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Title: Castration, Violence, and the Social Bond

“You will not age!” This is the latest promise flooding our media and social networks. AI gurus forecast that within a mere decade—ten years, to be exact—medicine will triumph over aging, ushering in ever-lengthening lives. Consider the words of Ray Kurzweil, Google’s lead researcher and AI expert, who asserts that by 2032, each year we live will grant us an additional year of life expectancy. The premise of AI rewrites the rules of time: rather than each passing year chipping away at our lifespan, it propels us toward greater survival. Is this the eternal life we’ve longed for?

How could one not be captivated by predictions that defy time’s relentless march? Science, dazzling technological leaps, and the networked revolution of the internet and AI, allied with capitalism, dangle before us the erasure of castration, the abolition of lack, and the tantalizing prospect of total jouissance. The pledge to sidestep aging and postpone death clashes head-on with the real, which insists on revealing itself through the body’s inevitable decline.

“Be happy,” “enjoy”—this is the mantra dominating today’s culture. Yet contemporary malaise stems from a promise that never delivers. Consumption is peddled relentlessly, but it’s the subject who ends up consumed, their desire drained to exhaustion. In this way, capitalism turns on itself, devouring its own tail.

Drawing on Lacan’s thesis, we argue that the market floods us with *letras*—objects engineered by scientific formulas to stand in for the lost object. These are like suction cups, pulling us in, granting fleeting access to jouissance. Ephemeral by design, they lose their allure the moment they’re grasped, as the next shiny thing looms on the horizon. In the capitalist discourse, every object is bound for the trash heap, reduced to waste. The surplus value extracted comes at the cost of the consumer’s devaluation, driven ever deeper into the pursuit of jouissance.

If managing technological refuse poses a practical challenge—whether through disposal or recycling—the same quandary applies to the human remnants of this system: the poor, the marginalized, immigrants, those shut out from consumption. The capitalist discourse is unique in its rupture of social bonds, its exclusion of love’s domain, and its fracturing of the social fabric by fostering an autistic jouissance.

Violence

How are we to grapple with the pervasive violence marking our culture of malaise today? In this ultra-modern era, violence flows from the capitalist discourse that shapes our current mode of social bonding. Whether in its subtle psychological guises or its raw physical outbursts, violence disrupts our ties to others, shatters the social bond, and breaches our pact with the Other.

We’re witnessing profound shifts in how social collectives are structured. The traditional family, where the father wielded authority over kin and repressed sexuality, is fading. With the decline of the paternal function comes the collapse of the father’s knowledge and power. In its place rises the imperative of jouissance, shifting the reference point

away from neurosis—the product of repressed drives—toward what dominates now: villainy. The villain operates beyond the law. He abuses the other, tramples them underfoot, and draws his *jouissance* from their suffering. In doing so, he severs ties with the other, demolishing the social bond. The capitalist discourse fuels this villainy by casting the other as an object to be mined for enjoyment. It positions itself outside the law, beyond any relation to the fellow human. This logic—that nothing is impossible, that everything is permitted—ushers in an antisocial spiral of boundless, generalized violence. It's a chase for instant gratification, the erasure of difference, and a proliferation of autistic *jouissances*.

When *jouissance* ceases to be impossible, violence erupts as its social effect. We understand violence as the rupture of the discourse that forges the social bond. It's a naked horror, stripped of symbolic cover, acting as a magnetic pull by presenting an object that promises to fill every void. Violence has thus become a mode of social bonding—yet one that devastates those bonds, marking their breaking point.

What reigns, then, are aggression, envy, hatred, and racism. These emerge as desperate claims for a *jouissance* supposedly stolen by the other. The assumption is that the other deceives us, when in truth it's the object that's discarded. Segregation of the other—of the Other—stems from a demand to enjoy the same as everyone else, intolerant of difference. The social bond inherently carries an exclusion tied to the strange, the foreign, to that *jouissance* lodged at the core of our being. This extimacy—this hatred of the Other's presumed *jouissance*—drives racism and segregation, presuming the Other's enjoyment robs us of our own.

The Politics of Psychoanalysis

We inhabit a world riddled with devastating wars and fractured social bonds. On one side stand values of freedom, minority rights, and praise for human fraternity; on the other, hatred of ethnic groups, rejection of the foreigner, exclusion, segregation of the different, and racism. Within nations, divisions deepen—unbridgeable rifts between right and left, populists and libertarians. We live under governments veering toward authoritarianism, eager to dismiss and challenge democracy's values, the political system that curbs the tyrant's or emperor's unchecked *jouissance*. The One asserts an unlimited, singular master, untouched by castration.

Amid the malaise of contemporary culture and the ascendant capitalist discourse—which forecloses love's domain in its bid to plug anxiety with consumer goods—psychoanalysis holds its ground by centering the subject and their desire. The psychoanalyst stands in the world to remind us of desire's presence, sustained by lack, alert to the capitalist demand for *jouissance*. In a feminine stance, the analyst opens themselves to desire, enabling the not-all, thwarting totalitarian closure. The analyst's desire sparks a new social bond, an unprecedented desire, birthing a subject no longer chasing the impossible.

Against the triumph of religion and science, psychoanalysis finds itself at a loss. It wages a losing battle, staking everything on the unconscious subject's singular act with their object of desire. We persist in affirming ties with the fellow human, with the other in their difference, toward the ever-unfinished crafting of a new love, willing to bear lack in encountering the other. An ethical imperative drives us to reintroduce the desiring

subject's singularity into the possibility of a bond with the other in their alterity, embracing the unassimilable nature of their jouissance. Following Lacan's teaching, we counter aggression and hatred with the prospect of a discreet fraternity, acknowledging what unites us in the social bond while irrevocably setting us apart.

This is a politics of the symptom, giving voice to speech and fostering an effect of truth. Yet it's also a politics of the *sinthome*, where analysis opens a path to creation—a heresy that lets one master what went awry in their knotting, a self-naming beyond the name imposed upon them. At analysis's end, we face the irremediable, and it's there the subject gains a margin to act upon the real. It's an invention that makes the impossible bearable, doing what's possible with existence's irreducible core. Ultimately, it's a know-how with jouissance for living—a mode of enjoyment tied to the body—realizing Lacan's claim that psychoanalysis is nothing but “a practical bias to feel better.”

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