuticals remains a privilege of the few on the African continent, where folks continue to die of AIDS like flies.
 - 24 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
 - 25 Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983).

14 Introduction to the English Edition

- 26 “Modifiche al codice penale, al codice di procedura penale e altre disposizioni in materia di tutela delle vittime di violenza domestica e di genere,” Legge 19 luglio 2019 n. 69, articolo 10, *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/07/25/19G00076/sg>.
- 27 In particular with the thesis that Dufourmantelle advances in *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007).
- 28 Leo Bersani, *Receptive Bodies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
- 29 In this sense even Emmanuel Lévinas, writes Judith Butler, could be read as an “elevated masochist” because of his limitless ethics of responsibility that privileges the other over the self. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, 140.
- 30 Even asexual folks because asexuality does not necessarily exclude masturbation.

Bibliography

- Berizzi, Paolo. *È gradita la camicia nera. Verona, la città laboratorio dell'estrema destra tra l'Italia e l'Europa*. Milano: Rizzoli, 2021.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. “Out of the Choir: Bodies Inclined on the Playboy” In *Rethinking Life: Italian Philosophy in Precarious Times*. Edited by Silvia Benso. Albany: SUNY Press, 2022. 53–70.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*. Translated by Michela Baldo and Elena Basile. London-New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*. Translated by Julia Heim. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Bersani, Leo. *Receptive Bodies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Bersani, Leo. “Is the Rectum a Grave?” In *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. Edited by Leo Bersani. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010. 3–30.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Butler, Judith, and Frédéric Worms. *The Livable and the Unlivable*. New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming 2023.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- Dufourmantelle, Anne. *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
- Eco, Umberto. *Il Fascismo eterno*. Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2017.
- Eco, Umberto. “Ur-Fascism,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Dive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana. “Modifiche al codice penale, al codice di procedura penale e altre disposizioni in materia di tutela delle vittime di violenza domestica e di genere.” Legge 19 luglio 2019 n. 69, articolo 10, *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/07/25/19G00076/sg>.
- Ghenò, Vera. *Chiamami così: Normalità, diversità e tutte le parole nel mezzo*. Trento: il Margine, 2022.

- Lacan, Jacques. "Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses." In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, and translated by Russell Grigg. New York: WW Norton, 1993. 3–15.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Milano, 12 maggio: Du discours psychanalytique." In *Lacan in Italia / Lacan en Italie*. Edited by Giacomo Contri. Milano: La Salamandra, 1978. 27–52.
- Laplanche, Jean. *Freud and the Sexual: 2000–2006*. Edited by John Fletcher, and translated by John Fletcher, Jonathan House, Nicholas Ray. New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Can the Monster Speak? Report to an Academy of Psychoanalysts*. Translated by Frank Wynne. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2021.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics*. New York: Zone Books, 2014.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013.
- Recalcati, Massimo. *The Telemachus Complex: Parents and Children after the Decline of the Father*. Translated by Alice Kilgarriff. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.

Prologue

Merde alors!

Did I ever tell you about the man who taught his asshole to talk? His whole abdomen would move up and down you dig farting out the words. It was unlike anything I ever heard. [...] This man worked for a carnival you dig, and to start with it was like a novelty ventriloquist act. Real funny too, at first. [...] After a while the ass started talking on its own. He would go in without anything prepared and his ass would ad-lib and toss the gags back at him every time. Then it developed sort of teeth-like raspy incurving hooks and started eating. He thought this was cute at first and built an act around it, but the asshole would eat its way through his pants and start talking on the street, shouting out it wanted equal rights. It would get drunk, too, and have crying jags nobody loved it and it wanted to be kissed same as any other mouth. Finally it talked all the time day and night, you could hear him for blocks screaming at it to shut up, and beating it with his fist, and sticking candles up it, but nothing did any good and the asshole said to him: “It’s you who will shut up in the end. Not me. Because we don’t need you around here any more.”

—William S. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*

Swearing

Loosely translated it means “what the fuck” or “holy shit.” Here “it” is the expression of disagreement, “merde alors,” which Jean Asselborn, minister of foreign affairs of Luxembourg, spoke to Matteo Salvini, minister of the interior and deputy prime minister of Italy. The setting was the European meeting on immigration held in Vienna on September 14, 2018. The meeting was held behind closed doors and Asselborn was not aware of being recorded with a mobile phone. As soon as the video, uploaded on the web, went viral, he accused Salvini of deploying “the methods of the Fascists from the thirties.”¹ About three weeks earlier, the Italian politician and philosopher Massimo Cacciari also lost his patience with Salvini when the Italian government, represented by Salvini in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, had decided to close Italy’s ports to rescue ships for migrants: “In the current situation, whoever is not ashamed and outraged,” Cacciari stated in a television interview, “is a piece of shit.”² More than a mere coincidence, these two inelegant statements made by members of the democratic and liberal

European intelligentsia like Asselborn and Cacciari are symptoms of an embittered situation. In a world where Trump, Putin, and Bolsonaro are in power, and sovereigntist parties such as Orbán's Fidesz party in Hungary and Salvini's Lega party in Italy are on the rise, those who still hold onto (or those who still delude themselves into holding onto?) the humanitarian vocation of Europe find some relief from their perceived powerlessness through the act of swearing.

If we focus on the content of Asselborn's linguistic act, and not just on its form, and if we put it in contact with the subsequent charge of fascism that he addressed to Salvini, we can try to push the interpretation a bit further. The utterance was not a generic curse, but an excremental one—one that momentarily conflated the two orifices used for nutrition and for defecation, both of which are also fundamental erogenous zones. If we were to play a game of free association, we might say that Asselborn got so irritated by Salvini at the Vienna meeting that he ended up spewing shit out of his mouth. Or, to borrow a cinematic image, we might say that Asselborn turned into a talking anus, like the one depicted by David Cronenberg³ in the shape of a bug in his adaption of William Burrough's groundbreaking work of beat literature *Naked Lunch*.⁴ One might also recall another film, Pier Paolo Pasolini's allegory of fascism in *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*.⁵ In particular, the final scene of the film's second infernal "circle," "The Circle of Shit." As Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit write in their aptly titled article, "Merde alors,"⁶ the scene featuring the banquet of feces is a "revealing moment" that discloses key dynamics in the brutal sexual dictatorship conceived by the Marquis de Sade under Louis XIV's kingdom in France and transposed by Pasolini to Italy under Mussolini's Italian Social Republic (the military regime imposed by Mussolini on Northern Italian Territories when they were occupied by the German army, from September 1943 to April 1945). Despite using one of the most common slurs in the French language, Asselborn's statement perhaps represents a "revealing moment" as well: it connects Fascism and Leghism with a specific kind of sadism in which anal enjoyment (or jouissance) represents the taboo, the repressed, but also an obscene secret. This "revelation" might even confer a new meaning onto the hashtag that has been used against the leader of the Lega: #salvinimerda (#shitsalvini).

As soon as he took office in the Ministry of the Interior in May 2018, Salvini announced that he would carry out a census of Roma people in Italy—an ethnicity-based census that, fortunately, Italy's antifascist constitution forbids. He expressed his regret that he could not deprive Italian Roma of their citizenship: "Unfortunately, you must keep Italian Roma here at home," he said. His use of the adverb "unfortunately" here, though, should not mislead us: living in a home haunted by unwanted presences is a necessary part of his political project. This is confirmed by the pivotal "security decree" passed in October 2018⁷ and, according to polls, was well-received by Italian citizens. The intended goal of the decree, like that of the

impossible Roma census, is the expulsion of so-called illegal migrants based on a “zero-tolerance” disciplinary logic. Given the extreme difficulty of practicing forced repatriations, however, the actual logic behind the decree is that of the double-bind:⁸ it has been estimated that the number of “illegal migrants” will increase by around three hundred thousand in the next three years.⁹ On the contrary, the number of disembarkations had decreased during the previous center-left government, which funded the Libyan police forces that imprison migrants in camps where, as was denounced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,¹⁰ extortions, beatings, tortures, and rapes happen regularly. “Out of sight, out of mind” was the refrain of the previous interior minister, Marco Minniti. The strategy of his successor, Salvini, is instead to keep people’s sights and minds well-focused on a social emergency that does not exist. In fact, he needs the presence of *subjects who have to be expelled but are not really expellable* in Italian territory in order to direct Italian people’s sadism onto these subjects. This is why he makes proclamations against Roma people, closes ports, approves a security decree that produces insecurity, and so forth.

At the Vienna meeting, in order to underscore the foreignness of the African migrants to Italians’ “civilized” lifestyle, Salvini characterized the former in terms that are unacceptable for our liberal consciousness; that is, in terms of slavery instead of paid work. These are the words that outraged Asselborn:

I heard some colleagues say that we need migrants because the European population is aging. My opinion is different. I think I have been placed in government and am paid in order to help our youth have as many children as they used to have some years ago. I am not here to eradicate *the best of African youth* in order to replace the European youth who cannot afford to have children. This might be the need in Luxembourg, but in Italy we need to help our children to have other children, and not to have new *slaves* to supplant the children we no longer have.

Naturally, Salvini avoids mentioning that the reason migrants do not have access to regular jobs resides in the Italian legal system (and the European one as well, with all due respect to Asselborn and Cacciari). Salvini has done everything he can to make this system stricter and more contradictory. Aside from this omission, what is most striking in his reasoning is his slippage from demography to the realm of work. For him, the possibility of a mixed-race European population is unacceptable to such an extent that the role he imagines for African migrants in an aging Europe cannot be that of new European citizens who make children, but rather that of slaves who work in the service of European citizens, with no citizenship and no rights. Such a discursive slippage clarifies the euphemistic and hypocritical nature of Salvini’s initial phrasing: “the best of African youth.” Yet what he really

meant to say is: “the African slaves, the African scum who in no way shall mix with Europeans.”

Asselborn’s reply, in contrast, was exemplary on the level of argumentative logic. He reminded Salvini that Italians have been migrants themselves (actually, they continue to be migrants nowadays, and extensively so¹¹). Migrants, not slaves, who guaranteed their families survival with their remittances: “In Luxembourg, dear Sir, we had thousands of Italians who came to work, migrants who allowed you in Italy to have money for your children.” Then, clashing with the clear argumentative logic of these words, the slur erupted: “Merde alors!” This did not clinch the argument but threw it into an abyss of signification: into the black hole of jouissance, which Cronenberg represents as a bug, to which Sade and Pasolini dedicate a banquet—the black hole that it is now time to enter. *Merde alors*: hold your nose.

Slaves and Children

Salvini’s reference to generational succession and reproduction in his intervention in Vienna was no accident; nor was his reference to slavery. Together with contradiction and euphemism, the double bind and the double entendre are typical tropes in his current rhetoric. At the beginning of his political career, his messages were mainly rage-filled, aggressive, and vulgar. Umberto Bossi—Salvini’s mentor, founder of the Lega party, and advocate for the secession of Northern Italy, the imaginary “Padania,” from the rest of the country—used to say: “Us men of the Lega Nord have a hard-on.” Salvini reused Bossi’s chauvinistic manners to taunt Southern Italians. At the annual gathering of the party in Pontida¹² in June 2009, for instance, he sang: “Something stinks, even the dogs are running: it’s Neapolitans coming ... Shit Naples, Choleric Naples, you make all of Italy feel ashamed.”¹³ And again, in October 2012, he stated that only the North of Italy deserved to belong to Europe, whereas the South “cannot afford the Euro and should have a different currency.” In the past six years, water has been flowing under the bridge: Salvini turned the Lega Nord (the Norther League) into, simply, the Lega (the League). In 2018, he was even elected with votes from Southern Italians and already when the first budget law passed together with the support of the Lega’s ally in government, the Five-Star Movement, he risked incurring a violation from the European Commission against the whole of Italy. Above all, during this time, Salvini replaced the Neapolitans with other polemical targets; and at the same time, he learned that polemic alone is not enough. For the sake of votes, it is perhaps more convenient to appear as victims rather than as perpetrators.¹⁴

His current rhetoric is a successful mix of fear and rage, reassurance and hope, and he conveys these ambivalent feelings through euphemisms, coded messages, and contradictory arguments. Additionally, Salvini abandoned the guise of the independentist agitator and started wearing more humble clothes: during public speeches and interviews or in the many videos he posts

on social media—wearing sweatshirts and undershirts, and even displaying his chubby bare chest—he talks “like a dad.” This is Salvini’s new political mask: the big boy, once naughty, has now settled down and started a family. As a dad, he is now worried about the future of his children. A quintessential example of his new rhetoric is the programmatic speech that he delivered in July 2018 at the thirty-second annual gathering of the Lega in Pontida, the slogan of which was “good sense in government.”¹⁵

Following Ernesto Laclau,¹⁶ Chantal Mouffe,¹⁷ and Pierre Rosanvallon,¹⁸ we can define populism as a variant of democracy in which the feeling of belonging to the political community is expressed in negative terms of rejection rather than in positive terms of adhesion. What characterizes the argumentative structure of populism is not a specific ideology, but the opposition between a people and an elite—with the latter accused of ignoring the needs of the former. The populist character of Salvini’s “goodsensical” government clearly emerges in the speech that he delivered in Pontida. Here the elite is portrayed as a cultivated, liberal, leftist, and pro-European cabal. It certainly includes Asselborn and Cacciari, the “snobbish” and “radical chic” intellectuals living in their “attics,” sitting on comfortable “armchairs,” together with journalists filled with “envy” (in Italian slang, “rosiconi”), who dare to show worry at the Lega’s success.¹⁹ While the “people” is neither a specific social group nor a class, it does not include the less affluent or the less cultivated, nor does it correspond solely to the workers (the bond between the Lega and the entrepreneurs from the Italian North remains steadfast). It is neither a conglomerate of corporations nor the result of a rational pact between individuals. In Salvini’s rhetoric, “the people” is first and foremost “a collection of family units” made of “self-absorbed couples with their kids,” as in Valerie Solanas’s depiction of patriarchal society in the *SCUM Manifesto*.²⁰ In a sense, Salvini’s “people” does constitute a family of sorts:

This is not a party gathering, this is not a rally. This is a Sunday family meeting, a day of communion and community. [...] Each of you is my brother and my sister. The children of each of you are my children.

As in the most traditional families, the father and husband speaks on behalf of his children and wife: he takes for granted that they agree with him. Yet Salvini’s tone is not authoritarian or imperious, but sentimental and altruistic. Although he claims fatherhood toward everyone, he does not portray himself as a patriarch, as a father of the fathers and mothers in the audience, but as a father *among* fathers and mothers, who he addresses as brothers and sisters, almost like a deacon celebrating a religious ritual. His sermon opens with a tribute to Gianluca Bonanno, a Leghist member of the European Parliament who died in a car accident, and to “all our friends who,” like him, “passed away.” Salvini then descends from the stage to hug Bonanno’s mother, and the two of them kiss the “tree of life” that Bossi

planted years ago in memory of dead Leghist militants. His sermon ends with the leader holding a rosary:²¹ “I always carry it with me: an exploited woman made it,” he explains, and then adds, “that woman could very well be Nigerian or Italian.”²² In this way, Salvini portrays himself as a pious and merciful father who does not forget the dead nor the neediest, including the Nigerians, especially when they are women to be saved from sex trafficking.²³

Or rather, I should correct myself: he does not portray himself strictly as a “father.” As I noted before, Salvini portrays himself more as a “dad.” He does not address a people made of mothers and fathers, but one made of moms and dads, that is, a people comprising parents looked at from the perspective of children demanding attention, containment, and protection. In this way, Salvini activates a generational short circuit, becoming dad and child at once: he is both reassuring and endearing; he offers protection while asking for it.²⁴ His tone is firm, balanced, virile—a master class in style compared to Asselborn’s and Cacciari’s irritation—but the most ferocious contents of his political program are conveyed in a tender and even corny manner: “to forget *all compassion* for murderers and rapists,” to equip police with electric tasers, to close ports to ships aiding migrants. All such measures are equivalent to “working towards a better, cheerful, and smiling Italy.” Each argument takes a repressive, punitive shape; and yet Salvini no longer takes up the role of the irresponsible macho man, nor the role of the authoritarian father. Instead, he steps into the role of the good-hearted dad. Oftentimes he states that he is not motivated by revenge, anger, or hate, but by love: “I see love here,” he says of the Lega rally, “I see no envy, no jealousy.”²⁵ He then quotes Catholic poet Davide Rondoni and explains that “love is the task of the fearless.”²⁶

In this way, the feeling of love, understood less in terms of an excessive and exceptional burning passion than in its more ordinary sense, paints the electoral slogan of the Lega in pink: “Italians first.”²⁷ By arguing that lovers are fearless, Salvini evidently means that there is something to fear, or rather, someone: someone who is necessarily excluded from the Italian people gathered under the loving embrace of the Lega.²⁸ What is frightening is not the elite, the clique of pro-European intellectuals and journalists, but other subjects who are supposedly protected and championed by these elites. Salvini takes a detour in his speech, but he eventually reaches the conclusion that everyone in the audience is expecting from him. What is frightening is “that filth called the Mafia, the Camorra, and the Ndrangheta.” “Filth” that is “filthy,” he says, redundantly, while promising that, with “courage,” he will “eradicate them from our country.”²⁹ This “filth” is immediately connected to other “filth”: for criminal organizations like the Mafia and the Camorra, he announces, “the party is over,” just as it is over for the “smugglers of human beings.”³⁰ The latter expression recurs in Salvini’s communication: it is the slogan used to justify the closure of ports to rescue ships, with which his audience is well-acquainted, just as they know that the ultimate referents of “filth” are not Mafia-aligned smugglers but their

22 Prologue

shiploads of suffering human beings. “Filth” is the last link in the metonymic chain fashioned by Salvini. He means that “the party is over for migrants”: *they* are frightening and filthy; *they* are the *enemies* of the people, protected by the pro-European elites.

The tone is literally bellicose. Salvini does not forget to commemorate the anniversary of the end of the First World War: “Our grandfathers and their own grandfathers,” he proclaims, died to defend the borders of the Italian nation.³¹ It is thus time to get back to defending these borders—with courage, pride, and of course with love:

Here we have people who love, people who got their pride back ... I would not be able to look at myself in the mirror if I were not using the twenty-four hours a day that God provides me to defend the history of this country. And I can tell you that right now, for the third time in one month, there is a ship filled with *slaves* which is not docking in Italy but is going elsewhere. Elsewhere! (emphasis added)

Here the argument that Salvini summarizes in the Vienna meeting is fully developed. Not women and men, but families made of women and men, of moms and dads, must gather under the love of the Lega’s people, blessed by its God and its martyrs—a people which is itself a family. Together, they can find the courage to defend their children from those who threaten them, who are both fearsome and “filthy”: not only the snobbish elitists and Mafia-aligned criminals and smugglers but also the slaves carried on their boats (sexual slaves and trafficked women included?). Slavery: not a euphemism in this case, but a dysphemism that designates, in Pontida as well as in Vienna, African migrants with their black skin, made into the representatives of all migrants.

The Wrong Hole

We can thus consider Salvini’s performance in Vienna as a reprise of his antimigrant rhetoric, but only partially. Unlike the short speech in Vienna, the longer one in Pontida assembles other enemies supposedly protected by European elites alongside migrants, who are described through both cultural and pop cultural references. They too are filthy, as filthy as Neapolitans used to be. But they are not Roma. Their entrance is “sponsored” by Coca-Cola, the drink that epitomizes US imperialism, which Salvini contrasts with Italian olive oil. Even more curiously, as a way into this new argument, Salvini points to the work of philosopher Simone Weil:

Simone Weil used to say that duties come before rights: this is something those who have been living in Italy for a long time now, and especially those who will come tomorrow, have to keep in mind ...*And speaking of immigration*: Simone Weil herself, who definitely can’t be charged with

populism, sovereignty, Fascism, racism, Nazism, or Martianism, as we usually are, wrote that everything that uproots human beings or prevents them from putting down roots is a criminal act. This is what Brussels, Berlin, and Paris have been trying to do in recent years. Uprooting us. Erasing women and men in order to have their numbers and consumers. At the service of multinational corporations such as Coca-Cola, which sponsor *pride parades* in our cities to conquer new consumers. Someone then comes to tell us that Coca-Cola is healthier than Italian olive oil. They should drink it if they like it so much! I prefer olive oil. I prefer the products of my sea and my land. (emphasis added)

Obviously olive oil cannot be consumed in the same way as a sparkling beverage, but as should be clear by now, the coherence of arguments is not one of Salvini's priorities. On the contrary, his interventions include subtexts that only small circles of his supporters can understand. His tendentious reference to *The Need for Roots* by Weil,³² a philosopher of Jewish origin who converted to Christianity and certainly cannot be charged with Fascism or Nazism, as Salvini points out, becomes fully legible only when it is read alongside two other passages in the speech. After recalling Bonanno in his opening, Salvini celebrates the electoral success of the Lega by offering an aphorism: "If you can dream it, you can do it." The alleged author of this motto is Walt Disney, the visionary father of animated feature films whose past, despite his wholesome image, is rather ambiguous: controversies around Disney's anti-semitism and his alleged sympathy for National Socialism are still ongoing.³³ At the end of the speech, in an effort to reaffirm that the scope of the new Lega extends beyond Northern Italy, Salvini names the flags being waved in the audience: he acknowledges the Venetian flag with the lion of Saint Mark, many regional flags of Italy, that of Putin's Russia and even—this is key—that of the State of Israel.³⁴ Along with this earlier reference to Weil, these references to Judaism and anti-Semitism (at the beginning, middle, and end of his speech) are neither casual nor really meant to address accusations of his alignment with neo-Fascist and neo-Nazi movements. The contradictory figures of the converted philosopher, the state of Israel, and the film producer suspected of anti-Semitism come together in the service of what is in fact a non-contradictory message. Salvini pushes aside a tragic page of history by enacting a stupid, if tacit, reconciliation between fascism and anti-fascism, between racism and human rights, making all parties stand on the same level. After all, the deceased deputy Bonanno, who Salvini mourns in his speech, before being a member of Movimento Sociale Italiano (afterward renamed Alleanza Nazionale), a far-right party founded by former members of the Fascist party who were nostalgic for Fascism. Of course, this is not common knowledge; nor does everyone know who Weil is or about the shadow of anti-Semitism cast on Disney's past. Yet the intended recipients of these encrypted messages can easily decipher them. Salvini is saying, in effect, "Times have changed, and new alliances are

needed, so that the pagan tree of life planted by Bossi can be invoked together with the Catholic and the Jewish God against a common threat.” This threat later becomes explicit when another trope of Salvini’s emerges, one shared by other leaders of contemporary far-right forces all over the world.

In 2018, the Leghist leader has an extensive social media following: about 3.3 million people on Facebook, 1 million on Instagram, and 935,000 on Twitter. Helped by his spin-doctor Luca Morisi and a sizable communications team—“la Bestia” (the Beast), as they call it, he remains frenetically active on social media. He publishes around four hundred posts per month.³⁵ Lately, the language in his posts has become milder, although he does not censor his followers in any way, and they continuously leave violent and vulgar comments. From time to time, the constant flow of Salvini’s posts decrying migrants, journalists, and the European Union is interrupted by pictures of cute animals, mainly kittens. Salvini’s wall gets pet-washed.³⁶ Animals appear twice in his Pontida speech as well. On the first of these two occasions, Salvini pairs imagery of animals with imagery showing the children who are fond of them: both are used as symbols of vulnerability and innocence and are deployed to justify his securitarianism. He argues that people who mistreat and abandon animals, as well as those who rape children, should be “harshly punished,” rather than rehabilitated.³⁷ On the second occasion when animals appear with children in the speech, defying logic as usual, Salvini manages to conflate animal rights and pro-hunting positions, while simultaneously providing a point of entry for the interpretation of his references to Fascism and Judaism: “Leftists pester hunters in defense of the environment and animals, and tolerate the monstrosity of Islamic slaughtering, which makes animals suffer.” Salvini is saying that it is not the time to pick on Southern Italians and Jewish people any longer; instead we should target African migrants—or, in his words “slaves”—and especially the Muslims who make animals, the objects of our children’s love, suffer.

But the enemies named in Pontida are not just migrants, as I have noted. In addition to Muslims, Salvini’s references to Weil’s “roots” and to her conversion are meant to identify another enemy that the Lega shares with Catholic fundamentalists and other far-right movements, another menace from whom children need to be protected (we should not forget that he always speaks from the position of being a dad): “speaking of immigration,” he says when citing Weil. But he then immediately moves onto a different topic: this enemy, he explains, is allied with the European culture of rights and US imperialism, organizes “pride parades,” and relates to Coca-Cola in the same way we—those of us who are women and men instead of sexless consumers—relate to genuine olive oil. Once again Salvini can afford to be reticent: he can avoid naming his target, because the audience knows perfectly well who the addressees of his disgust are. They are the objects of a disgust that is once again encoded in the word “filth.” Salvini continues:

Not numbers: men and women, with their rights. We are not here to strip rights from anyone ... Everyone in his own bedroom does what he likes, with whom he likes, *and where he likes*. But as long as I can voice my dissent and blood runs through my veins, I will always defend the right of the voiceless, the right of babies to have a mom and a dad, the right of women not to be wombs for rent. The mere thought of a womb for rent is *filthy* to me, of the woman as an object, of babies being sold in malls. This is not progress: this is the end of civilization.³⁸

Wombs for rent: this is a derogatory way to name surrogacy—a practice that is illegal in Italy, but that, for Italians with enough money, can be arranged abroad. This practice is mainly deployed by heterosexual couples, but Salvini's disgust is not provoked by them. Instead, he targets those who celebrate their pride sponsored by the American beverage. These are gay men, depicted here as traders of children and exploiters of women. In this way, women appear in the Pontida speech not only in the traditional roles of mothers and prostitutes but also in the form of victimized surrogates: simpletons with no agency and in need of leader-dad's protection.

U.S. capitalism undermining the Christian roots of Europe, the commodification of children, the erasure of sexual difference, the replacement of women and men with neutral subjects: these themes clearly reference the campaign against so-called gender ideology, a campaign (or better, crusade) that started in the mid-1990s and that brings together members of the Catholic hierarchy, anti-abortion associations, and far-right movements from all over the world. They all fight against rights for women and sexual minorities, as well as against anti-discriminatory and sexual education in schools.³⁹ The Italian Parliament approved legislation for same-sex civil unions only in May 2016; and it did so in a highly discriminatory way that does not recognize same-sex couples as families and defines civil unions as “specific social formations.”⁴⁰ Assisted reproductive treatments are not permitted; nor is adoption allowed in any form—not even when the partner has a child from a previous relationship. This level of discrimination, however, is clearly not enough for Salvini.⁴¹ In January 2018, during his electoral campaign, he participated in a conference titled “Oltre l'inverno demografico” (“Beyond the Demographic Winter”), organized by the committee called Difendiamo i nostri figli (Let's Defend Our Children) and the Associazione Family Day (Family Day Association). Here, the center-right coalition, to which the Lega used to belong, committed itself to “abolishing or profoundly changing” the law allowing for civil unions, because it “offends the family” and leads “to the end of the human.”⁴² After becoming an institutional figure, in Pontida, Salvini tones down his rhetoric and declares that he does not “mean to strip rights from anyone.” At the same time, however, he does not hold back from showing his disgust for surrogacy, which becomes the symbol of the new forms of kinship that are at last starting to be recognized in Italy after decades of advocacy by lesbian and

gay movements. The underlying logic is once again that of the double bind, the same logic that also informs Salvini's security decree and his announcement about the Roma census: "goodsensical" government needs same-sex couples as yet another scapegoat.

"The mere thought of a womb for rent is filthy to me," daddy says, without caring about the effect that such a statement might have on Italian children who were born through surrogacy. But if we listen attentively, it becomes clear that what is "filthy" for Salvini is neither the womb hosting the artificially fertilized egg nor the vagina through which the egg is implanted. The filthy orifice is of a different kind. "Everyone in their own bedroom does what he likes, with whom he likes, and *where he likes*," he says with no small amount of hypocrisy; but from his hypocrisy, a Freudian slip emerges. In fact, if the sexual scene were to unfold in the bedroom then what does he mean by "where he likes" here? Does he mean that people in their bedrooms do what they like on their beds, on their floors, in their closets, hanging on their chandeliers? "Where he likes" was not planned in the speech, for it does not appear on the text published online (which is why I call it a Freudian slip).⁴³ More than the setting, this locution refers to the part of the body involved in the non-reproductive act of penetration that Salvini imagines between the two men who buy babies: not the vagina, but the anus. In bed, "everyone does what he likes, where he likes," he says. But the message that Salvini is conveying is: "The mere thought of men having sex in the wrong hole is filthy for me." The "merde alors" that came out of Asselborn's mouth in his denunciation of Salvini's racism is thus also well-suited to denounce his homophobia. And more generally—as Asselborn himself suggested after the Vienna meeting—to denounce his Fascist methods.

Il Capitano's Buttcheeks

In October 2018, a few months after the start of the coalition government that brought together the Five-Star Movement and the Lega, Michela Murgia published a provocative pamphlet titled *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti* ("Instructions on How to Become Fascists"), which sparked a widespread debate. Murgia's argument is that fascism should be considered "a method" with the "extraordinary capacity to contaminate everything."⁴⁴ Many intellectuals—including some on the left, even among those most reviled by Salvini—have polemically engaged with Murgia, arguing that Fascism is instead a particular historical regime, and that history does not repeat itself. In their opinion, drawing a parallel between the new Italian populism and Fascism is a form of trivialization that sets off false alarms. On the contrary, however, several celebrated intellectuals have throughout the 20th century shown that fascism as a category can be used meta-historically to name an anti-democratic, illiberal, and discriminatory function of the political that can recur after historical Fascism, taking on neo-Fascist configurations. In the 1940s, for instance, the Frankfurt School under the

direction of Theodor Adorno started a research project on the psychology of fascism.⁴⁵ In a similar way, in his preface to the 1977 English edition of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, Michel Foucault suggested that we consider fascism and anti-fascism as two opposing ways of life.⁴⁶ And finally, in a well-known lecture in 1995, Umberto Eco warned against what he called "eternal Fascism" or "Ur-Fascism," that is, a constellation of political "archetypes" that have always been present in modernity.⁴⁷ Many of these archetypes reemerge in Salvini's Pontida speech, though in a concealed and softened form: the syncretic cult of tradition, the celebration of blood and soil, the rejection of critique and disagreement, the diffidence toward intellectuals and cultivated people, the appeal to a frustrated middle-class, and the understanding of the people as a "monolithic entity expressing one common will."⁴⁸ And finally, "the fear of difference":⁴⁹ racism, sexist chauvinism, homophobia.⁵⁰ But in the Pontida speech, there is even more than this. Those capable of reading between the lines can detect references to the historical experience of Fascism, sympathetic winks at those who are nostalgic for it, and a call for consensus within neo-Fascist circles. It is no coincidence that neo-Fascist movements have acquired more visibility and acceptance in Italy since the Lega has come to power. A few weeks after the annual rally of the Lega, Salvini replied to some journalists' critiques with a Fascist motto: "The more enemies, the bigger the honor." The tweet was posted on July 29th, the anniversary of Mussolini's birth, and it was accompanied by a winking emoji sending a heart-shaped kiss.

There is no doubt that on an aesthetic level, Salvini's leadership is far from Mussolini's. First of all, he is not supported by the disciplinary logic of propaganda but by the neoliberal logic of marketing. Unlike "Il Duce," "Il Capitano"—or "The Captain" as Salvini is called by his supporters—does not embody normative ideal behaviors; he does not have an exceptional personality to which he invites people to conform. On the contrary, he shapes his own personality around the statistical norms of his followers. The look and the lifestyle he often exhibits on social media are very distant from Mussolini's in-your-face psychotic masculinity—patriarchal, authoritarian, libertine—which made the average Italian man of the first half of the 20th-century dream and feel inadequate at the same time. Salvini is also far from both the moral austerity of the founding fathers of postwar Italy and from the vulgar displays of wealth and young women around which Silvio Berlusconi built his success.⁵¹ A forty-five-year-old divorcé with two children (a boy and a girl), recently dumped by TV presenter Elisa Isoardi on Instagram⁵² to be immediately re-coupled with the twenty-six-year-old Francesca Verdini, Salvini settles for the antiheroic and anti-erotic (but not totally anti-erotic: it depends on one's tastes and desires) role of the "dad." He looks like a neighbor anyone might have, who proudly brings children to play soccer or volleyball, who rushes to the shopping center to buy groceries after work, and who can finally relax on the weekend by having a beer in the cafeteria next door. He is no role model: he is a man like any other, a man

among men, and like many other men today, he tries to show his masculinity in the ways he is able: by reverting to a patriarchal imaginary from the past, an imaginary of which, however, he manages only to be a caricature. All these features make him likeable to some and deadly to others. Because the liturgy of the dad-like Matteo might as well be the faded copy of the Fascist trinity “God, Fatherland, and Family,”⁵³ the charge of hate that nourishes this ritual, even if it is disguised as love, remains unchanged. I am aware that the cinematic images from *Salò* and *Naked Lunch* that I alluded to at the beginning of this prologue when referring to Asselborn’s outburst might seem gratuitous and repugnant. But they are meant to evoke on an affective level the powerful psycho-political archetype summoned by Salvini when he utters the word “filth.” In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler calls this “abjection,” describing it as a double movement of expulsion and repulsion through which others “become shit.”⁵⁴

The banquet of feces in *Salò* and the talking anus-bug in *Naked Lunch* are metaphors for the kind of phobic and sadistic aversion that male homosexuality traditionally arouses in men. Freud provided a classic description of this homophobic aversion, a description that is well-suited to Salvini’s rhetoric of abjection and fatherhood. In his narrative of sexual development ranging from the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* to *Civilization and Its Discontents*⁵⁵—in which the protagonist is always the white heterosexual cisgender man—civilization forces subjects, beginning at an early age, to perceive the anus and its products as object of disgust.⁵⁶ Once the child becomes an adult, the anus and its products turn into symbols for everything that must be expunged from the social. For Freud, the taboo of anal enjoyment is, in short, the premise for sociality. But it also serves the pivotal function of establishing the primacy of genital reproductive sexuality over all other forms of sexuality: thanks to this taboo, if nothing goes wrong (veers queer), over time the son will take the place of the father in the Oedipal succession of generations. The libidinal energy of the repressed anal drive will instead feed both the paranoid fear of being subjected to that drive and the sadistic enjoyment of persecuting those who have been singled out as its disgusting representatives: gay men, as Pasolini and Burroughs point out. Yet not just gay men. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, for instance, Frantz Fanon goes back to Freud’s theorization to show that the phobic aversion to black men also has psychosexual origins. In his analysis, racism is ultimately a synecdoche for the fantasy projected onto the colonies of a primeval, unbridled, and violent sexuality barred from white civilization. In this way, the Black man is transfigured into a huge phallus, which arouses revulsion and fear, but also envy—and attraction. In Fanon’s view, behind the phantom of the Black rapist there lies the desire to be penetrated, even “ripped open”⁵⁷ by that monstrous phallus: an unconscious desire that the racist woman shares with her man—a masochist desire, then, as well as a homosexual one. In short: the huge, erect phallus of the black man is a mask for the contracted

anus of the white man, the primary source of abjection both in the metropole and in the colonies.

I do not intend to take these fascinating theories literally, but I cannot help but notice that they strongly resonate with Salvini's conflation of gay men and African men, with the collapse between "immigration" and "pride parades," that he stages after referring to Weil. In Lee Edelman's words from his article "White Skin, Dark Meat,"⁵⁸ "the repression of anal pleasure within the regime of the [Oedipal] Western symbolic"⁵⁹ "entangles ... anti-black racism and homophobia in complex relation to each other"⁶⁰ and "gives rise to the phallus, as a sort of carrot, and to disgust, as a sort of stick."⁶¹

The shift in the Lega's rhetoric from Bossi's "hard-on" to Salvini's "good sense" should therefore not mislead us. Though delivered in the flaccid language of an endearing paternalism, the Pontida speech remains fully located in the symbolic to which Edelman refers, one that it shares with far-right Italian movements nostalgic for historical Fascism, whose main "ideological glues" nowadays are the Catholic crusade against the rights of women and sexual minorities, and the nationalist campaign against "Muslim and African invaders." In fact, according to Laclau, Mouffe, and Rosanvallon, the populist polemic against the elites is not tied to a specific ideology; nevertheless, it always needs these "ideological glues." Whereas *Il Capitano* expresses his populism as a protest against a pro-European clique of intellectuals, the rhetoric of abjection that Salvini mobilizes against homosexuals, migrants, and Roma people communicates an extremely dangerous ideology. In this respect, Edelman is quite instructive when in *No Future*, where he discusses the political use of childhood as "the empty placeholder of [social] totalization,"⁶² he calls such a political tactic "the fascism of the Baby's face."⁶³ By means of this argumentative apparatus, a "Fascist archetype," as Eco might say, the Child endows those who take up the task of protecting future generations with a salvific role—and sends deeply into abjection, into shit, those who are made to represent an unlivable life, one that does not deserve any future because it corrupts younger generations.

In "Captain-Daddy's" view, the threat comes not only from migrants and homosexuals but also from their offspring—children who are not considered worthy of contributing to the repopulation of the country he claims to care for so much, and who thus stand in contradiction with those children who are born from "moms and dads" of pure Italian blood. The child-to-be-defended is therefore not a child but the sign of a future that has yet to be identical to the present. The son repeatedly evoked by Salvini is one who will take his place one day in the generational chain. Any other possibility is as "filthy" as the choleraic Neapolitans that he once did not hesitate to call, literally, shits. Huge Coca-Cola cans tearing children from their mothers' wombs, slave invaders whose reproduction is barely imaginable, and unnamable children who should never be born: apocalyptic figures of the end of civilization and humanity, like Cronenberg's talking-anus bugs or Pasolini's

coprophagist libertines. It is thus as if Asselborn, turning into a talking asshole himself, had mirrored the Italian Deputy Prime Minister, thereby identifying, provisionally, with him. It is Salvini's fantasy to embody a people exclusively made up of white, straight, fertile families. It is his fantasy to embody the will of this people, its sentiments, and also its sphincter, deriving enjoyment from its evacuation of excrement and even more from its retention of it. Double bind, double enjoyment.

In contemporary history, Italy has repeatedly emerged as a successful laboratory for political experiments. After the First World War, Mussolini invented Fascism there before it quickly spread across Europe. In the 1990s, Berlusconi anticipated Trump's entrepreneurial populism. If Salvini will become, as he says, the presidential candidate for the sovereign front in the European Commission, then there is a risk that Italy will once again perform the role of a political avant-garde: that it will export to Europe a populism of a new kind, one that is nonetheless continuous with disquieting features of the worst of the past. History does not repeat itself, to be sure, but a neo-fascist daddy is marching on Brussels: with clenched butt cheeks.

The Stick and the Carrot

What I think Edelman does not stress enough in "White Skin, Dark Meat," is that in the fascist politics of abjection the knot binding racism and homophobia can be disentangled in a variety of ways. In the 1950s, the redemption of the Black phallus, working as a "carrot," justified, for Fanon, the use of disgust as a "stick" against—or inside—the anus of white homosexuals. Conversely, the right to marriage today can be the "carrot" to convince same-sex couples to participate in the kind of familial love Salvini celebrates, thereby (deceitfully?) unloading the "stick" of disgust, which homosexuals have carried for a long time, onto the shoulders of migrants. This is already happening in the US, Northern Europe, France, and Germany, where political leaders such as Marine Le Pen and Alice Weidel (who came out as lesbian) manage to recruit gays and lesbians into the ranks of the far right, by presenting the latter as the stronghold against homophobic violence allegedly perpetrated by Muslim invaders. There is also a risk—and the fact that Salvini uses it instrumentally means we should not refrain from mentioning it—that in their attempt to fulfill the reproductive functions of heterosexual families male homosexual couples may contribute to new forms of exploitation of women's bodies. Solanas sensed this in her metonymic delirium, when she shot Andy Warhol and his partner Mario Amaya, as if hitting them was enough to deal a mortal blow to the conglomerate of family units that is patriarchal society.

For the time being, Salvini's soft paternalism prevents Italy, where same-sex unions are a recent phenomenon, from fully realizing this "homonationalist" process.⁶⁴ Yet, in writing this prologue,⁶⁵ I do not wish to reiterate Italian backwardness, as much as I want to highlight the structural

element of what—with Éric Fassin—we can call not only the “populist moment” but also the “neo-fascist moment” of contemporary neo-liberalism.⁶⁶ The co-opting of same-sex couples’ right to marriage within the rhetoric of some sovereigntist right movements who are functionally opposed to immigration, above-all Islamic immigration, is in fact subtended by the same double bind that Salvini expresses when he claims “to not want to take anyone’s rights away.” Achieving juridical recognition as respectable productive (and eventually reproductive) citizens of the liberal state as good wives and good husbands (and eventually good mothers and good fathers)—in other words, as *subjects of marriage and of the family*—does not guarantee protection from the disgust that affects all sexual subjects. The increase in episodes of homophobic aggression in Italy after the approval of the civil union law⁶⁷ is just as much proof of this as is the explosion of “anti-gender” crusades in the 1990s as a backlash to the entry of marriage rights for same-sex couples into the agenda of international politics.

One of the possible differences between populism and democracy is that the former—of which the familialist rhetoric of Salvini is a prime example—is directed toward a people, or *demos*, already given, distinguished by its opposition to the elite that governs and/or to the enemies that threaten it; while the latter (when it is not meant in the reductive sense as a sovereign-representative regime), as Jacques Rancière and Miguel Abensour teach us, is a process in which the people is always on its way, always to be made through the gaining of citizenship of those who have no citizenship.⁶⁸ My hope as a queer academic and a gay man is that lesbian and gay citizens and their allies are able to activate democratic antidotes and to reject the carrot of a poisoned exclusionary integration; that they are able to detect the fascist archetypes present in the Lega, identified by Murgia in her short pamphlet; that they are able to take up the difficult, yet not obvious, challenge of finding alliances between the LGBTQIA+ movements, feminist movements, anti-racist movements, and fully democratic citizens in order to resist the politics of abjection that remains, even when it is enacted by a neoliberal populism. This book, however, does not have any programmatic intent aimed at the construction of such an alliance. Instead, it is limited to developing themes already present in the preceding pages—to reflect on the psychopolitical processes that feed the hate toward both sexualized subjects and racialized subjects. It therefore also does not contain any sort of project for the reconstruction of the left, nor theories of citizenship, democracy, or inclusion: its analysis instead deals with the exclusion of the sexual from the political and on the sexual implications of the political bond that is brought about through this exclusion. If this work predominantly draws on a theoretical archive produced by male authors, as the subtitle suggests, it is because my intent is to *deconstruct*—sometimes, as we will see, also ironically—the chauvinist, heterosexist, cisgenderist, and endosexualist hegemony which is reaffirming itself together with the hegemony of sovereign populism against the achievements of feminism and the LGBTQIA+ movements.

This book's narrative emanates from the bitter reflections developed by a Freud faced with the ascent of Fascism and Nazism in the 1920s, which is the topic of the second and third chapters. These reflections are brought out first, however, through the background of a long sexophobic philosophical tradition, which I reconstruct in the first chapter.⁶⁹ The other three chapters analyze the Fanon's examination of the racist psychology of colonialism from the 1950s. These chapters do this in a somewhat tortured chronological fashion: they touch on the thought of the sexual revolution—from the 1930s writing of Wilhelm Reich, to the 1950s writing of Herbert Marcuse, to the 1970s writing of Luciano Parinetto, Guy Hocquenghem, and above all Mario Mieli—in which Freud is read together with Marx, and then on the queer theories of the 1990s and early 2000s—including work by the already cited Bersani, Edelman, Butler, and Teresa de Lauretis—which have an essential reference point in Michel Foucault's polemic against "Freudo-Marxism" of the 1970s.⁷⁰ Contemporary events will return again in the epilogue,⁷¹ where the argument will be picked up from where I left off; that is, from the contemporary Italy of civil unions and closed borders. The conclusions, as you will have already understood (but bears repeating), will have nothing to do with the normative, nor aimed toward peace-making. Instead, their register is in line with a realistic critical theory tradition which does not lack a sense of the tragic. I do not intend to look for remedies for the exclusion of the sexual from the political, nor do I think myself capable of it, nor do I think such a solution would be desirable to me. What I can do, and which already seems enough to me, is to invite us to recognize this exclusion as a moment from which democratic contestation can perpetually revitalize itself—to invite us to accept negativity as the condition of the exercise of freedom.⁷²

For the entire book, beginning to end, the privileged site of the destitution of the sovereign and sovereigntist, masculine and chauvinist subject will be, it goes without saying, the anus—once more: the anus. This is meant as a symbol and symptom of the irredeemable dark side of sexuality: that black hole of subjectification, which has for a long time been foreclosed by both politics and theory, which Freud teaches us to call the "drive."

Brighton and Verona, January and March 2019

Postscript: Reality Cinema

I argue above that the meal of human feces and the talking-anus bug are "metaphors for the kind of phobic and sadistic aversion that male homosexuality traditionally arouses in men." Now I must unpack this statement; I will do this quickly.

Picture the ending scene of *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*: after staging a metonymic chain where male homosexuality, anal pleasure, and coprophagy

suggest the overturning of masculinity, Pasolini gives the last word to two soldiers of the (Fascist) Italian Social Republic. While the four libertines who represent the powers of the Fascist regime—the Duke, the Bishop, the President of the Court of Appeals, and the President of the Central Bank—are brutally torturing their young working-class and partisan prisoners, the two soldiers, who are also young, fantasize about the girls waiting for them once the orgy of violence is over. Then they start a clumsy waltz between the two of them. One can therefore conclude, as Bersani and Dutiot seem to,⁷³ that the enjoyment staged in Pasolini’s film adaption of Sade’s text points first and foremost to the repression of homosexuality, which is crucial for the construction of sublimated homosocial bonds in historical Fascism.⁷⁴

Not only in historical Fascism though. In 1976, Italian police confiscated *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*, and the film’s producer, Alberto Grimaldi, was charged with obscenity and corruption of minors. Pasolini did not have the time to be prosecuted because he was murdered by the seventeen-year-old prostitute Pino Pelosi before the film was released. Fourteen years earlier, in Boston, Burrough’s novel *Naked Lunch* was also withdrawn from circulation, accused of obscenity for its descriptions of homicidal orgies with minors involved. When Cronenberg turned *Naked Lunch* into a movie, thirty years later, he made the talking-anus bugs stand for the paranoid super-ego of the protagonist, William Lee. Lee accidentally kills his girlfriend, just as Burroughs did, in a silly attempt to emulate William Tell. But his sense of guilt, whose symptom is an obsession with being fought over by the secret intelligence services of competing powers, does not originate from this accident, or from his drug addiction: instead, it is rooted in homosexuality. This is what turns Lee, Burroughs’s doppelgänger, into an outlaw and a traitor who cannot be incorporated into the organizations that seek to control his mind.

The censorship that befell these two different yet similar works, in the 1960s in the US and the 1970s in Italy, to some extent proved that Burroughs and Pasolini were right. And so is Edelman. The repression and sublimation of anal enjoyment are Fascist archetypes, and the Child of the heterosexual couple, the Baby, the Minor, is the worst enemy of those who are made into the apocalyptic representatives of that antisocial enjoyment. In this case, it is reality that becomes a raw metaphor for theory: Solanas shoots Warhol and Amaya, Burroughs kills his betrothed Joan Vollmer, and his book is censored because of the infanticides and pedophilia that it describes, just as Pasolini’s film is censored for its corruption of minors. Finally, Pasolini is murdered by an underage hustler in the worst of settling disputes.

Notes

- 1 Markus Becker, “EU-Minister offenbar heimlich von Kollegen gefilmt: Der Salvini-Eklat—eine Falle?” *Spiegel Online*, September 15, 2018. URL: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/matteo-salvini-filmte-offenbar-heimlich-jean-asselborn-war-es-eine-falle-a-1228295.html>.

- 2 Cacciari's outburst occurred during a live broadcast of the Italian TV program *In Onda*, on channel La7. The video is viewable here: <https://www.la7.it/in-onda/video/nave-diciotti-cacciari-mi-vergogno-chi-non-si-indigna-%C3%A8-un-pezzo-di-ma-23-08-2018-248631>.
- 3 David Cronenberg, dir., *Naked Lunch* (Eagle Pictures, 1991).
- 4 William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*, ed. James Grauerholz and Barry Miles (New York: Grove Press, 2001).
- 5 Pier Paolo Pasolini, dir., *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (United Artists Corporation, 1975).
- 6 Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, "Merde alors," *October*, no. 13 (1980): 22–35.
- 7 Eventually approved by the Parliament in November 2018.
- 8 See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972). The double bind is established by a schizophrenic communication, in which contradictory messages are conveyed at the same time. Also see Mara Selvini Palazzoli, Luigi Boscolo, Gianfranco Cecchin, Giuliana Prata, *Paradosso e contrapadosso* (Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2003).
- 9 According to ISPI (*Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale*, or the Institute of International Political Studies, www.ispionline.it), the number of "illegal migrants" in Italy will increase from 490,000 in December 2017 to 622,000 in 2020. See Fabio Tonacci, "La stretta sui permessi che in due anni produrrà centomila irregolari," *La Repubblica*, 28 November 2018.
- 10 The declaration, of the High Commissioner Zeid Raad al-Hussein, is from November 2017.
- 11 In the *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2018*, published by the Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, the number of Italians living abroad in 2017 (more than 5,114,000) almost equals the number of foreigners living in Italy (5,144,000). While the Italian population living abroad has increased by 141,000 in one year, the number of Italians living on Italian soil has decreased by 203,000 in the same period, in spite of 147,000 foreign residents who managed to obtain Italian citizenship in 2017 (without them, Italy would have lost 350,000 citizens in one year).
- 12 Pontida is a small town in the province of Bergamo, Lombardy. On April 7, 1167, an oath was set there that constituted the Lombard Lega: a military union of independent cities in the Po Valley aimed at countering the restoration of Frederick Barbarossa's imperial power in the region. In 1990, one year after founding the Lega Nord through the merging of separatist movements that already existed, Umberto Bossi chose Pontida as the site for the celebration of the annual gathering of his party.
- 13 In September 2010, in an interview with *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, Salvini restates that the Neapolitans are "light years away" from the "cultural setting, lifestyle, and mentality of the North." See Angelo Alfonso Centrone, "Salvini: Radio Padania anche in Puglia. A Napoli? Mai: siamo troppo diversi," *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, 20 September, 2010.
- 14 See Daniele Giglioli, *Critica della vittima* (Milano: Nottetempo, 2014).
- 15 The quotations that follow are taken from Salvini's speech in Pontida, which can be listened to and viewed through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1WDIlo0cmQ>. My interpretation of Salvini's rhetoric is partly indebted to Christian Raimo's piece, "Come smontare la retorica di Matteo Salvini," published on the site of the magazine *Internazionale* on July 3, 2018: <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/christian-raimo/2018/07/03/salvini-pontida>.
- 16 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2007).
- 17 Chantal Mouffe, *For a Left Populism* (London: Verso, 2018).

- 18 Pierre Rosanvallon, “Penser le populisme,” *La vie des idées* (2011): <https://lavedesidees.fr/Penser-le-populisme.html>. For a more recent collection of Rosanvallon’s reflections on populism in English, see his *The Populist Century: History, Theory, Critique*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021).
- 19 Salvini enters the stage while tenor Matteo Tiraboschi sings the aria “Nessun dorma (Vincerò) from Puccini’s *Turandot*.” The presenter, deputy and former “*ultra*” of the Atalanta soccer team, Daniele Belotti, introduces Salvini on stage by yelling loudly: “Thanks Captain! Thanks Pontida! Here is our federal Secretary and Minister of the Interior. The whole world is watching us today, so let Macron, Merkel, Sánchez, Saviano, and all those who offend the Lega while sitting in their snobbish armchairs hear that people are supportive of their minister. His leadership is steady, determined, proud, and it has made people rise up. He is now being attacked, and we are defending him. Let the people in New York’s attics hear that people here are with their minister. Matteo! Scream it louder! Let your voice be heard in Paris! Matteo! Matteo!” During his speech, Salvini himself addresses some left-wing Italian journalist sarcastically: “Kisses to Gad Lerner. Long may he live and work. To him, to Eugenio Scalfari, Michele Santoro, Fabio Fazio, and all the doomsayers filled with envy: may your life be long: kisses.”
- 20 “Our society is not a community, but merely a collection of isolated family units. Desperately insecure, fearing his woman will leave him if she is exposed to other men or to anything remotely resembling life, the male seeks to isolate her from other men and from what little civilization there is, so he moves her out to the suburbs, a collection of self-absorbed couples and their kids.” Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2004), 48.
- 21 Salvini showed a rosary both at the end of his electoral campaign (when he wielded it alongside a Bible) and at his swearing-in ceremony as minister.
- 22 Additionally, Salvini says that no matter the nationality of this woman, she ought to be granted the right “to see her children being born in her country, without being uprooted and sent to the other side of the world.” Then he concludes, “Everyone’s happy in their own country.”
- 23 The principle of exceptionalism is also present in the “security decree,” in which residence permits based on humanitarian protection (established by the 1998 decree Testo Unico sull’Immigrazione, or the Single Text on Immigration) are replaced by temporary residence permits given “in *special* circumstances” to people who need medical care for “*exceptionally* serious” health conditions, to victims of violence, in case of “*contingent* and *exceptional* calamity,” and for acts of “*particular* civil valor” (emphasis added).
- 24 I suspect that former judge and writer Gianfranco Carofiglio did not grasp the function of this generational short circuit when journalist Lilli Gruber interviewed him on November 21, 2018, in the context of the TV program *Otto e mezzo* (La7). Carofiglio commented on Salvini’s sarcastic statement delivered after the European Commission rejected Italy’s planned budget: “Did we get a letter from Brussels? Okay, so let’s now wait for Santa’s letter.” After reminding the minister that “Santa does not send letters: he receives them,” Carofiglio argued that this joke is an example of “violence against meaning in language” and the “disdain for the meaning of words and for the destiny of citizens in this country.” In the days that followed, many people on the web teased Salvini for his mistake and his belief in Santa Claus as an obsessive writer. But if we take a closer look, we see that, as a dad, Salvini finds himself in the position of those who usually read the letters that their children send to Santa. And as a child, he still has the right to believe in him.

- 25 When speaking of European populations, he says they should “get back to loving each other.”
- 26 Davide Rondoni, *La natura del bastardo* (Milano: Mondadori, 2017), 111. “Mi fanno male le nuvole nel petto / le finestre rotte degli occhi / il cuore che ha luce dura / di stazioni, viavai, / (lo sai lo sai) / amare è l’occupazione / di chi no ha paura.”
- 27 This slogan dominates the main stage right behind the speaker, together with the title of the rally, to which I have already referred: “Good sense in government.”
- 28 Later in a Pontida speech he says: “The country we are about to rule for thirty years is not afraid of anything or anyone.”
- 29 “Uproot from this wonderful country, and we will need courage, that filth is called the Mafia, the Camorra, and the Ndrangheta. That’s filthy for us.”
- 30 “In Pontida we are thereby announcing that the party is over both for smugglers of human beings and for Mafia and Camorra.”
- 31 “In 1918, the First World War ended: a war in which our grandfathers and great-grandfathers died to defend our borders. To honor their sacrifice, as people in government we have the duty to defend the borders and not to let the sacrifice of many boys who died for their families and fatherland be in vain.”
- 32 Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind*, trans. Arthur Wills (London: Routledge, 2001).
- 33 “We shall not put a limit to our dreams for, as Walt Disney said, ‘if you can dream it, you can do it.’”
- 34 “The flags I see on this lawn—that of Israel and of the Marche, that of Piedmont and of Russia, that of Venice with its lion and those with many other symbols connecting each and every one of us—are telling 60 million Italians (thought softly and humbly): get out of your houses, down from your coaches, out of the shops, tribunals and schools where you are. If people move, they win. Let’s get back our dignity, as well as our will to work, to win, to smile. Nothing is forbidden or impossible for people like you.” In other excerpts, Salvini highlights the presence of flags from Southern Italy as well.
- 35 See Fabio Tonacci, “Ma ora Salvini fa il testimonial? Marchi in visita sui social del ministro,” *La Repubblica*, 19 December, 2018. In particular, Salvini publishes many videos (like the one displaying a furious Asselborn) that provide the audience with the illusion of a direct relation with the self-reporting leader, who refuses any mediation by the journalists he reviles.
- 36 Tom Kington and Anthee Carassava, “Matteo Salvini Accused of Using Cat Pictures to Distract from Debt,” *The Times*, November 27, 2018.
- 37 “Prison should rehabilitate; but to rehabilitate someone who raped a little boy or girl is far from my understanding and way of life. We will work toward harsh punishments for those who mistreat animals, too. I say this at the beginning of the summer, that should no longer be the season of abandoned pets.”
- 38 The emphasis is mine. The passage concludes: “I ask our mayors and governors to re-center politics on families and kindergartens, to allow women to be mothers and workers at the same time. One cannot choose to either become a mom, which is the most beautiful challenge in the world, or to keep working.”
- 39 On this topic, see Roman Kuhar and David Paternotte, eds., *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing Against Equality* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018); Sara Garbagnoli and Massimo Prearo, *La crociata “anti-gender”*: *Dal Vaticano alle manif pour tous* (Torino: Kaplan, 2018).
- 40 “The current law establishes civil unions between same-sex people as specific social formations.” “Regolamentazione delle unioni civili tra persone dello stesso sesso e disciplina delle convivenze”: Legge 20 maggio, 2016, n. 76, art. 1, comma 1, *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2016/05/21/16G00082/sg>.

- 41 The audience in Pontida knows very well that two important representatives of anti-abortion and “anti-gender” movements have been elected in parliament as deputies of the Lega: Lorenzo Fontana, federal Vice-Secretary of the Lega and Minister for Family and Disability (who entered his public office stating that homosexual families do not exist), and Simone Pillon, author of a draft law to change divorce that would strongly undermine women’s rights.
- 42 Simone Alliva, “‘Aboliremo le unioni civili’: L’ultima minaccia del centrodestra,” *L’Espresso*, January 29, 2018: <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2018/01/29/news/aboliremo-le-unioni-civili-l-ultima-minaccia-del-centrodestra-1.317676>.
- 43 See: Redazione BergamoNews, “Matteo Salvini a Pontida, il discorso integrale dal palco del raduno leghista,” *Bergamo News*, July 1, 2018: <https://www.bergamonews.it/2018/07/01/matteo-salvini-pontida-discorso-integrale-dal-palco-del-raduno-leghista/285598/>.
- 44 Michela Murgia, *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti* (Torino: Einaudi, 2018).
- 45 Theodor W. Adorno, Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Stanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Verso, 2019).
- 46 Michel Foucault, “Preface,” in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Penguin, 2009), xi–xiv.
- 47 Umberto Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno* (Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2017). For the English translation of the title essay, see Umberto Eco, “Ur-Fascism,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>.
- 48 Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno*, 46.
- 49 Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno*, 39.
- 50 Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno*, 45; Murgia, *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti*, 41–46.
- 51 On the model of masculinity embodied by Berlusconi see, Lorenzo Bernini, “Not in my name: Il corpo osceno del tiranno e la catastrophe della virilità,” *Filosofia di Berlusconi: L’essere e il nulla nell’Italia del Cavaliere*, ed. Carlo Chiurco (Verona: Ombre corte, 2011).
- 52 The post is from November 5, 2018. A few months earlier, April 6, 2018, Isoardi had shared a series of photos on Facebook where she was ironing a man’s white dress shirt, obviously Salvini’s, with the text: “A Friday evening at the lions.”
- 53 See Murgia, *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti*, 41–46, in agreement with Eco, *Il Fascismo eterno*, 45.
- 54 “The repudiation of bodies for their sex, sexuality, and/or color is an ‘expulsion’ followed by a ‘repulsion’ that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation ... The boundary between the inner and the outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excretive function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity-differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Other become shit.” Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Gender and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 133–134. Butler is here commenting on Kristeva’s *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) as well as on Iris M. Young’s “Abjection and Oppression: Dynamics of Unconscious Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia,” in *Crises in Continental Philosophy*, eds. Arleen B. Dallery, P. Holley Roberts, and Charles E. Scott (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).
- 55 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SE 7, and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21.
- 56 Obviously, this should prove true for women as well. But women, for Freud, are constitutionally inclined to develop a “polymorphously perverse” sexuality, hence what he calls an “aptitude for prostitution.” See Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 191.

- 57 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 179.
- 58 Where he discusses, next to Freud and Fanon, the studies on racism carried out in the US by Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1968) and Joel Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).
- 59 Lee Edelman, “White Skin, Dark Meat: Identity’s Pressure Point,” *Identities* 8, no. 1 (2011): 101.
- 60 Edelman, “White Skin, Dark Meat,” 102.
- 61 Edelman, “White Skin, Dark Meat,” 101.
- 62 Lee Edelman, “Learning Nothing: Bad Education,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 1 (2017): 124.
- 63 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University, 2004), 75.
- 64 The concept of homonationalism, together with homonormativity, will be defined later in the epilogue.
- 65 I drafted this text for the conference “Fascism? Populism? Democracy? Critical Theory in a Global Context,” organized by the International Consortium of Critical Theory Programs and held between January 23 and 25 at the University of Brighton; it has also been published in a slightly revised translation in the journal *Critical Times* (issue number 3, 2020), with the title: “‘Merde Alors!’ A Neo-Fascist Daddy is Marching on Brussels.”
- 66 See Éric Fassin, “Il neliberismo in camicia nera,” *Il Manifesto*, July 11, 2019. See also Éric Fassin, “Genere minaccioso, genere minacciato,” *AG AboutGender* 8, no. 15 (2019): 414–434. DOI: 10.15167/2279-5057/AG2019.8.15.1116.
- 67 See the investigative report, “Caccia all’omo: Aggressioni. Minacce. Discriminazioni. In crescita impressionante nell’ultimo anno. Da nord a sud, dalle città alla provincia. Per gay, lesbiche e trans il clima è molto cambiato. In peggio,” *L’Espresso* February 7 and 10, 2019, with articles by Simone Alliva, Elena Testi, Natalia Aspesi, and Francesco Lepore; and the book Simone Alliva, *Caccia all’omo: Viaggio nel paese dell’omofobia* (Roma: Fandango, 2020).
- 68 See Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2004) and *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2014); Miguel Abensour, *Democracy Against the State: Marx and the Machiavellian Moment*, trans. Max Blechman and Martin Breaugh (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011). See also, Adriana Cavarero, *Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt’s Political Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).
- 69 The first chapter is a revised version of my article, “L’arrosto di maiale. Ovvero: del sesso e dei filosofi,” *I castelli di Yale online* anno III, n. 2 (2015): 25–41, which is itself a revision of an earlier conference paper at the international conference “Women’s Mind: Filosofia e scienza al femminile,” held at the University of Ferrara on November 14, 2014.
- 70 The first section of the fourth chapter and the second section of the sixth chapter are taken, in part, from my article, “The Foreclosure of the Drive: Queer Theories, Gender, Sex, and the Politics of Recognition,” *Soft Power: Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho* 4, no. 2 (July–December 2017): 65–77, which is a revised version of my paper at the international conference, “Critical Theory in the Humanities: Resonances with the Work of Judith Butler,” held from April 5th–7th 2017 at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam.
- 71 In “Epilogue” I discuss themes already present in my article, “Eterotopie quotidiane: Foucault tra critica e postcritica, le iene nella sauna e il sesso anonimo tra

- maschi,” *Politica e società* 2 (2018): 191–214, a revised version of a paper I presented at the international conference, “What’s New in Queer Studies?” (organized by CIRQUE—Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerca Queer / Inter-University Center of Queer Research at the University of Aquila between March 31st and April 2nd 2017), and published with the title “Gay Orgies Under the Big Top: Re-Sexualizing the Queer Debate,” *Whatever: A Transdisciplinary Journal of Queer Theories and Studies* 1 (2018): 93–103.
- 72 To avoid any misunderstanding, I want to clarify that I do not want to take an ontological stance, if not in the Foucauldian sense of an “ontology of the present.” More simply, mine is a “generational” position, consciously linked to what it is possible for me to understand about the relationship between the sexual and the political within the contingency of the historical period in which I happen to live. In this regard, see my article, “Anticapitalista, antirazzista, femminista, transfemminista, freak, e queer: L’(in)attualità del Gruppo di Liberazione Omosessuale,” in *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**, eds. Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegatta, Walter Pigino (Milano: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019), 155–157.
- 73 According to the two authors, the reason why “Sade’s men” prefer “to have sex with boys than with girls” is because “the most intense Sadean—and sadistic—sexuality depends on symmetry,” which allows a greater identification of the executioner with the victim. Bersani and Dutoit, “Merde Alors,” 22.
- 74 See Lorenzo Benadusi, *The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy*, trans. Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012). For the political use of childhood during the Fascist period see, Antonio Gibelli, *Il popolo bambino: Infanzia e nazione dalla Grande Guerra a Salò* (Torino: Einaudi, 2005).

References

- Abensour, Miguel. *Democracy against the State: Marx and the Machiavellian Moment*. Translated by Max Blechman and Martin Breugh. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.
- Adorno, Theodor W., Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Stanford. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Verso, 2019.
- Alliva, Simone. *Caccia all’omo: Viaggio nel paese dell’omofobia*. Roma: Fandango, 2020.
- Alliva, Simone. “‘Aboliremo le unioni civili’: L’ultima minaccia del centrodestra,” *L’Espresso*, January 29, 2018: <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2018/01/29/news/aboliremo-le-unioni-civili-l-ultima-minaccia-del-centrodestra-1.317676>.
- Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Becker, Markus. “EU-Minister offenbar heimlich von Kollegen gefilmt: Der Salvini-Eklat – eine Falle?” *Spiegel Online*, September 15, 2018. URL: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/matteo-salvini-filmt-offenbar-heimlich-jean-asselborn-war-es-eine-falle-a-1228295.html>.
- Benadusi, Lorenzo. *The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy*. Translated by Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. “‘Merde Alors!’ A Neo-Fascist Daddy is Marching on Brussels.” *Critical Times* 3, no. 3 (2020): 358–383. DOI: 10.1215/26410478-8662280.

- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Anticapitalista, antirazzista, femminista, transfemminista, freak, e queer: L'(in)attualità del Gruppo di Liberazione Omosessuale." In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegatta, Walter Pigino. Milano: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019. 155–157.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Eterotopie quotidiane: Foucault tra critica e postcritica, le iene nella sauna e il sesso anonimo tra maschi." *Politica e società* 2 (2018): 191–214.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Gay Orgies Under the Big Top: Re-Sexualizing the Queer Debate." *Whatever: A Transdisciplinary Journal of Queer Theories and Studies* 1 (2018): 93–103.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "The Foreclosure of the Drive: Queer Theories, Gender, Sex, and the Politics of Recognition." *Soft Power: Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho* 4, no. 2 (July–December 2017): 65–77.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "L'arrosto di maiale. Ovvero: del sesso e dei filosofi." *I castelli di Yale online* anno III, n. 2 (2015): 25–41.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Not in my name: Il corpo osceno del tiranno e la catastrophe della virilità." In *Filosofia di Berlusconi: L'essere e il nulla nell'Italia del Cavaliere*. edited by Carlo Chiurco. Verona: Ombre corte, 2011.
- Bersani, Leo, and Ulysse Dutoit. "Merde alors." *October* 43, no. 13 (1980): 22–35.
- Burroughs, William. *Naked Lunch*. edited by James Grauerholz and Barry Miles. New York: Grove Press, 2001.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Gender and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt's Political Thought*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.
- Centrone, Angelo Alfonso. "Salvini: Radio Padania anche in Puglia. A Napoli? Mai: siamo troppo diversi." *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, 20 September, 2010.
- Cossolo, Felix, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegatta, Walter Pigino, eds. *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. Milan: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019.
- Cronenberg, David. Director. *Naked Lunch*. Eagle Pictures, 1991.
- Eco, Umberto. *Il Fascismo eterno*. Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2017.
- Eco, Umberto. "Ur-Fascism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 22, 1995: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>.
- Edelman, Lee. "Learning Nothing: Bad Education." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 1 (2017): 124–173.
- Edelman, Lee. "White Skin, Dark Meat: Identity's Pressure Point." *Identities* 8, no. 1 (2011): 99–113.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University, 2004.
- Fassin, Éric. "Il neliberismo in camicia nera." *Il Manifesto*, July 11, 2019.
- Fassin, Éric. "Genere minaccioso, genere minacciato." *AG AboutGender* 8, no. 15 (2019): 414–434. DOI: 10.15167/2279-5057/AG2019.8.15.1116.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- Foucault, Michel. "Preface." In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, edited by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.

- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In *SE 21* (1930): 57-46.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In *SE 7* (1905): 123-246.
- Garbagnoli, Sara, and Massimo Prearo. *La crociata "anti-gender": Dal Vaticano alle manif pour tous*. Torino: Kaplan, 2018.
- Gibelli, Antonio. *Il popolo bambino: Infanzia e nazione dalla Grande Guerra a Salò*. Torino: Einaudi, 2005.
- Giglioli, Daniele. *Critica della vittima*. Milano: Nottetempo, 2014.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1968.
- Kington, Tom, and Anthee Carassava. "Matteo Salvini Accused of Using Cat Pictures to Distract from Debt." *The Times*, November 27, 2018.
- Kovel, Joel. *White Racism: A Psychobiography*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Kuhar, Roman, and David Paternotte, eds. *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing Against Equality*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.
- L'Espresso*. "Caccia all'omo: Aggressioni. Minacce. Discriminazioni. In crescita impressionante nell'ultimo anno. Da nord a sud, dalle città alla provincia. Per gay, lesbiche e trans il clima è molto cambiato. In peggio," *L'Espresso* February 7 and 10, 2019.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso, 2007.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *For a Left Populism*. London: Verso, 2018.
- Murgia, Michela. *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti*. Torino: Einaudi, 2018.
- Pasolini, Pier Paolo. Director. *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*. United Artists Corporation, 1975.
- Raimo, Christian. "Come smontare la retorica di Matteo Salvini." *Internazionale* on July 3, 2018: <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/christian-raimo/2018/07/03/salvini-pontida>.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Hatred of Democracy*. Translated by Steve Corcoran. New York: Verso, 2014.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Translated by Julie Rose. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2004.
- Rondoni, Davide. *La natura del bastardo*. Milano: Mondadori, 2017.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. *The Populist Century: History, Theory, Critique*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. "La stretta sui permessi che in due anni produrrà centomila irregolari." *La Repubblica*, 28 November 2018.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. "Penser le populisme." *La vie des idées* (2011): <https://laviedesidees.fr/Penser-le-populisme.html>.
- Salvini, Matteo. "Matteo Salvini a Pontida, il discorso integrale dal palco del raduno leghista." *Bergamo News*, July 1, 2018: <https://www.bergamonews.it/2018/07/01/matteo-salvini-pontida-discorso-integrale-dal-palco-del-raduno-leghista/285598/>.
- Selvini Palazzoli, Mara, Luigi Boscolo, Gianfranco Cecchin, Giuliana Prata. *Paradosso e contrapadosso*. Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2003.
- Solanas, Valerie. *SCUM Manifesto*. London: Verso, 2004.
- Tonacci, Fabio. "Ma ora Salvini fa il testimonial? Marchi in visita sui social del ministro." *La Repubblica*, 19 December 2018.

Weil, Simone. *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind*. Translated by Arthur Wills. London: Routledge, 2001.

Young, Iris M. "Abjection and Oppression: Dynamics of Unconscious Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia." In *Crises in Continental Philosophy*. Edited by Arleen B. Dallery, P. Holley Roberts, and Charles E. Scott. Albany: SUNY Press, 1990: 201–214.

Part I

Freud

All men are against nature from the first: the act of civilization, which is an act of human arrogance over nature, is an act against nature.

Giuseppe Ungaretti interviewed by Pier Paolo Pasolini in *Love Meetings*



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

1 The Pig Roast

If *jouissance* is one of those words that expresses the moment in which something is given to you that you can neither want nor subjugate, the moment in which a thing as evanescent, as sudden, and as changeable as a burn makes you forget everything else, the moment in which it appears to you without the shadow of a doubt that it is better to be alive than dead, then sex can reasonably believe, yes, that it accedes to the essence of every existent better than any philosophy.

Anne Dufourmantelle, *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy*

1.1 The Curse of the *Übermensch*

In the elegant and passionate prose of her book published in 2003, psychoanalyst Anne Dufourmantelle claims that for about three thousand years, the date held between philosophy and sex had gone blank.¹ In her view, it was, after all, a date that made the Italian idiomatic expression “appuntamento al buio”—equivalent to the English “blind date” but meaning “date in the dark”—literal. That is, in her view, philosophers were not capable of seeing the anthropological facts that have always curbed their attempts to edify the domination of reason over humanity. And, for its part, the sexed body would have hidden from view those who cultivated a discursive practice aimed at the care of the soul.² In the *Symposium*, the aging Socrates refuses the advances of the young Alcibiades, establishing that a pedagogical eros befitting the philosopher has nothing to do with sexual eros. The sun which, in the *Republic*, enlightens the philosopher who has left the cave, “source for all that is good and beautiful”³, uncorrupted and perfect, is certainly not the same sun that scalds imperfect human bodies in this corruptible world,⁴ bodies that are inclined toward passion and desire rather than remaining properly straight,⁵ and that sometimes are downright ugly. Since then, however, the water has passed under the bridge.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is usually credited with having introduced the reflection on the body into philosophy in the 20th century; yet the body that he thematizes is, mostly, desexualized. By now there has been a long tradition of feminist philosophy, of which Italy is not without its own well-known examples that focused on the “incarnated uniqueness”⁶ of humans, beginning

with their subdivision into male and female sexes. Another tradition has flourished alongside it—together with it and sometimes polemically against it—which, with regard to the human, has problematized not only sex but also gender and sexual orientation; not only being male or female, man or woman, but also being lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transexual, transgender, non-binary, intersexual, queer—or heterosexual.⁷ Without any pretense to being exhaustive, the second part of this book draws on some meaningful examples from lesbian-feminist, transfeminist, and queer philosophy to explore how the relation that intersects politics and sexuality might be thought. However innovative, these philosophical traditions do not arise out of nowhere. They rely on the history of earlier thought, of which they have often been interpreted as a radical critique, but sometimes also as a recuperation and development of those traditions. Even this history has to be, at least in summary, retraced. In this first chapter, I begin by proceeding backwards, to linger on two moments in the history of traditional European philosophy in which white, male, cis-gender, and heterosexual authors were still the only legitimate bearers of disembodied thought. What I want to demonstrate—in partial disagreement with Dufourmantelle—is that at least two modern philosophers, Kant and Hobbes, did not remain blind to the uncanny light of the sexual.⁸ On the contrary, they were dazzled by its disconcerting power, and feeling horror they did what they could in a useless effort to block out its dazzling light. But first a quick homage is due to Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud, of whom lesbian-feminist, transfeminist, and queer philosophies are heretical and degenerate heirs.

At the turn of the 19th century, the three titanic “masters of suspicion”⁹ struck a blow to Western consciousness with a hammer,¹⁰ knocking humanity back down to earth after millennia of being upside down,¹¹ definitively shattering the subject’s illusion of being able to be the master in their own house.¹² Since Marx political theory has resumed dealing with the materiality of human existence; after Freud reflection on the human can no longer be exempt from the sexual question. Both had prompted a redefinition of the theoretical foundations of what today we call philosophy, and both had influenced the way in which such philosophy later thought the relation between politics and sexuality. Both, especially Freud, will be given their due attention in the following chapters. For now, briefly, I will lend my attention to Nietzsche to demonstrate how his attempt to abandon the “aesthetic ideals” of the philosophers preceding him and to reconnect thought to nature, to bodies and the senses—as far as sex is concerned—has actually failed.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), Nietzsche makes Socrates, and above-all Schopenhauer, the champions of the aversion to life, which is necessary in philosophers who argue for a “will to nothingness” that is, in effect, *their* will.¹³ Starting with Schopenhauer, or better from himself, Nietzsche indicates how—with the exception of Socrates, who confirms the rule—philosophers, as “priests,”¹⁴ have led the lives of bachelors:

Thus the philosopher abhors *marriage*, together with that which might persuade to it—marriage being a hindrance and calamity on his path to the optimum. What great philosopher hitherto has been married? Heraclitus, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer—they were not; more, one cannot even *imagine* them married. A married philosopher belongs *in comedy*, that is my proposition—and as for that exception, Socrates—the malicious Socrates, it would seem, married *ironically*, just to demonstrate *this* proposition.¹⁵

Schopenhauer himself had already raised the topic of marriage with opposing intentions,¹⁶ a topic for which Nietzsche cared deeply: indeed, Nietzsche experienced *his* celibacy as a curse. He advanced various marriage proposals, among whom Lou Salomé is the most notable, and all were duly declined. The fact is that women did not like Nietzsche. With the hypothesis that his madness originated in syphilis having been refuted for some time even biographers today do not rule out the possibility that the philosopher of the *Übermensch*—who in his private life was a meek, inhibited, and clumsy man—may have died a virgin.¹⁷ It often happens, moreover, that by a curious *contrapasso*, philosophers write the opposite of what they are. Schopenhauer, on his part, did not, in fact, practice the sexual abstinence that he preached. He actually liked women quite a bit, although, like Nietzsche, he disparaged them:¹⁸ he had different lovers, always younger than him, and in the grip of passion, sometimes also thought of marriage.¹⁹ He remained a bachelor, however, often writing negatively of marriage.²⁰ Nietzsche also followed him in this respect.²¹

As Nietzsche reminds us, Kant was also a staunch bachelor. And with him—with them—we can also find the cowardly Hobbes.²² The two authors are situated at the antipodes of modern political philosophy: the latter a monarchic absolutist, the former a republican, the latter theorizes that the sovereigns are in a perennial state of war against themselves,²³ the former calls for states to cede their sovereignty to a worldwide confederation.²⁴ However, they share the same interpretive paradigm, which intellectual historians agree constitutes modern politics: both justify the power of the state through the theory of the contract. There is therefore a period of suspicion regarding sex in philosophy that follows from a prior foundational moment of suspicion: this prior moment requires our attention, and it will be the second stage of my backwards-oriented itinerary. The first date, as Dufourmantelle says, went blank: the impetuous Nietzsche makes numerous declarations against Schopenhauer, but he, in turn, prefers to pontificate against marriage, against women, against the sexophobia of philosophy more-so than philosophizing on sex itself. Kant and Hobbes, on the other hand, with their aplomb and *prouderie*, seem to have had the courage to look at sex for what it is: an ambivalent force that throws into question the sovereignty of the state and of the subject, that therefore threatens human civilization, but is nevertheless necessary for its perpetuation.

1.2 *Crimina Carnis Contra Naturam*

In the Supplements to the 1844 edition of *The World as Will and Representation*, the Schopenhauer of whom Nietzsche is so critical does distrust not only sex but also love; in fact, he interprets romantic feeling as sexual instinct in disguise and sexual instinct as a procreative instinct.²⁵ Every event of falling in love is, for him, the aim of a will that degrades the subject to be a mere instrument of the reproduction of life,²⁶ from which the subject must therefore try to extricate themselves. Schopenhauer's ascetic anti-romanticism is, however, a small thing in contrast to Kant's sexophobia. In his *Lectures on Ethics* given between 1775–1780,²⁷ only in the second instance is sex read as a function of the conservation of the species; in the first instance, Kant investigates it from the point of view of the individual, who rarely has sex with the intention to procreate.²⁸ Usually, scholars emphasize Freud's debts to Schopenhauer; it seems to me, however, that few note that Kant anticipates not only the Freudian concept of *drive* (*Trieb*)²⁹ but also Lacan's famous maxim, according to which "there's no such thing as a sexual relationship."³⁰ In fact, in his eyes, sex appears as having an "inner abhorrency" that causes "damage to morality," there is "something contemptible in the act itself, which runs counter to morality"³¹ precisely because it renders human relationships impossible. In his view, sex strips the human of its own humanity, making it less than human: making it into a beast, a thing. Not a person to encounter, but an object of pleasure to consume. Much like a "roast of pork":

So if a man wishes to satisfy his inclination, and a woman hers, they each attract the other's inclination to themselves, and both urges impinge on one another, and are directed, not to humanity at all, but to sex, and each partner dishonours the humanity of the other. Thus humanity becomes an instrument for satisfying desires and inclinations; but by this it is dishonoured and put on a par with animal nature. So the sexual impulse puts humanity in peril of being equated with animality.³²

And further:

if a person allows himself to be used, for profit, as an object to satisfy the sexual impulse of another, if he makes himself the object of another's desire, then he is disposing over himself, as if over a thing, and thereby makes himself into a thing by which the other satisfies his appetite, just as his hunger is satisfied on a roast of pork.³³

With the intent to contrast the *Wille zur Leben* (Will to Live) to which human and animal alike are victims, Schopenhauer preaches—but does not practice—abstinence from sex and love. Kant, on the other hand—the bachelor of bachelors,³⁴ who also probably died a virgin³⁵—is a dogged

defender of marriage, which in his view represents the only possibility to make sex moral. The husband and wife, according to his interpretation, draw up a contract in which they reciprocally recognize the right to place one into the *totality* of the other, not only in terms of their “*organa sexualia*.”³⁶ In this way, they redeem themselves from being instruments of lust, coming to constitute “a unity of will”³⁷ that engages in a wider “love for mankind.”³⁸

Only after having expressed the moral exceptionality of marital sex in this way, Kant abandons the individual point of view in order to assume that of the species, applying to sex that teleological judgment that Schopenhauer demolishes in the wake of his own pessimism. To be able to argue that beyond marriage, all sexual acts are “*crimina carnis*” or “a misuse of the sexual impulse” that “are contrary to self-regarding duty, because they run counter to the ends of humanity,”³⁹ Kant apodictically states that “in regard to this impulse” the ends of humanity “is to preserve the species without forfeiture of the person.”⁴⁰ He then establishes a hierarchy in the abomination of sex that is not redeemed by reproduction. As long as they involve a man and a woman, adultery, concubinage, casual sex, prostitution and even incest are for Kant *crimina carnis secundum naturam*; that is, they are “contrary to sound reason” but not “to our animal nature.”⁴¹ The latter is, instead, offended by homosexual acts, which, together with zoophilia and onanism, reenter the “*crimina carnis contra naturam*,” about which Kant—following a longstanding tradition⁴²—expresses an even more severe judgment. According to him, these practices are the ultimate realization of the degradation that the sexual brings with it, as they offend not only humanity, but even the animality of the human. They are “base, ignoble, contemptible,” morally worse than suicide. For this they inspire disgust more than reproach:

All *crimina carnis contra naturam* debase the human condition below that of the animal, and make man unworthy of his humanity; he then no longer deserves to be a person, and such conduct is the most ignoble and degraded that a man can engage in, with regard to the duties he has towards himself. Suicide is certainly the most dreadful thing that a man can do to himself, but is not so base and ignoble as these *crimina carnis contra naturam*, which are the most contemptible acts a man can commit. For this reason, too, such crimes are unmentionable, because the very naming of them occasions a disgust that does not occur with suicide.⁴³

Like Kant, Schopenhauer also disapproves of suicide, which is for him a “vain and therefore foolish”⁴⁴ protest against the difficulties of existence that confirms the will to live rather than negating it. Different from Kant, he is among the few modern philosophers who reserves words of acceptance for homosexuality, although they are ambiguous and extravagant. According to Schopenhauer, “pederasty,” insofar as it is a “monstrous vice, repellent and

repugnant to the highest degree” it is not, in fact, contrary to nature: it is, rather, yet another device with which life conserves itself. Men inclined to it would be, in fact, men in which the “reproductive force” is feeble: adolescents and the elderly whose “immature sperm and that depraved through age”⁴⁵ would risk producing “inferior, feeble, defective, and undersized children.”⁴⁶

Sixty years before him, while Kant was giving his *Lectures on Ethics*, Jeremy Bentham—a bachelor with strong difficulties with relationships, neurodiverse, perhaps with Asperger’s syndrome⁴⁷—also develops an ambivalent defense of pederasty (1785).⁴⁸ Like Schopenhauer, he interprets pederasty’s obstinate persistence as proof of the naturalness of same-sex eroticism despite the ferocity of persecutions to which it is subject. Additionally, he openly argues that “based on the principle of utility,” these persecutions must end, because homosexual acts do not provoke damage or pain to anyone,⁴⁹ rather they are in those who practice them as a source of pleasure—however “disgusting and perverted” the pleasure. Bentham also shares with Schopenhauer the idea that pederasty is a non-exclusive and transitory condition. Different from Schopenhauer, however, he does not consider it to be a consequence of reduced production of semen: for him he who abandons himself to this vice will be able to, at another moment, fully perform his reproductive functions, fulfilling his duty toward the *Wille zur Leben*, of which the state must make him an instrument.⁵⁰

The same interrogations posited by Kant, Schopenhauer, and Bentham—that is, the naturalness or unnaturalness of homosexuality and non-reproductive sex in general in relation to the survival of the species—a century and a half before are also dealt with by another prodigious bachelor: Hobbes (about whose intimate life is not well known). The way in which he resolves these questions appear to be surprisingly original when met by the arguments of his colleagues. For him, the sovereign must punish eroticism between people of the same sex, but this does not mean that such sex is against the laws of nature.

1.3 The Political Body in the *boudoir*

In the first of his works dedicated to the state, *De corpore politico* (1640),⁵¹ Hobbes writes:

That in them who have sovereign authority: not to forbid such copulations as are against the use of nature; not to forbid the promiscuous use of women; not to forbid one woman to have many husbands; not to forbid marriages within certain degrees of kindred and affinity: are against the law of nature. *For though it be not evident, that a private man living under the law of natural reason only, doth break the same, by doing any of these things aforesaid; yet it is manifestly apparent, that being so prejudicial as they are to the improvement of mankind, that not to forbid*

the same, is against the law of natural reason, in him that hath taken into his hands any portion of mankind to improve.⁵²

The sovereign therefore has, according to Hobbes, the *duty* to prohibit “such copulations as are against the use of nature”: sodomy, promiscuous sex, female polygamy, marriage between blood relatives; because these sexual practices, turned toward enjoyment and not to reproduction, do not contribute to the “betterment” of the population. The philosopher from Malmesbury writes, however, that there is no evidence to suggest that in abandoning oneself to these acts, an individual that lives “only under the law of reason” violates that law. Thus, for him, it is not about crimes against nature but about crimes against civilization: it is the moment in which the individual renounces their individuality, voluntarily and rationally, to be absorbed in the great body of the state, it is the social pact, that leads to the prohibition of these crimes.

It seems to me that his thesis acquires particular interest if contrasted with Kant’s view. For Kant, the state of nature is a moral condition, even juridical, where the imperatives of practical reason are fully in effect. For Hobbes, instead, the concepts of good and evil, like those of right and wrong, do not make sense if not in the civil state, and for those who do not cling to the social contract, the laws of nature are prudential rules lacking effectiveness. Consequently, in its natural state, the life of human beings is “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short”:⁵³ there is no civilization, nor community, nor family, to which man is morally responsible, woman alone cares for children, who will abandon her at the opportune moment.⁵⁴ And this disgraced condition is not banally intended as a prehistoric epoch that “precedes” the advent of civilization: it is instead, for Hobbes, an ever-present threat within the civil state, an eventuality that in every instant can irrupt into the present, when sovereign power is not sufficiently strong enough to maintain political order.

In the passage of *De corpore* included above, sex outside marriage explodes the contradiction between two orders in natural law: that which rules the life of the “portion of humanity” that the sovereign “has received in his hands,” and opposed to this, that which is valid for the individual as such, not considered to be a member of the state. This second law, as is noted, accords to each individual the right to everything and every other individual, considered a thing. This second law is therefore the overturning of Kant’s categorical imperative, admirably expressed by the great Sade, who, according to Lacan, expressed the “truth” of the critique of practical reason. “‘I have the right to enjoy your body,’ anyone can say to me, ‘and I will exercise this right without any limit to the capriciousness of the exactions I may wish to satiate with your body.’”⁵⁵

Dufourmantelle writes that when Sade summoned the philosophers into the *boudoir*, no one accepted the invitation: “all of them, or almost all, made excuses,” she writes, and whoever, like Nietzsche, “did turn up, it was in haste.”⁵⁶ What she seems to have missed is that old Hobbes had already been

sitting in the bedroom for some time waiting for the Divine Marquis: though a fearful bachelor, Hobbes was nonetheless capable of exploring the moral abysses of *civilization's discontents*⁵⁷ before the audacious libertine had.⁵⁸ To whomever knows to read his texts between the lines, Hobbes in fact suggests that the social contract is the act of birth, not only of the civilized individual but also of their obscene conjoined twin: of their amoral, asocial, alter-ego, that will not ever integrate themselves into the great body of the Leviathan, and that, like a spectral parasite, will never stop infesting its viscera. If the former is a well-educated, disciplined citizen, capable of putting themselves in relation to the other and to sacrifice their passions for the good of the collectivity, the second is an unruly and wild body that simply, irresponsibly, seeks enjoyment. This, with all due respect to Kant, is “nature” for Hobbes (for Freud, as will be better explained shortly, it is, instead, perversion).

Therefore, well before feminism, lesbian feminism, transfeminism, and queer theories, even before the advent of psychoanalysis, there seems to have existed a moment in the history of thought when, transgressing Plato's directives, philosophy took the liberty to encounter sex. And that moment still illuminates the present of our hyper-hedonistic societies. In fact, in a way, that moment is still our own. Think of those subjects that traditionally represented the negativity of enjoyment, and who today appear, in a mirror image to the reactionaries who oppose them, as the most strenuous champions of familial love. For the current liberal sensibility, a state does not recognize the full human rights of lesbians and gays as long as it does not grant them access to marriage, adoption and assisted reproduction. This is an opinion to be shared, which nevertheless confirms how much, in contemporary political imagination, the sexual subject can still aspire to reunite with civilized humanity only by constituting a fruitful couple. Everything, and nothing, has changed: only a fold in the Veil of Maya, as Schopenhauer would say.

In the crowd of bachelor-philosophers of modernity, two in particular have witnessed that which still today, for those who can accurately weigh their misogyny⁵⁹ and homophobia, shine with the light of truth. For as much as we try to “redeem” it through reproduction and affectivity, sex is itself an uncanny drive that pushes us beyond the limits of that which we consider fully human: below or beyond good and evil, below or beyond comprehension and meaning. In a wild and unthinkable region that disturbs us and excites us at the same time, from which the conventions of social life succeed to keep us distant only in part. It is precisely this region that we are about to explore. More precisely, that which this book proposes to do is to confront diverse cartographies that have been produced of this region in political thought from the beginning of the 20th century to the more recent queer philosophies. Where to begin? Having liquidated Nietzsche, among the masters of suspicion, one figure decisively stands out: Freud. His debts to both the philosophical tradition (Schopenhauer and Kant are only two

examples, as we will see) and 19th-century psychiatry and early 20th-century sexuality are undeniable. Likewise, on the matter of sex, as Derrida argues, Freud was “the doorman of the today” who had opened up contemporaneity.⁶⁰ On one point, we cannot but agree with Dufourmantelle: psychoanalysis is the threshold that philosophy must cross so as to begin to think sex in a way that is still ours.

Notes

- 1 Trans.—Here Bernini uses the idiomatic phrase “andare in bianco,” meaning that a certain situation was perfectly set up for sex—the date went well, the chemistry is great, and then something happens where the sexual act cannot be carried through.
- 2 “On the margins of the encounter between sex and philosophy, in the shadows that hide the surrounding landscape, there is this ‘blind,’ this obstacle to seeing, but also this word that designates a shade, a veil, something that is interposed between the gaze and the outside, or the inside, it all depends on where one stands, something that conceals the better to turn the eye away from the rawness of sight. The blind date that had been at issue here will never be able to dispel its protagonists’ blindness. So they will never see each other.” Anne Dufourmantelle, *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 100.
- 3 Plato, *The Republic*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), Book 7, 517B, 749.
- 4 Jan Patočka argues that the myth of the cave “is a reversal of the traditional mysteries and their orgiastic cults.” Jan Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 104.
- 5 Adriana Cavarero, *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*, trans. Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).
- 6 The terms “embodied singularity” (sometimes appearing as “living singularity” or “singularity of a lived personal life”) and “incarnated uniqueness” recur in Adriana Cavarero’s work since *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
- 7 On these feminist philosophies, in Italian see: Adriana Cavarero and Franco Restaino, eds. *Le filosofie femministe* (Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002); Elda Guerra, ed. *Storia e cultura politica delle donne* (Firenze: Archetipo libri, 2008); Eleonora Missana, *Donne si diventa: Antologia del pensiero femminista* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2014); Sara Garbagnoli and Vincenza Perilli, eds., *Non si nasce donna: Percorsi, testi e contesti del femminismo materialista in Francia* (Roma: Edizioni Alegre, 2013). On queer theory and its relation to gay and lesbian studies see, instead: Marco Pustianaz, ed., *Queer in Italia: Differenze in movimento* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2011); Elisa A.G. Arfini and Cristian Lo Iacono, “La cosa queer” in *Canone inverso: Antologia di teoria queer* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012). Permit me to also include my own two books, *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*, trans. Julia Heim (New York: Routledge, 2013) and *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*, trans. Michela Baldo and Elena Basile (New York: Routledge, 2020).
- 8 The reasons for using the substantive use of “sexual” will be clarified in the next chapter.

- 9 See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).
- 10 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1990).
- 11 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "German Ideology: Part I" in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978): 146–200.
- 12 Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis," *SE* 17, 135–144.
- 13 "We can no longer conceal from ourselves *what* is expressed by all that willing which has taken its direction from the aesthetic ideal: this hatred of the human, and even more of the animal, and more still of the material, this horror of the senses, of reason itself, this fear of happiness and beauty, this longing to get away from all appearance, change, becoming, death, wishing, from longing itself—all this means—let us dare to grasp it—a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental presuppositions of life; but it is and remains a *will!* ... " Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage), 162–163.
- 14 The "ascetic priest," who encourages the resentment of his flock, is the central figure of the *On the Genealogy of Morals*.
- 15 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 107.
- 16 "The married man bears the whole burden of life, the unmarried only half the burden; whoever is dedicated to the Muses must belong to the latter class. We shall therefore find that almost all genuine philosophers have remained unmarried, such as Descartes, Leibniz, Malebranche, Spinoza and Kant. Here the ancients cannot be considered, for with them women occupied a subordinate position; moreover, the sufferings of Socrates are well known and Aristotle was a courtier. The great poets, on the other hand, were all married and indeed all unhappily. Shakespeare was even a double cuckold." Arthur Schopenhauer, "The Manuscript Books of 1830–1852 and Last Manuscripts," in *Manuscript Remains in Four Volumes*, vol. 4, ed. Arthur Hübscher, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Berg, 1990), 505.
- 17 See Massimo Fini, *Nietzsche: L'apolide dell'esistenza* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2002). There are even those who speculate that Nietzsche was homosexual: Joachim Kohler, *Zarathustra's Secret: The Interior Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Ronald Taylor (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).
- 18 See Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 2, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), par. 362–371. An example: "§364. Women are qualified to be the nurses and governesses of our earliest childhood by the very fact that they are themselves childish, trifling, and short-sighted, in a word, are all their lives grown-up children; a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the man, who is a human being in the real sense." (614–615). See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), par. 377–437. An example: "416. *On the emancipation of women.*—Are women able to be just at all, since they are so accustomed to loving, to at once taking sides for or against? That too is why they are less interested in causes, more interested in persons: if they are interested in a cause, however, they at once become its vehement advocates and thereby spoil the purity of its influence. There is thus no little danger in entrusting politics or certain kinds of science (for example history) to them." (154–155).
- 19 See Rüdiger Safranski, *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Ernst Otto Linder,

- who knew him personally, wrote “He was so frank so as to openly admit, if the occasion presented itself, that in his life sexual love and women had given him a lot to get on with.” Schopenhauer, *Colloqui* (Milan: BUR, 1982).
- 20 For example: “I therefore call marriage a debt that is contracted in youth and paid in old age [...] for the usual aim of the so-called career of young men is simply to become a woman’s beast of burden”; “Matrimony = war and want! Single blessedness = peace and plenty.” Schopenhauer, “The Manuscript Books of 1830–1852 and Last Manuscripts,” 504–504.
 - 21 “388. *Diverse sighs*.—Some men have sighed over the abduction of their wives, most however over the fact that no one wanted to abduct them.”; “394. *Usual consequence of marriage*.—All society that does not elevate one draws one down, and conversely; that is why men usually sink a little when they take wives, while their wives are elevated a little. Men who are too intellectual have great need of marriage, though they resist it as they would a foul-tasting medicine.” Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 151.
 - 22 It is the same Hobbes who described himself like so: “Non est un patriae pudeat, sed tempus iniquum conqueror, et mecum tot quoque nata mala. Fama ferebat enim diffusa per oppida nostra, extremum genti classe venire diem. Atque metum tantum concepit tunc mea mater, ut pareret geminos, meque metumque simul. Hinc est, ut credo, patrios quod abominor hostes, pace mammo cum musis, et faciles socios.” Hobbes, “Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis vita carmine expressa, autore seipso, scripta anno MDCLXXIII” in *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophic aquae Latine Scripsit Omnia*, Vol. 1, ed. William Molesworth (London: Bohn, 1839), lxxxvi.
 - 23 See Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic: Part I, Human Nature; Part II, De corpore politico; with Three Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); “Chapter 13: Of The *Natural Condition* of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery,” in *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 86–90.
 - 24 See Immanuel Kant, “Toward a Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch,” in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, trans. David Colclasure (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 67–109.
 - 25 See Arthur Schopenhauer, “The Metaphysics of Sexual Love” in *The World as Will and Representation. Vol. II*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958), 531–567.
 - 26 On the centrality of the concepts of will and life in modern philosophy see Davide Tarizzo, *Life: A Modern Invention*, trans. Mark Epstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).
 - 27 Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, eds. Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 - 28 One could say more prosaically—with Lee Edelman’s *No Future*—that more often than not one does not “fuck” to reproduce, but for pleasure: “No fucking could ever effect such creation: all sensory experience, all pleasure of the flesh, must be borne away from this fantasy of futurity secured, eternity’s plan fulfilled, as ‘a new generation is carried forward.’ Paradoxically, the child of the two-parent family thus proves that its parents *don’t* fuck.” (41)
 - 29 See Jean-Paul Paccioni, “Le terme ‘Trieb’ et l’homme comme fin dernière et ultime,” *Revue germanique internationale*, 18 (2002): 25–44. The following two chapters of this book are dedicated to the concept of the drive.

- 30 See Jacque Lacan, "The Seminar of Jacque Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge" *Book XX Encore 1972–1973*, ed. Jacques Alain-Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998).
- 31 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 157.
- 32 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 156.
- 33 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 157. Just before Kant turns to another culinary metaphor: "In loving from sexual inclination, they make the person into an object of their appetite. As soon as the person is possessed, and the appetite sated, they are thrown away, as one throws away a lemon after sucking the juice from it." (156)
- 34 "The more or less selfish old bachelor" as Miguel De Unamuno defines him in *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 6.
- 35 See Jean-Baptiste Botul, *La Vie sexuelle d'Emmanuel Kant* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 1999).
- 36 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 158.
- 37 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 159.
- 38 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 173.
- 39 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 160.
- 40 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 161.
- 41 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 160.
- 42 The Kantian distinction between crimes against nature and crimes accorded with nature derive from a long Christian tradition, of which the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Secunda Secundae* of Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* can be considered paradigmatic texts. In Aquinas's thought, however, the Dominican theologian Adriano Oliva, in his *Amours: L'Église, les divorcés remariés, les couples homosexuels* (Paris: Cerf, 2015), has proposed an original and controversial interpretation, not dissimilar from that which later on I give regarding Hobbes, according to which, for Aquinas, from the point of view of the individual and not from the point of view of the collectivity, the sexual inclination of a person toward people of the same sex may be considered natural.
- 43 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 161. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Revised Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 34–35, 41–42.
- 44 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation. vol. I*, Book IV, §54, 281.
- 45 See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation, vol. II*, Appendix to chapter 44, 565.
- 46 Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation, vol. II*, Appendix to chapter 44, 563. Schopenhauer here cites Aristotle's *Politics*, VII.
- 47 See Philip Lucas and Anne Sheeran, "Asperger's Syndrome and the Eccentricity and Genius of Jeremy Bentham," *Journal of Bentham Studies*, 8 (2006): 1–13.
- 48 Jeremy Bentham, "Offences Against One's Self: Paederasty (Part 1/Part 2)," *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 3 no. 4/vol. 4 no. 1 (1978): 389–406, 91–107.
- 49 "Population therefore cannot suffer till the inclination of the male sex for the female be considerably less than a hundredth part as strong as for their own. Is there the least probability that [this] should ever be the case? I must confess I see not any thing that should lead us to suppose it." Bentham, "Offences Against One's Self (Part 1)," *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 3 no. 4: 396.
- 50 "The proposition which [...] is not at all true with respect to paederasty, I mean that were it to prevail universally it would put an end to the human race, is most evidently and strictly true with regard to celibacy. If then merely out of regard to population it were right that paederasts should be burnt alive monks ought to be roasted alive by a slow fire." Bentham, "Offences Against One's Self (Part 1)," 397.

- 51 In 1889 Ferdinand Tönnies publishes *De corpore politico* together with another essay by Hobbes from the same year, “Human Nature,” with the title *Elements of Law Natural and Civil*, which has remained in later editions.
- 52 Hobbes, “Chapter XXVIII: Of the Duty of Them that Have Sovereign Power,” in *De corpore politico*, 173.
- 53 Hobbes, “Chapter XIII: Of the Naturall Condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery,” in *Leviathan*, 89.
- 54 Carole Pateman argues that in Hobbes the parties to the social contract are “individuals” belonging to both sexes only in appearance. In reality, they are patriarchs who have already subjugated women in the state of nature because the care that they dispense to children renders them weaker (See, Hobbes, *Leviathan*, “Chapter XX: Of Dominion Paternall, and Despotical”). Therefore, patriarchy is instituted in an intermediate moment between the state of nature and the state of civility, and it does not break with the institution of sovereignty: “At first, women are able to ensure that sexual relations are consensual. When a woman becomes a mother and decides to raise her child, her position changes; she is put at a slight disadvantage against men, since now she has her infant to defend too. A man is then able to defeat the woman he had initially to treat with as an equal (so he obtains a ‘family’).” Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract. Thirtieth Anniversary Edition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 49. Even in Kant, as Pateman reveals commenting on the *Metaphysics of Morals*, marriage is a reciprocal contract, yet still unequal, in which the woman assumes a subaltern position and the man the state of being master, by virtue of a difference of rational faculties and of capacities of command that the philosopher Königsberg maintains is natural.
- 55 Lacan, “Kant with Sade,” in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 648.
- 56 Dufourmantelle, *Blind Date*, 103.
- 57 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21 (1930).
- 58 Significantly, even the two masters of vice in *Philosophy of the Bedroom*, Dolmancé and Madame de Saint-Ange, are prevalently homosexual, and educate the virgin Eugénie to enjoyment without procreation: “A pretty girl ought simply to concern herself with *fucking*, and never with *engendering*. No need to touch at greater length on what pertains to the dull business of population, from now on we shall address ourselves principally, nay, uniquely to those libertine lecheries whose spirit is in no wise reproductive.” Donatien-Alphonse-Francois Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*, trans. Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 201. On the role of homosexual relationships in Sade see, again, Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit “Merde Allors.”
- 59 By way of example, remember that Kant maintains that “the entirety of the fairer sex” is incapable of enlightenment. Kant, “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” in *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, ed. Pauline Kleingeld, trans. David Colclasure (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 17–23.
- 60 Jacques Derrida, “‘To Do Justice to Freud’: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis” *Critical Inquiry*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, 20, no. 2 (Winter, 1994), 235.

References

Arfini, Elisa A.G. and Cristian Lo Iacono, eds. *Canone inverso: Antologia di teoria queer*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012.

- Bentham, Jeremy. "Offences Against One's Self: Paederasty (Part 1/Part 2)." *Journal of Homosexuality* 3, no. 4/vol. 4 no. 1 (1978): 389–406, 91–107.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*. Translated by Michela Baldo and Elena Basile. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*. Translated by Julia Heim. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Bersani, Leo and Ulysse Dutoit. "Merde Allors." *October* 13 (Summer 1980): 22–35.
- Botul, Jean-Baptiste. *La Vie sexuelle d'Emmanuel Kant*. Paris: Mille et une nuits, 1999.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*. Translated by Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Áine O'Healy. Cambridge: Polity, 1995.
- Cavarero, Adriana and Franco Restaino, eds. *Le filosofie femministe*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002.
- De Unamuno, Miguel. *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*. Translated by Anthony Kerrigan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Derrida, Jacques. "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis." *Critical Inquiry*, Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, 20, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 227–266.
- Dufourmantelle, Anne. *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
- Fini, Massimo. *Nietzsche: L'apolide dell'esistenza*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2002.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis." In *SE* 17 (1917): 135–144.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents*. In *SE* 21 (1930): 57–46.
- Garbagnoli, Sara and Vincenza Perilli, eds. *Non si nasce donna: Percorsi, testi e contesti del femminismo materialista in Francia*. Roma: Edizioni Alegre, 2013.
- Guerra, Elda, ed. *Storia e cultura politica delle donne*. Firenze: Archetipo libri, 2008.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic: Part I, Human Nature; Part II, De corpore politico; with Three Lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*. Edited by Howard Warrender. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hobbes, Thomas. "Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis vita carmine expressa, autore seipso, scripta anno MDCLXXIII" In *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophic aquae Latine Scripsit Omnia, Vol. 1*. Edited by William Molesworth. London: Bohn, 1839.

- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Revised Edition*. Edited and translated by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Lectures on Ethics*. Edited by Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind. Translated by Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*. Edited by Pauline Kleingeld. Translated by David Colclasure. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Kohler, Joachim. *Zarathustra's Secret: The Interior Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Translated by Ronald Taylor. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Lacan, Jacques. *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XX. Encore 1972–1973*. Edited by Jacques Alain-Miller. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998.
- Lucas, Philip and Anne Sheeran. "Asperger's Syndrome and the Eccentricity and Genius of Jeremy Bentham." *Journal of Bentham Studies* 8 (2006): 1–13.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Edited by Robert C. Tucker, Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978.
- Missana, Eleonora. *Donne si diventa: Antologia del pensiero femminista*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2014.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. Edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Oliva, Adriano. *Amours: L'Église, les divorcés remariés, les couples homosexuels*. Paris: Cerf, 2015.
- Paccioni, Jean-Paul. "Le terme 'Trieb' et l'homme comme fin dernière et ultime," *Revue germanique internationale* 18 (2002): 25–44.
- Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract. Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018.
- Patočka, Jan. *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*. Translated by Erazim Kohák. Edited by James Dodd. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Translated by Lane Cooper. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Pustianaz, Marco. ed. *Queer in Italia: Differenze in movimento*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2011.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*. Translated by Ewald Osers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Sade, Donatien-Alphonse-Francois. *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse. New York: Grove Press, 1965.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Manuscript Remains in Four Volumes. Volume 4*. Edited by Arthur Hübscher. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Berg, 1990.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Colloqui*. Milan: BUR, 1982.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays. Volume 2*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.

Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation. Volumes I and II*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover, 1958.

Tarizzo, Davide. *Life: A Modern Invention*. Translated by Mark Epstein. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

2 Feel Your Way with Freud

Popular opinion has quite definite ideas about the nature and characteristics of this sexual drive. It is generally understood to be absent in childhood, to set in at the time of puberty in connection with the process of coming to maturity and to be revealed in the manifestations of an irresistible attraction exercised by one sex upon the other; while its aim is presumed to be sexual union, or at all events actions leading in that direction. We have every reason to believe, however, that these views give a very false picture of the true situation. If we look into them more closely we shall find that they contain a number of errors, inaccuracies and hasty conclusions.

Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*

2.1 To Do Justice

A speaking and political animal according to Aristotle,¹ a dangerous wolf toward its own kind—despite the fact that it speaks—according to Hobbes:² the traditional point of departure for philosophical reflections on politics is the human, which according to its nature has always searched for its own foundations, showing great imagination. The creative faculty of philosophers, however, seems to have been exhausted for some time: ever more often many of them extract the anthropological arguments on which they build their theories from psychoanalysis. Those who do not accept this new tendency, and those who even denounce psychoanalysis as a dangerously deviating current of thought, use Foucault as an authority. For the purposes of our argument, the French philosopher's critique of the political use of psychoanalysis in *The Will to Knowledge* (1976)³ assumes a fundamental importance. This critique will have the prominence it deserves later in this book. In the meantime, we must remember that from this critique's inception, in that masterpiece of antipsychiatric critique that is *The History of Madness* (1961), Foucault recognizes that “we must do justice to Freud”:

We must do justice to Freud. [...] Freud took up madness at the level of its *language*, reconstituting one of the essential elements of an experience that positivism had reduced to silence. He did not set out to bring a major addition to the list of psychological treatments of madness, but restored

instead the possibility of a dialogue with unreason to medical thought. We should not be surprised that the most “psychological” of medications was so quickly paired up with its opposite and with organic confirmations. Psychoanalysis is not about psychology, but it is about an experience of unreason that psychology, in the modern world, was meant to disguise.⁴

In *The Order of Things* (1966), where Foucault critiques the entirely modern way of making “man” a scientific object, Foucault similarly argues that psychoanalysis is not a general anthropological theory, but an investigation of the limits of anthropology: not a human science, therefore, but a “counter-science” that—like ethnology, but also like surrealist literature—drives the human to that “region where death prowls, where thought it extinguished, where the promise of the origin interminably recedes.”⁵ Again, that is, in the region of madness. Finally, in *The Will to Knowledge*, he attributes “the political credit” to psychoanalysis of being constituted “in theoretical and practical opposition to fascism”:⁶

And the strange position of psychoanalysis at the end of the 19th century would be hard to comprehend if one did not see the rupture it brought about in the great system of degenerescence: it resumed the project of a medical technology appropriate for dealing with the sexual instinct; but it sought to free it from its ties with heredity, and hence from eugenics and the various racisms. It is very well to look back from our vantage point and remark upon the normalizing impulse in Freud; one can go on to denounce the role played for many years by the psychoanalytic institution; but the fact remains that in the great family of technologies of sex, which goes far back into the history of the Christian West, of all those institutions that set out in the 19th century to medicalize sex, it was the one that, up to the decade of the forties, rigorously opposed the political and institutional effects of the perversion-heredity-degenerescence system.⁷

Following Foucault, it is therefore necessary to make a preliminary distinction. The topic of this chapter, and the next, will be some arguments taken not only from Freud’s *clinical* theory, but from his *metapsychological* theory, or from his “speculative” reflection on the human (and its limits) that does not aim toward cure, but is “an attempt to follow out an idea consistently, out of curiosity to see where it will lead.”⁸ We will therefore explore that territory of psychoanalytic thought which is traversed by philosophical imagination more than others, and that we could recognize as philosophy in its own right, if it were not extremely inhospitable to that rational subject, self-transparent and master of itself—the model to which many modern philosophers have illusorily aspired. In this zone, Freud wavers, falters, often he even tumbles, forced to abandon normative intentions and presuppositions that have supported him elsewhere. Most of all, this occurs when his curiosity pushes him to interrogate the phenomena of

sexuality, which—with all due respect to Dufourmantelle—disturb not only philosophy but all forms of theory.⁹

Another tendency present in contemporary philosophy,¹⁰ not free from its debts to Foucault nor Derrida,¹¹ aims to blur or even erase the boundaries that separate the human from the animal. Yet, at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, there were other urgent matters. As Foucault demonstrates well, in the face of a positivist psychiatry easily used for eugenic purposes by the rising racism of the state, Freud's significance was to reaffirm, in his own way, the special status that, among the ranks of the living, the western tradition, including Aristotle and Hobbes, has always recognized to humanity. Schopenhauer claimed to have learned from the East that the singular subject can refuse to reproduce the life of the species to whom they belong, but actually in Europe this was known for some time—so much so that philosophers often withdrew from an existence as fathers, husbands, and even lovers. For Freud—who on the contrary had six children and, by age sixty-seven, already suffering from cancer of the mouth which eventually led to his death, underwent a vasectomy thinking he was gaining sexual vigor¹²—the abstinence of a few people is just one example of a condition common to the entire human race, including its most prolific and most joyful part. What drives even the most compulsive of our peers to have sex is not in fact, or at least not only, the reproductive instinct. It is far less so the exclusive search for pleasure. For us sex inscribes itself in a suspended dimension between sense and non-sense, extending from the burdens of parental commitment—and even from the patriotic contribution to the future of the nation—to the most frenetic and desperate debauchery. The way we practice it, or avoid it, makes us truly human, and at the same time jeopardizes our humanity. Sex reminds us that we are animals while distancing us from the rest of the animal kingdom. It allows us to rise to an angelic asceticism, to fall into the inhumanity of brutes and, if Kant is right, even deeper, below the level of animality. In that region, as Foucault would say, “death prowls,” and madness with it.

The emergence of the sexual question in political philosophy beginning in the 20th century has to do with the complexity of human sexuality which psychoanalysis has tried, not without difficulty, to translate into words. For men, women, and all humans in-between or elsewhere, sex involves a number of factors: instincts, desires, gender identifications, and social and cultural norms. According to Freud, however, another factor is the binding of sexuality to excitation as an end in itself, which largely and definitively releases human sexuality from the aim of biological reproduction. As is well known, the German language often uses two terms to designate the same concept; in the case of sexual “drive” and sexual “instinct,” one derives from German, the other from Latin. In their common use, *Instinkt* (instinct), which derives from Latin, is a synonym for *Trieb* (drive), however in Freud's work, the two terms take on two different meanings. As Laplanche observes, Freud uses *Instinkt* “rarely, but he does so in a consistent manner, very often

to refer to instinct in animals.”¹³ Meanwhile, *Trieb* denotes a very different impulse, fitting to his view of the human race, that in English, we translate as “drive.” It would be, however, simplistic and incorrect to believe that the drive is the psychological equivalent of the physical phenomenon that is the instinct. As Laplanche notes:

Drive is no more psychical than instinct. The difference is not between the somatic and the psychical but between, on the one hand, something that is innate, atavistic and endogenous and, on the other, something that is acquired and epigenetic but is by no means less anchored in the body for all that.¹⁴

As I will now demonstrate through a close reading, the sexual drive does not coincide with sexual instinct in Freud; rather, the sexual drive grafts onto sexual instinct and remains implanted on the surface of the body. The sexual instinct is, for him, linked to both self-preservation and reproduction, therefore it is fundamentally heterosexual, and has as its aim the achievement of orgasm and the stillness that follows it. The sexual drive, on the contrary, ignores the aims of self-preservation and reproduction; it is perverse, dissipative, and potentially polymorphous. It drives the subject to excitation, not to stillness. In the development of the human, despite being acquired, the drive “comes before” the instinct, which is instead innate. In fact, for Freud the sexual drive returns the subject to early childhood when—as Laplanche observes—the child is incapable of experiencing orgasm, and yet their body is already susceptible to excitation by way of being handled by the adults (even today most often from adults) who take care of them. The true and proper sexual instinct follows the drive in puberty—when the production of sexual hormones is activated¹⁵—and it finds that “the seat is already occupied.”¹⁶ For Freud, then, human sexuality is not “individual” and does not derive “from inside” (from where within?); rather it is transindividual¹⁷ and derives “from outside,” from the original and asymmetric exposure of infants to adults. It does not have direct access to nature, but is always already “deviated” with respect to it.¹⁸ If we want to “do justice to Freud,” without forgetting his masculinism and heterosexism, we can do none other than begin from here.

2.2 The Phases of (Hetero)Sexual Development

Considered to be an inaugural text of psychoanalysis, along with his 1899 *The Interpretation of Dreams* (which introduces the concept of the unconscious), the 1905 *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (which introduces the category of the drive) concludes with the declaration of an *impasse*. In its “Summary,” Freud writes that his investigations of the disturbances of sexual life have reached an “unsatisfactory conclusion.”¹⁹ At the end of the second essay, after many attempts to understand it, for him “the nature of the process of sexual excitation” remains “highly obscure.”²⁰ The text undergoes numerous structural changes where Freud adds notes and entire numbered

sections but this conclusion remains unaltered until the sixth and final edition in 1924. Again, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), he admits that “of all the slowly developed parts of analytic theory, *the theory of the instincts is the one that has felt its way the most painfully forward*” (“hat sich die Trieblehre am mühseligsten vorwärtsgetastet”).²¹ Taking cue from Laplanche once again, I will call the enigma that Freud claims to have failed to solve, “the sexual”: that which escapes rational understanding in sexuality, challenges the productive and reproductive logic of means and ends, and therefore both utilitarian and evolutionist theories.²² The wild and phantasmatic element of sexuality, which explodes the illusory unity of our subjectivity, shatters our fantasies of self-control, and retracts us from a destiny as mere bearers of the life of the species.²³ I will not attempt to define it, since not even the great Freud could. “Drive,” however, is a synonym for it and “infantile” is the adjective that originally connotes it. Infantile sexuality is, in fact, the great discovery that the founder-father of psychoanalysis announces in the second of the *Three Essays*, only to conclude that he had not been able to discover much. What needs to be examined above all are the reasons for his declaration of failure. To do so, not only will I let myself be guided by Jean Laplanche but also one of his attentive readers on whom I will have more to say later: Leo Bersani, who dedicates an intense and dense little book to this question—*The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*.²⁴

The *Three Essays*: Freud dedicates the first essay to “The Sexual Aberrations,” the second to “Infantile Sexuality,” the third to “The Transformations of Puberty.” The sequence immediately pitches the study at the level of the clinic, where it assumes a clearly normative significance. The cause of sexual aberrations—a term that in this text ties inversion (homosexuality) together with pedophilia, zoophilia, fetishism, scopophilia, exhibitionism, sadism, and masochism—is a block or defect of sexual development for Freud. In “so-called normal” people, instead, sexual development proceeds in the direction of a healthy reproductive heterosexuality: initially the partial infantile drive²⁵ is repressed, and afterwards, upon the awakening of the sexual desire in puberty, that which remains is subordinated, and assumes a preliminary function, to the primacy of the genital drive and thus to penal-vaginal coitus:

The final outcome of sexual development lies in what is known as the normal sexual life of the adult, in which the pursuit of pleasure comes under the sway of the reproductive function and in which the partial drives, under the primacy of a single erotogenic zone, form a firm organization directed towards a sexual aim attached to some extraneous sexual object.²⁶

Freud’s narrative account of this development is also well-known. In his view, it does not proceed with continuity, but in evolutionary leaps: when no setbacks occur, sexuality passes through five distinct phases. The first four, he

explains, “are normally passed through smoothly, without giving more than a hint of their existence [in adulthood]. It is only in pathological cases that they become active and recognizable to superficial observation.”²⁷ Therefore, Freud does not hide the fact that he elaborates the theory of sexual stages by means of deduction, moving from stories of neurotic adult patients rather than the empirical observation of children.²⁸ This explains not only the structure of the book but also the reason for which, in the second of the *Three Essays*, the chronology is rather vague, not to mention confusing. In his 1938 *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, to anticipate and resolve potential critiques of the chronological blurring of the phases, Freud specifies that it would be misleading to believe that the stages of infantile sexuality “succeed one another outright: one of them may appear in addition to another, they may overlap one another, they may be present simultaneously.”²⁹

In any case, the first phase, “the oral or, as it might be called, cannibalistic pregenital sexual organization,”³⁰ begins at birth, when sexual activity is tied to food consumption and “the sexual aim consists in the incorporation of the object—the prototype of a process which, in the form of identification, is later to play such an important psychological part.”³¹ The second coincides instead with the moment in which you teach the boy or girl how to defecate in their little toilet: “here the opposition between two currents, which runs through all sexual life, is already developed: they cannot yet, however, be described as ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine,’ but only as ‘active’ and ‘passive.’”³² The former function is carried out by the body’s musculature with which the infant appropriates external objects, the latter primarily by the intestinal mucous membrane. Freud explains:

Children who are making use of the susceptibility to erotogenic stimulation of the anal zone betray themselves by holding back their stool till its accumulation brings about violent muscular contractions and, as it passes through the anus, is able to produce powerful stimulation of the mucous membrane. In so doing it must no doubt cause not only painful but also highly pleasurable sensations.³³

At the end of this phase, which Freud calls the “sadistic-anal,” from three to five or six years old, the first experiments with genital onanist activity occur, which represent “the beginning of what is later to become ‘normal’ sexual life.”³⁴ As proof of how masculinist prejudice is embedded in him, Freud calls this phase “phallic.” He admits that at this age, even girls masturbate, “in the application of pressure [...] either from the hand or by bringing the thighs together,”³⁵ and yet he promptly asserts that the only genitalia known in these years, not only by males, but also females, is the penis, that the little boy would assume to belong to all the people that they know, while the little girl would envy, desiring to also be male.³⁶ It is in this moment that, in Freud’s opinion, the male develops the Oedipus complex, with its terrible fantasies of castration, while the female has to definitively

become aware of her inferiority, which leads her “turn away altogether from sexual life.”³⁷ The outcome is the definitive acquisition—for “normal persons”—of a gender identity that corresponds to their sex assigned at birth (male or female: while often using the example of “hermaphroditism” to support his thesis of “original bisexuality,”³⁸ Freud does not consider the possibility that intersex subjects may develop a non-binary identity). This is followed, therefore, by five to six years until puberty, the “infantile period of latency or deferment,”³⁹ in which the sexual energy or libido—that Freud thinks of as a flowing current, according to a hydraulic model⁴⁰—does not disappear but becomes totally or partially deviated to address other purposes. For our author, it is about a process of “sublimation” necessary to acquire the necessary competencies for civil life. In fact, in this phase there arise “the mental forces which are later to impede the course of the sexual instinct and, like dams, restrict its flow—disgust, feelings of shame, and the claims of moral and aesthetic ideals,”⁴¹ which “probably emerge at the cost of the sexual impulses themselves.”⁴² Age, you will have noticed, roughly corresponds to the occurrence of primary school, and Freud does not deny that the repression carried out by parents, babysitters, tutors, and teachers influences the suspension of sexual activity in these years. He specifies, however, that “this development is organically determined and fixed by heredity,” and that it can “occasionally occur without any help at all from education”:⁴³

It is possible further to form some idea of the mechanism of this process of sublimation. On the one hand, it would seem, the sexual impulses cannot be utilized during these years of childhood, since the reproductive functions have been deferred—a fact which constitutes the main feature of the period of latency. On the other hand, these impulses would seem in themselves to be perverse—that is, to arise from erotogenic zones and to derive their activity from instincts which, in view of the direction of the subject’s development, can only arouse unpleasurable feelings. They consequently evoke opposing mental forces (reacting impulses) which, in order to suppress this unpleasure effectively, build up the mental dams that I have already mentioned—disgust, shame and morality.⁴⁴

These “dams” carry out an important function for the rest of life. And when human beings finally reach sexual maturity, by loosening appropriately, these dams contribute to giving a form of sexual life that is adapted to civil life, circumventing “that instinct within the limits that are regarded as normal.”⁴⁵ In fact, as I have anticipated above, after puberty, with the activation of hormonal production and the arising of the adult orgasmic response, if nothing goes wrong, for Freud the erotogenic zones are subjugated to the primacy of the genital zone. The excitation produced by sight, the mouth, the anus, the nipples, etc., then becomes the means by which to obtain the goal of *pleasure* in which heterosexual coitus culminates (and

which is, in turn, a means of reproducing the species). If instead this does not occur, if “at any point in the preparatory sexual processes the fore-pleasure turns out to be too great” and “the motive for proceeding further with the sexual process then disappears,”⁴⁶ we are, in Freud’s view, faced with a fixation that could assume a pathological character: “Experience has shown that the precondition for this damaging event is that the erotogenic zone concerned or the corresponding component instinct shall already during childhood have contributed an unusual amount of pleasure.”⁴⁷ What is, therefore, mysterious in this teleological narrative, in which the boundary between normality and abnormality is clearly established? What is the substance of the impasse on which Freud so keenly insists in the “Summary” of the *Three Essays*?

2.3 The Perverse Sexual, or the Drive

In *The Freudian Body*, Bersani notes that the sixth section of the second essay, dedicated to “The Phases of Development of the Sexual Organization,” occurs for the first time in the third edition of 1914, and that Freud added the phallic phase to the other four phases only in the sixth edition of 1924.⁴⁸ Therefore, the theory of phases is not responsible for what Freud considers the failure of the essays, a failure that had already been there since the 1905 edition. He does not refer to the phallic phase as the enigma of the “nature of the process of sexual excitation.”⁴⁹ Rather, this theory represents a late attempt, which also fails, to resolve the enigma in the most classic of ways, by subordinating the whole of sexual life of humans, not dissimilarly from that of other animals, to the purpose of the reproduction of the species. Another attempt, present since the first edition, can be found at the beginning of the third essay, where Freud examines the nature of mature sexual pleasure through the “model of discharge,” that he admits having elaborated by reflecting principally on the orgasm of the man (whose sexual development, he justifies to himself, is “the more understandable, while that of females actually enters upon a kind of involution”⁵⁰). Our author therefore writes: “The new sexual aim in men consists in the discharge of the sexual products. The earlier aim, the attainment of pleasure, is by no means alien to it; on the contrary, the highest degree of pleasure is attached to this final act of the sexual process.”⁵¹

Beyond its literal meaning as the emission of sperm, the term “discharge” takes on a metaphoric valence. Freud maintains that sexual excitation of (‘normal’) adults manifests “by two sorts of indication, mental and somatic”: the latter consists of “a number of changes in the genitals, which have the obvious sense of being preparations for the sexual act—the erection of the male organ and the lubrication of the vagina,” while the former consists of “a peculiar feeling of tension of an extremely compelling character.”⁵² Foreplay would have the function of increasing the “tension” of the libido, in a progressive process of excitation in which the pleasure achieved

each time through the stimulation of the erogenous zones provokes a growing dissatisfaction that pushes one to follow through with the sexual act, until the genital zone is activated; that is, “the glans of the penis, [mediated] by the appropriate object, the mucous membrane of the vagina”⁵³ (the clitoris is not mentioned here, but further on, where it is given the “function of transmitting the excitation to the adjacent female sexual parts, just as—to use the simile—pine shavings can be kindled in order to set a log of harder wood on fire”⁵⁴). Not even the pleasure of penetration stops the tension of excitation for Freud: on the contrary, penetration further augments it in such a way that coitus carries on until orgasm. This constitutes not only the most intense sexual pleasure but also that which, together with the “sexual substances,” finally “discharges” the tension of the libido, thus causing a temporary suspension of it.

According to the discharge model, the end of sex therefore coincides with the aim of sex.⁵⁵ Yet, as Bersani suggests, the point is that the theory of phases, with which the model of discharge correlates, “is only half the story.”⁵⁶ The other half is the theory of the drives, where Freud develops a completely different “ontology of sexuality”:⁵⁷ the search for pleasure intended as the relaxation of tension, as stillness, as the end of sex, is not sufficient to explain the ontology of the sexual understood as “drive.” Indeed, the sexual drives do not end in the “discharge” of “tension,” but, rather, push to increase excitation, bringing it to levels that could result in dysfunction, not only with regard to reproduction but also to the organism’s well-being. Here Freud argues that “a feeling of tension necessarily involves unpleasure” and is “accompanied by an impulsion to make a change in the psychological situation.” Nevertheless, in sexual excitation, the “tension of unpleasure” is accompanied by “a feeling of satisfaction of some kind.”⁵⁸ Already in the second essay, as I have noted above, the biological and social necessity of the latency phase is justified by the fact that the infantile drives, before genital maturity and the activation of the reproductive capacity, “can only arouse unpleasurable feelings”;⁵⁹ that is, a progressive excitation that does not generally culminate in orgasm. In the third essay, Freud declares instead, as I have mentioned, that in both children and adults “the sexual aim” consists in the “attainment of pleasure.”⁶⁰ But shortly thereafter he contradicts himself, admitting that sexual activity does not seek to extinguish itself, but to prolong the intensification of excitation, and that the sensation of *pleasure* produced in excitation is mixed with a sensation of unpleasure. Bersani pushes this observation to its extreme limit, enthusiastically arguing that “sexuality could be thought of as a tautology for masochism.”⁶¹ Freud shows, instead, a certain reluctance to admit the conclusions which his observations impose. The sexual has to do with that which, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, he will call the “compulsion to repeat”: with the impulse to grow a particular pleasure that is also an unpleasure,⁶² with the satisfaction never quite attainable that accompanies a certain type of pain. The overall impression one gets from reading the *Three Essays* is that Freud

continually attempts to bring human sexuality back to the heterosexual norm (to orgasm and reproduction), but he also does not succeed. His experience as an analyst obliges him to observe that penis-vagina coitus is only one episode in the sexual life of human, which is less significant to understanding sexual life in its specificity, and that the model of discharge, perhaps able to explain coitus, does not satisfactorily explain the rest of sexual life. What escapes this model is the drive, the infantile sexual, also present in adult sexuality well beyond the subordinate function to which Freud tries to assign it. To understand the failure, he ascribes to his sexual theory, we must return to the second essay, and this time to read it without considering the theory of phases of sexual development, which were added only after the original 1905 edition.

The text opens with the proud claim of that epistemological break that even Foucault was willing to acknowledge: if psychiatry has long researched the hereditary causes of the character “of the adult individual,” psychoanalysis had first recognized the determining importance of the “primaeval period, which falls within the lifetime of the individual himself”⁶³—that is, childhood. And if sexology had considered the expressions of infantile sexuality “as oddities or as horrifying instances of precocious depravity,” psychoanalysis affirms for the first time “the regular existence of a sexual drive in childhood.”⁶⁴ With false modesty, Freud maintains that “the gaps in our knowledge which have arisen in this way cannot be bridged by a single observer,”⁶⁵ but he in fact attempts to build this bridge, beginning by diagnosing the reasons for this inattention. In his view, it is not, or, not only, about moralism as much as it is a consequence of that “peculiar amnesia which, in the case of most people, though by no means all, hides the earliest beginnings of their childhood up to their sixth or eighth year.”⁶⁶ Already in 1905, Freud therefore theorizes the latency phase and its indispensable function for the processes of socialization.

Ten years later, Freud will feel the need to add, in the last pages of the first essay, a concise definition of “drive”:

A “drive” is provisionally to be understood the psychical representative of an endosomatic, continuously flowing source of stimulation, as contrasted with a “stimulus,” which is set up by single excitations coming from without. The concept of the drive is thus one of those lying on the frontier between the mental and the physical.⁶⁷

Since the first edition, this concept of amphibious nature is, moreover, fully operative in the second essay, where “sensual sucking”⁶⁸ is taken as the model to account for the entirety of infantile sexual life. The first stimulus of this activity comes to the infant from the outside, from the sensations established by sucking “at his mother’s breast, or at substitutes for it,”⁶⁹ but the instinct to nourish oneself offers this activity only one beginning, from which it soon acquires autonomy. In fact, Freud defines sensual sucking as

“the rhythmic repetition of sucking contact by the mouth (or lips)” in which the goal of food intake is excluded.⁷⁰ Therefore, the satisfaction it provokes consists neither in the pleasure of the flow of warm milk, nor in the subsequent sensation of satiation, but derives solely from the repetition of the movement of the lips that the psyche is able to provoke even in absence of the object on which it is originally exerted. In its place, a part of those same lips, “the tongue, or any other part of the skin within reach—even the big toe—may be taken as the object upon which this sucking is carried out.”⁷¹ Although the oral drive to suck comes from the care of adults, and in particular from nourishment, it makes the infants illusorily independent, momentarily isolating them from the world to which they are totally exposed and which they are not able to control in any way. The oral drive exhibits characteristics that can be found in other infantile sexual drives: “At its origin it attaches itself to one of the vital somatic functions; it has yet no sexual object, and is thus auto-erotic; and its sexual aim is dominated by an erotogenic zone.”⁷²

The other erotogenic zones on which Freud dwells are ones that he will later consider as dominating the different “phases”: thus the anus and the genitals become “predestined erotogenic zones.”⁷³ Even the part of the body that the child prefers to suck becomes for him a secondary erotogenic zone: essentially any part of the skin and mucous membrane, if opportunely stimulated, can become an erotogenic zone, demonstrating that the entire surface of the body is potentially a sexual organ. With caution, Freud admits to not having succeeded in understanding what differentiates the sensations that characterize sexual excitation from other pleasurable sensations, apart from the fact that an unpleasant tension accompanies them. He compares it first to tickling and then to itching.⁷⁴ He justifies his hesitations by stating that “in questions of pleasure and unpleasure” not only him, but the whole of psychology “is still so much in the dark.”⁷⁵ Instead he tries to be more precise with regard to the character of stimuli that generate sexual excitation, but rather than shutting down the question, this opens it further. In an early moment, Freud seems to want to claim that all sexual stimuli are characterized by rhythm and intensity. This would not only be justified by the movement of the lips while sucking and the alternating contraction and relaxation of the sphincter that accompanies the retention and expulsion of feces, but also in children’s other playful activities, to which Freud attributes an autoerotic character. If “children are so fond of games of passive movement, such as swinging and being thrown up into the air,”⁷⁶ Freud writes, if they love to be rocked, travel in strollers and in trains where they undergo bobbing and swaying, it is because, indeed, the “rhythmic mechanical agitation of the body”⁷⁷ provokes sexual excitation. In a second moment, Freud must, however, recognize that not all sexual stimuli have a rhythmic character: for example, a rise in temperature can provoke excitation as well as muscular exertion.⁷⁸ Despite having argued that infantile sexuality is mostly caused by stimulation of the erotogenic zones, Freud

cannot avoid registering the presence, in boys and girls, of a sexual activity that is instead released from them, and therefore does not have an autoerotic character but already turns to external objects. In fact, from the tenderest of ages, there manifest “the drives of scopophilia, exhibitionism and cruelty which appear in a sense independently of erotogenic zones; these drives do not enter into intimate relations with genital life until later.”⁷⁹ Our author then adds that “all comparatively intense affective processes, including even terrifying ones, trench upon sexuality,” that emotions and sensations that are “in themselves unpleasurable” like “apprehension, fright or horror” and certain “intensely painful feelings” have sexually exciting effects, and finally that “it is an unmistakable fact that concentration of the attention upon an intellectual task and intellectual strain in general produce a concomitant sexual excitation in many young people as well as adults.”⁸⁰ In both infants and adults, then, there are numerous stimuli that can induce excitation, it is even possible that “nothing of considerable importance can occur in the organism without contributing some component of excitation of the sexual drive.”⁸¹ Freud does not therefore succeed in attributing any specific quality to sexual stimuli, and to characterize them he does not succeed in finding anything other than the intensity of excitation, that is an intensity *in pain*: “The decisive element in these sources of sexual excitation is no doubt the quality of the stimuli, though the factor of intensity, in the case of pain, is not a matter of complete indifference.”⁸²

And here we find the “unsatisfactory conclusion” at which the *Three Essays* arrive, which I have chosen as the starting point for this discussion: in Freud’s words, the sexual remains “obscure.” But maybe for him it mostly represents a scandal, as it already had for Kant and Hobbes, since it curbs any attempt to understand the human in terms of strategic rationality. To revisit a distinction that recurs in Freud’s thought and that of his contemporaries, the sexual represents a challenge for philosophical anthropologies that contains two levels of discourse. From the ontogenetic point of view, for that which concerns the evolution of the singular subject, the drive not only precedes the reproductive instinct, but threatens the instinct of self-preservation: even after sexual maturation in puberty, the drive continues to push the subject toward a dissipative, painful, even damaging, excitation. From the phylogenetic perspective, for that which concerns the evolution of the species, the drive turns out to be highly dysfunctional because it not only dissociates sexual excitation from the purpose of reproduction, but sometimes opposes them. Freud therefore delivers a checkmate to both the anthropology of Bentham—according to whom each human being, *even* the pederast, primarily pursues their own profit and pleasure—and the metaphysics of Schopenhauer, according to whom *even* pederasty is caused by a will to life that wants to best reproduce itself. “Inversion,” which Freud largely deals with in the first and third essays, is for him one of the more evident examples of the enigmatic character of the sexual drive, and of its independence from aim and object which are generally qualified as “natural” or “normal.”⁸³

And yet, in scanning the work, which opens with a treatment of sexual aberrations and closes with an affirmation of sexual normality intended as heterosexual reproductivity, we see that Freud attempts to disassemble the uncanny outcome, to which the discovery of the sexual has led him. Some of these attempts: the 1914 addition of the theory of the phases of sexual development, the theory of sexual pleasure as discharge, and the recommendation (also added in 1914) that parents abide by the roles envisaged for them in the Oedipal structure to prevent the onset of inversion in their sons and daughters.⁸⁴ In the “Summary,” where Freud’s ambivalence reaches its peak, he cannot stop himself from declaring this outcome: “a disposition to perversions is an original and universal disposition of the human sexual instinct.”⁸⁵ To then retract it again: “and that normal sexual behavior is developed out of it as a result of organic changes and psychical inhibitions occurring in the course of maturation.”⁸⁶

The discovery of the sexual is the discovery that the human being is originally, universally, perverse. That the surface (and not only the surface) of the body offers infinite points of graft to the drive; that the drive is the detonator of a painful excitation without limits that risks consuming the subject; that the subject is a sexual bomb ready to explode in all directions disseminating terror throughout civilization (though, without producing victims); that civilization is the straightjacket that contains the sexual body (with disgust, shame, and morality), preventing the subject from blowing up. From the point of view of the singular subject, the reduction of “polymorphously perverse”⁸⁷ potentialities of the human to only the penis-vagina heterosexual coitus is therefore a wanton deprivation, which not even the perspective of the species is sufficient to justify. To attempt to justify it, it is necessary to take the point of view of civilization: according to Freud, the sexual energy not necessary for the purpose of reproduction is sublimated to make social relations possible. This thesis will have interesting developments when, drawing not only on psychoanalysis, but on Marxism as well, others elaborate revolutionary projects of sexual liberation.⁸⁸ As for Freud, he would not have given his approval to “Freudo-Marxism”: the reasons for this, already evident in the *Three Essays*, are further developed in other later works. It is not only the observation that the drive dominates human sexuality that disturbs Freud but also the observation that civilization edifies itself at the expense of sexuality, and that therefore the social life of humans is inevitably an inhibited, mutilated, and impoverished life; therefore, sexual liberation is not of this world; therefore, neither is happiness; therefore, for the human, there is no redemption.

One of Freud’s great merits, which those who want to “do justice” to him must recognize, is that his metapsychological reflection about the ontology of the drives does not stop when faced with the scandal of the sexual. It is true that Freud has tried to hide the scandal behind a declaration of failure, but his dissatisfaction pushed him to continue with his research, until he explored that abyss from which Hobbes and Kant ran for cover. In the end,

of course, even he searched for protection, but first he had the courage to take risks. Feeling his way through this obscure region, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929), Freud detects a drive that pushes the subject not only to the dissipation of its energies but also to its own extinction: the death drive. The relations, more controversial than conflicting, that this entertains with the sexual drive will be the subject of the next chapter.

Notes

- 1 Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 264 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), I.I.9, 1253 a, p9. See also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library 73 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926).
- 2 Thomas Hobbes, "Epistle Dedicatory," in *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 25. Hobbes draws the famous expression "*homo homini lupus*" from Plautus's *Asinaria* or *The One with the Asses*. The capacity to speak, which for Aristotle facilitates social life, is for Hobbes a source of strife because it allows one to "represent to others, that which is Good in the likeness of Evil; and Evil, in the likeness of Good; and augment, or diminish the apparent greatness of Good and Evil; discontenting men, and troubling their Peace at their pleasure." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 119–120.
- 3 Trans. The original French title, *La volonté de savoir*, is typically translated into English as *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Because the Italian here is a more direct translation of the French, *La volontà di sapere*, and because Bernini eventually discusses other volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, I refer to this work in-text throughout as *The Will to Knowledge* and use the usual English title *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* for citational footnotes.
- 4 Michel Foucault, *The History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge 2006), 339, emphasis his.
- 5 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), 404. Derrida has registered the absence, in Foucault's *The History of Madness* and *The History of Sexuality*, of a reflection on that which *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) represents in the history of psychological thought. It seems to me, instead, that—as far as it is possible to deduce even from these words alone—in *The Order of Things* Foucault recognizes the value of the theory of the death drive that Freud proposes for the first time in that text. See, Jacques Derrida, "To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, *Critical Inquiry*, 20, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 227–266.
- 6 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 150.
- 7 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 105–106.
- 8 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 18.
- 9 As Derrida reminds us in *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), for his part, Freud refused to attribute any philosophical foundations to his metapsychological theories, arguing that such theories, even in their more abstract passages, remain anchored in analytic observation (see Freud, *An Autobiographical Study*, SE 20,

- 59). As Derrida observes, this clarification sounds somewhat suspect. Both Jean Laplanche and Leo Bersani insist on the fully philosophical theoretical foundations of Freudian metapsychology and above all on its character as “disturbance” to the normativity necessary in the clinic: see, Jean Laplanche, “Freud and Philosophy,” in *Freud and the Sexual: 2000–2006*, ed. John Fletcher, trans. John Fletcher, Jonathan House, Nicholas Ray (New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011), 267–274; Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 1–6.
- 10 See, for example, Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).
- 11 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal that Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008); *The Beast and the Sovereign* vol. 1–2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- 12 The vasectomy operation, tying of the seminal tubes, which Freud underwent was known at the time as the “Steinach operation,” or “Steinach vasoligature,” named after Eugen Steinach, the physiologist that invented it. As Paul B. Preciado recalls: “Steinach’s idea was more dependent on concepts of sexual hydraulics or the physics of vital fluids than it was on a molecular understanding of excitation: obstructing external sperm ducts would produce an increase in sexual power and a generalized rejuvenation. Freud underwent Steinach’s operation on November 17, 1923. As he would explain in a letter to his friend Ferenczi: ‘I’m hoping to improve my sexuality, my physical condition in general and my ability for work.’ After the surgery, Freud said that he felt better, but above all, he confessed to Otto Rank, the operation had aroused in him a desire for Dr. Pichler—Freud’s surgeon.” Paul Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), 358.
- 13 Jean Laplanche, “Drive and Instinct: Distinctions, Oppositions, Supports and Intertwinings,” in *Freud and the Sexual: Essays 2000–2006*, 7.
- 14 Laplanche, “Drive and Instinct,” 11.
- 15 In the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, which I will analyze shortly, Freud does not yet speak of hormones, of which he could not have known the precise function. In 1905, when this work was published, British physiologists Ernest Henry Starling and John William Maddock Bayliss coined the term “hormone,” deriving it from the Greek verb *horman*, to excite, to incite. See Ernest Starling, *The Croonian Lectures of the Chemical Correlations of the Body* (London: Women’s Printing Society, 1905). However, ever since the first edition of the *Three Essays*, Freud mentions the influence of the thyroid gland on sexual arousal and, in the fourth edition of 1920, speaks of “special chemical substances” produced by “sex-glands” that would not coincide with the gonads but with the “interstitial portions of the sex-glands.” Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 215.
- 16 Laplanche, “Drive and Instinct,” 22.
- 17 A term borrowed from Gilbert Simondon, *L’individuation psychique et collective: a la lumière de notions de forme, information, potentiel et métastabilité* (Paris: Aubier, 2007).
- 18 If the drive is caused by the care of adults on the infant, nothing is stopping us from hypothesizing its existence in all homeothermic animals, in which the phenomenon of parental care appears. Through experience I can confirm with certainty that the sexual impulses of my dog Dodo are not limited to reproductive instinct. On this point Laplanche (“Drive and Instinct,” 15) recalls the ethological studies of Lorenz (Konrad Lorenz, *King Solomon’s Ring: New Light on Animal Ways*, trans. Marjorie Kerr Wilson [London: Routledge, 2002]) on *imprinting*, and asks what then constitutes the specificity of the human. He excludes language, since different forms of communication also exist in other animal species,

and concludes that it is the unconscious. In the *Three Essays*, Freud limits himself to demonstrating that only in human beings does sexual development proceed in two periods, comprising a latent phase—which, as I will show in a moment, is fundamental for the development of civilization in his view. I confess that I do not know much about the phases of sexual development in dogs, but Dodo is without a doubt a rather civilized being. I do not know if he has an unconscious. I am not even sure if I have one. In any case, dogs will assume an important role later in this book, in the third section of chapter 6.

- 19 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 243.
- 20 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 204.
- 21 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 64, emphasis mine.
- 22 To emphasize Freud's originality, Laplanche uses, in French, the German "sexual," in place of the current French "sexuel": "*Infantile sexuality* is Freud's great discovery. It is the 'sexual' enlarged beyond the limits of the difference between the sexes and beyond sexual reproduction. It is the sexuality of the component drives, connected to erogenous zones and functioning on the model of *Vorlust*—a term in which we again encounter the word *Lust* as meaning pleasure and desire simultaneously. *Vorlust* might be called 'fore-pleasure-desire,' since it is not the pleasure attendant upon the reduction of tension but on the increase of tension. Indeed, there is nothing to suggest that this infantile 'pleasure-desire' corresponds to any internal physiological tension and that requires discharge." Laplanche, "Drive and Instinct", 19.
- 23 For more on the wild aspect of "the sexual" see Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire* (Durham: Duke, 2020).
- 24 An important essay on the concept of the drive in Freud and Laplanche is also Teresa de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), which I will examine in the last chapter of this study.
- 25 Freud's vocabulary is on its own revelatory of the normative character of his clinical work: here "partial" means "non-genital."
- 26 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 197.
- 27 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 198.
- 28 In the second footnote, added in 1910, Freud admits that in 1905, his theses relied almost exclusively on "the results of psycho-analytic research upon adults." However, he follows this up by noting "that direct observation has fully confirmed the conclusions arrived at by psychoanalysis." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 193. Here he refers to two of his studies from 1908: *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*, SE 10, 1–150, and "On the Sexual Theories of Children," SE 9, 205–226.
- 29 Freud, *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, SE 23, 36.
- 30 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 198.
- 31 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 198.
- 32 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 198.
- 33 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 186.
- 34 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 187.
- 35 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 188.
- 36 See Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 195 and note 2 on page 199 where Freud cites his 1923 study *The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido* (which can be found in SE 19, 139–146). In the third essay, our author explains that, consisting in the stimulation of the clitoris, "the sexuality of little girls is of a wholly masculine character," and furthermore, the "libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 219.

- 37 Freud gives a particularly clear and concise treatment of this phase in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*: “But now the paths of the sexes diverge. The boy enters the Oedipus phase; he begins to manipulate his penis and simultaneously has phantasies of carrying out some sort of activity with it in relation to his mother, till, owing to the combined effect of a threat of castration and the sight of the absence of a penis in females, he experiences the greatest trauma of his life and this introduces the period of latency with all its consequences. The girl, after vainly attempting to do the same as the boy, comes to recognize her lack of penis or rather the inferiority of her clitoris, with permanent effects on the development of her character; as a result of this first disappointment in rivalry, she often begins by turning away altogether from sexual life.” Freud, *Outline of Psychoanalysis*, SE 23, 154–155.
- 38 “It is popularly believed that a human being is either a man or a woman. Science, however, knows of cases in which the sexual characters are obscured, and in which it is consequently difficult to determine the sex. This arises in the first instance in the field of anatomy. The genitals of the individuals concerned combine male and female characteristics. (This condition is known as hermaphroditism.) In rare cases both kinds of sexual apparatus are found side by side fully developed (true hermaphroditism); but far more frequently both sets of organs are found in an atrophied condition. The importance of these abnormalities lies in the unexpected fact that they facilitate our understanding of normal development. For it appears that a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs normally.” See Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 140–148.
- 39 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 179.
- 40 “The various channels along which the libido passes are related to each other from the very first like intercommunicating pipes, and we must take the phenomenon of collateral flow into account.” Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 151, note 1.
- 41 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 177.
- 42 “What is it that goes to the making of these constructions which are so important for the growth of a civilized and normal individual? They probably emerge at the cost of the infantile sexual impulses themselves. Thus the activity of those impulses does not cease even during this period of latency, though their energy is diverted, wholly or in great part, from their sexual use and directed to other ends.” Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 178. It seems possible to infer from this thesis that the same activity of sexual repression is nourished by sexual energy and provokes sexual excitement—and that therefore moralizers, censors, and champions of public decorum are, in reality, the great perverts. For example, who knows how much “hunger” lies behind Kant’s culinary metaphors!
- 43 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 177.
- 44 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 178.
- 45 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 162.
- 46 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 211.
- 47 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 211.
- 48 Following the publication of “The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido” (1923).
- 49 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 204.
- 50 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 207. Later he explains that with puberty, while the boy experiences the “great accession of libido,” the girl is marked by “a fresh wave of repression, in which it is precisely clitoridal sexuality that is affected.” And denying herself of females would have the effect of ultimately intensifying the libido in men (221). Male development is “the more understandable” for Freud, because he thinks that the libido is male, and male is, for him, the sexuality of females in infantile ages. See notes 36 and 37 above.

- 51 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 207.
- 52 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 208.
- 53 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 210.
- 54 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 221.
- 55 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 33.
- 56 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 32.
- 57 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 33.
- 58 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 209.
- 59 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 178.
- 60 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 207.
- 61 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 39.
- 62 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 34.
- 63 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 173.
- 64 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 173.
- 65 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 176.
- 66 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 174.
- 67 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 168.
- 68 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 179. Trans. In the English translation of Freud, Strachey uses the very specific term “thumb-sucking,” but adds a note that Freud uses “lutsehen” and “ludeln,” to “suck” and to “loll,” similar to the action taken with a lollipop. The specificity thumb-sucking in English, should therefore be understood in a more general way.
- 69 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 181.
- 70 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 179–180.
- 71 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 180.
- 72 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 182–183. The first characteristic is added in the third edition. On page 181 Freud reminds us that the term “autoerotic” was used by the English sexologist Havelock Ellis, just as on page 179 he mentions the studies of Hungarian pediatrician Samuel Linder on sucking.
- 73 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 183.
- 74 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 183 and 184.
- 75 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 183.
- 76 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 201.
- 77 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 201.
- 78 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 202–203.
- 79 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 192. Trans. The Italian translation of Freud and thus Bernini use “sexual life” here, but in the English translation there is a footnote indicating that it appeared as “sexual life” in the 1905 and 1910 editions and switched to “genital life” in later editions.
- 80 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 203–204. In the fifth section titled “The Sexual Researches of Childhood,” that is the sexual theories elaborated by children, Freud argues that in these “the drive for knowledge” (194) is primarily activated by the processes of generation and differentiation of sexes. This section was added to the 1914 edition along with the following section “The Phases of Development of the Sexual Organization.”
- 81 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 205.
- 82 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 204.
- 83 “It will be seen that we are not in a position to base a satisfactory explanation of the origin of inversion upon the material at present before us. Nevertheless our investigation has put us in possession of a piece of knowledge which may turn out to be of greater importance to us than the solution of that problem [...] It seems probable that the sexual drive is in the first instance independent of its object; nor

- is its origin likely to be due to its object's attractions." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 146 and 148.
- 84 "One of the tasks implicit in object-choice is that it should find its way to the opposite sex." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 229. "It may be presumed [...] that in the case of men a childhood recollection of the affection shown them by their mother and others of the female sex who looked after them when they were children contributes powerfully to directing their choice towards women; on the other hand their early experience of being deferred by their father from sexual activity and their competitive relation with him deflect them from their own sex. Both of these two factors apply equally to girls, whose sexual activity is particularly subject to the watchful guardianship of their mother. They thus acquire a hostile relation to their own sex which influences their object-choice decisively in what is regarded as the normal direction." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 229–230.
- 85 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 231.
- 86 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 231.
- 87 "Polymorphously Perverse Disposition" is the title of the fifth sub-section of the fourth section of the second essay, dedicated to "Masturbatory Sexual Manifestations."
- 88 I examine this in Chapters 4 and 5 of this book.

References

- Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Volume 264, Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Volume 73, Loeb Classical Library 73. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Edited by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud. Volumes 1–2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009–2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal that Therefore I Am*. Translated by David Wills. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- Derrida, Jacques. "To Do Justice to Freud": The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis." Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 227–266.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Madness*. Translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa. Edited by Jean Khalfa. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Random House, 1970.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.

- Freud, Sigmund. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. In *SE* 23 (1938): 139–208.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In *SE* 21 (1930): 57–146.
- Freud, Sigmund. “An Autobiographical Study.” In *SE* 20 (1925): 1–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. “The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido (An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality).” In *SE* 19 (1923): 139–146.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In *SE* 18 (1920): 1–64.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*. In *SE* 10 (1909): 1–150.
- Freud, Sigmund. “On the Sexual Theories of Children.” In *SE* 9 (1908): 205–226.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In *SE* 7 (1905): 123–246.
- Halberstam, Jack. *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*. Durham: Duke, 2020.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*, edited by Howard Warrender. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Laplanche, Jean, *Freud and the Sexual: 2000–2006*. Translated by John Fletcher, trans. John Fletcher, Jonathan House, Nicholas Ray. Edited by John Fletcher. New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011.
- Lorenz, Konrad. *King Solomon’s Ring: New Light on Animal Ways*. Translated by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Preciado, Paul. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press, 2013.
- Simondon, Gilbert. *L’individuation psychique et collective: a la lumière de notions de forme, information, potentiel et métastabilité*. Paris: Aubier, 2007.
- Starling, Ernest. *The Croonian Lectures of the Chemical Correlations of the Body*. London: Women’s Printing Society, 1905.

3 Sigmund on the Couch

Which is the devil that impels Freud to write? What the devil by impelling him to write in sum writes in his place without ever writing anything himself? [...] Which is the revenant? To whom, to what, and from whence will he come back? It is in the future that the question will be asked.

Jacques Derrida, "To Speculate—On 'Freud'"

3.1 The Forbidden Step

An irony of fate: the same Lou Salomé who refused one of Nietzsche's many marriage proposals is named in a note in the second of the *Three Essays* as the one who theorized that "the prohibition against getting pleasure from anal activity and its products" is the child's first experience of the distinction between their "own entity" and the external world that limits their impulsive movements.¹ "From that time on," Freud remarks, "what is 'anal' remains the symbol of everything that is to be repudiated and excluded from life."² Another woman, Sabina Spielrein, appears in a note in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, as the one who—"in an instructive and interesting paper" but "unfortunately not entirely clear"³—anticipated Freud's "speculations" on what, from within life, aims to reject and take away life itself. To tell the truth, as John Kerr suggests, far from having "'anticipated' the idea of a death drive," Spielrein's contribution cited by Freud "was that *sexuality* brought with it such themes as that of dying in the arms of the beloved. Which is quite a different thing."⁴

In Spielrein's reflection, love, sex, and death are therefore tightly bound together. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, however, detaches the third term from the first two. The text is short but very dense, at times convoluted, and because of this is liable to different interpretations. Freud, in a letter to Ferenczi, defines it as "quite unclear" and leaves the reader the work of "making the right thing out of it."⁵ Published in December of 1920 (this text was also reworked in the subsequent editions of 1921, 1923, and 1925), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is often considered to be a consequence of the First World War on Freud's reflections. Among other things, he had experienced the agonizing concern of having all three of his sons (Oliver, Ernst,

and Martin) at the war's front.⁶ It has also been interpreted as an expression of Freud's depression following the death of his beloved daughter Sophie from pneumonia, which occurred on January 25 of the same year. Yet if we read it as a continuation of the theoretical reflections he began in the *Three Essays*, it loses much of this somber quality and instead acquires a sense of comfort. According to Leo Bersani,⁷ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* represents a new attempt to temper the disturbing result of the discovery of the sexual. In this sense, the book does not argue what the title promises: rather than leading the reader beyond the pleasure principle, Freud holds fast to this principle; he clings tightly to it and lets all that contradicts it in his sexual theory drift away. As if he were no longer able to endure the idea of a sexual drive that pushes the human to an unpleasurable and potentially dangerous excitation, our author finds shelter, as he himself admits, in "the harbour of Schopenhauer's philosophy. For him death is the 'true result and to that extent the purpose of life,' while the sexual drive is the embodiment of the will to live."⁸ With all due respect to Dufourmantelle, the sexual drive is thus brought back in Freud, together with the self-preserving and reproductive instinct, in the riverbed of the "Eros of the poets and philosophers which holds all living things together."⁹ Alongside the sexual drive, though quite distinct from it, Freud posits the existence of a death drive—yet not even this leads one beyond the pleasure principle. As Derrida notes in "To Speculate—On 'Freud,'" "the step beyond remains interdicted," and the pleasure principle stubbornly reappears in all the cases that should be examples of its absence.¹⁰ Must we therefore conclude that, in the end, even the founding father of psychoanalysis missed an encounter with the sexual? It seems to me that the psychic mechanism itself, which can be found at the center of the analysis in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, prevents this argument. Spurred by a "repetition compulsion," Freud renews the sexual appointment that upset him so much in the *Three Essays*, only to escape from it once again. The trauma of the sexual has clearly left an indelible mark on the unconscious of his thought.

In the first of the seven sections that comprise this intricate little book, the sexual is barely evoked only to be quickly cast aside (repressed). Once again taking up a thesis already developed in the *Three Essays*, Freud reiterates that the definition of pleasure and unpleasure—meant here in a broad sense, not only in the sexual sense—remains "the most obscure and inaccessible region of the mind."¹¹ It is, however, reasonable to hypothesize that there is a certain "correspondence" between pleasure and the diminution of excitation, between unpleasure and an increase in excitation, even if it is not a "directly proportional ratio."¹² The expression, "pleasure principle," therefore names a tendency of the psychic apparatus to "keep the quantity of excitation present in it as low as possible or at least to keep it constant."¹³ This is, for Freud, an essential tendency, which, however, does not always succeed in imposing its own "dominance." *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is presented as the attempt to investigate which "forces"¹⁴ succeed in opposing

this dominance, in negating it, in “overcoming” it. Our author assesses several different hypotheses; and each time he does the flow of his thoughts forces him to correct or abandon these conjectures. Indeed, even when Freud does fully develop them, he does not manage to convince himself (in fact, he refuses to).¹⁵ The first of these hypotheses is that the pleasure principle conflicts with the “reality principle” which, if Lou Salomé is right, the infant first encounters in the form of an inhibition of the anal drive. This principle “demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction, the abandonment of a number of possibilities of gaining satisfaction and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long indirect road to pleasure.”¹⁶ The reality principle therefore only appears to prompt one to renounce pleasure; limiting itself, instead, to postponing pleasure to preserve both the life of the single subject and the life of society, thereby guaranteeing the possibility of pleasure in the future.

Freud continues: “Another occasion of the release of unpleasure, which occurs with no less regularity, is to be found in the conflicts and dissensions that take place in the mental apparatus”¹⁷ due to the failures of the process of repression. It is at this point in the text that the sexual drives make their first brief appearance: in fact, we find out that under their influence the pleasure principle “succeeds in overcoming the reality principle, to the detriment of the organism as a whole”¹⁸ and that this success “in struggling through, by roundabout paths, to a direct or substantive satisfaction [...], which would in other cases have been an opportunity for pleasure, is felt by the ego as unpleasure.”¹⁹ These words should be read carefully. The unpleasure named here has nothing to do with the unpleasure that, in the *Three Essays*, we know to be correlated with sexual excitation, and really it is not even an unpleasure; instead, it is “pleasure that cannot be felt as such”²⁰ by those who feel guilty for having transgressed the reality principle. It is a “neurotic unpleasure,”²¹ and at the same time a pleasure, and in fact—as will become evident shortly—a pleasure according to a very specific schema: it is, after all, orgasm, which releases the tension of excitation and with it the sexual products that allows for reproduction.²² The function of this first section of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is to therefore renounce the *Three Essays* and to redirect the sexual drives under that adult-centric, phallic-centric, and heterosexist yoke in which *Trieb* (drive) coincides with *Instinkt* (instinct) and sex’s function as the pleasure of the singular subject toward the perpetuation of the species.

Without this first section, Freud could not carry out the long speculation that traverses the fourth, fifth, and sixth, in which he explains the evolution of the life from single-cell organisms to human beings and to their communities with the action of a force that pushes the organic substances to unite “into ever larger unities.”²³ Following Empedocles and Plato, as I have anticipated, Freud calls this force “Eros,” but also “the life drive.”²⁴ By virtue of Eros, “the cells of the soma are attached to one another”²⁵ and “the portions of living substance”²⁶ remain united. Eros also manifests—as our

author argues after his abjuration—"the sexual drives," which "by every possible means" pursue the aim of "the coalescence of two germ-cells" to "prolong the cell's life and lend it the appearance of immortality."²⁷ However, Eros does not have an easy task: since the origins of life—the moment of the "coming to life of inorganic substance"—Eros struggles against an antagonistic force, "the 'death drive,'"²⁸ under whose influence life tends to return to "the inanimate state"²⁹ from which it came. For Freud, this is an inextinguishable conflict that the sexual act is able to neutralize under certain conditions. In his view, in fact, if the sexual drives are expressions of the life drive, the pleasure principle, in its tendency to keep levels of excitation low and to search for stillness, is instead a product of the death drive. Yet, rather than diverging, the sexual drives and the pleasure principle converge when a male and female body unite in coitus:

Let us make a sharper distinction than we have hitherto made between function and tendency. The pleasure principle, then, is a tendency operating in the service of a function whose business it is to free the mental apparatus entirely from excitation or to keep the amount of excitation in it constant or to keep it as low as possible. We cannot yet decide with certainty in favour of any of these ways of putting it; but it is clear that the function thus described would be concerned with the most universal endeavour of all living substance—namely to return to the quiescence of the inorganic world. We have all experienced how the greatest pleasure attainable by us, that of the sexual act, is associated with a momentary extinction of a highly intensified excitation. The binding of the drive's movement would be a preliminary function designed to prepare the excitation for its final elimination in the pleasure of discharge.³⁰

To summarize: Freud argues in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that the sexual intersects with the death drive only to the extent that it provokes the pleasure of the orgasm, which discharges sexual excitation. The sexual is therefore a life drive—so much so that Freud pushes himself to affirm that "the original opposition between the ['self-preservative drives'] and the sexual drive proved to be inadequate."³¹ After all, for him, the death drive is even self-preservative. It does not, in fact, push the subject to suicide, which, as with Kant, for Freud essentially remains an act "against nature." On the contrary, the death drive has the function of assuring "that the organism shall follow its own path to death, and to ward off any possible ways of returning to inorganic existence other than those which are immanent in the organism itself."³² The death drive is, therefore, the drive to "natural" death, which makes the portrait of the human being treated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* very reassuring: with the understanding that we must die, the death drive and the pleasure principle, which is the expression of the death drive, aim to make us live as long as possible, and the sexual drive aims to prolong the life of the species, along with our own lives. The contrast

between life drive and death drive is therefore more theoretical than actual, and in any case the contrast does not represent a threat to the pleasure principle.³³ Or does it?

3.2 Demons

In reality, this summary does not account for the last sentence from the citation above: the thesis with which *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* concludes is valid only insofar as the sexual drive is “preliminarily bound” to the pleasure principle in such a way that its action of exciting the organism, unpleasurable in itself, is directed toward its own extinguishment (“its final elimination in the pleasure of discharge”). Therefore, his conclusion rests on the condition that the infantile sexual is removed in favor of the (hetero) sexual adult. In the brief passage on the sexual drives in the first section, Freud commits a significant slip: when observing how the sexual drives are “hard to ‘educate,’”³⁴ he in fact admits how difficult it is *for him* to “educate” the infantile sexual with regard to reproductive heterosexuality. It is so difficult that, in the third section, the infantile sexual erupts with the force of a trauma (which is then readily repressed). The third section is dedicated to transference, which is a second interesting symptom to be interpreted: in fact, the return of the repressed sexual also intervenes in the transference of Freud toward his readers, creating a tear in the logical coherence of his line of reasoning. It is therefore as if the great psychoanalyst unconsciously wants to signal that something in this text “does not work”; that a not inconsiderable part of the human experience escapes his attempt to make sense of it within the flow of life. It seems to me that the following hypothesis is therefore tenable: it is a reaction-formation for Freud to persistently cling to the pleasure principle until it coincides with the death drive; this is his attempt to not plummet into the hole of meaning that the drive opens under his feet.

The second and third sections constitute as sort of parenthesis in the argument that crosses through the rest of the book. Here Freud abandons speculation to turn to an analysis of clinical data: with its biographical and historical determinations, concrete experience enters the entanglement of abstract hypotheses. His research into the forces that oppose the pleasure principle are here carried out first by using three examples that testify to the presence of a “compulsion to repeat”³⁵ unpleasurable experiences in the human, which—as we will see—Freud does not hesitate to qualify as “demonic.”³⁶ The first is provided by the veterans of the “terrible war which has just ended,” who are often struck by a “comprehensive general enfeeblement and disturbance of the mental capacities,” comparable to hysteria, yet more serious. For Freud, the cause of this “traumatic neurosis”³⁷ must be sought in the experience of a strong fright or surprise, which the subject strives to not remember “in their waking lives,”³⁸ but which returns to persecute them “in their dream lives,” in the form of recurring nightmares.

In the hypothesis developed in the *Interpretation of Dreams*, according to which dreams have a “wish-fulfilling tenor,” these nightmares would reveal “the mysterious masochistic trends of the ego.”³⁹ However, Freud refuses this conclusion—though without explaining why—in favor of a different thesis, according to which “the function of dreaming [...] is upset in this condition and diverted from its purposes.”⁴⁰ He therefore proposes “to leave the dark and dismal subject of the traumatic neurosis”⁴¹ to pass on to the second example. This is how he opens onto one of the most discussed passages of this work, the interpretation of the “first game played by a little boy of one and a half and invented by himself.”⁴²

The child enjoys repeatedly throwing “a wooden reel with a piece of string tied to it” “over the edge of his curtained cot so that it disappeared into it,”⁴³ staging in this way—or at least as Freud interprets it—a distancing of the mother that he succeeds in controlling. He had learned to not shed a tear when the mother left for a few hours, but our author makes the assessment that “the child cannot possibly have felt his mother’s departure as something agreeable or even indifferent,”⁴⁴ and he argues that the repetition of this “distressing experience as a game”⁴⁵ is explainable with the pleasure of revenge: “All right, then, go away! I don’t need you. I’m sending you away myself.”⁴⁶ Analogously, the following year, while his father was in the war, the child had taken to throwing his toys to the ground yelling, “Go to the fwont!”⁴⁷ Evoking the Oedipus complex, though without naming it, Freud tells us: “He had heard at the time that his absent father was ‘at the front,’ and was far from regretting his absence; on the contrary he made it quite clear that he had no desire to be disturbed in his sole possession of his mother.”⁴⁸ A note follows this line, in which we understand that, however, when his mother died at age “five and three-quarters,” the child “showed no signs of grief.”⁴⁹

To introduce the entire sequence of events, Freud recounts having “lived under the same roof as the child and his parents for some weeks.”⁵⁰ He does not add anything else, but he knows well, Derrida suggests, that his discretion hides an “open secret.”⁵¹ It does not take long for the critical literature on this scene to discover that the circumstance of Freud’s observations was essentially a family vacation: the child in question was none other than Ernst, Freud’s first-born grandson, the son of Sophie, his daughter who died in the same year he published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Therefore, Freud’s writing could also be read as an attempt to make peace with the image of little Ernst: the game with the wooden reel and the joy from the absence of the father during the war demonstrate how fond he was of Sophie, so that Ernst’s indifference to her death, which Freud notes, could be justified as a “violent jealousy”⁵² because of the birth of his little brother Heinz. In this way, Freud manages to avoid disgracing his grandson twice: even though he showed himself to be insensitive to his mother’s death, Ernst cannot be accused of lacking emotions; while insistently repeating an experience that we would presume to be painful for him in the form of a game,

he cannot be charged with masochism (just as the hypothesis of masochism has thus already been rejected in the case of traumatic neurosis). At the same time, when Freud described him as a child who “was not at all precocious in his intellectual development”⁵³ it is possible to presume that Freud is somehow taking revenge on him.⁵⁴ It is especially possible to recognize the little symbolic punishments Ernst carried out against his mother as a projection of Sigmund’s pain regarding the loss of Sophie. Despite boasting his own composed reaction in the face of mourning to his friend Ferenczi,⁵⁵ Freud writes that he would like to still “have” Sophie again; it is clear that he is the one who would perhaps have preferred the death of his son-in-law to that of his daughter. Or that perhaps Freud would like to take revenge on his grandson who does not suffer enough, or on the contrary, to explain his grandson’s behavior to be able to make peace with him. Or, finally, that he envies his grandson, because thread and a reel are not enough for him to take revenge on the unbearable pain that his daughter has caused him by dying.⁵⁶ What is certain in this blossoming of hypotheses is that not even little Ernst leads us into the promised “beyond,” because for his shrewd grandfather, Ernst’s playful revenge is a source of pleasure.

Then the third section begins, where a third example is taken from the clinic. Freud refers to how neurotic patients manifest a strong “compulsion to repeat” repressed traumatic experiences in the relation of transference with their psychoanalyst which “always have as their subject some portion of infantile sexual life—of the Oedipus complex, that is, and its derivatives.”⁵⁷ Therapeutic work, in fact, loosens repression and allows the unconscious to express itself, dumping onto the analyst the feelings experienced during childhood regarding the parents during the Oedipal phase.⁵⁸ In some cases, this return of the repressed provokes feelings of guilt that for Freud, as we have seen, do not conflict with the pleasure principle.⁵⁹ Yet in other cases, “the compulsion to repeat also recalls experiences from the past which include no possibility of pleasure, and which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed.”⁶⁰ Freud reminds us that the sexual drives of children, beyond being inhibited by parents, do not actually know the discharge in orgasm:

The early efflorescence of infantile sexual life is doomed to extinction because its wishes are incompatible with reality and with the inadequate stage of development which the child has reached. That efflorescence comes to an end in the most distressing circumstances and to the accompaniment of the most painful feelings. Loss of love and failure leave behind them a permanent injury to self-regard in the form of a narcissistic scar, which [...] contributes more than anything to the “sense of inferiority” which is so common in neurotics.⁶¹

However, it is precisely these humiliating conflicts that insistently re-emerge in analytic transference,⁶² in a compulsion to repeat, the

manifestations of which “exhibit to a high degree a driven character and, when they act in opposition to the pleasure principle, give the appearance of some ‘daemonic’ force at work.”⁶³ The evocation of infernal powers opens a digression on the concept of “trauma” rather important for our purposes in which Freud manifests, though for a brief time, “courage to assume that there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle.”⁶⁴ Elaborating a bold comparison between single-cell organisms and consciousness, he defines as “‘traumatic’ any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to” open “a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli.”⁶⁵ Trauma’s power, he continues, brings about “a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism’s energy” and puts the pleasure principle “out of action”: there therefore arises “the problem of mastering the amounts of stimulus which have broken in and of binding them, in the psychical sense, so that they can then be disposed of.”⁶⁶ It becomes clear a few pages later that Freud is here also talking about trauma caused by an insurgence of the infantile sexual drive (which, as we know, does not come from inside the organism, but is fixed to its surfaces), of the biological necessity to suspend action during the latency phase and to subordinate such action to the pleasure of orgasm after puberty. This occurs when, explicitly referencing the *Three Essays*, our author reminds us that in his view, “mechanical agitation must be recognized as one of the sources of sexual excitation,”⁶⁷ and he reasons that “the mechanical violence of the trauma would liberate a quantity of sexual excitation.”⁶⁸ He concludes:

In the case of a person in analysis, on the contrary, the compulsion to repeat the events of his childhood in the transference evidently disregards the pleasure principle in every way. The patient behaves in a purely infantile fashion and thus shows us that the repressed memory-traces of his *primaeva* experience are not present in him in a bound state and are indeed in a sense incapable of obeying the secondary process [...] It may be presumed, too, that when people unfamiliar with analysis feel an obscure fear—a dread of rousing something that, so they feel, is better left sleeping—what they are afraid of at bottom is the emergence of this compulsion with its hint of possession by some “daemonic” power.⁶⁹

In the existence of the singular subject the sexual drive is therefore more “original” not only of the reality principle that is established through the repression of the “anal” element but also of the pleasure principle (which is after all the origin of the reality principle). To establish its dominance over the psychic apparatus, the pleasure principle must be able to “bind it”—to channel the excitation that it procures toward discharge.⁷⁰ *The force which eminently opposes the pleasure principle is therefore infantile sexuality*, and the reason for which psychoanalysis is so restless is that, having discovered this force, it leads each patient to rediscover it in themselves. The hypothesis

of original masochism, which in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud continues to take into consideration and then reject, he had therefore already known for some time. And yet for him it also does not stop being a great source of anxiety and repression: having begun with the abjuration of the *Three Essays*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* ends with an attempt to exorcise the human, not from the death drive, but from the sexual drive. Indeed, he gives the sexual drive the status of a demon that insistently returns, meanwhile the death drive inspires a speculation that leads to the non-demonic outcomes that we have reported above. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* could then have been more honestly titled *Beyond the Sexual*, because it is the unpleasurable power of excitation that Freud actually tries to leave behind, even binding death to pleasure.

Have we finished the session? Not yet. There is one symptom left to interpret: the citation that closes the book, which Freud takes from Maqâmât of al-Hariri: “What we cannot reach flying we must reach limping ... The Book tells us it is no sin to limp.”⁷¹

Of course, to limp is not a sin. It is a sin, however, to impair oneself to once again avoid arriving at an embarrassing truth that previously, while feeling one’s way, one had managed to reach. The farewell that Freud borrows from al-Hariri sounds like an *excusatio non petita* for a contradictory and unresolved text that does not have the last word. Does the sexual really intersect with the death instinct only to the extent that it causes the pleasure of orgasm that discharges excitation? Is there really no other death drive in the human being than the one that drives us to maintain a peaceful and quiet life for as long as possible? Sigmund does not really seem satisfied by his conclusions; rather than placating his demons, he excites them even more. The appointment must therefore be renewed. He will return to lie down on our couch.

3.3 Again and Again

Three years after the death of Mamma Sophie, in 1923, little Heinz, of whom his older brother Ernst is very jealous, has his tonsils removed. At the same time, Grandpa Sigmund—an avid cigar smoker—undergoes his first operation for Leukoplakia: realizing that the situation is serious, he fears that he is nearing the end. In fact, the lesion will develop into an epithelioma of the oral cavity, with bone metastasis; but its progression will be slow and painful. Freud will live with the sickness for sixteen years, undergoing thirty-two operations, including the removal of his jaw and the insertion of a prosthesis. In 1923, he bolsters himself by joking with his grandson about their two operations, two mouths, his own and his grandson’s, as if they were the same operation, the same mouth “eating itself and speaking through what it eats.”⁷² But Heinerle (Heinz), “son of the war”⁷³ has a much more “fragile” constitution than Freud, and due to post-operation complications, aggravated by onset miliary tuberculosis, dies at age five. It is

a very difficult loss for the grandfather. His daughter, his grandson: the succession of generations oriented toward the future by the pleasure principle can now only sound to him as an illusory, off-balance, mocking illusion. In 1926, he writes to Ludwig Binswanger: “since Heinerle’s death, I have no longer cared for my grandchildren, but find no enjoyment in life either. This is also the secret of my indifference—it has been called courage—towards the threat to my own life.”⁷⁴ And again, in 1928, to Ernest Jones: “It was only three years later, in June 1923, when little Heinerle died, that I became tired of life permanently.”⁷⁵

Unfortunately, life’s misfortunes do not end here. In 1930, after the death of his mother Amalia Nathanson, Freud confesses to Jones that he finally feels free to die,⁷⁶ not having ever accepted the idea that his beloved parent should endure the agony of the loss of a child, which was a feeling so familiar to him. Yet he will have to live nine more years, with great physical and moral suffering, while the world around him is lost in a distressing drift. After Hitler takes power in 1933, Freud’s works are banned. After the annexation of Austria to the Third Reich in 1938, deprived of his Austrian citizenship, together with a part of his family, our author obtains political asylum in London. He will die there on September 21, 1939, after two days of unconsciousness caused by the morphine administered to quell his excruciating pain.

Written in 1929, *Civilization and Its Discontents* came out in German and English in 1930. In 1922, Mussolini had taken power in Italy; in 1925, Hitler published *Mein Kampf* in Germany, in which he outlines his eugenicist and racist program of National Socialism⁷⁷ and clearly theorizes the project of conquering space vital to the German nation against Communism and Judaism. However, no one could have foreseen the reach of the imminent catastrophe: the almost sixty million dead in the second major world conflict in the 20th century, the extermination of millions of Jews in the concentration camps—among whom were four of Freud’s sisters—and with them Rom and Sinti, Jehovah’s witnesses, homosexual, trans, and disabled people, the mentally ill, and political dissidents. Still, no one can yet imagine the unimaginable. And yet Freud, whose profound personal grief allowed him to apprehend the somber spirit of the time, writes a pervasive and greatly pessimistic work, where the impossibility of the singular subject to realize their own happiness is amplified by the incapacity of human communities to guarantee peace.⁷⁸ In a sequence in which it is easy to recognize his personal situation, he lists three reasons for human unhappiness, to then principally dedicate the rest of the essay to the last of them—social life:

We are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay in dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations with other men.⁷⁹

It is in this text that Freud twice confides in his readers, as if he wanted to apologize, that his theory of the drives has proceeded “with restless groping” “through tormenting uncertainty.”⁸⁰ But to tell the truth, the last four sections, from the fifth to the eighth, have a gait that is anything but inconsistent. His argument proceeds rather quickly toward its conclusion, which is clear, and almost apodictic. The problem is, if anything, that so many of his efforts seem to have produced few results, like in the Aesopian fable of the mountain and the mouse. Not only does Freud admit to not have anything to add to what he had understood in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, besides perhaps giving it a “sharper focus,”⁸¹ but also of having the very unsatisfactory “feeling as now that what I am describing is common knowledge⁸² and that I am using up paper and ink and, in due course, the compositor’s and printer’s work and material in order to expound things which are, in fact, self-evident.”⁸³ Effectively, in a first reading, the conclusions seem to add little to the anthropology developed almost three centuries earlier by Hobbes, in a polemic with Aristotle. Like the founder of modern political philosophy, the father of psychoanalysis affirms that, different from “bees, ants, and termites,”⁸⁴ human beings are not political animals, but are wolves toward other human beings, and that “hostility of each against all and of all against each”⁸⁵ can only be kept at bay if “the power of this community is [...] set up in ‘right’ opposition to the power of the individual, which is condemned as ‘brute force.’”⁸⁶ Freud, like Max Weber, seems, therefore, to share with Hobbes the definition according to which the state is the “monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force,”⁸⁷ necessary to protect the human from their own brutality. The agreement, however, is not full, and it is in this line of reasoning that things become more complicated than Freud, in his *excusationes non petitae*, would admit.

In fact, in Hobbes’s anthropology, conflict mostly comes out of competition, and violence—like power⁸⁸—has an instrumental status: individuals in their natural state make war to possess things or to excel in the conquest of glory in a zero-sum game; each wants to be better off and more respected by others. Freud instead recognizes that aggression causes an enjoyment in the human that seems to be an end in itself. In this regard, he clearly also distances himself from “communists,”⁸⁹ “socialists,”⁹⁰ and even earlier from Rousseau:⁹¹ for Freud, aggression is not the outcome of a corruption of human nature caused by the institution of private property. The abolition of private property would remove one of violence’s instruments, “certainly a strong one, though certainly not the strongest.”⁹² The fact is that “for men”:

Their neighbor is [...] not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. *Homo homini lupus*. Who, in the face of all his experience of life and of history, will have the courage to dispute this assertion?⁹³

So does Freud therefore resign himself to the bitter observation of human cruelty, with respect to which there would be nothing to do? As we will see, this is not the case. Rather, the solution for him cannot come from a rational calculation of the means necessary to reach ends, or from the balancing of costs and benefits. The result is ultimately a distancing from the Contractualist tradition. This tradition affirms that the state emerges from a free pact of the calculating wills of singular individuals who each pursue their own profit (Hobbes or Locke for example⁹⁴) or who on the contrary subscribe to a moral idea (Kant for example⁹⁵). Freud does not deny that social life can also be explained by “Ananke,” “the compulsion to work, which was created by external necessity” which forces humans to collaborate in the egoistic goal of material survival.⁹⁶ Close once again to Schopenhauer, he retraces instead back through the wills of singular subjects to a Will that wills through these subjects, or better—here as we know, is Freud’s originality—two Wills. The main thesis of *Civilization and Its Discontents* is, in fact, that even the unhappiness of human beings in society is the result of the perpetual struggle between the two forces which could explain “the concurrent or mutually opposing action” of “the phenomena of life,” and that the calculating reason does not appear among these forces. It is, instead, as we know from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Eros, “the drive to preserve living substance and to join it into ever larger units,” and the death drive, which seeks to “dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primaeval, inorganic state.”⁹⁷

To what he had already argued ten years earlier, Freud then adds that “seldom—perhaps never” do these two drives appear “in isolation”: on the contrary, they “are alloyed with each other in varying and very different proportions and so become unrecognizable.”⁹⁸ It is for example by virtue of the interaction with the drive of self-preservation that the death drive, originally turned “within the organism towards its dissolution,” is directed “towards the external world,” coming “to light as an instinct of aggressiveness and destructiveness.”⁹⁹ Paradoxically, therefore, Eros itself contributes to the rising of conflict of every human being against every other human being. And even more paradoxically, social life is made possible by aggression: by the norms necessary for social life—beginning with the incest taboo which is soon taken up by the family (starting from a frustrated need for love)—aggression is in fact “introjected, internalized [...] sent back to where it came from,” that is, once more turned against the subject. This is how the super-ego originates, a psychic instance without which cohabitation would be impossible, and with it that sense of guilt that psychoanalysis knows to be the origin of much suffering:

The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment. Civilization, therefore, obtains mastery over the individual’s dangerous desire for aggression by weakening and disarming it and by

setting up an agency within him to watch over it, like a garrison in a conquered city.¹⁰⁰

This is therefore the reason for which human beings cannot but feel uncomfortable with their social life: the “price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt.”¹⁰¹

According to Freud’s claims, the clarifications that *Civilization and Its Discontents* brings to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* therefore would derive from this theory of aggression, which the subject directs toward itself, then externally, and then once again towards itself, in a neurotic pendular movement. But to those who, like us, have closely read the 1920 text, one cannot avoid the fact that these “clarifications” actually contain a profound revision of the theses expressed there. This is not only because *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* contained only a brief note on the sense of guilt, aimed at making it coherent with the pleasure principle. There, above all, the death drive had nothing aggressive about it: it was a desire for quietude, an expression of the pleasure principle. It was not a violent suicidal impulse, but a passive principle of inertia that guides the living toward their natural death. How could this desire become a source of aggression once turned toward others? Freud cannot but agree that the binary structure of his psychoanalytic theory, on which he insists,¹⁰² does not suffice to explain the complexity of the human: from his arguments, it emerges that the psychic forces that govern the processes of life must be much more than two. As we already observed, next to Eros, the conservative drive toward pleasure, Freud also finds a dissolutive sexual drive toward excitation. Analogously, next to a drive toward natural death, he finds a drive toward violent death, toward oneself and others. It could also be that the former pushes the subject toward the pleasure of peace, while surely the latter drags the subject toward the enjoyment of war. We have already covered the repression of the sexual, and we will soon return to it. Now we will cover this second repression: why does Freud resist drawing an obvious conclusion from his reasoning? After having contested the wolf-like character of the human, going so far as to refuse to recognize the existence of a primary aggression—that “radical evil” that for Kant is the basic condition of possibility of moral freedom to choose good¹⁰³—why does he argue that violence derives from the sum of a longing for peace and a need for life? What is hiding behind such a bizarre hypothesis?

The first edition of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, from 1930, concludes with a declaration of hope, of faith in the efforts of Eros:

The fateful question for the human species seems to me to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. It may be that in this respect precisely the present time deserves a special interest. Men have gained control over the forces of

nature to such an extent that with their help they would have no difficulty in exterminating one another to the last man. They know this, and hence comes a large part of their current unrest, their unhappiness and their mood of anxiety. And now it is to be expected that the other of the two “Heavenly Powers,”¹⁰⁴ eternal Eros, will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his immortal adversary.

In the 1931 edition, with the escalating political situation in Europe, a question is added to these words: “But who can foresee with what success and with what result?”¹⁰⁵

My hypothesis is that, troubled by having stumbled upon some dangerous evidence regarding social life, Freud’s own sense of guilt may be hidden behind the repression of the possibility of primary aggression in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, which turns out to be in line with the era in which he is required to live in much longer than he would like. In the sections preceding those we have been analyzing up until now, the dialectic between an aggressive drive and Eros is even more contorted. In the fourth section, for example, recalling the theses he developed years earlier in *Totem and Taboo* (1913),¹⁰⁶ and also echoing Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*,¹⁰⁷ Freud argues that “in the course of development the relation of love to civilization loses its unambiguity” because “on the one hand love comes into opposition to the interests of civilization” and “on the other, civilization threatens love with substantial restrictions.”¹⁰⁸ In particular, the family, first a community of affection, “will not give the individual up,” and opposes his becoming an active member of the community. This conflict, argues a sexist and Hegelian version of Freud, is embodied above all by the woman, who in his mind maintains a “hostile attitude” toward civilization, proving to be not so capable of carrying out those “driven sublimations” that render “the work of civilization [...] the business of men.”¹⁰⁹

From the *Three Essays*, we already know that for Freud, each bond that holds together members of a society, together with the affective current that unites members of a family, drains energy from the libido: the latency phase is in this sense essential to civilization. This thesis here finds a complement in which an ambivalence of aggression corresponds to the ambivalence of Eros. Originally, an obstacle to the establishment of the affective and social bond, this double ambivalence then becomes a complement not only inside the subject, in the form of the super-ego, but also outside of it, in the form of organized war: “it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love,” our author argues, “so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness.”¹¹⁰ Human beings are therefore not political animals, indeed they are wolves toward their own kind. Yet through complex psychic intertwining, the combination of their affective drives and of their violent drives manages to gather them in herds—against other herds.

After Schopenhauer, after Hegel, it is here that Freud reaches another peak of German philosophical culture. In 1927, the catholic anti-Semite Carl Schmitt, a great admirer of Hobbes, had already formulated his celebrated thesis regarding *the concept of the political*, which he reiterates in 1932, at the moment of participation with the Nazi regime. That is, he had already argued that “the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend [*Freund*] and enemy [*Feind*].”¹¹¹ And that the enemy is “the other, the stranger [*der Fremde*],” with whom there does not exist “a previously determined general norm,”¹¹² with whom conflict leads to “the real possibility of physical killing.”¹¹³ Like Schmitt, Freud therefore overcomes Hobbes’s anthropological pessimism, affirming not only that the political community suspends war between isolated human beings to establish it among social human beings, but also that the individuation of the stranger as enemy is the strongest of social bonds. Moreover, Freud is well-acquainted with the fact that “the Jewish people, scattered everywhere, have rendered most useful services to the civilizations of the countries that have been their hosts.” And that “the dream of a Germanic world-dominion called for anti-Semitism as its complement.”¹¹⁴ On the last page of the essay, as we have seen, Freud trusts the peacemaking potential of Eros. But what is this conclusion worth for someone who explains the origin of this history of persecution as the following: “When once the Apostle Paul had posited universal love between men as the foundation of his Christian community, extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it became the inevitable consequence.”¹¹⁵

Therefore, for Freud “civilization is not the tireless if generally defeated opponent of individual aggressiveness,” but a “regulator of aggressiveness” who is part of the “very problem of aggressiveness.”¹¹⁶ From this, in the already cited study, *The Freudian Body*, Leo Bersani concludes that the speculation on violence elaborated in *Civilization and Its Discontents* “necessarily becomes, at least implicitly, an *apology for violence*.”¹¹⁷ To me it seems, instead, that Freud is not Schmitt, and it is not unimportant that—as Foucault *rightly* reminds us—the two are situated at two counterposed sides of history: despite having discovered that Eros feeds on violence in civilization, Freud does not resign himself to the fact that staying on the side of civilization must mean staying on the side of violence, and at the cost of giving the impression that he has a “good soul” (very Freud!), he challenges the need of his analysis, and finds a way to redirect even the aggressive drive toward (his own) desire for peace, which he calls the “death drive.”¹¹⁸ This is where he is compelled by his sense of guilt as a theorist of civilization.¹¹⁹ This is where he is compelled by his concern for the present and his sense of responsibility for a future that was denied to Heinerle, but not to his other grandchildren (it is not actually true that after 1923 he did not care about them, seeing as he managed to bring them to London with him), nor to the entire generation to which they belonged. Another suggestion from Bersani’s reading seems to me, instead, more productive: in *Civilization and*

Its Discontents “the notes play the role of the psychoanalytic unconscious”¹²⁰—of Freud’s overbearing unconscious that had already messed with the coherence of his text in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

In 1923, when his cancer had already begun to show its symptoms, well aware of the severity of his situation and beyond the necessary oral operation, Freud also decides to undergo an experimental procedure of the tying of his seminal tubes that I had mentioned in the previous chapter, deluding himself of being able to obtain an increase of sexual potency and of general health from the retention of his sperm.¹²¹ Analogously, in his 1930 essay, Freud responds to the realistic verification of the role that violence plays in politics, not only with a sensible appeal to the best resources of humanity but also with an unleashing of erotic fantasies, which he retains in the notes. Thus, the discovery that the father of psychoanalysis has in vain tried to remove since the time that the *Three Essays* reappears. The sexual returns, the compulsion to repeat returns, again, and again. This time not in the form of trauma, but in that of the hypothesis of an *uncivilized* world, preceding civilization, that becomes a resource of the imagination against the discontents that it inevitably provokes. In the body of the text, the narration is basically focused on the succession of the generations, on the heterosexual family where the sexual drive is sublimated into affection and sociality, where children learn the prohibitions from their fathers, where their mothers resist their sons’ becoming adults, their acquisition of the status of citizen. Human beings, Freud argues, “strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so,” and the desire for happiness is nothing more than the well noted principle that “aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and unpleasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure.”¹²² “Prototype of all happiness” he adds, is for them “sexual (genital) love”:¹²³ therefore the cis-heterosexual coitus of penis and vagina, orgasm, and discharge. In all of this, what happens to the subject of the sexual who does not search for pleasure but an excitation that is also pain, who is not content with heterosexual genital relations but perversely enjoys every organ and all the functions of their body? We find out what happens in the footnotes, where Freud formulates some very strange “theoretical speculations” on the evolution of the human species and on the origins of social life.

The “organic repression” of “anal erotism,” Freud hypothesizes in his footnotes, “paved the way to civilization,” which followed “man’s raising himself from the ground.” With the “assumption of an upright gait”—in an analogous way to “when the gods of a superseded period of civilization turn into demons”—the olfactory stimuli, which were once very important to the end of sexual excitation, had undergone a process of “devaluation.” It is in this way that, “by their strong smells,” excrement becomes “disagreeable to the sense perceptions” and therefore “worthless, disgusting, abhorrent and abominable.” The “taboo on menstruation” and “the incitement to cleanliness” suddenly appear for the same reason. With a vertical posture, moreover, “his genitals, which were previously concealed,” become “visible

and in need of protection”: thus shame is born, and with it the desire to rediscover that which has been covered, and the consequent “time when visual stimuli were paramount” to sexual excitation.¹²⁴ Even the “repugnance” that accompanies the “sexual function,” diminishing the pleasure of sexual intercourse and preventing “its complete satisfaction,” for Freud comes from the “strong sensation of smell” emanating from the genitals, which many civilized human beings “cannot tolerate.”¹²⁵ Beyond the anal erotism, here interpreted as a synonym of olfactory excitation, civilization then calls for a symbolic ban of (male) homosexuality. Recalling that “gaining of control over fire”¹²⁶ was one of the fundamental transitions of civilization intended as the human domination over nature, Freud leads himself to a “conjecture—a fantastic sounding one,” according to which “this great cultural conquest was thus the reward for his renunciation of instinct”: the renunciation to satisfy “infantile desire,” in which “primal man” used to indulge every time that “he came into contact with fire” by putting it out “with a stream of his urine.”¹²⁷ He authoritatively explains “the legends that we possess leave no doubt about the originally phallic view taken of tongues of flame as they shoot upwards” (really?): it is therefore a “kind of sexual act with a male, an enjoyment of sexual potency in a homosexual competition,”¹²⁸ that the civilized singular subject left behind.

Desires like this, which is here not by accident qualified as infantile, have not, however, completely disappeared in the daily life of humanity. The well-known hypothesis that ontogeny (a singular subject’s development) recapitulates phylogeny (the development of the species) allows Freud to find evidence that, for children, excrement “arouses no disgust,” and that despite all the efforts of education, even as an adult, “man [...] scarcely finds the smell of *his own* excreta repulsive,” being disturbed only by “that of other people’s.”¹²⁹ Moreover, Freud here recovers the thesis of the “unmistakably bisexual disposition” of the human, affirming that the “fact that each individual seeks to satisfy both male and female wishes in his sexual life,” and that instead the evolution of the human species toward civilization has predisposed man to an exclusively heterosexual sexuality, made legitimate by the sole reproductive function, is a further cause of unhappiness.¹³⁰ With regard to this, not only in the notes but also in the body of the text, he laments the excessive sacrifices that the civilization contemporary with him asks from sexuality, from which is withdrawn “a large amount of psychical energy” to sublimate into social relations:

A high-water mark in such a development has been reached in our Western European Civilization. A cultural community is perfectly justified, psychologically, in starting by proscribing manifestations of the sexual life of children, for there would be no prospect of curbing the sexual lusts of adults if the ground had not been prepared for it in childhood. But such a community cannot in any way be justified in going to the length of actually *disavowing* such easily demonstrable, and,

indeed, striking phenomena. As regards the sexually mature individual, the choice of an object is restricted to the opposite sex, and most extragenital satisfactions are forbidden as perversions. [...] But heterosexual love, which has remained exempt from outlawry, is itself restricted by further limitations, in the shape of insistence upon legitimacy and monogamy. Present-day civilization makes it plain that it will only permit sexual relationships on the basis of a solitary, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman, and that it does not like sexuality as a source of pleasure in its own right and is only prepared to tolerate it because there is so far no substitute for it as a means of propagating the human race.¹³¹

What is clear in this passage is a reference to the *Three Essays*, where Freud develops the theory of original bisexuality in the thesis according to which each “child,” before “the mental dams against sexual excesses—shame, disgust and morality” are consolidated in him or her—can be “led into all possible kinds of sexual irregularities” “under the influence of seduction,” becoming “polymorphously perverse.” Providing proof this time not only of sexism but also of classism, he then adds that usually in “an average uncultivated woman” there persists “the same polymorphously perverse disposition,” and that “prostitutes” exploit that disposition “for the purposes of their profession.” Already in the 1905 text, like in the 1930 version, woman is therefore situated on a lower step on the staircase of adulthood and of civilization with respect to men,¹³² less capable than him for the sacrifices that need to be made with regard to their drives required by social and marital life. Fundamentally Freud seems to suggest that all women are whores to some extent: indeed an “immense number of women” must “have an aptitude for prostitution without becoming engaged in it.” That men then willingly and often pay for the services of sex workers, does not seem to be a problem for Freud, who even uses the flattering expression “clever seducer” to indicate those who succeed in causing the “uncultivated woman” to develop a taste for “every sort of perversion,”¹³³ awakening the potential prostitute that is inside her.

We have not made a great discovery: an endosexual, heterosexual, bourgeois, white, cis-man (even in the critical position in which the fact of his being Jewish places him in 20th-century Vienna), Freud is not alien to the cultural conditioning of society in his time. What interests us here, however, is that while the society of his time is headed toward disaster, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, he reacts to the evidence that society requires enemies in order to cement the social bond in two different ways. On the one hand, in the text, he pays a price of a certain incoherence appealing to a universal love that he knows to be impossible. On the other hand, mainly in the footnotes, his sexual fantasy runs rampant: if civilization founds itself on violence, he imagines a non-violent world, an uncivilized world. This is a world on all fours, dominated by exciting stenches, where the “prohibition against getting pleasure from anal activity and its products,” which for Lou Salomé is the basis for

socialization,¹³⁴ has not yet been established, where there are not constraints to experiment with one's bisexuality, neither on the real nor the symbolic levels, where monogamy, with paternity, do not even re-enter the horizon of the thinkable (maternity is clearly a different story). Sick, depressed, tired, maybe the aging Freud finds solace in figuring himself as still young and handsome, full of that vigor that he had hoped to find once more through the vasectomy, surrounded by "prostitutes" open to satisfy all of his bizarre desires from a "clever seducer," ready to joyously urinate on every little flame that appears in front of him. Without a wife, without children, without grandchildren to think about, without grief from which to suffer.

Like Hobbes in *De corpore politico*, in the notes in which his unconscious takes refuge from his super-ego, so too does Freud imagine that the subject of civilization has an obscene conjoined twin that refuses to abandon the "state of nature," always remaining subjected to that sexual drive, which according to Laplanche is a non-aggressive death drive, aimed not at actual death of the self or another, but to the *jouissance* in the momentary dissolution of the self in the other. The subject of civilization is instead the *homo homini lupus*, animated by the aggressive drive according to Freud, that here he calls the death drive in contradiction with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. As history teaches us, this subject literally, or in the symbolic sense of social mortification, puts to death those who remain enemies of *their* civilization: racialized subjects regarded as incapable of living in civilization or contrarily, all too capable of inserting themselves parasitically into civilization to then assume control over it;¹³⁵ the women who are judged to be too infantile to dedicate themselves to public life, too inept at disengaging from their emotions and family interests, and therefore "naturally" confined to the private sphere; the so-called sexual minorities that represent the non-teachable, anti-familial and anti-social, against nature, wild side of the sexual drive.

After the end of the Second World War, in the United States, in Europe, in many countries all over the world, many women had interpreted their emancipation as access to the roles of power once destined only for men, including the presidency of the United States, a military career, and the governing of armies. A by now uncontrollable feminist reading has instead relied precisely on the tasks of care and mourning that psychoanalysis, in line with tradition, has continued for a long time to reserve for the *second sex*,¹³⁶ to contrast realism and virility of those who affirm the necessity of war with an ethical vision, non-violent or even pacifist, of politics.¹³⁷ It is not, however, the task of this book to survey this fundamental tradition, nor the equally fundamental attempts, operative in anticolonial, postcolonial, and decolonial thinking, to valorize the ethics of the pacifistic resolution of conflicts and of the respect for the natural environment present in many cultures that, to justify genocide and enslavement, the West has for a long time condemned as wild.¹³⁸ Our attention moves instead toward another theoretical current, of which the texts analyzed up until now constitute its

premises. Even the LGBTQIA+ movements have in large part chosen the way of integration through those rights that, not by chance, we call “civil.” To become good citizens, good soldiers,¹³⁹ good husbands and good wives, good parents: to contribute to the production and the reproduction of the social, to be on the side of “civilization” even at the cost of assuming hostile positions toward immigration, homonationalist,¹⁴⁰ sometimes even racist and xenophobic, today more often islamophobic than antisemitic.¹⁴¹ However, there is no shortage of intellectual figures who preferred to question the foundations of heterosexual societies rather than affirm the social assimilation of sexual minorities. For some of these thinkers, the perverse sexual, the infantile sexual, offers resources to radically rethink politics outside the friend-enemy logic, or as we will see, the overturning sexuality becomes a resource—by interpreting it as a political apparatus—to rethink politics by noting sexuality’s intersection with the apparatus of racialization. The concept of the sexual drive, quite difficult to integrate into a coherent vision of the human because of its own detection, has continued its act of disturbance even within this tradition, which mostly has repressed it, or rather, foreclosed it—until, as we will see, the drive has returned to threaten tradition.

Notes

- 1 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SE 7, fn. 1, 187. The reference is to Andreas-Salomé, Lou, “‘Anal’ und ‘Sexual,’” *Imago* 4, no. 5 (1916): 249–272. Freud adds note 23 in 1920. Salomé was a friend and follower of Freud.
- 2 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, fn. 1, 187.
- 3 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 55. The reference is to Spielrein, Sabina, “Die Destruktion als Ursache des Werdens,” *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen*, 4, no. 1 (1912): 465–503. Spielrein was the first patient (and lover) of Jung and later a student of Freud. Aldo Carotenuto recognized her role in the history of psychoanalysis and published her collection of letters, *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein, Jung, and Freud* (New York: Pantheon, 1982), that provided the basis for the study of John Kerr (see my following note).
- 4 John Kerr, *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 501.
- 5 “I am writing the essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and, as in all instances, I am hoping for your understanding, which has not yet abandoned me in any situation. In it I am saying many things that are quite unclear, out of which the reader has to make the right thing. Sometimes one can’t do otherwise. But I hope you will find something interesting in it.” Freud to Sándor Ferenczi, Vienna, March 31, 1919, in *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*, eds. Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, trans. Peter Hoffer, vol. 2, 1914–1919 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 341.
- 6 All three returned home safe and sound, but for a long time, Martin was believed to be killed in battle, while a prisoner in Italy. Much has been written on Freud’s life, but in my view, the biography that remains unsurpassed, for both its emotional tone and compelling prose (even if, as we are accustomed, we

- must take his masculinism, etc., with a grain of salt), is that of his friend and student Ernest Jones written in the 1950s, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 vols. (New York: Basic Books, 1953–1957).
- 7 Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), especially Chapter 3, “Pleasures of Repetition.”
 - 8 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 50. The quote taken from Schopenhauer here comes from his “Transcendent speculation on the apparent deliberateness in the fate of the individual,” in *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Sabine Roehr and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 197. In a letter from August 1st, 1919 to Lou Salomé, Freud writes that he had begun reading Schopenhauer for the first time just for the occasion of drafting *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.
 - 9 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 50.
 - 10 “The very procedure of the text itself is diabolical. It mimes walking, does not cease walking without advancing, regularly sketching out one step more without gaining an inch of ground. A limping devil, like everything that transgresses the pleasure principle without ever permitting the conclusion of the last step.” “Paralysis: the step beyond the PP will have remained interdicted.” Jacques Derrida, “To Speculate—On ‘Freud’” in *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 269, 338.
 - 11 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 7.
 - 12 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 8.
 - 13 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 9.
 - 14 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 9.
 - 15 “It may be asked whether and how far I am myself convinced of the truth of the hypotheses that have been set out in these pages. My answer would be that I am not convinced myself and that I do not seek to persuade other people to believe in them.” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 59.
 - 16 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 10.
 - 17 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 10.
 - 18 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 10.
 - 19 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 11.
 - 20 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 11.
 - 21 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 11.
 - 22 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 207.
 - 23 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 43.
 - 24 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 60.
 - 25 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 52.
 - 26 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 60.
 - 27 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 44.
 - 28 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 60.
 - 29 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 38.
 - 30 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 62.
 - 31 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 52.
 - 32 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 39.
 - 33 Freud finds in “the theory which Plato put into the mouth of Aristophanes in the *Symposium*” a hypothesis that might explain, with mythical language, the convergence of sexual drives and death drives. For Aristophanes, as has been observed, every human being searches for the other human with which they were originally fused together before Zeus “decided to cut these men in two.” Even Eros could therefore be the attempt to return to an original phase of life.

- Freud, however, does not adhere to this hypothesis, except in the form of a question: "Shall we follow the hint given us by the poet-philosopher, and venture upon the hypothesis that living substance at the time of its coming to life was torn apart into small particles, which have ever since endeavored to reunite through the sexual drives?" Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 58.
- 34 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 10.
- 35 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 19.
- 36 On the recurrence of this adjective in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, see the epigraph which opens this chapter, taken from Derrida, "To Speculate—On Freud," 271 and 341–342.
- 37 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 12.
- 38 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 13.
- 39 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 14.
- 40 Freud defines "fright" as "the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it." This state must be, in his view, distinct from both "anxiety," that "state of expecting the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one," and from "fear," which is instead the expectation of a known danger (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 12). In order to reject the hypothesis of the "mysterious masochistic trends of the ego," Freud hypothesizes that recurring nightmares "master the stimulus retrospectively, by developing the anxiety whose omission was the cause of the traumatic neurosis." It is therefore about "a function of the mental apparatus which, though it does not contradict the pleasure principle, is nevertheless independent of it and seems to be more primitive than the purpose of gaining pleasure and avoiding unpleasure." Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 32.
- 41 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 14.
- 42 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 14.
- 43 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 15.
- 44 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 15.
- 45 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 15.
- 46 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 16.
- 47 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 16.
- 48 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 16.
- 49 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 16.
- 50 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 14.
- 51 Derrida, "To Speculate—On 'Freud,'" 300.
- 52 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, fn. 1, 16.
- 53 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 14.
- 54 In other moments, Freud's judgment of little Ernst is rather generous: "My grandson is a charming little fellow, who manages to laugh so engagingly whenever one pays attention to him; he is a decent, civilized being, which is doubly valuable in these times of unleashed bestiality. A strict upbringing by an intelligent mother [...] had done him a great deal of good." Sigmund Freud to Karl Abraham, September 22, 1914, in *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907–1925*, ed. Ernst Falzeder, trans. Caroline Schwarzacher (London: Karnac Books, 2002), 279.
- 55 "Dear friend, don't worry about me. I am the same except for somewhat more fatigue. The death, as painful as it is, does not overturn any attitude toward life. For years I was prepared for the loss of my sons, now comes that of my daughter. Since I am profoundly unbelieving, I have no one to blame, and I know there is no place where one can lodge a complaint. [...] Very deep within I perceive the feeling of a deep, insurmountable narcissistic insult. My wife and

- Annerl are severely shaken in a more human sense.” Sigmund Freud to Sándor Ferenczi, February 4, 1920, in *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi*, eds. Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, trans. Peter Hoffer, vol. 3, 1914–1919 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996), 6–7.
- 56 “Freud cannot prevent himself from excusing his daughter’s son. What, then, is he reproaching him for? But is he reproaching him for what he excuses him for, or for what excuses him? The secret fault for which he excuses him, or precisely that which excuses him for his fault? And with whom would the prosecutor be identified in the mobile syntax of this trial?” Derrida, “To Speculate—On ‘Freud,’” 307–308.
- 57 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 18.
- 58 See, Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 20 and fn. 2 on the same page.
- 59 “It is clear that the greater part of what is re-experienced under the compulsion to repeat must cause the ego unpleasure, since it brings to light activities of repressed instinctual impulses. That, however, is unpleasure of a kind we have already considered and does not contradict the pleasure principle: unpleasure for one system and simultaneously satisfaction for the other.” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 20.
- 60 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 20.
- 61 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 20–21.
- 62 “Patients repeat all of these unwanted situations and painful emotions in the transference and revive them with the greatest ingenuity. They seek to bring about the interruption of the treatment while it is still incomplete; they contrive once more to feel themselves scorned, to oblige the physician to speak severely to them and treat them coldly; they discover appropriate objects for their jealousy; instead of the passionately desired baby of their childhood, they produce a plan or a promise of some grand present—which turns out as a rule to be no less unreal. None of these things can have produced pleasures in the past” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 21.
- 63 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 35. The reference to demons had already appeared on page 21: “What psycho-analysis reveals in the transference phenomena of neurotics can also be observed in the lives of some normal people. The impression they give is of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some ‘daemonic’ power; but psycho-analysis has always taken the view that their fate is for the most part arranged by themselves and determined by early infantile influences.” And as we will see, it appears again on page 36.
- 64 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 22.
- 65 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 29.
- 66 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 30.
- 67 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 33.
- 68 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 33.
- 69 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 36. Freud therefore recognizes that even the frights experience by soldiers at war liberate “a quantity of sexual excitation which, owing to the lack of preparation for anxiety, would have a traumatic effect.” However, as I have already noted, he interprets recurring nightmares of veterans not as a compulsion to repeat this excitation, but as the attempt to test that protective anxiety that they missed.
- 70 Derrida, “To Speculate—On ‘Freud,’” 348–349.
- 71 Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 64.
- 72 Derrida, “To Speculate—On ‘Freud,’” 334.
- 73 Freud had always expressed worry for the Heinz’s delicate health. In 1922 Freud described him, for example, as “physically very fragile, truly a child of the war,

- but especially intelligent and endearing.” Sigmund Freud to Anna von Vest, November 14, 1922.
- 74 Sigmund Freud to Ludwig Binswanger, October 15, 1926, in *The Sigmund Freud-Ludwig Binswanger Correspondence, 1908–1938*, ed. Gerhard Fichtner, trans. Arnold Pomerans and Thomas Roberts (New York: Other Press, 2003), 184.
- 75 Sigmund Freud to Ernest Jones, March 11, 1928, in *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Ernest Jones, 1908–1939*, ed. R. Andrew Paskauskas (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1993), 643.
- 76 See Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: Norton, 1998), 573.
- 77 For example: “Even the most superficial observation shows that Nature’s restricted form of propagation and increase is an almost rigid basic law of all the innumerable forms of expression of her vital urge. Every animal mates only with a member of the same species. The titmouse seeks the titmouse, the finch the finch, the stork the stork, the field mouse the field mouse, the dormouse the dormouse, the wolf the she-wolf. [...] Any crossing of two beings not at exactly the same level produces a medium between the level of the two parents. [...] The stronger must dominate and not blend with the weaker, thus sacrificing his own greatness. Only the born weakling can view this as cruel, but he after all is only a weak and limited man; for if this law did not prevail, any conceivable higher development of organic living beings would be unthinkable.” Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Mariner Books, 1999), 284–285.
- 78 *Civilization and Its Discontents* continues a discussion on the mystifying character of religions, which promise a redemption from the feeling of guilt that is impossible for the human being, begun in a 1927 essay, “The Future of an Illusion” in *SE*, 21.
- 79 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 77.
- 80 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 133.
- 81 “It is merely a matter of bringing into sharper focus a turn of thought arrived at long ago.” Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 117.
- 82 This is also repeated twice: “so far we have discovered nothing that is not universally known.” Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 96.
- 83 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 117.
- 84 The example of the termites appears in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 123. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 119.
- 85 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 122.
- 86 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 95.
- 87 Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and eds. Hans H Gerth and Charles W Mills (London: Routledge, 2009), 78.
- 88 “The power of a Man, (to take it Universally), is his present means, to obtain some future apparent Good.” Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 62.
- 89 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 112–113.
- 90 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 143.
- 91 See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992).
- 92 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 113.
- 93 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, *SE* 21, 111. See Hobbes, “Epistle Dedicatory,” in *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*, ed. Howard Warrender (Oxford: Oxford

- University Press, 1983), 25. See also note 2 of Chapter 2 above. Trans.—This is accompanied in Freud by a footnote, the phrase means “Man is a wolf to man” and Hobbes takes it from Plautus’s play *Asinaria* II.iv.88.
- 94 See John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980).
- 95 See Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Revised Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- 96 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 101.
- 97 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 118–119.
- 98 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 119.
- 99 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 120.
- 100 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 124.
- 101 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 134.
- 102 “Our views have from the very first been *dualistic*, and to-day they are even more definitely dualistic than before—now that we describe the opposition as being, not between ego-drives and sexual drives but between life drives and death drives.” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 53.
- 103 “The statement, ‘the human being is evil,’ cannot mean anything else than that he is conscious of the moral law and yet has incorporated into his maxim the (occasional) deviation from it. [...] so we can call this ground a natural propensity to evil, and [...] we can further even call it a radical innate evil in human nature (not any the less brought upon us by ourselves).” Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. and trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79–80. On the concept of evil in the Western tradition, see Simona Forti’s essential study: *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).
- 104 This expression is a citation taken from one of the harpist’s songs in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*, which he had already cited, see Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 145.
- 105 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 145.
- 106 Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, SE 13.
- 107 G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1977).
- 108 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 103.
- 109 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 103.
- 110 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 114.
- 111 Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Expanded Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26. The article, originally published in 1927 in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* and then reprinted autonomously by the editor Walther Rotschild, was reedited in 1932 and then again in 1963 by the publishing house Duncker & Humblot.
- 112 Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 27.
- 113 Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 33.
- 114 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 114–115. Freud continues: “Unfortunately all the massacres of the Jews in the Middle Ages did not suffice to make that period more peaceful and secure for their Christian fellows.” Passing from the Medieval period to the foundation of modernity, we may note that Hobbes formulates his theory of sovereignty, within the context of Europe during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648) and of the British Civil War (1642–1651), to justify the *christian* states (Protestant and Catholic): for the Malmesbury philosopher, all of the forms of messianism, including Judaism,

- must be banned by the State as possible sources of disobedience to the will of the sovereign. On Hobbes's antisemitism see my essay "La macellaria del *Leviatano*: Come nutrirsi delle carni di un mito," in *La sovranità scomposta. Sull'attualità del Leviatano*, eds. Lorenzo Bernini, Mauro Farnesi Camellone, Nicola Marcucci (Milan: Mimesis, 2010). On his attitude against Romani people, also see my essay "*Bande: Thomas Hobbes*," in *I filosofi e gli zingari*, eds. Leonardo Piasere and Gianluca Solla (Rome: Aracne, 2018).
- 115 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 114. The whole essay could also be read as a treatise on the impossibility of love as a social feeling; in particular, the fifth section is an examination of the human's incapacity to "love their neighbor as themselves." One could say that if for Kant radical evil is the condition of morals, for Freud the impossibility of love justifies his appeal to it. We must love our neighbor because we are incapable of doing so.
- 116 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 23.
- 117 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 24.
- 118 Bersani, after all, not too much earlier affirms that Freud's being "tautologic and circular," the "explicative logic" of *Civilization and Its Discontents* is "a rigorously psychoanalytic logic which implicitly mocks all the philosophically narrativizing procedures and distinctions of Freud the prophetic thinker. It breaks down the boundaries separating concepts, and thereby nicely exemplifies what might be called an oceanic textuality." *The Freudian Body*, 21.
- 119 Freud renews his wish some years later, in a dialogue with Einstein, see Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein, "Why War?" SE 22, 195–216.
- 120 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 18.
- 121 See note 11 of chapter 2 above. Paul Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013), 357–358: "Between 1923 and 1924, under the direction of his doctor, Hans Pichler, he undergoes two invasive operations, as well as more than thirty minor operations and a variety of more or less painful fittings of oral prostheses to combat cancer of the jaw. Despite an unfavorable prognosis, Freud decides to undergo one additional operation: the 'Steinach procedure,' that is, the tying of the seminal tubes, or a vasectomy, and thus becomes our first European male-to-male transsexual."
- 122 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 76.
- 123 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 101.
- 124 In fn. 1 to Chapter 4 in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 99.
- 125 In fn. 3 to Chapter 4 in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 105.
- 126 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 90.
- 127 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 90. Freud adds: "It is as though woman had been appointed guardian of the fire which was held captive on the domestic hearth, because her anatomy made it impossible for her to yield to the temptation of this desire."
- 128 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, 90.
- 129 Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, SE 21, fn. 1, 99.
- 130 Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, SE 21, fn. 3, 105.
- 131 Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, SE 21, 105.
- 132 Both Schopenhauer and Kant, we should note, formulate similar judgments on the intellectual and emotional immaturity of women. See again notes 18 and 59 from Chapter 1 above.
- 133 Freud, *Three Essays*, 191. Sexism and Classism are also not lacking in *Civilization and Its Discontents*: "there is so often associated with the erotic relationship, over and above its own sadistic components, a quota of plain inclination to aggression. The love-object will not always view these complications with the degree of

- understanding and tolerance shown by the peasant woman who complained that her husband did not love her any more, since he had not beaten her for a week” (Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21, fn. 3, 105). For a critique of the masculinist perspective that psychoanalysis and philosophy have given of female sexuality for a long time I would direct you to the classics: Carla Lonzi, “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale” in *Sputiamo su Hegel e altri scritti* (Milan: et al., 2010); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Adriana Cavarero, *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*, trans. Serena Anderlini-D’Onofrio and Áine O’Healy (New York: Routledge, 1995).
- 134 See the first footnote to this current chapter above.
- 135 See Cesare De Michelis, *Il manoscritto inesistente: I “Protocolli dei savi di Sion”* (Padua: Marsilio, 1998).
- 136 Naturally this reference is to one of the texts that second wave feminism considers fundamental: Simone de Beauvoir, *Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).
- 137 In the vast literature available after September 11, 2001, the reflections on the theme of vulnerability developed in dialogue between Judith Butler and Adriana Cavarero stand out. See, at least, Judith Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004); *Giving an Account of Oneself: A Critique of Ethical Violence* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); Adriana Cavarero, *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); “Archeology of Homicide” in Adriana Cavarero and Angelo Scola, *Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Political and Theological Dialogue* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015); *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*, trans., Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016). Allow me to also include mine and Olivia Guaraldo’s jointly edited collection of essays, *Differenza e relazione: L’ontologia dell’umano nel pensiero di Judith Butler e Adriana Cavarero: Con un dialogo tra le due filosofe* (Verona: ombre corte, 2009). See also Olivia Guaraldo’s *Comunità e vulnerabilità: Per una critica politica della violenza* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012). For more introductory titles on the feminist tradition, see note 7 of Chapter 1 above.
- 138 Even in this case the literature is immense. I limit myself to recalling the poetic, literary, and political movement of negritude, originally developed in the 1930s in francophone colonies and in France, which constitutes a precondition for but also a polemical aim of Fanon’s reflections on colonialism. See, for example: Léopold Sédar Senghor, *Liberté 1: Negritude et Humanism*. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964), *The Collected Poetry*, trans. Melvin Dixon (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Aimé Césaire, *A Season in the Congo*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Chicago: Seagull Books, 2020), *Resolutely Black: Conversations with Françoise Vergès*, trans. Matthew Smith (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019), *A Tempest*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Ubu Repertory Theater Publications, 1992), *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000). On more recent studies of contemporary postcolonial and decolonial thought see, at least: Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), *Critique of Black Reason*, trans. Laurent Dubois (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), *Necropolitics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019), *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).
- 139 On the role that the demand and achievement of the right for gays to serve in the military without hiding their identities had for the U.S. lesbian and gay

- movements fighting for marriage equality, see Gianfrancesco Zanetti: *L'orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015).
- 140 The concept of homonationalism will be explained in the epilogue: “The Hyenas in the Sauna.”
- 141 The State of Israel is considered a stronghold of LGBTQIA+ rights in the Middle East.

References

- Andreas-Salomé, Lou. “‘Anal’ und ‘Sexual.’” *Imago* 4, no. 5 (1916): 249–272.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. “Bande: Thomas Hobbes.” In *I filosofi e gli zingari*. Edited by Leonardo Piasere and Gianluca Solla. Rome: Aracne, 2018.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. “La macelleria del *Leviatano*: Come nutrirsi delle carni di un mito.” In *La sovranità scomposta. Sull’attualità del Leviatano*. Edited by Lorenzo Bernini, Mauro Farnesi Camellone, Nicola Marcucci. Milan: Mimesis, 2010.
- Bernini, Lorenzo, and Olivia Guaraldo. *Differenza e relazione: L’ontologia dell’umano nel pensiero di Judith Butler e Adriana Cavarero: Con un dialogo tra le due filosofe*. Verona: ombre corte, 2009.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Butler, Judith. *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life & Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself: A Critique of Ethical Violence*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Carotenuto, Aldo. *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein, Jung, and Freud*. New York: Pantheon, 1982.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*. Translated by Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Cavarero, Adriana. “Archeology of Homicide.” In *Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Political and Theological Dialogue*. edited by Adriana Cavarero and Angelo Scola. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Translated by William McCuaig. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Serena Anderlini-D’Onofrio and Áine O’Healy. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Césaire, Aimé. *A Season in the Congo*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Chicago: Seagull Books, 2020.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Resolutely Black: Conversations with Françoise Vergès*. Translated by Matthew Smith. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.
- Césaire, Aimé. *A Tempest*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Ubu Repertory Theater Publications, 1992.
- De Michelis, Cesare. *Il manoscritto inesistente: I “Protocolli dei savi di Sion”*. Padua: Marsilio, 1998.

- Derrida, Jacques. "To Speculate—On 'Freud.'" In *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Forti, Simona. *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today*. Translated by Zakiya Hanafi. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Sigmund Freud-Ludwig Binswanger Correspondence, 1908–1938*. Edited by Gerhard Fichtner, translated by Arnold Pomerans and Thomas Roberts. New York: Other Press, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907–1925*. Edited by Ernst Falzeder, translated by Caroline Schwarzacher. London: Karnac Books, 2002.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, Volume 3, 1914–1919*. Edited by Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, translated by Peter Hoffer. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, Volume 2, 1914–1919*. Edited by Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, translated by Peter Hoffer. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In SE 21 (1930): 57–146.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In SE 18 (1920): 1–64.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo*. In SE 13 (1913): viii–162.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In SE 7 (1905): 123–246.
- Freud, Sigmund and Albert Einstein. "Why War?" In SE 22 (1933): 195–216.
- Gay, Peter. *Freud: A Life for Our Time*. New York: Norton, 1998.
- Guaraldo, Olivia. *Comunità e vulnerabilità: Per una critica politica della violenza*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1977.
- Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: Mariner Books, 1999.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hobbes, Thomas. "Epistle Dedicatory." In *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*. Edited by Howard Warrender. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jones, Ernest. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volumes 1–3*. New York: Basic Books, 1953–1957.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Revised Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*. Edited and translated by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kerr, John. *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*. New York: Vintage, 1994.

- Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980.
- Lonzi, Carla. "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale." In *Sputiamo su Hegel e altri scritti*. Milan: et al., 2010.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*. Translated by Laurent Dubois. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Preciado, Paul. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press, 2013.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992.
- Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political. Expanded Edition*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*. Volume 1. Edited and translated by Sabine Roehr and Christopher Janaway. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *The Collected Poetry*. Translated by Melvin Dixon. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *Liberté 1: Negritude et Humanism*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964.
- Spielrein, Sabina, "Die Destruktion als Ursache des Werdens." *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* 4, no. 1 (1912): 465–503.
- Weber, Max. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth and Charles W. Mills. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Zanetti, Gianfrancesco. *L'orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015.

Part II

With Marx, Fanon, Foucault

The ass is a cock-less soliloquy that caresses the eyelid.

Mario Mieli, "Sull'altalena di Poe. Ovvero: cosa nascondi dietro la coscia?"

I love the anus of my neighbor as myself.

Corrado Levi, *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica*



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

4 Foreclosures

Whatever is refused in the symbolic order, in the sense of *Verwerfung*, reappears in the real [...] There is an abyss here, a temporal submersion, a rupture in experience [...] The essential distinction is this—the origin of the neurotic repressed is not situated at the same level of history in the symbolic as that of the repressed involved in psychosis, even if there exists the closest of relations between their contents.

Jacque Lacan, “Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses”

To indicate the psychic process that leads to neurosis, Freud usually deploys the term “Vedrängung,” currently translated in French as “refoulement,” in Italian as “rimozione,” and in English as “repression.” However, Lacan points out in his 1956 seminar that, while Freud uses “Vedrängung” to refer to the psychic process leading to neurosis, in the “Wolf-Man” case study he turns to a different word, “Verwerfung.” To translate this word, Lacan borrows the term “forclusion” (indicating the loss of something based on legal rights, like citizenship or property) from French juridical vocabulary, which in psychoanalytic English becomes “foreclosure.” They are not synonyms: even if the patient Sergej Castontinovič Pankëev, the “Wolf-Man,” was affected by neuroses according to Freud, Lacan uses “foreclosure” to indicate the psychic process that triggers psychosis.¹ In his view, the return that we have often seen in action in previous chapters of this book characterizes (failed) neurotic repression: that which is repressed does not disappear, but transforms into an enigmatic symbol that periodically disturbs the psychic life of the subject² (or his theoretical production) without, however, letting their relation to reality go astray (if Freud is right, it is, rather, the prohibitions that come from familial and social reality which determine repression³). Traumas, desires, and drives are denied in a radically different way with psychosis; at that point they are foreclosed, so that the subject no longer recognizes these traumas, desires, and drives as their own. Hence, they move not to the symbolic order, Lacan argues, but to the Real. And when they return, they return to the subject “from the outside,” in the form of oppressive hallucinations that sink the subject into an “abyss” and provoke a “rupture” in their relation to reality.⁴

In the following pages, I will adopt the concept of foreclosure not in the clinical sense, but to give a name to that impulse to escape, which more often than not, as we have seen, apprehends those who practice philosophy when faced with the possibility of a date with sex. I will no longer attend to the philosophy that precedes Freud's thinking but will instead focus on the tradition following him and which find their premises in his thought. The narrative will have a circular path, whose point of departure and of arrival will be the performative theory of gender of Judith Butler, who in the 1990s worked at "the intersection of Foucault and Freud," recuperating a political use of psychoanalysis that Foucault himself had contested two decades earlier.⁵ It is a complex story that proceeds through ongoing criticism, one which (not the first, as we will see) is of Freud by Lacan.

4.1 Bodies in Alliance without Sex⁶

Beyond using Freudian categories to develop a theory of the psychoses that Freud had never developed, Lacan relies on the Freudian theories of the Oedipus complex, the castration complex, and female penis envy to develop an argument on gender of which Freud certainly would not have approved.⁷ In fact, Lacan argues that the female "position" and the male "position" do not immediately and directly derive from the biological differences between sexuated bodies—that is, from the presence of a penis or the presence of a vagina and a clitoris, which Freud interprets essentially as an absence of the penis—but are inscribed in the symbolic order. The thesis, influenced by Simone de Beauvoir's feminist critique targeting Freud,⁸ had, in turn, a strong influence on the subsequent development of feminism, transfeminism, and queer theory. Butler, who also draws on this critique, uses Lacan's theoretical tools to raise a radical objection to Lacan himself. According to Butler, in making note of incest and gender difference, there is one point on which Lacan and Freud agree: both have carried out a *foreclosure* of homosexual desire.

Butler comes to terms with Freud in a text that is often celebrated as the inauguration of queer theory, and which is surely the inaugural text of their planetary success—*Gender Trouble* (1990).⁹ Here the philosopher, in a thorough examination of *The Ego and the Id* (1922), demonstrates how the father of psychoanalysis uses the category of "original bisexuality" to mean a co-presence of two heterosexual desires, not of a heterosexual desire and a homosexual desire. If a newborn male is potentially predisposed to feel attraction for his same sex, this is because, according to Freud, he is potentially predisposed to also take up a female identity (and vice versa): because a subject desires a male, they must identify—at some level of the psyche—with a female (and vice versa).¹⁰ Freud, Butler observes, does not even consider the possibility of homosexual desire where those who desire a person of the same sex might fully identify with that sex (a definition, I add, that we are not required to uphold as valid for everyone that self-defines as

homosexuals). Consistent with his conception of bisexuality, Freud also argues that homosexual desire derives from a negative resolution of the Oedipus complex, which the subject concludes by melancholically identifying with the parent of the opposite sex by having lost them as love object. If his argument was fully coherent, Butler observes, Freud would then have to theorize, symmetrically, that even the heterosexual desire, following what he considers to be the positive resolution of the Oedipus complex, derives from the melancholic identification of the subject with the parent of the same sex, insofar as they are the lost love object. If Freud does not theorize this, it is precisely because a foreclosure of homosexual desire is at play in his thought, the prohibition of which operates as a non-expressed premise both in the theory of original bisexuality, and in the theory of the incest taboo.

To summarize: according to Freud bisexuality is originally specified as the copresence of male and female heterosexual desires, and sexual identification derives directly from the anatomic presence or absence of the penis, as well as the resolution of an Oedipus complex brought on by (heterosexual) desire for the parent of the opposite sex. Lacan takes distance from these theses in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience”¹¹ (1949) and “The Signification of the Phallus”¹² (1958); but in *Bodies that Matter* (1993),¹³ Butler argues that his distancing does not capture the essential point. For Lacan, the morphology of the body is imaginary, sex is a symbolic position, and the Oedipus complex comes not from a desire for the parent of the opposite sex, but from the need to recuperate the fusional relationship with the mother first experimented by the newborn and later interrupted by the father. This need compels babies of both sexes to want what the mother lacks (what she desires) and what the father possesses: the phallus, meant as the privileged signifier of the Law.¹⁴ Since he has a penis, the male child therefore identifies as the one that *has* the phallus and acquires a male identity; since she does not have a penis, the female child identifies as the one who, not having the phallus, *is the phallus*, and acquires a female identity. In this bizarre theory, Lacan therefore provides only two sexual positions, having or being the phallus, which in his view corresponds to the male and female roles in heterosexual relationships. According to Butler, by excluding the fact that the relation of the subject to the phallus can organize itself differently, as is the case with homosexuality, Lacan thereby forecloses homosexuality.

Moreover—and this is Butler’s final fundamental objection to classic psychoanalysis—by making the phallus the privileged signifier of the law and considering the identification of the penis with the phallus to be structural, Lacan reifies a contingent effect of the imaginary, inscribing it into the symbolic to make it more stable. In other words, according to Butler, Lacan does not understand—does not want to understand—that the symbolic order is in reality a social and political order, which does not transcend culture but is itself cultural. In line with the method developed by Foucault in *The Will to Knowledge*, Butler interprets the attribution of “normality” and “naturalness” to the identities of cisgender heterosexual men and women not as an

immutable fact, but instead as a contingent effect of a biopolitical apparatus.¹⁵ Butler thus counters both Freud and Lacan with a highly counter-intuitive thesis, according to which gender difference is not the result of the cultural elaboration of bodily differences or symbolic positions, but is a set of norms that shape bodily differences and symbolic positions. In re-elaborating Adrienne Rich's concept of compulsory heterosexuality,¹⁶ Butler calls this set of norms the "heterosexual matrix." Therefore, for Butler, the foreclosure of homosexual desire in Freud and Lacan is rooted in the binary, heterosexist, cisgenderist, and endosexist, power apparatus that both thinkers help to consolidate, thereby perpetuating gender stereotypes that condition the lives of everyone, marking the lives of some in a particularly serious way.

Years later the philosopher returns to the topic in a dialogue with Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek called *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (2000). Here Butler clarifies that for them "foreclosure" is not just an individual psychic process that produces psychosis, but also a political one that—here Foucault returns—produces the subject through radical exclusions, "a way in which variable social prohibitions work."¹⁷ Offering a Lacanian reading of Freud in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997), Butler argues: "Freud distinguishes between repression and foreclosure, suggesting that a repressed desire might once have lived apart from its prohibition, but that foreclosed desire is rigorously barred, constituting the subject through a certain kind of preemptive loss."¹⁸ In these texts, Butler appears to be even more realistic than Schmitt and Freud, arguing that not only the community as a whole but every singular subject, by virtue of their inscription into the community, requires enemies on whom to project the foreclosed parts of themselves felt as threats: as we saw in the "Prologue," the abjection of minoritarian subjects is an outcome of this process. With the arrival of the "War on Terror" declared by the Bush administration, Butler will later argue that this psycho-political apparatus amounts to a negation of the vulnerability of the personal body and of the national body as well as to the dehumanization of the stranger and of the enemy whose lives are perceived as unworthy of mourning.¹⁹ However, before the trauma of September 11, 2001, Butler's attention primarily turns to the "preemptive loss" of the foreclosed homosexual desire that characterizes the subjects that emerge from the heterosexual matrix. One could, however, argue that even their interpretation of sexuality through the categories of gender and desire is marked by a fundamental foreclosure.

In *Homos* (1996), Leo Bersani addresses an objection to Butler,²⁰ which he also addresses to Foucault in "Is the Rectum a Grave?" (1987):²¹ the transposition of sexual identity and desire into a dialectics of power and resistance, norms and their subversion, politicizes sexuality by desexualizing it, and thus depriving it of its essential element that Freud has called "drive." The subject of homosexual desire as conceptualized by Butler is effectively a subject that aspires, to use their terminology, to the "displacement," or the "subversion" of the "heterosexual matrix": because it is foreclosed, or

abject, the subject of homosexual desire pushes against the same normative system that made them abject from the outside in order to modify it and therefore be included in it. Just like the sexual subject conceptualized by Foucault who is entangled in the biopolitical apparatus, which they resist, the subject of homosexual desire conceptualized by Butler still has much in common with the “individual” placed at the foundation of modern political philosophy (again think of Hobbes), who enters into society moved by the search for their own utility—a motivation that for Foucault, as we will see further on, is the search for pleasure, while in Butler it is the search for physical and cultural survival, of a livable life, of social recognition, of full belonging to humanity.²² As we have seen in the preceding chapters, Bersani instead follows the Freud of the *Three Essays*, and Laplanche’s interpretation of the *Three Essays*, in order to assert that the sexual subject is dominated by a drive that isolates them from human society in search of a perverted excitation, in which pleasure is brought together with pain, that undermines not only the reproductive instinct but also that of self-preservation. In this sense, in Bersani’s view, the sexual drive coincides with the death drive, meant not as an aggressive or suicidal tendency, but as a search for enjoyment (*jouissance*) that comes from the symbolic dissolution of identity, from the erasure of the borders that separate the subject from the other and from the world.²³ The sexual subject, intended as the subject of the drive, is not therefore a hedonistic subject who searches for pleasure and self-affirmation through the recognition of society; but is, on the contrary, a masochistic subject, at the mercy of a drive that dissolves them into the beyond of the pleasure principle, a beyond which one is careful not to ask for recognition in society. For Bersani, this beyond represents a space of radical withdrawal from power, beginning with *one’s own* power. A perverse place, which according to Bersani constitutes an “inherited disposition,” an “evolutionary conquest,” and which nevertheless does not have anything natural about it, deriving from the long care that the human, who is born helpless, requires to become an adult:

Overwhelmed by stimuli in excess of the ego structures capable of resisting or binding them, the infant may survive that imbalance only by finding it exciting. So the masochistic thrill of being invaded by a world we have not yet learned to master might be an inherited disposition, the result of an evolutionary conquest. This, in any case, is what Freud appears to be moving toward as a definition of the sexual: an aptitude for the defeat of power by pleasure, the human subject’s potential for a *jouissance* in which the subject is momentarily undone.²⁴

Bersani elaborates these reflections from the 1980s through the 1990s, while the outbreak of HIV/AIDS epidemic exposes gay cis-men and trans women to ferocious media campaigns where they are presented as internal enemies, sick and villainous—abject, to be precise—by the healthy and

right-minded American nation.²⁵ After two decades, and thus after the introduction of antiretroviral triple therapy which suppresses the replication of the HIV virus, while lesbian and gay movements in the United States are busy claiming the right to marry alongside the right to join the military without having to hide themselves,²⁶ Lee Edelman, whom I have already cited,²⁷ revisits the argument regarding the equivalence between the sexual drive and the death drive, this time inserting it into a Lacanian theoretical frame, in his evocatively titled book, considered to be the origin of the “anti-social” turn in queer theory: *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004).²⁸ Here Edelman argues that the sexual drive—or, the death drive—is that which properly defines the sexual experience both for cisgender and endosexual heterosexuals and for those that are not. However, in the heterosexist symbolic order that for Edelman, like Lacan (but not Butler), is the only symbolic order possible, the negativity of the drive is projected above all on those sexual practices that cannot be redeemed by reproductive purposes. Heterosexual sex, fantasmatically reduced to only penis-vagina coitus, thus adopts the meaning of the reproduction of society and humanity, while in its sterility, homosexual sex is established as a threat to meaning. In the lectures that make up *Antigone’s Claim*, published in 2000,²⁹ Butler makes the heroine of the Sophoclean tragedy a symbol of sexual minorities’ struggle for the recognition of their affective relations and for the redefinition of kinship, of their aspiration to become intelligible as fully human beings through the subversion of the heterosexual matrix. In *No Future*, Edelman polemicizes with Butler, and instead urges queer subjects to persist, with Antigone, outside of every meaning and intelligibility, to continue to stubbornly occupy the obscure place of negativity which they have always occupied—without deluding themselves that a law on gay and lesbian marriage, on assisted reproduction and adoption, may be sufficient to abandon it.³⁰

From their earliest work, Butler is aware of the limits of a political action that exhausts itself in the claim for rights, and in their latest book, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015),³¹ they counterpose what they call “street politics,” the politics of assembly, and the occupation of public places, to the juridical sovereignty of the state. However, despite their attention to what the gathering of bodies can do, the fact remains that their understanding of the political action forecloses one of the forces unleashed from the contact between bodies: the sexual drive. It seems to me, moreover, that with Edelman’s attempt to bring the concept of drive to the center of the queer theoretical reflection, positing an equivalence between the sexual drive and the death drive insofar as both threaten meaning, he condemns queer subjects (as representatives of the negativity of this self-destructive force) to the solitude of an enjoyment (*jouissance*) that impedes them from acting politically. Edelman seems to counterpose the logic of a refusal of politics, which leaves aside circumstances, contingencies, and the search for possible alliances that is destined to always repeat itself through the compulsion to repeat, to Butler’s politics of bodily alliance. The subject

of the sexual, for him, simply *cannot* inscribe themselves into the social order, like the promiscuous individual that enjoys full sexual freedom in the state of nature imagined by Hobbes or as our quadruped ancestor that Freud imagined in a perverse and intensely redolent prehistory.

It could then be argued that Butler's critique of Freud and Lacan represents the return of homosexual desire foreclosed to psychoanalysis; and that the so-called antisocial turn inaugurated by Edelman's book represents the return of the sexual drive foreclosed by queer theories. If the Foucauldian politicization of sexuality carried out by Butler runs the risk of desexualizing sexuality, then antisocial theories, at least in Edelman's version, run the risk of depoliticizing queer theories: in such antisocial theories, the uncanny force of the foreclosed sexual drive persecutes the queer subject, thereby rendering them incapable of political action. What morality should we then take from this passionate debate? Maybe we cannot but resign ourselves to a psychotic split, or more precisely a schizophrenic split, between the subject of politics and the subject of sexuality. But maybe a different solution is possible, at least on a theoretical level: a neurotic solution, as it were, in which—as had happened with Freud—the drive is not foreclosed but only repressed and returns from the subject to the subject, disturbing but not impeding his capacity to intervene in that symbolic order that Butler rightly describes as cultural, historical, and political. Before searching for this solution, however, it is necessary to take some steps backward, toward some preceding moments of this history of thought, which, in speaking of the present, I have neglected until now.

4.2 The (Hetero)Sexual Revolution

Let us therefore bracket off the previous section; let's forget that Butler has found psychotic symptoms in old Sigmund, and let's return to our first diagnosis. Let us remember, that is, that Freudian theory's relation to the sexual drive is neurotic, marked by repression with its symbolic returns. Following Butler, we can attribute the foreclosure of homosexual desire from the psychoanalytic theory of identity to Freud; we cannot, however, hold Freud accountable for the foreclosure of the drive from political and sexual theory which, following Bersani, we have found in Butler. Neither would it be right to hold Butler solely responsible: the event of these foreclosures predates even the first volume of Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, The Will to Knowledge*, by nearly a half century.

This event began in 1926. In 1927, Wilhelm Reich, a member of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, as well as a lecturer at his training institute, joined the Austrian Communist Party and published *The Function of the Orgasm*.³² In this book—and in his later “Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis” (1929)³³ and *The Sexual Revolution* (1936)³⁴—all of Freud's reluctant attempts to remain on this side of the pleasure principle, despite having clearly explored its “beyond,” are suddenly overtaken on the left to argue that this beyond is none other than a mirage, a historical specter

of bourgeois civilization that Freud had mistaken for immutable reality. Butler's critique of the symbolic order in Lacan therefore has a precedent in Reich's critique of the theory of the dualism of the drives for which Freud cared deeply. For Reich, the death drive does not have a natural nor a structural character, but one that is contingent and pathological.³⁵ There only exists one original drive, Eros, which would lead humans to a peaceful and pleasant life, without hate and devoted to love, if it had not been repressed by patriarchal and capitalist culture,³⁶ based on exploitation and competition, on the restriction of sexual relations to bourgeois marriage,³⁷ on the sublimation of the libido into neurotic, proprietary, aggressive, and socially alienated bonds. Civilization's discontents can therefore, for Reich, be eliminated once and for all: it is enough to read Freud through Marx and Engel's critical lens of ideology,³⁸ it is enough to introduce psychoanalysis into a revolutionary perspective and to strive for the actualization of a non-classist and non-repressive society in which the abolition of bourgeois morals make possible a "non-authoritarian self-regulation"³⁹ of subjects, and with it a "full harmony with nature and civilization":⁴⁰

Sex-economy teaches us that the antisocial unconscious instinctual life of modern man [...] is a product of moralistic regulation and can be abolished only with its elimination. Sex-economy alone can resolve the contradiction between culture and nature because in eliminating repression of the instincts it also eliminates the perverse and antisocial drives.⁴¹

The concept of nature here undergoes a significant deviation with respect to the long philosophical tradition that extends to Freud (to the clinical-normative body of the text in Freud, and not to the unconscious Freud that speaks in the footnotes), which I discussed in the first chapter: Reich has the great merit of distinguishing between what he evaluates as being the natural ends of sex from sole reproductive ends.⁴² However, those who would understand the concept of self-determination to mean the free expression of queer sexual practices would be disappointed by Reich. As Guy Hocquenghem⁴³ in France and Carla Lonzi⁴⁴ in Italy argued in their denunciations of Reich in the 1970s, the sexual self-determination that he defends is actually hetero-determined by his own prejudices: Reich conceives of the "naturalness" of sex in the form of penis-vagina coitus carried out with romanticism, with no sadistic or masochistic fantasies, and achieved by the orgasm.⁴⁵ Another great merit of Reich is to have affirmed a woman's right to orgasm and not just men's, positing it as a sort of duty dictated by nature, which moreover in the female must be aroused by penetration alone.⁴⁶ Heterosexual women who cannot reach orgasm without the direct stimulation of the clitoris, together with all non-heterosexual people or even heterosexuals that enjoy different sexual practices, are, according to Reich, victims of the repression suffering from neurotic blockages that pervert their drives. The aim of anticapitalist and antirepressive revolution is therefore,

for him, the total (penetrative) heterosexualization of every human being. This does not mean however that in the present, homosexuality must be criminalized (another of Reich's merits, if one considers the tragic fate of homosexuals contemporary with him in the Nazi lagers and Stalinist gulags). Homosexuality will die out on its own in the future, with the advent of liberated society:

1. Homosexuality is not a social crime; it harms no one. 2. It can be *restricted* only by restoring all the prerequisites for a *natural* love life among the masses. Until this goal is realized, it must be considered on equal terms with heterosexual forms of gratification and should not be punished (except for the seduction of minors).⁴⁷

The conception of libido as energy and Freud's theory of discharge are the premises for these preemptory conclusions, theories which Reich extends to a cosmic dimension rather than reinterpreting them into a rigidly heterosexist register. For him, the "natural" orgasm, reached through heterosexual coitus, is not only the "central phenomenon" of sexual life: in the orgasm, we are met with "questions deriving from the field of psychology as well as from that of physiology, from the field of biology no less than from that of sociology."⁴⁸ The discharge of "vital energy" or "biological energy" in human beings occurs through orgasm, while in organisms, it takes the form of the "orgone," or the "universal cosmic energy" measurable "thermically and electroscopically, as well as by means of the Geiger-Müller counter."⁴⁹ The orgone, Reich explains, makes the whole universe dynamic, self-regulating its own electromagnetic flows: when it accumulates excessively, it finds a way to discharge. Among the living, the human being in patriarchal and bourgeois civilization is the only species that does not respect this natural law,⁵⁰ facing serious consequences. The "damming-up of biological energy"⁵¹ carried out by sexual repression is, in fact, responsible for such psychological pathologies, as well as those that are physical and social: it causes pregenital fixations,⁵² perversions, neuroses, but also cancer, and moreover "the psychic plague which gave rise to dictatorships"⁵³ and war between nations.⁵⁴ The aim of the "sex-economic therapeutic technique" developed by Reich—which, he explains, he publicly calls "vegetotherapy" rather than "orgasmotherapy" only because of a "concession to the squeamishness of the world in sexual matters"⁵⁵—"is the re-establishment of biopsychic motility through the dissolution of the character and muscular rigidifications ('armorings')."⁵⁶

Deeply convinced of the revolutionary reach of his ideas, Reich did not spare any effort to disseminate them throughout his life with both the scientific community and the less affluent classes: in 1928, he founded the *Gesellschaft für Sexualberatung und Sexualforschung* (Society for Sex Counseling and Research) and opened six clinics for sexual hygiene that offered free or low-priced counseling on sexuality and contraception for

those who could not afford the long and costly psychoanalytic therapy.⁵⁷ Later emigrating to Berlin in 1930, he joined the German Communist Party and within it established *Sexpol*, the *Reichsverband für proletarische Sexualpolitik* (German Association for Proletarian Sexual Politics), with the aim of spreading an anti-repressive and revolutionary education to the youth of the working class. Yet, by 1933, he left the party in protest of the Soviet Union's drift to authoritarianism and sexual conservatism⁵⁸; and in 1934, he was expelled from the International Psychoanalytic Society. With Hitler's rise to power, his work was banned together with that of Freud; and he, who with Freud shared Jewish origins, escaped to the United States. There he founded the Orgonon Research Institute in Maine, where he conducted experiments on animals aimed at strengthening orgonic energy through nuclear radiation that proved to be lethal for the poor guinea pigs. In 1947, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ordered him to stop using the box that he called the "orgone energy accumulator" as a therapeutic instrument (geared toward "recharging" patients), but he did not respect the prohibition. He then was brought to trial, which concluded with a sentence of two years in prison for contempt of court. He died in prison in 1957 from a heart attack.⁵⁹ Reich's suggestive and bizarre theories had more luck than he did. Beginning in the 1950s, his patient Alexander Lowen developed his own psychosomatic approach in bioenergetic analysis, a psychotherapeutic technique that is still used throughout the world today.⁶⁰ Moreover, the sexual revolution of 1968 and the 1970s sees in Reich a tutelary deity; in 1972 his thought is celebrated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in that philosophical manifesto of anti-authoritarian movements that is *Anti-Oedipus*.⁶¹ Even before them, his ideas inspired the critical theory of society developed by the intellectuals of the Frankfurt School—many of whom, Jewish in origin, shared with him the condition of exile, first in Geneva, then in Paris, and finally in New York.

Reich can be considered the founder of what he himself calls "Freudo-Marxism,"⁶² a current of political thought that, as at this point must be clear, is based on a deep revision of Freudian theories in which the sexual is radically foreclosed, while in Freud, it is only repressed. What does not find a place in the reformulation of psychoanalysis as revolutionary theory is in fact the presence, in the human, of those drives which push the human subject not toward the discharge of genital sex, but toward the accumulation of energy: toward a perverse, unnatural, senseless, and potentially dangerous excitation, in which the subject loses control of themselves and the world, and is dragged not only beyond the limits of bourgeois civilization but also beyond the limits of any civilization. Reich examines different hypotheses in order to contest the Freudian thesis according to which, sexual excitation, insofar as it is "tension," however pleasurable, also has a painful element to it. Maybe the sexual drive is "none other than the motivational aspect of pleasure," or "none other than the motivational memory of a pleasure already had"; but what is certain, for him, is that the "concept of the drive"

can be reduced to the “concept of pleasure.”⁶³ In Freudo-Marxism, the potentially masochistic and anti-social characteristic of sex is denied with conviction, and the libido is taken back to the pleasure principle and the civilizing potential of Eros, in an anthropological optimism that is quite distant from Freud’s uncanny “discoveries.” The caution, doubts, uncertainties, and pessimism of the hesitant father of psychoanalysis thus leave room for systematic and peremptory discussions, for linear optimistic enthusiasm toward a future radiant with peace, prosperity, and full happiness.

A clear example is the text published in 1955, in English, of the other great inspirer of 1968 anti-authoritarianism, Herbert Marcuse. Its title is programmatic, *Eros and Civilization*,⁶⁴ but even more meaningful for my argument is the terminological precision that concludes the introduction, in which the German terms “*Instinkt*” and “*Trieb*,” and the corresponding English “instinct” and “drive” are presented as perfectly equivalent synonyms, without any divergence in meaning. In this way, Marcuse, like Reich, connects the perversion of the instinct, that for Freud (or, at least for the Freud read by Laplanche and Bersani) is the drive, to the natural order, albeit to a natural order which, according to Marx,⁶⁵ is always subject to the influences of history and to the becoming of society⁶⁶: “Instinct,’ in accordance with Freud’s notion of *Trieb*, refers to primary “drives” of the human organism which are subject to *historical* modification; they find mental as well as somatic representation.”⁶⁷

It is this connecting the human animal to nature that allows us to imagine a revolution that is—in the astronomical sense of the term—a return to the origin, and therefore the advent of a “non-repressive civilization,”⁶⁸ in which alienated instincts can be reappropriated. The foreclosure of the drive is the foreclosure of the perverse, unnatural, character of the human. It is the affirmation of the unity of the psychic and the corporeal, of a topology of the subject in which that hybrid space in-between, which is occasioned by the encounter of bodies, does not find room.

The anti-repressive critique of Marcuse is “less easy” with respect to that of Reich and is filled with greater tension and ambiguity. In *Eros and Civilization*, the proclamation of new era of happiness is, however, no less clear-cut. In his conclusions Reich’s rebuke is explicit: Marcuse recognizes in him the value of having developed “the critical social theory implicit in Freud” revealing the “extent to which sexual repression is enforced by the interests of domination and exploitation.” But at the same time, he criticizes him for having too hastily dismissed “Freud’s hypothesis of the death instinct,” of not having considered the “essential distinction between repressive and non-repressive sublimation,” of having remained entangled in a “sweeping primitivism” that has over the course of time led him to “wild and fantastic hobbies.”⁶⁹ In reality, not even the Frankfurt School lacks fantasy, and their attempts to tidy up Freudian theories pay the price of simplification. Of the numerous hypotheses examined in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Marcuse, following Otto Fenichel,⁷⁰ first coincidentally

accepts those that are the most in line with Reichian principles. The death drive, or *Thanatos*, for him is nothing more than the “Nirvana principle,”⁷¹ in turn an expression of the pleasure principle: liberation from the energetic tension, desire for quiet and peace.⁷² And then, not even the reality principle contradicts the pleasure principle: the latter, in fact, transforms the search for pleasure into the search for “what is useful,” of what the subject “can obtain without damage to itself [...] to its vital environment,”⁷³ and to its inclusion in a collectivity; the reality principle, through the deferral of satisfaction, is what makes the human a rational and social animal, allowing the Ego to mediate between the unbridled demands of the Id and what is necessary for both self-preservation and communal life.

According to Marcuse, if Freud makes the death drive into the aggression principle, as well as the origin of the sense of guilt caused by the Super-ego at the base of civilization’s discontent, it is because he “generalizes from a specific historical form of reality to reality pure and simple”⁷⁴ and because he attributes to Ananke, or the necessity of work in a regime of scarcity, “what actually is the consequence of a specific organization of scarcity”⁷⁵ in classist societies, where one human group dominates others. Differently than Reich, Marcuse agrees with Freud in maintaining that “a repressive organization of the instincts underlies all historical forms of the reality principle in civilization,”⁷⁶ and that the sublimation of a certain amount of libidinal energy is necessary for the creation of affective and social bonds. In his view, the real obstacle to happiness is not given by the reality principle itself, but from the historical form that the reality principle assumes in advanced industrial society, which Marcuse calls the “*performance principle* in order to emphasize that under its rule society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members.”⁷⁷ He provides a helpful description of the effects of this principle in his 1964 book, *One-Dimensional Man*, where the philosopher—beyond condemning the authoritarianism of Soviet society—denounces the “stupefication” produced by consumerism:

The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation [...] while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this stupefication; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.⁷⁸

In line with the later developments of the Frankfurt School, this second essay ends with an appeal to the faculty of judgment that knows how to challenge the homogenization and conformism of mass culture, introducing

defects into the “one-dimensionality” of the present. To the rationalistic philosophical currents of the 20th century, such as neo-positivism and analytical philosophy, the author opposes a critical thought which, by appealing to imagination, contrasts the existing present with a “Great Refusal” so as to inspire insurrection not in those who participate in the “illusion of popular sovereignty”—those who belong to the working class or are white collar workers—but in those who “exist outside the democratic process” that for them is “intolerable”: “the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable,”⁷⁹ willing to risk everything because they have nothing.⁸⁰

In *Eros and Civilization*, instead, the perversions represent a foothold for the revolution. Marcuse explains here that the performance principle adds to the “basic repression” of the libido, necessary to the creation of social bonds, a “surplus-repression,”⁸¹ which establishes alienated social relations aimed at the “perpetuation of the monogamic-patriarchal family” and of the “hierarchical division of labor.”⁸² Consequently, in capitalistic society “libidinal relations with others” are confined to leisure time and directed to the preparation and execution of [heterosexual] genital intercourse,” while the rest of the body is desexualized “in order to make the organism into a subject-object of socially useful performances.”⁸³ It is therefore in this context that “the perversions [...] express rebellion against the subjugation of sexuality under the order of procreation, and against the institutions which guarantee this order.”⁸⁴

Freud, as we have seen, gives the name “polymorphously perverse” to the possible aim which the infant (and above all the female infant) can encounter in case the latency phase cannot run its course, due to the seduction carried out by external subjects. In Marcuse, the term undergoes a significant contortion in meaning and instead comes to indicate the *original nature* of the *sexual instinct* “before” all repression or sublimation:

Originally, the sex instinct has no extraneous temporal and spatial limitations on its subject and object; sexuality is by nature “polymorphous-perverse.” The societal organization of the sex instinct taboos as *perversions* practically all its manifestations which do not serve or prepare for the procreative function. Without the most severe restrictions, they would counteract the sublimation on which the growth of culture depends.⁸⁵

The author nevertheless takes care to dispel the fear that sexual liberation can lead to “a society of sex maniacs, that is, to no society”⁸⁶ (meaning to a state of Hobbesian nature or to the pre-civilization imagined by Freud). In its plans, the abolition of capitalism’s surplus-repression will not in fact have as an aim the abolition of all repression, but the substitution of the performance principle with “a *new* reality principle”⁸⁷ under which the libido will

sublimate into “high civilization.”⁸⁸ With a certain prudishness, Marcuse even goes so far as to argue that “the free development of transformed libido within transformed institutions, while eroticizing previously tabooed zones, time, and relations, would *minimize* the manifestations of *mere* sexuality.”⁸⁹ Rather than being liberated into its original form, reactivating “precivilized and infantile stages,”⁹⁰ sexuality is transformed instead into an Eros that is spread throughout all of the activities of the organism: it is therefore not a society of sex that is actualized, but rather a society of love.

It is at this point in Marcuse’s theory that Marx by far gets the better of Freud: not at all interested in how sexual intercourse will be transformed, Marx is mostly concerned with how relations of production will be transformed. The tenth chapter of *Eros and Civilization*, entitled “The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros,” interprets the “erotization of the entire organism”⁹¹ above all as “a change in the character of work by virtue of which the latter would be assimilated to play—the free play of human faculties.”⁹² In the non-repressive society of the future imagined by Marcuse, thanks to automation⁹³ and the reorganization of the industrial apparatus, work will lose its characteristic features of alienation and exertion, and will become a pleasurable, erotic, activity comparable to what the *hobby* represents in the repressive society of the present.⁹⁴

What a delight! After the *vanilla* heterosexism of Reich, we needed to relax a bit. Moving between gardening and DIY activities, we can thus fill the temporal hiatus with which this section opened and pull together the threads of my argument, returning to Butler through Foucault, whose constructivist conception of sexual identity takes as its starting point his critique of Freudo-Marxism.

4.3 Hedonistic Resistances

The polemical targets of *The Will to Knowledge*, are, however, neither the coital fixation of Reich nor the laborist puritanism of Marcuse⁹⁵: Foucault disputes both authors’ use of psychoanalysis, characterizing it as a “strangely restrictive”⁹⁶ conception of power, according to which power would act on sexuality only in the form of a prohibition. In his view, the prophets of sexual liberation had praised Freud as a great innovator who had spoken of sex after centuries of silence, without realizing that in inventing psychoanalysis, he had done nothing other than overturn the meaning of a hermeneutic practice present long present in our culture, at least since the Catholic Church had made confession an obligatory sacrament for all of the faithful.⁹⁷ We should be clear that this overturning was no small feat, however for Foucault it was not enough.⁹⁸ Well before Freud, he explains, “an ever greater quantity of discourse”⁹⁹ was produced, in which sex was questioned not as an activity, but as an essence: as “a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp,”¹⁰⁰ as a secret to which every singular subject would be permanently tied. Initially the issue regarding sexuality had to do with the

purity of the soul and sin, salvation and damnation; later, instead, these criteria gave way to those of health and sickness, normality and abnormality. Medicine, psychiatry, psychology, pedagogy, and then sociology, statistics, economics: not only psychoanalysis but also all these so-called human sciences dealt with sex sooner or later. The result of this discursive proliferation was not the repression of a *deep* truth—perhaps polymorphous and perverse—of the subject, but the deployment of “a great *surface* network where the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power.”¹⁰¹ Foucault calls this normative network the “apparatus of sexuality,” and argues that, rather than representing them, the revolutionary theories “in which *sex*, the revelation of *truth*, the overturning of global laws, the proclamation of a new day to come, and the promise of a certain felicity are linked together,”¹⁰² are fully implicated with it. In his view, the Freud-Marxist “great sexual sermon”¹⁰³ is fundamentally nothing more than a recent product of the transformations in the Christian pastoral, in which the “great requirement of confession [...] assumed the new meaning of an injunction to lift psychological repression” and “the task of truth was now linked to the challenging of taboos.”¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, Foucault invites us to abandon “the diffuse energetics that underlies the theme of a sexuality repressed for economic reasons,”¹⁰⁵ and to open our eyes to the fact that, far from being characterized by the restrictions to sexuality in the form of the fertile heterosexual couple, “19th-century ‘bourgeois’ society, and it is no doubt still with us,” is “a society of blatant and fragmented perversion.”¹⁰⁶ Like neoliberalism, the apparatus of sexuality in fact participates in a biopolitical operation that does not impose norms on reality, but rather pulls its norms out of reality: the adhesion of every single human being to an abstract model of perfection is not necessary for the flourishing of the life of the human species; such abstraction would have too high of a cost and would require excessive rigidity and the statistical management of all sorts of imperfection.¹⁰⁷ Just as certain morbidity and mortality rates are tolerable in a healthy and vital population, and certain unemployment and poverty rates are functional to the prosperity of the capitalist economy, so too is a certain rate of abnormality indispensable to society’s well-being. In the first half of the 20th century, Nazi and Soviet totalitarianisms had put “abnormals”—racialized, pathologized, psychiatrized, disabled, subjects—to death; neoliberalist biopolitics which for Foucault is already evidently triumphant in Europe at the end of the 1970s, instead utilizes such subjects in the governance of populations and subjectivity. In the field of sexuality, for example, there is no other epoch than our own which is dedicated to tracking down signs of sexual transgression everywhere, to recall the specter of perversion at every opportunity. Psychoanalysis—to which Foucault, let us remember, gives “political credit” for having been constituted “in theoretical and practical opposition to

fascism”¹⁰⁸—had widely participated in this search: does not the theory of the Oedipus Complex make the desire for incest universal? Does not the theory of the stages of sexual development serve to locate the signs of regressive fixation in everyone? In the biopolitical regime of the apparatus of sexuality, the perversions are not obstacles to shut down in order to construct an ordered society, rather they act as supports on which power leans so as to extensively penetrate social and familial relations, all around and “inside” the subject to better observe, probe, and survey the subject. The stakes of the crusades against masturbation that had obsessed 19th-century pedagogy (and which was the starting point of the Freudian theories of infantile sexuality), for example, was not the extinction of autoeroticism, but the extension of surveillance on the family: the sexuality of adults and educators but above all parents, was probed, administered, and governed beginning with that of children.¹⁰⁹

This “persecution of the peripheral sexualities entailed,” moreover, “an *incorporation of perversions* and a new *specification of individuals*.”¹¹⁰ “An entire sub-race race was born”¹¹¹ of which Foucault has fun writing out the catalogue: “Krafft-Ebing’s zoophiles and zoerasts, Rohleder’s auto-monosexualists [...] mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sex-oesthetic inverts, and dyspareunist women.”¹¹² But in the bestiary of the perversions, a place of honor awaits that character which to this day obsesses our culture, even if he is assured a definitive social recognition for liberal common sense due to triumph of marital rights. The exemplary case for understanding how the apparatus of sexuality crystalizes the “bad habits” in identity is homosexuality:

As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The 19th-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. [...] We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal’s famous article of 1870 on “contrary sexual sensations”¹¹³ can stand as its date of birth—less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.¹¹⁴

In Foucault’s constructivist perspective, homosexuality, and therefore also heterosexuality which is defined in opposition to it, and the subsequent specifications of the difference between homosexuality and transsexuality,

between transgender and cisgender,¹¹⁵ they are therefore recent inventions, through which the apparatus of sexuality binds every subject to a sexual identity. This thesis has opened a hot debate in subsequent decades, which has become of central importance in the queer theories of the United States. As we have anticipated, Butler reworks this thesis in *Gender Trouble* to open a debate in feminism regarding female identity: like gays and lesbians, in their view, even man and woman are social constructs resulting from discursive and gestural performances that follow the norms laid out by the heterosexual matrix. In *Homos*, Bersani is quite critical of Butler: in his view, the success of *The Will to Knowledge* in the United States has made it dangerously “fashionable for gay and lesbian theorists to show they are no longer being brainwashed by heterosexist society”¹¹⁶ by rejecting the “essentialized identities derived from sexual preference.”¹¹⁷ For Bersani, while the lesbian and gay movements claim visibility and social recognition for sexual minorities, lesbian and gay intellectuals make themselves “collaborat[e] in the disciplinary tactics that would make invisible”¹¹⁸ those minorities—of which they are also part. They therefore oppose a paradoxical “resistance to homophobia in which the agent of resistance has been erased,” since for them there is “no longer any homosexual subject to oppose the homophobic subject.”¹¹⁹

To tell the truth, to argue that homosexual identity is a product of the apparatus of sexuality is not to argue that homosexual identity does not exist, nor that before full modernity conditions did not exist that could be in some way linked to it. Foucault does not maintain that homosexual people have nothing in common other than the heterosexist apparatus that defines them as minorities, let alone theorize that it is not desirable to resist such a device as homosexuals. On the contrary, as Bersani knows well,¹²⁰ in *The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault recognizes more than once the possibility of instituting a continuity between the premodern experience of sodomy and the modern experience of homosexuality (although the former did not concern identity like the latter, but a transgression of natural and divine law); he hints at the existence of “societies of men that were thought to exist in the army or in the courts” prior to the introduction of the category of homosexuality; above all he maintains that the medico-psychiatric invention of this category “made possible the formation of a ‘reverse’ discourse,” in which “homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified.”¹²¹ Foucault therefore does not suggest the abandonment of homosexual identity—his is not a normative theory—but demonstrates how the experience of what today we call homosexuality was different in the past and could become something else in the future.

For example, though it remains an object of disgust and discrimination (above all but not only for white and wealthy people), over the course of the decades that separate us from him homosexuality, in much of the world, has

also increasingly become a market niche, it has become an object of familial morality, and it has been co-opted by discourses of a nationalist, xenophobic, anti-Islamic nature.¹²² Foucault suggests to homosexual people (and to everyone) that, on the one hand, to fully subscribe to the identitarian models presently attributed to them is not a destiny with no exit routes,¹²³ and on the other hand, that to undo these models, for those who feel the need, does not necessarily require the liberation of another identity or of a truth of sex outside of time, that would be repressed in the present. In the Freudo-Marxist tradition, in the last instance, the French philosopher finds an epistemological error: that tradition interprets power exclusively as a localized “superstructure” above social relations and outside of the subject, which one day could be definitively demolished. For Foucault, however, power constitutes social relations and shapes subjectivities. Certainly, closer to the pessimism of *Civilization and Its Discontents* than Reich and Marcuse are, Foucault thus also retains that power cannot be eliminated from social life, and that it is unavoidably in conflict with the freedoms of the singular subject. Power is necessary, power is everywhere. Everywhere it restricts, but also it co-opts and produces freedom. And for this very reason, everywhere freedom can oppose itself to power in the form of resistance. It is therefore highly rare—Foucault adds further—that the “strategic codification of these points of resistance [...] makes revolution possible”¹²⁴; and it is in every case impossible that a revolution extinguishes power forever. History teaches that *the* power, in the singular, does not exist: in each society, there exists instead multiple and unstable relations of power, ready to take on ever-new configurations. The forms of resistance are also multiple and unstable, quite different from *the* revolution: various disparate forms, unpredictable, the result of contingencies more than from strategic planning. A passage of *The Will to Knowledge* responds to Marcuse’s appeal in *One-Dimensional Man* with these words:

Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a *plurality* of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial [...] Are there no great radical ruptures, massive binary divisions, then? Occasionally, yes. But more often one is dealing with mobile and transitory points of resistance, producing cleavages in a society that shift about, fracturing unities and effecting regroupings, furrowing across individuals themselves, cutting them up and remolding them, marking off irreducible regions in them, in their bodies and minds.¹²⁵

For Foucault, the future society of love and peace is in the end “an abstraction”¹²⁶ and the project of a revolution that could actualize that society, restoring the just order of things, does not fit with sexual liberation

movements. The essence of the subject that is shaped by the apparatus of sexuality is precisely to think of oneself as endowed with a sexual desire that is more difficult to grasp the truer it is: therefore, the fantasy of letting the original libidinal energy present in all the specimens of the human species discharge and flow cannot lead to any sort of liberation, nor can the fantasy of sublimating this energy in a spontaneous, “natural” way lead to authentic social bonds and unalienated labor. To be effective, the resistance must be thought and practiced otherwise: “The rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality ought not to be sex-desire, but bodies and pleasures.”¹²⁷

This assertion, as peremptory as it is cryptic, is not explained further in *The Will to Knowledge*. We can however understand the meaning of these words in some later studies by Foucault dedicated to “technologies of the self” and the “aesthetics of existence” of the ancient Greeks and Romans,¹²⁸ as well as from some of his interviews in the early 1980s.¹²⁹ For those who feel the need to loosen the grip of the modern regime of sexual identification, the possibilities for action do not end with the alternative presented by Bersani between the demand for public visibility of one’s identity and the attempt to undo it. In recognizing oneself as homosexual and to publicly declare it, for example, is not bad according to Foucault; the political question is to ask what can those who identify socially through homosexuality manage to do with it? The choice made by *mainstream* lesbian and gay movements has been to demand the right to institute the most traditional form of life for same-sex couples, the family, and to make their contribution to liberal society through it. In two interviews from the early 1980s—respectively published in the French gay magazine *Gai pied* and the American gay magazine *The Advocate*—Foucault instead argues that recognizing oneself as homosexual can represent the point of departure for embracing “new friendships,” that is, to introduce new ways of relating, new communities: to constitute unedited forms of life, which have nothing to do with the expression of the truth of the subject, but which are the result of the creative use, non-natural and artificial, that each human being can make of the self.¹³⁰

This thesis is also picked up again by Butler, when they make the *drag queen* the heroine of the performative subversion of gender that demonstrates the possibility to displace the sexual binary, and when they advocate for the social recognition of new genders and new forms of kinship that allow sexual minorities to access a livable life and full humanity. In this case, as I have tried to show, Bersani’s critique is right on target. It is in fact not true that Foucault in *The Will to Knowledge* and Butler in *Gender Trouble* “repudiate” gay and lesbian identity. It is true, however, that both often seem to think the sexual subject, even the homo-sexual subject, as the classic political subject, who aspires not only to live, but to live humanly, pleasurable, rationally: to live the good life in society with those like them. In this regard, the two tutelary deities of queer theory in the 1990s do not appear to be distant from the tutelary deities of Freudo-Marxism in the 1970s: even

when they critique the limited conception of power in traditional philosophy and the heterosexism of the psychoanalytic tradition, Foucault and Butler, like Reich and Marcuse, foreclose the sexual in order to theorize the political. Indeed, the sexual has little to do with the pleasures of a fully human life, with the recognition of a restricted community or an entire society: its death drive instead pushes the humans beyond themselves—below not only humanity, as Kant would say, but even animality. In fact when Freud, our usher,¹³¹ opened a pathway for the sexual into thought, after some risky ventures he had hidden in the notes of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, the sexual had remained burrowed for a long time until it re-emerged with the violence of a psychotic symptom in authors that perturb our understanding of politics, who in fact we define as “antisocial.” A mediation between the sexual and the political does not seem to be possible on the level of a theoretical critique ... or was it? Or is it? Is another history possible?

Notes

- 1 As the original title of the “Wolf Man” case study suggests, “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” (*SE* 17, 1–124), Freud makes this clinical case into an example of neuroses, which, among other things, he argues to have been successful with the treatment. In reality, Pankëev was not cured and the literature that followed recognized a form of psychosis in his suffering. In the early 1970s, by now an old man, he told journalist Karin Obholzer that he had received an annuity from the Sigmund Freud Foundation for not having revealed the truth (and he made her promise to not publish the interview before his death). See, Karin Obholzer, *Gespräche mit dem Wolfsmann: Eine Psychoanalyse und die Folgen* (Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1983).
- 2 Repression and the return of the repressed are just the two sides of the same coin. The repressed is always there, expressed in a perfectly articulate manner in symptoms and a host of other phenomena.” Jacques Lacan, “Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses,” in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: WW Norton and Co., 1993), 21.
- 3 Sigmund Freud, *The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis*, *SE* 19, 181–188.
- 4 See the epigraph which opens this chapter, taken from Lacan, “Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses,” 13.
- 5 Butler writes: “In the intersection of Foucault and Freud, I have sought to provide a theory of agency that takes into account the double workings of social power and psychic reality. And this project, partially undertaken in *The Psychic Life of Power*, is motivated by the inadequacy of the Foucauldian theory of the subject [...] which does not appreciate the instabilities that inhere in identificatory practices.” Judith Butler, “Competing Universalities,” in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), 151.
- 6 Trans. The section title here alludes to the chapter “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street” in Judith Butler’s *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 66–98.
- 7 For example, in the fifth section of the second of the *Three Essays*, added in 1914, we read: “The assumption that all human beings have the same (male) form of genital is the first of the many remarkable and momentous sexual

- theories of children. It is of little use to a child that the science of biology justifies his prejudice and has been obliged to recognize the female clitoris as a true substitute for the penis. Little girls do not resort to denial of this kind when they see that boys' genitals are formed differently from their own. They are ready to recognize them immediately and are overcome by envy for the penis—an envy culminating in the wish, which is so important in its consequences, to be boys themselves.” Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 195. In the fourth section of the third essay, added in 1920, Freud, in fact, pushes himself to hypothesize that, insofar as the libido is “active” energy, even in females, it is male: “The sexuality of little girls is of a wholly masculine character. Indeed, if we were able to give a more definite connotation to the concepts of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine,’ it would even be possible to maintain that libido is invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman.” Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 219.
- 8 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).
 - 9 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
 - 10 For example, Freud writes: “This alternative outcome may also occur, and is easier to observe in girls than in boys. Analysis very often shows that a little girl, after she has had to relinquish the father as a love-object, will bring her masculinity into prominence and identify herself with her father (that is, with the object which has been lost), instead of with her mother. This will clearly depend on whether the masculinity in her disposition—whatever that may consist in—is strong enough. It would appear, therefore, that in both sexes the relative strength of the masculine and feminine sexual dispositions is what determines whether the outcome of the Oedipus situation shall be an identification with the father or with the mother. This is one of the ways in which bisexuality takes a hand in the subsequent vicissitudes of the Oedipus complex.” Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SE 19, 32–33.
 - 11 Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, ed. and trans. Bruce Fink, Héloïse Fink, and Russell Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2002), 75–81.
 - 12 Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus,” in *Écrits*, 575–584.
 - 13 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
 - 14 In Lacanian theory, as a privileged signifier the phallus is at the origin of the subject’s capacity for meaning.
 - 15 For Foucault “discipline” is the techniques of training that act upon singular human subjects to render them docile bodies, and “biopolitics” is the totality of procedures of control and management of vital processes that transform the human species from a disordered multitude to a governable population. The sexual apparatus—on which we will linger in the third section of this chapter—operates as the connection between the microphysical dimension of discipline and the macrophysical of biopolitics. For bibliographic information, see note 107 in this chapter.
 - 16 Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” *Signs* 5, no. 4, *Women: Sex and Sexuality* (Summer 1980): 631–660.
 - 17 Judith Butler, “Competing Universalities,” 149.
 - 18 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 23.

- 19 See, in particular, Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004) and Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2009).
- 20 See, Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 76 and 152.
- 21 See Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” in *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 29.
- 22 This conception of the subject is different from that which Butler theorizes after September 11th as one of ethical responsibility, recovering the Emmanuel Lévinas’s reflections on the precedence of “the Other” over the “I.” See, in particular, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).
- 23 It is above-all the late Bersani who specifies that his “interest of a self-shattering sexuality” was principally “its moral value” founded on the “crucial psychoanalytic distinction between fantasy and reality.” Leo Bersani, “Shame on You,” in *After Sex?: On Writing Since Queer Theory*, eds. Janet Halley and Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 107.
- 24 Bersani, *Homos*, 100.
- 25 The pandemic also has a central role in Butler’s thematization of vulnerability in *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2004).
- 26 On the jurisprudential history of these claims see, Gianfrancesco Zanetti, *L’orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015).
- 27 See the Prologue, “Merde alors!” above.
- 28 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 29 Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- 30 “So Antigone may well depart from her tomb at the end of Butler’s argument, returning to life in the political sphere from which she was excluded, but she does so while preserving the tomb itself as the burial place for whatever *continues* to insist outside of meaning, immune to intelligibility now or in any future yet to come. She emerges from her tomb, that is, only to claim, for those condemned to unlivable lives on account of unintelligible loves. [...] Ironically, Butler’s reading thus buries Antigone once more—or buries in her the *sinthomosexual* [*queerness*] who refuses intelligibility’s mandate and the correlative economy that regulates what is ‘legitimate and recognizable.’” Edelman, *No Future*, 105.
- 31 Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.
- 32 The text went through a second drafting in 1942, which is the basis for the English translation: Wilhelm Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973).
- 33 Wilhelm Reich, “Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis,” in *Sex-Pol: Essays, 1929–1934*, ed. Lee Baxandall (New York: Verso, 2012), 1–74.
- 34 Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*, trans. Therese Pol (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986).
- 35 “In my clinical work, I never encountered a death drive, a will to die, as a primary instinct corresponding to sexuality or hunger. All psychic manifestations that could be interpreted as ‘death drive’ proved to be products of the neurosis.” Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 154–155.

- 36 “Freud endorsed the cultural-philosophical viewpoint that culture owes its existence to the repression or the renunciation of instinctual drives and has recently tried to explain culture again by referring to the issue of the acquisition of fire [...]. This theory is accurate only insofar as sexual suppression forms the mass-psychological basis for a specific culture in all its forms, namely, the patriarchal culture, but it does not apply to the basis of culture and its formation in general.” Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 10.
- 37 For Marx’s and Engels’s critique of the bourgeois family, see “The Manifesto of the Communist Party,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, Second Edition (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978), 469–500, and especially the section on “Proletarians and Communists,” 483–491; Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 26 – Engels 1882–1889 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 129–276. I address the condemnation without distinction that Engels makes regarding the “pedophilia” of the Greeks and in general the contempt of both authors toward homosexuality in the next chapter.
- 38 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The German Ideology: Part I” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 146–200.
- 39 Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 21.
- 40 Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 25.
- 41 Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 20.
- 42 “No patriotic sexologist, concerned about the perpetuation of humanity, can ask a worker’s wife to bear more than, say, five children. This means having sexual intercourse five times in one’s life, if the act is regarded merely as a means to procreation. However, human nature [...] has arranged it so that man feels sexual excitation and wants to have sexual intercourse even when he has no marriage license. Furthermore, he feels this urge roughly every third day. That means that if he is unconcerned about conventional morality, he has sexual intercourse three thousand to four thousand times from his fourteenth to his fiftieth year.” Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 38.
- 43 “Reich’s sexual revolution can unfortunately be reduced to the idea that what is repressed is man’s natural inclination towards woman and vice-versa.” Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, trans. Daniella Dangoor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 134.
- 44 “The confusion brought about by Reich’s theories is in the fact that in him there coexists a new awareness of the function of pleasure and orgasm [...] and an absolutely procreative vision of sexuality with the patriarchal rejection of the clitoris. In the Reichian cosmogony there is no position for the only organ whose function is purely and exclusively that of pleasure.” Carla Lonzi, “La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale,” in *Sputiamo su Hegel. E altri scritti* (Milano: et al. 2010), 95.
- 45 “The man and the woman are tender toward each other, and there are no contradictory impulses. The following are pathological deviations from this behavior: aggressiveness stemming from sadistic impulses, as in some erectively potent compulsion neurotics, and the inactivity of the passive-feminine character.” Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 103.
- 46 Reich’s critique of the masculinism of Freudian theory is significant: “The psychoanalytic theory denied the existence of a primary vaginal eroticism in young girls and ascribed female sexuality to a complicated combination of other drives.” Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 21.
- 47 Reich, *The Sexual Revolution*, 221.
- 48 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 3.

- 49 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 383–384. Trans. Here the English translation of Reich differs from that of the Italian translation cited by Bernini. I've modified the English translation to be closer to that of the Italian version.
- 50 "MECHANICAL TENSION→BIOELECTRIC CHARGE→BIOELECTRIC DISCHARGE→MECHANICAL RELAXATION. It proved to be the formula of living functioning as such. [...] The immediate cause of many devastating diseases can be traced to the fact that man is the sole species which does not fulfill the natural law of sexuality." Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 9.
- 51 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 6.
- 52 "Pregenital sexuality (oral, anal, muscular, etc.) are fundamentally different from the dynamics of genital sexuality. If non-genital sexual activities are retained, the genital function becomes disturbed." Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 113–114.
- 53 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 248.
- 54 "It is my belief that our earth will never find lasting peace and that it will seek in vain to fulfill the function of social organization as long as untutored and naive politicians and dictators of whatever persuasion continue to contaminate and to lead sexually sick masses of people." Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 13.
- 55 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 5.
- 56 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 8.
- 57 As Reich reminds us, Freud was the one who raised the question about the need to offer psychotherapeutic treatments at moderate prices for less affluent classes: see, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 190.
- 58 On this criticism see the second part of *The Sexual Revolution*, 157–282, entitled "The Struggle for a 'New Life' in the Soviet Union."
- 59 On Reich's life, see: Myron R. Sharaf, *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983).
- 60 See: Alexander Lowen, *The Language of the Body: Physical Dynamics of Character Structure* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012); *Love and Orgasm* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); *Bioenergetics: The Revolutionary Therapy that Uses the Language of the Body to Heal the Problems of the Mind* (New York: Penguin, 1994).
- 61 "Reich was the first to raise the problem of the relationship between desire and the social field (and went further than Marcuse, who treats the problem lightly). He is the true founder of a materialist psychiatry [...] Reich, in the name of desire, caused a song of life to pass into psychoanalysis." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009), 118–119.
- 62 The term appears, for example, in the preface to the second edition of *The Sexual Revolution* (xxvi).
- 63 Reich, *The Function of the Orgasm*, 377–379.
- 64 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (New York: Beacon Press, 1966).
- 65 See Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978).
- 66 "The vicissitudes of the instincts are the vicissitudes of the mental apparatus in civilization. The animal drives become human instincts under the influence of the external reality. Their original 'location' in the organism and their basic direction remain the same, but their objectives and their manifestations are subject to change." Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 11–12.
- 67 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 8.
- 68 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 5.

- 69 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 239.
- 70 Marcuse often cites the article by Otto Fenichel, “Zur Kritik des Todestrieb,” *Imago* 21 (1935).
- 71 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 270. The expression is already present in Freud who in turn takes it from Barbara Low, the only female founder of the English Psychoanalytic Society and author, in 1920, of *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory* (London: Forgotten Books, 2017). “The dominating tendency of mental life,. And perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli (the ‘Nirvana principle,’ to borrow a term from Barbara Low)—a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of that fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of death instincts.” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18, 49–50.
- 72 The eleventh chapter of *Eros and Civilization* is titled “Eros and Thanatos.” Here we read, for example, “The death drive operates under the Nirvana principle: it tends toward that state of ‘constant gratification’ where no tension is felt—a state without want. This trend of the drive implies that its *destructive* manifestations would be minimized as it approached such a state.” Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 234.
- 73 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 14.
- 74 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 34.
- 75 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 36.
- 76 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 34.
- 77 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 44.
- 78 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2002), 9.
- 79 Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 260.
- 80 “Their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game and, in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game. When they get together and go out into the streets without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death.” Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 260–261. *One-Dimensional Man* concludes with a famous citation from Walter Benjamin: “Only for the sake of the hopeless ones have we been given hope.” Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 261; See Walter Benjamin, “Goethe’s Elective Affinities,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume I, 1913–1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 356.
- 81 See Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 35–45.
- 82 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 37–38. Later he writes, “Under the rule of the performance principle, body and mind are made into instruments of alienated labor; they can function as such instruments only if they renounce the freedom of the libidinal subject-object which the human organism primarily is and desires.” (46)
- 83 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 199.
- 84 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 49.
- 85 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 49.
- 86 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 201.
- 87 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 156.
- 88 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 203.
- 89 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 202.

- 90 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 202.
- 91 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 208.
- 92 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 214.
- 93 See Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 27–41.
- 94 “In a reality governed by the performance principle, such ‘libidinal’ work is a rare exception and can occur only outside or at the margin of the work world—as ‘hobby,’ play, or in a directly erotic situation.” Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 220.
- 95 In *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), pages 5, 53, 56, 119, 130–131, 151, 158–159, only the names of Freud and Reich recur, even if the book could be considered as a response to the success of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*. Marcuse’s name appears in the conference proceedings from 1978 (Foucault, “Sexualité et pouvoir,” in *Dits et Écrits, 1954–1988, Vol. III, 1976–1979*, eds. Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 568. Foucault associates Reich instead with the Dutch writer Jos Van Ussel, who authored a book translated into French in 1968 called *Histoire de la répression sexuelle* (Paris: Laffont, 1972), during his lectures at the *Collège de France* between 1974–1975 (*Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*, eds. Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni, trans. Graham Burchell [London: Verso, 2003], 326) and in a conference in 1975 (“Schizo-Culture: Infantile Sexuality,” in *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961–1984*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, trans. Lysia Hochroth and John Johnston (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996), 154–157.
- 96 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 85.
- 97 That is, since 1215, the year of the fourth Lateran Council. Foucault meant to dedicate his fourth volume of his *History of Sexuality* to the theme of confession. *The Will to Knowledge* is the first volume, and the other two are *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality, Vol. II*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990) and *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality, Vol. III*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986). Left incomplete at his death, and published against Foucault’s will which prohibited posthumous publications, this final fourth volume was recently published as *Les Aveux de la chair* (Paris: Gallimard, 2018).
- 98 See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 131.
- 99 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 23.
- 100 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 105.
- 101 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 105–106, emphasis mine.
- 102 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 7, emphasis mine.
- 103 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 7.
- 104 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 130.
- 105 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 114.
- 106 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 47. In contradiction with the commonplaces of Freudo-Marxism, Foucault emphasizes how the more rigorous techniques of sexual control were initially tested on privileged families (whose children were taught by tutors or in colleges, and who underwent medical surveillance), and not on the working class. The popular classes avoided the apparatus of sexuality for a long time, until when, in the course of the 19th century, campaigns for the moralization of working class and rural families were organized, which was a result of the biopolitical state administration, which progressively had been producing a politics of public hygiene, medicalization, and education of the masses. See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 126–127.
- 107 Foucault introduces the category of “biopolitics” in the last lecture at the *Collège de France* in 1976, “Society Must be Defended” (“17 March 1976” in

- “*Society Must Be Defended*”: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey [New York: Picador, 2003], 243–245), and in the last chapter of *The Will to Knowledge* to specify the governmental procedures of the vital processes of the populations developed in conjunction with the birth of the modern state. The concept is then developed in two courses of lectures from 1978 (*Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009]) and 1979 (*The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008]). In the former, biopolitics is presented as a secularized evolution of pastoral power perfected by Christianity: just as the shepherd must lead the flock of the faithful to salvation in the afterlife, so too must the State provide for the security and well-being of the populations on this earth. In the latter he analyzes the solidarity that exists between biopolitics and neoliberal economics: this version of economics aims to produce the well-being of the population through the construction of a civil society shaped by competition and inequality. On Foucault’s analytic of power, and on the epistemological turn that it had impressed upon political philosophy, see: Lorenzo Bernini, *Il pecore e il pastore: Critica, politica, etica nel pensiero di Michel Foucault* (Napoli: Liguori Editore, 2008).
- 108 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 150.
- 109 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 99.
- 110 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 42–43.
- 111 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 40.
- 112 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 43.
- 113 Foucault refers to the article “Die Konträre Sexualempfindung” *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten*, 1 (1870), by the German psychiatrist and neurologist, Karl Friedrich Westphal.
- 114 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 43.
- 115 One of the limits of *The Will to Knowledge* consists in the fact that Foucault turns his attention only to the concept of homosexuality, neglecting to reconstruct the genealogy of the concept of transsexuality. In reality the category of *könträre Sexualempfindung* (contrary/inverted sexual sensations), coined by Westphal, did not differentiate between homosexuality and transsexuality, and understood them both as inversions of the male and female elements of the psyche. It was not even until the 1950s that the adjective “transsexual” became a noun—in this case the fundamental article is Harry Benjamin’s “Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psychosomatic and Somatopsychic Syndromes,” *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 2 (1954). The identity of the invert had thus been “doubled,” giving life not only to the two identities of homosexual and transsexual/transgender, but also, by means of difference, cisgender heterosexual identity as we think of it today. The term “transvestism” used by Benjamin is instead today considered offensive by the official knowledge on sexuality.
- 116 Bersani, *Homos*, 55.
- 117 Bersani, *Homos*, 56. Bersani include Edelman among those who follow this fashion for his thesis that I have summarized, according to which homosexuality, because of its sterility, represents the negativity of sexuality itself: “For Edelman, ‘the signifier ‘gay’ comes to name the unknowability of sexuality as such, the unknowability that *is* sexuality as such.” Bersani, *Homos*, 69; the citation is taken from Lee Edelman, *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1994), xiv–xv. Moreover, for the thesis according to which heterosexuality is “no longer the stable norm from which same-sex desire deviates [but] constitutes ‘a psychic economy that defines itself

- against the historically available category of the ‘homosexual.’” Bersani, *Homos*, 35–36; the citation is taken from Edelman, *Homographesis*, 39.
- 118 Bersani, *Homos*, 42.
- 119 Bersani, *Homos*, 56.
- 120 Bersani, *Homos*, 33–36.
- 121 “The extreme discretion of the texts dealing with sodomy—that utterly confused category—and the nearly universal reticence in talking about it made possible a twofold operation: on the one hand, there was an extreme severity (punishment by fire was meted out well into the eighteenth century, without there being any substantial protest expressed before the middle of the century), and on the other hand, a tolerance that must have been widespread (which one can deduce indirectly from the infrequency of judicial sentences, and which one glimpses more directly through certain statements concerning societies of men that were thought to exist in the army or in the courts). There is no question that the appearance in 19th-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and ‘psychic hermaphroditism’ made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of ‘perversity;’ but it also made possible the formation of a ‘reverse’ discourse: homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or ‘naturalness’ be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified.” Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 101.
- 122 I will return to this theme in the epilogue: “Hyenas in the Sauna.”
- 123 On the critique of the current classificatory sex-gender-sexual orientation system, and on the contradictions and insufficiency of identity that it produces, see Chapter 2 in: Lorenzo Bernini, *Queer Theories: An Introduction: From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*, trans. Michela Baldo and Elena Basile (New York: Routledge, 2020).
- 124 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 96.
- 125 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 95–96.
- 126 In an interview from 1982, Foucault defines power as “a mode of action upon actions” and then explains: “That is to say, power relations are rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted ‘above’ society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of. In any case, to live in society is to live in such a way that action upon other actions is possible—and in fact ongoing. A society without power relations can only be an abstraction.” Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, trans. Leslie Sawyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 222–223.
- 127 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 157.
- 128 Beyond the other two volumes of the *History of Sexuality: Vol. II, The Use of Pleasure* and *Vol. III, The Care of the Self*, see, for example, the lectures given by Foucault at the Collège de France in 1982 titled, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*, ed. Frédéric Gross, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), and the seminar that he holds in the same year at the University of Vermont, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, ed. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton (London: Tavistock Publications, 1988).
- 129 See, for example, “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity,” with B. Gallagher and A. Wilson, in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984, vol. 1*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: The New Press, 1997), 163–174; and “The Subject and Power.”

- 130 “Another thing to distrust is the tendency to relate the question of homosexuality to the problem of ‘Who am I?’ and ‘What is the secret of my desire?’ Perhaps it would be better to ask oneself, ‘What relations, through homosexuality, can be established, invented, multiplied, and modulated?’ The problem is not to discover in oneself the truth of one’s sex, but, rather, to use one’s sexuality henceforth to arrive at a multiplicity of relationships. And, no doubt, that’s the real reason why homosexuality is not a form of desire but something desirable. Therefore, we have to work at becoming homosexuals and not be obstinate in recognizing that we are. The development toward which the problem of homosexuality tends is the one of friendship.” Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life,” in *Ethics*, 135–136. “Well, if identity is only a game, if it is only a procedure to have relations, social and sexual—pleasure relationships that create new friendships, it is useful. But if identity becomes the problem of sexual existence, and if people think that they have to ‘uncover’ their ‘own identity,’ and that their own identity has to become the law, the principle, the code of their existence; if the perennial question they ask is ‘Does this thing conform to my identity?’ then, I think, they will turn back to a kind of ethics very close to the old heterosexual virility.” Foucault, “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity,” 166.
- 131 On the Derridian imagining of Freud as usher of contemporaneity, see the conclusion to Chapter 1 above.

References

- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Benjamin, Harry. “Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psychosomatic and Somatopsychic Syndromes.” *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 2 (1954): 219–230.
- Benjamin, Walter. “Goethe’s Elective Affinities.” In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume I, 1913–1926*. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Theories: An Introduction: From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*. Translated by Michela Baldo and Elena Basile. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Il pecore e il pastore: Critica, politica, etica nel pensiero di Michel Foucault*. Napoli: Liguori Editore, 2008.
- Bersani, Leo. “Shame on You.” In *After Sex?: On Writing Since Queer Theory*. Edited by Janet Halley and Andrew Parker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Bersani, Leo. “Is the Rectum a Grave?” In *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Bersani, Leo. *Homos*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Butler, Judith. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso, 2009.
- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself: A Critique of Ethical Violence*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.

- Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. "Competing Universalities." In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. edited by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Edelman, Lee. *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works, Vol. 26 – Engels 1882–1889*, 129–276. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
- Fenichel, Otto. "Zur Kritik des Todestrieb," *Imago* 21, no. 4 (1935): 458–466.
- Foucault, Michel. *Les Aveux de la chair*. Paris: Gallimard, 2018.
- Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. Edited by Michael Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*. Edited by Michael Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*. Edited by Frédéric Gross, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*. Edited by Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni, translated by Graham Burchell. London: Verso, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 1*. 163–174. Edited by Paul Rabinow, translated by Robert Hurley et al. New York: The New Press, 1997.
- Foucault, Michel. "Schizo-Culture: Infantile Sexuality." In *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961–1984*. Edited by Sylvère Lotringer, translated by Lysia Hochroth and John Johnston. New York: Semiotext(e), 1996.
- Foucault, Michel. "Sexualité et pouvoir." In *Dits et Écrits, 1954–1988, Vol. III, 1976–1979*. Edited by Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality, Volume II*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

- Foucault, Michel. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, Patrick H. Hutton. London: Tavistock Publications, 1988.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality, Volume III*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and Power," In *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. 2nd Edition. 222–223. Edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, translated by Leslie Sawyer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis." In *SE 19* (1924): 181–188.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. In *SE 19* (1923): 1–66.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In *SE 18* (1920): 1–64.
- Freud, Sigmund. "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis." In *SE 17* (1918): 1–124.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In *SE 7* (1905): 123–246.
- Hocquenghem, Guy. *Homosexual Desire*. Translated by Daniella Dangoor. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses." In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Russell Grigg. New York: WW Norton and Co., 1993.
- Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Lonzi, Carla. "La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale." In *Sputiamo su Hegel. E altri scritti*. Milano: et. al. 2010.
- Low, Barbara. *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*. London: Forgotten Books, 2017.
- Lowen, Alexander. *The Language of the Body: Physical Dynamics of Character Structure*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012.
- Lowen, Alexander. *Bioenergetics: The Revolutionary Therapy that Uses the Language of the Body to Heal the Problems of the Mind*. New York: Penguin, 1994.
- Lowen, Alexander. *Love and Orgasm*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. New York: Beacon Press, 1966.
- Marx, Karl. "The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." In Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Edited by Robert C. Tucker. 2nd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978.

- Obholzer, Karin. *Gespräche mit dem Wolfsmann: Eine Psychoanalyse und die Folgen*. Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1983.
- Reich, Wilhelm. "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis." In *Sex-Pol: Essays, 1929–1934*. 1–74. Edited by Lee Baxandall. New York: Verso, 2012.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*. Translated by Therese Pol. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*. Translated by Vincent R. Carfagno. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs, Women: Sex and Sexuality* 5, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 631–660.
- Sharaf, Myron R. *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Van Ussel, Jos. *Histoire de la répression sexuelle*. Paris: Laffont, 1972.
- Westphal, Friedrich. "Die Konträre Sexualempfindung." *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 2(1869–1870): 73–108.
- Zanetti, Gianfrancesco. *L'orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015.

5 Flying Anuses, or of Another Tradition

Physicists say that holes are not the absence of particles but particles traveling faster than the speed of light. Flying anuses, speeding vaginas, there is no castration.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

Let's recap. According to Foucault's interpretation, Freud—relying on the vast literature produced by 19th-century sexology—had overturned the Catholic injunction to confess sex acts, making sex itself an object of interpretation; what is at stake is no longer the spiritual salvation of the subject into the great beyond, but their psychic health on this earth. In so doing, Freud contributed to the restructuring of power relations that were under way in his time, providing new footholds to the biopolitical governance of populations deployed through the normalizing management, though not abstractly normative, of identities. In sanctifying Freud as a liberator of the truth of sex that had long been repressed, Reich and Marcuse's Marxist-branded revolutionary theories thus overlooked a full understanding of the function of power in high modernity and offered naïve and insufficient solutions to resist it. According to Bersani, however, Foucault, together with Butler and all those that had taken up the constructivist theory of sexual and gender identity, did not distance himself from Freud-Maxism in one essential respect, which I have called the "foreclosure of the sexual." Like the books of Reich and Marcuse, *The Will to Knowledge* and the vast queer production that has taken inspiration from it thematizes the subject of sexuality in a way not altogether dissimilar from how the modern philosophical tradition has thought the political subject: a rational being that consciously seeks self-affirmation and their own profit (for Foucault this occurs in the form of pleasure and for Butler in social recognition). For Foucault, power is everywhere and everywhere finds the freedom of subjects as its limit and condition of possibility. But in his description of the power-resistance dialectic the subject of sexuality seems to exhaust itself without leaving a residue; without those remnants of the drive that have little to do

with the freedom of the subject, which for Freud are the reasons for civilization's discontent. Because Freud would go on to become an innovator of confessional practices, he was a *remarkable* pioneer. It is not true, as Douformantelle asserts, that no one before him in the western philosophical tradition was capable of theorizing sex as sex itself, but the fact remains that in introducing the concept of the drive, he developed a new ontology of sex. However, the discovery was unsettling even for him who on several occasions tried to remove it from his metapsychology, resulting in those disturbing, and often comic, outcomes that we have attempted to describe in two chapters from this book. Whoever after him has attempted—often with no less amusing results—to make psychoanalysis into a critical tool operative within the aims of left-wing revolutionary or progressive politics has often left behind these aspects of his theory of the sexual, along with Freud's pessimism regarding it, which come to represent a scandal to the image of the political subject that the Western tradition has crafted for itself. According to Bersani, it bears repeating, Foucault makes a similar attempt.

According to the reconstruction carried out in the last chapter, it seems to be the case that before Bersani and Edelman, no thinker attributable to the critical tradition of the left would have been able to think sex for what it is: each attempt to politicize sex resulted in desexualizing it—another date went blank. On the other hand, when Edelman's "anti-social theory" results in an appeal to sexually minoritarian subjects to stubbornly insist on their social unintelligibility—like Antigone, who does not ask for redemption—its outcome seems to run the risk of a radical depoliticization of queer theories. In an attempt to find a more politically satisfying theoretical solution, we will follow the example of Foucault—who attempted "to do justice" to Freud—and will now attempt to do justice to both the Freudo-Marxist and Foucauldian traditions. To this end, a change in perspective will be necessary. By redirecting our attention from the great official cultural institutions—the International Psychoanalytic Association, the Frankfurt School, the Collège de France, American Universities—to those hybrid, multiple, and diffuse locations of knowledge production in which the academy intersects with social movements, where the authors are militant intellectuals and the theory is closer to political practice, we will be able to intercept a different reading—one that was done with greater consistency than Freud yet in opposition to Freud's (and many others' after him) respectability—that has had the audacity to bring Freud's discoveries regarding the sexual to its extreme consequences. For the founder of psychoanalysis (or, at least, for the interpretation which we have given his thought), the sexual drive perverts the natural instincts of the human since early childhood, and as long as civility can absolve the natural reproductive needs of the species, some renunciations are imposed on every human being after puberty: the renunciation of the clitoral drive, the anal drive, all those drives that for Freud can be in some way associated with homosexuality (among them that masculine drive to urinate on flames).¹ However, the valorization of the clitoris, of the lips and of the vagina in the anti-patriarchal

perspective operating in feminism's response, to the feminist ethics of care, mourning, and vulnerability, exceeds the scope of this work.² Bersani's objections to Foucault on the "modern invention" of homosexuality has instead led us back to the theme which constitutes the common thread of our narration. Shortly we will look at the theoretical debate that developed within LGBTQIA+ movements, in particular the gay liberation movements of the 1970s, which simultaneously drew and distanced themselves from Reich and Marcuse to theorize a homosexual struggle that has little to do with the matrimonial demands of lesbian and gay movements that would shortly thereafter become hegemonic.³ First, we must again look to Freud, a look that will reestablish a still different and more complex image of him with respect to what we have said about him up until this point.

5.1 In the Name of Anna

Midway through the 1990s, Bersani polemicizes against the diffusion of a certain "Foucauldianism" in the queer theory coming out of the United States and at the same time against the prevailing integrationist attitude within American gay and lesbian movements. In his view, sexual minorities' attempt to assimilate the heterosexual way of life and to integrate within heterosexual institutions represents an effort to erase the specific existence of homosexual people in an intellectually similar way to claiming that it is "a recent invention." If Kant tries to banish homosexual acts, literally arguing that they are a more serious sin than suicide (and because of this much more disgusting), Bersani, instead, utilizes suicide as a metaphor to express his disapproval toward a strain of homosexuality for which not Kant but those same gays and lesbians have made themselves guilty: "In our anxiety to convince straight society that we are only some malevolent invention and that we can be, like you, good soldiers, good parents, and good citizens, we seem bent on suicide."⁴

Moreover, he argues that the "suicidal tendencies" that he denounces in homosexual intellectuals and movements follow from an "attempted homicide" for which his beloved Freud made himself responsible when he "spoke of the repression of a primary bisexuality in all human beings in the normative maturation of desire (and its 'satisfactory' climax in genital heterosexuality)."⁵ Bersani therefore agrees with Judith Butler on the critique of the heterosexism in classic psychoanalysis, indeed he cites *Gender Trouble* at length.⁶ However, he neglects to take into consideration an earlier theoretical debate, one based in Europe and not the United States, in which the liberation of homosexuality is, effectively, a liberation *from* homosexuality—something which, I repeat, does not seem to occur in Butler nor Foucault—and yet, insofar as it is not given the name of a drive, the sexual as such is clearly thematized.

In Foucault's reconstruction, homosexual people made homosexual identity an instrument of political demands after it was "produced" in the 1870s by medical and psychological knowledge. In reality, as Robert Beachy,

among others, has expertly reconstructed in *Gay Berlin*, early activists contributed to the elaboration of the concepts utilized by sexology, first in Germany then internationally, in order to specify the existence of sexual minorities, thus also contributing to the solidification of sexual behaviors as identities in psychological knowledge production.⁷ In those years, above all in Berlin, a movement of opinion emerged which demanded the abolition of section 143 of the Prussian penal code, which punished sexual acts against nature (and which would later be extended first in the North German Confederation [1867–1870] with section 152 and then in the German Empire [1871–1918] with section 175, to later be definitively abolished in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1994). In this context, three years after the constitution of the North German Confederation in 1869, the intellectual Karl Maria Kertbeny drafted an essay in which the terms “homosexuality” and “heterosexuality” first appear in response to the institution commissioned by Prussia to gather opinions on unification.⁸ Before him, the jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs had coined the term “uranism” (taking it from Aphrodite Urania—celestial, from “ouranos” for heaven—who Plato invokes as the goddess protector of love between men in the *Symposium*), which the doctor Magnus Hirschfeld used to indicate a variation of what he called the “third sex,” or an “intermediate sexual condition,” which also comprised transsexualism and transvestism.⁹ Anticipating the existing concept of homosexual orientation, Kertbeny’s intended use of “homosexuality” was to lay claim to the specificity of the homosexual condition against the shared interpretation of Ulrichs and Hirschfeld that made homosexuality into a form of “inversion,” that is, as a discrepancy between anatomical sex and psychological sex, which today we call gender. In any case, within the discourse of this activist debate, uranism/homosexuality did not have any reason to be punished by law because it constituted a biological condition that was not dependent on the choices of the subject.

It was also not a question of will for Freud. And yet he, who knew Ulrich’s and Hirschfeld’s theses well and fundamentally shared the interpretation of homosexuality as psychic inversion, questioned the innatist conception of sexual desire as biological and static. He opted for the psychodynamic interpretation that I discussed in the last chapter, according to which homosexuality is the result of a failed “positive” resolution to the Oedipus complex. Hirschfeld appears in the first note in the first of the *Three Essays* among the sources from which Freud claims to have drawn his “data,”¹⁰ with Ulrichs noted shortly thereafter in the body of the text as the “spokesman of the male inverts” who announced the “theory of bisexuality [...] in its crudest form [...] a feminine brain in a masculine body.”¹¹ Far from being inscribed in the brain, for Freud homosexuality derives, instead, from the inversion of the identification with parental figures. The thesis he announces in 1922 in *The Ego and the Id* regarding lesbianism, examined by Butler in *Gender Trouble*,¹² returns once more to what he expressed in his 1919 essay on the *Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman*,¹³

which was formulated still earlier around male homosexuality. Already present in the account of the 1908 clinical case of Little Hans,¹⁴ and picked back up in a note added to the *Three Essays* in 1909, this thesis informs the imaginative text dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci the following year, in which Freud suggests not only the homosexuality of the Italian Renaissance genius but also his fondness for fellatio:

Homosexual men, who have in our time taken vigorous action against the restrictions imposed by law on their sexual activity, are fond of representing themselves, through their theoretical spokesmen, as being from the outset a distinct sexual species, as an intermediate sexual stage, as a “third sex.” They are, they claim, men who are innately compelled by organic determinants to find pleasure in men and have been debarred from obtaining it in women. *Much as one would be glad on grounds of humanity to endorse their claims,*¹⁵ one must treat their theories with some reserve, for they have been advanced without regard for the psychical genesis of homosexuality. Psycho-analysis offers the means of filling this gap [...] In all our male homosexual cases the subjects had had a very intense erotic attachment to a female person, as a rule their mother, during the first period of childhood, which is afterwards forgotten; this attachment was evoked or encouraged by too much tenderness on the part of the mother herself, and further reinforced by the small part played by the father during their childhood. [...] After this preliminary stage a transformation sets in whose mechanism is known to us but whose motive forces we do not yet understand. The child’s love for his mother cannot continue to develop consciously any further; it succumbs to repression. The boy represses his love for his mother: he puts himself in her place, identifies himself with her, and takes his own person as a model in whose likeness he chooses the new objects of his love. In this way he has become a homosexual. What he has in fact done is to slip back to auto-erotism: for the boys whom he now loves as he grows up are after all only substitutive figures and revivals of himself in childhood—boys whom he loves in the way in which his mother loved *him* when he was a child. He finds the objects of his love along the path of *narcissism*, as we say; for Narcissus, according to the Greek legend, was a youth who preferred his own reflection to everything else and who was changed into the lovely flower of that name.¹⁶

This tortuous theory, we should note, does not intend to justify reparative therapies that bring the narcissistic-inverts back to heterosexual health thanks to the transference onto the male analysts who take the place of the father. Freud is careful not to give out simplistic prescriptions. First of all, in the text on *Leonardo*—as already mentioned in the *Three Essays*¹⁷—he specifies that his hypothesis could describe a “type of homosexuality,”¹⁸ and that other types could derive from different processes of psychic identification. Secondly, in the integration to a note at the beginning of *Three*

Essays added in 1914, Freud draws from this theory what could be considered a preemptive defense to Butler's objections: here heterosexuality is, in fact, defined as "a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature."¹⁹ Thirdly, in *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman*, after having clearly affirmed that the lesbian girl, who was forced by her parents to turn to Freud, was in fact not sick,²⁰ he explains that "to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse" and that "for good practical reasons the latter is never attempted."²¹ "I have found success possible only in specially favorable circumstances," he explains, where through analysis such "success essentially consisted in making access to the opposite sex (which had hitherto been barred) possible to a person restricted to homosexuality, thus restoring his full bisexual functions,"²² (note that he mentions bisexual and not exclusively heterosexual functions), yet "as a rule the homosexual is not able to give up the object which provides him with pleasure."²³ The same opinion is restated in his well-known *Letter to an American Mother* in 1935. Here, to a woman that writes to him worried about the fate of her son, Freud explains that "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness"; he tells her that "many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc)"; to then point out that "it is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime and cruelty too," finally responding:

By asking me if I can help, you mean, I suppose, if I can abolish homosexuality and make normal heterosexuality take its place. The answer is, in a general way, we cannot promise to achieve it. In a certain number of cases we succeed in developing the blighted germs of heterosexual tendencies which are present in every homosexual, in the majority of cases it is no more possible. It is a question of the quality and the age of the individual. The result of treatment cannot be predicted. What analysis can do for your son runs in a different line. If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency, whether he remains a homosexual or gets changed.²⁴

It is worth including these citations because they allow us to once again do justice not only to the complexity of Freud's thought but also to his remarkable humanity. We must remember, first and foremost, that for Freud meta-psychological reflection has a subsidiary function with respect to the clinical, which is the true aim of psychoanalysis; it should not escape us that each time Freud considers singular cases, the heterosexism of his hypotheses on inversion gives way to compassion and empathy. This is the ethics of (his)

psychoanalysis, of course, it is an ethics for which there is no case where the particular experience can be sacrificed on the altar of general theory, but there is probably more to this. We have already seen the intensity of Freud's love for his family, and it is not a mystery that his youngest, "little Anna"²⁵—the only one, moreover, who followed in the footsteps of her father, undertaking his own profession—was lesbian. The political rhetoric of fascisms from both the right and the left—today as always—invoke the name of an abstract child, a fetish-Child, "an empty placeholder of [social] totalization,"²⁶ in order to defend the "natural family" from the "threat" of homosexuality. It was instead (also) by virtue of the feelings that he nurtured for his real daughter, in flesh and bone, who escaped from the destiny of the wife and the mother that he had imagined for her, that Freud refused to attribute to homosexuality the status of a sickness to be cured. It was (also) in Anna's name that Freud preferred to ally himself with the heterodox desires of his current and potential patients, rather than with the heterosexist anxieties of their parents.

Thus, we can see how in Freud's thinking homosexuality generates a tension between theory and practice, between metapsychology and clinical work; a tension, or better, an ambivalence, that in the following decades broke into two opposing directions. As Foucault also notes, in Nazi Germany just as in Stalinist Russia, degenerationist sexology overtook Freud's theories and overturned the innatist thesis that we have seen with Ulrichs and Hirschfeld so as to justify the internment and extermination of homosexual people in the lagers and the gulags. Yet, in the United States, psychoanalysis thrived again spreading throughout the West in the post-Second World War period. However, a conservative interpretation of it prevailed in the official academic and medical spheres, which exacerbated the heterosexism of Freud's theories, abandoning his clinical ethics in favor of a normalizing morality. In the 1950s the category of inversion became "outdated" due to the diffusion of the classifying system of sexual identity based on the difference between sex, gender, and sexual orientation. As a consequence, the identity of the invert "doubled" into the homosexual on the one hand and the trans person on the other²⁷: but until recently both have been considered pathological identifications²⁸ by official psychiatric knowledge and many psychotherapists had attempted—and some still do—to "cure" such identifications with so-called reparative therapies.²⁹ Filtered through a Marxist lens, as we have seen, psychoanalysis gave way to a different kind of tradition, which through Freudian thought accentuated anti-repressive and liberatory perspectives. It is good to recall—I have not done it yet—that in a series of letters between 1868 and 1869 Marx and Engels did not spare their disparaging tone when discussing Ulrich's homophile movement and his attempt to reform the Prussian penal code. Engels—who had already condemned what he called Greek "pedophilia," without much differentiation, as "degradation" and "shameful" in *The Origin of the Family, Private*

Property, and the State—wrote about homosexuality as “filth” and stooped to the level of crass jokes:

Guerre aux cons, paix aux trous del cul. (War on the cunts, peace to the arse-holes.) [...] Just wait until the new North German Penal Code recognizes the *droits di cul* (rights of the arse-hole); then he will operate quite differently. Then things will go badly enough for poor frontside people like us, with our childish penchant for females.³⁰

In the 1920s and 1930s, Reich condemned the criminalization of homosexuality, but at the same time maintained—in line with the humor of the authors of the *Communist Manifesto*—that the sexual revolution would have the same outcome as mass reparative therapy, with the total extinction of homosexuality and the triumph of a coital and orgasmic heterosexuality. In the subsequent decade, instead, following the interpretive line begun by Marcuse in the 1950s and 1960s, some gay militant intellectuals went as far as to theorize the arrival of that perversion of the masses which Marcuse himself was so keen to avoid. They too endorsed a liberated society in which homosexuality would be extinct; but this extinction included heterosexuality, bringing back into view an original condition imagined in a way different from bisexuality in the Freudian sense. It is this literature that Bersani hastily liquidates, blaming its authors for suicidal tendencies, without recognizing in it the presence of that thematization of the sexual that in his view is also missing in Foucault. The time has now come to look at this literature.

5.2 Elements of a Pansexual Critique

We have said that Butler’s critique of Lacan—that he does not recognize the historical character of what he calls the symbolic order—is anticipated by Reich’s and Marcuse’s critiques of Freud; that he had mistaken the discomfort historically caused by sexual repression in capitalistic society as necessary in every society. So too with Butler’s criticism of Freud—he had foreclosed homosexual desire by conceptualizing it as original bisexuality as the sum of two heterosexual desires—which finds its antecedents in Freud-Marxism, and more precisely in its re-elaboration during the period of gay movements that followed the colonial wars of independence, the black movements for civil rights and the pacifist demonstrations against the Vietnam War in the United States, and the student protests of 1968.

It was during the night, between June 27 and 28, 1969, when the trail-blazers and patrons of an infamous locale situated at number 53 Christopher Street in New York’s Greenwich Village revolted against a police raid—one of countless raids—sparking a series of clashes that ignited the neighborhood for nearly a week; it is only after this moment, according to poet Allen Ginsburg, that “the fags lost that wounded look.”³¹ This is the outburst of

pride that we remember every year at LGBTQIA+ parades.³² Many stories are told about the beginning of the revolt. It is said, for example, that the grief over Judy Garland, an icon for the trans and gay public who died from alcohol poisoning and barbiturates only a few days earlier, played a role. Moreover, it has been said that the Puerto-Rican trans woman, Sylvia Rivera, triggered the revolt by throwing a bottle of empty gin—or a heel—at a cop. More likely, it was Stormé DeLarverie, a mixed-race butch lesbian of color that was performing that night as a drag king and seemed to have been confused for a gay man, who resisted the police first and incited the crowd to rebel while being dragged to the paddy wagon in handcuffs bleeding from the blows she received from the cops. For her act of disobedience, De Larverie is remembered today as the “Rosa Parks of the LGBTQIA+ community”; however, opinions on this version of the events are also not unanimous. What is certain is that in the United States, and elsewhere, the time was ripe for a new period of struggles: inspired by the civil rights movements of racialized minorities, sexual minorities were no longer willing to support unfair laws and abuse by the police. It is also certain that Marsha P. Johnson, a black drag queen who later was one of the founders of the Gay Liberation Front (the name GLF recalled the FLN, the Algerian National Liberation Front), participated in the clashes at Stonewall and later, together with Sylvia Rivera founded the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR). These early New York-based collectives inspired the rest of the United States and the world: in a short amount of time a Gay Liberation Front appeared in Great Britain; in Francoist Spain, the Movimiento Español de Liberación Homosexual (MELH) was founded that later became the Alliberament Gai de Catalunya (FAGC); in France, the Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR) was born; in Belgium, the Movement Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire (MHAR); in Germany, the Homosexuelle Aktion Westberlin (HAW); and in Italy, the Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano (FUORI!).³³

It was within these movements that a “queer *ante litteram*” version of Freudo-Marxism was developed, which is radically critical toward psychoanalysis’s heterosexism, and which, in comparison to the prudish versions of Reich and Marcuse, is much closer to Freud’s unbridled sexual fantasies.³⁴ As we have already said, *Eros and Civilization* contains lukewarm possibilities for homosexuality: for example, to explain the difference between fundamental repression and surplus-repression, Marcuse recalls that “within the historical dynamic of the instinct” described in *Civilization and Its Discontents* “crophilia and homosexuality have a very different place and function,” meaning that the repression of the former is, in his view, *necessary* for civilization, while the repression of the latter is operational to the restriction of sexuality in the reproductive monogamous couple of capitalistic and patriarchal alienated society.³⁵ To explain the function of libidinal sublimation in creating social bonds, the German philosopher recalls, instead, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, where “‘sexual love

for women' as well as 'desexualized, sublimated, homosexual love for other men' [...] appear as instinctual sources of an enduring and expanding culture."³⁶ In the writings of Mario Mieli, who I will now take as an example of a debate that exceeds his thought, homosexuality, and sexuality in general, do not in fact appear to be sublimated nor desexualized.

As his sister Paola³⁷ and political scientist Massimo Prearo remind us in their edited collection of Mieli's writings, *La gaia critica*,³⁸ Mario moved from the small town of Lora, in the province of Como, to Milan in the fall of 1968: in that pivotal year, he enrolled in his first year of high school, at the *liceo classico Parini* just in time to participate in the student movement. He took his graduation exams in 1971 when FUORI! was founded in Turin by Angelo Pezzana,³⁹ and according to the customs of his wealthy family, despite having enrolled in the philosophy department at the University of Milan, he then spent a few months in London where (the family could not have predicted this) he took part in the activities of the Gay Liberation Front.⁴⁰ He returned to Milan in the Spring of 1972, and "as the envoy of the Gay Liberation Front" he participated "in what came to be considered the first public demonstration of homosexuals in Italy" on April 5 in Sanremo called together by FUORI! "to protest against the International Congress of Sexology on the topic of 'Deviant behaviors of human sexuality' organized by the Italian Center for Sexology in support of reparative therapy."⁴¹ Just a few photographs of this action remain: they show Mieli with oversized sunglasses "a satin blouse with billowy wide sleeves and a scarf tied around the front of his head just like washerwomen used to use," while he distributed pamphlets and stood next to the sign "Psychiatrists we've come to cure you."⁴² Around forty Italian activists, and others from all over Europe, participated in the protest, among whom were representatives from the FHAR, the MHAR, and the British Gay Liberation Front (GLF)—some were identified by the police, others succeeded in speaking during the congress's symposium. Pezzana's intervention became particularly famous: "I am a homosexual and I am happy to be!" This candid action had a strong impact in the media and was a propulsive event for the gay Italian movement in general and for Mieli's involvement in it in particular.

The first issue of the periodical *FUORI!* was published two months after the events of Sanremo; Mieli became part of the editorial board beginning with the second issue. In following years, he wrote numerous theoretical articles and reports of his travels abroad for the journal: some of which he signed with his *nom de plume*, Mario Rossi, some furnished with an opening note from the rest of the editorial staff in which they took their distance from his arguments. His parent's home address became the seat of the Milanese section of the magazine as well as the Milanese FUORI! group: it was there that Mieli, together with Corrado Levi,⁴³ took it upon themselves to organize consciousness-raising meetings, a practice inspired by psychoanalysis that in those years was spread throughout Italy by feminism and which Mieli

had been introduced to in his earlier years of *liceo*; it is a practice consisting of a group that shares their more intimate and authentic personal experiences openly and in support of the rest with the intention of the liberation and transformation of the self.⁴⁴ However, Angelo Pezzana's relationship to these other leaders of the movement soon deteriorated. The anti-institutional positions of radical feminism and revolutionary lesbianism always remained a fixed point for Mieli⁴⁵ and, consequently, he did not approve of FUORI!'s choice to undertake a reformist brand of the politics geared toward parliamentary lobbying that took place when the group united with the Italian Radical Party (PR) in 1974. That same year Mieli helped found the Autonomous FUORI! Collective, which split from the larger FUORI! group, later to become the Milanese Homosexual Collectives (COM) in 1976—a group that continued to privilege revolutionary topics and consciousness-raising practices. In 1976, Mieli also graduated with a degree in Moral Philosophy with a thesis that, once developed, became his book-manifesto *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Gay Critique* in 1977 just as a new wave of youth movements flowered in Italy—indeed the last before the so-called political “ebb” (*riflusso*) of the early 1980s.⁴⁶

In 1976, the first volume of *The History of Sexuality (The Will to Knowledge)* came out in French, where Foucault critiques the Freud-Marxist theory of repressive power: in a 1977 text which had remained unedited until the recent publication of *La gaia critica*, Mieli dismisses its contents with a less than kind epithet: “bullshit.”⁴⁷ Yet, while he was drafting *Towards a Gay Communism*, he did not actually have the time to read it. There is just a trace of Foucault in Mieli's book,⁴⁸ even though Mieli was probably caught up on the arguments of both *History of Madness*, which was a key text for the antipsychiatry movement in Italy at the time,⁴⁹ and *Discipline and Punish*, which was another fundamental text for the anti-authoritarian left during that period.⁵⁰ The primary reference of Mieli's text is, instead, the thought of Marcuse, and above all *One-Dimensional Man* and *Eros and Civilization*, which Mieli re-reads in light of the schizoanalysis developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*,⁵¹ following the teaching of Luciano Parinetto, who taught at the Department of Moral Philosophy in the University of Milan while Mieli was a student.⁵² Mieli does not directly cite *Anti-Oedipus*,⁵³ instead he mostly rereads it according to the interpretation provided by Luciano Parinetto and Guy Hocquenghem—Deleuze and Guattari's pupil and leading intellectual of the FHAR, six years Mieli's senior and author of *Le désir homosexuel* in 1972.⁵⁴ It is therefore through an extensive review of the relevant literature (including Freud, Carl Jung,⁵⁵ and especially Georg Groddeck⁵⁶) that Mieli is able to anticipate Butler's critique of the foreclosure of homosexuality in psychoanalysis, while also demonstrating theoretical originality and audacity with a healthy dose of brazenness. He contests Freud's interpretation of original bisexuality as the co-presence of two heterosexual desires as well as the conception of homosexuality as inversion. He also challenges Freud's

“psycho-nazi” imitators and the pathologization of homosexuality, which he was well aware was not a part of the work of the founder of psychoanalysis.⁵⁷ Moreover, in this text, the young activist-philosopher offers an example of political theorization that does not, in fact, foreclose the sexual, but rather defiantly shows it off, and at the same time advocates for the extinction of homosexual identity that Bersani likens to suicide.

As we have seen, Marcuse simplifies the Freudian conception of the *potentiality* of infantile sexual drives by making polymorphous perversion the natural origin of the sexual *instinct before* various forms of social repression, to then theorize that a good part of that instinct would be sublimated into gratifying work activity in a liberated society—such work would be as erotic as *hobbies*. According to Parinetto, however, only complete “disalienation,” which also includes the “*liberation of libidinal polymorphism*,” could lead “to the construction of that Marxian man (which is not-yet-here) whose being—by definition, totality [*omnilateralità*]*—cannot but include polymorphism.*”⁵⁸ This “new man,” Mieli sarcastically remarks in an *homage* to feminism, therefore will not really be a man anymore, but will be a “new [and at the same time ‘remote’] man-woman or even more likely a woman-man,” beyond, before, past and altogether elsewhere with respect to the “polarity between the sexes.”⁵⁹ Sexuality, liberated from the repression that Mieli alternately calls “Norm” (with a capital “N”)⁶⁰ and “educastration,”⁶¹ will therefore assume form, or better an absence of form; it will not be bisexual, but “transsexual.” If Freud foresaw the possibility for homosexual people to “fully reactivate bisexual functions” through psychoanalytic treatment, Mieli trusted the “revolutionary gays” with the work of transsexual liberation through the practice of consciousness-raising:

The original and far-reaching theory of bisexuality or “ambisexuality” (Ferenczi)⁶² does not clarify the causes of so-called “sexual inversion,” but it does justify it. [...] But this justification of homosexuality is not good enough (and in fact falls fully within the essentially reactionary perspective of tolerance). [...] Homosexuality is explained in terms of heterosexual categories. I believe, rather, that homosexuality contains, among its secrets, the possibility of understanding psycho-biological hermaphroditism not as something *bi*-sexual, but rather as erotic in a new (and also very old) sense, as polysexual, transsexual. The heterosexual categories are based on a rejection of the underlying hermaphroditism, on the submission of the body to the neurotic directives of the censored mind, on an ego-istic vision of the world-of-life as determined by the repression of woman and Eros, by compulsory sexual morality, by the negation of human community and by individualistic atomization. It is no good trying to use the bisexual and therefore heterosexual categories of our alienated reason, superimposed on the latent and the repressed, to plumb the depths, for we shall only fail to appreciate the full scope of the repression that chains us

to the status quo. We revolutionary gays want rather to raise ourselves to transsexuality, as a concrete process of liberation.⁶³

Mieli's use of the category "transsexuality" is therefore quite different from the one given by doctors and psychologists since the 1950s, who over the years have defined it as a "gender identity disorder," "gender dysphoria," or "gender incongruence"; in other words, the condition of those who feel uncomfortable with their biological sex and want to modify their body so as to make it resemble the body of the other sex⁶⁴—this definition is, in fact, contested by Mieli's use of the category. In an Italy in which it was still not possible to change one's gender on official documents and those who wished to undergo medical treatment to modify their sexual characteristics were forced to go abroad (Casablanca and Copenhagen were the most popular destinations),⁶⁵ Mieli anticipates, on the one hand, the more advanced arguments of what later becomes transgender studies: Sandy Stone's critique of the desire for trans people to "pass" as cis,⁶⁶ the contestation over the obligation of genital operation to obtain recognition of one's desired gender identity, the diffusion of the concept of transgender in the trans movements of the 1990s, Susan Stryker's critique of transnormativity,⁶⁷ and Paul B. Preciado's gender-queer and gender-fuck attitude.⁶⁸ On the other hand, however, he held views that alternated between sympathy and disapproval toward "manifest transsexuals," or, trans people that turned to hormone therapy and/or surgery to obtain the aesthetic features appropriate to one's sense of self. Together with a disquieting defense of pedophilia⁶⁹ and incest,⁷⁰ these are arguments that today we must repudiate.⁷¹ However, we must also read these arguments within the context of the years in which they were written and understand that they are not the result of a patronizing gaze external to trans circumstance, but were, on the contrary, an expression of a first-person struggle against the classificatory system of sex/gender/sexual orientation still in effect today, one which would prefer homosexual and trans identity to be clearly distinct, with no overlap or continuity. Indeed, Mieli was not a cis male homosexual to whom the current image of "the modern gay" corresponds; for him the subversion of the psychological "standards" of homosexuality and transsexuality (and, naturally, heterosexuality) was above all a condition for the expression of the self.

In London, Mieli was a "member of the Transvestites and Transsexual Group of the Gay Liberation Front,"⁷² sometimes he defined himself as "transsexual,"⁷³ other times as a "part-time transvestite"⁷⁴ (in line with the common use of the term "transvestite" in those days, which was not in the psychiatric sense⁷⁵), as well as "androgynous" or better "gynandrous,"⁷⁶ "an obvious, 'feminine,' queen."⁷⁷ More often, like in the just mentioned citation, he defined himself as a "gay revolutionary," and, however, never missed an opportunity to declare that he did not disdain sex with women⁷⁸—this sometimes seemed to constitute for him a sort of "task" to fulfill

toward his own personal liberation.⁷⁹ After the release of his book, Mieli does an interview with the television program *Come mai* broadcast by RAI in 1977 fully dressed as a high society Milanese woman. In a high-necked billowy blouse and a skirt ending just above the knee, Mieli explains that he “cross-dresses” simply and above all because he likes to, but also, “with a touch of polemical spirit,” to go against “that deranged normality that wants men inevitably dressed in pants and women ... well women can cross-dress as men but men cannot cross-dress as women.”⁸⁰ On another occasion, in 1978, while in flashy make-up, white worker coveralls, and high heels, he went to interview some factory workers about their opinions on homosexuality for the RAI program *Tabù tabù* (Taboo, Taboo) in front of the gates to the Alfa Romeo automobile factory. Parinetto had already drawn on Deleuze and Guattari⁸¹ in his article, “L’utopia del diavolo: egualitarismo e transessualità,” in which he defines transsexuality as the “radical contestation of the *fixation of sexual roles*, on which as it is known, the *oedipal* family of bourgeois society is firmly established.”⁸² Following Parinetto, Mieli uses transsexuality in *Towards a Gay Communism* as a synonym for “perverse polymorphism.” Therefore, for Mieli, this term does not indicate the condition of those who have a gender/sex identity differing from their sex assigned at birth, but as that which Hocquenghem—who also used the term atypically—calls “homosexual desire.”⁸³ In other words, a sexual desire without restraint and without the limitations of identity, which precedes the difference between male and female and therefore between heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender and cisgender, capable of discovering an erogenous zone in every part of the body, indifferently turned toward the self and the other. Mieli uses “pansexuality” in a passage of *Towards a Gay Communism*⁸⁴ instead of “transsexuality, as well as in some talks and interviews—even here the term’s meaning is different from its use today, which indicates the sexual orientation of those who are attracted to people of any anatomical sex, gender identity, or gender expression. For Mieli, the terms “transsexual” or “pansexual” do not have to do with gender and sexual orientation, nor with identity, except to the extent that they are their antithesis. They primarily describe a “sex-desire,” as Foucault would say,⁸⁵ that in the Freudo-Marxist tradition (certainly already in Marcuse and Parinetto) would be a reservoir of the truth and the freedom of the human, but to me, they seem to also indicate what in this book we have called “sexual drive” or more simply “the sexual.” In one of his last interviews, Mieli argues: “My point is very *radical*; it does not end, for example, with the genital liberation that Reich had expected: mine is *total liberation*.”⁸⁶

In another interview, he responds to the question, “You claim that liberated Eros will be transsexual. Do you mean that we will all undergo operations in Casablanca?” with, “I appreciate the joke, but you know very well that that’s not what I meant to say. Liberated Eros is pansexual, or, directed *towards everyone and everything*; this is what I mean in my book, transsexuality means through *all* sexuality.”⁸⁷

It would be helpful to recall the definition that Bersani provides of the sexual to better understand Mieli's references to the "radicality" and "totality" of pansexual liberation: "a jouissance in which the subject is momentarily undone" which each time leads back to that "masochistic thrill of being invaded by a world" experienced by the infant when they are totally dependent on and totally exposed by the care of adults, "overwhelmed" by an excess of stimuli to which the infant succeeds in "surviv[ing] [...] only by finding it exciting."⁸⁸ In these same years, Monique Wittig also reworks Marxist materialism so as to argue that the aim of lesbo-feminist struggle cannot be anything but "the destruction of heterosexuality as a social system which is based on the oppression of women by men and which produces the doctrine of difference between the sexes to justify this oppression."⁸⁹ In her opinion, like "race," the two sexes are none other than political classes, the result of the male sex's exploitation of the female: "They are seen as *black*, therefore they *are* black; they are seen as *women*, therefore, they *are* women. But before being *seen* that way, they first had to be *made* that way,"⁹⁰ and therefore, "one must destroy politically, philosophically, and symbolically the categories of 'men' and 'women.'"⁹¹ Even for Mieli the two sexes (today we would say the two genders) are the result of educastration, and so too is the distinction between heterosexual and homosexual orientation. The radicality and totality of the pansexual condition that he theorizes, however, is not only the liberation *of* the subject from the tyranny of the sex/gender/sexual orientation classifying system: it is the liberation of desire—in actuality a partial drive, pre-personal, infantile sexual—from subjectivity itself. This is because, for him, like for Parinetto, "the very notion of the *subject* is determined by alienation and therefore by the negation of the human community."⁹² If Bersani stresses the masochistic character of the explosion of the subject in sexual jouissance, Mieli (who makes no mystery of his own masochism,⁹³ nor does he forget to mention sadomasochism among the numerous forms of sexuality that he suggests must be released⁹⁴) follows the theses of *Anti-Oedipus*, while also drawing on the his own experimentation with drugs (in particular the "trips" with LSD⁹⁵), and his personal experience with psychiatric distress, to emphasize the psychotic character of the sexual. The eventually liberated gynandrous person will be a delirious form of life, one which immediately realizes their desires, one which does not sublimate their drives, if not in search of new sexual excitement, one which loses themselves in a state of blessed schizophrenia:

The ego and the illusion of "normal reality" are the result of the individualistic atomization of the species, an atomization that followed and replaced the gradually destroyed community. So-called "delusion" is therefore a "state of grace," since in the individual affected the desire for community reawakens and seeks to assert itself in surroundings which are hostile to it and in fact its negation.⁹⁶

5.3 The Golden Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge

Mieli's Marxist vocabulary is sometimes misleading,⁹⁷ probably even to himself, but it is evident that his is not a prophecy of a world to come, like Hocquenghem. If for Freud and Marcuse social relations are sexual and sublimated homosexual relations, the young French intellectual theorizes—in a polemic with not only the Communist Party's familialism and the homophobia of the new left of those years, but also with those he calls “movements for homosexuality,” that is gay assimilationist movements of the liberal kind—that the “homosexual struggle,” the authentic expression of “homosexual desire,” consists in the (homo)sexualization of the public sphere posed in opposition to the privatization of sexuality within the family. He thus proposes that sex enters directly the social realm, without any sort of sublimation, against the normative ideal of “civilization” that the bourgeoisie and the proletariat share as the framework of their conflicts⁹⁸ and to whom the gay movements also turn when laying claim to rights, not by chance called “civil,” for homosexual people. The homosexual struggle is therefore, for Hocquenghem, a “wildcat” struggle, that does not declare “a new form of ‘social organization’” or “a new stage of civilized humanity,” but denounces the fact “that civilization is the trap into which desire keeps falling.”⁹⁹ In a similar way, this is what Mieli means by the event that he simply calls “communism,” or more specifically “gay communism,” or in his use of the Hegelian-Marxian expression of “Kingdom of Freedom.”¹⁰⁰ In fact, in the introduction to the 1982 Dutch edition of *Towards a Gay Communism*, Mieli explains that “communism is the conquest of the unconscious and of the collective unconscious to consciousness”¹⁰¹ and that all of these expressions are, in turn, synonyms of “transsexuality” meaning that “Kingdom of Love”: the disinhibition of the “highest cognitive and creative faculties of man. (Actually, let's say of the *androgyné*, since it is in the depths of every human being).”¹⁰² Yet, in his autobiographical novel drafted between 1977 and 1982, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, it becomes clear that the Kingdom, of which Mieli considers himself the Messiah, does not really belong to the temporality of waiting, but is rather a practice of dissolution of the self that is done in the here and now of his own life. Before Hocquenghem¹⁰³ and Parinetto, Mieli re-elaborates his erotic personal experiences through the practice of consciousness-raising, through which he learns that the state of homosexual/transsexual/pansexual grace to which he aspires also derives from the full recuperation of the anal drive.

According to Lou Salomé and Freud, it is necessary to renounce anality in order to enter into society. For Mieli, however, it is the “the rule of capital” which is founded “on the repression of anality and its sublimation”¹⁰⁴:

As Luciano Parinetto writes: “the proletarian revolution too must pass through the asshole.”¹⁰⁵ The (re)conquest of anality contributes to subverting the system in its foundations. If what in homosexuality

especially horrifies *homo normalis*, that cop of the hetero-capitalist system, is getting fucked in the ass, then this can only mean that one of the most delicious bodily pleasures, anal sex, bears in itself a remarkable revolutionary force. The thing for which we queens are so greatly condemned contains a large part of our subversive gay potentiality. I hoard my treasure in my ass, but my ass is open to everyone ...¹⁰⁶

As if he wanted to respond to Marcuse's comments about the socialization of anality point by point, not only regarding the sublimation of (homo) sexuality but also the process by which feces becomes taboo, Mieli associates this process of socialization of anality with the "redemption of shit"¹⁰⁷: already in *Towards a Gay Communism*, but with ever-more insistence in *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, coprophagia is presented as the apex of the ascendance toward liberation, as the practice most adept at bringing the adult back to the polymorphously perverse infant before education—below and beyond good and evil, to that primal stage that precedes the "original sin" of entering into civilization:

I took to reading psychoanalytic texts. I discovered that I could heal my neuroses by indulging in pleasures I was not used to ... Could I make love to women? Rarely. I was neurotic even because of this. Could I whip myself? Could I eat pieces of shit? I could have begun there without needing to make anyone else uncomfortable. [...] I did not ever dare to look at my dirty fingers. Yet I remembered the pleasure that I felt as a child when I cut my poop. I forced myself to look closely at it. It was a wriggling mass of worms, almost alive with dead particles. "If you eat them," my Nanny said to me, "you will know death and you will not die: this is the fruit from the tree of good and evil! It was in refraining from eating his own feces that man committed original sin."¹⁰⁸

"Shit," the "blessed fruit of the tree of knowledge,"¹⁰⁹ seems, in fact, able to lead the humans still closer to their origin, making them cross the barrier that separates them from animals. Mieli was a lover of dogs, as was Freud. In one of the notes to *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud hypothesizes that if "man [uses] the name of his most faithful friend in the animal world—the dog—as a term of abuse," it is because the dog has "incurred his contempt through two characteristics: that it is an animal whose dominant sense is that of smell and one which has no horror of excrement, and that it is not ashamed of its sexual functions."¹¹⁰ Just as determined to break down that psychic barrier to the sexual of disgust as the other barrier, of shame, Mieli argues in a 1976 article that "the scatological dimension brings you close to children and to dogs in an extraordinary way (more delightful and on their toes as ever)"¹¹¹: in *Towards a Gay Communism*—besides creating propaganda from zoophilia (together with coprophilia, urophilia, pedophilia, gerontophilia, necrophilia, sadomasochism, exhibitionism, fetishism,

autoeroticism¹¹² ...)—he presents dogs as “the richest animals” because they are “decidedly copro-uophilic”¹¹³; and finally in *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, he tells us: “It was the glimmer of the canine dung that attracted me ... ‘Dogs,’ they say, ‘are rich animals: they follow the path of excrement.’ Convinced that the pieces of shit I was tasting on the road would bring me fortune, I was spending money happily.”¹¹⁴

For Mieli, the sexual revolution will lead—or better, leads—precisely to a society of sexual maniacs; in other words, something that is not a society at all, both *disgusting* and tremendously exciting, one which Marcuse wanted to avoid, which in Hobbes’s fantasies corresponds to the state of nature, and which in Freud’s corresponds to the pre-historic and pre-civilized condition of humanity. Therefore, there is no foreclosure of the sexual in Mieli’s thinking—but this does not mean that it is free from psychosis. In fact, in this case, affliction is literal. Crises erupted in 1974, a year in which Mieli, half naked in a confused and euphoric state, was arrested at Heathrow airport “for removing a Kleenex box from a bathroom and for making erotic propositions to a public official.”¹¹⁵ He was released from prison because the family paid bail, and after the trial, which resulted in a fine, was brought back to Italy to recover at a private clinic.¹¹⁶ The crises reappeared frequently, exasperated by Mieli’s copious drug use. His was a life filled with trips in every sense of the word: the economic support of his wealthy father Walter (who was thoughtful and affectionate, and also profoundly anti-fascist and progressive by virtue of his being Jewish, according to the testimony of Mieli’s sister Paola; his initial rejection of Mario’s homosexuality was soon overcome by worry over his mental health) allowed him to visit London, Paris, Berlin, Amsterdam, New York and San Francisco, Marocco, Greece, India, Nepal, Rajasthan, Thailand, Indonesia ... but he also traveled often in his own mind, in perennial search of the mysterious interconnections and hidden meanings of things. In 1976, in his speech at the fifth congress of FUORI!, where he reiterated his opposition to the politics of parliamentary lobbying, he began by provocatively “coming out” with his diagnosis: “I have been diagnosed a paranoid schizophrenic, I have been in the hospital, in an asylum for this reason.”¹¹⁷ To then claim that

the schizophrenic experience reveals above all one thing: that none of us is a homosexual human being, as we have been brought up to be in a repressive form, and above all as we have been trained to believe that we are. Each one of us is a transsexual being—and I use the term transsexual because I like it, and because it means to live through sexuality; sexuality is deep within us.¹¹⁸

At a time when a long period of arguments against discrimination and for the social recognition of sexual minorities was beginning, which within forty years has also led to the juridical recognition of homosexual couples, therefore, Mieli advocated for the elimination of homosexual identity, for

the elimination both of homosexuality and heterosexuality, as well as the bourgeois institution of the monogamous couple. Indeed, he did not limit himself to fighting for these eliminations, but he tested them in a joyous and tragic journey in which he never missed an opportunity to make a spectacle of himself. He was a *maestro masochista* (masochistic master/teacher)—as Matthew Zundel has effectively described him—subject of and to the sexual who becomes undone in the “other,” not in search of recognition, but of scandal.¹¹⁹ His experiments with sex and drugs are well-documented in *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, as are his delirious ideations, already present in *Towards a Gay Communism*,¹²⁰ in which witchcraft and alchemy (which Parinetto argues are types of knowledge that historically represent a form of resistance to nascent capitalism) unify with mysticism in a rave in which feces, beyond being the fruit of good and evil, becomes the philosopher’s stone that, once ingested, “unveils the symbolic significance of all things.”¹²¹ Here it is thus through the ingestion of feces that Mieli envisions himself as a Messiah, disposed to the sacrifice of the self. Mieli’s essayistic and novelistic writing was only one of the ways in which he expressed his intellectual activism. After the publication of *Towards a Gay Communism* “he became the ideal interlocutor for TV and magazines,”¹²² which were certainly attracted by his theoretical wisdom, but also by his vivid methods—even earlier than his television appearances he had a leading role in the *teatro frocio* (queer theater) of those years, for which he was both an author and an actor.¹²³ In *Risveglio*, he describes one of his performances: “The show that I put on with Adriana dei Tolomei, ‘Maria Teresa d’Austria’ and others was a fiasco [...]. For the first time I presented myself in public dressed as Christ in the nude, while nibbling on my feces on stage.”¹²⁴

Beginning in its style all of *Il risveglio dei faraoni* oozes maniacal euphoria. And this, as often happens, had its downfall in a dysphoric breakdown: Mieli was obsessed with the writing of the text, and after having sent it to the prestigious Einaudi publishing house, which had already published *Towards a Gay Communism*, on March 7, 1983, he sent them a secured mail packet containing the contracts for both books torn-up. Two days later he regretted the gesture and wrote a letter apologizing, and after the same amount of time, withdrew it once more.¹²⁵ Another obsession that interrupted the writing of the novel was that of the figure of the father: his sister Paola, now a psychoanalyst, imagines that it was maybe because his actual father was “condescending with him” that “Mario constantly appealed to an imaginary, punitive, and ferocious father” who in the text took on the behavior of Sade and the Devil incarnate in various characters.¹²⁶ Something that also troubled him in those later days was the fear that the contents of *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, in which the family is very present, could have hurt his parents.¹²⁷ And finally, this year saw the end of a complex amorous relationship that he had maintained with Umberto Pasti since 1976.

A good Freudo-Marxist, Mieli remained convinced until the very end that in a liberated society Eros could definitively overcome the death drive,

understood by him as an aggressive and self-destructive impulse.¹²⁸ Embittered not only by FUORI's reformist turn but also by the decline of the effervescence of Italian social movements after 1977, what I have already mentioned as their "ebb," in the later years expressed great worry over the nuclear ecological crises, which in some writings he associates with capitalism's death drive.¹²⁹ It is not until the early 1980s that he recognizes that the sexual drive can be a death drive—not turned against the other, nature, or the physical suppression of the self, but understood as the momentary suspension of subjectivity. In other words, just like Laplanche and Bersani's readings of Freud, in this text, he recognizes how Eros and Thanatos come to coincide in the driven ecstasy of sexual jouissance:

According to Judeo-Christianity, which condemns homoeroticism and the babel of the sexes—"though shall not have carnal relations with a man as one has with a woman; it is an abomination"—the "vision face à face" is reserved for the blessed post-mortem; only ecstasy, having "something to see" with death, can grant it in life (*The Ways of the Saints*). Now, in ecstatic understanding, the "folie à deux" (con)fuses Eros with Thanatos and one sex with another: "Mais tout ce que tu me fais voir dans la mort que t'as dans tes yeux." (This is the moment in which I feel most holy).¹³⁰

A different death drive, however, got the better of him in the end. If only Mieli had limited himself to that gay identity "suicide" that so annoyed Bersani! Psychosis, Lacan says, renders permeable the boundary that separates the symbolic from the real, this time with tragic consequences. March 12, 1983, just a few months before turning thirty-one, Mieli took his life. Listen up, Professor Kant: as Freud and Mieli's father understood well—as the loving and kind parents of this chapter in defiance of Oedipal stereotypes—this act was more serious, much more serious, than Mieli's homo(-trans-pan-)sexuality.

Notes

- 1 We should remember that, for Freud, and not only for Reich, the "normal" adult woman must only enjoy vaginal penetration. According to a citation from the *Three Essays* that I've included in Chapter 3 (paragraph 2): after adolescence, the clitoris should alone retain "the task of transmitting the excitation to the adjacent female sexual parts, just as—to use a simile—pine shavings can be kindled in order to set a log of harder wood on fire." Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 221.
- 2 In particular, I am thinking of the already-cited classics: Carla Lonzi, *Sputiamo sul Hegel: La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti* (Milan: Scritti di rivolta femminile, 1974), Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), but also Lynne Huffer's more recent *Are the Lips a Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013). Trans. Unfortunately, there does not yet exist an English translation of Carla Lonzi's fundamental collection of

- feminist essays. On vulnerability, mourning, and care see note 137 from Chapter 3.
- 3 In other words, we will investigate what Massimo Prearo has called, “the removed roots of queer theory.” See Massimo Prearo, “Le radici rimosse della queer theory: una genealogia da ricostruire,” *Genesis* 1–2 (2012): 95–114.
 - 4 Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 42.
 - 5 Bersani, *Homos*, 36.
 - 6 “Since, as Judith Butler has pointed out, bisexuality is conceptualized by Freud in terms of feminine and masculine ‘dispositions’ that have heterosexual aims (it is in desiring like a woman that a boy sees his father as an object of sexual love), bisexuality is simply ‘the coincidence of two heterosexual desires within a single psyche.’” Bersani, *Homos*, 36–37. The citation is taken from Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 77. In the following pages, in addition to *Gender Trouble*, Bersani cites Butler’s *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993).
 - 7 See Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Vintage, 2014). For an insistence on the active contribution of homosexual people in the historical process of naming themselves, see Giovanni Dall’Orto, *Tutta un’altra storia: L’omosessualità dall’antichità al secondo dopoguerra* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2015), in particular Chapters 48 and 49. The history Dall’Orto narrates, through an impressive survey of archival material (and also through a reading of Freud in all his complexity in Chapter 54 that differs from Beachy’s), is oriented by intentions quite different from my own; that is, the polemic against the constructivism of queer theory. In my view, this polemic seems to feed not only on a misunderstanding of Foucault’s thesis regarding the “recent invention” of homosexual identity but also on an essentialist view of homosexuality.
 - 8 Henry Havelock Ellis notes this in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II Sexual Inversion* (London and Leipzig: The University Press, 1900). Ellis came to know about the essay from a letter in which Ulrichs argued that Kertenbeny had proposed “homosexuality” because he resented the term “uranism.”
 - 9 See for example, Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Transvestiten, eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem causistischem und historischem Material* (Berlin: Medizinischer Verlag, 1910), and “Die intersexuelle Konstitution,” *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 23 (1923): 3–27.
 - 10 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 135.
 - 11 Freud, *Three Essays*, 142.
 - 12 See note 9 from Chapter 4.
 - 13 Freud, *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman*, SE 18, 145–174.
 - 14 Freud, *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*, SE 10, 5–152. In addition to the thesis of the identification with the mother, which we will now analyze, here Freud suggests that the “fate” of future homosexual males will be decided by the “high esteem felt for the male organ” (of his own male organ) during infancy. For the love of the mother the homosexuals would choose women as sexual objects while children, but they would become homosexuals following the traumatic discovery that women do not have a penis—the organ without which they fail to become aroused (109).
 - 15 Emphasis mine. Even more clear, as we will see shortly, is the condemnation of the persecution of homosexuality in a letter Freud wrote in 1935. Beachy’s judgment of Freud regarding homosexuality is therefore excessive: “The objective in Freud’s model, as any good Darwinian would understand, was adult heterosexual coitus, necessary for procreation and social reproduction. For

Freud, then, homosexuality reflected a misstep in this psychodynamic process, since sex between two men (or between two women) was not (re)productive. Freud discounted the notion that same-sex erotic desire was somehow hardwired from birth, and he also rejected the emancipatory project of Hirschfeld. Legal reform was not a priority for Freud, since he considered homosexual desire to be fundamentally pathological.” Beachy, *Gay Berlin*, 257–258.

- 16 Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, SE 11, 98–100. Leonardo’s predilection for oral sex is inferred from a fragment of his diary: “It seems that I was always destined to be so deeply concerned with vultures; for I recall as one of my earliest memories that while I was in my cradle a vulture came down to me, and opened my mouth with its tail, and struck me many times with its tail against my lips.” (82) Freud makes the tail a substitute for the penis, which the child Leonardo, like all male children, would have believed was gifted to him by his mother, and the pleasure of fellatio is the outcome of a fixation on the oral stage (the cradle in Leonardo’s fantasy alludes to the age of nursing). Freud, however, takes this fragment from a German translation, see Marie Herzfeld, *Leonardo da Vinci: Denker, Forscher und Poet* (Hamburg: Severus Verlag, 2014), in which the Italian “nibbio” is incorrectly rendered, not as “Milan” (German for “kite”) but with “Geier” (German for “vulture”), therefore developing a series of reflections on the symbolism of the vulture that has little to do with Leonardo.
- 17 See page 144 and the following in *Three Essays*.
- 18 Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci*, SE 11, 62.
- 19 Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7, 146.
- 20 “The girl was not in any way ill (she did not suffer from anything in herself, nor did she complain of her condition)” Freud, *The Psychogenesis*, SE 18, 150.
- 21 Freud, *Psychogenesis*, SE 18, 151. Emphasis mine.
- 22 Freud, *Psychogenesis*, SE 18, 151. Freud continues: “After that it lay with him to choose whether he wished to abandon the path that is banned by society, and in some cases he has done so.” (151)
- 23 Freud, *Psychogenesis*, SE 18, 151. Shortly after Freud adds: “If he comes to be treated at all, it is mostly through the pressure of external motives, such as the social disadvantages and dangers attaching to his choice of object, and such components of the instinct of self-preservation prove themselves too weak in the struggle against the sexual impulses. One then soon discovers his secret plan, namely, to obtain from the striking failure of his attempt a feeling of satisfaction that he has done everything possible against his abnormality, to which he can now resign himself with an easy conscience.” (151).
- 24 In a gesture of gratitude, the woman, wanting to remain anonymous, sent Freud’s letter to the *American Journal of Psychiatry* in 1951 who then published it, see “Historical Notes: A Letter from Freud” *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 107, no. 10 (April 1951): 786–787, the letter itself is dated April 9th, 1935. Ernst Jones also includes it in his *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud. Volume 3: The Last Phase, 1919–1939* (New York: Basic Books), 195–196.
- 25 We’ve run into her before in note 55 of Chapter 3 of this book, while she was crying together with her mother over the death of Sophie. Anna was also the one who looked after her father more than anyone else during the long sickness that brought him to death.
- 26 See the “Prologue: Merde alors!” above. The citation is taken from Lee Edelman, “Learning Nothing: *Bad Education*” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 28, no. 1 (May 2017): 124.
- 27 See note 115 of Chapter 4 above. Freud anticipates this distinction between the three concepts when, for example, in *Psychogenesis* when he distinguishes

- between “physical sexual characters,” “mental sexual characters,” and “kind of object-choice.” (170).
- 28 The American Psychiatric Association has published the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) since 1952 and it remains the most used nosographic manual of psychiatry in the world. Profoundly influenced by the conservative version of psychoanalysis developed in the United States, in 1952, the APA included homosexuality on the list of mental disorders, removed it in the 1973 seventh reprint of the second edition (DSM-II) only to reintegrate it in 1980 (DSM-III) through the distinction between “egosyntonic homosexuality” (healthy, because integrated into the personality of the subject) and “egodystonic homosexuality” (pathological, because characterized by non-acceptance and dysphoria). This latter category was finally removed in the 1987 edition (DSM-III-R) and as a consequence homosexuality was also erased from the list of psychiatric disturbances in the *International Classification of Diseases* (ICD) by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1990. In the DSM-III of 1980 “transsexualism” appeared for the first time as a medical condition under the name “Gender Identity Disorder.” In the DSM-V, which was released in 2013, while I was writing this book, the transgender category is still present, though reduced to the level of “Gender Dysphoria.” It is therefore no longer considered a serious disorder of identity, but as a lighter disorder of one’s state of mind. The path toward full de-pathologization undertaken by the trans “condition” in the DSM seems to be retracing the path already taken by homosexuality. This time, though, the ICD has been quicker: in 2019, the World Health Organization’s assembly has approved a new edition of the volume, in which “gender incongruence” no longer appears in the chapter on mental disorders, but instead in the chapter entitled “Conditions Related to Sexual Health.” This is also the chapter from which “transvestism” has disappeared, a category that had been used to impute a trans person of not actually being trans, but to have been affected by a “paraphilia.” Even the introduction of medical protocols aimed toward the surgical “normalization” of the genitals of intersex newborns during the 1950s was influenced by a distorted interpretation of the Freudian theory of original bisexuality and by the importance Freud conferred to the genitals in the sexual identification of the subject. Even though the most influential endocrinological pediatric associations in the world—Lawson Wilkins Pediatric Endocrine Society and the European Society for Pediatric Endocrinology—had taken a stand against these genital mutilations in 2006, they continue to be practiced. In the latest edition of the ICD (ICD-11), intersex continues to be named with the stigmatizing wording “Disorders of Sexual Development” (introduced by the same document signed by the medical associations in 2006). Throughout all of this, nothing has ever been given for free to sexual minorities: in the medical and psychiatric fields, just like in the field of law, every victory has instead been obtained thanks to the courage and the determination of the LGBTQIA+ movements, thanks to their capacity both to protest and to arbitrate with medical institutions, the academic world, and governments.
- 29 These therapies became fashionable again in the 1990s following the spread of the conservative campaign against the so-called gender theory, but they were condemned by the American Psychiatric Association with two consecutive resolutions in 1998 and then in 2000. The National Council of the Order of Italian Psychologists (Consiglio Nazionale dell’Ordine Psicologi—CNOP) followed the example of the APA in 2008.
- 30 See letters 68, 69, 195, and 242 in the *Collected Works*, vol. 43. The citation is taken from letter 210, from Engels to Marx, June 22nd 1869. Marx and Engels,

- Collected Works*, vol. 43 – *Marx and Engels Letters April 1868–July 1870* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 295–296.
- 31 “The guys there were so beautiful—they’ve lost that wounded look that fags all had 10 years ago.” See: Lucian Truscott IV, “Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square,” *The Village Voice*, July 3, 1969, 18; Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants* (New York: St. Martin’s Press), 7.
- 32 As Susan Stryker notes, this was not the first case of rebellion against the police: three years before Stonewall an analogous episode took place at Gene Compton’s Cafeteria in San Francisco, which Stryker defines as a locale for the “usual late-night crowd of drag queens, hustlers, slummers, cruisers, runaway teens, and down-and-out neighborhood regulars.” Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today’s Revolution* (Berkeley: Seal Press), 64.
- 33 Trans. The Italian version adopts the same sense of a “liberation front” but the founders of the group were intentional about forming a coherent acronym, where FUORI! in Italian is also the imperative “COME OUT!,” which was also the title of the journal begun by the Gay Liberation Front of New York.
- 34 According to Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo, for example, “the political and theoretical exploration of [Mario] Mieli”—to whom this and the following paragraph are dedicated—“anticipates *queer* politics and theories that will take shape and name beginning in the 1990s; or maybe, more than anticipation, his is just one possible *queer* path.” Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo, “Mario Mieli: un archivio del presente,” in *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni sessanta. Scritti (1972–1983)* (Venice: Marsilio Press, 2019), 27. Mieli uses the term “queer” only once in *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams (London: Pluto Press, 2018), citing Larry Mitchell’s *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions* (New York: Nightboat Books, 2019). The term also appears in a narrative description of the London scene from 1979: Mario Mieli, “Il ‘divino’ androgino,” now in *La gaia critica*, 190.
- 35 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 203.
- 36 Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 207.
- 37 In his autobiographical novel *Il risveglio dei Faraoni* [The Pharaoh’s Reawakening] (Paderno Dugnano: Cooperativa Colibrì, 1994), Mieli calls Paola “Nefertiti,” and always speaks about her with enormous affection, as his favorite sister, tied to him in destiny and in name: Mieli, the sixth child, was actually called Mario Paolo, and his sister’s full name, the seventh and last child two years younger than Mario, is Paola Maria. An example: “we were not simply relatives, but rather a brother and a sister who were interpenetrated in spirit” (162). It is to Paola Mieli that we owe the publication, not only of *La gaia critica* but also of the second Italian edition of *Towards a Gay Communism*, edited together with Gianni Rossi Barilli for the editor Feltrinelli in 2002 (and republished in an economic edition in 2017), after the first Einaudi edition was long out of print. This second edition is accompanied by an appendix of critical essays by Tim Dean, Teresa de Lauretis, David Jacobson, Christopher Lane, Claude Rabant, and Simonetta Spinelli. On the life and work of Mieli, see also the entry for “Mario Mieli” written by Laura Schettini for the *Dizionario Biografico degli italiani Treccani* (2015), available through the Treccani website, www.treccani.it. For an English introduction to Mieli’s life and work, see: Matthew Zundel, “Mario Mieli: Queer Dynamite” *AG—About Gender: International Journal of Gender Studies*, 9 no. 17 (2020): 285–307.
- 38 The book contains Mieli’s published articles as well as his interviews and some unedited texts that have been found in his private archive. Many of the texts

- overlap with his writing in *Towards a Gay Communism* and *Il risveglio dei Faraoni*.
- 39 For texts by Pezzana, see: *Dentro e fuori: Un'autobiografia omosessuale* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1996); *Un omosessuale normale: Diario di una ricerca d'identità attraverso il ricordo, la storia, il costume, le vite* (Viterbo: Stampa alternativa, 2011).
- 40 See his 1972 article: Mario Mieli, "London Gay Liberation Front: Angry brigade, piume & paillettes" in *La gaia critica*, where, among other things, Mieli narrates how "the London Gay Lib" was "born two years ago at the London School of Economics from an initiative of two students who were veterans of the American Gay Liberation Front" (54). In *Il risveglio dei Faraoni* this first experience in the British capital is described with a certain frustration: "Yes the Gay Liberation Front had demonstrations and parties, but very few cared for me because I spoke the language so poorly and I wasn't a star" (56).
- 41 See Schettini (2015). On the history of LGBT Italian movements see: Gianni Rossi Barilli, *Il movimento gay in Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999); Massimo Prearo, *La fabbrica del orgoglio: Una genealogia dei movimenti LGBT* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015); Elena Biagini, *L'emersione imprevista: Il movimento delle lesbiche in Italia negli anni '70 e '80* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2018); On Mieli's central role in the nascent Milanese gay movement see also: Fabio Pellegata, "Dal F.U.O.R.I. ai COM: dalla rivoluzione alla percezione del valore di sé" in *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**, eds. Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegata and Walter Pigino (Milan: Il dito e la luna, 2019). Mieli mentions the congress at Sanremo in *Towards a Gay Communism*, 77, and Guy Hocquenghem, who I will speak of more in a moment, also mentions it in *Homosexual Desire*, trans. Daniella Dangoor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 67.
- 42 Pezzana, *Un omosessuale normale*, 83.
- 43 Mieli cites Corrado Levi often in *Towards a Gay Communism* (in the acknowledgments in the preface, as well as on pp. 95–96, 134, 246). In *Il risveglio dei Faraoni*, he appears as "one of my lovers, the architect Corrado Vile" (71), who Mieli's father considered to be responsible for having "corrupted" his son; and also as "Professor Corrado Vile to whom giving a blow-job was enough to receive full marks for an exam"—"or so it was written on a *tatzebao* by some gossip monger in the architecture building, but Corrado sarcastically replied that a blowjob wasn't enough" (185). Moreover, Mieli tells us that he had "given a speech on schizophrenia at the Faculty of Architecture, where I was invited by that singularly eccentric Corrado Vile whose seminars on architectural design were completely beside the point" (205). For more on Levi, see his essential articles on the consciousness-raising practice of the Milanese FUORI! group, "Storia palpitante e violenta" *FUORI!* no. 8 (1973)—cited by Mieli in "Il fallo nel cervello, published under the pseudonym 'Mario Rossi' in the following number of the journal, available in *La gaia critica*—and "Il lavoro di presa di coscienza: Problematiche e contribute del lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo fuori! di Milano" *FUORI!* no. 12 (1974)—cited by Mieli in *Towards a Gay Communism*, 95–96, 246. Also see Levi's book originally published in 1979 *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica* (Milan: Asterisco edizioni 2019); his interview with Andrea Pini collected in *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2011); "Che bello scrivere di Mario Mieli" in *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*, eds. Dario Accolla and Andrea Contieri (Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013); and finally "L'inizio del movimento omosessuale in Italia e a Milano," *Milano e 50*

- anni di movimento LGBT**. On Levi's role in the Italian gay movement also see my "a C. da L.: Introduzione (?) di Lorenzo Bernini" in *New Kamasutra*.
- 44 On the importance Mieli gave to consciousness-raising practices for the gay movement, see his article "Dirompenza della questione omosessuale" published under the pseudonym Mario Rossi, in *La gaia critica*.
- 45 In a 1977 television interview, Mieli confirms: "My best relations are with the feminists that do not participate in the political activities of men, that is, they are the feminists that take part in the group practices of consciousness-raising." Mario Mieli, "Intervista a *Come Mai*" in *La gaia critica*, 286. In *Towards a Gay Communism* he writes: "If I truly believed in the avant-garde, I would say that the vanguard of the revolution will be composed of lesbians. Anyhow, *the revolution will be lesbian*" (129, see also p. 194).
- 46 In Mieli's articles there are numerous polemical references to Pezzana's belief in moderation. In 1983, however, in his final interview, besides affectionately labelling Pezzana as "funny" and "very likeable," Mieli writes of him: "There is no word [...] of Pezzana's to which I would subscribe. [...] However, *chapeau!* Because Pezzana has done a lot of good for homosexuals in Italy, a massive benefit." Mario Mieli, "Intervista a Mario Mieli, *Studio 82*," in *La gaia critica*, 321.
- 47 Mario Mieli, "Jean-Louis Bory e Guy Hocquenghem: Comment nous epelez-vous déjà?" in *La gaia critica*, 245.
- 48 Foucault appears in note 36 of Chapter 1 (*Towards a Gay Communism*, 18) with Deleuze, Guattari, and Hocquenghem (as well as Jean Genet, Jean-Paul Sartre and others) as one of the editors of the monographic number of "Recherche" *Trois milliards de pervers: Grand encyclopedie des homosexualités*, published in March 1973 and confiscated by the police. The volume is also cited by Luciano Parinetto in his article "L'utopia del diavolo: Eguatarismo e transessualità" *Utopia* (December 1973). In the article, "Paris-FHAR" (under the alias Mario Rossi, *La gaia critica*, 86) Mieli talks about the editorial operation of "Recherches" with a certain contempt.
- 49 It was a movement for which, among other things, Mieli reserved unflattering words due to what was, in his view, their instrumental use of the homosexual question: "The gay movement totally rejects the reactionary (pre)judices against homosexuality displayed by mainstream psychiatry, yet revolutionary homosexuals also oppose the new 'progressive' but completely heterosexual view of homosexuality currently widespread in anti-psychiatry circles" (2; also see pages 25 and 251).
- 50 Michel Foucault, *History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Both books are amply cited, for example, by Luciano Parinetto who will shortly be named as one of Mieli's sources.
- 51 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Penguin, 2009).
- 52 Parinetto was an "assistant"—as they used to say—of Remo Cantoni, who was a full professor in the teaching of Moral Philosophy I, while Mieli graduated with Franco Fergnani, the full professor in the teaching of Moral Philosophy II. Mieli cites Parinetto's essays "L'utopia del diavolo: Eguatarismo e transessualità" and "Analreligion e dintorni. Appunti" *L'erba voglio* 26 (1976) in *Towards a Gay Communism*. These two articles were republished in 1977 in Luciano Parinetto, *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: morte diavolo analità* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2015), that in turn was published with other texts in his later collection of work *Marx diversoperverso* (Milano: Unicopli, 1997). On

- Parinetto see two studies: Manuele Bellini, *Corpo e rivoluzione: Sulla filosofia di Luciano Parinetto* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni 2012) and *Dialettica del diverso: Marxismo e antropologia in Luciano Parinetto* (Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2018).
- 53 Regarding Deleuze Mieli cites an intervention from a conference organized in Milan by the “Semiotics and Psychoanalysis” collective in 1973. The intervention can be found in Armando Verdiglione, ed. *Psicanalisi e politica* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1973). He also cites *Masochismo e sadismo* (Milan: Iota libri, 1973) and, finally, the interview between Vittorio Marchetti and Deleuze and Guattari titled “Capitalismo e schizofrenia” in *L'altra pazzia: Mappa antologica della psichiatria alternativa*, ed. Laura Forti (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975).
- 54 In 1973 Mieli met Hocquenghem and other comrades from FHAR on a visit to Paris together with a delegation from FUORI!, and offers an unflattering judgment of him and his teachers in later *FUORI!* article: “Noted theoretician and shining star of FHAR Guy Hocquenghem walked all over me and another comrade from FUORI! [...], snubbing us because of his usual chauvinist blinders and a theoretical arrogance close to the scatterbrained buffoonery of his friends Deleuze and Guattari” Mieli, “Paris-FHAR,” 85. He speaks of Hocquenghem with approval in another article published with *FUORI!* in the same year, reporting how, in order to “demonstrate how hetero-fascist the seriousness of the” comrades from the Homosexuelle Aktion Westberlin (HAW) who organized a gay protest in Berlin for which they recommended adopting ‘respectable’ clothing and mannerisms, he had “parodied the rhythm of the nazi march along the side of the long courtyard.” See Mieli (alias Mario Rossi), “Berlino: L’omosessualità scavalca il muro” in *La gaia critica*, 94. On Hocquenghem see, Bill Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem: Beyond Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Cécile Voisset-Veysseyre, *Guy Hocquenghem: La revolte (1946–1988)* (Paris: Édition du Sextant, 2015); Antoine Idier, *Les Vies de Guy Hocquenghem* (Paris: Fayard, 2017).
- 55 Mieli cites Carl Gustav Jung’s “The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious,” in *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 1966) and *Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido. A Contribution to the History of the Evolution of Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).
- 56 Mieli often cites Georg Groddeck’s *Book of the It* (New York: International Universities Press, 1976).
- 57 “The Psychonazis” is the title of the fifth section of the first chapter of *Towards a Gay Communism*. The critique of this conception of homosexuality as inversion is also present in Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*.
- 58 Luciano Parinetto, *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: morte diavolo analità* (Milan: Mimesis, 2015), 74–75. I cite Parinetto here because his wording is particularly concise and incisive, even though *Corpo e rivoluzione* (The Body and Revolution) had not yet come out while Mieli was working on *Towards a Gay Communism*. (Mieli would review the book with enthusiasm in the gay periodical *Lambda*, and his review can now be found in *La gaia critica*). Parinetto had, however, also laid out this same argument in the articles “L’utopia del diavolo” and “Analreligion e dintorni. Appunti,” which were republished in *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx*, and both of which were already known to Mieli. This citation comes from Parinetto’s 1973 article “Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx” *Utopia* (January 1973), also republished in 1977 Moizzi edition of *Corpo e rivoluzione*.
- 59 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 254.
- 60 Mieli was, with others and together with Corrado Levi, one of the writers and actors in the show, *La Traviata Norma, ovvero: vaffanculo ... ebbene sì!* (The

Wayward Norm, or: go get fucked in the ass ... well if you say so!). The script, which was edited by the Milanese Homosexual Collectives and published with *L'erba voglio* in Milan in 1977, was recently republished with Asterisco Edizioni (Milan 2020).

- 61 See for example, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 242.
- 62 Sándor Ferenczi is the polemical target of both Hocquenghem and Mieli insofar as he is the typical exponent of heterosexist and homophobic psychoanalysis. See in particular the following essays: “On the Part Played by Homosexuality in the Pathogenesis of Paranoia” (154–186); “The Nosology of Male Homosexuality” (296–318) “Stimulation of the Anal Erotogenic Zone as a Precipitating Factor in Paranoia” (295–298). The first two essays can be found in, Sándor Ferenczi, *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Ernest Jones (New York: Karnac Books, 1994); and the third can be found in, Sándor Ferenczi, *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-analysis*, ed. Michael Balnit and trans. Eric Mosbacher, et al. (New York: Karnac Books, 1994). Mieli also dedicated ample space to critiquing the heterosexism of Franco Fornari who was the president of the Italian Psychoanalytic Society (SPI), professor at the University of Milan, and author of *Genitalità e cultura* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975) and other article in Italian journals and newspapers. However, in a speech at the 5th Congress of FUORI! held in 1976 (which can be found in *La gaia critica*) Mieli describes Fornari as “my friend, Franco Fornari, President of the SPI.” (165)
- 63 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 19–20. The spatial metaphor was already present, though differently articulated, in Hocquenghem’s *Homosexual Desire*, according to whom desire can mobilize us upward, toward a sublimation that obeys super-egoic dictates and therefore toward a sense of guilt and “social anxiety,” or downward: “towards the abyss of non-personalized and uncodified desire,” inhabited as “organs subject to no rule or law.” Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 95.
- 64 See note 28 from this chapter.
- 65 Law 164, which regulates official changes in gender in Italy was approved on April 14, 1982. It is a meager rule which establishes that to authorize a change of gender on official documents you need obtain approval from the courts. However, for more than thirty years, its interpretation in the legal system had made not only sterilization but also genital surgery mandatory in order to correct the official registry (orchiectomy, penectomy, and vaginoplasty in the case of an MtF transition; hysterectomy and salpingoophorectomy [the removal of the ovaries and Fallopian tubes], in the case of an FtM surgical transition). In 2015, two important rulings were handed down: one on July 20 (n. 15138) from the Supreme Court (*Corte di Cassazione*) and one on November 5 (n. 221) from the Constitutional Court (*Corte Costituzionale*) which finally established that these procedures were no longer necessary to change names on official documents, and that the trans person must be left free to choose the ways in which they wish to realize their path of transitioning.
- 66 Sandy Stone, “The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- 67 Susan Stryker and Petra Dierkes-Thrun, “Transgender Studies Today: An Interview with Susan Stryker,” *the b2o review*, August 20, 2014, <https://www.boundary2.org/2014/08/transgender-studies-today-an-interview-with-susan-stryker/>.
- 68 Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013).

- 69 An example: “We revolutionary queers see in the child not so much Oedipus, or the future Oedipus, as *the potentially free human being*. We do indeed love children. We are able to desire them erotically, in response to their own erotic wishes, and we can openly and with open arms grasp the rush of sensuality that they pour out and make love with them. [...] The oppressive heterosexual society forces the child into a period of latency; but this is nothing but the deadly introduction to the prison of a latent ‘life.’” *Towards a Gay Communism*, 54.
- 70 For example, in the “Nota introduttiva all’edizione olandese” [Introductory Note to the Dutch edition] of *Towards a Gay Communism*, published in 1982, Mieli writes: “If we could love our blood relatives from an early age without any problem, we would love others more easily [...]. It is absurd that those who give us life are not among the first to enjoy our bodies with us.”
- 71 See, for example, *Towards a Gay Communism*, where “manifest transsexuality” is defined as a reduction of transsexuality to an “apparent monosexuality” through an attempt to “identify with a historically ‘normal’ gender opposite to their genital definition.” (7–8).
- 72 Mario Mieli, “My First Lady,” in *La gaia critica*, 26.
- 73 This is how he introduces himself during his intervention at FUORI!’s fifth congress in 1976. See Mario Mieli, “Intervento di Mario Mieli al V Congresso del FUORI! del 1976” in *La gaia critica*, 165.
- 74 Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 128 and also “My First Lady,” 118. In this article, during a visit to London’s Victoria and Albert Museum in March of 1974, Mieli describes a “polite woman” wrapped in a “checkered overcoat” with “modest high-heel shoes, a leopard-print handbag, leather gloves, carefully tinged red lips, and, to conclude, expansive sunglasses in the shape of a mask,” to then explain that this woman is “a man, a transvestite, that is: me.” (117).
- 75 As I have said above, the term “transvestism” was invented by Hirschfeld when medical knowledge had not yet coined the term “transsexuality.” Psychiatry had later used the term to indicate a paraphilia of a fetishistic nature which became the label for cis-heterosexual men who masturbated while dressed in women’s clothing. The World Professional Association for Transgender Health has contested the use of the term on the grounds of it being misleading and derogatory (“WPATH ICD-11 Consensus Meeting,” May 31, 2013) and the term has finally been erased from the latest edition of the ICD (see footnote 28 from this chapter).
- 76 “To an Englishman I so blithely asked: ‘So, are you a homosexual?’, he responded: ‘I don’t like labels. I like men.’” And, you know, women are for the most part much more on their toes and brighter than men. He does not love labels, but the choice that drives him to feel gynandrous in tendency is always operating in her “eclecticism.” Mieli, “Ginandro in tram,” in *La gaia critica*, 148.
- 77 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 48.
- 78 For example: “I love women, and every once and a while we even fuck.” Mieli, “Dialogo sull’amore tra Lia Migale e Mario Mieli,” in *La gaia critica*, 298. Another example: “the first woman I fucked ...” Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 45. However, when coming out to his father he explains: “Look, I am not really attracted to women,” Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 68.
- 79 In general, a sort of obsession with having sex with women emerges in Mieli’s autobiography. Though rare, he describes these experiences as very pleasurable for him and, indeed, a duty in the process of his personal journey towards liberation. See *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 100.
- 80 Mieli, “Intervista a *Come mai*,” in *La gaia critica*, 285.

- 81 “The molecular unconscious [...] knows nothing of castration, because partial objects lack nothing and form free multiplicities as such [...]: *everywhere a microscopic transsexuality*, resulting in the woman containing as many men as the man, and the man as many women, all capable of entering—men with women, women with men—into relations of production of desire that overturn the statistical order of the sexes. Making love is not just becoming as one, or even two, but becoming as a hundred thousand. Desiring-machines or the nonhuman sex: not one or even two sexes, but *n* sexes. Schizoanalysis is the variable analysis of the *n* sexes in a subject, beyond the anthropomorphic representation that society imposes on the subject, and with which it represents its own sexuality. The schizoanalytic slogan of the desiring-revolution will be the first of all: to each its own sexes.” Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 295–296.
- 82 Luciano Parinetto, “L’utopia del diavolo: egualitarismo e transessualità” in *Marx diversoperverso*, 152. In *Towards a Gay Communism* (18) Mieli cites a different passage from Parinetto’s essay: “If they do not wish to uphold sexual roles by precisely denying them—on which such roles could be based—homosexual and feminist contestation [...] must present itself as the introduction to transsexuality; that is, to something altogether different, both with regard to so-called normality and its dialectical opposition.” Parinetto, “L’utopia del diavolo,” 203–204.
- 83 For an interpretation of Hocquenghem’s intended use of ‘homosexual desire,’ see section 3.1, “Lotta anale contro il capitale” of my book, *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*, trans. Julia Heim (New York: Routledge, 2017).
- 84 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 25.
- 85 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, 157.
- 86 Mario Mieli and Studio 82, “Intervista a Mario Mieli,” in *La gaia critica*, 304, my emphasis.
- 87 Mario Mieli, “C’è ancora speranza? Intervista a Mario Mieli di Gianpaolo Silvestri” in *La gaia critica*, 325, my emphasis. Mieli goes on from here: “Those who have had operations done are eunuchs (castrated by the repressive system, in most cases). But just as Germaine Greer wrote that April Ashley, a British transsexual, is a symbol of all women and of their struggle for emancipation (women for Greer are ‘female eunuchs’), we can consider our brothers who were operated as a symbol—one of many—of the movement of gay liberation.” Germaine Greer author of *The Female Eunuch* [1976] (New York: Harper Collins, 2009) also appears in *Towards a Gay Communism* (209), while a reference to her interpretation of Ashley’s story also appears in Mieli’s brutal article, “Marocco: miraggio omosessuale.” In a note accompanying his article, “I radical chic e lo chic radicale” Mieli assesses *The Female Eunuch* as “an interesting work in some ways, however [...] also anti-feminist and anti-homosexual” (65): in the same way we might say that some of his arguments, like these, are anti-trans. The substantive “pansexuality” and the adjective “pansexual” also appear, respectively, in his article “Chi non si è mai prostituito scagli la prima pietra” (185) and “Dialogo sull’amore tra Lia Migale e Mario Mieli” (298), both of which can be found in *La gaia critica*.
- 88 Leo Bersani, *Homos*, 100. I cited this passage in the last chapter as well.
- 89 Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman,” in *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 20. For more on Wittig see Eva Feole, *Corpo a corpo con il linguaggio: Il pensiero e l’opera letteraria di Monique Wittig* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2020). Federico Zappino has recently attempted to jointly update Wittig and Mieli’s thought in order to propose a “subversion of heterosexuality” in his book, *Comunismo queer: Note per una sovversione*

- dell'eterosessualità (Milan: Metelmi, 2019). A few years ago Samuele Grassi attempted to work at the intersection of queer theory, including antisocial queer theories, and the anarcho-individualist tradition in his book, *Anarchismo queer: Un'introduzione* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2013).
- 90 Wittig, "One Is Not Born a Woman," 12.
- 91 Wittig, "Preface," in *The Straight Mind*, xiii–xiv.
- 92 Mario Mieli, "Luciano Parinetto. Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: Morte diavolo analità," in *La gaia critica*, 250.
- 93 For example in *Il risveglio dei faraoni* (93) Mieli makes Pietro say to himself, "I am a masochist like you." And makes his aunt Hats'epsout say: "it is by following a certain masochistic path that one becomes immortal."
- 94 See Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 121 and 132–133.
- 95 This is how Mieli describes his first trip in *Il risveglio dei faraoni* (54): "My bones melted ... but I felt so good! I started laughing, laughing, laughing like I have never laughed before. Transported by the current of laughter that gushed from my mouth as if from a fresh spring, I drew on the truest truth: we are free! Eighteen years of inhibitions vanished in a few minutes." The consonance with his idea of revolution/liberation is evident."
- 96 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 195.
- 97 For example in the last few pages of *Towards a Gay Communism*, Mieli claims to want to "draw hypothetical conclusions—and more than hypothetical—for the future of the human race" (253) and even in the text itself he fantasizes that "in a relatively distant future" the liberation of transsexuality may drive an evolution of the species that transforms every human into a "gynandry reproducing by parthenogenesis, or else a new two-way type of procreation (or three-way, or ten-way?)" (227).
- 98 "The gay movement is thus not seeking recognition as a new political power on a par with others; its own existence contradicts the system of political thought, because it relates to a different problematic. The bourgeoisie generates the proletariat revolution, but defines the framework within which the struggle takes place; this we could call the framework of civilisation, from whose historical continuity every social force benefits." Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 137.
- 99 Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 137–138.
- 100 "The idea of *gay communism*, which is the most important idea in this book [...] was based on the conception of communism quite different from that of traditional political groups and parties. We know, for example, that in the work of Marx some passages describe communism as *kingdom of freedom*, which was a definition in Hegel that Marx took up. So this idea is one which I made my own and which I thought could be transformed into something real [...] if there were to be an actual liberation of eros." Mieli, "Intervista a Mario Mieli," in *La gaia critica*, 302.
- 101 Mario Mieli, "Nota introduttiva all'edizione olandese dell'*Elementi di critica omosessuale*" in *La gaia critica*, 218.
- 102 Mieli, "Nota introduttiva" 221. Here, however, Mieli reclaims from Marcuse the idea of "positive sublimation," which is different from the negative, or supplementary sublimation of capitalistic society: "It is true that the total liberation of Eros coincides with communism: in fact, it is impossible to imagine one without the other. But communism also entails the development of the whole of human faculty—intellectual, scientific, and artistic. It is the Kingdom of Love, increasingly enriched and embellished by positive sublimation." Mieli, "Nota introduttiva," 221. For more on the Mielian idea of the Kingdom with its differences from the conceptions of the left, both old and new, see also: Mieli, *Il*

- risveglio dei Faraoni*, 219. For a critique of the virility of the left, see: Mario Mieli and Francesco Santini, "Violenza e omosessualità" in *La gaia critica*, 161.
- 103 See, for example, Guy Hocquenghem, "Every man possesses a phallus which guarantees him a social role; every man has an anus which is truly his own, in the most secret depths of his own person. The anus does not exist in a social relation, since it forms precisely the individual and therefore enables the division between society and the individual to be made" (97).
- 104 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 156.
- 105 The citation is taken from Luciano Parinetto, "L'utopia del diavolo," 211. The theme of anality recurs in other writings by Parinetto. See, as an example, Parinetto, "Capitalismo e analità," in *Marx diversoperverso*, 228: "It is presumable that the proletariat must—among other things—be no-longer-religious, no longer repressed in anal eroticism, polymorphously perverse, no longer renouncing excitement, to cut themselves off from being proletariat."
- 106 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 157.
- 107 "Heterosexual males also fear the excremental aura of anal intercourse. 'But Love has pitched its mansion in/The place of excrement' (Yeats). We gays know this very well, and our condition is most close to the joyous redemption of shit—if we have not already attained this. Even as far as shit is concerned, too, the repressive disgust conceals a rich enjoyment." Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 149.
- 108 Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 100–101.
- 109 "The religion of they who, like Sade, are beyond good and evil and know what the golden fruit of the tree of knowledge is: shit, the bread that the libertines of the One-Hundred and Twenty days of Sodom savored, as is appropriate, in the chapel." Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 173.
- 110 Freud, *SE* 21, 100.
- 111 Mario Mieli, "Sull'altalena di Poe. Ovvero: cosa nascondi dietro la coscia?" in *La gaia critica*, 151.
- 112 See, in particular, Mieli, "Sull'altalena di Poe" in *La gaia critica*.
- 113 Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 155. See also, "who hasn't seen two male dogs fucking, or two females, for that matter?" (27).
- 114 Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 280.
- 115 Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo, "Biografia critica" in *La gaia critica*, 335.
- 116 In *Towards a Gay Communism*, Mieli notes both his arrest (On the "love between men in prison" he writes, "I myself, in an English prison, got on well—sometimes very well—with other prisoners," 126) and his recovery ("Perhaps I have tended to generalize from an experience of my own, which, after a varied trajectory, brought me into clinics for the 'mentally ill' some two years ago. True; it is wrong to generalize; and yet I feel that I have lived situations that are true, in as much as they contain within them something universal," 198).
- 117 Mieli, "Intervento di Mario Mieli," 167.
- 118 Mieli, "Intervento di Mario Mieli," 167–168.
- 119 Matthew Zundel, "Mario Mieli, ovvero il maestro masochista: Performative Elements of a Perverse Militancy," *gender/sexuality/italy*, 6 (August 2019): 28–50.
- 120 In particular see Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 146–157.
- 121 Mieli, "Sull'altalena di Poe," 151.
- 122 Laura Schettini, "Mario Mieli." In an article published with the Italian popular weekly magazine *Panorama* on September 20th, 1977, the journalist Luciano Santin describes Mieli as "the most discussed, celebrated, and aggressive gay in Italy at this moment."

- 123 Besides the already cited performance *La Traviata Norma, ovvero: vaffanculo ... ebbene sì* (see note 63 of this chapter), Mieli performed in *Questo spettacolo non s'ha da fare: andate all'inferno* (This Show is Not to be Performed: Go to Hell), his monologue *Ciò detto passo oltre* (That Said, I'm Moving On), and in the performance *Dai bordelli di New Orleans* (From the Brothels of New Orleans). On the performative dimension of Mieli's militancy, besides Matthew Zundel's already cited article, see: Francesco Paolo Del Re, "La performance totale di Mario Mieli" in *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*, 66–89.
- 124 Mieli, *Il risveglio dei faraoni*, 215. There is also evidence of a scene of copro-fagia with Mieli in a queen's gown in the video-performance *Non è mai troppo ovvio* (It is Never that Obvious) from 1979.
- 125 "March 11th, in a letter sent to Hubert Kennedy, Mieli writes in a post scriptum: 'My book will not be published by my free choice.'" Mieli and Prearo, "Biografia critica," 351. Hubert Kennedy wrote a brief obituary for Mieli on May 26th, 1983 that was published in the magazine *Advocate*, later collected in a little booklet of Kennedy's obits, *In Memorium: Five Gay Obituaries* (Concord: Peremptory Publications, 2003), 7. And can be found online here: <https://hubertkennedy.angelfire.com/Obits.pdf>
- 126 Mieli and Prearo, "Biografia critica," 332. This thesis is confirmed by Mieli himself who in *Il risveglio dei faraoni* writes: "Maybe papà, loving me more than his other children, wanted me to be schizophrenic in order to subject me fully to his sadism" (153). But also: "Maybe the father that I wanted to kill was someone different than this real father, who I loved so much ... " (33).
- 127 In the belief in respecting Mieli's decisions, the family eventually took the manuscript back from Einaudi in April of 1983. The novel, with some pages missing, was published posthumously in 1994 by a group of Mieli's friends (among whom was Corrado Levi, Lia Cigarini, Marc de' Pasquali and the editors of the edition, Umberto Pasti, Francesco Santini, and Catia Tommasin) with the publishing house Cooperativa Colibrì in Paderno Dugnano (a town on the periphery of Milan) which was retracted once more by the family. In 2018, a new edition has appeared based on the 1994 edition edited by Alfonso Sarrio Solidago with dR edizioni, which once again was retracted as requested by Paola Mieli.
- 128 See, in particular, *Towards a Gay Communism*, 111 and 251–252.
- 129 "Was the pessimistic Freud, therefore, correct in anticipating the victory of the death principle and the sense of guilt about the vital drive? It is up to us to blame him ... with the facts." (Mieli, "Nota introduttiva," 215. It should be noted that Freud does not actually make this prediction). "Oh how can you not love life, not want its conservation? Yes, has it perhaps been forgotten that the death drive can coexist in harmony with the pleasure principle? Do we not have eyes for animals, for plants?" (Mieli, "Amor omnia vincit" in *La gaia critica*, 257). In 1981 his appeal, "Contro l'equilibrio del terrore" (Mieli, et al. "Appello per la pace" in *La gaia critica*), co-edited with Pasti and signed by several various personalities, was published by the communist daily newspaper *L'Unita*.
- 130 Mario Mieli, "Discreta gayness," in *La gaia critica*, 232–233.

References

- Accolla, Dario and Andrea Contieri, eds. *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.
- American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5th Edition (DSM-5)*. Washington, DC: Psychiatric Publishing, 2013.

- Barilli, Gianni Rossi. *Il movimento gay in Italia*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999.
- Beachy, Robert. *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*. New York: Vintage, 2014.
- Bellini, Manuele. *Dialettica del diverso: Marxismo e antropologia in Luciano Parinetto*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2018.
- Bellini, Manuele. *Corpo e rivoluzione: Sulla filosofia di Luciano Parinetto*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2012.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "a C. da L.: Introduzione (?) di Lorenzo Bernini." In *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica*. Milan: Asterisco edizioni, 2019.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*. Translated by Julia Heim. New York: Routledge, 2017.
- Bersani, Leo. *Homos*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Biagini, Elena. *L'emersione imprevista: Il movimento delle lesbiche in Italia negli anni '70 e '80*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2018.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Cossolo, Felix, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegattae, Walter Pigino, eds. *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. Milan: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019.
- Dall'Orto, Giovanni. *Tutta un'altra storia: L'omosessualità dall'antichità al secondo dopoguerra*. Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2015.
- Del Re, Francesco Paolo. "La performance totale di Mario Mieli." In *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*. Edited by Dario Accolla and Andrea Contieri. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Deleuze, Gilles, Félix Guattari and Vittorio Marchetti. "Capitalismo e schizofrenia." In *L'altra pazzia: Mappa antologica della psichiatria alternativa*. Edited by Laura Forti. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975.
- Edelman, Lee. "Learning Nothing: *Bad Education*." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (May 2017): 124–173.
- Ellis, Henry Havelock. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II: Sexual Inversion*. London and Leipzig: The University Press, 1900.
- Feole, Eva. *Corpo a corpo con il linguaggio: Il pensiero e l'opera letteraria di Monique Wittig*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2020.
- Ferenczi, Sándor. *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*. Translated by Ernest Jones. New York: Karnac Books, 1994.
- Ferenczi, Sándor. *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-analysis*. Edited by Michael Balnit, translated by Eric Mosbacher, et al. New York: Karnac Books, 1994.
- Fornari, Franco. *Genitalità e cultura*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975.
- Foucault, Michel. *History of Madness*. Edited by Jean Khalifa, translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalifa. London: Routledge, 2006.

- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. “Historical Notes: A Letter from Freud” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 107, no. 10 (April 1951): 786–787.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman, SE 18* (1920): 145–174.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. In *SE 11* (1910): 57–138.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy. SE 10*(1909): 5–152.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In *SE 7* (1905): 123–246.
- Grassi, Samuele. *Anarchismo queer: Un'introduzione*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2013.
- Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009.
- Groddeck, Georg. *Book of the It*. New York: International Universities Press, 1976.
- Herzfeld, Marie. *Leonardo da Vinci: Denker, Forscher und Poet*. Hamburg: Severus Verlag, 2014.
- Hirschfeld, Magnus. “Die intersexuelle Konstitution.” *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 23 (1923): 3–27.
- Hirschfeld, Magnus. *Die Transvestiten, eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem causistischem und historischem Material*. Berlin: Medizinischer Verlag, 1910.
- Hocquenghem, Guy. *Homosexual Desire*. Translated by Daniella Dangoor. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Huffer, Lynne. *Are the Lips a Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- Idier, Antoinne. *Les Vies de Guy Hocquenghem*. Paris: Fayard, 2017.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jones, Ernst. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud. Volume 3: The Last Phase, 1919–1939*. New York: Basic Books, 1957.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. “The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious.” In *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. New York: Routledge, 1966.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. *Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido. A Contribution to the History of the Evolution of Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Kennedy, Hubert. *In Memorium: Five Gay Obituaries*. Concord: Peremptory Publications, 2003: <https://hubertkennedy.angelfire.com/Obits.pdf>
- Levi, Corrado. “L’inizio del movimento omosessuale in Italia e a Milano.” In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. Edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegata and Walter Pigino. Milan: Il dito e la luna, 2019.
- Levi, Corrado. *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica*. Milan: Asterisco edizioni, 2019.
- Levi, Corrado. “Che bello scrivere di Mario Mieli.” In *Mario Mieli: trent’anni dopo*. Edited by Dario Accolla and Andrea Contieri. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.

- Levi, Corrado. "Il lavoro di presa di coscienza: Problematiche e contribute del lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo fuori! di Milano" *FUORI!* no. 12 (1974).
- Levi, Corrado. "Storia palpitante e violenta." *FUORI!* no. 8 (1973).
- Lonzi, Carla. *Sputiamo sul Hegel: La donna clitoridea e la donna vaginale e altri scritti*. Milan: Scritti di rivolta femminile, 1974.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.
- Marshall, Bill. *Guy Hocquenghem: Beyond Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *Collected Works, vol. 43 – Marx and Engels Letters April 1868–July 1870*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975.
- Mieli, Mario. *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni sessanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*. Edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venice: Marsilio Press, 2019.
- Mieli, Mario. *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*. Translated by David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams. London: Pluto Press, 2018.
- Mieli, Mario. *Il risveglio dei faraoni*. Paderno Dugnano: Cooperativa Colibrì, 1994.
- Mieli, Paola and Massimo Prearo. "Mario Mieli: un archivio del presente." In *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni sessanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*. Edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venice: Marsilio Press, 2019.
- Milanese Homosexual Collectives. *La traviata norma, ovvero: vaffanculo ... ebbene sì!*. Milano: Asterisco Edizioni, 2020.
- Mitchell, Larry. *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*. New York: Nightboat Books, 2019.
- Parinetto, Luciano. *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: morte diavolo analità*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2015.
- Parinetto, Luciano. *Marx diversoperverso*. Milano: Unicopli, 1997.
- Pellegata, Fabio. "Dal F.U.O.R.I. ai COM: dalla rivoluzione alla percezione del valore di sé." In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. Edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegata and Walter Pigo. Milan: Il dito e la luna, 2019.
- Pezzana, Angelo. *Un omosessuale normale: Diario di una ricerca d'identità attraverso il ricordo, la storia, il costume, le vite*. Viterbo: Stampa alternativa, 2011.
- Pezzana, Angelo. *Dentro e fuori: Un'autobiografia omosessuale*. Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1996.
- Pini, Andrea. *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta*. Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2011.
- Prearo, Massimo. *La fabbrica del orgoglio: Una genealogia dei movimenti LGBT*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Prearo, Massimo. "Le radici rimosse della queer theory: una genealogia da ricostruire." *Genesis* 1–2 (2012): 95–114.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press, 2013.
- Schettini, Laura. "Mieli, Mario." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani. Treccani* (2015): [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-mieli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-mieli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).
- Stone, Sandy. "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto." In *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*. Edited by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub. New York: Routledge, 1991.

- Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008.
- Stryker, Susan, and Petra Dierkes-Thrun. "Transgender Studies Today: An Interview with Susan Stryker," *the b2o review*, August 20, 2014, <https://www.boundary2.org/2014/08/transgender-studies-today-an-interview-with-susan-stryker/>
- Teal, Don. *The Gay Militants*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971.
- Truscott IV, Lucian. "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square." *The Village Voice*, July 3, 1969: 18.
- Verdiglione, Armando, ed. *Psicanalisi e politica*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1973.
- Voisset-Veysseyre, Cécile. *Guy Hocquenghem: La revolte (1946–1988)*. Paris: Édition du Sextant, 2015.
- Wittig, Monique. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- World Health Organization. *International Classification of Diseases. 11th Revision (ICD-11)*. World Health Organization (WHO), 2019/2021: <https://icd.who.int/en>
- Zappino, Federico. *Comunismo queer: Note per una sovversione dell'eterosessualità*. Milan: Metelmi, 2019.
- Zundel, Matthew. "Mario Mieli: Queer Dynamite." *AG—About Gender: International Journal of Gender Studies* 9, no. 17 (2020): 285–307.
- Zundel, Matthew. "Mario Mieli, ovvero il maestro masochista: Performative Elements of a Perverse Militancy," *gender/sexuality/italy* 6 (August 2019): 28–50.

6 The Sexual/Political

“Poppers” are passing around: you sniff—dazed—the smell of capital fills the nostrils, the music of capital fills the ears, a cock in your mouth, another in your ass, a charitable soul gives you a blowjob. Some dance with their asses out of their pants, some are partly naked, some dressed as Indians, others as cowboys. No saloon pussy in sight. The cocks that I suck all have the same flavor. I don’t know who is fucking me, if he is young or old, handsome or ugly: I look ahead, I have thighs and peckers under my nose. I animate the weary scene. I despise almost all of them. Each one offers their goods according to the competitive laws of the market. Almost no one looks you in the eye. Furtive glances, lots of guilt. It is striking how, throughout this virile performance, the cocks are duds. There are also few who, like me, give their ass away with no problems. Oh many a “tiny dot”—noble fucks worthy of me, Lady Godiva de Sade Kundalini!¹ What is this inactivity? No one talks! No one communicates! No one laughs! I am full of these people’s balls: I feel so inferior! It is dreadful they would have the same “rights” as me in this shit world! Oh lousy democracy! Poor idiotic fools on whom the Third World War will erupt. The damned who accept their ghetto without even knowing how to have fun in it. They have not even heard of the metaphysics of sex. And to think that if they can be exploited like this, in ghettos like these, they owe it to the courage of those of us who were the first to act to bring homosexuality out into the open. These idiots have allowed capital to make homosexuality a fad. Fools they are, like all the cultured gays like Arbasino and de Pisis or guilty fairies like Pasolini, all miserable shits. Our courage is a thousand times more superior to them: it is foremost the courage to think freely. They have not understood what a genuine liberation of Eros would mean and they accept the repressive desublimation imposed by the system so as not to look deeply and seriously into themselves and their lives. Cowards; like almost everyone else they deserve the impending catastrophe, the nuclear war.

Mario Mieli, “The Festival of Impotence: An Evening at One Way”

6.1 Foucault without Organs

Published in 1976, a year before *Towards a Gay Communism*,² *The Will to Knowledge*³ opened new horizons of research and reflection and for quite

some time ostracized Freud-Marxism, and Marxism in general, to the margins of academic political-philosophical studies on sexuality. To remain for a moment in the vibrant language with which we have become accustomed in the previous chapter, we could say that Mieli's entire "Freudo-Marxist shit" was soon swept away by Foucault's "constructivist bullshit." Bersani invited the French philosopher, who was forty-nine years old at the time, as a visiting professor at the University of California Berkeley in 1975, when few were familiar with his thought in the United States. In his lectures, Foucault discussed themes from the book that would soon be published; in his free time, he explored the flourishing gay community in California, getting into sadomasochism and the leather scene there—in the same commercial subculture that quickly spread throughout Europe, even in France and Italy, which the young Mieli would despise so much, calling it a "ghetto."⁴ It was on this occasion, moreover, in Death Valley in the company of Simeon Wade and one of his friends, the musician Michael Stoneman, that Foucault took LSD. The rumors regarding the event abound, but all versions of the story agree: it was a good trip, of which Foucault always held fond memories.⁵ Five years later, at the same university on the occasion of his own conference, the police had to intervene in order to break up the massive crowd that had come to listen to him as they were trying to enter. Foucault had become a star of world philosophy. The interest in his research continued to grow on campuses in the United States, even after his death—which occurred in 1984 due to complications related to AIDS. Ever since February 1990, when Teresa de Lauretis coined the term "queer theory"⁶ in a famous talk at the "Gay and Lesbian Studies" conference at the University of California Santa Cruz, Foucault is recognized as one of the foundational thinkers of this "new" field of knowledge. This is also why Bersani is thinking of Foucault, as well as Butler, when in 1996 he wrote in *Homos* that "queerness would seem to be, in large part, an emphasis on the inextricability of the sexual and the political," and that, however, "its theorists often understand the connection in a peculiarly nonsexual way."⁷ As we have said, Foucault's critique of the use of psychoanalysis in Freud-Marxism and the "strangely restrictive"⁸ idea that it has of power, can be held responsible for having perpetuated the foreclosure of the sexual drive from political theory carried out by Reich and Marcuse, as well as having contributed to the erasure of the roots of queer theories in 1970s gay liberation movements (Foucault never reads Mieli, but his reflections certainly are indebted to Guy Hocquenghem⁹ and the FHAR,¹⁰ neither of which Foucault ever really mentions).

At the same time, we cannot but recognize the merit in how Foucault faithfully does justice to Freud,¹¹ which he demonstrates with his argument regarding psychoanalysis's structural "theoretical and practical opposition to fascism"¹² in *The Will to Knowledge*. Bersani, however, does not seem to have completely done justice to Foucault: like Freud, as with all great thinkers, even the French philosopher is a complex, multifaceted, author

whose theoretical ambivalence (which here I do not consider to be a defect) is necessary to know how to grasp. Indeed, *a whole other history* could be told on his account.¹³ At the beginning of the second chapter, I outlined how his is not an “absolute” refusal of psychoanalysis. It is now a question of accounting for how his politicization of sexuality does not actually create a foreclosure without appealing to the sexual: even in Foucault’s work, like in Freud, the drive returns. If it is the footnotes that make the expression of Freud’s unconscious possible in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, then here it is not so much the unconscious of Foucault the author,¹⁴ as much as it is the unconscious of his theorizations on sexuality, which emerges mostly in his interviews after 1975, a period in which his acquaintance with the exciting leather ambiance of the West Coast became more assiduous. However, we must also make some clarifications in relation to the few interviews that Foucault released on the question of homosexuality.

For example, Foucault speaks of sexual practices, and not only the apparatus of sexuality, in the already-cited 1982 interview posthumously published in the gay magazine *The Advocate* in 1984. Here, referring to the ethnographic studies of Gayle Rubin,¹⁵ as well as his own personal experience, he interprets the sadomasochism of lesbian and gay subcultures in the United States in terms of an exercise of reinvention of the community, as ethical “counter-conduct,”¹⁶ a form of resistance to power that acts on homosexual identities in modern society. Far from liberating the universal truth of sexual desire from the action of repressive power, sadomasochistic practices would be proof of the creative use that every human being can make of their own body and of themselves in the search for “artificial”—neither true nor false—pleasures:

For instance, look at the S&M subculture, as our good friend Gayle Rubin would insist. I don’t think that this movement of sexual practices has anything to do with the disclosure or the uncovering of S&M tendencies deep within our unconscious, and so on. The idea that S&M is related to a deep violence, that S&M practice is a way of liberating this violence, this aggression, is stupid. We know very well what all those people are doing is not aggressive; they are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body—through the eroticization of the body. I think it’s a kind of creation, a creative enterprise, which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualization of pleasure. The idea that bodily pleasure should always come from sexual pleasure as the root of *all* our possible pleasure—I think *that’s* something quite wrong. These practices are insisting that we can produce pleasure with very odd things, very strange parts of our bodies, in very unusual situations, and so on.¹⁷

Translating these words into Freud’s vocabulary, one could say that for Foucault sadomasochistic practices constitute an opportunity, not to rediscover unconscious tendencies hidden within the depths of the subject

(where might that be?), but the sexual potentialities of the entire bodily surface, the multiplicity of the erogenous zones that are lodged throughout the body (and of the anus in particular, if goes without saying, and which in fact the demure philosopher does not say). When Foucault speaks of “sexual pleasure” and the “desexualization of pleasure,” he in fact probably means “genital pleasure” and the “degenitalization of pleasure”: the attire of leather, handcuffs, chains, dildos, and sadomasochistic games are therefore an opportunity for him to rediscover infantile sexuality (polymorphous, as Mieli would say, but not Freud), to redeem it from the coital primacy of adult genital sexuality. In *Homos*,¹⁸ Bersani *rightly* also accuses this interview of an excess of hedonism, and even makes it into a paradigmatic example of what already in “Is the Rectum a Grave?” (1987) he calls Foucault’s “salvational project”: a project where the subject that experiences the sexual is always one who resists power with the aim of seeking greater pleasure, and therefore aims to “preserve us from a nightmare of ontological obscenity, from the prospect of a breakdown of the human itself in sexual intensities, from a kind of selfless communication with ‘lower’ orders of being.”¹⁹ It seems to me that Deleuze has the same view. In a letter to Foucault from 1977—though in his lexicon, which is still different—he makes fun of the possibility of considering himself a masochist and Foucault a sadist²⁰ and then disputes Foucault’s insistence on pleasure rather than desire (on *his* concept of desire) with these words:

What interests me in Masoch²¹ are not the pains but the idea that pleasure interrupts the positivity of desire and the constitution of its field of immanence ([...] or a body without organs in which desire lacks nothing and refrains as long as possible from the pleasures that would interrupt its processes). Pleasure seems to me to be the only means for a person or a subject to “find itself again” in a process that surpasses it. It is a reterritorialization.²²

In short, Foucault “forgets” (a Freudian slip) that the possibility of the exposure to pain is implicated in sex in general and in sadomasochism in particular (Deleuze does not forget, but “is not interested in it”: the matter is even more Freudian), and moreover he forgets the possibility of that surrender to the other which involves humiliation, mortification, and the suspension of the self—the excitation and *jouissance* of a condition that goes far beyond the pleasure principle. Thus, it would seem like the same story that we have been telling up until now: where Foucault forecloses the sexual. Where is the other story that I have introduced? Where would Foucault’s (theory’s) unconscious be holed up? Certainly not in that other passage where the French philosopher recounts his American experiences, taken from an interview from four years earlier, which I include below. There the sexual subject is first of all described as a subject committed to challenging identity categories, to redefine their own identity—exactly like Butler’s drag queens,

and, if you think about it, also Mieli's "transvestite," but in a way that challenges the demonization of every form of virility that one finds in Mieli (but not in Butler, who also for evident personal reasons is sensitive to the expression of masculinity by butch lesbians²³):

At the moment what seems to be happening in the United States could appear to be a kind of reflux movement, as if they were falling back onto a monosexual machismo, where men flaunt all the signs of masculinity in order to keep to themselves. As if they had again lowered an iron curtain between men and women. Unshaven homosexuals with mustaches have become the eroticized morphological type of the homosexual today. He has to be at least thirty-five years old, built like a baseball player, with an enormous mustache and whiskers everywhere. To this, you add the motorcycle cap, the leather pants, the jacket, the chains, and so on. But in the end, when you look up at this a little more closely, what strikes me is that all these get-ups, all these brazen displays of masculinity, absolutely do not coincide with the revaluation of the male as male. For, on the contrary, out of sight and under cover of this brazen masculinity, what emerges are the types of masochistic sexual relations or masochistic assertiveness in which there is no valorization of the male as male. Absolutely none. On the contrary, these uses of the body could be defined as desexualized, as devirilized, like fist fucking or other extraordinary fabrications of pleasures, which Americans reach with the help of certain drugs or instruments.²⁴

Even the use of drugs²⁵ (perhaps the poppers Mieli talks about, which in addition to getting high, relaxes the muscle tissues of the anus), and even fist fucking (the anal penetration from the entire hand and forearm), here become technologies of the self, and the gay sex clubs assume the function of a spa of subjectivity from which identity comes out regenerated. However, to get to the point, in this same interview, Foucault says more in a passage that reverberates with echoes of the Artaudian figure of the "body without organs" (i.e., disordered and lacking organization),²⁶ celebrated by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* before Deleuze's letter to Foucault cited above:

I'm saying that it's important for there to be places like baths where, without being imprisoned or pinned in your own identity, in your legal status, your past, your name, your face, and so on, you can meet the people who are there, and who are for you—as you are for them—nothing more than bodies, with whom the most unexpected combinations and fabrications of pleasure are possible. [...] The intensities of pleasure are indeed linked to the fact that you desubjugate yourself, that you cease being a subject, an identity. [...] Not only because you leave your ID card in the changing room but because the multiplicity of possible things, of possible encounters, of possible pilings-up, of possible connections, means that, in effect, you cannot *not* fail to be identical to yourself.²⁷

The theme of identity returns here, but this time descended toward a loss, and not mastery, of the self. The gay baths, among the most widespread private clubs geared toward anonymous sexual encounters between men, in this way become a symbol of the dimension of sexuality that Foucault insists on calling “pleasure,” but which clearly corresponds to what we have so far been calling “the sexual.” In other words, the sexual practice in the baths corresponds to the sexual drive/death drive that sucks the subject into a vortex of jouissance, reducing them to the obscene real of the body that ceases to belong to the subject: they are no longer an individual body, but a transindividual body. The revolutionary, wild, homo/pansexual struggle of Hocquenghem and Mieli ideally aims to make this condition permanent, to actualize the utopia of an excitation without end that, as even Marcuse understood well, equals the “killer of civilized egos.”²⁸ More realistically, Foucault—like Freud, Laplanche, Bersani, and Edelman—recognize within the sexual, even when it is used for profit as happens in the gay sex industry, a blackout destined to recur with the force of the repetition compulsion (but not destined to last forever) that disturbs the constitution of the self, and therefore its inscription as an individual, into civilization.

And so the critiques that Foucault turns toward Freud-Maxism in *The Will to Knowledge* can (and must) also be read as taking distance from the simplifying use of psychoanalysis carried out by Reich and Marcuse, which had provided an overly reassuring understanding of the relation that exists between sexuality and power. His critiques also take distance from Reich’s and Marcuse’s promise of a definitive liberation of the human from the negativity that constitutes it, of a complete subsumption of the human into the social order (into humanity, Butler would say). For Foucault, this promise cannot be maintained because a residue of the inhuman exists in the human: that of being a mere body among other bodies to which the sexual is a gateway. He demonstrates this in *The Order of Things* where—again—he credits psychoanalysis with having explored that “region where death prowls, where thought is extinguished,”²⁹ and even before he demonstrates this in *The History of Madness*, his doctoral thesis, when he *rightly* recognizes the ambiguous role played by Freud in that historical process that had led the Medieval and Renaissance experience of madness to its reduction into a mental illness in modernity.

According to Foucault’s historical reconstruction, until the 16th century in Europe “unreason” was considered tangible evidence of the chaos that threatened every religious, moral, and social order from the inside: it was proof of the existence of Satan’s rule, an anticipation of the apocalypse. For this reason, the insane were not imprisoned in asylums, but were left free to move around: excluded from human connection, they wandered from village to village making a show of themselves. In subsequent centuries, in response to the necessity of rationalization in emerging capitalist society (early Foucault unlike the late Foucault is strongly saturated with Marxism), nascent psychiatry (a twin sister to capitalist society) attempted to dominate

this tragic version of madness by reducing it to silence. However, this endeavor has never quite succeeded. For Foucault, there were examples of figures throughout the fully modern period who continued to be a proof of that other unbridled and uncivilized dimension of the human, which had already been visually depicted by Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel, and include examples like the paintings of Francisco Goya and Vincent Van Gogh, the lyrics of Friedrich Hölderlin, the novels of the Marquis de Sade and Gérard de Nerval, Nietzsche's philosophy, and Artaud's theatre—not to mention Freudian psychoanalysis. On the one hand, by theorizing that the determining factor for treating mental illness is the relation between the doctor and patient Freud made it explicit that the function of the modern specialist on madness—the psychoanalyst or the psychiatrist—belongs to the order of moral authority more so than the order of scientific aptitude. On the other hand, Freud gave a fresh voice to madness after positivist psychiatry had attempted to take that voice away. He let the insane speak, opening up the possibility to critically understand the arbitrariness of our social order, our civilization, and the knowledges that such an order produces. How this reflects the later development of Foucault's research in the *Will to Knowledge*, and in particular with the analysis of how the biopolitical governance of sexuality is actualized through the concretization of sexual identities, is made clear by the fact that the homosexual in *The History of Madness*, together with other typologies of maniacs and perverts, appears as the central figure of the modern domestication of unreason.³⁰

In a certain sense, in one of the stories that can be built from it, one could actually argue that Foucault's entire research project is a continuation of Freud's interpretation in his first major work: to explore the liminal or interstitial experiences that put into crisis the idea that the modern subject has made of themselves and their civilization, and to make the subject the privileged locus for denouncing the arbitrariness of the structures of power to which this subject has historically given themselves and by which this subject is presently constituted.³¹ In *The Order of Things*, Foucault coins the term "heterotopias"³² for these sorts of spaces, which clearly follows from "utopias," though depriving it of any salvational or redemptive connotation. In a text from the 1967 conference, "De espaces autres" (Of Other Spaces), the publication of which he not did authorize until 1984, when he was now sick, he advocates for the invention of a new theoretical practice, "heterotopology," toward "the study, analysis, description, and 'reading' [...] of these different spaces."³³ In his definition heterotopias, unlike utopias, are "sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society."³⁴ Some examples are institutions that occupy a central role in studying power³⁵: "boarding schools," "military service," "psychiatric hospitals," "prisons," "barracks." Others are places of leisure, dedicated to pleasure and sex: "fairgrounds," "vacation villages,"³⁶ "American motel rooms," "hamman of the Moslems," "Scandinavian saunas," and "brothels." It is difficult to imagine that in 1984, when he sent this text to

press, that he was not also thinking about private clubs and gay bathhouses, places where he, above all, experimented with the heterotopia of his self, and in which he probably contracted the HIV. It is also difficult to imagine that, in publishing this text over many years, he would not have wanted to suggest research directions to those who would come after him, perhaps now aware that he would not have time to explore them himself (a large portion of the paper is also dedicated to the heterotopia of the cemetery, “the other city where each family possesses its dark resting place”).³⁷

In fact, it would be interesting to open up an historical, anthropological, and genealogical reflection here on the places where sex occurs between men—from the clandestine cruising zones (urinals, beaches, parks and parking lots, red-light cinemas, etc.), to business premises, to apps to chat and hook up—starting from the observation that the location that these heterotopias occupy in contemporary society are not the same in the time of Mieli and Foucault. Much has happened since then in the United States and Europe, and in many countries around the world, not only in the matter of dating and sexting, but also in LGBTQIA+ rights and sexual health (after the AIDS crisis, the introduction of the High Active Antiretroviral Therapy in the mid-1990s and of the Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis in the early 2010s). It would be an interesting reflection, but the itinerary we have followed thus far would lead us elsewhere.³⁸ I will return to the baths in my concluding epilogue to reflect on a recent scandal that seems helpful to understand the situation of homosexuality in Italy’s present. But first I want to try to undo the theoretical knot that the tortuous path of this work has tightened up until now. After having noted in the first part of the book Freud’s “discovery” of the sexual drive (or simply of the sexual, according to Laplanche’s vocabulary) in the *Three Essays* and his immediate neurotic attempt to remove it, I then argued in the fourth chapter that the so-called anti-social theories may be read as the traumatic return of the foreclosed sexual drive that threatens the political operation of queer theories from the outside. In the last chapter and in this section of this chapter, I then needed to, partly, take a few steps back: I’ve revealed the possibility of another history, where before the “antisocial turn,” the sexual has been returned to queer theory from within it, in both the Freud-Marxist tradition (with Hocquenghem, Parinetto, and Mieli) and in Foucault’s thought. In partial disagreement with Bersani and Edelman, I would now like to argue that it is possible to relocate the sexual at the center of queer theory without necessarily dismissing the constructivist paradigm introduced by Foucault’s thesis regarding the invention of modern sexual identities which Butler then consolidated into their theory of gender performativity. Far from wanting to take part in an imaginary intellectual conflict which would pit antisociality against relationality and recognition, and the drive’s apolitical jouissance against gender’s political subversion, what I would like to suggest is more generally the possibility of developing a theory (“neurotic” as I called it in chapter four) that takes the body without organs of the drive into account as much as the organization that is necessary

for the subject to politically subvert social norms, or mediate with them. To this end, I will turn my gaze to a past that I have left unexplored until now, and at the same time to another of the heterotopias that Foucault names in his 1967 essay but with which he does not explicitly concern himself in his research: the colony, the heart of darkness of modern western civilization just as much as it is for totalitarianism.³⁹

6.2 Bastardized Space

We have said that in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997),⁴⁰ Butler develops a theory of the subject that “takes into account the double working of social power and psychic reality [...] in the intersection of Foucault and Freud.”⁴¹ But we have also said that her attempt to do so, mostly aimed at exploring the affective attachments that make the subject an accomplice to the gender norms to which they are subjected, does not account for that intermittent suspension of psychic life that is the sexual drive. Instead, not without a polemical tint toward what she considers to be an excess of “volunteerism” in Butler’s reflections, it is de Lauretis who accounts for the drive. She first makes it clear in *Freud’s Drive*⁴² (2010) that when Foucault takes distance from the use of psychoanalysis in political theory it in no way speaks to Freud’s understanding of the sexual, which the French philosopher probably did not have in mind. The French academic context in the 1960s and 1970s was in fact characterized by a “return to Freud” in opposition to the “ego psychology” popular in the United States and its insistence on consciousness. However, the form of this return was mostly what Lacan theorized, who privileged the concept of the unconscious over that of the drive.⁴³ In following, like Bersani, the interpretation of psychoanalysis developed by Laplanche by returning, not to Freud but onto him,⁴⁴ de Lauretis thus argues that “drive” does not properly describe a concept but a “conceptual figure,”⁴⁵ positioned in the same indefinite and hybrid dimension that it designates, in a transindividual space (as we have said), between the somatic and the psychic,⁴⁶ which de Lauretis does not hesitate to call, in a Foucauldian manner, a heterotopia:

As stimuli pass from the interior of the body to the mind, they traverse a non-homogenous space in which they are first transformed into their delegate, something that is no longer bodily stimuli but something else, something that Freud names drive; the drive, then, links itself to a mental image, an idea, an affect or an emotion, which acts as its delegate to consciousness. In other words, the drive exists in a space between corporeal stimuli and mental representation, a space or “psychical locality” that is not just non-homogenous but more precisely heterotopic: it is the space of a transit, a displacement, passage and transformation—not a referential but a figural space.⁴⁷

According to de Lauretis, it is precisely this heterotopic space that makes the encounter between Freud's sexual theory and Foucault's analytic of sexuality possible. Far from being "antithetical or incommensurable,"⁴⁸ they can be integrated into a point of view that recognizes the historical/cultural character of the actual classificatory system of sexual identities and at the same time would not eradicate the drive and its "stubborn"⁴⁹ resistance to being domesticated both by collective political programs and personal life projects of the civilized ego. Indeed, de Lauretis *rightly* reminds us that with the concepts of discipline and biopolitics Foucault has in no way intended to de-materialize the body by making it into a by-product of power or a mere discursive effect. For him (and for Butler too), the question is posed otherwise: the materiality of the body is organized in a consciousness that is capable of living in society only by "mingling" with cultural significations that are vectors of power, of which sexual identities are a paradigmatic example. In the end, the sexual apparatus described by Foucault acts precisely in that bastardized space between the biological and the social, between the corporeal and the symbolic, in which the sexual drive described by Freud erupts. The consciousness of the singular subject does not have sovereignty over this space: the two authors (the philosopher and the psychoanalyst) agree on this insofar as they both challenge the rational subject's mastery over the self passed down by the Cartesian philosophical tradition (and also, Bersani would add, of the subject of the liberal political tradition).⁵⁰ We could say, then, that the sexual drive is a heterotopia of subjectivity.

As we have seen, for Bersani the sexual, "a tautology for masochism,"⁵¹ is an "evolutionary conquest"⁵² of the human, deriving from lasting parental care which is necessary for the human to become an adult. It is the original exposure to care, but also to power and eventually to the violence of the other that perversely excites the erogenous body of the child before it is capable of sexual discharge, installing onto them what Freud calls "sexual drives." It seems to me that de Lauretis suggests that this same exposure constitutes the condition of possibility so that the biopolitical apparatus that Foucault calls "sexuality" can discipline the identity of the subject according to historically determined criteria of normalization which guide the action of educational figures. One could therefore say that the sexual drive represents the obscene double of both familial care and of the biopolitical taking charge of the body of the singular subject. Far from repressing original polymorphism as Mieli would like, in this way "educastration" reveals itself to be perversely excitational. Foucault argues this point with his own terminology in *The Will to Knowledge*:

The power which [...] took charge of sexuality set about contacting bodies, caressing them with its eyes, intensifying areas, electrifying surfaces, dramatizing troubled moments. It wrapped the sexual body in its embrace. There was undoubtedly an increase in effectiveness and an

extension of the domain controlled; but also a sensualization of power and a gain of pleasure.⁵³

And further:

Pleasure and power do not cancel or turn back against one another; they seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitation and incitement.⁵⁴

As we have noted, in Butler—with all due respect to Lacan (and to Edelman)—the symbolic order that makes the singular subject's access to the social possible is contingent and not natural, and therefore subject to change by the very subjects that such an order makes into subjects in the first place. In theorizing and practicing subversion, one should not however forget that, beyond affective factors, libidinal investments and the interferences of the drive are also implicated in the processes of subjection as well as in that of subjectification. In different ways, both contiguous and counterposed, Marcuse and Mieli demonstrate just how illusory and doomed to failure it is to imagine the full subsumption of the sexual into the social. It does not make sense to ask for the political recognition of one's sexual drives. However, an understanding of the political should not disregard an awareness of the presence of sexual *jouissance* at the limits of the social, like what is repressed and continues to return to trouble the subject's access to the order of civilization. Bersani and Edelman, and Freud before them, and Hobbes and Kant before him, have correctly identified an antisocial dimension of the human in the sexual. However, insofar as it is antisocial, the sexual (*sex as sex*), is deeply entangled in the social; insofar as it is unpolitical, the sexual is eminently political (biopolitical and psychopolitical). The sexual, we could conclude, *is* and *is not*, at the same time, a political factor⁵⁵: it is one of the causes of civilization's discontents, which, despite all the efforts that can be made in the attempt to repress it, is repeatedly destined to disturb civilization. First of all, the sexual interferes with the production of subjects, abject subjects as we have said in the "Prologue," who are made representatives of such abjection, whose struggle for recognition necessarily leads also to misrecognition, whose efforts to be included in the human community necessarily leads also to their exclusion from the human community. This does not imply that the subject is irredeemably split between sex and politics: the foreclosure of the drive is, rather, the result of liberal philosophical rationality's attempt to domesticate humans by isolating them from relations with others, from the transindividual substrate on which they depend for both their survival and for their enjoyment. In the enthusiasm of his twenties, despite his psychic suffering (or maybe, who knows, as he says by virtue of such suffering), while remaining anchored in the perspective of Freudo-Marxism, and having learned from the practices of feminism, Mieli had understood well that a political

reflection that would like to account for the sexual must also be an exercise in consciousness-raising. He therefore engages in a mode of thinking that begins not from an abstract theory of the subject, but from the material understanding of the conditions in which this subject, the research subject, finds themselves.

In a famous lecture from 1983, Foucault outlines his critical method, finding antecedents in the Socratic notion of *parrhesia* and the Kantian *Aufklärung*, with the paradoxical expression “ontology of the present” which in his view is synonymous with an “ontology of ourselves”: to interrogate what we have become over the course of the history of the West in order to open up the possibility of change.⁵⁶ However, nowhere, not even in the few interviews where he speaks of his being gay, does the great philosopher theorize the importance of accounting for the libidinal investments that currently envelops the being of minorities (sexual and non-sexual alike). Here he probably considers such a theoretical move to be one of the political uses of psychoanalysis which he is against. It is precisely in this regard that de Lauretis praises Mieli in her essay, “La gaia scienza, ovvero la traviata Norma” (The Gay Science, or the Wayward Norm), which she wrote for the second Italian edition of *Towards a Gay Communism* in 2002. She does this while regretting the fact that Mieli did not read Foucault and Laplanche, while praising constructivism’s overcoming of the Freud-Marxist perspective,⁵⁷ and while comparing Mieli’s “superb and impossible thesis”⁵⁸ on male homosexuality not only to Monique Wittig’s reflections on lesbianism but also to Frantz Fanon’s reflections on the subjectivity of black men:

My first thought after having read Mario’s book was: oh how I wish he could have written this thesis in my department, how I wish I had been the supervisor of this superb and impossible dissertation. Superb for the vastness of its research, for the lucidity of its critical analyses, and the theoretical and political passion which animates it. Impossible, and fascinating, for the incompatibility of its theoretical premises and the contradictions of a thought that strays from the margins of the discourse in which and against which the same discourse is formed and debated. In this regard, he is not unlike Freud, but is even closer to the Fanon of *Black Skin, White Masks*, or Monique Wittig in *The Straight Mind*, texts where the psychic experience of a body or of a desire that does not conform to the socially prescribed norm seeks a language to express themselves, excavates the whole of knowledge to understand themselves, forges new words to name themselves.⁵⁹

Black Skin, White Masks also plays a central role in *Freud’s Drive*, where de Lauretis, taking up what she had already written in her article “Difference Embodied,”⁶⁰ makes Fanon’s phenomenology of the experience of racialized subjects into an example of how biopolitics traumatically operates within the transindividual heterotopic region that lies between the body, the psyche,

and society with the effect of instituting discontinuities and hierarchies in humanity. In other words, of how biopolitics is also psychopolitics, and of how racism is an apparatus on par with sexism. To conclude, I will turn our attention to this fundamental decolonial work, while believing that almost seventy years after its publication, *Black Skin, White Masks* continues to be an essential contribution for those who wish to attempt an exercise in the ontology of the present at the height of the serious political challenges of the present, which are also sexual challenges in the way that I have meant the term “sexual” throughout this work.

6.3 Caliban’s Phallus

*The Wretched of the Earth*⁶¹ came out in 1961, the same year as the premature death of Fanon from Leukemia. It was written in the years of the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962), in which he participates as a leading intellectual of the Algerian National Liberation Front, as a collaborator of the of *El Moudjahid* newspaper,⁶² and as ambassador of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic in Ghana. Destined to have great success with the contestational youth movements in Europe and the United States beginning in 1968, also receiving heavy criticism because of its success,⁶³ the book proposes revolutionary armed struggle and an alliance of the liberated “third world” against all forms of imperialism in response to the violence of colonialism. Nine years earlier, in 1952, *Black Skin, White Masks*⁶⁴ was published, which instead confronts the problem of racism from the point of view of psychic alienation of the victim of racism and proposes work of the self on the self as an instrument of disalienation, which has much in common with the consciousness-raising practice theorized by Mieli. Fanon was also twenty-five years old when he wrote *Black Skin, White Masks* as his thesis in psychiatry,⁶⁵ indeed in the essay he discusses a considerable bibliography of psychiatric and psychoanalytic sources (including Karl Jaspers,⁶⁶ Alfred Adler,⁶⁷ Angelo Hesnard,⁶⁸ Marie Bonaparte,⁶⁹ Helen Deutsch,⁷⁰ and Anna Freud⁷¹—the very same “little Anna” we discussed earlier—not to mention Freud, Jung, and Lacan), together with philosophical sources (G.W. Friedrich Hegel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre⁷²), literary (Mayotte Capécia,⁷³ René Maran,⁷⁴ Abdoulaye Sadjji⁷⁵), poetic (Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, David Diop), ethnographic (especially Octave Mannoni⁷⁶), the negritude tradition of thought (Césaire,⁷⁷ once more) and materials taken from popular culture (comics, film, advertisements). However, his merit and originality do derive not only from the great quantity and variety of literature he examines but also and especially from his research methodology: the fact that his methodology is filtered through the personal experience of the young author and the consequent problematization of his access to the position of authorship in Francophone academic culture.⁷⁸ Born in 1925 in Fort-de-France, the capital of the French colony in Martinique, Fanon comes from a bourgeois family descending

from black slaves, Tamil servants, and white colonizers. He was a student of Césaire's in high school. And in 1943, when a military dictatorship allied with the Vichy government was established, Fanon went to France to join the resistance. Having received an award for military valor for this action, he returned to Martinique at the end of the war to finish school, and thanks to a scholarship he was able to move to France again to attend university in Lyon. He is thus thinking first of himself when in the book he describes the painful and traumatic disappointment of a young black adult, relatively well-off and educated from the Antilles who reaches the motherland with the hope of finding his place in the world there.

In a famous article from 1897, "Striving of the Negro People,"⁷⁹ re-edited as "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in the first chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903 when the Jim Crow laws were in effect in the United States, William Edward Burghardt Du Bois effectively described the "double-consciousness" of the African-American, who was forced to measure their sense of self "by the tape of a [white] world that looks on in amused contempt and pity," and therefore is perennially split between the identity of "American" and of "Negro"⁸⁰: "two souls," Du Bois explains, "two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."⁸¹ Similarly, after more than a half century, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon recounts the inane effort of the Black Antillean to be recognized as French, and therefore as white. The frame is a colonial imaginary in which whiteness is the feature of belonging not only to civilization but also to full humanity, and it is the overseas French colonies, especially African and in particular Senegal, that are considered to be properly black, and therefore uncivilized, in the last instance inhuman. For the young psychiatrist, it is precisely this false identification of the black Antillean with the white French person that constitutes alienation:

The black schoolboy in the Antilles, who in his lessons is forever talking about "our ancestors, the Gauls," identifies himself with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white man who carries truth to savages—an all-white truth. There is identification—that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white man's attitude. [...] The Antillean does not think of himself as a black man; he thinks of himself as an Antillean. The Negro lives in Africa. Subjectively, intellectually, the Antillean conducts himself like a white man. But he is a Negro. That he will learn once he goes to Europe; and when he hears Negroes mentioned he will recognize that the word includes himself as well as the Senegalese.⁸²

What Fanon writes about the film *Tarzan*, for example, is significant: screened in the Antilles, it fixes the identification of the young black Antillean spectator with the white protagonist, "against the Negroes." Yet, the same spectator that returns to watch the film in a European cinema instead experiences the discomfort of being "automatically" associated by

the entire audience “with the savages on screen.” The same could happen on the occasion of screening ethnographic documentaries on Africa: in Fort-de-France, Fanon writes, “the Bushmen and Zulus arouse [...] laughter among the young Antilleans,” while “in France a Negro who sees this documentary is virtually petrified,” where “he has no more hope of flight” from having to find out that “he is at once Antillean, Bushan, and Zulu.”⁸³ “Race,” the “color line” as Du Bois would say,⁸⁴ is not therefore fixed once and for all by the gradation of cutaneous pigmentation, but undergoes changes and displacements also determined by non-sensory data like class, the level of culture, geographic context, and the hierarchy among the colonial territories of a nation (and sex, and gender, and sexual orientation: but these factors, as we will see, are put to a different use in *Black Skin, White Masks*). In particular, Fanon tells us, a black Martinican can even feel safe from racism and illude himself of having the same social merit as the white French citizen with whom he identifies as long as he stays in the Antilles. In France, however, “the first encounter with a white man” inexorably warns him of “the whole weight of his blackness.”⁸⁵

Freud's Drive is also a book about “Film Studies” with a chapter dedicated to David Cronenberg; however, de Lauretis does not demonstrate an interest in what Fanon tells of the experience of the Antillans in cinemas. She chooses a different passage on which to comment: a passage where Fanon describes from a first person perspective how the “experience of being stared at” leads to the “indelible inscription of race on the skin,” which “makes the body burst apart, haemorrhage, feel amputated, excised, sprawled, distorted, recoloured,”⁸⁶ undermining the physical integrity of the black man in the “development of his bodily schema.”⁸⁷ It is effectively a narration of the extraordinary expressive power, the efficacy of which derives from the fact that in the episode that he recounts, Fanon is annihilated not by the hateful gaze of a band of white supremacists preparing to lynch him, or by a cop preparing to beat and arrest him,⁸⁸ but by a fearful child on the train who would like to run away from him. Better than commenting on his narration—since my commentary really is not necessary here—it is worth reporting it in full:

“Look, a Negro!” It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile.

“Look, a Negro!” It was true. It amused me.

“Look, a Negro!” The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement.

“Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible.

I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history, and above all *historicity*, which I had learned about from Jaspers. Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled,

its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. In the train it was no longer a question of being aware of my body in the third person but in a triple person. In the train I was given not one but two, three places. I had already stopped being amused. It was not that I was finding febrile coordinates in the world. I existed triply: I occupied space. I moved toward the other ... and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea ...

I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tomtoms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: "Sho' good eatin'."⁸⁹

On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that spattered my whole body with black blood? But I did not want this revision, this thematization. *All I wanted was to be a man among other men*. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together.

[...] "Look at the nigger! ... Mama, a Negro! ... Hell, he's getting mad ... Take no notice, sir, he does not know that you are as civilized as we ... "

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day. The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger, it's cold, the nigger is shivering, the nigger is shivering because he is cold, the little boy is trembling because he is afraid of the nigger, the nigger is shivering with cold, that cold that goes through your bones, the handsome little boy is trembling because he thinks that the nigger is quivering with rage, the little white boy throws himself into his mother's arms: Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.

All round me the white man, above the sky tears at its navel, the earth rasps under my feet, and there is a white song, a white song. All this whiteness that burns me ...

I sit down at the fire and I become aware of my uniform. I had not seen it. It is indeed ugly. I stop there, for who can tell me what beauty is?

Where shall I find shelter from now on? I felt an easily identifiable flood mounting out of the countless facets of my being. I was about to be angry. The fire was long since out, and once more the nigger was trembling.

"Look how handsome that Negro is! ... "

"Kiss the handsome Negro's ass, madam!"⁹⁰

Fanon's bitter conclusions, which he anticipates in the introduction, are that his desire to be nothing other than "a man among other men" cannot be

satisfied, simply because, tragically, in a racist society “the black is not a man”: “the black is a black man.” Before claiming his membership to humanity, before asking for full recognition as human, “the liberation of the man of color from himself” is necessary: “he must be extricated” from the psychoemotive universe in which his experience is positioned, he must become aware of the “aberrations of affect”⁹¹ that make him what he is, that make him desire to be “simply” a man, which is to say, white.

In *Freud's Drive*, de Lauretis uses this narrative as an example of how the biopolitical apparatus of race, like that of sexuality, intervenes in the same heterotopic space, which is both somatic and psychic, on which the drive acts. Just as the touch of the “other” adult arouses a perverse excitation in the infant, so too does the gaze, filled with history, of the “other” white subject on the black subject that establishes the process of racial inferiority. In her book, de Lauretis does not go beyond this comparison (she does, however, go a bit beyond it in her earlier article, “Difference Embodied”) and neglects to stop to reflect on how, in Fanon’s analysis, the processes of coagulation of race on the epidermis of the racialized subject does not take place *analogously with* the implantation of sexuality and the drive on the skin, but overlaps with this implantation and comes to coincide with it: for Fanon the “aberrations of affect” that make a black man black are first and foremost sexual aberrations. By taking up some of the same Freudian theories that Hocquenghem, Parinetto, and Mieli developed after him—as we have seen—he confirms that the taboo of male homosexuality derives not only from the sterility of homosexual acts but also from the fantasy that these acts necessarily involve the anus and lead the subject to a disgusting, fetid, but tremendously exciting existential dimension of uncivilization. Considered to be one of the founders of critical ethnopsychiatry, Fanon argues, instead, that “the discoveries of Freud” on the function of the human psyche, matured in the cultured spheres of bourgeois Europe, “are of no use”⁹² to understanding the alienation of the black man. Yet in reality, it is by critically leveraging a psychoanalytic understanding of personality that he also further develops Freud’s reflections. In his view, the morphological differences between human beings coming from different geographical areas is a clear perceptual datum, while race meant as a hierarchy between different human morphologies is a historical/political product: race is therefore not the premise, but the consequence of racism.⁹³ And, in turn, racism against black people is not an immutable attitude of the white human, but is the ideological justification that first the Europeans and then the Americans gave themselves to justify colonial domination, colonial violence, trafficking, slavery, segregation.

In a similar way to Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, as well as to Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political*,⁹⁴ Fanon also adopts a perspective of crude realism on society and on politics. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, this perspective leads him to theorize the need to use violence geared toward the liberation from colonialism; in *Black Skin, White Masks*, however, he

advances a different sort of analysis. To understand the roots of racism and the complicity of the alienated black man with his oppression, he argues that “we have to fall back on the idea of a *collective catharsis*,” which he explains using an energy model of psychic motivation that has a clear origin in psychoanalysis:

In every society, in every collectivity, exists—must exist—a channel, an outlet through which the forces accumulated in the form of aggression can be released. This is the purpose of games in children’s institutions, of psychodramas in group therapy, and, in a more general way, of illustrated magazines for children—each type of society, of course, requiring its own specific kind of catharsis. The Tarzan stories, the sagas of twelve-year-old explorers, the adventures of Mickey Mouse, and all those “comic book” serve actually as a release for collective aggression. The magazines are put together by white men for little white men. This is the heart of the problem. In the Antilles—and there is every reason to think that the situation is the same in the other colonies—these same magazines are devoured by the local children. In the magazines the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians; since there is always identification with the victor, the little Negro, quite as easily as the little white boy, becomes an explorer, an adventurer, a missionary “who faces the danger of being eaten by the wicked Negroes.”⁹⁵

Therefore every society, Fanon writes, has its own way of cathartically discharging aggression; and in a complex society, the cathartic outlets can be more than one. In conversation with Sartre,⁹⁶ the young psychiatrist from Martinique lingers in particular on the co-presence in Europe of antisemitism and what he calls “Negrophobia,”⁹⁷ reflecting on the differences that exist between these two forms of racism. In the “collective unconscious,”⁹⁸ he explains, “the Jew is feared because of his potential for acquisitiveness”:⁹⁹ the Jew provokes rage because one presumes that they belong to an elite circle of wealth and culture, to a plutocratic lobby that infiltrates “the banks, the stock exchanges, the government.”¹⁰⁰ The Jew is discriminated against for their success, for their cunning, for their ability to deceive: in the last instance, for their intelligence. Instead, “Negrophobia [...] is to be found on an instinctual, biological level”¹⁰¹: if “in the case of the Jew, one thinks of money and its cognates,” “in that of the Negro, one thinks of sex.”¹⁰²

Two years before the release of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Octave Mannoni had already attempted to analyze the psychic processes implicated in colonialism in *Psychologie de la colonisation*.¹⁰³ Fanon harshly criticizes Mannoni’s attempt to explain African populations’ submission to European colonizers based on two complexes that were endemically present in these colonizers and in those African populations before colonization. They are “an authority complex,” or a “leadership complex” in the Europeans and a

“dependency complex,” or an inferiority complex in the Africans.¹⁰⁴ If anything, Fanon argues, “it is the racist who creates his inferior”:¹⁰⁵ “I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native.”¹⁰⁶ Mannoni, however, comes in handy when, by adding “a new complex to the standing catalogue [...] the ‘Prospero complex,’”¹⁰⁷ he opens up a line of investigation on the libidinal investments through which the white colonizer and/or enslaver puts the black man into a place of inferiority. In fact, Mannoni rightly makes the magician protagonist of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* into “the ‘picture’ of the paternalist colonial,” Fanon explains, because he is “the racist whose daughter has suffered an (imaginary) attempted rape of the hands of an inferior being”:¹⁰⁸

Prospero, as we know, is the main character of Shakespeare’s comedy, *The Tempest*. Opposite him we have his daughter, Miranda, and Caliban. Toward Caliban, Prospero assumes an attitude that is well known to Americans in the southern United States. Are they not forever saying that that negroes are just waiting for the chance to jump on white women?¹⁰⁹

If Mannoni hypothesizes, in a rather simplistic use of psychoanalysis, that this trait of the colonialist’s personality also derives from his childhood experiences, probably from a lack of discipline in his education (the conqueror, the ruler, the enslaver, is basically a spoiled child),¹¹⁰ Fanon wants to go deeper—or rather, stay on the surface. As Foucault will do later, Fanon recognizes Freud’s value for having accounted for, in his understanding of character, the “individual factor” “against the constitutionalist tendency of the late 19th century” (the theory of degeneration), but at the same time he affirms that “the black man’s alienation is not an individual question,” and that to understand the “epidermalization” of his inferiority, “beside phylogeny and ontogeny” one must account for “sociogeny,” or of colonial domination.¹¹¹ This certainly does not have a psychological motive, as Mannoni would like, but “primarily, economic”¹¹² ones, and yet he mobilizes investments of the drives that transform “the Negro” into “a phobogenic object.”¹¹³

To understand what he refers to as a process of “Negro-phobogenesis,”¹¹⁴ Fanon relies on a hypothesis of one of the founders of the *Société psychanalytique de Paris* (Paris Psychoanalytic Society) Angelo Hesnard. He defines a phobogen as an object the “*contact*” with which “alone is enough to evoke anxiety”¹¹⁵ meant as “terror mixed with sexual revulsion.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, recalling *The Three Essays*, Hesnard argues that the origin of the phobias is in the last instance sexual: “for contact is at the same time the basic schematic type of initiating sexual action (touching, caresses—sexuality)”¹¹⁷—that is, of the sort of action of care that implants the drive onto the body of the infant. Fanon’s obsession, not only with his masculinity but also with his “virility,” does not allow him to grasp the

possible connections of the abjection of the black man with the social foreclosure of anality, the primordial matrix of disgust toward that which one must renounce in the name of a civil life.¹¹⁸ For him, there is another organ that is implicated in this process: in his view, “whoever says rape says Negro”¹¹⁹ because whites imagine the black man *as the penis* (the black man “is turned into a penis,”¹²⁰ “he is a penis,”¹²¹ “the Negro is the genital”¹²²). Racism, for Fanon, is in the end the outcome of the fantasy of “the sexual potency of the Negro [that] is hallucinating”¹²³ (“God knows how they make love! It must be terrifying”¹²⁴) projected onto the body of the black man, onto his phallus. The source of this projection is the male colonizer, who does not limit himself to making the colonized into the representative of an infantile stage of humanity, preceding civilization, but who also attributes a “wild” and sexually unbridled life to the colonized, a projection which ultimately belongs to his erotic dreams as a male (which we also found in Freud). Fanon thus reconstructs the genesis of the Prospero complex:

The civilized white man retains an irrational longing for unusual eras of sexual license, of orgiastic scenes, of unpunished rapes, of unrepressed incest. In one way these fantasies respond to Freud’s life instinct. Projecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves “as if” the Negro really had them. When it is a question of the Jew, the problem is clear: He is suspect because he wants to own the wealth or take over the positions of power. But the Negro is fixated at the genital; or at any rate has been fixated there.¹²⁵

Despite his self-conscious efforts, not even Fanon, who actually happily plays into the virile competition of who is more male (of whose penis is longer), seems to have completely freed himself from this fixation. Indeed, if on the one hand, he specifies that “the superiority of the black man” is not in fact real but is a construct of “the prelogical thought of the phobic,”¹²⁶ and he even cites research according to which “the average length of the penis among the black men of Africa” corresponds to that of the “European.”¹²⁷ On the other hand, he insists on a “feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority” of the white man, on his feelings of frustration and revenge.¹²⁸ “One thing must be mentioned,” he writes, which he then specifies as to be “believed, particularly by white men,” though in any case he introduces it as a real “thing,” that “a white woman who has had a Negro lover finds it difficult to return to white men.”¹²⁹ “Who knows what ‘they’ can give a woman?”¹³⁰ he asks rhetorically. The response, readable between the lines, is that for Fanon, if it is true that the black is not a man, but a black man, it is always equally true for him that the black man is a “real man” more than the white man could be, where a “real man” is traditionally defined as sexually complementary to a “real woman.”

Indeed, Marie Bonaparte and Helen Deutsch offer Fanon a very conventional (masculine and heterosexual) portrait of female sexuality, which is not

worth reporting here, but the essence of it, which is quite Freudian, is that the sexuality of the adult “normal” woman, white or black, should be vaginal and not clitoral. When in the course of a woman’s sexual development, the Martinican psychiatrist continues, because of her failure to overcome the Oedipal condition, her maturation does not fully occur, it can happen that she may develop a “fear of rape” that ultimately “[cries] out for rape.”¹³¹ In his view, it is a clitoral fixation on a perverse active sexuality of a sadomasochistic type: “Hurt me as I would hurt me if I were in your place.”¹³² And what rape would be more desirable in a racist society if not that committed by he who—to inappropriately repeat the Lacanian formula—does not simply *have*, but *is* a phallus? The conclusion comes from itself: “when a woman lives the fantasy of rape by a Negro, it is in some way the fulfillment of a private dream, of an inner wish”¹³³: “I wish the Negro would rip me open as I would have ripped a woman open.”¹³⁴ The presumed universality of this female desire of rape, which only the presumed hypervirility of the black man can satisfy, testifies to the fact that for Fanon, this desire is not even lacking in black Antillean women, or better, in “many [black] women in the Antilles,” which he calls “all-but-whites” with a certain contempt. For these women, however, “the aggressor is symbolized by the Senegalese type” (again: the color-line).¹³⁵

And this does not end here, because according to Fanon, this same desire for rape disguised by fear and disgust is also found in the racist man: if “the Negrophobic woman is in fact nothing but a putative sexual partner,” then “the Negrophobic man is a repressed homosexual,”¹³⁶ who sadistically unleashes onto the black man his desire for him, a desire which is masochistic. In this case too, it would be shame to sacrifice Fanon’s prose to my paraphrase:

For the majority of white men the Negro represents the sexual instinct (in its raw state). The Negro is the incarnation of a genital potency beyond all moralities and prohibitions. The women among the whites, by a genuine process of induction, invariably view the Negro as the keeper of the impalpable gate that opens into the realm of orgies, of bacchanals, of delirious sexual sensations ... We have shown that reality destroys all these beliefs. But they all rest on the level of the imagined, in any case on that of a paralogism. The white man who ascribes a malefic influence to the black is regressing on the intellectual level, since, as we have shown, his perception is based on a mental age of eight years (the comic books). Is there not a concurrent regression to and fixation at pregenital levels of sexual development? Self castration? (The Negro is taken as a terrifying penis.) Passivity justifying itself by the recognition of the superiority of the black man in terms of sexual capacity? It is obvious what a variety of questions it would be interesting to raise. There are, for instance, men who go to “houses” in order to be beaten by Negroes; passive homosexuals who insist on black partners. Another solution might be this: there is first

of all a sadistic aggression toward the black man, followed by a guilt complex because of the sanction against such behavior by the democratic culture of the country in question. This aggression is then tolerated by the Negro: whence masochism. But, I shall be told, your schema is invalid: It does not contain the elements of classic masochism. Perhaps, indeed, this situation is not classic. In any event, it is the only way in which to explain the masochistic behavior of the white man.¹³⁷

Surely, at this point in the argument, an “invalid schema” actually intervenes, or better an extremely revealing schema of Fanon’s virile imaginary, which—as if to give further confirmation to the hydraulic conception of the psychic energies developed by Freud—does not succeed in doing anything better than nourishing his critique of sadomasochistic aggression of “Negrophobia” with further aggression, taken from his own homophobia. Indeed, in the case of black women from the Antilles, Fanon is prepared to recognize the presence of the same Oedipal mechanisms present in white French women, who make women from the Antilles fear and desire Senegalese men as much as white French women desire black males in general. But in the case of black Antillean men, this is not the case: Fanon “congratulates”¹³⁸ himself because for black males from the Antilles, the Oedipus complex does not exist. Therefore, Oedipal neuroses do not exist and *homosexuality does not exist*, which is instead a pathological prerogative of white people. Here the one who has it the longest is the one who wins the competition! To demonstrate this thesis, against the alleged universalism of Freud’s theories, the young psychiatrist mobilizes his entire theoretical imagination, and when necessary, even against the evidence proffered by reality.

Psychoanalysis, he explains, endeavors to comprehend the “neurosis experienced by an adult,” in terms of “a repetition [...] of conflicts that owe their origin to the essence of the family constellation,”¹³⁹ however, grasping this analogy is possible in Europe, where “there are close connections between the structure of the family and the structure of the nation,” where “the family is a miniature of the nation” and “as the child emerges from the shadow of his parents, he finds himself once more among the same laws, the same principles, the same values.”¹⁴⁰ Where, therefore, “a normal child that has grown up in a normal family will be a normal man,”¹⁴¹ and will bring into society the personality that has matured since early childhood in relationships with his parents. This does not happen in the colonial world, where there exists an irreducible hiatus between family life and national life, which corresponds to the impact with the apparatus of racialization: “the Antillean family has for all practical purposes no connection with the national—that is, the French, or European—structure,”¹⁴² Fanon explains. Consequently, in Martinique, “a normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world.”¹⁴³ The black man who has grown up believing himself to be French, therefore, not in his first private experience with his parents, but

once his body appears in public space will realize, as Fanon did, that it emits disgusting “pseudopodia,” and “secretes a race.”¹⁴⁴ The violent trauma of this discovery, as I think I understand it, will cover over the small traumas of previous family events, thereby neutralizing their consequences to character. Knowing how to forgive one’s own parents, being able to relativize the past: after all, is this not also essentially proof of virile maturity?

According to Fanon, alienation and racism therefore have a positive counterweight for the black Martinican man (but not for woman): “the absence of the Oedipus complex,” makes him immune from the homosexuality for which Fanon has no qualms about expressing his “revulsion,”¹⁴⁵ and with it, from the symptoms that characterize it: “fault, guilt, refusal of guilt, paranoia.”¹⁴⁶ All of this belongs to the white man, and only to him. It is true that in the Antilles, men exist who dress in feminine clothing. Fanon is forced to acknowledge it in a note (the *makoumés* or *Ma Commères*: here the evidence of reality), but they “lead normal sex lives”: proof of this lies in the fact that “they can take a punch like any ‘he-man’”—how masculine is that! As for those Martinican comrades “who became homosexuals, always passive” (?) once they arrived in Europe, in his psychiatric opinion this is not about a real “neurotic homosexuality” for them, but instead “was a means to a livelihood, as pimping is for others.”¹⁴⁷ End of story.

So too we come to the end of this chapter, whose three sections correspond to three different operations. After having shown, against the “injustice” of Bersani, that Foucault is by no means oblivious to the negativity of the sexual, of its appearance to the “‘lower’ orders of being” as a heterotopia, or apocalypse, of subjectivity (the first operation), I have followed de Lauretis’s suggestions to formulate a hypothesis regarding the genesis of a subjectivity that succeeds in mediating between Freud’s sexual theory and Foucault’s analytic of the apparatus of sexuality (the second operation). Finally (the third operation), I have searched for the confirmation of my thesis in Fanon’s thinking on the racism against black men, and it seems as though I have found it: the sexual *is* political. At this point, a clarification is necessary, which for those who have read the “Prologue” will sound like a repetition. In Fanon, as in Mieli, as in Freud, I have not searched for an ontological truth of the human: my use of psychoanalysis in this book is situated on a different level, which is that of the political imaginary of the West and, in this last chapter, the colonial world. My aim has been to demonstrate how masculinism, heterosexism, homotransphobia, racism, and classism operate not only through the biopolitical and psychopolitical production of subjectivities (both majoritarian and minoritarian) but also through sexual investments: politics excites bodies, not just minds, while shaping them. And for this very reason, the sexual, the sex-drive, which always leads to the death of the subject in *jouissance* (momentary eclipse, the black-out of subjectivity, the loss of mastery over the self, the surrender to the other in order to get lost in them) at the level of the imaginary (not of the

real, and there is a big difference, as Mieli's suicide has forced us to point out), can represent a radical resource of resistance to the sovereigntist, fascist (and virilist, proprietorial, competitive, accumulating, exploitative ...) tendencies of the ego that wants to exert domination onto the world.

To this end, *Black Skins, White Masks* is particularly illuminating because of the symptomatic absence of this perspective. Like Mieli, Fanon is convinced that liberation can only happen through a disalienation which one can access by way of the difficult work of analyzing the self. The debts that his refined theoretical constructions pay to Sartre's existentialist philosophy makes him immune to those essentialist residues that we find in Mieli: he apprehends from existentialism that an origin of the subject (like Mieli's original transsexuality) does not exist, or better, that the subject is thrown into a world that shapes them and prevents all access to origins. The psychic organization of the black man of the Antilles is, in his analysis, overdetermined by the apparati of racialization that spread the hypervirilized identity, saturated by sexuality, of a monstrous rapist onto his body. But Fanon is only partially able to unmark himself from this identity: his pride as a "black man" prevents him from leveraging the orgiastic fantasy that is coagulated onto his skin to counterpose to this organization of his subjectivity the organless body of the sexual subject to which Mieli, Hocquenghem and Foucault, instead, all appeal with different vocabularies. Fanon's move is very different. Not at all willing to consider the hypothesis that sexuality in general, even *his* sexuality, "could be thought of as a tautology for masochism,"¹⁴⁸ Fanon attributes masochism only to white people (and to "all-but-whites") who are in turn disfigured by their passivity: the "Negrophobic woman," and the "Negrophobic man." In the last instance, the woman and the homosexual. A logical consequence of his argument on "Negrophobogenesis" could have been the invitation, addressed to white people of both sexes, to accept their erotic attraction toward black men, to live it rather than sublimate it into racist violence. But Fanon does not even think about it: after having explained that there can exist different forms of collective catharsis in a society, he himself provides us with the proof of how it might be possible to play one cathartic process against another, and attempt to liberate himself from the negativity of the sexual projected by racism *onto* his black phallus by re-projecting it, in turn, *inside* the vagina of the white woman and *inside* the anus of the white man. In short, Fanon defends himself from racism, before armed struggle, with the weapons of misogyny and homophobia. He reacts to abjection with another abjection.

It seems to me that today it is important to understand his move not so much for the purposes of an ontology of the subject, as for the purposes of an ontology of the present. Ever alive in the collective unconscious, the myth of sexual and reproductive potency of the black man is still present in rhetoric of the new European sovereign right, associated with old and new myths related to homosexuality. In this rhetoric, if migrants attempt to seduce "our women," if their numerous offspring risk replacing, or

bastardize, our white stock,¹⁴⁹ then the gays, instead, in various ways attempt to seduce children, snatching them from their mothers in a shameful trade, corrupting them through educational programs inspired by the equally shameful “gender ideology” or through a more direct, and even more vile seduction: the black man is a rapist, the gay man a pedophile. Of the two who is more “disgusting”? The game is on, and if at the outset of the 1950s, Fanon could shield himself from racism with homophobia, today the inverse move is possible, by gays convinced (deluded) that a law that extends matrimonial rights to them is enough to erase from the political imaginary the negativity of the sexual, that for a long time has been represented by their bodies and acts (recall, once more, Kant the Enlightenment thinker). This is the maneuver of the carrot and the stick which, with Edelman, I discussed in “Prologue.” I will conclude this maneuver in “Epilogue.”

Notes

- 1 Trans. Here Mieli uses the term “piccolo punto” in quotes, which is likely a reference to a phrase that continuously returns in his thinking: “Un bambino schizofrenico è un piccolissimo punto” (A schizophrenic child is a tiny dot). The phrase comes from a dream that he has about having sex in a London club, which he posits as a response to a question asked of him in that same dream: “Dimmi che cosa amano in te” (Tell me what they love about you). The piece that originates this phrase is Mieli’s article, “My first lady” in *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni settanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*, eds. Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo (Venezia: Marsilio, 2019). A more condensed mention of it can be found in the original Italian version of *Towards a Gay Communism*, but which was cut from the English translation, *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, eds. Gianni Rossi Barilli and Paola Mieli (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017), 159. Armando Maggi discusses this phrase in line with Mieli’s poetics of schizophrenia in the conclusion to his study of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s late aesthetics, “‘A Schizophrenic Child is a Tiny Dot, I Dreamed Once’: Metamorphosis in Mario Mieli and Pasolini,” in *The Resurrection of the Body: Pier Paolo Pasolini from Saint Paul to Sade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- 2 Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams (London: Pluto Press, 2018).
- 3 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978).
- 4 The exergue quoted above is taken from Mario Mieli, “La sagra dell’impotenza, una serata al One Way” in *La gaia critica*, 200–201. The article chronicles a night in the dark room of the famous leather disco, One Way, in the Sesto San Giovanni, near Milan. Though it was written in 1981, his critiques of the “gay ghetto,” the international diffusion of which Mieli was quite familiar thanks to his frequent travels, are present throughout his cultural production, including *Towards a Gay Communism*. For example, in the “Nota introduttiva all’edizione olandese di *Elementi di critica omosessuale*” (Introductory note to the Dutch edition of *Towards a Gay Communism*), Mieli writes that our society “remains founded on sexual repression. (Unless you pass off as freedom the anal sex of the SA or of those poor ‘leather-queens’ who neurotically perform at the Mine Shaft in New York).” Mieli, “La sagra dell’impotenza, una serata al One

- Way” in *La gaia critica*, 220. In 1979, on the contrary, in *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochista* (Milano: Asterisco edizioni, 2019), Corrado Levi recounts his experiences in the same club, the Mine Shaft, in New York to gay Italians in ecstatic tones, not unlike what we find in Foucault.
- 5 On Foucault’s visit to California see: David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993); James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); Simeon Wade, *Foucault in California (A True Story—Wherein the Great French Philosopher Drops Acid in the Valley of Death)* (Berkeley: Heydey, 2019).
 - 6 The conference proceedings were published the following year in a monographic issue of the academic journal *differences* (no. 3, 1991), edited by de Lauretis. Her paper appears as the introduction to that issue with the title “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities: An Introduction.” For an introduction to queer theories see my *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*, trans. Michela Baldo and Elena Basile (London: Routledge, 2020).
 - 7 Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 72.
 - 8 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 85.
 - 9 Hocquenghem’s name rarely comes up in Foucault’s work, despite the fact that his thesis in *The Will to Knowledge* of the “modern invention” of homosexuality can already be found in *Homosexual Desire*, trans. Daniella Dangoor (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 51–52, and despite the fact that the two had no lack of opportunities to get to know and discuss their ideas with each other. In 1976, for example, Foucault signed the petition written up by Hocquenghem and his companion René Schérer on occasion of the proposal to reform the French penal system, to ask that the age of consent necessary to engage in homosexual acts be brought down to the same as that of heterosexual acts. Foucault and Hocquenghem were interviewed together about the petition on April 4th, 1978 on the radio show “Dialogues” produced by France Culture. The transcription of the interview was published in the journal *Recherches*, 37 (1979), now available as Michel Foucault and Guy Hocquenghem, “Sexual Morality and the Law,” in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture. Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1988), 271–285. Foucault remembers the event in his 1982 interview with Jean Le Bitoux, “The Gay Science,” *Critical Inquiry*, 37 (Spring 2011): 385–403. In his 1977 interview, “Power and Sex” (in *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, 110–124), Foucault instead cites the monographic issue of *Recherches*, 22 (1976), titled “Co-ire. Album systématique de l’enfance” which Hocquenghem had edited with Schérer, as a positive example of a vision of childhood liberated from the obsession of sexuality. In an interview from 1981 titled “Interview de Michel Foucault” (now in *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome IV 1980–1988* [Paris: Gallimard, 1994], 656–667), Foucault limits himself to saying that he finds Hocquenghem’s thought “interesting,” and that he has the impression that he agrees with Hocquenghem on “some points” (663).
 - 10 For the theoretical production of FHAR, besides Hocquenghem’s writing, see, Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire, “Rapport contre la normalité,” in *Trois milliards de pervers: Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités, réédition de la publication saisie en 1973* (La Bussière: Acratie, 2015). In a 1982 interview, to which I will return, Foucault at least expresses gratitude toward the post-stonewall homosexual movements, and in general towards the movements of the New Left in the 60s and 70s that have succeeded in changing things “without a program”—though not “without proper reflection”—in an age in

- which “great political institutions and great political parties [...] have tried to give to political creation the form of a political program in order to take over power.” Referring to the experience of gay men in particular, here he observes: “It’s a fact that people’s everyday lives have changed from the early sixties to now, and certainly within my own life. And surely that is not due to political parties but is the result of many movements.” Michel Foucault, “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984, Vol. 1*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans Robert Hurley et al. (New York: The New Press, 1997), 172.
- 11 Michel Foucault, *The History of Madness*, ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge 2006), 339.
 - 12 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 150.
 - 13 This is the title of Giovanni Dall’Orto’s book, cited in footnote 7 in Chapter 5 above.
 - 14 Foucault speaks against the principle of authorship in the 1969 conference, “What is an Author?” see his paper of the same name in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977): 113–138.
 - 15 Today Rubin teaches Anthropology, Women’s Studies, and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan. In the early 1980s she took part in Samois, a lesbo-feminist BDSM (Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, Sadism and Masochism) collective, and her study, “The Leather Menace: Comments on Politics and S/M” was published in 1981 in the volume edited by Samois, *Coming to Power: Writings and Graphics on Lesbian S/M* (Boston: Alyson Press, 1981). Now it can be found, with the same title, in Gayle S. Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
 - 16 See Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michael Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Analogously, as I have noted, in the interview published in the French magazine *Gai pied* in 1981 Foucault proposes to make homosexuality into an occasion not to interrogate the truth of desire, but to develop new forms of relation and friendship; see Michel Foucault, “Friendship as a Way of Life,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 135–140.
 - 17 Foucault, “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity,” in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, 165.
 - 18 Bersani, *Homos*, 77–112.
 - 19 Leo Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” in *Is the Rectum a Grave and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 29.
 - 20 “It is not by chance that Michel attaches a certain importance to Sade, and myself on the contrary to Masoch. It would not be enough to say that I am masochistic and Michel sadistic. That would be nice, but it’s not true.” Gilles Deleuze, “Desire and Pleasure,” in *Foucault and His Interlocutors* ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 190.
 - 21 The Figure of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch and his novel, *Venus in Furs* is central to Deleuze’s book, *Coldness and Cruelty*. Both the novel and the book were published together in English as: *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).
 - 22 Deleuze, “Desire and Pleasure,” 190.
 - 23 Least of all in Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). For example, Butler tells us: “the only way to describe me in my younger years was as a bar dyke who spent her days reading Hegel and her

- evenings, well, at the gay bar, which occasionally became a drag bar. And I had some relatives who were, as it were, in the life, and there was some important identification with those 'boys.' So I was there, undergoing a cultural moment in the midst of a social and political struggle. But I also experience in that moment a certain implicit theorization of gender: it quickly dawned on me that some of these so-called men could do femininity much better than I ever could, ever wanted to, ever would." Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 213. On the possibility of redefining masculinity by subverting its hegemonic manifestations, see also, Raewyn W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- 24 Foucault, "The Gay Science," 396.
- 25 Regarding drug use, Foucault argues: "What frustrates me [...] is the fact that the problem of drugs is always envisaged only as a problem of freedom and prohibition. I think that drugs must become a part of our culture. [...] We have to study drugs. We have to experience drugs we have to do *good* drugs that can produce very intense pleasure. I think this puritanism about drugs, which implies that you can either be for or against drugs, is mistaken. Drugs have now become a part of our culture. Just as there is bad music and good music, there are bad drugs and good drugs. So we can't say we are 'against' drugs any more than we can say we're 'against' music." Foucault, "Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity," 165–166.
- 26 Antonin Artaud and Victor Corti, "To End God's Judgement," *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1965): 56–98.
- 27 Foucault, "The Gay Science," 399–400.
- 28 Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, 150.
- 29 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 418.
- 30 "The Middle Ages and the Renaissance had felt the menace of insanity at all the weak points of the world. They feared its lurking presence beneath the thin veneer of appearances, and their evenings and nights were haunted by presentiments that resulted in the spectacular bestiaries and apocalypses of their imagination. Being so present and pressing the world of the insane was not easily perceived [...]. From the 17th century onwards, unreason was no longer a fear that floated over the world, and it lost its place as a natural dimension of the adventures of reason. It appeared as a new kind of human fact, a spontaneous mutation in the field of social species. That which had previously been considered an inevitable peril for things and the language of men, their reason and their land, now took the form of a social type. Or rather, social types, as unreasonable men were characters whom society recognised and isolated: the debauched and the dissolute, homosexuals, magicians, libertines and suicides. Unreason began to be considered as a certain distance from a social norm." Foucault, *The History of Madness*, 101–102.
- 31 Foucault provides a similar interpretation of his own theoretical trajectory when, in the afterword that he writes in 1982 for Hubert Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow's study on his thought, he argues that it is not power but the subject that constitutes the "general theme" of his research, and that has developed a new analytic of power exactly for studying "the objectivizing of the subject." Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 208–209.
- 32 In *The Order of Things* (xix), the term is not defined but exemplified by the classification of animals in the famous "Chinese encyclopaedia" "cited" by Jorge Luis Borges in his 1952 short essay "The Analytical Language of John

- Wilkins”: “Animals are divided into: (a) those that belong to the Emperor, (b) embalmed ones, (c) those that are trained, (d) suckling pigs, (e) mermaids, (fabulous ones, (g) stray dogs, (h) those that are included in this classification, (i) those that tremble as if they were mad, (j) innumerable ones, (k) those drawn with a very fine camel’s hair brush, (l) others, (m) those that have just broken a flower vase, (n) those that resemble flies from a distance.” Jorge Luis Borges, *Other Inquisitions: 1937–1952*, trans. Ruth L.C. Simms (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), 103.
- 33 Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, n. 1 (Spring 1986): 24.
- 34 Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 24.
- 35 Besides *The History of Madness* here I am thinking in particular of the analysis of disciplinary power (see note 15 of Chapter 4 above) that Foucault carries out in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), in his lectures collected in *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*, ed. Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Verso, 2003) and *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–1974*, ed. Jacques Lagrange, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- 36 Beginning in the Autumn of 1966 Foucault taught in Tunis for about two years. He delivers this paper there and he explains the reference to tourist villages because it is in these very years in Tunisia, in Djerba, that one of the first of Club Mediterranean is being opened.
- 37 Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 25.
- 38 After recalling the praise Foucault gives these places, and Mieli’s criticism of their commercialization, I limit myself to only referring to Bersani’s cutting response to their romanticization: “I do not [...] find it helpful to suggest, as Dennis Altman has suggested, that gay baths created ‘a sort of Whitmanesque democracy, a desire to know and trust other men in a type of brotherhood far removed from the male bondage of rank, hierarchy, and competition that characterize much of the outside world.’ Anyone who has ever spent one night in a gay bathhouse knows that it is (or was) one of the most ruthlessly ranked, hierarchized, and competitive environments imaginable. Your looks, muscles, hair distribution, size of cock, and shape of ass determined exactly how happy you were going to be during those few hours, and rejection, generally accompanied by two or three words at most, could be swift and brutal, with none of the civilizing hypocrisies with which we get rid of undesirables in the outside world.” Bersani, “Is the Rectum a Grave?” 12. The citation of Altman comes from *The Homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the Homosexual* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982), 79–80. For more on this topic, see Allan Berubé, “The History of Gay Bathhouses” in *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, ed. Dangerous Bedfellows (Boston: South End Press, 1996); Diane Binson and William Woods, “A Theoretical Approach to Bathhouse Environments,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 44 (2003); Ira Tattelman, “Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces,” in *Public Sex/Gay Space*, ed. William Leap (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Ira Tattelman, “Presenting a Queer (Bath)house” in *Queer Frontiers: Millennial Geographies, Genders and Generations*, ed. Joseph Allen Boone (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000); Richard Tewksbury, “Bathhouse Intercourse: Structural Aspects of an Erotic Oasis,” *Deviant Behaviors* 23 (2002).
- 39 In the early 1960s, with these words, Marcuse denounces the “Happy [and false] Consciousness” of the West which deludes itself in thinking that it had eliminated evil in politics following the defeat of Nazi-Fascism because it is ignorant

- (hypocritically made itself ignorant) of the catastrophe of colonialism (which is a catastrophe of the West): “The Happy Consciousness—the belief that the real is rational and that the system delivers the goods—reflects the new conformism which is a facet of technological rationality translated into social behavior. It is new because it is rational to an unprecedented degree. It sustains society which has reduced—and in its most advanced areas eliminated—the more primitive irrationality of the preceding stages, which prolongs and improves life more regularly than before. The war of annihilation has not yet occurred; the Nazi extermination camps have been abolished. The Happy Consciousness repels the connection. Torture has been reintroduced as a normal affair, but in a colonial war which takes place at the margin of the civilized world. And there it is practiced with good conscience for war is war. And this war, too, is at the margin—it ravages only the ‘underdeveloped’ countries. Otherwise, peace reigns.” Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge, 2002), 87–88.
- 40 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
- 41 Judith Butler, “Competing Universalities,” in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), 151.
- 42 “Contrary to what Butler goes on to suggest, this sexuality, this massive social technology, is not something that individuals may rearticulate, resignify or reappropriate, whether by drag performance or by political will.” Teresa de Lauretis, *Freud’s Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 44. The same polemic with Butler is also present in her book *Soggetti eccentrici* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1999): “The formula, both more reductive and widely disseminated, which puts an innate sexuality (essentialism), by attributing it to Freud, face to face with a socially constructed sexuality (constructivism), by attributing it to Foucault, is based on a double misunderstanding: first, what is innate in Freud is not sexuality, but if anything, the drive (this too could be argued), while sexuality is none other than a phantasmatic construction; second, what Foucault means by sexuality—a social technology, a gathering together of power apparatuses developed in time far from complex societies—is not something which the individual can reappropriate or that could subvert and transform either with surgery or performance.” (109) De Lauretis expansively discussed how the drive might be understood as innate in *Freud’s Drive*, where the above passage is offered once again with few changes, but the addition of this conclusion: “*Freud’s notion of drive undermines and actually undoes the opposition between constructionism and essentialism*: for sexuality is nothing if not constructed, but if it can be implanted in the subject, it is precisely because of the stubborn drive [...] that Freud calls *Trieb*.” (46) On Freud’s ambivalences, see also de Lauretis’s fundamental study: *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
- 43 See de Lauretis, *Freud’s Drive*, 45. We have already noted that when Foucault, in *The Order of Things* (1966), makes psychoanalysis into a counter-science that subtracts the human from the epistemic field of the human sciences, he is primarily thinking of Lacan. But even earlier, since the publication of *The History of Madness* (1961), He gives interviews in which he recognizes that he has been influenced by “a second prestigious existence [of psychoanalysis] due [...] to Lacan.” Michel Foucault, “La folie n’existe que dans une société,” in *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome I, 1954–1969* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), 168.
- 44 Born in 1924, Laplanche belonged to the same generation as Foucault, who was born two years after him. The phrase “*retour sur Freud*” that Laplanche in the

- 1980s opposes to Lacan's phrase "*retour à Freud*," indicates his proposal to psychoanalytically interpret the same Freudian texts by beginning with their ambiguities, hesitations, and aporia—a method that I have followed in the first part of this book. See Dominique Scarfone, *Jean Laplanche: An Introduction*, ed. Jonathan House, trans. Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz (London: Karnac Books, 2015).
- 45 de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*, 61.
- 46 Among the Italian studies on the topic, see Antonella Moscati's illuminating essay, "Tra la morte e la vita: a proposito della teoria delle pulsioni di Freud," in *La carta coperta: l'inconscio nelle pratiche femministe*, ed. Chiara Zamboni (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2019).
- 47 de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*, 61–62.
- 48 de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*, 43.
- 49 The second chapter of *Freud's Drive* is titled, "The Stubborn Drive: Foucault, Freud, Fanon."
- 50 "It seems to me, somato-power [or biopower] is not so different from Freud's drive after all. Both are located in corporeality beyond the reach of the Cartesian rational subject, and both provide the material, bodily ground for what Foucault has called 'the perverse implantation' of sexuality in the subject." de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*, 50.
- 51 Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 39.
- 52 Bersani, *Homos*, 100.
- 53 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 44.
- 54 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 48.
- 55 See Slavoj Žižek, *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (New York: Verso, 1991).
- 56 Michel Foucault, "5 January 1983: First Hour," in *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, ed. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 21. The paradox consists in the fact that in the metaphysical tradition being (of which the Greek *òntos* is the genitive) is what is equal to itself and does not change for eternity, while Foucault proposes to investigate the being of the present, of the subject of the present, reconstructing its history in light of its possible transformation. As we have seen, Foucault's books have mostly the form of historical-genealogical research.
- 57 "I wonder how Mieli's thesis would have looked if [...] he had read Jean Laplanche's *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*. Or if he had read Foucault. Queer theory today, that read Foucault or a summarized version of him, insists that sexuality is not so much repressed as it is produced by discourse." Teresa de Lauretis, "La gaia scienza, ovvero la traviata Norma," in Mario Mieli, *Elementi di critica omosessuale* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017), 265.
- 58 de Lauretis, "La gaia scienza," 261.
- 59 de Lauretis, "La gaia scienza," 261–262.
- 60 Teresa de Lauretis, "Difference Embodied: Reflections on Black Skin, White Masks," *Parallax* 8, n. 2 (2002): 54–68, DOI: 10.1080/13534640210130421. On Fanon as feminine author see David Marriott, "That Within," in *Haunted Life: Visual Culture and Black Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007).
- 61 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004).
- 62 Fanon's articles from *El Moudjahid* can be found in two volumes in English: Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Frantz Fanon, *Alienation and*

- Freedom*, ed. Jean Khalfa and Robert J.C. Young, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).
- 63 For a critique of the reception of Fanon's revolutionary theory of violence by youth movements in the United States see Hannah Arendt's classic *On Violence* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1970). On Fanon's theorization of the instrumental use of violence, see Homi K. Bhabha, "Framing Fanon," in *The Wretched of the Earth*, vii-xlii, and Judith Butler, "Violence, Non-Violence: Sartre on Fanon," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 3–24.
- 64 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
- 65 The Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy in Lyon rejected the text, which was initially titled, *Essai sur la désaliénation dur Noir* (Essay on the Disalienation of the Black), arguing that it is "atypical" for a thesis in psychiatry. Fanon was restricted to hastily writing a "more traditional" paper, which he titled *Altérations mentales, modifications caractérielles: Troubles psychiques et déficit intellectuel dans l'héredo-dégénération spinocérébelleuse à propos d'un cas de la maladie de Friedrich avec délire de possession* (Mental alterations, character modifications, psychic disorders and intellectual deficit in spinocerebellar heredodegeneration: a case of Friedrich's ataxia with delusions of possession), which he defended in November of 1951. An extract of the text, titled "Mental Disorder and Neurological Disturbance" ("Le Trouble mental et le trouble neurologique") was published in *L'information psychiatrique* 51, no. 10 (1975): 1079–1090, the whole thesis can be found in Fanon, *Alienation and Freedom*, 203–276. For more on Fanon in English see David Macey, *Fanon: A Biography* (London: Verso, 2012) and Nigel C. Gibson, *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* (Cambridge: Polity, 2003).
- 66 Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963).
- 67 Fanon cites two of Alfred Adler's texts: *Understanding Human Nature: The Psychology of Personality* (New York: Routledge, 2013) and *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and Psychotherapy* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
- 68 Angelo Hesnard, *L'univers morbide de la faute* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949).
- 69 Marie Bonaparte, "De la sexualité de la femme," *Revue français de psychanalyse* (April-June 1949); *Myths of War* (London: Imago, 1947).
- 70 Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation, Volume 1* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944).
- 71 Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
- 72 The books of Sartre that are particularly important to Fanon are: Jean-Paul Sartre, "Black Orpheus," in *What is Literature? and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988); "Reflections on the Jewish Question, A Lecture," *October*, 87 (Winter 1999): 32–46.
- 73 Mayotte Capécia, *I Am a Martinician Woman and The White Negress: Two Nouvelletes by Mayotte Capécia*, trans. Beatrice Stith Clark (Pueblo: Passaggiata Press, 1997).
- 74 René Maran, *Un homme pareil aux autres* (Paris: Arc-en-ciel, 1947).
- 75 Abdoulay Sadi, *Nini, mûlatresse du Sénégal* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1954).
- 76 Central to Fanon's critiques as he moves through the text, as we will see, is Octave Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*, trans. Pamela Powesland (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990).

- 77 See note 138 of Chapter 3 above. Particularly present in Fanon's book is Aime Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000).
- 78 The book concludes with these words: "It is through the effort to recapture the self and to scrutinize the self, it is through the lasting tension of their freedom that men will be able to create the ideal conditions of existence for the human world. [...] At the conclusion of this study, I want the world to recognize, with me, the open door of every consciousness. My final prayer: O my body, make of me always a man who questions!" Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 231–232. This appeal to the body as the source of thought offers up the code of the whole of Fanon's research, where racism cannot be thought if not in the "bastardized space" of a lived experience where the biological, psychical, mental, historical, and political cannot be disentangled. It is not by chance that Vinzia Fiorino approaches Fanon's thought through the feminist theorist of consciousness-raising, Carla Lonzi. See Vinzia Fiorino, "Desideri del sé: Frantz Fanon and Carla Lonzi," in Frantz Fanon, *Pelle nera, maschere bianche* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015) and Sandro Luce, *Soggettivazioni antagoniste: Frantz Fanon e la critica postcoloniale* (Milan: Metelmi, 2018).
- 79 *Atlantic Monthly* 478 (1897).
- 80 Both Du Bois and Fanon use the term "negro" (*nègre* in French). In citing them, I also bring it back here, aware that it contradicts the politically correct conventions of the Italian language. I do not use it to challenge those conventions, which I wholeheartedly agree with, but in order to make evident the abject character that dark skin takes on in a racist gaze, both in the present and as it was in the time of these authors. Here and in the following pages, I also stick to the original texts in using either the uppercase or lowercase "n" and "b" in the terms "negro" and "black," and "w" in the term "white." Trans. I have left this note in its original reference to the Italian language so as to retain the original context in which the author wrote it.
- 81 W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.
- 82 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 147–148.
- 83 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 152–153, footnote 15.
- 84 "The problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line, the question as to how far differences of race—which show themselves chiefly in the color of the skin and the texture of the hair—will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization." W.E.B. Du Bois, "Address to the Nations of the World," in *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890–1919*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), 125. This is the incipit of a text that Du Bois prepared on the occasion of the Pan-African Conference that was held in London in July of 1900, which was then adopted by the Conference as an official resolution.
- 85 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 150.
- 86 de Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*, 55.
- 87 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 110.
- 88 This last experience is one to which he was not a stranger: "Fanon recognizes firsthand degradation, racist violence, and the experience of an 'engaged' body. While a student of medicine in Lyon he was stopped while taking a walk with his French and white girlfriend, and taken to a police station where he was held, beaten for hours, and interrogated: he was accused of trafficking white women. Roberto Beneduce, "La tormenta onirica: Fanon e le radici di un'etnopsichiatria critica," in *Decolonizzare la follia: Scritti sulla psichiatria coloniale*, ed. Roberto

- Beneduce (Verona: ombre corte, 2011), 14. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon describes a different episode: “Many times I have been stopped in broad daylight by policemen who mistook me for an Arab: when they discovered my origins, they were obsequious in their apologies; ‘Of course we know that a Martican is quite different from an Arab.’ I always protested violently, but I was always told, ‘You don’t know them.’” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 91.
- 89 Fanon deals with the image of the smiling Senegalese rifleman who stood out on the packages of the Banania brandsoluble cocoa powder and banana flour and the advertising jingle, in which he sings in ungrammatical French (the so-called “petit nègre”) “Y a bon” (“It good” rather than “C’est bon,” or “It is good”), similarly to Angela Davis’s critique, in *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), of the image of the plump and smiling black maid who appeared on the packaging of Aunt Jemima’s pancake mix. These are two examples of how commercial culture after the Second World War would reproduce, exploit, and reinforce the infantilizing stereotype of the black man and woman who are eternally in a good mood and happy to serve white people.
- 90 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 111–114, emphasis mine.
- 91 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 10.
- 92 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 104.
- 93 This is the meaning of the term, as a historical construct, which I also exclusively mean by using “race” in this book.
- 94 See Chapter three, above.
- 95 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 145–146.
- 96 His “Reflections on the Jewish Question: A Lecture.”
- 97 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 159.
- 98 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 187.
- 99 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 157.
- 100 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 157.
- 101 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 160.
- 102 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 160. Another fundamental difference, which Fanon does not neglect to highlight, is that the Jew can hide their Jewishness and pass for a non-Jew, while dark skin is visual evidence that you cannot hide. This passage is however surprising for the lightness with which he treats the Shoah: “The Jew can be unknown in his Jewishness. He is not wholly what he is. [...] He is a white man, and, apart from some rather debatable characteristics, he can sometimes go unnoticed. He belongs to the race of those who since the beginning of time have never known cannibalism. What an idea, to eat one’s father! Simple enough, one has only not to be a nigger. Granted, the Jews are harassed—what am I thinking of? *They are hunted down, exterminated, cremated. But these are little family quarrels.* The Jew is disliked from the moment he is tracked down. But in my case everything takes on a new guise. I am given no chance. I am overdetermined from without. I am the slave not of the ‘idea’ that others have of me but of my own appearance.” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 115–116, emphasis mine.
- 103 Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*.
- 104 See Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 99, where Fanon cites Mannoni: “‘Wherever Europeans have founded colonies [...] it can safely be said that their coming was unconsciously expected—even desired—by the future subject peoples. Everywhere there existed legends foretelling the arrival of strangers from the sea, bearing wondrous gifts with them.’” From Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, 86.
- 105 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 93.
- 106 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 98.

- 107 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 107.
- 108 Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, 107, cited by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, 107. In Shakespeare's play, Prospero is the Duke of Milan, exiled by his brother and usurper Antonio to an exotic island in the Mediterranean together with his daughter Miranda. The island is inhabited by Caliban, a deformed and disgusting being, the son of the deceased witch Sycorax of Algiers and most likely a demon. Prospero attempts to raise him as if Caliban were his own son until he threatens Miranda and then Prospero forces him into slavery. Caliban is, moreover, inhabited by the spirit Ariel, who Sycorax had imprisoned in a tree and who Prospero freed, bonding Ariel to him with a fidelity pact. Endowed with magical powers that derive from his studies after twelve years of exile, and with the help of Ariel, Prospero unleashes a storm that sinks the ship transporting Antonio and his accomplice Alonso, the King of Naples, and his brother Ferdinand. The plot, rich with storylines (among which is a ridiculous attempted conspiracy by Caliban), concludes with the engagement of Miranda and Alonso and Prospero's reconciliation with Antonio. Before returning to Milan, Prospero dismisses Ariel and renounces his magical powers. In Mannoni's reading, which Fanon shares, Prospero thus represents the European colonizer, capable of commanding both his own instincts as well as those of nature, civilized and a paternalistic civilizer; while Caliban represents the colonized savage, physically and morally ugly, a treacherous traitor, prey to an uncontrollable sexual urge, which makes him rebellious to civilization. His name, after all, recalls the word "Caribbean," but also sounds like an anagram of "cannibal." In 1969 Césaire reworks the Shakesperian plot into his drama *A Tempest*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Ubu Repertory Theater Publications, 1992), where Prospero is a white colonizer who enslaves both the mixed-race Ariel and the black king of the island, who he gives the name Caliban, and a name which Prospero refuses, preferring to call him X.
- 109 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 107. On the instrumental use of accusations of rape to justify lynching black men and boys in the United States, see Angela Davis, "Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist," in *Women, Race & Class*. Without minimizing the severity of rapes actually perpetrated by black men on white and black women, Davis opposes the stereotype of the black rapist of white women to the harassment and rapes carried out in the United States by white men on enslaved black women before the abolition of slavery as well as on black domestic house workers afterward. She explains, moreover, how difficult it has long been for black women to report these crimes because they knew that they would not be believed in a trial, and they rightly feared that even the policemen assigned to listen to their testimony could harass and rape them too.
- 110 "What the colonial in common with Prospero lacks, is awareness of the world of Others, a world in which Others have to be respected. This is the world from which the colonial has fled because he cannot accept men as they are. Rejection of the world is combined with an urge to dominate, an urge which is infantile in origin and which social adaption has failed to discipline." Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban*, 107, cited by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, 108.
- 111 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 13.
- 112 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 13.
- 113 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 151.
- 114 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 151.
- 115 Angelo Hesnard, *L'univers morbide de la faute* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), 38, cited by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, 156.
- 116 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 155.

- 117 Hesnard, *L'univers morbide de la faut*, 38, cited by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, 156.
- 118 As I discuss in the Prologue to this book, Lee Edelman explores these connections in his article "White Skin, Dark Meat: Identity's Pressure Point," *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture*, 8, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 99–113.
- 119 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 166.
- 120 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 170.
- 121 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 170.
- 122 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 180.
- 123 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 157.
- 124 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 158.
- 125 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 165.
- 126 "Is the Negro's superiority real? Everyone *knows* that it is not. But that is not what matters. The prelogical thought of the phobic has decided that such is the case." Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 159.
- 127 "Now, what is the truth? The average length of the penis among the black men of Africa, Dr. Palès says, rarely exceed 120 millimeters (4.6244 inches). Testut, in his *Traité d'anatomie humaine*, offers the same figure for the European. But these are facts that persuade no one. The white man is convinced that the Negro is a beast; if it is not the length of the penis, the nit is the sexual potency that impresses him. Face to face with this man who is 'different from himself,' he needs to defend himself. In other words, to personify The Other." Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 170.
- 128 "Still on the genital level, when a white man hates black men, is he not yielding to a feeling of impotence or of sexual inferiority? Since his ideal is an infinite virility, is there not a phenomenon of diminution in relation to the Negro, who is viewed as a penis symbol? Is the lynching of the Negro not a sexual revenge?" Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 159.
- 129 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 171.
- 130 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 171.
- 131 "Basically, does this *fear* of rape not itself cry out for rape?" Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 156.
- 132 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179.
- 133 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179.
- 134 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 179. Here is Fanon's roundabout explanation: "From the work of Helen Deutsch and Marie Bonaparte, both of whom took up and in a way carried to their ultimate conclusions Freud's ideas on female sexuality, we have learned that" throughout her development the woman passes through different stages: "alternatively clitoral and clitoral-vaginal and finally purely vaginal." "Corresponding to the clitoral stage there is an active Oedipus complex, although according to Marie Bonaparte, it is not a sequence but a coexistence of the active and the passive. The desexualization of aggression in a girl is less complete than in a boy. The clitoris is perceived as a diminished penis [...]. In her as in the little boy there will be impulses directed at the mother; she too would like to disembowel the mother." Then, when in the stage that ranges "between the ages of five and nine," which corresponds to the age in which one enters "folklore and culture," "the father, who is now the pole of her libido, refuses in a way to take up the aggression that the little girl's unconscious demands of him," then "the Negro becomes the predestined depositary of this aggression." Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 178–179. The racism of the woman, then, would be the fault of fathers, who do not know how to punish them with sufficient severity.

- 135 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 180.
- 136 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 156.
- 137 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 177–178.
- 138 “It is too often forgotten that neurosis is not a basic element of human reality. Like it or not, the Oedipus complex is far from coming into being among Negroes. [...] it would be relatively easy for me to show that in the French Antilles 97% of the families cannot produce one Oedipal neurosis. This incapacity is one on which we heartily congratulate ourselves.” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 151–152.
- 139 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 141.
- 140 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 141–142.
- 141 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 142.
- 142 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 149.
- 143 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 143.
- 144 “Little by little, putting out pseudopodia here and there, I secreted a race.” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 122.
- 145 “Beyond all question the most interesting testimony [reported in the journal *Présence africaine*] is presented by Michel Salomon. Although he defends himself against the charge, he stinks of racism. He is a Jew, he has a ‘millennial experience of anti-Semitism,’ and yet he is a racist. Listen to him: ‘But to say that the mere fact of his skin, of his hair, of that aura of sensuality that he [the Negro] gives off, does not spontaneously give rise to a certain embarrassment, whether of attraction or of revulsion, is to reject the facts in the name of a ridiculous prudery that has never solve anything ...’ Later he goes to the extreme of telling us about the ‘prodigious vitality of the black man.’ M. Salomon’s study informs us that he is a physician. He should be wary of those literary points of view that are unscientific. The Japanese and the Chinese are ten times more prolific than the Negro: Does that make them sensual? And in addition, M. Salomon, I have a confession to make to you: I have never been able, without *revulsion*, to hear a man say of another man: ‘He is so sensual!’ I do not know what the sensuality of a man is. Imagine a woman saying of another woman: ‘She’s so terribly desirable—she’s darling ...’ The Negro, M. Salomon, gives off no aura of sensuality either through his skin or through his hair. It is just that over a series of long days and long nights the image of the biological sexual-sensual-genital-nigger has imposed itself on you and you don’t know how to get free of it.” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 201–202, emphasis mine.
- 146 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 183.
- 147 “Let me observe at once that I had no opportunity to establish the overt presence of homosexuality in Martinique. This must be viewed as the result of the absence of the Oedipus complex in the Antilles. The schema of homosexuality is well enough known. We should not overlook, however, the existence of what are called there ‘men dressed like women’ or ‘godmothers.’ Generally they wear shirts and skirts. But I am convinced that they lead normal lives. They can take a punch like any ‘he-man’ and they are not impervious to the allures of women—fish and vegetable merchants. In Europe, on the other hand, I have known several Martinicans who became homosexuals, always passive. But this was by no means a neurotic homosexuality: for them it was a means to a livelihood, as pimping for others.” Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 180, fn. 44.
- 148 Bersani, *The Freudian Body*, 39.
- 149 Parodying racist discourse, Fanon had already written: “As for the Negroes, they have tremendous sexual powers. What do you expect with all the freedom they have in their jungles! They copulate at all times and in all places. They are

really genitals. *They have so many children that they cannot even count them. Be careful or they will flood us with little mulattoes.*" Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 157, my emphasis. At a certain point in Shakespeare's text even Caliban rejoices at the fantasy that, if he succeeded in his attempt to seduce Miranda, he would have populated the island with a race of Calibans.

References

- Adler, Alfred. *Understanding Human Nature: The Psychology of Personality*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Adler, Alfred. *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and Psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Altman, Dennis. *The Homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the Homosexual*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1970.
- Artaud, Antonin, and Victor Corti. "To End God's Judgement." *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1965): 56–98.
- Beneduce, Roberto. "La tormenta onirica: Fanon e le radici di un'etnopsichiatria critica." In *Decolonizzare la follia: Scritti sulla psichiatria coloniale*, edited by Roberto Beneduce. Verona: ombre corte, 2011.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*. Translated by Michela Baldo and Elena Basile. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Bersani, Leo. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" In *Is the Rectum a Grave and Other Essays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Bersani, Leo. *Homos*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Berubé, Allan. "The History of Gay Bathhouses." In *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, edited by Dangerous Bedfellows. Boston: South End Press, 1996.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Framing Fanon." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, edited by Frantz Fanon. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Binson, Diane, and William Woods. "A Theoretical Approach to Bathroom Environments," *Journal of Homosexuality* 44 (2003): 23–31.
- Bonaparte, Marie. "De la sexualité de la femme." *Revue française de psychanalyse* (April-June 1949).
- Bonaparte, Marie. *Myths of War*. London: Imago, 1947.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Other Inquisitions: 1937–1952*. Translated by Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.
- Butler, Judith. "Violence, Non-Violence: Sartre on Fanon." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 3–24.
- Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. "Competing Universalities." In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, edited by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

- Capecia, Mayotte. *I Am a Martinician Woman and The White Negress: Two Novelletes by Mayotte Capecia*. Translated by Beatrice Stith Clark. Pueblo: Passaggiata Press, 1997.
- Césaire, Aime. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.
- Césaire, Aime. *A Tempest*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Ubu Repertory Theater Publications, 1992.
- Connell, Raewyn W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. "La gaia scienza, ovvero la traviata Norma." In *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, edited by Mario Mieli. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. "Difference Embodied: Reflections on Black Skin, White Masks," *Parallax* 8, no. 2 (2002): 54–68. DOI: 10.1080/13534640210130421.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Soggetti eccentrici*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1999.
- De Lauretis, Teresa, ed. *differences* (no. 3, 1991).
- Deleuze, Gilles. "Desire and Pleasure." In *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- Deutsch, Helene. *The Psychology of Women: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation, Volume 1*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. "Address to the Nations of the World." In *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890–1919*, edited by Philip S. Foner. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. "Striving of the Negro People." *Atlantic Monthly* 478 (1897), 194–198.
- Edelman, Lee. "White Skin, Dark Meat: Identity's Pressure Point." *Identities: Journal for Politics, Gender and Culture* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 99–113.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Alienation and Freedom*. edited by Jean Khalifa and Robert J.C. Young and translated by Steven Corcoran. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- Fanon, Frantz. "Le Trouble mental et le trouble neurologique." *L'information psychiatrique* 51, no. 10 (1975): 1079–1090.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Fiorino, Vinzia. "Desideri del sé: Frantz Fanon and Carla Lonzi." In *Pelle nera, maschere bianche*, edited by Frantz Fanon. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. "5 January 1983: First Hour." In *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, edited by Frédéric Gros and translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

- Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, edited by Michael Senellart and translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Madness*, edited by Jean Khalfa and translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–1974*, edited by Jacques Lagrange and translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*, edited by Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni and translated by Graham Burchell. London: Verso, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. “Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity.” In *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984, Vol. 1*, edited by Paul Rabinow and translated by Robert Hurley et al. New York: The New Press, 1997.
- Foucault, Michel. “Interview de Michel Foucault.” In *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome IV, 1980–1988*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. “La folie n’existe que dans une société.” In *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome I, 1954–1969*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture. Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman and translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Routledge, 1988.
- Foucault, Michel. “Of Other Spaces.” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22–27.
- Foucault, Michel. “Afterword: The Subject and Power.” In *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, 2nd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.
- Foucault, Michel. “What is an Author?” In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard and translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Foucault, Michel and Jean Le Bitoux. “The Gay Science,” *Critical Inquiry* 37 (Spring 2011): 385–403.
- Freud, Anna. *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Front homosexuel d’action révolutionnaire. “Rapport contre la normalité.” In *Trois milliards de pervers: Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités, réédition de la publication saisie en 1973*. La Bussière: Acratie, 2015.
- Gibson, Nigel C. *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.
- Halberstam, Jack. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Hesnard, Angelo. *L’univers morbide de la faute*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949.
- Jaspers, Karl. *General Psychopathology*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963.
- Levi, Corrado. *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochista*. Milano: Asterisco edizioni, 2019.

- Luce, Sandro. *Soggettivazioni antagoniste: Frantz Fanon e la critica postcoloniale*. Milan: Metelmi, 2018.
- Macey, David. *Fanon: A Biography*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Macey, David. *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.
- Maggi, Armando. “‘A Schizophrenic Child is a Tiny Dot, I Dreamed Once’: Metamorphosis in Mario Mieli and Pasolini.” In *The Resurrection of the Body: Pier Paolo Pasolini from Saint Paul to Sade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Mannoni, Octave. *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*. Translated by Pamela Powesland. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Maran, René. *Un homme pareil aux autres*. Paris: Arc-en-ciel, 1947.
- Marriott, David. *Haunted Life: Visual Culture and Black Modernity*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Mieli, Mario. “My first lady.” In *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni settanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*, edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venezia: Marsilio, 2019.
- Mieli, Mario. *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*. Translated by David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams. London: Pluto Press, 2018.
- Mieli, Mario. *Elementi di critica omosessuale*. Edited by Gianni Rossi Barilli and Paola Mieli. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017.
- Miller, James. *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.
- Moscatti, Antonella. “Tra la morte e la vita: a proposito della teoria delle pulsioni di Freud.” In *La carta coperta: l’inconscio nelle pratiche femministe*, edited by Chiara Zamboni. Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2019.
- Rubin, Gale S. “The Leather Menace: Comments on Politics and S/M.” In *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Sadij, Abdoulay. *Nini, mûlatresse du Sénégal*. Paris: Présence africaine 1954.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. “Reflections on the Jewish Question, A Lecture.” *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 32–46.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. “Black Orpheus.” In “*What is Literature?*” and *Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Scarfone, Dominique. *Jean Laplanche: An Introduction*, edited by Jonathan House and translated by Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz. London: Karnac Books, 2015.
- Tattelman, Ira. “Presenting a Queer (Bath)house.” In *Queer Frontiers: Millennial Geographies, Genders and Generations*, edited by Joseph Allen Boone. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000.
- Tattelman, Ira. “Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces.” In *Public Sex/Gay Space*, edited by William Leap. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Tewksbury, Richard. “Bathroom Intercourse: Structural Aspects of an Erotic Oasis.” *Deviant Behaviors* 23, no. 1 (2002): 75–112.
- Wade, Simeon. *Foucault in California (A True Story—Wherein the Great French Philosopher Drops Acid in the Valley of Death)*. Berkeley: Heydey, 2019.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. New York: Verso, 1991.

Epilogue

Hyenas in the Sauna

In Europe, the black man is the symbol of Evil. [...] The torturer is the black man, Satan is black, one talks of shadows, when one is dirty one is black—whether one is thinking of physical dirtiness or of moral dirtiness. [...] In Europe, whether concretely or symbolically, the black man stands for the bad side of the character. As long as one cannot understand this fact, one is doomed to talk in circles about the “black problem.” Blackness, darkness, shadow, shades, night, the labyrinths of the earth, abysmal depths, blacken someone’s reputation; and, on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical, heavenly light. A magnificent blond child—how much peace there is in that phrase, how much joy, and above all how much hope! There is no comparison with a magnificent black child: literally, such a thing is unwonted. Just the same, I shall not go back into the stories of black angels. In Europe, that is to say, in every civilized and civilizing country, the Negro is the symbol of sin. The archetype of the lowest values is represented by the Negro.

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

I finished the prologue of this book in March 2019. September has arrived, and so I am getting ready to write its epilogue. Little time has passed and much has happened. At the end of last month, the political hegemony of Matteo Salvini’s Lega party in Italy seemed to be caught in a whirlwind of unstoppable expansion both on the level of electoral consensus and that of the social imaginary, powered by the ascent of the right in the rest of Europe and throughout the world. Then, all of a sudden, smack in the middle of the summer holidays, an unexpected turn has inaugurated a new political season in the *belpaese* with uncertain outcomes—an uncertainty common to all politics.

Michele the Fetus

“World Congress of Families” is the name of an event which has been organized irregularly since 1997 (but annually since 2012), each time in a different country, by an association based in the United States with the same name. The goal of the event and its organization is to promote an international alliance

between Christian groups (Catholic, Protestants of different denominations, orthodox) officially meant to defend “life” and the “natural family.” It is actually meant to oppose the right to abortion and divorce, same-sex marriage, the diffusion of anti-discriminatory education in schools as well as the study of gender and sexuality in universities, the de-pathologization of trans identity, and immigration, especially by those of Islamic faith. In 2019, the thirteenth iteration of the World Congress of Families was held in Verona, Italy—the city in which I live and work—from March 29 to 31. The choice of this location was certainly not accidental. In addition to having hosted the event in the prestigious Palazzo della Gran Guardia, the municipality of Verona (which encompasses the city itself and the immediate surrounding area run by the right-wing mayor, Federico Sboarina) was in fact one of the event’s organizing partners, while the regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Veneto as well as the province of Verona (which covers a much larger geographical area along the western end of the Veneto region bordering the Lombardy region and is run by the right-wing Lega party) sponsored the event along with the Ministry of Family and Disabilities. Moreover, the Minister of Family and Disabilities Lorenzo Fontana (a member of the Lega party), the ex-deputy mayor of Verona who has always been close to the “anti-gender” fundamentalist Catholic movement, intervened as a speaker alongside the Minister of Education, University and Research Marco Bussetti (an independent, though he is also associated with the Lega party) and, last but not least, the Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini. What struck the imagination of journalists and quickly became viral on the internet was one of the gadgets distributed during the congress: Michele, a reproduction of an eleven-week-old fetus made of pink rubber that was enclosed in a transparent plastic bag together with a card that read: “abortion stops a beating heart!”¹ (another one of the organizing partners of the event, ProVita & Famiglia, were the ones who gifted it to congress participants). The highlight of the event was held outside in a piazza, the “March for the Family,” which passed through the city center. A section of the neo-fascist Forza Nuova party and a neo-Nazi inspired group called Fortress Europe, whose militants wore white shirts as their official uniform, were clearly visible at the head of the procession lined up behind Mussolini’s slogan: “God, Country, Family.” The other main Italian neofascist force and competitor with the other two organizations is CasaPound, represented by their youth branch the Blocco studentesco (Students’ Block), who hoisted a banner in a multi-ethnic neighborhood in Verona (my neighborhood, and that of the university), which read: “Hasta la vista antifascista.” Siin after on Facebook, CasaPound posted a photograph depicting portraits of “eight hooded militants of the Mastino Gang Parkour Division,” underneath the banner accompanied by the “warning: ‘All anti-fascists are NOT welcome’ who are here to protest the ‘World Congress of Families.’”²

After about two months, from May 23 to 26, European elections were held, which in many countries saw the decisive advance of extreme right parties.

In Germany, the party Alternative für Deutschland grew by nearly four points in the polls, reaching 10% of the vote, in France the Rassemblement National came out in first with 23% of the vote, in Greece, it was Nea Dimokratia with 33%, while the party Laikós Síndesmos—Chrysí Avgí (Popular Association—Golden Dawn) earned 5%. Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS / Law and Justice) won in Poland with 45%, Fidesz—Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége (Fidesz—Hungarian Civic Alliance) triumphed in Hungary with 53%. There was also a victory for Italy’s Lega party, which obtained 34.3% of the vote, nearly doubling the consensus from the political elections held on March 4, 2018 (where they received 17.4%), while their ally in the government, the Five-Star Movement party, went down from 32.7% to 17.1% and the extreme right party Fratelli d’Italia, in contrast, rose from 4% to 6.5%. The result of these elections had changed the internal equilibrium of the coalition between Lega and the Five-Star Movement, further strengthening Salvini’s influence on Parliament, the media, Italian society in general, and Italy’s political imaginary in particular. Gaetano Moraca published an article in the cultural periodical *il Tascabile* on June 17, which demonstrates Salvini’s rising influence. The text opens with Salvini’s reply to the European Commission, which twice threatened to initiate infringement proceedings against Italy because of its government’s economic policies: “If my child is hungry and he asks me to give him something to eat, do you think I should respect the rules of Brussels or feed him? In my opinion, my child comes first. Sixty-million Italians are my children.”

Moraca demonstrates how the Salvini’s style of argument had a contagious effect on the public discourse of the entire Italian parliamentary political spectrum, without any significant difference among the right, the left, and the “post-ideological” populism of the Five-Star Movement. “Evermore often,” he explains, “politicians claim to speak and to act as if they were fathers of a family.” He provides some examples:

Even Minister Toninelli [of the Five-Star Movement], with regard to the NGO’s policy of refoulement, pointed out that “As a minister and a father of a family, I can say that these are terrible images, but they must convince us to move on” and further “As a father I guarantee you: we will save human lives.” The rhetoric of the father has also infected Matteo Renzi [in opposition, from the Democratic Party] who during a discussion of his faith in Conte’s government turned to Salvini “from one father to another,” just like Alessandro Di Battista [Five-Star Movement], who went so far as to write a book on fatherhood even before the birth of his son, up to the current Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte [Five-Star Movement], who last July declared: “Just as in every family the *pater familias* is duty-bound to keep the families accounts in order, I too feel very much like a *pater familias*.”³

Curiously however, Moraca abstains from commenting on the megalomania of “il Capitano”: sixty-million, naturally Italian, children is no small

amount! We are already familiar with the not too subliminal message contained in this fantasy of virile saccharine fatherhood, which is basically the same as the message conveyed by the pale pink color of the rubber of Michele the fetus: “The Child must not die! The Child must be fed! The Child must be protected! Especially if it is an Italian, European, and in the last instance, *white*, Child.” We already know too, that this Child must be protected from abject beings. But we can refresh our memory by reading the post published by Salvini on Facebook on the morning of March 30, intended as an anticipation of the contents of his intervention at the World Congress of Families as well as a response to the demonstration that feminist and transfeminist movement Non Una Di Meno organized in Verona on the same day, the same movement that was the target of the Blocco studentesco/CasaPounds’s threats (we should note, yet again, a double-bind here, which creates scapegoats aimed toward what Fanon calls “collective catharsis”):

In Verona today to argue for Italy’s need to bring children into the world, not to take away rights. Neither abortion nor divorce are up for debate. Everyone makes love with whomever they like. I share what the Pope said today, caring about substance and not form.⁴ Among my concerns are the commission to investigate family-cases to drive out those who make businesses out of children. Yes to mammas and papas, yes to swifter adoptions, no to the uterus for rent [surrogacy]!

P.S. To those “feminists” that pick on the family, I suggest worrying about Islamic extremism that would like women to be submissive, humiliated, and perhaps beaten.

Encore! Encore!

Indeed, in the name of love for his sixty-million children by protecting his thirty-million children from Islamic violence (Super-Prospero), and strengthened by the consensus received in the European elections and confirmed week after week by polls, Salvini issued a second law decree on the theme of security, the so-called Decreto sicurezza bis (“Second Security Decree”), which provides for the confiscation of ships carrying migrants who disembark in Italian ports without authorization from the Ministry of the Interior, as well as fines of up to one million euros for their captains. This second decree was made law by Parliament with the consensus of representatives and senators from the Five-Star Movement on August 5, exactly eight months after the approval of the first security decree. In this way (this is only one of many examples)⁵ on August 28, some (including myself but certainly not everyone) were outraged by the news that the Mare Jonio tugboat, which is connected to the Mediterranean Saving Humans civil platform and was renamed on this occasion as “the ship of children” was denied permission to disembark. It had picked up about one hundred people,

including minors, newborns, and twenty-six women, seven of whom were pregnant⁶ (there are white children, and then there are black and brown migrant children, not all fetuses are created equal) from a rubber dinghy adrift off the coast of Libya. In the meantime, newspapers and the media (some, but not all) spread the heartfelt denunciation made by the newly formed association “Mamme per pelle” (Moms for Skin), made up of Italian women who have chosen to respond to Salvini’s neofascist paternalism with a nationalist maternalism of the opposite sign, aimed at protecting their adopted children with dark skin from the “new wave of racism and xenophobia,” mentioning only in passing also “regular immigrants”⁷ present in the territory. It is not difficult to diagnose these women, or rather these parents, with a high level of political myopia: why are they tailoring an ad hoc anti-racism for their children alone, whose “regularity” and Italianness they claim? Why do they only assemble mothers? Why do they not level a broader critique against the migration policies of Italy and Europe? Do the so-called irregular migrants (a horrible expression) not deserve the same protection against racism that they ask for their own sons and daughters? In my view, the very existence of “Mamme per le pelle,” seems to confirm the cultural hegemony of Salvinism in Italy. After all, it must have been a real blow to these mothers of adopted children to witness the permanent election campaign of the Lega in the fourteen months it was in government. For example, on April 28, 2019, when in Cantù (just north of Milan) to support the Lega’s mayoral candidate Alice Galbiati, Salvini called an unmistakably Italian mother on stage together with her six very Italian biological children, and asked for an applause for her. He then called up her madman of a husband to declare with satisfaction: “This is the Italy which we are working toward: that children may be born in Cantù and that they do not arrive here on boats from the other side of the world already packaged!”

He then explained to journalists that: “There are those on the left that argue that since there is a demographic crisis in Italy there is a need for immigration, but I am in the government to help Italians return to having children because welcoming those fleeing the war is right, but I don’t like the substitution of a people with another people.”⁸

In short, Salvini has obtained 34% favorability in European elections by persevering with the psychopolitical apparatus of abjection, adhering to the archetype which, using Edelman’s words from my prologue, I have called “fascism of the Baby’s face.”⁹ However, it is this height of favorability that, according to many commentators, then made him lose a sense of boundaries and his clarity of judgment. These elections have firmly marked the end of the governmental coalition between the Lega and the Five-Star Movement. Salvini’s desire was to become president of the European Commission, but the polls did not provide the sufficient results for his plans: the Franco-German axis has not only held up once again, but it has also succeeded in magnetizing to itself the sovereigntist and populist parties of other states that

the Lega leader considered to be his allies. On July 16, Ursula von der Leyen of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU, *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*) party lead by Angela Merkel was elected to this post, which she had long aspired to, supported by liberal, popular, and socialist parliamentary groups: even by the Polish PiS, the Hungarian Fidesz, and the Italian Five-Star Movement. The latter thus found itself allied with the Italian Democratic Party (PD, *Partito Democratico*)—which in the Italian Parliament belongs to the opposition—in order to sustain the Europeanist élite that the conservative Italian government had instead promised to challenge. This was the beginning of a disjointed political phase which concluded on September 9 when Giuseppe Conte, already the prime minister for the Lega-Five-Star government, received a new vote of confidence for a new executive branch, this time with the support of the Five-Star Movement, the Democratic Party, and the Free and Equal (Liberi e Uguali) leftist parliamentary group, with the Lega in opposition. Conte's second government (commonly referred to as “Conte Two” by those who want to emphasize that the parliamentary coalition that supports him is different than the one that supported the “Conte One” government) was thus launched little more than a month from the ratification of the “Second Security Decree.”

Salvini sparked a governmental crisis, which ended with the downfall of the Lega's power in government, from the beach resort, “Papeete Beach,” in Milano Marittima (a town between Ravenna and Rimini on the Adriatic Sea). No one knew whether his intention was effectively to bring Italy back to vote—something that he had claimed many times—or rather to achieve a reorganization of the government to further increase the Lega's influence on the whole of the executive branch. In any case, neither of the two moves succeeded. What is certain is that starting in the beginning of August, he exhibited a dangerously subversive charge by making a constant spectacle of himself in official interviews while wearing a white shirt and through direct videos on Facebook in a bathing suit, while sipping cocktails and dancing with go-go dancers at Papeete. He launched the crisis on August 8 while at a rally in Pescara by asking “Italians” to give him the “*full power* to do things as they should be done,” with a direct appeal to the people. This action not only demonstrated all of his contempt for electoral procedures set down by the constitution, but yet again used a fascist formula, one which the Duce delivered on November 16, 1922, in his first speech as the elected prime minister.¹⁰ On the same trail of contempt for democratic means, the Captain then invited “Representatives and Senators” to “get off their butts” to “go to Parliament even during the week of Ferragosto, if they need to,”¹¹ and made the accusation that the reason that those “who do not come is because they want to keep their seat.” It is also clear that he, always around for rallies and crowds, did not spend much time sitting in the armchairs of the Ministry and Senate. Even on September 9, while the vote of confidence in the new government was taking place in the Chamber of Deputies, he was standing on the stage of the demonstration organized by the Fratelli d'Italia party in the

Piazza of Montecitorio (just outside of the Montecitorio Palace, where the Chamber of Deputies meets) to ask for a return to the ballot boxes: a banner reading “Thieves of Sovereignty” stood out among the Italian tricolor flags, while Forza Nuova and CasaPound militants flaunted the fascist “roman salute.”

Something of interest: the playlist that entertained the audience in Piazza Montecitorio after the Italian National Anthem included the songs “Viva la mamma” (“Long-live Mamma”) by Edoardo Bennato and “Siamo figli delle Stelle” (“We are sons of Stars”) by Alan Sorrenti, among others. After all, According to journalist Gabriele Romagnoli’s account of the event in *La Repubblica*, Salvini reached the “tipping point”—that is the “turning point when the behavior of an individual (or a group) changes in a novel and dramatic way”—because of a question posed to him “as a dad”:

For Salvini the tipping point struck between July and August. Connecting events and tracing their cause is an arduous and often bizarre science. It is a bit like the butterfly effect (if a moth beats its wings in Beijing it sets off a hurricane in Texas) in chaos theory. And so: if a young boy gets on a jet ski in Milano Marittima, the government falls in Rome. On July 30th, on behalf of *La Repubblica*, a videographer filmed the son of the Minister of the Interior, who is the leader of the third (but potentially the first) political party, riding in a state police vehicle. His initial reaction is measured and understandable: “A dad’s mistake,” Salvini explains, leveraging shareable feelings. Then something happens. The night does not bring consolation; the caterpillar becomes a butterfly and beats its wings. We find the fatal moment of the critical turning point in a narrative punctuated with exclamations. In the seaside press conference on August 1st, when faced with the inevitable and thus predictable questions of the same videographer, Salvini freaks out, passing beyond measure and defying comprehension: he calls out the dark passions of his interlocutor as well as improbable accounts of the paddle boat. Until that moment he had proposed a version of himself within a virtual world, in which he alternated between punches and caresses, insults and kisses. In real life, more than anything else he was absurd, but compared to the time, almost a conformist. On the first of August he wears the latest uniform, one that is invisible, which he reserved for a parallel reality, sewn for him by others, but which fit perfectly.¹²

Therefore, if Romagnoli is right, in this governmental crisis, the tipping point corresponds to Salvini’s passage from the potential power to act, from the virtual, to the real. Romagnoli would have done better to mention that this threshold had already been tragically traversed for some time by exhausted migrants who had for weeks been abandoned on NGO ships. Indeed, even a comment that has been interpreted as a reference to pedophilia (“You who are so specialized, sir, go and pick up children since you

like them so much”)—which Salvini launched at *La Repubblica*’s videographer, Valerio Lo Muzio, who had also been threatened by agents of the Lega leader’s escort (“We know where you live”)—represents a significant turning point. However, it is in the opposite direction of what Freud’s paternal love for little Anna probably imprinted on the development of psychoanalytic theory. Here Il Capitano’s words are not actually about the Child-symbol, the Child-fetish, nor any one of sixty-million Italians to be protected from a faceless category of enemies (migrants, Rom, the generically understood homosexuals of “gender theory”). Rather, his words are about a flesh and blood son, his biological son, and a flesh and blood journalist, with a specific name and last name, publicly mocked and threatened during a press conference for having carried out his task to provide information on a possible abuse of power (the use of police transport vehicles for entertainment purposes).¹³ A tipping point has effectively been reached and surpassed. Since then Salvini has unleashed a slew of invocations to “Our Lady,” kisses on rosaries¹⁴ and evocations of children who need a mother and a father in general, and of his son and daughter in particular – all of this occurred while Conte announced his resignation on August 20, on September 9, while the Chamber of Representatives held their vote of confidence in the new government in Parliament with neo-fascists protesting in the adjoining piazza with arms raised in the roman salute, and the following day while the Senate was preparing to cast their vote of confidence. Two short passages from Salvini’s speech while the Senate cast their votes will suffice as examples:

Tonight, I will call my daughter to ask her how school went, I will call my son to ask him if he finished his English homework, because he will start school on Thursday, but I will speak to my children with my head held high, with one less seat but with a lot more dignity. That’s something I would never change.

[...]

For us the child has a mom and a dad, they come into the world if there are a mom and a dad, they are adopted if there is a mom and a dad and they do not have to be stolen from that mom and dad.¹⁵ This is the minimum of juridical civilization, and it should not bother anyone.

Soon after the Lega held their thirty-fourth annual meeting in Pontida on September 14 and 15. It was titled, “The Strength to Be Free,” and was well-attended, according to its organizers eighty thousand people showed up, though according to local police, it was closer to forty thousand. During the event, the following occurred: Vito Comencini, a Lega elected representative, repeating a formula that we know is dear to his leader, expressed that the president of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, “*is disgusting*, because he does

not account for the vote of 34% of Italians”; a video-journalist from *La Repubblica*, Antonio Nasso, was assaulted by a militant who smashed his camera with a punch; an editorialist with the same newspaper and a journalist from RAI (the Italian national public broadcasting company), Gad Learner, was accosted with insults, threats, and antisemitic comments being shouted at him (“disgusting,” “we’ll make you eat shit,” “you’re not Italian, you’re jewish”); and Salvini, after his ritual greeting to the tree of life, showed off his entire rhetorical repertoire comprised of love, smiles, prayers to Our Lady of Sorrows, anti-European sovereignty and the fight against immigration, promising to his angry people an upcoming redemption from “the government of traitors and lazy people.” Il Capitano ended his intervention ended by bringing the children of the Lega party, the future, up on stage.¹⁶

If this is all the result of an effective loss of lucidity, of hubris, of self-sabotage, as many claim—even Romagnoli maintains that Salvini may have “lost his mind” in the excitement of the summer season—the reasons for it are not clear to me. As I write this, polls show that the Lega’s approval rating remains above 32%. Capable of mobilizing popular enthusiasm like no other Italian leader (by leveraging the dangerous impulses which we already know) in opposition to a fragile government that at this point will have to respect the European decrees on economic policy—the government is glued together by their opposition to him—Salvini may have also reached the ideal position to steal the votes in the next regional elections on October 27 and the upcoming political elections when they take place. Moreover, Salvinism’s hegemony on the imaginary of Italians could be strengthened by the presence of a new prime minister who is, at the same time, the old prime minister: the very same Conte who, with Salvini, had supported the two security decrees and brought them to the approval of Parliament, and who at the same time of his encore had not criticized himself about it (*merde alors!*). In any case, it is not surprising that the birth of the new government, supported by the Democratic Party which was the main proponent of the Italian law on civil unions, has aroused a sigh of relief in many LGBTQIA+ organizations, and in many of Italy’s LGBTQIA+ citizens.¹⁷

Even “the anus breathes,” my friend Corrado Levi observed in 1979, while providing instructions for fist-fucking in his book, *New kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistico* (New Kamasutra: Sadoomasochistic Teaching).¹⁸ Who knows if, in this moment, it can feel relief too (the anus, not Corrado).

Hyenas and Cat Ladies

To attempt to respond to this crucial question, I must abandon more recent Italian current events and take a few steps back. Like the British and American GLF, like the French FHAR, and like the other early gay liberation movements, the original Milanese FUORI! group, and then COM, which Corrado Levi had helped found together with Mario Mieli, did not ask for the inclusion of sexual minorities into heterosexual society by appealing to

the right to marriage and liberal democracy; rather, they promoted the revolution, arguing that the struggle for sexual liberation could only be combined with the struggle against class inequality and against any form of discrimination and racism. Within twenty years, following a largely common trajectory in the European and North American left, which has left the field open to new forms of populism, lesbian and gay movements in a majority of cases have instead converted to liberal political culture: they have taken to asserting only juridical equality and neglecting social, economic, and racial issues. Lisa Duggan has used the term “homonormativity” to refer to this development, with the intent to denounce how, within lesbian and gay reformist movements, an interpretation of sexuality through the right to privacy, “commercial life [and] domestic confinement,”¹⁹ has prevailed, a privatization which has wound up providing support to heterosexual institutions like marriage, against which the homosexual liberation movements of the 1970s fought. Susan Stryker has subsequently specified that the term “homonormativity” was already spread throughout the trans movements in the United States in the 1990s, indicating the hegemony of gay movements over the movements of other minority sexual subjects which has accompanied the diffusion of the GLBT acronym²⁰—which later became LGBT, LGBTQ, LGBTI, LGBTQI, LGBTQIA, and most recently LGBTQIA+. The acronym should ideally group together all sexual minorities: lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transexuals/transgender people, queers, questioning people, intersex people, asexuals, pansexuals, and more. However, Stryker notes, the acronym was disseminated alongside the emergence of campaigns for the recognition of marital rights for homosexual couples, in which gay, endosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, white and wealthy men had assumed the role as spokespeople, letting their needs override the rest, and making the presence of transgender and intersexual subjects a problem within the movement (even if I have never really liked the term “precursor,” here I cannot refrain from noting that Mieli was without a doubt an exuberant precursor in discussing both meanings of the concept of homonormativity). To this, I should add that since September 11, 2001, the rights of homosexual couples are used ever-more often in nationalist rhetoric that opposes European and North American liberal culture to the rest of the world, toward justifying the introduction of anti-Islamic and anti-immigrant politics.²¹ To explain this phenomenon, Jasbir Puar has coined the concept of homonationalism²² which in the last few years, together with the category of homonormativity, has increased in use by queer intellectuals and activists as a critical instrument to investigate the effects of the inclusion of sexual minorities in neoliberal societies.²³

The debate raised by these new political categories has been widespread not only in North America but also in all of Europe,²⁴ even in Italy,²⁵ and in some cases has brought about the return of Marxism to queer theory²⁶ and to the revival of Freudo-Marxism with the purpose of bypassing queer theory.²⁷ In this book, however, from the prologue on, these have not been,

or at least not all of these, the interpretive registers that I have used in my attempt to understand the role played by sex between men in the fascist psychopolitical archetypes that have been reactivated in contemporary Italy by a dangerous sovereigntist populism. The theoretical itinerary carried out in the six chapters of this study (in which Freud's fascinating and oscillating thought on the sexual has been read in light of the philosophical and philosophical-political tradition before him and after him, up to the so-called antisocial queer theories of Bersani and Edelman) could perhaps have disoriented those who expected that the stakes of my reflection was to trace a clear separation between the political right and left (which, to be clear, I do consider to be important, indeed fundamental), between Conte One and Conte Two, between the Lega and the Democratic Party.²⁸ This book has instead attempted to question the uncanny role that the sexual drive, of which anal sex between men is traditionally considered to be the epitome, assumes with respect to the ideals of a civilization and culture which the left also shares. In this way, this book has also attempted to invite mostly gay Italian men—to whom I address it, primarily because I recognize myself in them—to participate in a consciousness-raising exercise, to remember what they are and represent, and to make this awareness into an antidote against the seductive sirens of homonormativity and homonationalism. This operation, at least in Italy—if you'll allow me—has a certain originality today. If it is true that in the CIRQUE (Inter-University Centre for Queer Research) mission statement, we read that “the proper object of queer” is a “deconstruction of identities” that from sexual minorities can be extended to “migrants, precarious workers, disabled persons,” the “marginal individuals, losers, and misfits,” “the colleague with Asperger's syndrome,” and the “cat lady with her bowls.” In other words, that the “relation between queer and LGBT [...] is neither necessary nor a key defining factor.”²⁹ Personally, I have nothing against (please do not misunderstand me about this either) generically (de)constructivist research on the identities and subjectivities of migrants, people with disabilities, or those on the Autism spectrum, animal welfare activists, in general, and cat ladies, in particular. What I have tried to achieve is something different: to respond to the desexualization of the sexual in academic theory and in social movement theories, to put the sexual dimension back into political philosophy—queer or no longer queer at this point matters little to me—at the borders but certainly not the center of it. That strictly sexual dimension that can be found, for example, in Fanon's anti-racism and which, on the contrary, the “intersectional”³⁰ declaration of CIRQUE seems to remove or foreclose. The sexual compulsively returns: today, in Italy, it returns through a renewed interest in cherished authors (golden fruits) like Mieli and Parinetto, like Levi and like Lonzi. It also returns through this book.

As I have noted, in order to not simplify the question by reducing it to a choice between right or left we need to take a few steps back. I am not referring to the fleeting reference to FUORI! and to COM of the 1970s

mentioned at the beginning of this section, but to shorter trip back in time. In June 2015, when the president of the United States was Barack Obama and not Donald Trump, the Supreme Court had affirmed the “unconstitutionality [...] of the prohibitions against same-sex marriage” approved by certain states,³¹ thereby making same-sex marriage legal in federal territory. On May 5, 2016, when the center-left government presided over by the then secretary of the Democratic Party Matteo Renzi was in charge in Italy, our Parliament had instead approved a discriminatory law on civil unions, which denies—as I have noted—lesbian and gay couples’ access to marriage and the status of a family, and which, however, has undoubtedly represented an important legal and symbolic victory for sexual minorities in Italy, who had in fact celebrated the move as a great victory. If one considers the press and television as reliable indicators of Italian public opinion in general, even this opinion seemed to have a positive reaction: in the media, we witnessed a proliferation of articles, reports, and TV shows that celebrated the new legal institution. On RAI 3, for example from November 2016 to October 2017 two editions of the program “Stato Civile: L’amore è uguale per tutti” (Marital Status: Equal Love is for Everyone) were aired in which women and men in same-sex couples told their stories—romantic, moving, edifying, and ending in civil union. On Canale 5, in the 2016 edition of *Uomini e donne* (Men and Women)—planned before the law was approved—and then again in 2017, Maria De Filippi had instead hosted the first dating reality show with gay “tronisti” (dating contestants), Claudio Sona and Alex Migliorini: two handsome white, big and muscular, tattooed, men—very similar to the straight “tronisti” in previous iterations. “I’m not looking for scandal”—the television host claims in March 2016—“but rather of the *normality* of a love lived in its everydayness.”³² She was not the only one to achieve that goal; all of television did: one could find many examples in talk shows, fiction, and journalist commentary, to support the thesis that there exists a consolidated homonormativity in Italian “sauce.”³³ So much so that not even *Le Iene* (“Hyenas,” a television show broadcast on the “Italia 1” channel), the most irreverent of the scandal-driven television programs, was able to avoid dealing with the celebration of homosexual love. On November 26, 2014, when the approval of the Civil Union law in Italy still seemed to be a mirage, they aired an alarming investigation into the spread of barebacking³⁴ among gay Italian men, in which the journalist Nadia Toffa interviewed men who were looking for unprotected sex with other men, after luring them through online chatting. However, on December 6, 2016, some months after the approval of the law, the show aired a “double interview” in an episode called “Simone e Ivan: i più giovani sposi gay d’Italia” (Simon and Ivan: Italy’s Youngest Gay Spouses), in which the romantic ideals of faithfulness and reciprocity seemed to have succeeded in neutralizing any possible reference to the disturbing character of sex between men. By responding to an intense series of questions, the two twenty-three-year-olds, who met at the desks of their school and who would shortly be civilly united, not only claimed that

they have never cheated on each other but also that they were both sexually versatile; that is, they switch between the active and passive roles in anal sex. This apparent neutralization, however, was a repression, and shortly thereafter the repressed returned in the same program in all of its obscenity.

The scoop went on air on February 19, 2017: The National Office of Racial Anti-Discrimination (UNAR, *Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali*) had arranged a loan of more than fifty-five thousand euro for an association that is affiliated with clubs where sex between men takes place. An anonymous “informant” revealed the story facing away from the camera in order to explain—with a distorted and therefore unrecognizable voice—how these places work. Hiding themselves “under the label of associations that promote social activity,” these locales save on taxes and on business license fees, but they are actually businesses “in the gay sex market”: one must have an annual membership with the association, women are not allowed in, and a ticket is required at every entrance. Once inside, you get undressed and “everything happens often without the use of protection.” The journalist Filippo Roma twice asked for explanations from the president of UNAR, Francesco Spano (“the one with the flashy orange coat”), who twice takes refuge, embarrassed, inside Palazzo Chigi. The arguments are strong: not only is sex practiced without a condom in these clubs but so too is sex work. Moreover (“a little bird told me”), Spano appears to be registered for these clubs. Even more eloquent than the words of the “informant” and the journalist are the images that appear on screen between one attempted interview with the president of UNAR and the next, filmed by a telecamera hidden among three roman saunas where an associate of the broadcast has introduced himself as a customer. Obscured faces, with the pubic area at times covered by a towel tied at the waist, at times completely nude, dozens of men looking at each other, brushing against each other, touching each other, embracing each other, uniting in assorted sexual embraces. In the wellness centers of the saunas, three masseurs offer the fake customers sexual add-ons in exchange for extra cash. The report then explains in great detail what darkrooms are (“dark rooms where people enter dressed or nude, to have sex with whomever it happens, without looking each other in the eye”), what glory holes are (“you take out your cock, put it through a hole, and someone on the other side sucks you off”), and Roma sarcastically comments on the scenes of fellatio (“[look at] these two guys: one sits on a barstool, and the other on his knees in front of him tasting something more than a drink. Like these other two, and still others”), on anal sex, the voyeurism of those who watch and masturbate (“while these two have sex, next to them there is a third who does it himself”), a scene of fist-fucking (“here is the main dish: a man chained and hanging with his legs open, and another who, more than giving him a hand, gives him his own arm!”). Far from the sculptural perfection of the gay “tronisti” or from the innocent freshness of the “youngest gay couple in Italy,” the bodies displayed in the story are lanky, withered, or on the contrary well-fed, with prominent bellies, which almost always belong to middle-aged men. We also hear the voice of

some of them, urged to speak by the infiltrator's questions, and from whom nothing romantic or enlightening comes out ("it is a club where you can do whatever the hell you want," "it is enough to just open your ass or your mouth, it is cul-tural³⁵: culture-wise there is only the cock"). The reporting is knowingly constructed to provoke shame in those who identify with the clients of the gay saunas, and indignation and disgust in other television viewers.

Le Iene subsequently dedicated another two episodes to this topic, which aired on February 22 and March 19, 2017, during which time it was made known that the indicted association is the National Association Against Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation (ANDDOS, *Associazione Nazionale contro le Discriminazioni Da Orientamento Sessuale*).³⁶ Some of the scenes that were shot in the saunas were used again and interspersed with new interviews: Francesco Spano once again, as well as the transgender columnist and former deputy Vladimir Luxuria, the President of ANDDOS Marco Canale, and the mother (anonymous, appearing with her back turned from the camera, with an altered voice) of a mentally disabled young man who claimed that he had suffered an attempted rape in the sauna owned by Canale. If this were not enough, the local affiliates of ANDDOS were also accused of being a trafficking locale. The explanations provided by UNAR and ANDDOS were ineffectual; that is, that UNAR does not finance associations, but projects, and that ANDDOS had presented a project in collaboration with the University of Rome, La Sapienza, which did not involve saunas or cruising clubs, but anti-violence counseling centers. In a short amount of time, the events collapsed: Spano resigned,³⁷ the undersecretary to the prime minister, Maria Elena Boschi, suspended the funding granted to the associations, and ANDDOS withdrew the financial requests from the government, was expelled from the Italian Association of Sports and Culture (AICS, *Associazione Italiana Cultura e Sport*), and filed a lawsuit against both *Le Iene* and the "informant" responsible for the spread of Spano's sensitive information. Eventually, even Canale resigned from his role (after some time ANDDOS was re-founded under the name ARCO (*Associazione Ricreativa Circoli Omosessuali*—Recreational Association of Homosexual Clubs). Many rode the wave of the scandal: the Lega and Five-Star Movement have announced parliamentary investigations together with Forza Italia and Fratelli d'Italia, whose president, Giorgia Meloni, has asked for the closure of UNAR; CODACONS (Coordination of Associations for the Defense of the Environment and the Rights of Users and Consumers) has presented complaints to the Italian Court of Audit and Rome's public prosecutor, the leader of the traditionalist Catholic party The People of Family (PdF, *Popolo della Famiglia*), Mario Adinolfi, claimed to have inspired the reporting, a claim that was later denied by the editorial staff of the broadcast. The web went wild in a ferocious homophobic campaign, in Naples a night club affiliated with ANDDOS received threats from Forza Nuova. Another wave of blame was eventually leveled at the *Corriere della Sera*, which published a report on the debauchery of gay Milan, between the

cruising bars, darkrooms, saunas (“the gay spots denounced by *Le Iene*”) and private parties with drugs and unprotected sex.³⁸

When faced with the umpteenth “balletto verde”³⁹ in the Italian news, one could ask: why does no one ever protest the many cases in which there is an association like ARCI (The Italian Association of Cultural Recreation) financed with public funds for social programming, while ANDDOS’s involvement in public funding through UNAR with a project against homophobic violence has aroused such an outcry? The answer to which the reflections in this book lead is quite simple: because ARCI is affiliated with bars, restaurants, and dance halls, not clubs with darkrooms, cruising bars, and gay saunas. Performing outrage at the general outrage, as some leaders of the LGBTQIA+ movement have done, does not lead us very far in my view.⁴⁰ Instead, it is better to try to understand the reasons for the scandal: one which represents the sexual drive as the death drive of the civilized self. Someone may perhaps desire, as Mieli seems to (setting aside his reservations on the economic exploitation of gay sex), a world in which playing “scopone scientifico” in an ARCI club and fucking with multiple partners in an ANDDOS club are perceived as equivalent activities.⁴¹ However, as Freud teaches us, in our world, this equivalence is not given, and the anonymous sex between men continues to disturb the same public opinion that is moved by the love stories of gay couples united in Series B marriages. Western civilization has always attempted to neutralize the threat that the sexual drive makes against rationality, against moral conscience, against meaning through the rite of heterosexual marriage, ideally realigning instinct and drive in a promise of futurity from which the non-reproductive acts of sexual minorities remain traditionally excluded; we have found clarifying examples of this in classical philosophy of modernity. From the 1970s to today, the mainstream lesbian and gay movements have therefore done nothing more than following a path already trodden: to seek redemption from the perversion of the sexual drive, of which their sterility has long been representative, through access to family rights and techniques of assisted reproduction that allow even them to contribute to the future of the nation and the species. Duggan, Stryker, and Puar have done well in denouncing how in this way lesbians and gays (above-all white well-meaning gays) run the risk of unloading the weight of their negativity onto the shoulders of other minoritarian subjects. But to attempt to understand this negativity, to assume the responsibility of it without seeking other scapegoats, the concepts of drive and jouissance appear more functional to me than those of homonormativity and homonationalism, the theoretical frames of psychoanalysis and anti-social queer theories more useful than queer constructivist theories and Marxism (which instead become more useful than them for other purposes).

Today we live in a neoliberal and hyper-hedonistic era where jouissance produces economic utility⁴² while romantic love attains social, legal, and media recognition; and both romantic love and jouissance are then

effectively used in the political rhetorics of populism, sovereignty and neofascism. Already by the 1970s Mieli had updated Marcuse's thinking by speaking of the commodification and the fetishization of perversions for "the deadly purposes of capital"⁴³ and, with the ferocity of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, had written pages on the alienated sex taking place in the darkrooms of gay clubs.⁴⁴ The ANDDOS clubs are thus only one example of how sex is put to profit in what Preciado, renewing the definition that Foucault offers of modernity as a biopolitical age, has more recently called "the pharmacopornographic era."⁴⁵ At the same time—just as *Le Iene* and the *Corriere della Sera* had demonstrated in the moment in which the advent of the hegemony of Salvinism in Italy was near, but no one could yet foresee it—the sexual as such (not redeemed by romantic, reproductive, or political-transformative fantasies) retains the status of a toxic activity that disturbs consciousness, that contaminates social relations, which, according to common sense, the state administration should not promote or finance in any way. In the topology of the contemporary imaginary, the gay sauna remains that heterotopic interstice discussed by Foucault and de Lauretis—perhaps even better to call it heterodistopic—in which the sexual liberal-democracy reveals its obscene double and the social order of things is subverted so as to remain equal to itself. The unpleasant images shot by *Le Iene* in Rome's gay saunas have had, if nothing else, the merit of having brought us back—us gays, us queers, all of us mascs, femmes, and all shades in-between—to those other places of non-sense, physical and imaginary at the same time, which despite the remarkable achievements of queer movements, sex between men has never ceased to occupy. To the television viewer who is more a participant than an academic like me, those middle-aged bodies serve as a reminder of his own body before they would call to mind Bersani and Edelman's theories. These images rub his nose in the fact that more often than consolidating the subject's bonds with community, sex exposes the subject to the risk of public ridicule and isolation. Much more often than arousing social approval, sex arouses feelings of shame and disgust that have little to do with the transformation of oneself, the other, and the progress of civilization. The point is that, as much as it may upset us, the excitation and jouissance that sex continues to procure also depend on these feelings—to a far greater extent than a game of "scopone" among friends.

Milan, Castiglioncello, and Rosignano Solvay, September 2019

Notes

- 1 For an example of the news coverage, see Giuseppe Gaetano, "Il feto di plastica e gli altri gadget distribuiti al Congresso delle famiglie," *Il Corriere della Sera*, March 29th, 2019.
- 2 Paolo Berizzi, "Da forza nuova ai neonazi: Così l'estrema destra sale sul carro provita," *La Repubblica*, March 30th, 2019. See also Berizzi's other article on the event, "In testa sfila anche Forza Nuova, con gli standardi 'Dio, Patria,

- Famiglia,” *La Repubblica*, March 31st, 2019. See, especially, his book: *NazItalia: Viaggio in un Paese che si è riscoperto fascista* (Milano: Baldini e Castoldi, 2018).
- 3 Moraca concludes: “Any action by the government is therefore motivated and justified by the ‘common sense of the father of the family,’ who openly refers to the ‘diligence of a good family man’ with a legal background.” Gaetano Moraca, “La retorica del buon padre di famiglia: Da dove viene e quali conseguenze ha l’appello al *pater familias* nella comunicazione politica?” *Il Tascabile*, June 17th, 2019: <https://www.iltascabile.com/societa/padre-di-famiglia/>.
 - 4 The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal and Archbishop Pietro Parolin, spoke these words with regard to the world Congress of Families: “We agree on the substance but not on the methodology.” Pope Francis echoed these words: “I have read the position of the Italian Episcopal Conference and what the Secretary of State had affirmed not long ago. They seemed to me to be just and balanced words.” Francesca Giansoldati, “Congresso famiglie, Papa Francesco dal Marocco: ‘bene sostanza, metodo sbagliato,” *Il Messaggero*, March 30th, 2019. Salvini had therefore reported the Pope’s words in a partial manner, presenting as an adherence what was actually a taking distance.
 - 5 Another tragic episode that has received wide media coverage was the arrest (and subsequent release) of captain Carola Rackete of the Dutch ship, *Sea Watch 3*, operated by the German NGO *Sea Watch*. The ship had picked up fifty-three migrants on June 12, and on June 29, the captain had docked at Lampedusa, despite not having authorization, judging that the psychophysical conditions of the passengers had at that point become critical. Salvini did not miss the opportunity to attack Rackete, who in the meantime had also become a symbol because she is gendered female, on social media: he described her as “little loudmouth,” “outlaw,” “delinquent,” “an accomplice to human trafficking,” and more (Rackete has since pressed charges against him for defamation). The last of the twenty-four ships that were blocked in the sea when the Lega-Five-Star Movement’s coalitional government took office was the Ocean Viking of the French NGO *SOS Méditerranée* and *Médecins sans frontières*, which on September 14th, after six days of being denied permission to disembark in Italian ports, received authorization to enter Lampedusa’s port because the new Minister of the Interior, Luciana Lamorgese, finally agreed. At the Lega’s annual meeting in Pontida the following day Salvini protested the new government’s immigration policy and again attacked Rackete calling her a “spoiled little communist.”
 - 6 Because of the adverse weather conditions and the lack of drinkable water on board, the permission for pregnant women, children, and the sick to disembark was only conceded after about forty hours of waiting, and they were transferred to the ships of the Italian Coast Guard. However, thirty-one of the migrants had to wait until September 2nd when new authorization arrived, with the justification of “health reasons.”
 - 7 The quote is taken from a letter written by Gabriella Nobile, the founder of the association, “‘Negro dovevi affogare’: E ho visto il dolore negli occhi di Fabien,” *La Repubblica*, August 6th, 2019. In the same issue, see also: Maria Novella De Luca, “L’allarme dei genitori adottivi: ‘Razzismo contro i nostril figli.’”
 - 8 The video can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA5yzz-C8R6A&ab_channel=LaRepubblica. Two jokes anticipate this comment: while he was calling the children up to the stage, Salvini joked about the fact of having been denounced for “the kidnapping of minors” with regard to his policy of prohibiting ships aiding migrants to disembark. He then declared “I cannot make any promises, but as a dad I will do my best so that all children may go to school,” implying a prejudicial condemnation to Roma families who would force

their children to beg in the streets (see the video: <https://video.corriere.it/salvini-fa-salire-bambini-palco-cantu-no-quelli-che-arrivano-barconi-confezionati/596a0f4a-69ca-11e9-9fa7-3789e57c1b85>). The *mission* of the “Mamme per le pelle” organization is not to oppose the racism against the adults and children of the Roma population, nor toward minors or those of legal adult age to whom Salvini prevents being able to disembark, but only the protection from racism of their own beloved children.

- 9 Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 75.
- 10 This is an excerpt from Salvini’s speech in Pescara: “I ask Italians if they want to give me the full power to do things as they should be done. We must do what we want to do quickly, concretely, energetically, and courageously. It is no longer the moment of ‘nos,’ of ‘maybes,’ of doubts. And, of course, I don’t care to go back to the old ways: if I have to get involved, I’ll do it myself with my head held high. Then, of course, we can choose our travel companions. Italians need a government that acts.” And this is an excerpt from Mussolini’s so-called “discorso del bivacco” (Bivouac Speech): “We ask for full power because we want to assume full responsibility. Without full power you all know well that you would not make a penny—a penny, I say—from the economy. By this we do not mean to exclude the possibility of valiant collaborations with representatives, senators or competent individual citizens. Each of us has a religious sense of our difficult task. The country supports us and waits. We will no longer not give you words, but facts.” The similarities between the two are clear enough to make it improbable that they are more than mere coincidence. As the editors of *L’Espresso* note in an online comment (“Matteo Salvini wants ‘Full power’: as Benito Mussolini said” August 9th, 2019): “Mussolini, concluding the speech with which he obtained the confidence of the Parliament, asked for the intervention of ‘God,’ who ‘may assist me in bringing my arduous toil to a victorious end.’ Salvini [...] did not do the same thing. As is noted, he prefers to call on the ‘Madonna’ or ‘the Blessed Virgin Mary.’” (Proving even with these invocations a style of virility different than that of Mussolini)
- 11 Trans. “Ferragosto” (from the Latin *feriae Augusti*, or Augustan festivities from the ancient Roman days of Caesar Augustus) is a national Italian holiday on August 15 (also coinciding with the Catholic Church celebration of the Assumption) that tends to lead to the closing of major business until the beginning of September.
- 12 Gabriele Romagnoli, “La metamorfosi di Salvini,” *La Repubblica*, August 25, 2019. Here Romagnoli references Malcolm Gladwell’s book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2006).
- 13 The agent that made Salvini’s son get on the police jet ski has already undergone internal disciplinary proceedings, and the prosecutor in Ravenna has opened an investigation for embezzlement and private violence (for the threats leveled at Lo Muzio by the Salvini’s escort agents).
- 14 In this sense, Salvini had already seemed to be unleashed during the electoral campaign for European elections. On May 18, 2019, for example, in Milan’s Piazza Duomo, from a stage where the words “Italy First, Common Sense in Europe” dominated, surrounded by other representatives of European sovereigntist parties, Salvini spoke these words: “We rely on women and men of good will. We rely on the six patron saints of Europe: Saint Benedict of Norcia, Saint Bridget of Sweden, Saint Catherine of Siena, Saint Cyril and Methodius, Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. We put our faith in them. And we trust them with our destiny, the future, the peace and prosperity of our people.” Brandishing a

- rosary, which he kissed at the end of the speech, he then added: “I personally entrust your life, my life, and Italy to the immaculate heart of Mary, which I am sure will lead us to victory. Because this Italy, this piazza, and this Europe are symbols of moms, dads, men and women, who with a smile, courage, and determination, want peaceful coexistence, who give respect but ask for respect.”
- 15 Here Salvini refers to the judicial investigation called “Angels and Demons” conducted by the state police (*carabinieri*) in Reggio Emilia, which involves twenty-nine suspects, social service operators of the municipality of Bibbiano and the private study center “Hansel and Gretel.” According to the shocking testimony gathered, ten girls and boys were allegedly taken from their original families and were tricked into giving them up to foster care with other families: in particular, Hansel and Gretel’s consultants—paid well beyond market value—allegedly manipulated them into declaring family abuse that never occurred. As I write this, the investigation is still underway, and among those under house arrest is the Mayor of Bibbiano, Andrea Carletti of the Democratic Party. For this reason, the very serious legal matter is used instrumentally in political confrontations. Up until the launch of the Second Conte government, there have been numerous supporters not only of Lega but also of the Five-Star Movement, who mocked the Democratic Party by calling it “the party of Bibbiano.”
 - 16 Among the children gathered on the stage under the banner which read, “Torn Up Children,” one of them named “Greta” took pride of place with her “beautiful red hair,” who, Salvini told the crowd, was reunited with her mother after being placed in abusive foster care by social services. In the following days it was then discovered that the girl did not come from Bibbiano as Salvini had implied (see the previous footnote, and also the article by Matteo Puccianelli, “La vera storia della bambina di Pontida. La vicenda di Greta è molto diversa dal racconto della Lega. Lo provano le carte del tribunale,” *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019), and who had not even been returned to her mother by the courts, but was still at the center of a complex and difficult legal case (see the article by Giampaolo Visetti, “La bambina di Pontida non doveva stare sul palco: ‘Mai restituita alla madre,’” *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019).
 - 17 Two significant testimonies are a post by Arcilesbica on Facebook that hoped for an alliance between the Five-Star Movement and the Democratic Party already in the early stages of the crisis, and statements made by Gabriele Piazzoni, the secretary general of Arcigay, at the time of the presentation of the new ministers, who both had literally expressed “great relief,” in addition to “hope and optimism.”
 - 18 “The anus breathes! AT THE HEIGHT of dilation, when the knuckles strain to pass through, there remains an area between the base of the pinky finger and the base of the thumb through which there is a communication between inside and outside: in the hollow of the hand the air flows with each breath—warm as it exits, fresh as it enters.” Corrado Levi, *New kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica* (Milan: Asterisco edizioni, 2019), 40.
 - 19 Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 66.
 - 20 Susan Stryker, “Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity,” *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008):145–157. Doi: 10.1215/01636545-2007-026.
 - 21 Following the Orlando nightclub shooting in June 2016, for example, Donald Trump, who was then the candidate for the United States Presidency, expressed public condolences to the LGBT community. He did not, however, mention the fact that a major part of the patrons of Pulse nightclub who were killed or wounded were Latinx, and he promised that if he won he would close the borders

- to immigrants coming from countries where radical Islam is practiced and would construct a wall on the Mexican border to block the migrants coming in from South America—just like the majority of those who went to Pulse. In September 2017, in Germany, Alice Weidel ended her electoral campaign by explaining that her lesbianism was absolutely not in contradiction with her position as a leader in the right-wing party Alternative for Germany. On the contrary, as a lesbian, she demanded protection from the homophobia of Islamic immigrants.
- 22 Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
 - 23 The figure of Renaud Camus is a prime example of how much the social and political position of gays could change after obtaining marital rights. In 1979, the same year that Levi published his *New Kamasutra*, Camus published *Tricks: A Sexual Odyssey Man-to-Man*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Ace Charter Books, 1981), a scandalous account of Camus’s homosexual adventures gathered in France, in the United States, and in Italy; and in 2014 he was condemned for racial hate because of the vehemence with which he has publicly argued for the “great replacement” theory since 2010, a term which for him indicates the “danger” that the European population, and the French population in particular, could be replaced within a few decades by an African and Middle-East Islamic population because of population decline and immigration. Besides his book *Tricks*, see also: *Abécédaire de l’In-nocence* (Neully-sur-Seine: éditions David Reinharc, 2010) and *Le Grand Remplacement* (Neully-sur-Seine: éditions David Reinharc, 2011).
 - 24 See, for example: Gianfranco Rebutini, “Homonationalisme et impérialisme sexuel: Politiques néolibérales de l’hégémonie,” *Raisons politiques: Revue de théorie politique* 49 (2013); Gianmaria Colpani and Adriano José Habed, “In Europe It’s Different: Homonationalism and Peripheral Desires for Europe” in *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe*, eds. Phillip M. Ayoub and David Paternotte (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
 - 25 See, for example: Gianmaria Colpani, “Omonazionalismo nel Belpaese?” in *Il colore della nazione*, ed. Gaia Giuliani (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2015); Gianfranco Rebutini, “Omonormatività e omonazionalismo: gli effetti della privatizzazione della sessualità” in *Politiche dell’orgoglio*, ed. Massimo Prearo (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015); Alessia Acquistapace, Elisa A.G. Arfini, Goffredo Polizzi, Antonia Anna Ferrante, and Barbara De Vivo, “Tempo di essere incivili: Una riflessione terrena sull’omonazionalismo in Italia al tempo dell’austerità” in *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*, ed. Federico Zappino (Verona: ombre corte, 2016); Renato Busarello, “Diversity Management, pinkwashing aziendale e omonoliberalismo: Prospettive critiche sul caso italiano” in *Il genere*.
 - 26 See Kevin Floyd, *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
 - 27 James Penney, *After Queer Theory: The Limits of Sexual Politics* (London: Pluto Press, 2014).
 - 28 As far as the rights of migrants are concerned, also the Democratic Party leaves much to be desired at the moment, if we recall that one of its representatives, Marco Minniti, the Minister of the Interior before Salvini, made shameful deals with Libya regarding migration, a country in which, in the meantime, a bloody civil war has erupted.
 - 29 The citations above are taken from the mission statement on the Center’s website: <https://cirque.unipi.it/vision/>.
 - 30 The term (not the concept, which comes first) “intersectionality” was coined in 1989 by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her article, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist

- Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140. In this article she uses “intersectionality” to name the need to intersect the determinants of race, class, and gender to formulate balanced judgments in discrimination trials, provoking a far-reaching debate. This book has followed an intersectional method, however not in the sense of a mere juxtaposition of minority subjects, but by insisting on the way the sexual is implicated in different psycho-political processes of abjection, among which is racism. If Bersani is right (in his sentence which acts as the exergue to this volume), this should be the properly queer conjugation of intersectionality.
- 31 Gianfrancesco Zinetti, *L’orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015), 95.
 - 32 Martina Pennisi, “Uomini e Donne, Maria De Filippi ha deciso: da settembre il trono gay,” *Corriere della sera*, March 30th, 2016, my emphasis.
 - 33 Symptomatically, the intention to bring a lesbian “tronista” has still not been announced. For an example of homonationalism, I want to note the article published by Giovanni Dall’Orto in a magazine on gay spaces, *Pride*, in December of 2017, entitled “Islamofobia? Sì, grazie.”
 - 34 “Bareback” is both an adverb and an adjective within the lexicon of horseback riding: it means the practice of mounting directly onto the bare back of the horse without a saddle. By extension, in gay circles the term has come to mean the search for anal sex without a condom with the aim of deliberately contracting HIV. For an ethnography of the subculture of barebacking, see Tim Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).
 - 35 Trans. Here the speaker plays on the Italian word for “cultural” (*culturale*) by emphasizing the “cul” at the beginning, which in Italian means “ass” (*culo*).
 - 36 According to the association’s website, <https://anddos.org>, more than seventy social clubs are affiliated with the organization, which generally amounts to almost two-hundred and twenty-seven thousand members.
 - 37 On February 2, Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, successor to Matteo Renzi but also with the Democratic Party, had named Luigi Manconi as his replacement.
 - 38 Leonard Berberi, “Viaggio nel sesso estremo. ‘Ecco la via, quanti siete?’ Le sigle, I codici, gli eccessi. La Milano della trasgressione. Club, case, saune: appuntamento via app poi rapport non protetti e droghe. Nei locali gay denunciati dalle Iene,” *Corriere della Sera*, February 26th, 2017.
 - 39 “Balletti verdi” or “green ballets” is the name the press gave an open investigation in 1960 run by the public prosecutor in Brescia (near Milan) on parties that were being periodically held in a farmstead in the Castel Mella area. The name, coined by the magazine *Le Ore* (which at the time was not yet the pornographic magazine that it would become in the 1970s), was a combination of “ballets roses” or “pink ballets,” an earlier sex scandal in France analogous to the Italian case but in a heterosexual setting, with color of the carnation that Oscar Wilde used to wear on his lapel. About two hundred men were investigated for selling drugs, pornographic material, prostitution, and international trafficking of young sex workers. However, in the end, the investigation revealed an overblown exaggeration, which the judge, Giovanni Arcai, speculated to be traceable to neo-fascism. The Italian Socialist Democratic Party, however, took this opportunity to introduce a bill aimed toward criminalizing homosexual acts, which recalls that which was already introduced by the Italian Social Movement party, and which fortunately never came under review by Parliament. On the history of the “balletti verdi,” see: Stefano Bolognini, *Balletti verdi: Uno scandolo omosessuale* (Gavardo: Liberedizioni, 2000);

- Andrea Pini, *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta* (Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2011).
- 40 See, for example, Paolo Salvatore Orrù, “Scandalo fondi pubblici al circolo gay accusato di prostituzione. Il leader di Gaynet: ‘Agguato delle Iene.’ La Meloni: ‘Chiudiamo tutto,’” *Tiscali news*, February 20th, 2017; Porpora Marcasciano, “‘Quando le Iene ci presero tutte per prostitute.’ Il racconto della presidentessa del MIT,” *Gay.it*, February 22nd, 2017.
- 41 Trans. Here Bernini includes a play on words with “scopone scientifico,” which is the name of an Italian card game, closely related to the game “scopa,” and is also the nominal form of the verb “to fuck” (*scopare*). With the phrase “scopone scientifico,” then, Bernini attempts to craft a play on words that suggests an equivalence between the playfulness of a card game with that of the act of fucking.
- 42 See also, in this regard, Dardot and Laval, *The New Way of the World*.
- 43 “According to Marcuse: ‘Against a society which employs sexuality as means for a useful end, the perversions uphold sexuality as an end in itself; they thus place themselves outside the dominion of the performance principle and challenge its very foundation. They establish libidinal relationships which society must ostracize because they threaten to reverse the process of civilization which turned the organism into an instrument of work.’ This is already somewhat out of date, and needs to be revised. Today it is clear that our society makes very good use of the ‘perversions’; you need only go into a newsagent or to the cinema to be made well aware of this. ‘Perversion’ is sold both wholesale and retail; it is studied classified, valued, marketed, accepted, discussed. It becomes a fashion, going in and out of style. It becomes culture, science, printed paper, money—if not, then who would publish this book? The unconscious is sold in slices over the butcher’s counter. If for millennia, therefore, societies have repressed the so-called ‘perverse’ components of Eros in order to sublimate them in labour, the present system liberalizes these ‘perversions’ with a view to their further exploitation in the economic sphere, and to subordinating all erotic tendencies to the goals of production and consumption. This liberalization, as I have already argued, is functional only to a commodification in the deadly purposes of capital. Repressed ‘perversion,’ then, no longer provides simply the energy required for labour, but is also to be found, fetishized, in the alienating product of alienated labour, which capital puts on the market in reified form.” Mario Mieli, *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*, trans. David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams (London: Pluto Press, 2018), 224. This same passage is also present in his article, “Omosessualità e rifiuto del lavoro” in *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni settanta. Scritti (1972–1983)* (Venice: Marsilio, 2019), 154. In this passage Mieli also includes an acerbic reference to the assimilationist turn of FUORI! pushed by Angelo Pezzana: “‘Perversion’ is retailed and wholesaled, it is studied, dissected, valued, commodified, accepted, debated, it becomes fashionable, *in* and *out*; it becomes culture, science, print media, money; puppets of FUORI! put themselves up for elections with the Radical Party. The unconscious is sold in slices over the butcher’s counter.”
- 44 I am referring to the already cited article: Mieli, “La sagra dell’impotenza: Una serata al One Way,” in *La gaia critica*.
- 45 See Paul Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy’s Architecture & Biopolitics* (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2014); Paul Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*, trans. Bruce Benderson (New York: The Feminist Press, 2013).

References

- Acquistapace, Alessia, Elisa A.G. Arfini, Goffredo Polizzi, Antonia Anna Ferrante, and Barbara De Vivo. "Tempo di essere incivili: Una riflessione terrona sull'omonazionalismo in Italia al tempo dell'austerità." In *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*, edited by Federico Zappino. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.
- Berberi, "Viaggio nel sesso estremo. 'Ecco la via, quanti siete?' Le sigle, I codici, gli eccessi. La Milano della trasgressione. Club, case, saune: appuntamento via app poi rapport non protetti e droghe. Nei locali gay denunciati dalle Iene." *Corriere della Sera*, February 26th, 2017.
- Berizzi, Paolo. "In testa sfila anche Forza Nuova, con gli stendardi 'Dio, Patria, Famiglia.'" *La Repubblica*, March 31st, 2019.
- Berizzi, Paolo. "Da forza nuova ai neonazi: Così l'estrema destra sale sul carro provita," *La Repubblica*, March 30th, 2019.
- Berizzi, Paolo. *NazItalia: Viaggio in un Paese che si è riscoperto fascista*. Milano: Baldini e Castoldi, 2018.
- Bolognini, Stefano. *Balletti verdi: Uno scandolo omosessuale*. Gavardo: Liberedizioni, 2000.
- Busarello, Renato. "Diversity Management, pinkwashing aziendale e omoneoliberalismo: Prospettive critiche sul caso italiano." In *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*, edited by Federico Zappino. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.
- Camus, Renaud. *Le Grand Remplacement*. Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions David Reinharc, 2011.
- Camus, Renaud. *Abécédaire de l'In-nocence*. Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions David Reinharc, 2010.
- Camus, Renaud. *Tricks: A Sexual Odyssey Man-to-Man*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Ace Charter Books, 1981.
- Colpani, Gianmaria. "Omonazionalismo nel Belpaese?" In *Il colore della nazione*, edited by Gaia Giuliani. Firenze: Le Monnier, 2015.
- Colpani, Gianmaria, and Adriano José Habed. "In Europe It's Different: Homonationalism and Peripheral Desires for Europe." In *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe*, edited by Phillip M. Ayoub and David Paternotte. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 139 (1989): 139–167.
- Dall'Orto, Giovanni. "Islamofobia? Sì, grazie." *Pride*, December, 2017.
- Dardot, Pierre and Christian Laval. *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2009.
- De Luca, Maria Novella. "L'allarme dei genitori adottivi: 'Razzismo contro i nostril figli.'" *La Repubblica*, August 6th, 2019.
- Dean, Tim. *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Floyd, Kevin. *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.

- Gaetano, Giuseppe. "Il feto di plastica e gli altri gadget distribuiti al Congresso delle famiglie." *Il Corriere della Sera*, March 29th, 2019.
- Giansoldati, Francesca. "Congresso famiglie, Papa Francesco dal Marocco: 'bene sostanza, metodo sbagliato.'" *Il Messaggero*, March 30th, 2019.
- Gladwell, Malcom. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2006.
- Levi, Corrado. *New kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica*. Milan: Asterisco edizioni, 2019.
- Marcasciano, Porpora. "Quando le Iene ci presero tutte per prostitute". Il racconto della presidentessa del MIT." *Gay.it*, February 22nd, 2017.
- Mieli, Mario. *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni settanta. Scritti (1972-1983)*, edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venice: Marsilio, 2019.
- Mieli, Mario. *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*. Translated by David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams. London: Pluto Press, 2018.
- Moraca, Gaetano. "La retorica del buon padre di famiglia: Da dove viene e quali conseguenze ha l'appello al *pater familias* nella comunicazione politica?" *il Tascabile*, June 17th, 2019: <https://www.iltascabile.com/societa/padre-di-famiglia/>.
- Nobile, Gabriella. "'Negro dovevi affogare': E ho visto il dolore negli occhi di Fabien." *La Repubblica*, August 6th, 2019.
- Orrù, Paolo Salvatore. "Scandolo fondi pubblici al circolo gay accusato di prostituzione. Il leader di Gaynet: 'Agguato delle Iene.' La Meloni: 'Chiudiamo tutto.'" *Tiscali news*, February 20th, 2017.
- Penney, James. *After Queer Theory: The Limits of Sexual Politics*. London: Pluto Press, 2014.
- Pennisi, Martina. "Uomini e Donne, Maria De Filippi ha deciso: da settembre il trono gay." *Corriere della sera*, March 30th, 2016.
- Pini, Andrea. *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta*. Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2011.
- Preciado, Paul. *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture & Biopolitics*. Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2014.
- Preciado, Paul. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press, 2013.
- Puar, Jasbir *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Puccianelli, Matteo. "La vera storia della bambina di Pontida. La vicenda di Greta è molto diversa dal racconto della Lega. Lo provano le carte del tribunale." *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019.
- Rebucini, Gianfranco. "Omonormatività e omonazionalismo: gli effetti della privatizzazione della sessualità." In *Politiche dell'orgoglio*, edited by Massimo Prearo. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Rebucini, Gianfranco. "Homonationalisme et impérialisme sexuel: Politiques néolibérales de l'hégémonie." *Raisons politiques: Revue de théorie politique* no. 49 (2013): 75-93.
- Romagnoli, Gabriele. "La metamorfosi di Salvini." *La Repubblica*, August 25, 2019.
- Stryker, Susan. "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity." *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008): 145-157. Doi: 10.1215/01636545-2007-026.

- Visetti, Giampaolo. “La bambina di Pontida non doveva stare sul palco: ‘Mai restituita alla madre.’” *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019.
- Zanetti, Gianfrancesco. *L’orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015.
- Zappino, Federico. *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.

Bibliography

- Abensour, Miguel. *Democracy Against the State: Marx and the Machiavellian Moment*. Translated by Max Blechman and Martin Breugh. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.
- Accolla, Dario and Andrea Contieri, eds. *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.
- Acquistapace, Alessia, Elisa A.G. Arfini, Goffredo Polizzi, Antonia Anna Ferrante, and Barbara De Vivo. "Tempo di essere incivili: Una riflessione terrona sull'omonazionalismo in Italia al tempo dell'austerità." In *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*, edited by Federico Zappino. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.
- Adler, Alfred. *Understanding Human Nature: The Psychology of Personality*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Adler, Alfred. *The Neurotic Constitution: Outlines of a Comparative Individualistic Psychology and Psychotherapy*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Adorno, Theodor W., Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Daniel Levinson, and Nevitt Stanford. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Verso, 2019.
- Alliva, Simone. *Caccia all'omo: Viaggio nel paese dell'omofobia*. Roma: Fandango, 2020.
- Alliva, Simone. "Aboliremo le unioni civili: L'ultima minaccia del centrodestra," *L'Espresso*, January 29th, 2018. URL: <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2018/01/29/news/aboliremo-le-unioni-civili-l-ultima-minaccia-del-centrodestra-1.317676>.
- Altman, Dennis. *The Homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the Homosexual*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. 5th Edition (DSM-5)*. Washington, DC: Psychiatric Publishing, 2013.
- Andreas-Salomé, Lou. "'Anal' und 'Sexual.'" *Imago* 4, no. 5 (1916): 249–272.
- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1970.
- Arfini, Elisa A.G. and Cristian Lo Iacono, eds. *Canone inverso: Antologia di teoria queer*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012.
- Aristotle. *Politics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Volume 264, Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Volume 73, Loeb Classical Library 73. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926.
- Artaud, Antonin, and Victor Corti, "To End God's Judgement." *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1965): 56–98.

- Bateson, Gregory. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.
- Beachy, Robert. *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity*. New York: Vintage, 2014.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Becker, Markus. "EU-Minister offenbar heimlich von Kollegen gefilmt: Der Salvini-Eklat – eine Falle?" *Spiegel Online*, 15 September 2018. URL: <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/matteo-salvini-filmt-offenbar-heimlich-jean-asselborn-war-es-eine-falle-a-1228295.html>.
- Bellini, Manuele. *Dialettica del diverso: Marxismo e antropologia in Luciano Parinetto*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2018.
- Bellini, Manuele. *Corpo e rivoluzione: Sulla filosofia di Luciano Parinetto*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2012.
- Benadusi, Lorenzo. *The Enemy of the New Man: Homosexuality in Fascist Italy*. Translated by Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012.
- Beneduce, Roberto. "La tormenta onirica: Fanon e le radici di un'etnopsichiatria critica." In *Decolonizzare la follia: Scritti sulla psichiatria coloniale*, edited by Roberto Beneduce. Verona: ombre corte, 2011.
- Benjamin, Harry. "Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psychosomatic and Somatopsychic Syndromes." *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 2 (1954): 219–230.
- Benjamin, Walter. "Goethe's Elective Affinities." In *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume I, 1913–1926*. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Bentham, Jeremy. "Offences Against One's Self: Paederasty (Part 1/Part 2)." *Journal of Homosexuality* 3, no. 4/vol. 4 no. 1 (1978): 389–406, 91–107.
- Berberi, "Viaggio nel sesso estremo. 'Ecco la via, quanti siete?' Le sigle, I codici, gli eccessi. La Milano della trasgressione. Club, case, saune: appuntamento via app poi rapport non protetti e droghe. Nei locali gay denunciati dalle Iene." *Corriere della Sera*, February 26th, 2017.
- Berizzi, Paolo. *È gradita la camicia nera. Verona, la città laboratorio dell'estrema destra tra l'Italia e l'Europa*. Milano: Rizzoli, 2021.
- Berizzi, Paolo. "In testa sfilano anche Forza Nuova, con gli standardi 'Dio, Patria, Famiglia.'" *La Repubblica*, March 31st, 2019.
- Berizzi, Paolo. "Da forza nuova ai neonazi: Così l'estrema destra sale sul carro provita," *La Repubblica*, March 30th, 2019.
- Berizzi, Paolo. *NazItalia: Viaggio in un Paese che si è riscoperto fascista*. Milano: Baldini e Castoldi, 2018.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Out of the Choir: Bodies Inclined on the Playboy." In *Rethinking Life: Italian Philosophy in Precarious Times*, edited by Silvia Benso. Albany: SUNY Press, 2022. 53–70.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "'Merde Alors!' A Neo-Fascist Daddy is Marching on Brussels." *Critical Times* 3 no. 3 (2020): 358–383. DOI: 10.1215/26410478-8662280.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Theories: An Introduction. From Mario Mieli to the Antisocial Turn*. Translated by Michela Baldo and Elena Basile. London-New York: Routledge, 2020.

250 Bibliography

- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Anticapitalista, antirazzista, femminista, transfemminista, freak, e queer: L'(in)attualità del Gruppo di Liberazione Omosessuale." In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**, edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegatta, Walter Pigino. Milano: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019. 155–157.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Bande: Thomas Hobbes." In *I filosofi e gli zingari*, edited by Leonardo Piasere and Gianluca Solla. Rome: Aracne, 2018.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Eterotopie quotidiane: Foucault tra critica e postcritica, le iene nella sauna e il sesso anonimo tra maschi." *Politica e società* 2 (2018): 191–214.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Gay Orgies Under the Big Top: Re-Sexualizing the Queer Debate." *Whatever: A Transdisciplinary Journal of Queer Theories and Studies* 1 (2018): 93–103.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "The Foreclosure of the Drive: Queer Theories, Gender, Sex, and the Politics of Recognition." *Soft Power: Revista euro-americana de teoría e historia de la política y del derecho* 4, no. 2 (July-December 2017): 65–77.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Queer Apocalypses: Elements of Antisocial Theory*. Translated by Julia Heim. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "L'arrosto di maiale. Ovvero: del sesso e dei filosofi." *I castelli di Yale online* anno III, n. 2 (2015): 25–41.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "Not in my name: Il corpo osceno del tiranno e la catastrophe della virilità." *Filosofia di Berlusconi: L'essere e il nulla nell'Italia del Cavaliere*, edited by Carlo Chiurco. Verona: Ombre corte, 2011.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. "La macelleria del *Leviatano*: Come nutrirsi delle carni di un mito." In *La sovranità scomposta. Sull'attualità del Leviatano*, edited by Lorenzo Bernini, Mauro Farnesi Camellone, Nicola Marcucci. Milan: Mimesis, 2010.
- Bernini, Lorenzo. *Il pecore e il pastore: Critica, politica, etica nel pensiero di Michel Foucault*. Napoli: Liguori Editore, 2008.
- Bersani, Leo. "Shame on You." In *After Sex?: On Writing Since Queer Theory*, edited by Janet Halley and Andrew Parker. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Bersani, Leo. *Receptive Bodies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Bersani, Leo. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" In *Is the Rectum a Grave? And Other Essays*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Bersani, Leo. *Homos*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Bersani, Leo. *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.
- Bersani, Leo, and Ulysse Dutoit. "Merde alors." *October*, no. 13 (1980): 22–35.
- Berubé, Allan. "The History of Gay Bathhouses." In *Policing Public Sex: Queer Politics and the Future of AIDS Activism*, edited by Dangerous Bedfellows. Boston: South End Press, 1996.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "Framing Fanon." In *The Wretched of the Earth*, edited by Frantz Fanon. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Biagini, Elena. *L'emersione imprevista: Il movimento delle lesbiche in Italia negli anni '70 e '80*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2018.
- Binson, Diane, and William Woods. "A Theoretical Approach to Bathhouse Environments," *Journal of Homosexuality* 44 (2003): 23–31.
- Bolognini, Stefano. *Balletti verdi: Uno scandolo omosessuale*. Gavardo: Liberedizioni, 2000.

- Bonaparte, Marie. "De la sexualité de la femme." *Revue française de psychanalyse* (April-June 1949).
- Bonaparte, Marie. *Myths of War*. London: Imago, 1947.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Other Inquisitions: 1937–1952*. Translated by Ruth L.C. Simms. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.
- Botul, Jean-Baptiste. *La Vie sexuelle d'Emmanuel Kant*. Paris: Mille et une nuits, 1999.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity, 2013.
- Burroughs, William. *Naked Lunch*, edited by James Grauerholz and Barry Miles. New York: Grove Press, 2001.
- Busarello, Renato. "Diversity Management, pinkwashing aziendale e omoneoliberalismo: Prospettive critiche sul caso italiano." In *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*, edited by Federico Zappino. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.
- Butler, Judith. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso, 2009.
- Butler, Judith. "Violence, Non-Violence: Sartre on Fanon." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 27, no. 1 (2006): 3–24.
- Butler, Judith. *Giving an Account of Oneself: A Critique of Ethical Violence*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Butler, Judith. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. "Competing Universalities." In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, edited by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek. London: Verso, 2000.
- Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Gender and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Butler, Judith, and Frédéric Worms. *The Livable and the Unlivable*. New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming 2023.
- Camus, Renaud. *Le Grand Remplacement*. Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions David Reinharc, 2011.
- Camus, Renaud. *Abécédaire de l'In-nocence*. Neuilly-sur-Seine: Éditions David Reinharc, 2010.
- Camus, Renaud. *Tricks: A Sexual Odyssey Man-to-Man*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Ace Charter Books, 1981.
- Capecia, Mayotte. *I Am a Martinician Woman and The White Negress: Two Novelletes by Mayotte Capecia*. Translated by Beatrice Stith Clark. Pueblo: Passaggiata Press, 1997.
- Carotenuto, Aldo. *A Secret Symmetry: Sabina Spielrein, Jung, and Freud*. New York: Pantheon, 1982.

252 Bibliography

- Cavarero, Adriana. *Surging Democracy: Notes on Hannah Arendt's Political Thought*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Inclinations: A Critique of Rectitude*. Translated by Amanda Minervini and Adam Sitze. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016.
- Cavarero, Adriana. "Archeology of Homicide." In *Thou Shalt Not Kill: A Political and Theological Dialogue*, edited by Adriana Cavarero and Angelo Scola. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *Horrorism: Naming Contemporary Violence*. Translated by William McCuaig. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Cavarero, Adriana. *In Spite of Plato: A Feminist Rewriting of Ancient Philosophy*. Translated by Serena Anderlini-D'Onofrio and Áine O'Healy. Cambridge: Polity, 1995.
- Cavarero, Adriana and Franco Restaino, eds. *Le filosofie femministe*. Milano: Bruno Mondadori, 2002.
- Centrone, Angelo Alfonso. "Salvini: Radio Padania anche in Puglia. A Napoli? Mai: siamo troppo diversi." *Corriere del Mezzogiorno*, 20 September, 2010.
- Césaire, Aimé. *A Season in the Congo*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Chicago: Seagull Books, 2020.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Resolutely Black: Conversations with Françoise Vergès*. Translated by Matthew Smith. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.
- Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.
- Césaire, Aimé. *A Tempest*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Ubu Repertory Theater Publications, 1992.
- Colpani, Gianmaria. "Omonazionalismo nel Belpaese?" In *Il colore della nazione*, edited by Gaia Giuliani. Firenze: Le Monnier, 2015.
- Colpani, Gianmaria, and Adriano José Habel. "In Europe It's Different: Homonationalism and Peripheral Desires for Europe." In *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe*. Edited by Phillip M. Ayoub and David Paternotte. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Connell, Raewyn W. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Cossolo, Felix, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegattae, Walter Pigno, eds. *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**. Milan: Il Dito e La Luna, 2019.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 139 (1989): 139–167.
- Cronenberg, David. Director. *Naked Lunch*. Eagle Pictures, 1991.
- Dall'Orto, Giovanni. "Islamofobia? Sì, grazie." *Pride*, December, 2017.
- Dall'Orto, Giovanni. *Tutta un'altra storia: L'omosessualità dall'antichità al secondo dopoguerra*. Milano: Il Saggiatore, 2015.
- Dardot, Pierre and Christian Laval. *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*. Translated by Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2009.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage Books, 1983.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. "La gaia scienza, ovvero la travaiata Norma." In *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, edited by Mario Mieli. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Freud's Drive: Psychoanalysis, Literature and Film*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

- De Lauretis, Teresa. "Difference Embodied: Reflections on Black Skin, White Masks," *Parallax* 8, no. 2 (2002): 54–68. DOI: 10.1080/13534640210130421.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- De Lauretis, Teresa. *Soggetti eccentrici*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1999.
- De Lauretis, Teresa, ed. *differences* (no. 3, 1991).
- De Luca, Maria Novella. "L'allarme dei genitori adottivi: 'Razzismo contro i nostril figli.'" *La Repubblica*, August 6th, 2019.
- De Michelis, Cesare. *Il manoscritto inesistente: I "Protocolli dei savi di Sion"*. Padua: Marsilio, 1998.
- Dean, Tim. *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Deleuze, Gilles. "Desire and Pleasure." In *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, edited by Arnold I. Davidson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs*. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Masochismo e sadismo*. Milan: Iota libri, 1973.
- Deleuze, Gilles, Félix Guattari and Vittorio Marchetti. "Capitalismo e schizofrenia." In *L'altra pazzia: Mappa antologica della psichiatria alternativa*, edited by Laura Forti. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975.
- Del Re, Francesco Paolo. "La performance totale di Mario Mieli." In *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*, edited by Dario Accola and Andrea Contieri. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Edited by Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud. Volumes 1–2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009-2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Animal that Therefore I Am*. Translated by David Wills. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008.
- Derrida, Jacques. "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis." *Critical Inquiry*, Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, 20, no. 2 (Winter 1994): 227–266.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Postcard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Deutsch, Helene. *The Psychology of Women: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation, Volume 1*. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. "Address to the Nations of the World." In *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890–1919*, edited by Philip S. Foner. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. "Striving of the Negro People." *Atlantic Monthly* 478 (1897): 194–198.

254 Bibliography

- Dufourmantelle, Anne. *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2007.
- Duggan, Lisa. *The Twilight of Equality: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004.
- Eco, Umberto. *Il Fascismo eterno*. Milano: La nave di Teseo, 2017.
- Eco, Umberto. "Ur-Fascism," *The New York Review of Books*, June 22nd, 1995. URL: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/>.
- Edelman, Lee. "Learning Nothing: Bad Education." *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 1 (2017): 124–173.
- Edelman, Lee. "White Skin, Dark Meat: Identity's Pressure Point." *Identities* 8, no. 1 (2011): 99–113.
- Edelman, Lee. *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Dive*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.
- Edelman, Lee. *Homographesis: Essays in Gay Literary and Cultural Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Ellis, Henry Havelock. *Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II: Sexual Inversion*. London and Leipzig: The University Press, 1900.
- Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In *Collected Works, Vol. 26 – Engels 1882–1889*, edited by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 129–276. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Alienation and Freedom*, edited by Jean Khalfa and Robert J.C. Young and translated by Steven Corcoran. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2004.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1986.
- Fanon, Frantz. "Le Trouble mental et le trouble neurologique." *L'information psychiatrique* 51, no. 10 (1975): 1079–1090.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press, 1967.
- Fassin, Éric. "Il neoliberalismo in camicia nera." *Il Manifesto*, July 11th, 2019.
- Fassin, Éric. "Genere minaccioso, genere minacciato." *AG AboutGender* 8, no. 15 (2019): 414–434. DOI: 10.15167/2279-5057/AG2019.8.15.1116.
- Fenichel, Otto. "Zur Kritik des Tödestrieb," *Imago* 21, no. 4 (1935): 458–466.
- Feole, Eva. *Corpo a corpo con il linguaggio: Il pensiero e l'opera letteraria di Monique Wittig*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2020.
- Ferenczi, Sándor. *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*. Translated by Ernest Jones. New York: Karnac Books, 1994.
- Ferenczi, Sándor. *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-analysis*, edited by Michael Balnit, Translated by Eric Mosbacher, et al. New York: Karnac Books, 1994.
- Fini, Massimo. *Nietzsche: L'apolide dell'esistenza*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2002.
- Fiorino, Vinzia. "Desideri del sé: Frantz Fanon and Carla Lonzi." In *Pelle nera, maschere bianche*, edited by Frantz Fanon. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Floyd, Kevin. *The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Fornari, Franco. *Genitalità e cultura*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1975.

- Forti, Simona. *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today*. Translated by Zakiya Hanafi. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *Les Aveux de la chair*. Paris: Gallimard, 2018.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983*, edited by Frédéric Gros, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Foucault, Michel. "Preface." In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, edited by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. New York: Penguin, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. Edited by Michael Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, edited by Michael Senellart, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Foucault, Michel. *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–1974*. edited by Jacques Lagrange and translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Madness*. Translated by Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa, edited by Jean Khalfa. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*, edited by Frédéric Gros, translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*. edited by Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni, translated by Graham Burchell. London: Verso, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Foucault, Michel. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954–1984, Vol. 1*. 163–174, edited by Paul Rabinow, translated by Robert Hurley et al. New York: The New Press, 1997.
- Foucault, Michel. "Schizo-Culture: Infantile Sexuality." In *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961–1984*, edited by Sylvère Lotringer, translated by Lysia Hochroth and John Johnston. New York: Semiotext(e), 1996.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Foucault, Michel. "Interview de Michel Foucault." In *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome IV, 1980–1988*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. "La folie n'existe que dans une société." In *Dits et écrits, 1954–1988. Tome I, 1954–1969*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. "Sexualité et pouvoir." In *Dits et Écrits, 1954–1988, Tome III, 1976–1979*. Edited by Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Lagrange. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Use of Pleasure. The History of Sexuality, Volume II*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel. *Michel Foucault: Politics, Philosophy, Culture. Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman and translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Routledge, 1988.

- Foucault, Michel. *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Edited by Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton. London: Tavistock Publications, 1988.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality, Volume III*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22–27.
- Foucault, Michel. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. 2nd Edition. 222–223, edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, translated by Leslie Sawyer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard and translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Random House, 1970.
- Foucault, Michel and Jean Le Bitoux. "The Gay Science," *Critical Inquiry* 37 (Spring 2011): 385–403.
- Freud, Anna. *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Sigmund Freud-Ludwig Binswanger Correspondence, 1908–1938*, edited by Gerhard Fichtner, translated by Arnold Pomerans and Thomas Roberts. New York: Other Press, 2003.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Karl Abraham, 1907–1925*, edited by Ernst Falzeder, translated by Caroline Schwarzacher. London: Karnac Books, 2002.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, Volume 3, 1914–1919*, edited by Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, translated by Peter Hoffer. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Correspondence of Sigmund Freud and Sándor Ferenczi, Volume 2, 1914–1919*, edited by Ernst Falzeder and Eva Brabant, translated by Peter Hoffer. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. Translated and edited by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Historical Notes: A Letter from Freud" *American Journal of Psychiatry* 107, no. 10 (April 1951): 786–787.
- Freud, Sigmund. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. In *SE* 23 (1938): 139–208.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. In *SE* 21 (1930): 57–146.
- Freud, Sigmund. "An Autobiographical Study". In *SE* 20 (1925): 1–74.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis." In *SE* 19 (1924): 181–188.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Infantile Genital Organization of the Libido (An Interpolation into the Theory of Sexuality)". In *SE* 19 (1923): 139–146.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. In *SE* 19 (1923): 1–66.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman, SE* 18 (1920): 145–174.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In *SE* 18 (1920): 1–64.

- Freud, Sigmund. "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis." In *SE* 17 (1917): 135–144.
- Freud, Sigmund. "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis." In *SE* 17 (1918): 1–124.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo*. In *SE* 13 (1913): viii–162.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*. In *SE* 11 (1910): 57–138.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*. In *SE* 10 (1909): 1–150.
- Freud, Sigmund. "On the Sexual Theories of Children." In *SE* 9 (1908): 205–226.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. In *SE* 7 (1905): 123–246.
- Freud, Sigmund and Albert Einstein. "Why War?" In *SE* 22 (1933): 195–216.
- Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire, "Rapport contre la normalité." In *Trois milliards de pervers: Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités, réédition de la publication saisie en 1973*. La Bussière: Acratie, 2015.
- Gaetano, Giuseppe. "Il feto di plastica e gli altri gadget distribuiti al Congresso delle famiglie." *Il Corriere della Sera*, March 29th, 2019.
- Garbagnoli, Sara, and Massimo Prearo. *La crociata "anti-gender": Dal Vaticano alle manif pour tous*. Torino: Kaplan, 2018.
- Garbagnoli, Sara and Vincenza Perilli, eds. *Non si nasce donna: Percorsi, testi e contesti del femminismo materialista in Francia*. Roma: Edizioni Alegre, 2013.
- Gay, Peter. *Freud: A Life for Our Time*. New York: Norton, 1998.
- Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana. "Modifiche al codice penale, al codice di procedura penale e altre disposizioni in materia di tutela delle vittime di violenza domestica e di genere." Legge 19 luglio 2019 n. 69, articolo 10, *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*. URL: <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/07/25/19G00076/sg>.
- Gheno, Vera. *Chiamami così: Normalità, diversità e tutte le parole nel mezzo*. Trento: il Margine, 2022.
- Giansoldati, Francesca. "Congresso famiglie, Papa Francesco dal Marocco: 'bene sostanza, metodo sbagliato.'" *Il Messaggero*, March 30th, 2019.
- Gibelli, Antonio. *Il popolo bambino: Infanzia e nazione dalla Grande Guerra a Salò*. Torino: Einaudi, 2005.
- Gibson, Nigel C. *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003.
- Giglioli, Daniele. *Critica della vittima*. Milano: nottetempo, 2014.
- Gladwell, Malcom. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2006.
- Grassi, Samuele. *Anarchismo queer: Un'introduzione*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2013.
- Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009.
- Groddeck, Georg. *Book of the It*. New York: International Universities Press, 1976.
- Guaraldo, Olivia. *Comunità e vulnerabilità: Per una critica politica della violenza*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2012.
- Guerra, Elda, ed. *Storia e cultura politica delle donne*. Firenze: Archetipo libri, 2008.
- Halberstam, Jack. *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*. Durham: Duke, 2020.
- Halberstam, Jack. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.
- Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A.V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1977.

- Herzfeld, Marie. *Leonardo da Vinci: Denker, Forsher und Poet*. Hamburg: Severus Verlag, 2014.
- Hesnard, Angelo. *L'univers morbide de la faute*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949.
- Hirschfeld, Magnus. "Die intersexuelle Konstitution." *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 23 (1923): 3–27.
- Hirschfeld, Magnus. *Die Transvestiten, eine Untersuchung über den erotischen Verkleidungstrieb mit umfangreichem causistischem und historischem Material*. Berlin: Medizinischer Verlag, 1910.
- Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: Mariner Books, 1999.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic: Part I, Human Nature; Part II, De corpore politico; with Three Lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Richard Tuck. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Hobbes, Thomas. *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Vol. 2: De Cive: The English Version*. Edited by Howard Warrender. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Hobbes, Thomas. "Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis vita carmine expressa, autore seipso, scripta anno MDCLXXIII" In *Thomae Hobbes Malmesburiensis Opera Philosophic aquae Latine Scripsit Omnia, Vol. 1*, edited by William Molesworth. London: Bohn, 1839.
- Hocquenghem, Guy. *Homosexual Desire*. Translated by Daniella Dangoor. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.
- Huffer, Lynne. *Are the Lips a Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
- Idier, Antoinne. *Les Vies de Guy Hocquenghem*. Paris: Fayard, 2017.
- Irigaray, Luce. *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Translated by Gillian C. Gill. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.
- Jaspers, Karl. *General Psychopathology*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963.
- Jones, Ernest. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, Volumes 1–3*. New York: Basic Books, 1953–1957.
- Jordan, Winthrop D. *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1968.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. "The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious." In *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. New York: Routledge, 1966.
- Jung, Carl Gustav. *Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido. A Contribution to the History of the Evolution of Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, Revised Edition*, edited and translated by Mary Gregor and Jens Timmermann. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Toward Perpetual Peace and Other Writings on Politics, Peace, and History*, edited by Pauline Kleingeld. Translated by David Colclasure. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

- Kant, Immanuel. *Lectures on Ethics*, edited by Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind. Translated by Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. In *Religion and Rational Theology*, edited and translated by Allen Wood and George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Kennedy, Hubert. *In Memorium: Five Gay Obituaries*. Concord: Peremptory Publications, 2003. URL: <https://hubertkennedy.angelfire.com/Obits.pdf>.
- Kerr, John. *A Most Dangerous Method: The Story of Jung, Freud, and Sabina Spielrein*. New York: Vintage, 1994.
- Kington, Tom, and Anthee Carassava. "Matteo Salvini Accused of Using Cat Pictures to Distract from Debt." *The Times*, November 27th, 2018.
- Kohler, Joachim. *Zarathustra's Secret: The Interior Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Translated by Ronald Taylor. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Kovel, Joel. *White Racism: A Psychohistory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.
- Kuhar, Roman, and David Paternotte, eds. *Anti-Gender Campaigns in Europe: Mobilizing Against Equality*. London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.
- L'Espresso*. "Caccia all'omo: Aggressioni. Minacce. Discriminazioni. In crescita impressionante nell'ultimo anno. Da nord a sud, dalle città alla provincia. Per gay, lesbiche e trans il clima è molto cambiato. In peggio," *L'Espresso* February 7th and 10th, 2019.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits*. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006.
- Lacan, Jacques. *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book XX. Encore 1972–1973*, edited by Jacques Alain-Miller. Translated by Bruce Fink. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Introduction to the Question of the Psychoses." In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Russell Grigg. New York: WW Norton and Co., 1993.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Milano, 12 maggio: Du discourse psychanalytique." In *Lacan in Italia / Lacan en Italie*. Milano: La Salamandra, 1978.
- Laclau, Ernesto. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso, 2007.
- Laplanche, Jean. *Freud and the Sexual: 2000–2006*, edited by John Fletcher, and translated by John Fletcher, Jonathan House, and Nicholas Ray. New York: International Psychoanalytic Books, 2011.
- Levi, Corrado. "L'inizio del movimento omosessuale in Italia e a Milano." In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**, edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegata and Walter Pigo. Milan: Il dito e la luna, 2019.
- Levi, Corrado. *New Kamasutra: Didattica sadomasochistica*. Milan: Asterisco edizioni, 2019.
- Levi, Corrado. "Che bello scrivere di Mario Mieli" In *Mario Mieli: trent'anni dopo*, edited by Dario Accola and Andrea Contieri. Rome: Circolo Mario Mieli, 2013.
- Levi, Corrado. Testimony in Pini, Andrea. *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta*. Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2011.

- Levi, Corrado. "Il lavoro di presa di coscienza: Problematiche e contribute del lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo fuori! di Milano" *FUORI!* no. 12 (1974).
- Levi, Corrado. "Storia palpitante e violenta" *FUORI!* no. 8 (1973).
- Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.
- Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1980.
- Lonzi, Carla. *Sputiamo su Hegel e altri scritti*. Milan: et al., 2010.
- Lorenz, Konrad. *King Solomon's Ring: New Light on Animal Ways*. Translated by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Low, Barbara. *Psycho-Analysis: A Brief Account of the Freudian Theory*. London: Forgotten Books, 2017.
- Lowen, Alexander. *The Language of the Body: Physical Dynamics of Character Structure*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012.
- Lowen, Alexander. *Bioenergetics: The Revolutionary Therapy that Uses the Language of the Body to Heal the Problems of the Mind*. New York: Penguin, 1994.
- Lowen, Alexander. *Love and Orgasm*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
- Lucas, Philip and Anne Sheeran. "Asperger's Syndrome and the Eccentricity and Genius of Jeremy Bentham." *Journal of Bentham Studies* 8 (2006): 1–13.
- Luce, Sandro. *Soggettivazioni antagoniste: Frantz Fanon e la critica postcoloniale*. Milan: Metelmi, 2018.
- Macey, David. *Fanon: A Biography*. London: Verso, 2012.
- Macey, David. *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.
- Maggi, Armando. "'A Schizophrenic Child is a Tiny Dot, I Dreamed Once': Metamorphosis in Mario Mieli and Pasolini." In *The Resurrection of the Body: Pier Paolo Pasolini from Saint Paul to Sade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.
- Mannoni, Octave. *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization*. Translated by Pamela Powesland. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990.
- Maran, René. *Un homme pareil aux autres*. Paris: Arc-en-ciel, 1947.
- Marcasciano, Porpora. "Quando le Iene ci presero tutte per prostitute". Il racconto della presidentessa del MIT." *Gay.it*, February 22nd, 2017.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Marcuse, Herbert. *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. New York: Beacon Press, 1966.
- Marriott, David. *Haunted Life: Visual Culture and Black Modernity*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007.
- Marshall, Bill. *Guy Hocquenghem: Beyond Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker, Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1978.
- Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *Collected Works, vol. 43 – Marx and Engels Letters April 1868-July 1870*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975.

- Mbembe, Achille. *Out of the Dark Night: Essays on Decolonization*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*. Translated by Laurent Dubois. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Mieli, Mario. *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni sessanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*. Edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venice: Marsilio Press, 2019.
- Mieli, Mario. *Towards a Gay Communism: Elements of a Homosexual Critique*. Translated by David Fernbach and Evan Calder Williams. London: Pluto Press, 2018.
- Mieli, Mario. *Elementi di critica omosessuale*, edited by Gianni Rossi Barilli and Paola Mieli. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2017.
- Mieli, Mario. *Il risveglio dei faraoni*. Paderno Dugnano: Cooperativa Colibrì, 1994.
- Mieli, Paola and Massimo Prearo, “Mario Mieli: un archivio del presente.” In *La gaia critica: Politica e liberazione sessuale negli anni sessanta. Scritti (1972–1983)*. Edited by Paola Mieli and Massimo Prearo. Venice: Marsilio Press, 2019.
- Milanese Homosexual Collectives. *La traviata norma, ovvero: vaffanculo ... ebbene sì!*. Milano: Asterisco Edizioni, 2020.
- Miller, James. *The Passion of Michel Foucault*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.
- Missana, Eleonora. *Donne si diventa: Antologia del pensiero femminista*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2014.
- Mitchell, Larry. *The Faggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*. New York: Nightboat Books, 2019.
- Moraca, Gaetano. “La retorica del buon padre di famiglia: Da dove viene e quali conseguenze ha l'appello al *pater familias* nella comunicazione politica?” *il Tascabile*, June 17th, 2019. URL: <https://www.iltascabile.com/societa/padre-di-famiglia/>.
- Moscari, Antonella. “Tra la morte e la vita: a proposito della teoria delle pulsioni di Freud.” In *La carta coperta: l'inconscio nelle pratiche femministe*, edited by Chiara Zamboni. Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 2019.
- Mouffe, Chantal. *For a Left Populism*. London: Verso, 2018.
- Murgia, Michela. *Istruzioni per diventare fascisti*. Torino: Einaudi, 2018.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*. Translated by R.J. Hollingdale. London: Penguin Books, 1990.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Nobile, Gabriella. “‘Negro dovevi affogare’: E ho visto il dolore negli occhi di Fabien.” *La Repubblica*, August 6th, 2019.
- Obholzer, Karin. *Gespräche mit dem Wolfsmann: Eine Psychoanalyse und die Folgen*. Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1983.
- Oliva, Adriano. *Amours: L'Église, les divorcés remariés, les couples homosexuels*. Paris: Cerf, 2015.

- Orrù, Paolo Salvatore. "Scandolo fondi pubblici al circolo gay accusato di prostituzione. Il leader di Gaynet: 'Agguato delle Iene.' La Meloni: 'Chiudiamo tutto.'" *Tiscali news*, February 20th, 2017.
- Paccioni, Jean-Paul. "Le terme 'Trieb' et l'homme comme fin dernière et ultime." *Revue germanique internationale* 18 (2002): 25–44.
- Parinetto, Luciano. *Corpo e rivoluzione in Marx: morte diavolo analità*. Milan-Udine: Mimesis Edizioni, 2015.
- Parinetto, Luciano. *Marx diversoperverso*. Milano: Unicopli, 1997.
- Pasolini, Pier Paolo. Director. *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom*. United Artists Corporation, 1975.
- Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract. Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018.
- Patočka, Jan. *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*. Translated by Erazim Kohák. Edited by James Dodd. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Pellegata, Fabio. "Dal F.U.O.R.I. ai COM: dalla rivoluzione alla percezione del valore di sé." In *Milano e 50 anni di movimento LGBT**, edited by Felix Cossolo, Flavia Franceschini, Cristina Gramolini, Fabio Pellegata and Walter Pigino. Milan: Il dito e la luna, 2019.
- Penney, James. *After Queer Theory: The Limits of Sexual Politics*. London: Pluto Press, 2014.
- Pennisi, Martina. "Uomini e Donne, Maria De Filippi ha deciso: da settembre il trono gay." *Corriere della sera*, March 30th, 2016.
- Pezzana, Angelo. *Un omosessuale normale: Diario di una ricerca d'identità attraverso il ricordo, la storia, il costume, le vite*. Viterbo: Stampa alternativa, 2011.
- Pezzana, Angelo. *Dentro e fuori: Un'autobiografia omosessuale*. Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1996.
- Pini, Andrea. *Quando eravamo froci: Gli omosessuali nell'Italia di una volta*. Milan: Il Saggiatore, 2011.
- Plato. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Translated by Lane Cooper. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Prearo, Massimo. *La fabbrica del orgoglio: Una genealogia dei movimenti LGBT*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Prearo, Massimo. "Le radici rimosse della queer theory: una genealogia da ricostruire." *Genesis* 1–2 (2012): 95–114.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Can the Monster Speak? Report to an Academy of Psychoanalysts*. Translated by Frank Wynne. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2021.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics*. New York: Zone Books, 2014.
- Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. Translated by Bruce Benderson. New York: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013.
- Puar, Jasbir *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Puccianelli, Matteo. "La vera storia della bambina di Pontida. La vicenda di Greta è molto diversa dal racconto della Lega. Lo provano le carte del tribunale." *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019.
- Pustianaz, Marco. ed. *Queer in Italia: Differenze in movimento*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2011.

- Raimo, Christian. "Come smontare la retorica di Matteo Salvini." *Internazionale* on July 3rd, 2018. URL: <https://www.internazionale.it/bloc-notes/christian-raimo/2018/07/03/salvini-pontida>.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Hatred of Democracy*. Translated by Steve Corcoran. New York: Verso, 2014.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Translated by Julie Rose. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2004.
- Rebucini, Gianfranco. "Omonormatività e omonazionalismo: gli effetti della privatizzazione della sessualità." In *Politiche dell'orgoglio*, edited by Massimo Prearo. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2015.
- Rebucini, Gianfranco. "Homonationalisme et impérialisme sexuel: Politiques néolibérales de l'hégémonie." *Raisons politiques: Revue de théorie politique* no. 49 (2013): 75–93.
- Recalcati, Massimo. *The Telemachus Complex: Parents and Children after the Decline of the Father*. Translated by Alice Kilgarrieff. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019.
- Reich, Wilhelm. "Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis." In *Sex-Pol: Essays, 1929–1934*. 1–74, edited by Lee Baxandall. New York: Verso, 2012.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Regulating Character Structure*. Translated by Therese Pol. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986.
- Reich, Wilhelm. *The Function of the Orgasm: Sex-Economic Problems of Biological Energy*. Translated by Vincent R. Carfagno. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1973.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs, Women: Sex and Sexuality* 5, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 631–660.
- Ricoeur, Paul. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Romagnoli, Gabriele. "La metamorfosi di Salvini." *La Repubblica*, August 25, 2019.
- Rondoni, Davide. *La natura del bastardo*. Milano: Mondadori, 2017.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. *The Populist Century: History, Theory, Critique*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. "Penser le populisme." *La vie des idées* (2011). URL: <https://lavedesidees.fr/Penser-le-populisme.html>.
- Rossi Barilli, Gianni. *Il movimento gay in Italia*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1999.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1992.
- Rubin, Gale S. "The Leather Menace: Comments on Politics and S/M." In *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.
- Sade, Donatien-Alphonse-François. *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings*. Translated by Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse. New York: Grove Press, 1965.
- Sadji, Abdoulay. *Nimi, mûlatresse du Sénégal*. Paris: Présence africaine, 1954.
- Safranski, Rüdiger. *Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy*. Translated by Ewald Osers. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Salvini, Matteo. "Matteo Salvini a Pontida, il discorso integrale dal palco del raduno leghista," *Bergamo News*, July 1st, 2018. URL: <https://www.bergamonews.it/2018/07/01/matteo-salvini-pontida-discorso-integrale-dal-palco-del-raduno-leghista/285598/>.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Reflections on the Jewish Question, A Lecture." *October* 87 (Winter 1999): 32–46.

- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "Black Orpheus." In *"What is Literature?" and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Scarfone, Dominique. *Jean Laplanche: An Introduction*, edited by Jonathan House and translated by Dorothee Bonnigal-Katz. London: Karnac Books, 2015.
- Schettini, Laura. "Mieli, Mario." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani. Treccani* (2015). URL: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-mieli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mario-mieli_(Dizionario-Biografico)/).
- Schmitt, Carl. *The Concept of the Political. Expanded Edition*. Translated by George Schwab. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Manuscript Remains in Four Volumes. Volume 4*, edited by Arthur Hübscher. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Berg, 1990.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Colloqui*. Milan: BUR, 1982.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays. Volumes 1–2*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974.
- Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation. Volumes I and II*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. New York: Dover, 1958.
- Selvini Palazzoli, Mara, Luigi Boscolo, Gianfranco Cecchin, and Giuliana Prata. *Paradosso e contrapadosso*. Milan: Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2003.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *The Collected Poetry*. Translated by Melvin Dixon. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. *Liberté 1: Negritude et Humanism*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1964.
- Sharaf, Myron R. *Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983.
- Simondon, Gilbert. *L'individuation psychique et collective: a la lumière de notions de forme, information, potentiel et métastabilité*. Paris: Aubier, 2007.
- Solanas, Valerie. *SCUM Manifesto*. London: Verso, 2004.
- Spielrein, Sabina. "Die Destruktion als Ursache des Werdens." *Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen* 4, no. 1 (1912): 465–503.
- Starling, Ernest. *The Croonian Lectures of the Chemical Correlations of the Body*. London: Women's Printing Society, 1905.
- Stone, Sandy. "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto." In *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, edited by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Stryker, Susan. "Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity." *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008): 145–157. DOI: 10.1215/01636545-2007-026.
- Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008.
- Stryker, Susan, and Petra Dierkes-Thrun. "Transgender Studies Today: An Interview with Susan Stryker," *the b2o review*, August 20, 2014. URL: <https://www.boundary2.org/2014/08/transgender-studies-today-an-interview-with-susan-stryker/>.
- Tarizzo, Davide. *Life: A Modern Invention*. Translated by Mark Epstein. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.
- Tattelman, Ira. "Presenting a Queer (Bath)house." In *Queer Frontiers: Millennial Geographies, Genders and Generations*, edited by Joseph Allen Boone. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000.

- Tattelman, Ira. "Speaking to the Gay Bathhouse: Communicating in Sexually Charged Spaces." In *Public Sex/Gay Space*, edited by William Leap. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Teal, Don. *The Gay Militants*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971.
- Tewksbury, Richard. "Bathroom Intercourse: Structural Aspects of an Erotic Oasis." *Deviant Behaviors* 23, no. 1 (2002): 75–112.
- Tonacci, Fabio. "Ma ora Salvini fa il testimonial? Marchi in visita sui social del ministro." *La Repubblica*, 19 December, 2018.
- Tonacci, Fabio. "La stretta sui permessi che in due anni produrrà centomila irregolari." *La Repubblica*, 28 November 2018.
- Truscott IV, Lucian. "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square." *The Village Voice*, July 3, 1969, 18.
- Unamuno, Miguel De. *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*. Translated by Anthony Kerrigan. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972.
- Van Ussel, Jos. *Histoire de la répression sexuelle*. Paris: Laffont, 1972.
- Verdiglione, Armando, ed. *Psicanalisi e politica*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1973.
- Visetti, Giampaolo. "La bambina di Pontida non doveva stare sul palco: 'Mai restituita alla madre.'" *La Repubblica*, September 20th, 2019.
- Voisset-Veysseyre, Cécile. *Guy Hocquenghem: La revolte (1946–1988)*. Paris: Édition du Sextant, 2015.
- Wade, Simeon. *Foucault in California (A True Story—Wherein the Great French Philosopher Drops Acid in the Valley of Death)*. Berkeley: Heydey, 2019.
- Weber, Max. "Politics as a Vocation." In *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated and edited by Hans H. Gerth and Charles W. Mills. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Weil, Simone. *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties toward Mankind*. Translated by Arthur Wills. London: Routledge, 2001.
- Westphal, Friedrich. "Die Konträre Sexualempfindung." *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 2 (1869–1870): 73–108.
- Wittig, Monique. *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- World Health Organization. *International Classification of Diseases. 11th Revision (ICD-11)*. World Health Organization (WHO), 2019/2021. URL: <https://icd.who.int/en>.
- Young, Iris M. "Abjection and Oppression: Dynamics of Unconscious Racism, Sexism, and Homophobia." In *Crises in Continental Philosophy*, edited by Arleen B. Dallery, P. Holley Roberts, and Charles E. Scott. Albany: SUNY Press, 1990.
- Zanetti, Gianfrancesco. *L'orientamento sessuale: Cinque domande tra diritto e filosofia*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2015.
- Zappino, Federico. *Comunismo queer: Note per una sovversione dell'eterosessualità*. Milan: Meltemi, 2019.
- Zappino, Federico. *Il genere: Tra neoliberalismo e neofondamentalismo*. Verona: Ombre corte, 2016.
- Žižek, Slavoj. *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. New York: Verso, 1991.
- Zundel, Matthew. "Mario Mieli: Queer Dynamite" *AG—About Gender: International Journal of Gender Studies* 9, no. 17 (2020): 285–307.
- Zundel, Matthew. "Mario Mieli, ovvero il maestro masochista: Performative Elements of a Perverse Militancy," *gender/sexuality/italy* 6 (August 2019): 28–50.

Index

Note: Page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.

- Abensour, Miguel 31, 38n68
Abraham, Karl 102n54
Accolla, Dario 169n43
Acquistapace, Alessia 242n25
Adinolfi, Mario 236
Adler, Alfred 194, 213n67
Adorno, Theodor W. 27, 37n45
The Advocate 131, 184
Aeschylus xi
“aesthetics of existence” 131
AIDS crisis 9, 117–118, 189
Alcibiades 45
Algerian National Liberation Front
 153, 194
Algerian War of Independence 194
Al-Hariri, Abu Muhammad Ahmad al
 Qasim b. 89
Alliberament Gai de Catalunya
 (FAGC) 153
Alliva, Simone 37n42, 38n67
Altman, Dennis 210n38
Amaya, Mario 30, 33
American gay and lesbian
 movements 147
anal erotism 96–97
Andreas-Salomé, Lou 100n1
An Outline of Psychoanalysis (Freud) 66
anti-abortion associations 25
anti-authoritarianism 123
anti-black racism 29
anti-discriminatory education 224
anti-European sovereignty 231
anti-fascism 23, 27
anti-fascist constitution forbids 17
anti-gender campaigns 9
Antigone 11n1, 107n137, 118, 146
Antigone’s Claim (Butler) 118
anti-Islamic nature 130
anti-LGBT propaganda 5
Anti-Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari) 27,
 155, 159, 186
anti-racist movements 1, 31
anti-retroviral triple therapy 9, 118
anti-Semitism 23, 95
anti-social theory 146, 189, 233
Aphrodite 148
Arbasino, Alberto 182
Arcai, Giovanni 243n39
Arendt, Hannah 213n63
Arfini, Elisa A.G. 53n7, 242n25
Aristophanes 101n33
Aristotle 54n16, 56n46, 61, 63, 74n1, 91
Artaud, Antonin 188, 209n26
ascetic anti-romanticism 48
Ashley, April 174n87
Asperger’s syndrome 50
Aspesi, Natalia 38n67
Asselborn, Jean 16–21, 26, 28, 30, 33n1,
 36n35
“attainment of pleasure” 69
authoritarianism 122
auto-erotic 71
Ayoub, Phillip M. 242n24
Bachofen, Johann Jakob xi, xivn4
Bateson, Gregory 34n8
Beachy, Robert M. 147–148, 165n7,
 165n15
Beauvoir, Simone de 107n136, 114,
 133n8
Becker, Markus 33n1
Bellini, Manuele 171n52
Belotti, Daniele 35n19
Benadusi, Lorenzo 39n74

- Benedict of Norcia 240n14
 Beneduce, Roberto 214–215n88
 Benjamin, Harry 139n115
 Benjamin, Walter 137n80
 Bennato, Edoardo 229
 Bentham, Jeremy 50, 56n47, 72
 Berberi, Leonard 243n38
 Bergoglio, Jorge Mario (Pope Francis I) 239n4
 Berizzi, Paolo 12n12, 238n2
 Berlusconi, Silvio 27, 30, 37n51
 Bernini, Lorenzo xi–xiv, 6, 7, 53n1, 74n3, 106n114, 139n107, 244n41
 Bersani, Leo xi, 8, 10, 13n22, 14n28, 17, 34n6, 65, 75n9, 82, 95, 116, 165n4, 174n88
 Berubé, Allan 210n38
 Beyond the Demographic Winter 25
Beyond the Pleasure Principle (Freud) 69, 74, 81–86, 89, 91, 96, 123
 Bhabha, Homi K. 213n63
 Biagini, Elena 169n41
 Binet, Alfred (AU: Not found in the text)
 Binson, Diane 210n38
 Binswanger, Ludwig 90, 104n74
 biological energy 121
 biopolitical apparatus 116
 bisexuality 115, 152; conception 115; Oedipus complex 133n10; primary bisexuality 147; sexual identification 115; theory of 148, 156
 “The Black Hole” 8
 Black man 28; hypervirility of 202; new European sovereign right 205; oppression 199; physical integrity of 196; place of inferiority 200; sexual aberrations 198; sexual capacity 202; superiority of 201
Black Skin, White Masks (Fanon) 28, 193, 194, 195, 199, 205
Bodies that Matter (Butler) 115
 “body without organs” 186
 Bolognini, Stefano 243n39
 Bolsonaro, Jair M. 17
 Bonanno, Gianluca 20–21, 23
 Bonaparte, Marie 194, 201, 213n69, 217n134
 Boone, Joseph 210n38
 Borges, Jorge Luis 209–210n32
 Bory, Jean-Louis 170n47
 Bosch, Hieronymus 188
 Boschi, Maria Elena 236
 Boscolo, Luigi 34n8
 Bossi, Umberto 19–21, 24, 29, 34n12
 Botul, Jean-Baptiste 56n35
boudoir, political body in 50–53
 bourgeois civilization 120
 Braidotti, Rosi 75n10
 Bridget of Sweden 240n14
 Briffault, Robert xivn4
 British Gay Liberation Front (GLF) 154
 Brueghel, Pieter 188
 brutal sexual dictatorship 17
 Burroughs, William S. 28, 33, 34n4
 Busarello, Renato 242n25
 Bush, George W. 116
 Bussetti, Marco 224
 Butler, Judith 2, 11n1, 13n15, 14n29, 28, 32, 37n54, 38n70, 107n137, 114–120, 126, 129, 131, 132, 133n5, 134n30, 145, 147, 148, 150, 152, 155, 165n6, 183, 185–187, 189–192, 211n42
 Cacciari, Massimo 16–18, 20, 21, 34n2
 Caliban 194–206, 216n108
 Camus, Renaud 242n23
 Canale, Marco 234, 236
 cannibalistic pregenital sexual organization 66
 Capecia, Mayotte 194, 213n73
 “Captain-Daddy’s” view 29
 Carassava, Anthee 36n36
 Carletti, Andrea 241n15
 Carofiglio, Gianrico 35n24
 Carotenuto, Aldo 100n3
 Catherine of Siena 240n14
 Catholic movement 224
 Cavarero, Adriana 38n68, 107n137
 Cecchin, Gianfranco 34n8
 censorship 7, 13n19, 33
 Centrone, Angelo A. 34n13
 Césaire, Aimé 107n138, 195, 214n77, 216n108
 Chiurco, Carlo 37n51
 Christian Democratic Union (CDU) 228
 Christianity 23, 139n107
 Cigarini, Lia 177n127
 cisgender 129; civilization forces subjects 28; heterosexual men and women 115; sexual experience 118
 cis-heterosexual men 115, 173n75
 citizenship 17, 18, 31, 90, 113
 civilization 100, 146, 160, 233

- Civilization and Its Discontents* (Freud)
52, 65, 74, 90, 92–95, 98, 130,
132, 153, 161, 184, 198
- civil rights movements 9, 153
- civil unions 3, 25, 32, 36n40, 231, 234
- clinical theory* 62
- colonialism, racist psychology of 32
- Colpani, Gianmaria 242n24
- Comencini, Vito 230
- Communism 90
- compulsory heterosexuality 116
- The Concept of the Political*
(Schmitt) 198
- Connell, Raewyn W. 209n23
- constructivist bullshit 183
- Conte, Giuseppe 225, 228
- contemporary philosophy 63
- Contieri, Andrea 169n43
- Contingency, Hegemony, Universality:
Contemporary Dialogues on the
Left* (Laclau and Žižek) 116
- contradiction 19, 29, 51, 99
- Cossolo, Felix 39n72, 169n41
- counterintuitive thesis 116
- “counter-science” 62
- COVID-19 pandemic 1, 8
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé 242n30
- Crimina Carnis Contra Naturam* 48–50
- Cronenberg, David 17, 19, 29, 33,
34n3, 196
- Crow, Jim 195
- Cyril, Saint 240n14
- Dallery, Arleen B. 37n54
- Dall’Orto, Giovanni 165n7, 208n13,
243n33
- Dardot, Pierre 244n42
- Davis, Angela 9, 13n25, 215n89,
216n109
- Dean, Tim 168n37, 243n34
- death drive 187; *see also* sexual drive
- De corpore politico* (Hobbes) 50–51, 99
- Decreto sicurezza bis 226
- De Filippi, Maria 234, 243n32
- “degenitalization of pleasure” 185
- DeLarverie, Stormé 153
- De Lauretis, Teresa 32, 76n24, 168n37,
183, 190, 191, 193, 196, 198,
204, 207n6, 211n42,
212n57, 238
- Deleuze, Gilles 27, 37n46, 122, 138n95,
155, 158, 170n48, 171n53, 185,
186, 203n20
- Del Re, Francesco Paolo 177n123
- De Luca, Maria Novella 239n7
- De Michelis, Cesare G. 107n135
- democracy 20, 31, 232, 238
- De’ Pasquali, Marc 177n127
- dependency complex 200
- De Pisis, Filippo 182
- Derrida, Jacques 53, 57n60, 63, 74n5,
75n11, 82, 86, 101n10
- Descartes, René 47, 54n16
- “desexualization of pleasure” 185
- Deutsch, Helene 194, 201, 213n70
- De Vivo, Barbara 242n25
- Di Battista, Alessandro 225
- Dierkes-Thrun, Petra 172n67
- discharge model 69
- Discipline and Punish* (Foucault) 155
- discrimination 232
- Disney, Walt 23, 36n33
- double-consciousness 195
- Dreyfuss, Hubert 209n31
- drive, definition of 70; *see also* sexual
drive
- drugs use 185–186
- Du Bois, W.E.B. 195, 196, 214n80,
214n84
- Dufourmantelle, Anne 10, 11, 14n27,
45–47, 51, 53, 53n2, 63, 82
- Duggan, Lisa 232, 237, 241n19
- Dutoit, Ulysse 17, 34n6, 39n73, 57n58
- Echols, Alice xivn1
- economic inequality 3
- economic policy 231
- Eco, Umberto 7, 13n16, 27, 37n47
- Edelman, Lee xii, 7, 8, 10, 13n17, 29,
30, 32, 33, 55n28, 118, 119,
139n117, 146, 187, 189, 192,
206, 227, 233, 238
- The Ego and the Id* (Freud) 114, 148
- Einstein, Albert 106n119
- Ellis, Henry Havelock 78n72, 165n8
- El Moudjahid* newspaper 194
- Empedocles 83
- endosexual heterosexuals 118
- Engels, Friedrich xi, 54n11, 135n37,
151, 167n30
- Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse) 123,
125, 153, 155
- erotic fantasies 96
- “eternal fascism” 7, 21
- ethical “counter-conduct” 184
- euphemism 19

- European Commission 19, 225
 European Union 24
 evolutionary conquest 117, 191
 evolutionary leaps 65
 extreme right party 6, 225
- familialism 160
 Family Day Association 25
 Fanon, Frantz 8, 9, 13n24, 28, 30, 32,
 107n138, 193–206, 214n78,
 215n89, 216n108, 216n109,
 226, 233
- far-right movements 25
 fascism 6, 7, 17, 23, 24, 26, 27, 32, 183;
 First World War 30; neo-fascisms
 7, 243n39; political rhetoric of
 151; psychology of 27
 “fascism of the Baby’s face” 227
 Fassin, Éric 13n15, 31, 38n66
 Fazio, Fabio 35n19
 female: attraction 8; body unite 84;
 characteristics 77n38; Freud’s
 ideas on 217n134; heterosexual
 desires 115; identity 114–115,
 129; male sex’s exploitation 159;
 penis envy 114; position 114;
 rape 202; sexuality 201–202;
 sexual life 97
 femininity 209n23
 feminism 52, 114, 192
 feminist movements 31
 Fenichel, Otto 123, 137n70
 Feole, Eva 174n89
 Ferenczi, Sándor 75n12, 81, 87, 100n5,
 172n62
 Fergnani, Franco 170n52
 Ferrante, Antonia Anna 242n25
 Fini, Massimo 54n17
 Fiorino, Vinzia 214n78
 First World War 22, 30, 81
 Five-Star Movement 19, 26, 225, 226–228
 Floyd, Kevin 1, 242n26
 Fontana, Lorenzo 37n41, 224
 Food and Drug Administration
 (FDA) 122
 foreclosure concept 113–114, 116
 “foreclosure of the sexual” 145
 fore-pleasure-desire 76n22
 Fornari, Franco 172n62
 Forti, Laura 171n53
 Forti, Simona 105n103
 Fortress Europe 224
 Foucauldianism 147
- Foucault, Michel 27, 32, 37n46, 61–63,
 70, 74n5, 95, 114–132,
 138n106, 140n126, 140n128,
 145–164, 164n7, 183–206,
 207n5, 207n9, 209n25, 209n31,
 210n38, 238; *Discipline and
 Punish* 155; *The History of
 Madness* 61, 155, 187; *The
 History of Sexuality* 119, 155;
The Order of Things 62, 187,
 188; salvational project 185;
 sexuality possible analytic 191;
The Will to Knowledge 61, 62,
 115, 119, 126, 129, 182
 “fragile” constitution 89
 Franceschini, Flavia 39n72, 169n41
 Frankfurt School 146
 Frederick Barbarossa 34n12
 Freud, Anna 194, 213n71
 Freud, Ernst 81, 86
The Freudian Body (Bersani) 95
 Freud, Martin 81, 82, 100n6
 Freud, Oliver 81
 Freudo-Marxism 32, 73, 123, 127, 130,
 145, 146, 153, 183, 187,
 189, 192
Freud’s Drive (de Lauretis) 190, 193,
 196, 198
 Freud, Sigmund 11n3, 81–100, 104n74,
 119, 132n1; *An Outline of
 Psychoanalysis* 66; *Beyond the
 Pleasure Principle* 69, 74, 81–86,
 89, 91, 96, 123; *Civilization and
 Its Discontents* 52, 65, 74,
 92–95, 98, 130, 132, 153, 161,
 184, 198; *The Ego and the Id*
 114, 148; female sexuality
 217n134; *Group Psychology and
 the Analysis of the Ego* 153;
Interpretation of Dreams 86; *The
 Interpretation of Dreams* 64;
 sexual theory 191; *Three Essays
 on the Theory of Sexuality* 11n3,
 64, 68, 72, 73; *Totem and
 Taboo* 94
 Freud, Sophie (Sophie Halberstadt) 86,
 87, 166n25
 Fronte Unitario Omosessuale
 Rivoluzionario Italiano
 (FUORI!) 153
 Front Homosexuel d’Action
 Revolutionnaire (FHAR) 153
The Function of the Orgasm (Reich) 119

- Gaetano, Giuseppe 238n1
 Garbagnoli, Sara 36n39, 53n7
 Garland, Judy 153
 "Gay and Lesbian Studies"
 conference 183
Gay Berlin 148
 Gay Liberation Front 154
 Gay, Peter 104n76
 gays 4, 25; human rights of 52; militant
 intellectuals 152; movements 160;
 right to marriage 4; Salvini's
 conflation of 29; sex clubs 186;
 social inclusion 8; subcultures 184
 gender: binary 8; difference 116;
 dysphoria 157; equality 4;
 identity 67, 145; identity disorder
 157; ideology 5, 6, 21, 25;
 incongruence 3, 157;
 intersectional oppression 2; non-
 binary people 2; sexual
 orientation 46
 gender theory 167n29
Gender Trouble (Butler) 114, 129,
 147, 148
 general anthropological theory 62
 Genet, Jean 170n48
 "genital pleasure" 185
 Gentiloni, Paolo 243n37
 Giansoldati, Francesca 239n4
 Gibelli, Antonio 39n74
 Giglioli, Daniele 34n14
 Ginsburg, Allen 152
 Giraud-Teulon, Alexis xivn4
 Giuliani, Gaia 242n25
 Gladwell, Malcolm 240n12
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 105n104,
 137n80
 good and evil, concepts of 51
 Goya, Francisco 188
 Gramolini, Cristina 39n72, 169n41
 Greek "pedophilia" 151
 Greer, Germaine 174n87
 Greta (the "torn up child") 241n16
 Grimaldi, Alberto 33
 Groddeck, Georg 155, 171n56
*Group Psychology and the Analysis of
 the Ego* (Freud) 153
 Gruber, Lilli 35n24
 Guaraldo, Olivia 107n137
 Guattari, Félix 27, 37n46, 122, 136n61,
 145, 155, 158, 170n48,
 171n53, 186
 Guerra, Elda 53n7
 Habel, Adriano José 242n24
 Halberstadt, Ernst (Sigmund Freud's
 grandson) 86–87, 89, 104n54
 Halberstadt, Heinz (Heinerle, Sigmund
 Freud's grandson) 89
 Halberstam, Jack 76n23, 208n23
 hedonistic resistances 126–132
 Hegel, G.W. Friedrich 94, 95, 175n100
 Heraclitus 47
 hermaphroditism 67
 Herzfeld, Marie 166n16
 Hesnard, Angelo 194, 200, 213n68
 heterosexuality 5, 148, 150, 163; Butler's
 objections 150; destruction of 159;
 Foucault's constructivist
 perspective 128; healthy
 reproductive 65, 85; heterosexist
 society 129; heterosexual couples
 25; heterosexual matrix 116;
 reproductivity 73; as social
 system 159
 High Active Antiretroviral Therapy 189
 Hirschfeld, Magnus 148, 151, 165n9,
 166n15
The History of Madness (Foucault) 61,
 155, 187
The History of Sexuality (Foucault)
 119, 155
 Hitler, Adolf 90, 104n77, 122
 HIV/AIDS pandemic 9, 117–118
 Hobbes, Thomas xiii, 46, 47, 50–52,
 55n2, 57n54, 61, 63, 72, 73,
 74n2, 91, 92, 95, 99, 104n84,
 106n114, 117, 119, 162, 192
 Hocquenghem, Guy 32, 120, 135n43,
 155, 158, 160, 169n41, 171n54,
 172n62, 174n83, 183, 187, 189,
 198, 205, 207n9, 207n10
 Hölderlin, Friedrich 188
 homo-lesbo-bi-trans-pan-negativity 4–6
 "homonationalist" process 30
 homonormativity 232
 homo/pansexual struggle 187
 homophobia 29, 30, 52, 160
 homosexuality 3, 50, 115, 118, 128, 147,
 148, 153, 189; "civil" for 160;
 criminalization of 152; homosexual
 desire 160; homosexual struggle
 160; identity 129, 162; liberation
 from 147; "modern invention" of
 147; movements for 160;
 pathologization of 156; sterility
 of 198

- Homosexuelle Aktion Westberlin (HAW) 153, 171n54
 Huffer, Lynne 164n2
 human sciences dealt 127
 human sexuality 64, 70
 hydraulic model 67
 hyper-hedonistic societies 52

 ideological glues 29
 Idier, Antoine 171n54
 illegal migrants 18
 imagination 61
 immigration 16, 29, 31, 224, 231
 inequality 232
 infantile sexuality 85, 156, 185
Instinkt (instinct) 63, 83
 intermediate sexual condition 148
International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 167n28
 International Congress of Sexology 154
 International Exposition of the Decorative Arts, the Triennale 7
 International Psychoanalytic Association 146
 International Psychoanalytic Society 122
 International Sexological Conference 3
Interpretation of Dreams (Freud) 86
The Interpretation of Dreams (Freud) 64
 intersectional oppression 2
 intersex subjects 67
 Irigaray, Luce 107n133, 164n2
 irregular migrants 227
 Islamic: faith 224; immigration 31; violence 226
 Isoardi, Isabella 27, 37n52
 Italian: idiomatic expression 45; legal system 18; populism 26; public opinion 234
 Italian Psychoanalytic Society (SPI) 172n62
 Italian Radical Party (PR) 155
 Italian Social Republic 33
 Italy's Lega party 225
 Ivan (one of the youngest gay grooms in Italy) 234

 Jacobson, David 168n37
 Jaspers, Karl 194, 213n66
 Johnson, Marsha P. 153
 Jones, Ernest 90, 101n6, 104n75, 172n62
 Jordan, Winthrop 38n58
 Judaism 23, 24, 90

 Judeo-Christianity 164
 Jung, Carl Gustav 100n3, 155

 Kant, Immanuel xiii, 46–52, 54n16, 55n27, 57n59, 72, 73, 84, 93, 106n115, 132, 147, 164, 192, 206
 Kennedy, Hubert 177n125
 Kerr, John 81, 100n3
 Kertbeny, Karl Maria 148
 “Kingdom of Freedom” 160
 “Kingdom of Love” 160
 Kington, Tom 36n36
 kinship 118
 Kistner, Ulrike xivn7
 Kohler, Joachim 54n17
 Kovel, Joel 38n58
 Krafft-Ebing, Richard von 128
 Kristeva, Julia 37n54
 Kuhar, Roman 36n39

 Lacan, Jacques 3, 4, 8, 12n5, 13n20, 48, 51, 113–116, 118–120, 132n2, 152, 164, 190, 192, 194, 202, 211n43
 Laclau, Ernesto 20, 29, 34n16, 116, 132n5, 211n41
 Lamorgese, Luciana 239n5
 Lane, Christopher 168n37
 Laplanche, Jean xi, xii, 7, 10, 13n18, 63, 64, 65, 75n16, 99, 117, 123, 164, 187, 189, 190, 193, 211n44
La Repubblica 230–231
 Laval, Christian 244n42
 leadership complex 199
 Leap, William 210n38
Lectures on Ethics (Kant) 48, 50
 Lee, William 33
 Lega-Five-Star government 228
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm von 47, 54n16
 Leonardo da Vinci 149, 150, 166n16
 Le Pen, Marine 30
 Lepore, Francesco 38n67
 Lerner, Gad 35n19
 lesbians: homophobic violence 30; human rights of 52; lesbian feminism 52; lesbian-feminist 46; right to marriage 4; sadomasochism of 184; social inclusion 8
 lesbo-feminist struggle 159
 Let's Defend Our Children 25

- Levi, Corrado 154, 169n43, 177n127, 207n4, 231, 233, 241n18, 242n23
- Lévinas, Emmanuel 14n29
- LGBTQIA+: activist youth 2, 4; community 11n2, 153; Italian law on civil unions 231; movements 4, 12n7, 31, 100; revolution 3; rights 8, 189; sexual health 189
- libido, conception of 121
- Linder, Ernst Otto 54n19
- Lindner, Samuel 78n72
- Locke, John 105n94
- Lo Iacono, Cristian 53n7
- Lo Muzio, Valerio 230, 240n13
- Longo, Michele ix
- Lonzi, Carla 107n133, 120, 135n44, 164n2, 214n78, 233
- Lorenz, Konrad 75n18
- Low, Barbara 137n71
- Lowen, Alexander 122, 136n60
- Lucas, Philip 56n47
- Luce, Sandro 214n78
- Macey, David 139n107, 207n5, 213n65
- Macron, Emmanuel J. -M. F. 35n19
- Mafia 21, 36n29
- Maine, Sir Henry xiv, 122
- male: characteristics 77n38; chauvinism 5, 6; and female sexes 46; female, sex's exploitation 159; heterosexual desires 115; homosexual couples 30; homosexuality 28, 32, 149; identity 115; Oedipus complex 66; position 114; reciprocal attraction 8; sexual act with 97; sexual life 97
- Malebranche, Nicolas 54n16
- Manconi, Luigi 243n37
- Mannoni, Octave 194, 199, 200, 215n104, 216n108
- Maran, René 194, 213n74
- Marcasciano, Porpora 244n40
- Marcuse, Herbert 32, 123–127, 130, 132, 136n61, 137n71, 137n80, 145, 147, 152, 153, 156, 158, 160, 161, 162, 168n35, 175n102, 183, 187, 192, 210n39, 238, 244n43
- Mario Paolo 168n37
- Mario Rossi 154, 169
- marriage 49; marital sex 49; same-sex couples' right 31
- Marriott, David 212n60
- Marshall, Bill 171n54
- Marxism 183, 237
- Marx, Karl 32, 46, 54n11, 123, 126, 135n37, 151, 167n30, 174n82
- Marx political theory 46
- Mary (The Madonna) 240n10, 241n14
- masculinity 27–28, 33, 186, 200
- masochism 10, 65, 87, 89, 159, 191
- “masters of suspicion” 46
- Mattarella, Sergio 230
- mature sexual pleasure 68
- Mbembe, Achille 107n138
- McLennan, John. F. xivn4
- medico-psychiatric invention 129
- Mein Kampf* (Hitler) 90
- Meloni, Giorgia 5–6, 236, 244n40
- mental disorders 3
- Merkel, Angela D. 228
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 45, 194
- metapsychological* theory 62
- metapsychology 146
- Methodius, Saint 240n14
- Michelangelo 150
- Michele, (the fetus) 223–226
- Mickey Mouse 199
- middle-aged gay 7
- Mieli, Mario 8, 32, 154–164, 169n40, 169n43, 172n62, 173n74, 174n87, 182–187, 189, 191–194, 198, 204, 205, 206n1, 233, 237, 238, 244n43
- Mieli, Paola (Nefertiti) 168n34, 168n37
- Mieli, Walter 162
- Migale, Lia 173n78, 174n87
- Migliorini, Alex (gay “tronista,” dating contestant) 234
- Milanese Homosexual Collectives (COM) 155
- Miller, James 207n5
- Millet, Kate x, xi, xivn2, xivn4
- Minniti, Marco 18, 242n28
- Miranda, (The Tempest) 216n108, 219n149
- misogyny 52
- Missana, Eleonora 53n7
- Mitchell, Larry 168n34
- “model of discharge” 68
- modern political philosophy 47
- Molesworth, William 55n22
- monogamic-patriarchal family 125

- Moraca, Gaetano 225, 239n3
 Morgan, Louis Henry xivn4
 Morisi, Luca 24
 Moscati, Antonella 212n46
 Mouffe, Chantal 20, 29, 34n17
 Movement Homosexuel d'Action
 Révolutionnaire (MHAR) 153
 Movimento Español de Liberación
 Homosexual (MELH) 153
 Murgia, Michela 26, 31, 41n44
 Mussolini, Benito 12n7, 12n13, 17, 27,
 30, 90, 224, 240n10

Naked Lunch (Burrough) 17, 33
 Nasso, Antonio 231
 Nathanson, Amalia (Amalia Freud) 90
 National Association Against
 Discrimination Based on Sexual
 Orientation (ANDDOS) 238
 National Socialism 23
 nature concept 120
 Nazism 23, 32
The Need for Roots (Weil) 23
 Negro 197
 neo-Fascist circles 7, 27
 neo-Fascist movements 27, 31
 neoliberalism 127
 neoliberal populism 31
 neo-positivism 125
 Nerval, Gérard de 188
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 46–48, 51, 52,
 54n10, 54n18, 81, 188
 Nirvana principle 124
 Nobile, Gabriella 239n7
*No Future: Queer Theory and the Death
 Drive* (Edelman) 118
 non-authoritarian self-regulation 120
 non-binary people 2
 non-heterosexual people 120
 non-repressive civilization 123
 non-reproductive sex 50
 “normal persons” 67
 North German Confederation 148
*Notes Toward a Performative Theory of
 Assembly* 118

 Obama, Barack 234
 Obholzer, Karin 132n1
 oceanic textuality 106n118
 Oedipus 66, 77n37, 86, 87, 114, 115,
 122, 128, 133n10, 148, 173,
 203, 204, 217n134, 218n138,
 218n147
 Oedipus Complex 66, 86, 87, 114,
 115, 128
 olfactory excitation 97
 Oliva, Adriano 56n42
One-Dimensional Man (Marcuse)
 124–125, 130, 155
On the Genealogy of Morals
 (Nietzsche) 46
 “ontology of sexuality” 69
 oral drive 71
 Orbán, Viktor M. 17
The Order of Things (Foucault) 62,
 187, 188
 “organa sexualia” 49
 organic repression 96
 orgone energy accumulator 122
 Orgonon Research Institute in
 Maine 122
 original bisexuality 67, 98, 114
 original masochism 89
*The Origin of the Family, Private
 Property, and the State* (Engels)
 151–152
 Orrù, Paolo Salvatore 244n40
 Our Lady of Sorrows 231

 Paccioni, Jean-Paul 55n29
 Pankëev, Sergej Castontinovič 113,
 132n1
 pansexual liberation 159
 Parinetto, Luciano 32, 155, 156,
 158–160, 163, 170n48, 170n52,
 171n58, 174n82, 176n105, 189,
 198, 233
 Parks, Rosa 153
 Parolin, Pietro 239
parrhesia, Socratic notion of 193
 part-time transvestite 157
 Pasolini, Pier Paolo 17, 19, 28, 29, 33,
 34n5, 182, 206n1
 Pasti, Umberto 163, 177n127
 Pateman, Carole 57n54
 Paternotte, David 36n39, 242n24
 Patočka, Jan 53n4
 Paul of Tarsus (The Apostle) 95
 Pellegatta, Fabio 39n72
 Pelosi, Pino 33
 penal-vaginal coitus 65
 penis-vagina coitus 70
 Penney, James 242n27
 Pennisi, Martina 243n32
 PEP (Post-Exposure Prophylaxis) 9
 Perilli, Vincenza 53n7

- perverse sexual/drive 68–74
 Pezzana, Angelo 154, 155, 169n39,
 170n46, 244n43
 phallic phase 68
 pharmacopornographic era 238
 “The Phases of Development of the
 Sexual Organization”
 (Bersani) 68
Phenomenology of Spirit (Hegel) 94
 Piasere, Leonardo 106n114
 Piazzoni, Gabriele 241n17
 Pichler, Hans 75n12, 106n121
 Pigino, Walter 39n72, 169n41
 Pillon, Simone 37n41
 Pini, Andrea 169n43
 Plato 47, 52, 53n3, 83, 101n33, 148
 Plautus 74n2, 105n93
 pleasure 71, 187; from anal activity 81;
 concept of 123; definition of 82;
 degree of 68–69; principle 82, 84,
 88, 90, 93, 119, 124
 Poe, Edgar Allan 176n111
 politics 46; credit 127; “ebb” 155;
 philosophical reflections on 61;
 philosophy 63
 Polizzi, Goffredo 242n25
 polymorphously perverse 98
 populism 20, 31, 232
 “populist moment” 31
 “portion of humanity” 51
 post-Second World War 151
 Prata, Giuliana 34n8
 Prearo, Massimo 36n39, 154, 165n3,
 168n34, 169n41, 177n125,
 206n1, 242n25
 Preciado, Paul B. 4, 12n9, 13n15, 75n12,
 106n121, 157, 172n68, 238,
 244n45
 “predestined erotogenic zones” 71
 PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) 9, 189
 pride parades 29
 prohibition, anal activity 81
 Prospero 200, 201, 215n104, 216n108,
 216n110, 226
 psychic identification 149
The Psychic Life of Power (Butler)
 116, 190
 psychic process 113, 116
 psychoanalytic theory 93
 psychoanalytic therapy 122
*Psychogenesis of a Case of
 Homosexuality in a Woman*
 (Butler) 148–149
 Puar, Jasbir 232, 237, 242n22
 Puccianelli, Matteo 241n16
 Puccini, Giacomo 35n19
 Pustianaz, Marco 53n7
 Putin, Vladimir 4, 8, 17, 23
 queer philosophy 46
 queer theory 6, 52, 114, 119, 147
 quite unclear 70
 Rabant, Claude 168n37
 Rabinow, Paul 140n126, 208n10, 209n31
 race/racism 5, 6, 30, 159, 232
 Rackete, Carola 239n5
 radical feminism 155
 RAI (the Italian national public
 broadcasting company) 231
 Raimo, Christian 34n15
 Rancière, Jacques 31, 38n68
 Rank, Otto 75n12
 Rebucini, Gianfranco 242n24
 reciprocal attraction 8
 Reich, Wilhelm 32, 119–124, 126, 132,
 134n32, 135n42, 135n44,
 136n61, 138n95, 145, 147, 152,
 153, 158, 164n1, 183, 187
 Renzi, Matteo 225, 234, 243n37
 reparative therapy 3, 151, 152
 reproductive force 50
 reproductive heterosexuality 85
The Republic (Plato) 45, 53
 Restaino, Franco 53n7
 revealing moment 17
 revolutionary lesbianism 155
 Rich, Adrienne 133n16
 Ricoeur, Paul 54n9
 right track 7
 right-wing populism 5
 Rivera, Sylvia R. 153
Roe v. Wade 3
 Rohleder, Hermann Oscar 128
 Roma, Filippo 235
 Romagnoli, Gabriele 229, 231, 240n12
 Rondoni, Davide 21, 36n26
 Rosanvallon, Pierre 20, 29, 35n18
 Rossi Barilli, Gianni 168n37, 169n41,
 206n1
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 91, 104n91
 Rubin, Gayle S. 184, xivn1
 Sacher-Masoch, Leopold von 208n21
 Sade, Donatien-Alphonse-François 51,
 57n55, 57n58

- Sadji, Abdoulaye 213n75
 sadomasochism 183, 185
 Safranski, Rüdiger 54n19
 Salomé, Lou von (Andreas-Salomé Lou)
 47, 81, 83, 98, 101n8, 160
 salvational project 185
 Salvini, Matteo 5, 6, 16–31, 34n15,
 35n19, 35n24, 36n36, 224–231,
 239n5, 240n10, 240n14, 241n15
 same-sex: civil unions 25; couples' right
 31; eroticism 50; marriage 224
 Sánchez, Pedro 35n19
 Santini, Francesco 176n102, 177n127
 Santin, Luciano 176n102, 176n122
 Santoro, Michele 35n19
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 170n48, 199, 205,
 213n72
 satisfaction 71
 Saviano, Roberto 35n19
 Sboarina, Federico 224
 Scalfari, Eugenio 35n19
 Scarfone, Dominique 212n44
 Schérer, René 207n9
 Schettini, Laura 168n37, 169n41,
 176n122
 Schmitt, Carl xii, xiii, 95, 116, 198
 Schopenhauer, Arthur 46–50, 52,
 54n16, 55n20, 63, 72, 82, 92, 95,
 101n8
 Scola, Angelo 107n137
 Scott, Charles E. 37n54
 Scott, Joan W. 13n15
 SCUM *Manifesto* 20
 second sex 99
 Second World War 99
 securitarianism 24
 Selvini Palazzoli, Mara 34n8
 Senghor, Léopold Sédar 107n138, 194
 sensual sucking 70–71
 sexism 4, 98, 194
 sexophobic philosophical tradition 32
 sex/sexual: aberrations 73; abjection 5;
 act 68–69; activity 72; anti-social
 characteristic of 123; behaviors
 148; conservatism 122;
 constructivist theory of 145;
 definition of 117; development
 64–68; excitation 64, 68, 69, 97;
 experience 118; female position
 114; “foreclosure” of 8; function
 97; health 189; hormones 64;
 instinct 64; intercourse 126;
 inversion 156; irregularities 98;
 male position 114; “naturalness”
 of 120; normality 73; orientation
 46; pleasure 185; repression 152;
 revolution 2, 8, 32, 119, 162;
 self-determination 120;
 trafficking 21
 sexual drive 10, 61, 64, 72, 84, 85, 89,
 93, 158, 187, 191; of children 87;
 idea of 82; pleasure principle 85
 sexuality 46, 65, 126; apparatus of 127;
 dimension of 187; politicization
 of 184; possible analytic 191;
 privatization of 160
 sexual liberation movements
 130–131, 232
 sexual life 66, 68, 70; “central
 phenomenon” of 121
 “sexual (genital) love” 96
 sexual minorities 8, 95, 118; civil rights
 9; civil rights movements 153;
 far-right movements 25; symbolic
 victory for 234
The Sexual Revolution (Reich) 119
 sexual stages theory 66, 82, 191
 Shakespeare, William 54n16, 200,
 216n108, 219n149
 Sharaf, Myron R. 136n59
 Sheeran, Anne 56n47
 “The Signification of the Phallus”
 (Lacan) 115
 Silvestri, Gianpaolo 174n87
 Simondon, Gilbert xii, 75n17
 Simone (one of the youngest gay grooms
 in Italy) 234, 235
 social: inclusion 8; justice 3; recognition
 128; unintelligibility 146
 social media 2, 20, 24, 27
 Socrates 45–47, 54n16
 Solanas, Valerie 20, 30, 33, 35n20
 Solidago, Alfonso Sarrío 177n127
 Solla, Gianluca 106n114
 Sona, Claudio (gay “tronista,” dating
 contestant) 234
 Sorrenti, Alan 229
The Souls of Black Folk (Du Bois) 195
 sovereigntist right movements 31
 Spano, Francesco 236
 “specific social formations” 25
 Spielrein, Sabina 81, 100n3
 Spinelli, Simonetta 168n37
 Spinoza, Baruch 47, 54n16
 Starling, Ernest 75n15
 Steinach, Eugen 75n12, 106n121

- Stoneman, Michael 183
 Stone, Sandy 157, 172n66
 street politics 118
 Street Transvestite Action
 Revolutionaries (STAR) 153
 “Striving of the Negro People”
 (Du Bois) 195
 Stryker, Susan 157, 168n32, 172n67,
 232, 241n20
 “sublimation” process 67
 suicidal tendencies 147
 Sycorax, (The Tempest) 216n108
Symposium 45
- Taliban 3, 8
 Tarizzo, Davide 55n26
 Tarzan 195, 199
Tarzan film 195–196
 Tattelman, Ira 210n38
 “tautology for masochism” 191
 Teal, Donn 168n31
 Tell, William 33
 “tension of unpleasure” 69
 Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
 240n14
 Testi, Elena 38n67
 Testut, Léo 217n127
 Tewksbury, Richard 210n38
*The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and
 Art* (Bersani) 65, 68
 third sex 148
 Thomas Aquinas 56
Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality
 (Freud) 11n3, 64, 68, 72, 73, 81,
 82, 83, 88, 89, 94, 96, 98, 117,
 149, 189
 Tiraboschi, Matteo 35n19
 Toffa, Nadia 234
 Tommasin, Catia 177n127
 Tonacci, Fabio 34n9, 36n34
 Toninelli, Danilo 225
 Tönnies, Ferdinand 57n51
 tortuous theory 149
Totem and Taboo (Freud) 94
Towards a Gay Communism (Mieli)
 161, 163, 182, 193
 transfeminism 52, 114
 transfeminist 46
 transgender 129; gender and sexual
 orientation 46; identity 3; sexual
 minorities 232; social recognition
 8; trans movements 157
 transsexualism 148
 transsexuality 3, 128, 157, 160
 transvestism 148
 “tree of life” 20–21
Trieb (drive) 63–64, 83
 Trump, Donald J. 17, 30, 234,
 241n21
 Truscott, Lucian IV 168n31
- Übermensch* 45–47
 Ulrichs, Karl Heinrich 148, 151,
 165n8
 Umberto Eco 7, 27
 Unamuno, Miguel De 56n34
 Ungaretti, Giuseppe 43
 United Nations High Commissioner for
 Human Rights 18
 United States (U.S.): capitalism 25;
 imperialism 22; Supreme Court 3
 universal cosmic energy 121
 University of Verona 6
 unpleasure, definition of 82
 unsatisfactory conclusion 64, 72
- Vance, Carol xiv
 Van Gogh, Vincent 188
vanilla heterosexism 126
 Van Ussel, Jos 138n95
 Verdiglione, Armando 171n53
 Verdini, Francesca 27
 Vest, Anna von 104n73
 video, of sexual organs 9
 violent sexuality 28
 Visetti, Giampaolo 241n16
 vital energy 121
 Vladimir Luxuria 236
 Voisset-Veysseyre, Cécile 171n54
 Vollmer, Joan 33
 volunteerism 190
 Von der Leyen, Ursula 228
- Wade, Simeon 183, 207n5
 Walt Disney 23
 Warhol, Andy 30, 33
 “War on Terror” 116
 Weber, Max 91, 104n87
 Weidel, Alice E. 30, 242n21
 Weil, Simone 22–24, 29, 36n32
 Westermarck, Edward xivn4
 Westphal, Karl Friedrich 128, 139n113,
 139n115
 “White Skin, Dark Meat” (Edelman)
 29, 30
 “wildcat” struggle 160

- Wilde, Oscar 243n39
Wille zur Leben (Will to Live) 48
The Will to Knowledge (Foucault) 61,
 62, 115, 119, 126, 129, 131, 145,
 182, 183, 191
 Wittig, Monique 159, 174n89, 193
 “Wolf-Man” 113
 women: far-right movements 25;
 oppression of 159; *see also* female
 Woods, William 210n38
The World as Will and Representation
 (Schopenhauer) 48
 World Congress of Families 6,
 223–224, 226
 World Health Organization (WHO) 3,
 167n28
- The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon)
 194, 198
 wrong track 6–7
 Yeats, William B. 176n107
 Young, Iris M. 37n54
- Zamboni, Chiara 212n46
 Zanetti, Gianfrancesco 108n139, 134n26
 Zappino, Federico 174n89, 242n25
 Zeid Raad al-Hussein 34n10
 zero-sum game 18, 91
 Zeus 101n33
 Žižek, Slavoj 116, 132n5, 211n41, 212n55
 Zundel, Matthew 1, 163, 168n37,
 177n123



Taylor & Francis Group
an **Informa** business



Taylor & Francis eBooks

www.taylorfrancis.com

A single destination for eBooks from Taylor & Francis with increased functionality and an improved user experience to meet the needs of our customers.

90,000+ eBooks of award-winning academic content in Humanities, Social Science, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Medical written by a global network of editors and authors.

TAYLOR & FRANCIS EBOOKS OFFERS:

A streamlined experience for our library customers

A single point of discovery for all of our eBook content

Improved search and discovery of content at both book and chapter level

REQUEST A FREE TRIAL
support@taylorfrancis.com

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

 **CRC Press**
Taylor & Francis Group