

INTRODUCTION

Inheritance in Psychoanalysis

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The etymology of *inheritance* reveals a problematic concerning the fundamental ambiguity of the subject that inherits. To inherit—coming from the Latin *inhereditare*, “appoint as heir,” by way of the Middle English *enherite*, “receive as a right,” and the Old French *enheriter*—originally meant “to bequeath,” as in the phrase “I inherit you.” In a complete reversal of what it means today, the word was used in the sense of deliberately ceding an object to another, rather than passively receiving something as an heir. To inherit, in this first sense, is thus not unlike bestowing a gift—or, as becomes especially legible in the sense of the pathological, a *curse*. What to make of this curious etymological slippage of the word inherit, as though either its source or its heir is not quite in place?

While it may seem odd to think that psychoanalysis and inheritance belong together, since inheritance, as such, rarely appears in discussions of psychoanalytic theory and practice, it is nonetheless everywhere implied at the heart of an experience marked by repetitions, returns, and *après-coups*. In psychoanalysis, inheritance takes on a special significance when it is approached from the side of the indeterminacy of the subject that inherits, where the heir of an inheritance is determined retroactively through the pathways of the unconscious “it” that “speaks.” In the experience of analysis, what I inherit is often felt to be almost autonomous, like an invention without an inventor. Although the subject of the unconscious is itself substanceless—lacking, as Sigmund Freud claims, any relation to time¹ (and, hence, without a substantive past or future)—it is nonetheless what structures the experience of the “I” in terms of a narrative destiny that can, in principle, be reinvented. Hence, the “it speaks” (*ça parle*) of the unconscious could

also be read as “it inherits”—or, better, “it invents,” as in Freud’s aphorism, “Where it was, there I shall become” (*Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*).² That is, understood in the sense of a bequeathing in which the heir returns to the source, inheritance in psychoanalysis doubles as the potential for an act that would transform inheritance.

Herein, the past and the future, in a sense, trade places: What has come before is the potentiality of an act that would change one’s heredity. At its most radical level, such a reinvention of one’s inheritance would signify a change, not only in one’s self (as in the limited sense of self-invention) but also to oneself, that is, to the way that one is attached to the social reality in which one takes part. In light of psychoanalysis, then, what is inherited is not exactly given or received, according to a specific biological or cultural order, so much as it is reinvented and openly bestowed, in turn, upon the world of discourse in which the subject is imbricated. The mask of selfhood falls, revealing the depersonalized subject at stake in the discursive movements of symbolic tradition and the seeming paradox that in order to change who “I” am I must change the coordinates of what determines my place in the chain of the “world.” By acting in accordance with my unconscious desire, I take responsibility for the singular meaning and effects of an inheritance that I both receive and bequeath.

Herein, an unheard-of task falls to the one who would take responsibility for this act of inheritance: to change both one’s self and the world on behalf of something that is not a part of either, the lost object of desire. Inheritance thereby poses an ethical question *in* psychoanalysis, which could equally well be asked *of* psychoanalysis: How can an individual assume responsibility for an act whereby he or she is radically transformed, in which his or her heredity—constituting the given objects of inheritance (symbolically, biologically, structurally)—is reinvented?

It is not hard to find examples today of instances in which the meaning and effects of (trans)individual inheritance are not sufficiently attended to. In February 2016, the United Kingdom passed a law approving the manipulation of CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) gene sequences in experiments that would alter the genetic composition of the human germ line. CRISPR, a naturally occurring biological defense mechanism found in bacteria and certain viruses, has already demonstrated a wide applicability to the human genome through a technology that enables the “cutting” of undesirable genetic strands and their replacement with altered gene sequences. The CRISPR gene-editing technique has recently proven to have heritable effects and to effectively change the epigenome responsible for gene activation and expression.³ Hence, this

historic legislative act enables the existence of programs that would alter, edit, and even reinvent genetic inheritance. Much of the controversy that surrounds the new biogenetic research has tended to circulate around the excitement generated by the possibility of reinventing the biological makeup of the individual human body—including the possibility of eliminating certain heritable diseases, like HIV and sickle-cell anemia—that could cause people to overlook the potential damage these changes may have beyond the individual. For example, a growing number of scientists warn that while the new research may be promising in terms of its treatment of illness, it can also have potentially harmful effects for subsequent generations. In response to such concerns, the state, insurance companies, hospitals, and medical boards appoint bioethics committees to hold debates about the ethical implications of the new research programs and (sometimes) to make their findings available to the general public. But this “solution” to the ethical problems attending the reinvention of inheritance fails to fully appreciate the problematic of inheritance in the depersonalized sense discussed above. If the subject of inheritance, taken in the abstract, is fundamentally indeterminate, then how could it be made intelligible through some comprehensive report made by a panel of experts, let alone decided upon in any concrete sense? At the very heart of the subject’s desire to change his or her body lies an ambiguity that may only be approached immanently, since what it concerns—an unconscious truth—is only answerable to the subject of its experience and is “reported” only in the aberrant form of the symptom that the subject “inherits.” Psychoanalysis takes up this aberrant form, not in order to study, debate, or inform the public about it, but in order to help the subject transform the social bond as a consequence of his or her encounter with it. The ethics of psychoanalysis concerns the act of assuming responsibility for inheritance. As such, it offers an ethical alternative to the denaturalization and reinvention of inheritance promoted by other disciplines and practices at a time when such possibilities are increasingly available.

Against the establishment of heredity, either natural or cultural, *inheritance in psychoanalysis* names the ethical process whereby the analyst, in alliance with the subject of the unconscious, maintains the opening for an act that would radically transform not only the individual but also the discourses in which the individual is inhabited. This volume addresses the transformative potential of inheritance in the spirit of this ethical act, which, as a new bequest, also transforms one’s given heritage into a new acquisition, as in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s lines from *Faust*, a play that haunted Freud throughout his career: “What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it to make it thine.”⁴ The contributors to this volume intervene into

three domains wherein inheritance deserves to be called into question and rendered into the means of reinvention: problems of natural or biological inheritance, such as innateness, heredity, and ontogenesis; problems of cultural transmission, genealogy, and writing; and problems that form the material of psychoanalytic practice, in the concrete space that preserves the revolutionary potential for the subject's transformation. In their responses to the question of inheritance in psychoanalysis, they have each made a bequest that intervenes into the circuit of received meaning within various fields, creating a hole where the problems are that is also an opening necessary for radical change.

In one of his last writings, the unfinished *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, Freud begins and ends his text by insisting that both the id and the superego are transmitters of natural and cultural heritages, respectively. Despite their wide divergence in aim and expression, they “both represent the influences of the past—the id the influence of heredity, the super-ego the influence, essentially, of what is taken over from other people—whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience, that is by accidental and contemporary events.”⁵ On the one hand, the id is the “oldest” psychological agency, which “contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution—above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organization and which find a first psychological expression [. . .] in forms unknown to us.”⁶ On the other hand, there is the superego, “heir to the Oedipus complex,”⁷ which represents not only the influences of one's parents but also “everything that had a determining effect on them themselves, the tastes and standards of the social class in which they lived and the innate dispositions and traditions of the race from which they sprang.”⁸ Between the two, the natural and cultural heritages, Freud situates the locus proper to what inherits as the mediation of past influences. But the agent of this mediation in fact diverges within the same text, as though Freud cannot decide what the proper heir is. In the first instance, he indicates the ego (as Freud ends the sentence above, “the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience, that is by accidental and contemporary events”). Then, at the end of the text, where he stops writing due to an impending appointment to treat his terminal illness, this formulation of the two sources of inheritance appears again, but this time it is not the ego but “external reality” that mediates between them:

Those who have a liking for generalizations and sharp distinctions may say that *the external world*, in which the individual finds himself exposed after being detached from his parents, *represents the power*

of the present; that his id, with its inherited trends, represents the organic past; and that the super-ego, which comes to join them later, represents more than anything the cultural past, which a child has, as it were, to repeat as an after-experience during the few years of his early life. It is unlikely that such generalizations can be universally correct. Some portion of the cultural acquisitions have undoubtedly left a precipitate behind them in the id; [. . .] not a few of the child's new experiences will be intensified because they are repetitions of some primaeval phylogenetic experience.

Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast,
 Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.
 [What thou hast inherited from thy fathers,
 acquire it to make it thine.]

Thus the super-ego takes up a kind of intermediate position between the id and the external world; it unites in itself the influences of the present and the past. In the establishment of the super-ego we have before us, as it were, an example of the way in which the present is changed into the past. . . .⁹

The text ends here. In the editor's note, James Strachey informs us that Freud broke away from his writing in September 1938, due to his having to undergo surgery upon his jaw (he died the following September, and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* was published posthumously in 1940). But one cannot help but wonder whether there is not something enigmatic about this ending. If the text is considered Freud's last will and testament, a kind of bequest to his followers containing, *in nuce*, his final attempt to run the circuit of his invention, then its final words are instructive. The text concludes just after mentioning the inheritance of the superego as emblemized in Goethe's lines from *Faust*, as if therein lies the key to the riddle of the relationship between psychoanalysis and inheritance: "What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, acquire it to make it thine." In this final moment, when Freud contemplates the invention to which he had devoted almost his whole life, in this final attempt at an outline of psychoanalysis, was there something in the notion of inheritance that made the end return once again to the beginning? Is there, in this ambiguous "power of the present," the potentiality of an inheritance that has not yet been acquired?

Jacques Lacan said he inherited Freud, even in spite of himself.¹⁰ As early as 1954, in a lesson about what it means that the unconscious is the

discourse of the Other, Lacan describes an inheritance in the “discourse of the circuit in which I am integrated,” by which he implicates, also, the transmitted effects of his teaching of psychoanalysis:

I am one of its links. It is the discourse of my father for instance, in so far as my father made mistakes which I am absolutely condemned to reproduce—that’s what we call the *super-ego*. I am condemned to reproduce them because I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can’t stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else. I have to put to someone else the problem of a situation of life or death in which the chances are that it is just as likely that he will falter, in such a way that this discourse produces a small circuit in which an entire family, an entire coterie, an entire camp, an entire nation or half of the world will be caught. The circular form of a speech which is just at the limit between sense and non-sense, which is problematic.¹¹

Given that his point bears upon the father’s discourse, how can it be denied that Lacan’s “father” could just as well be Freud and that the “aberrant form” that he is obliged to transmit includes the “mistakes” of the father of psychoanalysis (for example, Freud’s reliance upon the centrality of the Oedipus myth in his account of the heritage of the superego that Lacan alternatively describes in this passage as the unstoppable chain of discourse)? Is this to concede to the naysayers, to admit that the above confirms what has long been thought about psychoanalysis, that it is a specialized language that belongs to a “small circuit” or “coterie” of devotees who pass on their occult knowledge in a self-enclosed circle? But this explanation cannot satisfy us if we reflect upon the significance of the fact that Lacan describes it as his duty to transmit a “problematic” discourse, in what amounts to bequeathing a *curse* to his followers, even a violent betrayal.

The betrayal is not so much reflected in the son’s attitude toward the father, or in the father’s betrayal of his progeny, as much as it is in the betrayal inherent to an inheritance one is obliged to transmit faithfully, if only because one cannot stop the chain of discourse. In being obliged to transmit mistakes, aberrations, and failures, what Lacan is seeking to place before his listeners’ awareness is that the inheritance dealt with in psychoanalysis is, above all, the inheritance of the symptoms of society’s discontents. In taking up the thread of this “aberrant form,” one necessarily takes up a certain number of problems, the provenance of which cannot

be limited to any single “I” in the unstoppable chain of discourse, even as each individual in the chain is responsible for what is transmitted. What Freud’s invention of psychoanalysis bequeaths to the world is an elaboration of problems brought to light through a discourse that is the “circular form of a speech [. . .] at the limit between sense and non-sense.” Such a problem is not only negative, in other words, but also what provides the necessary conditions for (re)invention. This is analogous to one of the key points of Lacan’s early teaching upon the symptom—a symptom can be read or interpreted because it is “already inscribed in a writing process”¹² and, thereby, already subject to an active, creative agency that is not bound in advance to reproduce or anticipate a given significance. In alliance with the writing of the symptom, the subject becomes capable of rewriting his or her destiny and what is worth living and dying for.

In academia, those who adopt psychoanalytic theory perennially turn or return to it as a more or less useful critical tool for supposedly shedding light upon the way, for example, historical events “return from the repressed,” or how unconscious fantasies play a role with, against, and with-and-against the forces of ideological mystification. And yet, this university reception of psychoanalysis is nothing if not a mystifying response itself, in which the scholar or critic avoids the abyssal encounter with the subject of the unconscious and its ethical subversion of self and world in favor of the placid abstraction of “subjective structures,” which are routinely mined for ready-made academic “solutions.” Why is this, if not that something in Freud’s legacy seems to fundamentally disturb one of the most comfortable illusions of intellectual discourse, namely, that there is an inherited and inheritable system of knowledge that can explicate the real? The intention of this volume is to show how far this is from the case. Psychoanalysis is not an object of inheritance, even a problematic one, but a practice that sustains the potential for a certain ethical violence, a new departure of thought and action apart from the given, received, and imposed forms of heredity. The question of its legacy is thus deeply fraught with all of the ambiguities of the subject of the unconscious and calls for a conceptual reinvention of inheritance *in* psychoanalysis.

As an orientating principle, Lacan summarizes Freud’s most fundamental recommendation to analysts as follows: “Everything in an analysis is to be gathered up [. . .] as though nothing had ever been established elsewhere.”¹³ In saying this, he not only gives analysts a word of procedural caution to avoid making each case fit the prevailing theories, he also reminds them that everything—including the inheritance of psychoanalysis itself—has to be gathered up without the fantasy that there is any established knowledge.

In this way, psychoanalysis perpetually reencounters its own beginning, always returning to the place from which “it speaks.” Perhaps this is why, as often as it is declared dead or back from the dead, there have been so many reintroductions to psychoanalysis, and why every attempt to “synthesize” psychoanalytic theory in the form of an accessible manual or textbook necessarily fails. Psychoanalysis cannot be inherited; it can only be reinvented.

The overarching argument of this volume is that, in contrast to the way in which notions of inheritance are understood and taken up in various other disciplines, inheritance in psychoanalysis ultimately concerns the reinvention of the social bond, broadly speaking. In order to demonstrate this, the volume enacts a critical traversal of inheritance within select disciplines in addition to psychoanalytic theory and practice. The order of its sections reflects the logic of this traversal: from biological notions of inheritance that are intuitive and seemingly straightforward, like innateness, heredity, and genesis, through cultural notions, like the recasting of cultural traditions and literary filiations, to the ethical reinvention of inheritance in psychoanalytic praxis, in which the idea of inheritance as an ethical problematic concerning the individual’s responsibility for the reinvention of the social bond is fully realized and taken to its logical conclusion. Because of this arc, the volume is not as much a collection of variations upon the theme of inheritance as it is a collection dedicated precisely to traversing this theme. That is, inheritance *in* psychoanalysis is not the same as inheritance *and* psychoanalysis, insofar as the former amounts to the conceptual realization of inheritance as an act of reinvention.

As in Lacan’s famous aphorism “There is no sexual relationship” (*Il n’y a pas de rapport sexuel*),¹⁴ wherein this impossibility is, in effect, supremely generative and makes possible the invention of new relations and dispositions, we should say “There is no inheritance in psychoanalysis.” Rather, *inheritance in psychoanalysis* stands for the transformative potential to reinvent one’s inheritance—including the inheritance of psychoanalysis—and the responsibility that this entails.

Natural Inheritance

In the growing field of evolutionary developmental theory (evo-devo), the concept of inheritance is undergoing a veritable revolution. The discovery of the human genome has made possible far greater knowledge of biological inheritance systems and enabled some scientists to see the way that local, human historical events—environmental changes, wars, famine, and

disease—affect the heritable biological information of human beings. For example, in the field of transgenerational, epigenetic inheritance, one of the profound discoveries—the implications of which are still only beginning to be felt—is that evolutionarily recent events affect the human genome indirectly through the epigenetic expression of DNA that determine which genes are “switched” on or off. Just as more short-term evolutionary changes, such as specific historical events, can directly affect the human genome, so too do their effects have a demonstrably far greater reach. A traumatic event may affect an individual not only at a biological level but also at the level of his or her succeeding generations, as in the well-documented case of the Dutch famine, in which pregnant women whose estrogen levels were affected by malnutrition during the famine passed on the RNA methylation process to their children and their children’s children, who ended up with the biological effects (low birth weight, for example, or compensatory obesity) of the original trauma.¹⁵ The emerging consensus in this field is that DNA can no longer be seen as the *leader* in the evolutionary process; instead, it is becoming more of a *follower* of epigenetic and environmental changes, including those actively made by organisms within the same biological lineage.¹⁶ Hence, natural selection is nowhere near as straightforward as had previously been assumed.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud takes up the problem of the retrogressive dimension of the drive in order to account for various clinical phenomena, such as the compulsion to repeat troubling experiences, rather than remember them, and the riddle of primary masochism. To account for such phenomena, and the famous tendency of the drive to “restore an earlier state of things,”¹⁷ Freud turns to multiple scientific theories, most especially in biological fields, such as embryology, wherein his theory of the retrogressive tendency of the psyche draws upon Ernst Haeckel’s recapitulation theory (“ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny”), the ethological notion of instinct, as in the case of the transgenerational repetition of the migratory patterns of birds and certain fish, and a distinctly Lamarckian brand of evolutionary theory. Although a generation of critics has pointed out the problems attendant upon Freud’s turn to biology for a metaphysical biologism that overemphasizes this retrogressive dimension, some theorists have more recently suggested a more nuanced, dialectical reading of Freudian biology, which returns to Freud’s biological materialism as well as to some formerly maligned scientific figures, such as Haeckel and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who are also starting to make something of a comeback. The essays in this first section situate themselves amid these new developments and address the bio-logics of inheritance from a psychoanalytically inspired orientation, a position that forces them to

invent new frameworks for thinking innateness, evolution, transmission, and the bio-logics of sexuality.

In each of their articles, Samo Tomšič and Lorenzo Chiesa argue that one of the most significant problems, not only in psychoanalytic practice but also in the dominant understanding of evolution, is the persistence of the myth of telos—the end of human action. In “Against Heredity: The Question of Causality in Psychoanalysis,” Tomšič identifies Freud’s three key revisions to the notion of causality—its nonlinearity, nonrelationality, and nonidentity with the signifier—in order to show that psychoanalysis reinvents the very notion of heredity by making it depend upon what Aristotle calls *tyche*, the contingency of the encounter as a specifically subjective causality. In a similar vein, Chiesa’s “Lacan with Evo-Devo?” develops Lacan’s critique of the theo-teleology of evolutionism in order to show that this critique remains topical today; at the same time, however, he also shows how Lacan misses out on the opportunity for self-critique in the process of criticizing the life sciences. Against over a century of Mendelian-Darwinian hegemony, the argument recently put forward by authorities in the field of evo-devo that genes are not the leaders in the selection process but followers of more decisive changes to the environment has delivered a powerful blow to biological determinism. However, if some of the teleological assumptions and illogical presuppositions of Darwinian evolutionary theory have been successfully critiqued in modern, dialectical theory (as promoted by the likes of Steven Jay Gould), then evolutionary theory still remains problematically close to a tautology. Lacan’s criticism of the field back in the 1970s thus still holds as a contemporary challenge—that, even without the supposition of a telos of organized life, the theory of natural selection devolves into the formula that “those who survive are those who have survived.”

According to one of the earliest definitions in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to *inherit* is to derive “by natural descent” or possess “by transmission from parents or ancestry.” Already in this definition, at the level of the letter, there is an ambiguous conflation between that which is inherited as an innate or natural constitution and that which is acquired by transmission. Plumbing this ambiguity of the logic of inheritance, Adrian Johnston outlines an ontogeny without descent, one that does not presuppose any priority of lineal ancestry. In “The Late Innate: Jean Laplanche, Jaak Panksepp, and the Distinction between Sexual Drives and Instincts,” Johnston points to the anatomical and physiological reality of prolonged prematurational helplessness (*Hilflosigkeit*) in human beings that Freud theorizes as essential to understanding the degree to which humans are thoroughly dependent upon and shaped by others. Not only is this primary

or originary helplessness a condition that helps to explain the intercession of the symbolic function within human affairs, but it is also, qua deficit, the motivation and catalyst for the further development of sexuality. Drawing upon Jean Laplanche's late theoretical writing in the largely neglected field of adolescent sexuality, as well as the recent affective neuroscience of Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven, Johnston argues that, contrary to what is supposed, the acquired (symbolic inheritance) temporally and logically precedes the innate (biologically constitutive). That is, the innate is only retroactively determined once the acquired is enlisted and actuated by the unconscious subject when sexuality reemerges in puberty. Johnston poses this logic of retroactivity as a critical corrective to key concepts within the emerging field of neuropsychanalysis.

Frank Ruda also takes up the paradoxical rapport of transmission and ontogenesis in "Hegel's Mother." In a hitherto little-remarked-upon moment in *Philosophy of Mind*, G. W. F. Hegel describes the passage of genius from the mother to the child as the condensation of all of the givens of individuality. Yet, even within this concentration of the given, the acquired precedes the innate: Genius is the genesis of transmission that appears to the human animal, en passant, as an almost autonomous process. Between mother and child stands the genius of genesis, "a possibility that is not—although it is necessarily mistakenly perceived as if it were—a natural disposition." According to Hegel's logic of transmission, the mother, in the very act of becoming a mother—bringing a new being into existence—also thereby passes on the capacity for bringing the new into being. The child inherits this capacity in the genesis or genius of an act whereby the mother becomes a mother by means of the presupposition of a disposition (motherhood) that also passes away in passing on this potentiality. Hence, the mother, according to Hegel, is a vanishing mediator of genius. The act of making new is not the inheritance of an innate substance but the inheritance of that which conditions the innate: "Genius is that which names the quality to posit new presuppositions." It is this quality of positing the unheard-of that makes the latter term resonate with the creative potential, or *jouissance*, of inheritance.

Such a potentiality exceeds the restrictive limits imposed by the contemporary logic of *bios*, as A. Kiarina Kordela's "Biopower in Lacan's Inheritance; or, From Foucault to Freud, via Deleuze, and Back to Marx" makes clear. Kordela dismantles some of the more persistent metaphysical strands of Michel Foucault's critique of biopower—time, sex, and the real—by showing how the psychoanalytic concept of primary fantasy reorients their coordinates and makes biopolitical administration seem even more excessive

than previously supposed. Not content with the managing or care of living bodies, contemporary biopolitics seeks the ultimate *jouissance* of immortality through the commodification of labor and surplus-value that only the Lacanian theory of sexual difference, and its insight into the overdetermination of sexuality implanted within bios, can critique effectively.

Cultural Inheritance

In “*Lituraterre*,” Lacan proposes a strategic “intrusion” of psychoanalysis into literary criticism, “because if literary criticism could effectively renew itself, this would be as a result of psychoanalysis being there for texts to pit themselves against it, the enigma residing on the side of the latter.”¹⁸ Such an approach would allow the enigma to stay within the site of its articulation, rather than, say, to close itself off in abstruse theorizing in the name of what psychoanalysis is or means in an artifactual sense. But how would such an approach signal a means of “effectively renew[ing]” literature and literary criticism, and what would it mean for psychoanalysis to “be there” for literary texts? If inheritance in psychoanalysis names the transformative potential of an encounter with the unconscious, then the point of departure could well be a literary one, concerning the creative combinations of letters that result when the speaking being stumbles upon the nonsense of signifying traditions. Other than in genetic science and linguistics, there is perhaps no other domain in which the discordance of letters, with respect to the message they are supposed to convey, is more clearly felt. Psychoanalysis may be said to interfere productively with a cultural tradition when criticism pits itself against the enigma of the letters of the unconscious.

Justin Clemens and Rebecca Comay oversee the site of collision between literature and psychoanalysis wherein new meaning is created. Clemens’s “*Drug Is the Love: Literature, Psychopharmacology, Psychoanalysis*” attempts to align the literary with the psychoanalytic in his criticism of the biotechnical hegemony of drugs and the ways in which it increasingly marginalizes talking cures. Far from sensing the ontological dimension of affects like anxiety and depression that philosophers have regarded for centuries as intrinsic to the riddle of human experience, the current psychopharmacological authorities tend to regard all unpleasant affects as symptomatic of, and reducible to, the terms and program of a chemical cure. In this tendency Clemens recognizes the force of a desire that “there should be an end to talk.” By silencing speech, psychopharmacology also attempts to short-circuit the inheritance of the unruliness of love’s hidden rule over the desiring subject.

But, despite this antagonism, drugs have always had a rich history in love's letters. In a brief genealogy, Clemens situates the current psychopharmacological love of drugs within a literary and historical register that has surprising parallels with the literary discourse of "the constitutionally ambivalent vicissitudes of love, in and by love itself." In spite of the dominance of drug therapies that would not dream of identifying love as an element of psychiatric treatment, Clemens suggests that psychoanalysis goes further "where the transference is expressly identified with the work of love in the practice of psychoanalysis." Unique among contemporary approaches, then, psychoanalysis makes love an object of singular knowledge, so that "*Übertragung* or transference in psychoanalysis [is] at once [what] constitutes a repetition, an analysis, and a *détournement* of the paradoxes of inheritance." From the vantage of love as a guiding problem, talk therapy, literature, and psychoanalysis seem to share a common bond.

In Comay's "Testament of the Revolution (Walter Benjamin)," new meaning takes flight from the evacuation of inherited meaning. Asking the unasked question of why it is that the history of critical theory, and the Frankfurt School in particular, is traditionally thought in patrilineal, dynastic terms as a succession of "generations," Comay examines the foundationalist desires attendant upon projects of historical remembering. A line from René Char—"Our heritage was left to us without a testament" (*Notre héritage n'est précédé d'aucun testament*)¹⁹—well expresses the retrospective sensibilities of such figures as Hannah Ardent and, at least allegedly, Walter Benjamin (each of whose position within any critical lineage is notoriously difficult to fix), who memorably lamented the cultural disarray of our dehistoricized times. But Comay hazards a reversal of this poetic formula. What if a better expression of our contemporary predicament is one in which "Our testament comes to us without a heritage"? Picking up from the most material level of the letter, Comay points to the potentiality inherent in the unfinished projects of these writers, including Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* and strewn writings, such as reading lists, in order to plumb the potentiality of testamentarity itself as the material for a new invention of a cultural countertradition against the grain of official narratives.

In the language of the unconscious, we find an essential support for the conceptual refoundation of cultural tradition. Seizing upon the powerful political potential implicit in this idea, Oxana Timofeeva and Donald E. Pease acquire new inheritances. Timofeeva's "'We' and 'They': Animals behind Our Back" reconceptualizes the "we" and "they" of the so-called human community at the basis of political culture. The language of the unconscious at its purest is an untranslatable, inarticulate noise, "like a

beast's cry." She daringly advances a notion of community that is organized according to such difficult-to-articulate truths at the "nonhuman core of the human." "Animals do not *have* an unconscious; they *are* the unconscious," Timofeeva contends. At the level of the dream, there is a nonhuman potentiality that is common to all but that belongs only to the shadowy animal multitude: "The community is not for us but for them." Tracing this unconscious "animal negativity" through biblical and other mythic traditions, Timofeeva dedicates herself to the dream of a future communist community in accordance with the shared terrain of our animal unconscious.

Tracing another pathway in its recasting of tradition is Pease's "F. O. Matthiessen: Heir to (American) Jouissance." Taking up a problematic kernel of American myth, its literary canon, Pease analyzes literary critic F. O. Matthiessen's invention, in 1941, of the tradition he called "American Renaissance" in *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. Although the latter work was created in line with the Popular Front movement to construct a national heritage that would defend against Nazi ideology, this canonical and academic field-defining work of Americanist criticism also notoriously configures this heritage restrictedly according to its nationalist agenda and heteronormative, progress-oriented teleology. In a kind of *détournement* of this heritage, Pease resituates Matthiessen within the register of his suppressed desire—through his work with displaced European persons after the war and his clandestine love affair with painter Russell Cheney—to conceive of an alternative articulation of American Renaissance.

The question of what psychoanalysis has to do with cultural tradition necessarily confronts the legacy of psychoanalysis within culture. Sigi Jöttkandt and Lydia R. Kerr provide surprising cases of this through the writings of two notoriously outspoken critics of psychoanalysis: Vladimir Nabokov and Ishmael Reed. There is a popular anecdote about one of Nabokov's tirades against Freud according to which the celebrated belletrist, upon being interrupted by the loud noise of the heating pipes in his Cornell University classroom, cried out, "The Viennese quack is *railing* at me from his grave!"²⁰ As Jöttkandt shows, both in his real life and fiction (which Nabokov does not regard as opposed, as in traditional notions of art versus life, but as two "manners of being" that emerge "from the same wellspring of inscription," as Jöttkandt puts it), such Freudian hauntings are not atypical. In "A Mortimer Trap: The Passing of Death in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*," paternal figures in Nabokov's novels can be seen to compose a general pattern of deceptive or counterfeit meaning. As opposed to the imaginary mimeticism

of most psychobiographical approaches, Jöttkandt is able to show, via the decisive turn to Lacan's understanding of the paternity of letters, that what this retracing also reveals—or, better, invents—is a masque of death. This reading allows us to savor the full piquancy of the closing scene of mistaken identity in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*.

As for Ishmael Reed, the question of the cultural inheritance of psychoanalysis is more deeply vexed as a consequence of the racism inherent to the governing logics of tradition. Yet, Reed's novel *Mumbo Jumbo* shows how the argument that inheritance, from a psychoanalytic perspective, is truly the subject's invention has perhaps the most evident and far-reaching effects. The novel concerns a mythic signifier of the inheritance of Black American culture, "Jes Grew," an apparent "plague" attacking the foundations of (Eurocentric, white supremacist) "Civilization As We Know It." Jes Grew's symptoms, like ragtime and jazz, are foreign objects within American history that "only appear as inassimilable excesses." Kerr's "Freud Fainted; or, 'It All Started 1000s of Years Ago in Egypt . . .'" picks up upon the fact that Reed situates Freud as one of the primary conspirators behind the inoculation measures taken by civilization against this plague. Reed's analyst-like protagonist PaPa LaBas, tasked with solving the mystery of Jes Grew, ends up reconstructing a repressed racial history and a myth "that traces the mysteries of inheritance in America to the trauma of an ancient Egyptian fratricide." Yet, despite the fact that Reed figures Freud (in cahoots with Carl Jung) as participating in the Egyptian conspiracy that threatens to eradicate Jes Grew, Kerr points out that Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* provides a similar account of an Egyptian conspiracy to cover up a primal crime in the name of civilization, namely, Freud's myth of the two Moseses. This latter myth, reconstructed by Freud upon the basis of a "historical truth" that he deduces through testamentary distortions, seems almost as though it were reconfigured, in turn, in Reed's novel. That is, if the Jes Grew virus is an inheritance of Black American culture in Reed's sense, it is just as much, Kerr argues, the signifier of "the transmissions of unconscious inheritance that Freud himself detected in the hidden after hours of Civilization As We Know It." Such an enigmatic inheritance is perhaps best understood as what a symbolic heritage tries, and fails, to repress, and the specific way in which the subject attempts to manage this symptom of inheritance to which it is nonetheless deeply, perhaps irrevocably, attached. LaBas's mythic reconstruction thus functions in a parallel way to Freud's myth-construction of the Egyptian Moses as the ur-father of civilization: an attempt to gather up a repressed historical truth in order to reinvent a cultural tradition.

The Inheritance of Psychoanalysis

In its relatively short history, the psychoanalytic movement has been subject to tumultuous upheaval, besieged by the doubts, fears, and wishes of supplicants and detractors alike, arising from both inside and outside the clinic. Therefore, the question of what might constitute its inheritance—not only in the sense of how it has become known to a broad public, or what it has become as a clinical praxis, but also in terms of its survival and the cultural legacy resulting from encounters with it—is an extremely difficult one. Yet, inheritance in psychoanalysis entails an ethical commitment that assumes the most apparent and lively urgency when it is situated within the space of the clinic. Here, inheritance ceases to be a matter of tracing certain effects; instead, it is a prerogative for future generations of analysts, a matter of the inheritance of psychoanalysis in the field—and, by the weight—of its own specific action in the lives of subjects. Coming up against some of the thorniest problems of human agency, as well as the most questionable inheritances of the Freudian unconscious, the contributors to this section explore the problematic dimension of Freud's myths as well as the challenging new symptoms facing psychoanalysis today.

Notoriously, Freud resorts to myth in answer to the riddles enunciated by the speaking being. Such a move is almost incomprehensible from a scientific standpoint, for, who, in the name of science, would dare ascribe epistemic significance to *myth*? Nonetheless, it is in the interest of scientific truth that Freud puts forward his "Darwinian myth" of the primal horde, the myth of Oedipus, and, indeed, his phylogenetic myths of the id's archaic inheritance, which outline a natural history of the unconscious, dating from primeval times. In "Freud's Lamarckian Clinic," Daniel Wilson retraces the condemned intellectual heritage at issue in these mythic constructions, from Lamarck's conception of the evolution of culturally acquired traits, continuing through Haeckel's theories of the ontogenetic recapitulation of phylogenetic history, followed by the replacement of need by the "power of unconscious ideas" in the psycho-Lamarckist theories of Ewald Hering. Wilson foregrounds the issues accordingly: Freud resorts to myths in the same way he commits himself to daring and controversial new developments in the sciences—in order to follow the torsions of neurotic symptoms and, in so doing, shed a glimmer of light upon universal symptomatic structures. Wilson thereby argues that Freud's myth of phylogenesis bears witness to the orientation of the individual drive towards something that does not correspond to any object in the individual's environment and to which the subject responds with the invention of the symptom.

Philippe Van Haute takes on one of the central mythic motifs of psychoanalysis, the formulations of the Oedipus complex. Against the standard reception, Van Haute draws out a vastly different intellectual history of Freud, pointing out that, despite what is roundly supposed, the Oedipus complex is never mentioned in the original 1905 edition of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, nor is it mentioned in the "Dora" case history, which was published around the same time. He even goes so far as to contend that the supposed references to the complex are susceptible to projection on the part of those eager to read Freud's later theories into these works. "Freud against Oedipus" proposes a decentering of the Oedipal focus of traditional Freudian psychoanalysis in favor of an alternative methodology that would rely upon the pathological disturbances in mental functioning, rather than complexes and myths, to provide the key to understanding mental life more generally, including the pathological basis of so-called normal mental life.

Freud invented the practice of psychoanalysis in recognition of the fact that subjects articulate the most difficult truths in symptomatic form. The turn of the twenty-first century has brought a veritable sea change in terms of the emergence of new subjective problematics. The experiences of trans subjects, for example, bring to the surface the most paradoxical truths about sexual difference and make manifest the difficulties and inventive potential resulting from the impossibility of the sexual relationship for each and every subject. Patricia Gherovici's "Plastic Sex? The Beauty of It!" provides a note of uplift upon this score. Under the reign of neoliberal ideology, the acceleration of technology in capitalism today supports conceptions of sex that reduce it to a commodity in some way serviceable or customizable to the "owner's" will. Yet, the experiences of trans subjects in psychoanalysis challenge this contemporary *doxa*, providing a glimpse into the possibilities for sexual reinvention that do not make sex conform to consumer user-friendliness. Rather than despair of this failure, Gherovici enjoins us to embrace the fruits of what sexual difference means for such subjects. Against the mirages of neoliberal self-invention (often reducible to merely topical alterations in one's life, occupation, or relationship status) and the epistemology of failure that too often serves as its sole critical counterpoint, Gherovici foregrounds the real of sex and sexual difference as the constitutive basis for the (re)invention of the body and its potentiality.

Another significant challenge and opportunity for psychoanalysis today is that of autism. In "The Autistic Body and Its Objects," Éric Laurent extends psychoanalytic themes and approaches to a traditionally nonpsychoanalytic context. He develops a psychoanalytic approach to the treatment of autistic

subjects that has echoes with other efforts, like affinity therapy. Through several case studies, he presents some topological aspects of the autistic body that have to be taken into account in order to develop this approach. In this vein, Laurent develops a novel, psychoanalytically inspired account of a number of features of autism that have been neglected by cognitive neuroscience, including the importance of role-playing, voice modulation, and the interplay between two- and three-dimensional objects.

As exciting as these new challenges may be for the future of psychoanalysis, it is becoming increasingly clear that they may only bode well provided that those who have been marked in some way by the inheritance of psychoanalysis culturally, intellectually, and personally are willing to resist the resistances that would stopper up the articulations of unconscious desire. In the interview that closes the volume, “The Insistence of Jouissance: On Inheritance and Psychoanalysis,” Joan Copjec remarks upon the urgency of the task of tending to the exigency of the unconscious. Reflecting upon the position that she has found herself in throughout her career as an intellectual who “inherits” psychoanalytic concepts into various fields (feminism, film theory, philosophy), Copjec indicates that the space or gap between meaning and enjoyment in which psychoanalysis is situated is not reducible to either a given or an imposed heritage, but rather unstopably insists by forging new means of conjugating enjoyment and sense. Within the interval of fatigue lies the potentiality of a psychoanalytic act that would chart a new course—the transformative power of *inheritance in psychoanalysis*.

Notes

1. See Sigmund Freud, “The Unconscious,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (hereafter SE), ed. and trans. James Strachey et al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), 14:187.

2. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, in SE 22:80; translation modified. See also, for example, Jacques Lacan, “The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud,” in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 435; *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 246; and *Lacte psychanalytique* (1967–1968), unpublished seminar, lesson of January 10, 1968, <http://gaogoa.free.fr/>.

3. See Ari E. Friedland et al., “Heritable Genome Editing in *C. elegans* via a CRISPR-Cas9 System,” *Nature Methods* 10 (2013): 741–43.

4. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Der Tragödie erster und zweiter Teil*, ed. Erich Trunz (München: C. H. Beck, 1986), 29. See also Freud, *Totem and Taboo* in *SE*, 13:158; and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, in *SE* 23:207.
5. Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, in *SE* 23:147.
6. *Ibid.*, 145.
7. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, in *SE* 19:48.
8. Freud, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, in *SE* 23:206.
9. *Ibid.*, 206–7; emphasis added.
10. See Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, Livre XXIII: Le sinthome, 1975–1976*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2005), 12.
11. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–55*, 89–90; emphasis in original.
12. Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching," in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, 371.
13. Lacan, "Introduction à l'Édition allemande des Écrits," in *Autres écrits*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), 556; my translation.
14. See, for example, Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 116; and *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 12, 34.
15. See Richard C. Francis, *Epigenetics: How Environment Shapes Our Genes* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 6–8.
16. See Mary Jane West-Eberhard, "Genes as Followers in Evolution," in *Developmental Plasticity and Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 157–58.
17. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *SE* 18:36.
18. Lacan, "Lituraterre," *Hurly-Burly* 9 (2013): 31.
19. René Char, *Feuillets d'Hypnos*, in *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 190.
20. See Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 308. See also Leland de la Durantaye, "Vladimir Nabokov and Sigmund Freud, or a Particular Problem," *American Imago* 62, no. 1 (2005): 59–73.