

# Critical Psychology, the Unconscious and Traumatic Ethics

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In this article, from Foucauldian and hermeneutic perspectives, I examine a modern form of ethics that follows a conceptualization of the unconscious related to the trauma of repression, as expressing a divided subject, which will necessarily elude the positive and adaptationist frameworks of normative psychology. I further suggest that, *inter alia*, subjectification through discourses on dissociation – manifest in Janetian theory, natural science psychology, and interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis – and related techne enjoin the subject to consolidate its experience through autobiographical identity or interpersonal expression. In contrast, the discourse of repression – as evident in classical psychoanalysis as read through Lacanian theory – and its related practices enjoin the subject to embrace its temporal destitution, to engage with the logic and politics of its desire. Finally, I suggest that differing conceptions of non-knowledge as the unconscious, refracted through traumatic subjectivity, serve rival tasks touching upon sanctioned foundations for governance.

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## 1 | INTRODUCTION

George Canguilhem (1958/1995) once remarked that philosophical thinking confronts psychology with the following question: “Tell me what you are up to, and I’ll know what you are” (p. 18). In response, critical psychology illuminates how psychological inquiry has, in varying degrees, concealed its own philosophical and ethical positioning, and the extent that it has performed a policing function in the lives of its subjects. The influence of Foucauldian modes of analysis for such critical approaches has been significant along these fronts, especially pertaining to biopower (Foucault, 2003, 2008, 2009), which conceptualizes a late modern rationality of governance directing the normalization of conduct, states of mind, affect, and body through body-organism institutions (e.g., asylums and hospitals) and population-biological process regulatory mechanisms (e.g., medical and psy-discourses). Nonetheless, not only positive knowledge as possibility needs to be accounted for, but epistemic limit as well. Following Foucault’s (1966/1973) archaeology of the human sciences, certain structural impasses come to haunt the project of knowing human beings. Among the lacunae of finitude emerging in the modern period, the significance of unthought – undergirding discourses on the unconscious – for governmentality prompts the instant analysis. Though histories of the unconscious have distantly (Ellenberger, 1970) and recently (Ffytche, 2011; McGrath, 2011) appeared, the latter especially in relation to German Idealism (cf. Mills, 2012; Žižek, 1996) and the question of ethics requires further address. Elsewhere, I have investigated the problem of trauma as the historical subject’s temporal disappearance to itself (Roberts, 2017). Thus, the problem of trauma, its historical co-emergence with a subject pinned to its own most vanishing point, and the question of what it means to be enjoined to know what cannot be known about oneself become relevant in the biopolitical sphere. In what follows, from Foucauldian and hermeneutic perspectives, I will examine two modern forms of ethics relating to the formation of the unconscious. First, the discourse of repression – as evident in classical psychoanalysis as read through Lacanian theory – and its related practices enjoin a divided subject to embrace its temporal destitution, to engage with the logic and politics of its desire. Second, in contrast, I will suggest that subjectification according to the dictates of the discourse of dissociation – manifest in Janetian theory informing psychoanalytically interpersonal/relational formulations – and its related *techné* admonish the subject to consolidate its experience as biographical identity or interpersonal expression. Finally, I will suggest that differing conceptions of non-knowledge as the unconscious, refracted through traumatic subjectivity, serve rival tasks touching upon sanctioned foundations for governance.

## 2 | FOUCAULT’S MODERNITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault (1966/1973) argues that during the classical period of the Enlightenment the subject is elevated to an ideal position for transparent knowledge of the world, and itself within the world. In diverse domains – whether the history of language or the analysis of wealth – its representations are untroubled, the subject presiding over “a system of thought for which chronological development resides within a table, upon which . . . all historical events” (Foucault, 1966/1973, p. 329) take place. Foucault (1966/1973) contends that the classical episteme of Enlightenment thought – unproblematized correspondence with reality – falls into crisis at the beginning of the nineteenth century. An ideal gaze presiding over a transparently and synchronically arranged taxonomic grid cannot account for its foundation; it cannot represent representation as *representation*. The masterful *cogito* finds itself thrust into the finite and contingent, its previously vertical relation to the world becoming horizontal. Thus, the subject’s own epistemic capacities must be understood as part of a changing world itself, and becomes faced again with the problem of grounding knowledge, especially self-knowledge. The creative solution to this conundrum, as

chronicled by Foucault (1966/1973), manifests in Kantian philosophy, where the limits of knowledge become structural for a finite subject. Foucault (1966/1973) extends his analysis of the modern episteme – that of historicity replacing representation – through an examination of the modern empirical sciences (e.g., biology). Significantly, however, as related to the current inquiry, what occupies Foucault's attention is the emergence of the human sciences (e.g., psychology, sociology) and their relation to contradictions of thought inhering in an epistemically anthropological limit. For instance, psychological research – pointed out by its critics – never actualizes its project of exhaustively accounting for the empirical qualities, traits, and attributes of human beings as objects of research. The transcendental conditions and subjectivities for these positivities invariably recede and disperse in conjunction with shifting pragmatic (read political and economic) uses that bring them into unconcealment. There is a doubling of subject and empirical object that involves excess. As Foucault (1966/1973) suggests, an analytic of finitude – manifesting this empirico-transcendental doublet, as well as the temporal return and retreat of the origin, and the *cogito* and the unthought – would haunt efforts to found transparent knowledge. The logic of the doublet is borne throughout these aporias through the interplay between thinking and its opaquely shifting ground.

Under the analytic of finitude, as destitution of the subject's unified or founded being, the subject becomes alienated or *other to itself*. In previous work, I have connected one such impasse – that of return and retreat of the origin – to the emergence of traumatic temporality (Roberts, 2017), briefly discussed *infra*. As Foucault (1966/1973) notes, an event posited as the subject's true origin will always be found to be deferred in relation to what occurs before and after. Put differently, any identified past will depend on a still prior event and the passage of history toward some future. The retreat to origin recedes. Moreover, any event found to be the subject's origin will be found to be other than the subject itself. As I have suggested, temporal dissolution – undermining the subject's stable relationship with its own being-in-time – resides at the heart of traumatic ontology, which is visible in the thought of Heidegger, Lacan, and Levinas. On another axis, traumatic suffering also relates to the problem of the *cogito* and unthought, where alterity harbored in the subject's own being would appear fatal to any final and faithful accounting of the human being in the disciplines of psychology or psychiatry. This eclipse of such knowledge occurs through the doubling non-coincidence of thinking and being, producing an alienation in the subject as the unthought, which is “not lodged in man like a shriveled-up nature or a stratified history; it is, in relation to man, the Other . . . both exterior to him and indispensable to him” (Foucault, 1966/1973, p. 326). As such, Boothby (2001) observes that Foucault situates unthought as an ineradicable other of fully rational representation. As related to the study of the human, the exteriority of knowledge appears as a gap in being that is – for instance, through the administrations of the psy-disciplines – obscured through positive signification. As such, non-knowledge as unthought obtains a proximate yet estranged relationship with the human sciences as the doubling of subject would surface in attempts to predict the human without acknowledgement of what cannot entirely be made explicit. The lack of sober evaluation of such always incomplete understandings of the subject becomes for Foucault (1966/1973) an ontotheological excess (where man mirrors God), and a slipping into an “anthropological sleep.”

For the history of ideas, unthought as otherness would take on many forms over against consciousness. The disappearance of the subject to itself may be rendered as an empirical and metapsychological matter (Brakel, 2009; Freud, 1895/1950; Janet, 1925), as an experience of prereflective consciousness (Stolorow, 2011) or narrative (Freeman, 2016), or as philosophical commitment to a metaphysics of negation. From the nineteenth century on, beyond the attempts to codify a synthetic account in the thought of Carus (1846/2017) and von Hartmann (1869/1884), the tradition of German Idealism forms the philosophical support for the Lacanian positioning of the unconscious. And, Foucault (1966/1973) clearly signals to Lacan in his remarking that “this Death, and this Desire, and this Law can never meet within the knowledge that traverses in its positivity the empirical domain of man; but the reason for this is that they designate the conditions of possibility of all knowledge about man” (p. 409). Despite the stentorian calls

(e.g., Johnston, 2008; Žižek, 2012) for further alignment of the philosophies of Schelling and Hegel with contemporary Lacanian theory, there is reason for caution. The metaphysical reduction of philosophies of negation tend to obscure the historical appearance of the unconscious. After the post-Kantian, Fichtean move in opposing the subject over against the *Anstoss* of the “Not-I,” Schelling’s search for unconditioned and non-rational ground for the facticity of subject and object requires a subject who obtains a revelatory grasp of the willing/desiring that underlies worldly phenomena. As McGrath (2011) argues, the middle Schelling generatively anticipates contemporary psychoanalytic theory where a dark ground of Being (*das Seyn*), contractive and without otherness, stands out of itself as existence (*das Seyende*), giving rise to division that is capable of becoming a being unified in a gesture of loving consciousness. The Žižekian anti-theological reading of middle Schelling is that the subject’s destitution arises from the constitutive lack in its being occasioned by the existence of desire for exteriority emerging out of the dark ground, and that retroactive positioning of positive being that would “fill in” for unthought is a fantasy of origin with Real effects. Within this light of thinking, it is Hegel who places ultimate weight on the fate of perpetual negation having both subjective and objective trajectories – consciousness is always outside of itself, as all are exterior forms as well. As Žižek (2012) argues, the unconscious as unthought is expressed in the Hegelian understanding that positive reality in its vicissitudes and recessions is not something epistemically ungraspable, but that a pure negation, as unthought, inhabits subject and substance as such which spawns the fragmentation that hounds any attempt to provide an authoritative accounting for the human subject. In other words, unthought does not lie on the other side of human thought as it does for Kant, but within the fabric of the things-in-themselves, of which we are only a part. Essentialist conceptualizations of the unconscious do not necessarily stand on common ground, as these German Idealist strands, unlike psychologized accounts, admirably defy natural science determinism through finding metaphysical foundations for the negative, unconscious subject, and some circumscribed space of freedom (Ffytche, 2011). Still, to remain within the orbit of critical psychological discernment, we must avoid universalist temptations to conceal the historically and politically worlded contexts for the emergence of psy-phenomena such as the unconscious. After all, if there is to be an accounting to ourselves of what we are doing when we adopt practices that unconceal heretofore concealed aspects of ourselves, then we may consider framing these as endeavors as a series of problematizations rather than through forms of unmediated intellectual intuition.

### 3 | HISTORICAL ONTOLOGY, PROBLEMATIZATION, & TRAUMATIC ETHICS

Foucault’s correlation of the knower and the known in their epochal belonging is well expressed in his framework of historical ontology. Under this view, objects of the human sciences are discernible through their pragmatic illumination (Hacking, 2002). As Foucault (1984) argues, addressing how such objects are constituted, and to whom they answer, requires a critique of our historical era. Moreover, these evaluations bring to light several questions often raised in critical psychology: “How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions?” (Foucault, 1984, p. 318). Historical ontology is, beyond an epistemological maneuver, an approach to the different ways that human beings become *subjects*. Along these lines, Han (2005) places Foucault’s earlier and later work in dialogue, tracing the relation between epistemic correlates and the subject’s capacities for self-knowledge. For Greek antiquity, subjectivity encircles the care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*), whose injunction requires a transformation of the subject’s being – through *askesis* (practice) and *parrhesia* (the embodiment of the subject and truth). This requirement of a spiritual transformation for coming to knowledge came to be refigured during later Christian practice. Foucault (1993) describes self-transformation through purification of one’s heart so that the word of God could be

received, and through practices that required the publication of sin to others. Therefore, a shift occurs wherein problematization relates not to the selfhood required for governance of the *polis* but to the discernment of desire, borne of the mark of sin in the flesh. Still, for Foucault (2005), the Cartesian moment interrupts the self-transformation living at the heart of such ancient Greek and Christian pursuits for self-knowledge, and the subject is given over to the correspondences of its experience with objective procedures, evidentiary rules, and the external contours of things. In sum, the historical ontology of knowledge touching human being – whether conceptualized through *akrasia* over against Aristotelian virtue, purification of sin, or the rational tracking of emotions as objects – must also investigate grids of knowledge bringing such phenomena to light, the imprints they have on others, and the vision of the good they articulate for the subject. Problematization or “eventalization” (*événementialisation*), thus, concerns what knowledge about the subject in a moment in historical time “offers itself to be, necessarily thought” (Foucault, 1984/1990, p. 11). In the late modern period, a continuum of ethically and epistemically necessary psychological knowledge presents itself – such as trauma or that concerning the early lives of children (Hacking, 2002), as does what that might and *ought to be known about oneself* that would remain unthought.

Foucault, thus, foresees the critical psychological positioning of the knowing subject within the socio-historical coordinates of its ethical bearing. To the ends of inquiring into the necessities regulating our being, the later Foucault is known for his investigations of Greek and Roman ethics, and of the history of sexuality. For Foucault (1983), ethical subjectification involves the ethical substance (*substance éthique*), the mode of subjection (*mode d'assujettissement*), the means of subjection (*pratique de soi*), and the aspirations of the subject (*teleologie*). Ethical substance asks the question, “What is the aspect of myself which is concerned with moral conduct?” In Greek antiquity, the ethical substance associates the unity of pleasure and desire, mastered in the will, the act. For historical Christianity, ethical substance implicates that of flesh and desire, refracted through Cartesian thought into the passions, which might be reflexively known and controlled. Possibilities for a modern ethical substance would include, for example in Kant, reasoned intention, or sexuality for classical psychoanalytic thought. In relation to what is addressed, the mode of subjection inquires into the way subjects are incited to recognize their moral obligations, which might be divine command, a Cartesian procedural reason, or for Kantian ethics a rationalized form of law. In relation to the mode of address, the means of subjection connects with manifold technologies, the “know how,” that allow the subject to actualize certain ideals – practices such as the conversation with a teacher, ascetic techniques, or forms of confession or modern therapeutic dialogue. The final aspect in Foucault’s ethical analysis concerns the being one aspires to be, the *telos* of the subject’s practices, the ends as related to the subject’s being. Historically, this involved purification in forms of Christianity, or rational freedom for Kantian ethics.

In other writings (Roberts, 2017), I have extended this analysis to suggest that for Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan, Foucault’s ethical substance involves the modern subject’s traumatic withdrawal from itself as dispersal in fragmented temporality. For Heidegger (1927/1962), the abyssal ground of Dasein’s clearing is that of futurity as a nullity, which is not an absent but remote present, but the persistence of nihilation in what is not taken up, what becomes impossible as un-lived. Because the past is always unsettled, reinterpreted in light of the worlded contexture of future possibilities, Dasein becomes other to itself; however, it is the possibility of this missing being through time that allows Dasein to retroactively become itself. Though differently rendered, Levinasian temporality is also self-alienated in relation to the Other’s infinite call. Time, for Levinas (1947/1987), is never the subject’s own, always being exceeded and originating, diachronically, in the immemorial past of the Other’s call, its Saying, and through the grace of the Other’s future. For Levinas, traumatic temporality provides erasure on a double horizon, past and future, which challenges any integrative and represented being, yet grants the subject its being as withdrawal from the prison house of knowledge. For the current inquiry, Lacanian temporality most precisely locates the subject of modernity. Here, a failure of signification presents as retroactive deprivation. The Lacanian subject is, thus, ontologically traumatized by

its division in grammatical time – the yawning space opening between what the subject was and *what the subject will have been* (Lacan, 1975/1991). As it does for Heidegger and Levinas, temporal alienation creates the possibility for the shifting sands of selfhood, while the Lacanian subject's possibilities also encircle its dyadic relation to the other's lack. The ethical substance, as traumatic temporality, of course, touches the *telos* of the subject's conduct, which implicates truth, whose origin in time is unknown to thought. Consequently, traumatic ethics bears a close relation to the unthought as unconscious, and the forms of ethics that emerge in relation thereto. Whereas temporal destitution – via Foucault's retreat and return of the origin – foregrounds what is unknown to thought as concealed/unconcealed in time, the *cogito* and unthought pertains more expressly to knowledge. The aim here is to extend the analysis of traumatic ethics to that of the unconscious. In what follows, two forms of conceptualizing the unconscious (ethical substance) will be considered. A focus on ethical mode – Lacanian repression and a more psychologized dissociation – will clearly demarcate the differences, and will point toward the *telos* of the subject's conduct, as related to the critical project of emancipation.

#### 4 | THE LACANIAN UNCONSCIOUS, REPRESSION, & ETHICS

As widely known, Freud's (1915/1957) repression concerns not only ideational representatives of instincts denied into consciousness but their derivatives, which combine and substitute in symbolic fashion. For Lacan (1973/1981; 1966/2006a), the unconscious is explicitly structured like language, and deferring operations of signifiers in the unconscious operate differentially, both logically and nonsensically, to exteriorize and undermine any coincidence of thinking and being. Relating the exteriority of language and the imaginary other, Lacan (1966/2006a) ties the recognition immanent in desire to the symbolic universe of the Other's speech. This becomes tangled most famously in the Oedipus complex, where a certain deal is struck, a bargain made between the subject and the world. Consequently, this *quid pro quo* is said to express itself in two traumatic moments. The first inscription is an alienation, where a name is given that distorts the subject as a lack in being. The second relates to the proper Oedipal installation of the paternal metaphor in separation, which prevents the subject from returning to the m/other's being. As such, the m/other's being is unknowable, as is her desire for the subject. The intervention by the Name-of-the-Father stands in for the m/other's desire but cannot comprehensively represent it. It is repressed. Thus, a part of the unity of subject and m/other is lost as *objet petit a*, a fragment of the Real that falls away returning to cause the subject's desire – the promise, the fantasy that some arrangement in the subject's life, as related to the Other's desire, will produce fulfillment. This is why Lacan (1966/2006d) says that "man's desire is the Other's desire" (p. 690). As coming from elsewhere, repression, thus, operates to constellate an absence working within the unconscious chaining of signifiers stretching toward actualization. The subject's absence to itself, is temporally accounted for in the notion of "afterwardness" (*Nachträglichkeit* or *après-coup*), as alluded to. Accordingly, the signification of traumatic suffering occurs retroactively through another later event, that is inevitably signified. As a manifestation of the unconscious, the logic appears somewhat paradoxical because the origin of the trauma seems to arrive from the future, as a signified event relates back to the originary occurrence that may not be articulated as such. The temporal logic of effect preceding its cause refers the original trauma to connections with what is repressed, which relate to the founding signifier, the Name-of-the-Father. Significantly, for the later Lacan, the Name-of-the-Father can no longer be thought of as an exterior guarantor of the symbolic order (Chiesa, 2007). That there is "no Other of the Other" means that the point of disappearance in the subject's being problematizes the superimposition of the Name-of-the-Father and the symbolic phallus. Excavations of the unconscious, therefore, begin to depart from the positive conceptions that occasion so many iterations of psychoanalytic practice – such as those involving ego defenses, object relations, dissociated affect,

or implicit experience. These psychodynamic formulations imply an Other of the Other, via symbolic *techné* that will supply the detained unconscious contents, pursuant to a psychologized writ of *habeas corpus*; and, such pretensions to a universalist unconscious as substance/presence has drawn critique from Foucault (1984/1990) and his critical psychological heirs (Cushman, 1990, 1995). Consequently, for Lacan, the phallus increasingly becomes associated with the signifier of the lack of the Other.

Lacanian psychoanalysis originates in an epoch, in Foucault's (1966/1973) analysis, where historicity has replaced any possibility for undiluted representation, and in the human sciences where the organism is symptomatically located in its own time. For Lacan following Freud, discontent historically occasions the subject's castrating initiation into a world of language, of moral ideals, and of the many interpersonal, political, and economic projects forming the subject's relationship to desire and *jouissance*. In linking speaking with enjoyment, and its correlative position within unthought, Lacan (1975/1998) writes that "'the unconscious is not the fact that being thinks . . . the unconscious is the fact that being, by speaking, enjoys,' and I will add, [the subject] 'wants to know nothing more about it'" (p. 104-105). In the aftermath of the later Lacan's facing toward a Real of the unconscious, Soler (2014) writes of the meaning of the symptom as singularity, of truth that can only be half-said, as language expressing a mystery, a facticity that weaves itself inside and outside of the speaking body. The problematization of the event of the unconscious, therefore, expresses a subjectivity whose life unfolds in its own time, and according to the logic of affect – which for Lacan would follow the effects of the Real of the unconscious, the trauma of the speaking body and its elusive and wounded *jouissance*. The later Lacan (2005/2016) uses a new term, *sinthome*, to replace the more commonplace notion of symptom, and this signals a new relationship to the signifier and the worlded realities that would be impossibly summoned into completion. Hence, the *sinthome* can be said to be that particular modality by which the subject enjoys its unconscious. In distinction to the symptom, the *sinthome* cannot be exhaustively deciphered. Verhaeghe and Declercq (2002) illuminate this distinction well through their discussion of whether the subject chooses to believe in their symptom or to identify with their *sinthome*. To believe in one's symptom means that the subject holds out for the existence of a signifier that will complete the chain of signifiers that have been initiated by the Name-of-the-father. In other words, the subject presses for a meaning of the symptom, which would necessarily be guaranteed by the Other; the question of identity or the meaning of one's experience or suffering can be answered intelligibly. In a Victorian world, subjects may come to believe that the ideal egoic positions of consistency, courage, and moral virtue may alleviate their symptoms as associated to the Name-of-the-father. In a post-industrial world, various psychologized forms of self-actualization, transpersonal experiencing, or cognitive realism may constitute paternal mirrors. Or, as suggested *infra*, interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis will refer the symptom to the dialogical junctions necessary for expression as creation and linking. To identify with one's *sinthome* itself rather than ideal ego aspirations for a comprehensive cure involves the destitution of a subject who no longer finds any credible solution in completing any meaning that will satisfy the Oedipal interrogation. There is no supplement that will work, no moral, or psychological normative ideal that will close the circuit or reflect without distortion. Consequently, as Verhaeghe and Declercq (2002) describe, this change involves a shift in the subject's manner of following its *jouissance*: "Before, the subject situated all *jouissance* on the side of the Other . . . after this change, the subject situates *jouissance* in the body, in the Real of the body" (p. 10). In other words, to identify with one's *sinthome* is to come into a way of being that occasions the Name-of-the-Father taking up its unthinkable position as supposed: "This is what the subject is missing in thinking he is exhaustively accounted for by his *cogito* – he is missing what is unthinkable about him" (Lacan, 1966/2006d, p. 694). Desire pursuing *jouissance* becomes a cutout of sorts – something that arises after a loss, different than, but in some semblance of the shape of the loss, what was missing. So, there is a missing part, repressed as existing only in its effects, and what comes out of it that is not identical to it, but reverberates from it.

The unconscious as repression in the Lacanian idiom embodies a modernist problematization with the sub-

ject's alienation from itself, and this may be expressed through a Foucauldian ethical lens. It is, therefore, possible to sketch out the unconscious (*substance éthique*) as operating according to the mode of subjection (*mode d'assujettissement*) of repression. To begin, Lacanian ethics does not pertain to a preexistent subject, which would find in the analytic of finitude its merely epistemic failures. Rather, in locating the subject within the analytic of finitude, within its vortices of impossibility, Lacan positions the subject as the traumatic failure, the void of withdrawal as symbolic wound to immanent materiality. For an analysis of the repressed unconscious, the mode of subjection involves the subject's *alienation pursuant to the signifier*. For Lacan, the loss of not only pleasure, but being, is relocated in the symbolic register as the mark, the phallus arising as "what is socially valued, valorized, desired" (Fink, 2004, p. 137). Here, and perhaps contra Lacan, we see the deprivation of the paternal metaphor not as the Hegelian *Aufhebung* working through the things-in-themselves. Rather, it is the effect of a negation, pursuing the greater logic of nihilation, that murders the Real of the speaking being; however, because such death occurs to embodied being itself at the hands of the signifier, what is missing may not be spoken of, even if its joyfully nostalgic, mournful memory finds its way through speech. Yet, this points to the unsettling insight that there is no Thing (*das Ding*) as a pure real otherness. The Real is both of-the-symbolic and beyond symbolic knowledge. The Thing as a mythically primordial object was always lost, and is concealed within a world where desire might be represented, and the repressive unconscious forms the chains of signifiers that impossibly encircle this loss. The other things filling in for the Thing, as in the position of *objet petit a* (object-cause of desire), are fantasies chasing a void. Of course, such fantasies and pursuits find their way into the conformity of signified moral life, and into the ideologies structuring the psychologized life-worlds of the late modern period. For instance, the assumed realistic depiction of the subject's life within a wholesome narrative free of moral ambiguity, dysfunctionality, or the intrusion of disturbing affect emerges from a collectivized fantasy that psy-technologies cultivate. Importantly, the Lacanian repressive unconscious interrogates these psychologized forms of life, which are embedded in the subject's *sinthome*, manifesting intense suffering and enjoyment. Normalization, thus, may echo through a subject's fundamental fantasy, and these returns to mythical origin are especially visible in experiential therapies and techniques of psychodrama, where a pilgrimage to the historical ground zero of suffering is accomplished. The historical problematization in the repressive unconscious, however, is quite different, the ethical injunction – similar to the ancient Greek care of the self (*epimeleia heautou*) – involving self-transformation as an identification with a traumatic dehiscence that may not be credibly assigned meaning.

The *telos* of the Lacanian subject's self-relation arrives in the questioning of the pursuits that might be hermeneutically situated within the modern world, and to whom, and to what, they find their allegiance or resistance. From a Foucauldian perspective, the gap in the subject's temporal being as an alienation giving rise to desire must be given a direction of revelation. Regarding the ethical question, and how that would shake out, Lacan famously writes that "from an analytical point of view, the only thing which one can be guilty of is having given ground relative to one's desire" (Lacan, 1986/1992, p. 319). This dictum, coming from an earlier phase of Lacan's work has been interpreted with different inflections. One straightforward view is that the subject is enjoined not to give up on what it wants, what it really desires; however, the Lacanian subject is itself founded on desire and making the law of desire into a command does not proceed from a divided subject. Zupančič (2000) makes a far more intricate case for an ethics of the Real, moving to juxtapose Lacanian and Kantian orientations to the symbolically impossible or the corporeal excess that lives in the heart of ethical action. In part, taking Lacan's (1966/2006b) own unexpected joining of Kant and Sade, Zupančič (2000) argues that ethics must exceed the law in order to avoid conformity of heteronomous will to the law, which would circumvent an authentic expression of formal demand or utilitarian calculation of interests or happiness. In other words, as seen in Lacan's (1986/1992) writings on *Antigone*, the subject must offer its Real being as a fragment of its inhuman materiality that would outstrip desire or demand in any articulable way to produce an excess that is lived (Žižek, 1991). Though persuasive, this account mostly situates Lacanian ethics within a moral



domain, which is concerned with how the subject's actions might align or not with the exterior demands of social institutions. Neill (2011) argues that Lacanian ethics is not a directive to embody desire or *das Ding* but is, rather, "concerned with recognizing desire for what it is and with the assumption of responsibility for and as the cause of desire that is in one" (p. 241). The Foucauldian ethical moment here would, therefore, involve precisely *how the subject accounts to itself*, as an inheritance of its world to be sure, for the emergence of its desire. Considering that such origins temporally arise from the future, that they are retroactively enacted according to the logic of *après-coup* in a world governed by historicity, the arrival of any determined identification would become impossible even if feverishly sought after. The release of such suffering necessarily involves an abandonment of the fundamental fantasy. To such ends of releasement, Lacan (1973/1981) queries: "What, then, does he who has passed through the experience of this opaque relation to the origin, to the drive, become? How can a subject who has traversed radical fantasy experience the drive?" (p. 273). Traversing the fantasy means the subject's adoption of a new position regarding its alienation through the signifier, which involves, *inter alia*, the assumption of the cause of being and resultant desire and jouissance (Fink, 1995). In a sense, this assumption amounts to the subject taking responsibility for its being-in-the-world. Though it in no way chose its thrownness, the subject must take stock of how master signifiers associated to the repressed Name-of-the-Father came to stand in for the m/other's desire, and how the material aspects of its being were forcibly withdrawn or concealed. This would include the myriad ways that the subject would find its being targeted for health and unhealth as a biopolitical strategy. We may think for instance of the ways relational suffering may be managed through communication, or that family systems may be structured as to achieve self-differentiation. Or, that individuation – the meaning of one's ownmost trajectory, one's own languaged ends – may emerge from the ancestral matrix of the subterranean world of the imago. Yet, such the projects for completing the meaningful chains of signification attempt to summon the *appearance* of something affirmatively signified that may find itself emplotted and tracked on the biopolitical screen. In distinction, the Lacanian subject must find within its own being the point of *disappearance* for the Name-the-Father – the wounding void and only to be supposed – whose contoured absence yields the positive effects in the Real. This necessary but always failed search places the workings of the signifier under "lalangue," that of the signifier shorn of its signified supplements, fulfillments, and hope, but given over to fate, and marking the subject's historically embodied being with the etchings of trauma, and the inevitably incomplete stories told relating thereto. Lacanian ethics, then, offers the subject the project – worlded through historical temporality – of discerning the effects that particular but failed inscriptions have on its possible being, as well as an injunction to discern the nature, the direction, and the fantasies that have guided desire, and its own truth, which cannot be named but only lived and borne.

## 5 | THE DISSOCIATIVE UNCONSCIOUS & ETHICS

Within the same historical landscape as Lacan's return to Freud, as emerging from the unthought, are discourses of dissociation and their related procedures. Unlike Freud and Lacan's understanding of repression, which involves an irreparable constitutional division, dissociation separates experiences that would *normally* be connected. The historical reference point here is Pierre Janet (1925), whose influence has been revived in the posttraumatic stress related, neurobiological theories of dissociation that have become ascendant (van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1989). Janet, thus, works out a dissociative rather than repressive psyche along several fronts. First, Janet understands memory as a synthetic faculty whereby a person is able to assimilate events into coherent narratives, the routine stories of disappointment and satisfaction that circulate in everyday life. Critical for those drawing on his work is the distinction between narrative memory and traumatic memory, the latter being encoded as embodied emotion and being known

through enactment. As Putnam (1997) writes, “dissociation represents a failure of integration of ideas, information, affects, and experience” (p. 19). In contradistinction to the divided Freudian and Lacanian subject, whose being is lost, dissociation involves a subject whose experiences may be recaptured. While contemporary theory continues to wrestle with the issues of adaptation and normatively dissociative experience, the problematization of dissociation herein relates more directly to, *inter alia*, traumatic stress, personality disorders, and dissociative identity disorder (DID), as hinging on its structural pathology. Second, Janet would connect traumatic memory with what he referred to as fixed ideas (*idées fixes*), or “dissociated systems not perceived or processed by personal consciousness” (Nijenhuis, 1999, p. 14). These islands of memory give rise to gaps in the stream of conscious awareness, perception, and function, and to the effects of painful experiences such as intrusive thought and affect, or behavioral reenactments. Janet (1925) writes, thus, that “the power of such ideas depends upon their isolation. They grow, they install themselves in the field of thought like a parasite, and the subject cannot check their development by any effort on his part” (p. 600). Consequently, these subconscious fragments of experience, resisting the full personhood implied by the synthetic tendency, become centers of automatism, actions performed outside of conscious awareness. Like Freud, Janet’s conceptualization of dissociation is implicated with the history of hysteria, especially figural to the psy-complex of the late nineteenth century. Moreover, Janet (1907) well expresses an empirical theme of the dissociative symptom: “Hysteria is a form of mental depression characterized by the retraction of the field of personal consciousness” (p. 332). In contrast to the Lacanian revision of Freud, however, the embodied symptoms of the hysteric – the convulsions, numbing, conversion, and histrionic agitation – are less to be identified with as a *sinthome*, and more to be believed in. In other words, Janet’s dissociative subject provides the possibility of a widening aperture for conscious awareness that would take in the cause and meaning of one’s symptom, an unmediated depiction of his or her suffering. Third, and relatedly, Janet (1925) asserts that the dissociated subject becomes attached to their traumatic suffering, their conscious lives being dominated by past experience that continues to constrict the ability to live in the present, to connect new experiences to narrative memory, and – crucially – to exert their will to act efficaciously in the world. To remediate the dissociative gaps in experience, Janet enjoins the suffering subject to “liquidate” the trauma through the normative dimension of memory that is privileged – “the action of telling a story” (Janet, 1925, p. 661). To repair the dissociated and subconscious state, the subject recites again the troubling events, and invites them into the ordinary course of life-history, to join the population of ordinary memories. As one may suspect, a fissure in the subject’s being remains, the irredeemable difference between what is *Real*, and what is *realistic*. To dwell in between them, as does Lacan, is to situate one’s project within the heart of the analytic of finitude; however, to liquidate the Real in favor of realistic depiction is to fall into Foucault’s “the anthropological sleep,” where the illusion of fixed knowledge would escape the shifting vectors of life and sense-making.

This vertical separation of dissociated states may be discerned across a theoretical spectrum, including contributions by van der Kolk et al. (1996), van der Hart, et al. (1993), Putnam (1997), Lanius et al. (2014) among many others. As a contrast with Lacanian formulations of the unconscious symptom, however, the work of Sullivan (1953), Bromberg (1998) and Stern (2003) present a different mirror on the suffering of the modern subject within the domain of interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis. Such an orientation to a dissociative rather than repressive psyche is ostensibly consistent with the intellectual trends of the mid-twentieth century, those foregrounding a multiplicity of self-states, and privileging of the symbolic and relational capacities of the subject for overcoming the intensity of its suffering. Sullivan (1953), therefore, views dissociation as central in structuring self-organization to include elements that not only represent the good-me and the bad-me, but also the not-me – a gap within which anxiety would be constituted parataxically and “made up of poorly grasped aspects of living which will be presently regarded as ‘dreadful,’ and which still later will be differentiated into incidents which are attended by awe horror, loathing, or dread” (p. 163). Bromberg (1998) continues Sullivan’s line of thought, extending a Janetian understanding of the dissociative psyche

toward a plurality of dissociated self-states as originary: "The psyche does not start as an integrated whole that then becomes fragmented as a pathological process, but it is nonunitary in origin; it is a structure that originates and continues as a multiplicity of self-other configurations or 'behavioral states'" (p. 181). Moreover, Bromberg (1998) – in alignment with the work of Wolff (1987) and Putnam (1997) – notes that self-experience as a multiplicity of unlinked states achieves coherent and unitary selfhood as an adaptively developmental illusion that is put into question through trauma. Strangely enough, the protective effect of dissociatively unlinked self-states, despite giving support for the post-modern self as construction from life fragments, is that of a consolidation of what may be preserved against dissolution. That is, what is dangerous to those potentially linked self-states remains on the periphery of experience or is evacuated. Stern (2003) – drawing on Sullivan's notion of selective inattention – understands dissociation as *unformulated experience* which is "the uninterpreted form of those raw materials of conscious, reflective experience that may be eventually assigned verbal interpretations and thereby brought into articulate form" (p. 37). Pursuant to Sullivan's reversal of Freud's repressive censorship, unformulated experience remains on the outside of consciousness as a kind of "familiar chaos," selectively avoided, yet these experiences come to the subject as unbidden perceptions, like unruly children demanding their entrance. Unlike Janetian thought, these dissociated self-states as the product of trauma are not thought of as automatic inscriptions but as the disavowal of the syntactical and interpersonal fabric of shared life. According to these understandings, dissociated experience resembles the Lacanian Real. For instance, Sullivan (1953) remarks that dissociation involves behavior and states of mind that are meaningless to the sufferer, who can neither locate the intrusions within social communication nor discern their causal genesis. Such not-me incidents, infused with uncanny anxiety, appear out of nowhere. For Stern (2003), the unavailability for symbolic mediation for these encounters with otherness presents a double aspect, dissociated and unformulated mentation categorized as strong or weak. Dissociation in the strong sense involves experiences with nonlinguistic structure that are not admitted into the theatre of reflection, potential stories that must not be told; they are disavowed. Others, those that are dissociated in the weak sense, struggle to be told because narrative rigidity obscures the possibility for finding the language for narration. Moreover, for Bromberg (2003), affective memory that is dissociated pursues an organismic rather than cultural logic, moving at the periphery of the subject's life and vigilantly keeping watch for danger. Unlike the repression of Lacan, or the early Freud, the discourses of dissociative psyche – whether involving the neurobiological automaticity from Janet to van der Kolk, or the Cartesian voluntarism of interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis – allow for the potential symbolic and meaningful illumination of dissociated and traumatic suffering.

According to Foucault's scheme for ethical subjectification, we may sketch out the unconscious (*substance éthique*) as operating according to the mode of subjection (*mode d'assujettissement*) of dissociation. The unconscious as dissociation in both the Janetian, cognitive neuroscientific discourses and interpersonal/relational psychoanalytic modalities partakes in a modernist problematization of the subject's vertical separation from itself through a plurality of discrete states of affectively imprinted experience. For the history of unthought that lies at the heart of the analytic of finitude in the modern episteme, the prospect of a dissociative psyche promises a solution to the otherness that tracks the subject's movements, the gap between the subject's thinking and being. In other words, the *différance* between being thought through the Other's linguistic register and the intensive maelstroms of affect and embodied tethering to the flesh of the world are potentially overcome. Still, it will not be Descartes' God of the *First Meditation* that dispels deceit; he has left the scene. The ontotheological warrant for these excursions is a procedural rationality. Such radical, Cartesian reflexivity bequeaths substitute guarantors of knowledge in the emergent human sciences of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Neutrality, distanciation, mechanism, and positive knowledge take their place on the empty throne. Though interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis critiques the Cartesian philosophical lineage, it inherits the Enlightenment impulse to narrate life in antimimetic terms *within* the analytic container (e.g., Davies & Frawley, 1994). Leys (2000), hence, argues that trauma, which can be extended to dissociation as well, operates

according to the conceptual interplay of mimesis and antimimesis. Mimesis involves the subject's hypnotic immersion in the event itself, where the discrete psychological state is one of engulfment, blindness, the loss of narration. In contrast, antimimesis summons the subject's capacity for memorial representation, narrativization, and expressive articulation that has been privileged from Janet onwards. Accordingly, within psychology, and the same could be said for the psy-disciplines at large, Foucault (1966/1973) observes that positive knowledge of the human, its antimimetic requirements, revolve around *norm* and *function* – following biology as an ancestral discourse. And, is it not precisely the antimimetic distance, memorial representation, and symbolic articulation, the very *techne* ruling human sciences, that find themselves installed as a normative mode of subjection for the very suffering subject it comes to know? Pursuant to the mirroring of the empirico-transcendental doublet, these epistemic principles are found to replicate themselves in the empirical content of human science inquiries and those of the psy-disciplines, and especially in the cognitive neuroscientific discourses on dissociation. The unconscious as dissociated, for these reasons, must be associated and bonded again with the remainder of psychic life, according to its function.

The movement of this mode of subjection working its way through the discourses of dissociation direct us away from the Lacanian subject, whose unconscious is marked by positive lack or absence at the hands of the signifier, and toward epistemological suture of the ontological wound we bear as modern subjects. The cognitive neuroscientific and interpersonal/relational psychoanalytic traditions are hardly approximate in their formulations; however, in their own ways they differently express the mandate in this mode of subjection: *the contingent, vertical and separated, isolated cells of disorganized life are to be reflexively consolidated*. At the heart of the cognitive neuroscientific accounts – from Janet (1925) to van der Kolk et al. (1989) – is the cultivation of the antimimetic and representative capacities of both the subject and therapist to engage in realistic mapping of dissociated and traumatic experience, which will have curative, affect-draining outcomes. Even when beginning with the trappings of embodied safety, and sensory expression, as van der Kolk (2014) asserts against the tyranny of the cognitive-behavioral therapy for trauma, the fulcrum is the incoherence/coherence of the life story to be owned. Aggregates of psychological knowledge serve to efficiently test and apply the techniques in this operation. Hence, cognitive-behavioral therapies' disciplinary constructions of narratives portend a more vital and resilient future, if a received realism is the aim (Foa et al., 1989; Kubany & Ralston, 2006). This socially stratospheric operation – the massification and directive implementation of the knowledge regarding traumatic dissociation – may appear allergic to the quiet depths of interpersonal/relational psychoanalysis. Still, if we shift our gaze somewhat we may find a complementarity positioning at work. *Representation*, which still carries with it the Enlightenment dream of Baconian and practical mastery, if not a final accounting of knowledge, is given over to its neo-Romantic counterpart, intersubjective *expression* more tolerant with the interplay between mimesis and antimimesis. Bromberg (1998), thus, writes that psychoanalysis will provide a “telling of the narrative and experienced by both parties as a living entity that must be continually renegotiated as the analysis proceeds... symbolized not by words themselves but by the new relational context that words come to represent” (p. 176). Similarly, Stern argues that allowing unformulated experience to be formulated is an act of creation and the conditions for this new expression arise from the dialogical relationship. Significantly, the philosophical underpinnings here derive from Gadamerian hermeneutics where genuine conversation occurs at the edge of their horizons. Thus, in a neo-Romantic vein, Stern (2003) writes that “understanding, then, is not the *reproduction* of something that existed before; it is, rather, the *construction* of something new” (p. 110). The stories that cannot be told in their horrific, not-me parataxic realities can be created and understood in the neutralized ethical space, the in-between of the analytic dyad. Unlike the cognitive neuroscientific appropriation of the Janetian lineage, however, Stern – as emblematic of the constructivist, hermeneutic and relational turn in psychoanalytic thought – does not presuppose a realistic depiction that has been lost prior trauma or dissociation. Still, in the mode of subjection pursuant to relational understanding, premised on dyadic containment, the creatively symbolic act administers a suture of the unthought,

which the Lacanian orientation circumambulates through its adherence to repression and its destitution.

Within Foucault's problematization of the unthought, for the dissociative psyche, the subject's *telos* stands in stark contrast to that of the Lacanian subject at the hands of repression. Recall that for Lacan, the subject must traverse the fantasy that any egoic and symbolic fulfillment will remediate the aftermath of traumatic deprivation that constitutes its very being. Put differently, the Lacanian subject will depart from those projects where its truth, desire, or the historical events constituting its thrownness may be finally named or worked through, assigned any authoritative meaning. As we have seen, the cognitive neuroscientific lineage in conceptualizing dissociation is oriented to the end of liquidating traumatically dissociated memory in starkly antimimetic, distancing terms. What is at stake in these practices of retelling is the prospect that the dissociated life may be returned to its rightful place, which is none other than to join the constellations of ordinary biographical, narrative memory. The subject's interpolations within everyday events are presumed to adjust themselves to the moral agency of forensic personhood, whose concerns reflect the edicts of the industrial world to find mundane satisfaction and pleasure in love and work. For this memorial depiction, a certain hedonistic and utilitarian ethos comes to light: "We may say 'There are certain words and phrases that if you never use again, you will be a happier person' . . . If they [clients] are not aware of negative things that they say to themselves, they are out of control and cannot regulate how they feel" (Kubany & Ralston, 2006, p. 266-267). For the interpersonal/relational psychoanalytic tradition, the dissociative psyche becomes shifted toward a different, though related end – that of symbolic expression through the medium of the analytic relationship. Thus, the here and now linking of dissociated states to meaning, or what is signified or named, requires the analytic container as a transitional space where a mimetic to anti-mimetic oscillation may occur (e.g., Davies & Frawley, 1994). Bromberg (1998) describes this form of consolidation as deeply connected with relatedness to the other: "Health is not integration. Health is the ability to stand in the spaces between realities without losing them" (p. 186). Likewise, authenticity for Stern (2003) is neither realistic depiction nor a press for coherence but, rather, the ability to invite in, link, and express a full range of relationally structured self-experience. For Stern (2014), similarly, formulating previously unformulated or dissociated experience is an act of creation that must emerge within a dialogical and hermeneutic context: "Truth is not already there, and so it cannot be revealed or uncovered . . . What do we do instead? We question and allow ourselves to be questioned" (p. 112). In Sullivan's idiom, what has been selectively not attended to has been given permission to emerge, as rooted in the subject's historically embodied being, to become what it would have been. Importantly, the mode of subjection for dissociation and its *telos* – traumatically vertical separation over against the possibility of narrative/expressive establishment – are projected within the biopolitical domain, set far apart from the repressive division of thinking and being.

## 6 | CRITICAL PSYCHOLOGY & THE UNCONSCIOUS

Foucault (1984) argues in "What is Enlightenment?" – which lays out the influence of Kant on his thinking – that the essence of Enlightenment thought is its capacity to release us from illusion and immaturity. Though Foucault (1984) draws criticism from Habermas for this positioning, what he seems to have in mind is not an embrace of traditional Enlightenment humanism, but an ethos that might be "described as a permanent critique of our historical era" (p. 42). Such critique is notably oriented to the historical immaturities attending the unreflexive submission to the warrants of authority, those which are typically theological or political. Most strikingly, however, this releasement from constriction also involves an ongoing ethical obligation to question the subject's collusion with its moral-epistemic limits. Thus, beyond the Kantian inquiry into the formal conditions of knowledge, there arises the further move toward a "critical ontology of the present and ourselves". . . [which] Foucault maintains, resituates ancient spirituality

in a modern context by linking the activity of knowing the present to a transformation in the subject's being" (Raynor, 2007, p. 135.). This mandate in interrogating the relation between the subject and its knowledge, especially its self-knowledge, does not find its way to any specific end, such as might be expressed in universal structures of political or economic life (i.e., those advocated by Habermas and others). Rather, what is attained is greater discernment concerning those more recent authorities that invisibly insinuate themselves into our being. In his *Lectures on Logic*, Kant (1800/1992) famously asks four questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for? What is man? The first question implicates metaphysics and epistemology, the second ethics and moral life, and the third question involves theology. Kant, however, argues that the first three questions are embedded in the fourth, which means that to answer the forgoing questions one must first find their limits in the nature of the human subject. This is precisely what Foucault describes above as historical ontology, where problematizations of knowledge exist within institutional and coercive conduits for action and mentation, bringing with them demands that we cultivate aspects of ourselves, that we subjectify our being, to constantly recreate our nature in conformity with new necessities and limits. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, psychologized life as *techne* and knowledge has – in the spaces often abandoned through more traditional forms of authority – imperceptibly fashioned answers to Kant's fourth question in ways that obscure its socio-historical, political origins.

Critical psychological interventions have found their way into the inner sanctum of psychology's disciplinary apparatuses, forcing on its closed circuits a certain accountability on behalf of the subjects that find themselves caught up in these normalizing procedures, strategies, and unacknowledged moralities. In historicizing the critical psychological intercession with hegemonic institutions along Foucauldian, Marxist, and feminist lines, Parker (2015) outlines several activities of psychological science that elicit the attention of critical approaches – i.e., a separating gaze, reductive individualism, positivistic mechanism, surreptitious interpretation, and assumed neutrality. These maneuvers are well known; however, Parker (2015) insightfully avoids a one-sided critique of the hyper-reductive sedimentations of neurobiological and cognitive-behaviorist accounts of human being, or the social psychological variants that persevere on social relations as a matter of economic exchange. For instance, the gaze that separates psychologists from their objects of inquiry not only pertains to the dehumanizing tendencies of the behaviorist but also to the neo-Romantic proclivities of the phenomenologist, or the conceptualizations of the psychoanalyst. Likewise, the bent towards locating an individualized psychic domain, apart from encroachments from the collective life of the species or the social body, cuts across the continuum of cognitive to existential psychologies. Moreover, such positivistic abstractions encompass not only the empirical products of efforts to explain, predict, and control, but also those human science formulations that guide qualitative research. Presumed neutrality and value-free interpretation, thus, find their home in so many disparate and opposed activities, as any affirmative argument regarding the essence of the subject, from natural or human science, must partake in a metaphysics of presence. Critical psychological analysis, however, is not necessarily aimed at establishing an ideal edifice of theory and practice beyond being answerable to the subjects within its illumination. To this end, González Rey (2019) describes the successor project, that of an inquiry into subjectivity manifesting “a cultural-historical and social character since it is historically located, expressing itself through . . . cultural symbolical devices of a particular epoch and generated within the specific forms of sociality of that epoch” (p. 21). The upshot of such differential articulation of psychological practice – which echoes recent voices calling for reconfiguration (Gergen, 1994; Teo, 2017) and older voices as well (Fanon, 1952/2008; Martín-Baró, 1996) – is that of research into subjectivity made responsible to those it serves, as well as being responsible to the historical moment. In other words, psychological life, as a potential answer to “What is the human subject?” would require, both for its rigor and its moral and political warrant, the timely attention to its practice as a matter of contemporary ethical and political life.

For the current inquiry, the rise of biopolitics as a major historical development lies at the intersection

with “cultural symbolical devices” appearing in psychoanalytic discourse as repression and dissociation. As suggested throughout, it is the rise of biopower as a distinguishing mode of governance in late modern societies that reorients the subject’s self-relation. As Foucault (2003, 2008, 2009) argues, the juridical model of sovereignty is contested as a newer form of governmental rationality, that of *raison d’Etat*, becomes ascendant, one premised not on divine right or on social contract but on utilitarian success or failure in managing the vitality of the governed. As recounted by Foucault (2003, 2008, 2009), and Hacking (2016), such a shift gained momentum in the late eighteenth century with the tracking of birth rates and mortality, incidence of disease, and accidents. The ends of these activities pertain to the natural realities of health and well-being of populations. What preoccupies Foucault (1976/1990, 2003, 2008, 2009) in this early expression as a guiding principle for biopower is the regularization of certain preferences for said welfare of populations, an established equilibrium resistant to accidents, random events, and preventable illnesses. Moreover, Foucault (2008) avers that mechanisms of control which protect liberal and neo-liberal subjects against disease, poverty, criminality, etc. are no longer counter-forces to freedom but the sources of autonomy itself, which manifests a departure from classical understandings of political and economic liberty. This would mean that disease, accidents – always the blight on predictable economic activity – would recur as a familiar problem, yet cast anew under the technologies of prediction, control, and aggregation of human populations. As matter of governmentality – where the subject has become *homo economicus* – security mechanisms involving populations and their welfare project themselves onto “probable rather than actual events . . . in terms of cost and in terms of the norm of acceptable outcomes” (Patton, 2016, p. 106-107). Consequently, the medicalized discourses that form the model for the psy-disciplines – providing protection against madness, dysfunction, and promoting health – will move toward predicting risk, and providing security. Additionally, as Giddens (1990) suggests, modern “risk societies” withdraw the subject from its lived existence through a heightened Weberian rationalization of institutions governing life, and remove the subject from local contexts of lived space, time, and intersubjective relation. Where risk is successfully ascertained, two outcomes are accomplished that are important for engagement with the unthought, and its repressive and dissociative iterations. First, the disembedding institutions must “extend the scope of time-space distanciation” (Giddens, 1990, p. 20), which means the psychologized subject must be given over to knowledge of itself that is normalized, and it must surveil itself as from afar. Second, to manage risk, actors in various contexts – including economics and medicine, but also subjects engaged in intimate personal relationships – Giddens (1990) asserts that trust may be established and safeguarded. In the contexts of the unconscious as variously configuring the ethical modes of subjection touching repression and dissociation, these twin obligations – self-distancing and trust – will be observed in operation, and through possibilities of subversion as well.

The historical corridors occupied by an unconscious configured through Lacanian repression or psychoanalytic dissociation stretch beyond straightforward evaluation of their critical positioning; however, these practices must continue to answer for their respective conceptions of subjectivity. Accordingly, several clarifying reiterations may demarcate their stance related to the biopolitical landscape we inhabit. As argued herein, Lacanian repression appears to place itself at the heart of Foucault’s unthought, as a structural feature of the analytic of finitude. Rather than attempt to suture the unthought as unconscious, to excavate it as a second consciousness, implicit awareness, or isolated state of dissociation, the ethical mode of the Lacanian project is that of “no solution” – to remain within the alienating, castrating logic of the signifier and its historical absence in the subject’s being. In contrast, for the discourses on dissociation, the ethical mode is twofold. For the cognitive neuroscientific discourses and practices, the mode involves the establishment of narrative via antimimetic representation. In other words, the *techné* of dissociation would – in the Janetian manner – liquidate affective memory to tell a story that possesses a redemptive rationality, as resumption of the flow of troubling experience into the cleansing currents of biographical life. In the interpersonal/relational psychoanalytic understanding of dissociation, as we have seen, the bent is toward expression

of what was heretofore unformulated or lost. The subject must form the capacity to create new experience, to link together formerly unlinked states of being, to “stand in the spaces,” while remaining within relation to the other – a mirror for the subject’s ownmost capacities and furthest reaches of temporal existence. And what of the ethical ends, the *telos*, of these trajectories? We may say that for the dissociative subject, the ethical *telos* involves in its cognitive and neuroscientific guises the framing of modern personhood as extolled in the thought Descartes, Locke, and Adam Smith. The being of this subject is continuous with its own biographically memorial reconstruction, and attains the radical reflexive rationality to fashion itself as “punctual self,” according to,

*the growing ideal of a human agent who is able to remake himself by methodical and disciplined action. What this calls for is the ability to take an instrumental stance on one’s given properties, desires, inclinations, tendencies, habits of thought, and feeling so that they can be worked on, doing away with some and strengthening others. (Taylor, 1989, p. 159)*

In parallel, the interpersonal/relational psychoanalytic discourses and practices seek a subjectivity able to formulate the traumatically dissociated experience alongside another, to be contained and mirrored in its transformative and creative expressions of selfhood. In biopolitical terms, the connection between these functions is between two related forms of protection against risk, and the provision of security. Those treatments of dissociative states fostering the articulation of narrative identity suture the unthought in service of those institutions that track biography as an arc between birth and death, an official story will be told and retold in ways that would blur Agamben’s (1998) distinction between *bios* and *zoe*. The interpersonal/relational accounts work on the axis of establishing trust in the eyes of another, a crucial feature of the *mitwelt* for societies of risk, where shared moral and religious experiences of the lifeworld have fragmented. These efforts recall Giddens’ (1990) notion of “ontological trust,” which connects with the work of Laing, Erikson, and Winnicott, and this trust, as appearing within proximity to the other, may be distinguished from the distanciations of biographical craft. Moreover, this double aspect of the *telos* of dissociative psyche, identity and relationship, would appear to affirm two elements of what Taylor (1989) argues is deeply important for the modern West as “ordinary life” – concerns with production (the making of things) and reproduction (the making of beings), as Freud would posit as the cornerstones of “work” and “love.” In any event, these endgames are fields apart from the Lacanian endeavor to arrest the play of fantasies of fulfillment and the staking of life on imaginary identifications with the phallic sedimentations of work, romance, or politics actualized. Though Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1983) remind us that the Lacanian subject’s lack may itself be a stratagem, we may also reflect that Spinozism possesses a strong pre-Kantian tendency to speak from nowhere and outside of the historical moment.

Meditating on the Foucauldian and critical psychological injunction to examine the location of subjectivity and its “cultural symbolical devices” within a particular historical clearing, an address may be briefly given to the question of governing, and the rival political tasks implied through a dissociative unconscious and that of Lacanian repression. This entails associating the subject of science with its biopolitical (mis)management. First, in considering how a critical psychological project retains its standing vis-à-vis the unthought, it may serve to reflect on the principle of historical discontinuity that Foucault draws from Nietzsche and Bachelard. Under the archaeological and genealogical methods that Foucault employs to apprehend the regularities of knowledge/discourse or forms of subjection, respectively, there is a certain Kantian placing out of bounds of metanarratives, of the Hegelian finalities that might usher in the logic of historical completion. Rather, the unconscious as unthought appears to us both within the relative intelligibility of the biopolitical sphere, and beyond its ken. Significantly, the enigma at the heart of the unthought as an aporia bearing finitude and otherness relates to what Lacan – recalling Foucault’s own nomination of psychoanalysis as a counter-science – would say about psychoanalysis and science, and the relation of knowledge and truth. As



Lacan (1966/2006c) writes, “there is no such thing as a science of man because science’s man does not exist, only its subject does” (p. 730). This alludes to Lacan’s shifting ruminations on the affiliation of psychoanalytic practice and science, and though Lacan appears to endorse the Copernican decentering of egoic consciousness in most scientific enterprises, the return of truth must be accounted for in the ways knowledge finds its imprint in human being. To examine the extent that subjectivity would exceed any science of human being is exactly the responsibility a psychoanalytic praxis owes the historical moment, where knowledge – such as that of the signifier, in its worldedness – finds its hold on the human the Real effects of knowledge, the aporias or knots, that cannot be fully accounted for. Thus, the subject’s truth, as given to unconscious repression, outstrips scientific knowledge – whether its origin is linguistics or evolutionary biology – while also depending on its structure. As Nobus (2005) observes, “truth as material cause in psychoanalysis emphasizes that all formations of the unconscious derive their existence from the material of language” (p. 59). More directly stated, as a historical emergence, the event of the unconscious must be acknowledged both as knowledge and a vortex of finitude with material effects that may not be escaped, but engaged with, and must not be obscured. To take the event of the unconscious seriously, as a matter of scientific inquiry, is not to make it disappear. Second, the unthought as a historical emergence, one framed through material exteriority, is given different political consequences in the theoretically incommensurable tongues under examination. Taking up Foucauldian thinking on biopolitics, Esposito (2008, 2009, 2011) addresses a problematic issue – that the subjectification that emerges to enhance the vitality of the governed also produces constriction, destruction, and death. Esposito suggests that for the social body, *communitas* – or collective life – incurs an obligation; however, modern societies extend immunity to the individual subject, who receives a dispensation against the communal obligation, simultaneously preserving life and destroying other possibilities. As is well known, this immunity manifests in the juridico-political sphere as social contract, political liberty, human rights, etc. Importantly, however, the juridico-political grounds for immunization are purely formal, and lose their relevance in a world increasingly governed through the expansion and contraction of the vitality and health of the governed. Moreover, the dynamic between *communitas* and *immunitas* – their indissoluble relation – may possess a certain historical variability; however, under modern regimes where biopower predominates immunization comes to bear society’s “most intimate essence . . . the need for a different defensive apparatus of the artificial sort that can protect a world that is constitutively exposed to risk” (Esposito, 2008, p. 55). In modern risk societies, the immunizing function – as a protection of rights and capacities – comes to guard against the psychologized dissolution of the individual subject, involving dispensation against injury to biographical being. This well demonstrates the governmentality served by the conceptualizations of the unthought/unconscious in dissociation as protection is extended to the encapsulated being of the individual’s memory through time – the consolidation through narrative and linkage – alongside the ontological trust required for its relations with others. Esposito suggests that the project of immunization has its limits; it must include something exterior for its continuation, that in Derridean fashion the immunizing principle must tacitly index its otherness. As Nedoh (2016) asserts, “the self must immunize itself against the surplus of immunization . . . It must split or divide itself in the direction of the common; it must accept its Otherness (its own negativity)” (p. 69). Such an otherness may involve childbirth, as Esposito (2008) suggests, or it may – according to this inquiry – pertain to the mark of otherness that the world has on the being of its subject. This precisely nominates the crossing of the unthought – symbolic and worlded exteriority – into the modern subject’s material being as the event of the unconscious. For the Lacanian subject, under the signifier’s mark of repression, a space opens where worldedness is exposed in conjunction with the ideological fantasies that result from alienation and the falling out of *objet petit a* (Žižek, 1989). Perhaps, most humbly, the dispersal of being and the traversal of fantasies of completion allow a different ear for that question, one central to the ethos of the critical psychological movement, and one foretelling a potentially different future, for us and our fellow citizens, “*Che Vuoi?*”

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