DEATH AND MASTERY

*Psychoanalytic Drive Theory and the Subject
of Late Capitalism*

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"There's no need to be afraid in the hall," she said, "you just have to pretend that you're the ghost who might meet you."
—Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*

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Jacques Lacan and the Genesis of Omnipotence

The visibility of brutality in the twentieth century was cause for much post–World War II theorizing about what Erich Fromm called the "anatomy of human destructiveness." The ethologist Konrad Lorenz famously explained aggression in evolutionary terms, asserting its supposed "life-promoting" function.[1] Damning Lorenz's "biology as ideology" alongside Jean-Paul Sartre's valorization of "creative violence," Hannah Arendt strove to keep the analysis of human violence squarely in the political realm.[2] And weaving his way between these two views, Fromm sought to develop his own characterological analysis that transcended the dichotomy, instinct versus social product.[3]

Different though they were, these authors are united in having taken the time to recognize and dismiss Freud's theory of the death drive on their way to their own respective theories of human aggressiveness.[4] Less willing curtly to reject the instinctual foundation of Freud's later work was the "absolute master" of the postwar French psychoanalytic scene, Jacques Lacan, who, early in his career, saw the death drive at work in his own theory of specular aggressivity (*agressivité*).[5] That this theory, synthesized from a wide range of influences of which Freud was at best a marginal member,[6] had something to do with destructiveness seems to have been the extent to which it "made some sense of" the death drive, and

Lacan would later recognize the tenuousness of the connection in situating the death drive in relation to other concepts in his work.[7] I want nonetheless to explore this early placement of the death drive in the "primitive imaginary of the specular dialectic with the other" because I believe that there is, in fact, an attractive way to connect the two (unsurprisingly, by building on the work of the first two chapters) and, furthermore, that doing so rounds out the developmental model outlined in chapter 2.[8] Loewald deals only with the conflict between what I have called the tension-within and tension-between positions; nowhere does he address destructive drives and the havoc they can wreak in the developmental process.[9] Lacan, by marked contrast, reserves a capital importance for aggressivity, but, I will argue, at the cost of not seeing more basic forces at work in psychic development. Inserting a theory of mimetic aggressivity into Loewald's developmental model, thus pairing the unlikeliest of theoretical bedfellows, will be my primary aim here.

To be clear, however, my proposed integration carries no pretension of symmetry: whereas my hope in the previous chapter was to provide a broad view of Loewald's work, my interest here is *only* in Lacan's theory of specular aggressivity (and not in his understanding of the death drive) and, furthermore, only in this theory inasmuch as it might serve as a point of departure in formulating an understanding of aggressivity that is assimilable to Loewald's developmental model. What follows should thus be understood neither as a comprehensive treatment of Lacanian theory nor as an attempt to fuse the Lacanian and Loewaldian frameworks. As opposed to the first two chapters, in which my primary efforts were focused on following along, the aim here is more constructive: if I dusted off the bones of a developmental model in the first chapter and watched Loewald assemble them in the second, my goal in the present chapter is to fill in the missing pieces.

Working through Lacan's theory in this way comprises my attempt to confront the common understanding of the death drive as a destructive and violent force. As I argued in chapter 1, Freud himself gives us good reason to think of the death drive as a strange appellation for aggressiveness in the works of the later twenties and thirties. If, however, one takes *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as a point of departure, the death drive is clearly no aggressive drive. Furthermore, when it is first "externalized," it is not sent out into the world as a raging will to seize and dominate. At what point then does a destructive psychic force rear its ugly head? And how precisely does it relate to the death drive?

Aggressivity and the Omnipotent Mother

Offering a captivating image to introduce his theory of the mirror stage,[10] Lacan asks us to think of the "striking spectacle of a nursling in front of a mirror who has not yet mastered walking, or even standing, but who—though held tightly by some prop, human or artificial—overcomes, in a flutter of jubilant activity, the constraints of his prop in order to adopt a slightly leaning-forward position and take in an instantaneous view of the image in order to fix it in his mind."[11] In Lacan's view, infants are drawn to their own image because the sight of this bound sack of flesh gives unity to the chaos of their real bodily situation: "the sight alone of the whole form of the human body gives the subject an imaginary mastery of his body, one which is premature in relation to a real mastery."[12] The identification with this specular other, dubbed the ideal-ego, fuels the formation of the *ego*, the template for which is provided by the image toward which the infant strives (Lacan jokes that, in this sense, "man creates himself in his own image").[13]

Undoubtedly the mirror stage is a positive development in that the *Urbild* of the ego, "out there" and yet representing what is "in here," forms a bridge between "the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*," between "inside" and "outside."[14] This very same development is also, however, one of *alienation*, in that the child's *I*-prototype is an *other* for *it*. In other words, there is a radical disjunction between the ideal organization of the image and the fragmented, disorganized state of the child's actual body, a disjunction that gives rise to aggressivity. *That* aggressivity emerges in this gap between "an original organic chaos" and "a salutary imago," at least in his initial presentation of the theory, is clear[15]—*how* and *why*, however, is less so. At times, Lacan makes it seem as if it is merely the uncanny experience of oneself as doubled that "would trigger uncontrollable anxiety," leading to an "excess of aggressive tension."[16] In this case, aggressivity is simply "correlative to every alienating identification."[17] At others, he seems to situate it in the child's anticipation of "the conquest of his own body's functional unity," giving "rise to an inexhaustible squaring of the ego's audits," in which case aggressivity would be the driving force of the orthopedic quest for completion in the imaginary.[18] Richard Boothby convincingly argues that we should instead understand aggressivity in precisely the opposite fashion: not as aiming at an imagined unity but rather as a "drive toward violation of the imaginary form of the body that

models the ego."[19] For the moment, I am interested only in the fact that, in all three of these interpretations, aggressivity is a rage situated in the "rending of the subject from himself" and thus must be understood as an *intrapsychic* force.[20]

Lacan would later clarify, however, that the image must be "ratified" if it is to serve its developmental role:

> Let's recall, then, how the specular relation is found to take its place and how it is found to be dependent on the fact that the subject is constituted in the locus of the Other, constituted by its mark, in the relation to the signifier.
>
> Already, just in the exemplary little image with which the demonstration of the mirror stage begins, the moment that is said to be *jubilatory* when the child, grasping himself in the inaugural experience of recognition in the mirror, comes to terms with himself as a totality functioning as such in his specular image, haven't I always insisted on the movement that the infant makes? This movement is so frequent, constant I'd say, that each and every one of you may have some recollection of it. Namely, he turns round, I noted, to the one supporting him who's there behind him. If we force ourselves to assume the content of the infant's experience and to reconstruct the sense of this movement, we shall say that, with this nutating movement of the head, which turns towards the adult as if to call upon his assent, and then back to the image, he seems to be asking the one supporting him, and who here represents the big Other, to ratify the value of this image.
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> This is nothing, of course, but an indication concerning the inaugural nexus between this relation to the big Other and the advent of the function of the specular image.[21]

The image is thus only of such interest because the embodiment of the Other—the symbolic order manifested in authority (the law, society, but at first, the parents)—confirms that the child is indeed seeing *itself* in the mirror. It is furthermore this representative that makes the image into an *Urbild*: the mirror stage, as I have indicated, provides only a *prototype* for the ego. The ego itself only comes into being as signifiers ("*girl, blonde, likes chocolate, hates pink, good at drawing,* etc.") are affixed to this imaginary signified.[22] In other words, the ego, as opposed to its

Urbild, is constituted symbolically on an imaginary foundation, and it is the big Other that provides the bricks.

It is no innocent gesture. In an important section of *Seminar IV*, Lacan distinguishes between two sides of the mirror stage:

> There is, on the one hand, the experience of mastery [*maîtrise*], which will make the child's relationship to its own ego essentially one of *splitting*, of a differentiation from oneself that will remain to the end. There is, on the other hand, the encounter with the reality of the master [*maître*]. Insofar as the form of mastery appears to the subject in the form of a totality from which it is alienated, but nonetheless closely related to and dependent on it, there is jubilation; but it is different when, at the moment that form is given, there is also an encounter with the reality of the master. The moment of triumph is also one of defeat. When in the presence of this totality in the form of the mother's body, the subject must find that she does not obey. When the specular structure reflected in the mirror stage comes into play, maternal omnipotence is reflected in the depressive position, and there follows the child's feeling of powerlessness.[23]

As he explains here, the mirror stage results in a *double* alienation, both from ideal ego and also from maternal omnipotence: the emergence of the possibility of mastery thus coincides with the realization of helplessness before the *real* master. In recognizing the child in the mirror ("That's really you!"), the "primitive Other" ratifies the ideal ego (the triumph) while making clear that the child is totally dependent on the Other for that ratification (the defeat).[24]

Since the "I" comes into existence in this way, as terrifyingly heteronomous, the possibility of the mother's absence signifies nothing less than the threat of self-annihilation, thus the overwhelming need to figure out what it is that she desires, what it is that she is lacking, so that the "I" can *be* that "fundamental missing something" (what Lacan calls the "imaginary phallus") and thereby give her no cause for being anywhere else.[25] For this reason, the quest for mastery that is the process of ego formation fuses with the attempt to satisfy a desire "that is, in its essence, unsatisfiable."[26] The signifiers that are affixed to the image are thus accepted as descriptions not of what the child *is* but of what the child *ought to be* in

order to fill in maternal lack: "It is precisely inasmuch as [the child] shows its mother that which it is not that it constructs the pathways around which the ego finds its stability."[27]

As I have said, Lacan typically presents aggressivity as an intrapsychic tension that only erupts as a social problem when the subject "clothes" the other with the "same capacities for destruction as those of which he feels himself the bearer."[28] Distinguishing his theory of aggressivity from an intersubjective one, he would even proudly proclaim that it is a "case of Lacan vs. Hegel."[29] In binding the process of ego formation to the encounter with maternal omnipotence, however, he has given us good reason to question this view: since the ideal ego is only a "salutary imago" as a result of being invested with phallic significance, one might say that aggressivity is, at the most fundamental level, a rage generated not simply in the gap of oneself from oneself but rather in the ever unsuccessful attempts to please Mother that are *responsible* for the gap of oneself from oneself. The child *is* what it is not *for her* but still fails to be that which is lacking. The "I" plays the "deceptive object" but ultimately does not deceive.[30]

This move allows us to answer Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's charge that "if I myself am the rival, there is fundamentally no reason why I should stop competing with 'myself,'" that is, if aggressivity is the product of a completely intrapsychic dialectic of ego formation, then there is no reason why it should ever be "overwritten," as the ego's fundamental connection to otherness is narcissistic.[31] At times, Lacan makes it seem as if this is precisely the case and thus that our emergence into the "social" world is only ever a continuation of the imaginary dialectic by other means: as he states quite categorically, "the object relation must always submit to the narcissistic framework and be inscribed in it."[32]

As I have just attempted to demonstrate, however, the narcissistic pursuit is never *simply* narcissistic: since the process of acquiring an "I" is one and the same as that of failing to seduce the mother, it already points to its failure at its inception, necessarily involving as it does the "narcissistic lesions" that are the "preludes to castration."[33] It must be emphasized that castration—the ultimate acceptance that one is not and does not have the phallus—does not involve the subject's further inadequacy before the image, as this kind of acceptance of lack would only widen the gap that generates aggressivity, inciting despair before the further impossibility of the orthopedic venture. Castration means rather that *the ideal ego itself* is lacking, that there is "a part that is missing in

the desired image."[34] Although Lacan believes that there certainly are ways of avoiding or dulling this realization (he calls them psychoses), he is also clear that it is implied in the specular dialectic from the start, castration being the telos of the ego.

The Elision of Death and Mastery

Critics of Lacan often fault his developmental theory for privileging the experience in the mirror to the neglect of a more primary affective bond,[35] but, as I have tried to show here, of their inextricability—that is, of the complete dependence of the process of ego formation on maternal recognition and love—Lacan is perfectly clear. One might nonetheless have reservations about the *manner* in which he theorizes this affective tie. For the most part, it is not the mother herself but rather her activity of constituting "a virtual field of symbolic nihilation, from which all objects, each in their turn, will come to derive their symbolic value," which is of fundamental psychic significance.[36] Indeed, he admits that he "can only remain for awhile in the pre-oedipal stages on the sole condition of being guided by the thread that is the fundamental role of the symbolic relation."[37] In this reduction (or perhaps, inflation) of mother to transitory Other, Lacan has precluded the possibility that the child might identify itself not with what she *wants* but with what she *is* (or, at least, with what she is perceived to be). I will return to this point in a moment.

There is another aspect of the mother, however, that transcends her role as protosymbolic: in her all-devouring insatiability, experienced by the child in both horror and attraction, there is also something of the *real*, a something that Lacan attempts to capture in calling the mother "the Thing."[38] In *Seminar VII* he would go so far as to claim that "the whole development at the level of the mother/child interpsychology . . . is nothing more than an immense development of the essential character of the maternal thing, insofar as she occupies the place of that thing, of *das Ding*."[39] As always, Lacan is providing an important corrective to prevailing trends, in this case to the idealization of the mother-infant relationship: "Here is your affective tie," he seems to be saying, "an indissoluble bond of unspeakable horror."

Beyond its corrective function, however, what justifies this claim? Spelling out the logic of *Nachträglichkeit*, Lacan asserts that "what is realized in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it is

no more, nor even the perfect as what has been in what I am, but the future anterior as what I will have been, given that I am in the process of becoming."[40] For this reason, one might say, the "emotional tie," signifying a reversal of the ego's accomplishments, can *only* be experienced retroactively as a source of dread (even if, one might speculate, it was not experienced in this manner in the overwritten past): "What we find in the incest law is located as such at the level of the unconscious in relation to *das Ding*, the Thing. The desire for the mother cannot be satisfied because it is the end, the terminal point, the abolition of the whole world of demand, which is the one that at its deepest level structures man's unconscious."[41] This would all be correct, I believe, *if* the affective tie manifested "afterward" *solely* in the conflictual horror of/attraction to the Thing. If, however, this tie has other "deferred" articulations—the primary of which, for Loewald, is *Eros*—then the theorization of the Thing does not in fact account for all of its vicissitudes.[42]

One might guess where I am going here: in Lacan's all-engulfing mother, the distinction that Loewald makes between dread of union and its precondition, the urge to union, is collapsed. What gets buried under the Thing is the more primary connection to the "other" of the tension-within position, the other not as threat to *one's* being but as co-occupant of the primordial density, of *being itself*. If *this* is the proper domain of the death drive, as I argued in the previous chapter, then we might come to the surprising conclusion that, far from making sense of Freud's "enigmatic signification," Lacan actually *erased* the death drive from his vision of psychic development by negating the kind of bond that is its aim.

I want to pair this insight with a brief analysis of Lacan's attempt in *Seminar II* to derive his theory of the imaginary from the failed *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, where Freud first conceptualizes the defensive and regulatory "barrier-pathway system" that would later be called the ego. Lacan claims there that Freud's account is ultimately "inadequate": this initial theorization fails, in his opinion, to entitle "one to think that the facilitations [*Bahnungen*, the "pathways" constitutive of the regulatory system in the *Project*] will ever have a *functional utility*."[43] It is only when one identifies the barrier-pathway system as a function of the imaginary, that is, as organized visually according to the "gestalt principle," that one can understand how the *Reizschutz* gives rise to this "functional utility" "serviceable for the guidance of behavior."[44] What Freud is pointing toward, but ultimately missing, in other words, is the image: "Freud isn't a Gestaltist—one cannot give him credit for

everything—but he does sense the theoretical demands which gave rise to the Gestaltist construction."[45]

Very swiftly then, Lacan translates Freud's concern with how the nervous system deals with the deluge of excitations that threaten to overwhelm it into a proto-gestaltist assertion of the psyche's world-structuring capacity. Mirroring could most certainly be thought of as a form of defense and regulation: being able perceptually to organize the world is a part of dealing with one's place in it.[46] But the problem of the precise relation between the two is not even raised: homed in as he is on the "reflected relations of the living," Lacan turns homeostasis into reflection and coping into mirroring, imagining himself engaged in an exercise in translation rather than transformation.[47]

In this move, the problem of "mastering excitation" that is really at the center of Freud's *Project* is elided and replaced with a picture of psychic development that relies exclusively on specular aggressivity.[48] If Freud can be accused of universalizing an obsessive neurotic view of reality, Lacan could in turn be said to universalize aggressive struggle at the expense of the more basic drive to mastery. And if this preference is viewed in light of his elision of the death drive, an even more substantial critique can be furnished: if Lacan theorizes an excessively "rigid" ego, it is because there is no pull of the primordial density to counter the drive to mastery and thus because there is only, in his view, a drive to an excessive, rigidifying mastery. Both characters in the drama I have investigated in chapters 1 and 2—the death drive and the drive to mastery—are thereby repressed in favor of a single motivating force: specular aggressivity. There is no urge to union, nor is there a slow grappling with a new environment (no *bewältigen*), only the image, the alienation, and the resulting hostility—a tension-between unshackled from a tension-within.

Toward a New Theory of Aggressivity

Rejecting the "hypothesis of a sort of megalomania that projects onto the infant that which is in the mind of the analyst," Lacan is avid that "the structure of omnipotence is not, contrary to what one might believe, in the subject, but in the mother."[49] In the first section of this chapter, I have argued that aggressivity is best understood not as a wholly intrapsychic force but rather as intimately related to this omnipotent

mother. In equating this mother with the big Other, however, Lacan has ruled out the possibility of identifying directly with what she *is*, though the essential connection, in some form, of aggressivity to an orthopedic quest for completion seems to betray this preclusion. The pieces are now more or less in place, and we might wonder anew: what precisely is the relationship "between narcissistic identification with omnipotence and submission to omnipotence?"[50] One way of working toward answering this question, primed in the previous section, would be to see aggressivity as conditioned by and emerging out of the dialectic of death and mastery outlined in the first two chapters. It is this possibility that I want to explore in what follows.

According to Loewald, when infants have made their way through the separation process, acquiring mastery from loss, they come to see the very same "other" toward which they bear an urge to union as a dreaded source of engulfment, as a threat to their emergent autonomy.[51] The paradox, of course, is that they gain this mastery through identification, by being the "other": the "other" thereby comes to be dreaded (comes to be the *other*) in being imitated. The entirety of my proposal in this chapter is captured in the possibility that *this development feeds back into the internalization process*; in other words, that the other is imitated not just in its caring capacity but also in its "engulfing" aspect. If our caregivers are truly the bearers of a schizoid projection, then to *be* them is not just to provide the comfort of presence in absence (to internalize the "other" of the tension-within position) but also to be an all-consuming source of dread (to internalize the *other* of the tension-between position).

The seemingly mistaken identification with an outside that is a source of engulfment, *the curious recognition of oneself in the very element that challenges one's autonomy*, would then give rise to a new motivational force (a new drive, if one wishes), distinct from both the death drive and the drive to mastery: neither to reimmerse oneself in the primordial density nor to protect oneself from loss through protective structure building but rather to *engulf others* in the same way that one feels oneself threatened. Parroting the *other*'s aggressive behavior, I become, for the first time, aggressive; that is, a more basic drive to master external threats ("Others are trying to engulf me" and "I want to protect myself against others") is perverted into a drive to aggress ("I want to engulf others"). What Anna Freud called "identification with the aggressor" is here more than just a manifestation of aggressivity or a mechanism of its genesis;[52] it is rather *the* initial appearance of a genuinely aggressive energy.[53]

Aggressivity is thus generated when the death drive, already projected outward and experienced negatively as a property of the *other*, is aped in this confused form; it is, more concisely, an imitation of a revalued projection.[54] Still bearing the urge to eliminate rigid self/other distinction through this chain, the drive is now set on reducing others to nothingness, on engulfing in the same way that the subject feels threatened with engulfment, in order to accomplish this goal. A drive to erase the independence of the other, to bear *omnipotence* over the other, is thereby produced by imitation of this same other in its capacity as dreaded threat, i.e., *qua other*. In turn, just as aggressivity is a vicissitude of the death drive at odds with the death drive itself, so too is it a kind of mastery-subverting drive to mastery: in aiming to shut out otherness, aggressivity does ward off "external" dangers, but at the cost of real engagement with the environment. It thus contributes *too much* to the construction of the psychic *Reizschutz*, leading to a loss of mastery by what Loewald calls ego rigidity.[55]

I cannot help but worry that my proposal here is so minimal that it runs the risk of vanishing into thin air. Perhaps I am only codifying, within Loewald's theoretical framework, an intuition that children, when they are genuinely *aggressive* and not lashing out in frustration, are only mimicking behavior of which they have previously felt themselves to be objects (which is different, of course, from *actually being* those objects, though the two are not mutually exclusive). Psychoanalysis has, however, generally shied away from theorizing aggressivity in these terms: where it is not put forth as an innate drive (arguably, Freud, Klein),[56] it is typically conceived of either as an unintentional expression of motility (Winnicott) or as rage against narcissistic injury (Fairbairn, Kohut).[57] If, as many schools of psychoanalysis recognize, parents are objects of both schizoid projection and imitation, would it not make sense that children receive back part of what they project outward?

In sum, I propose that aggressivity be understood as *neither* constitutional, i.e., inborn aggression, *nor* as a by-product of environmental failure (whether we understand this failure as familial or as the irrationality of the social order) but rather as a necessary developmental misstep. While I would agree with Wilhelm Reich's argument that there is no "innate" aggressive drive and that more neutral drives, inflamed by other conditions, are perverted into an aggressive one, I would disagree that those conditions are *only*, or even *primarily*, "external": given the nature of preoedipal life as both Loewald and Lacan imagine it, parents must

inevitably be identified as aggressors.[58] The question, from an "environmental" perspective, is not whether the parent is aggressive or not but whether the parent *confirms* the child's negative projection or lowers the intensity of the feedback loop of aggressivity by parrying the projection with patience and what Bion calls "reverie."[59] I will address this question of managing aggressivity in the final section of this chapter.

Dependence and Omnipotence: On Jessica Benjamin

To help further elucidate the distinctiveness and force of the proposal, I would like to mobilize it toward a critique of two other theories of aggressivity that are strikingly similar to the one developed here: those of Jessica Benjamin and René Girard. Seeking to move away from the classic psychoanalytic preoccupations with intrapsychic structures and drives toward an "intersubjective view,"[60] Benjamin explains aggressivity as emerging within a "struggle for recognition." No less than adults, infants act in the world and seek some kind of direct response to their actions. Many toys ("the mobile that moves when baby jerks the cord tied to her wrist, the bells that ring when she kicks her feet") are designed to provide a "contingent responsiveness," but none can provide the kind of recognition that other subjects do: "The nine-month-old already looks to the parent's face for the shared delight in a sound. The two-year-old says, 'I did it!' showing the peg she has hammered and waiting for the affirmation that she has learned something new, that she has exercised her agency."[61] This need for recognition leads inevitably to paradox: "at the very moment of realizing our own independence, we are dependent upon another to recognize it. At the very moment we come to understand the meaning of 'I, myself,' we are forced to see the limitation of that self."[62] We have already encountered this idea in Lacan: that the moment the "I" comes into existence coincides with the realization of its utter dependence.

This same paradox becomes somewhat unfamiliar, however, when stated in more dramatic terms: "the self is trying to establish himself *as an absolute*, an independent entity, yet he must recognize the other as like himself in order to *be* recognized by him."[63] To be aggressive, for Benjamin, is to seek to dissolve this intersubjective tension by denying the other's subjectivity and attempting to enthrone the omnipotent self. But how did we get from the realization of dependence and limitation to the desire to establish oneself as an absolute? "Hegel" might

be a good one-word answer here: like self-conscious individuals proving "themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle," children confronted with separateness feel they "must raise their certainty of being *for themselves* to truth."[64] Even if we accept the translation, however, we might still wonder why precisely dependence and limitation seem so naturally to elicit omnipotent striving. Are the two this obviously and immediately connected?

In an important note in "The Omnipotent Mother," Benjamin distinguishes omnipotence from a more "immediate, originary state . . . in which the limits of reality are not known and the other is experienced as 'there' without awareness of an opposing center of intentionality" (a perfect description of the tension-within position).[65] In her view, omnipotence is "the reactive effort to recreate [this] presumed state, as if power could be known before the knowledge of powerlessness and difference, which is actually the condition of power. This reconstruction creates omnipotence, which can then be understood as defensive denial, not simple ignorance, of the other's independence."[66] The developmental narrative outlined in this chapter also connects dependence and omnipotence, but contains two crucial middle steps that link what Benjamin calls here the "simple ignorance" of otherness to its "defensive denial": first, when the tension-within position is broken, the child does indeed wish to return to its "wholeness," but to say that this wish involves an aggressive stamping out of otherness is to accord the child at this stage too much volition, too much strategy and control. Wholeness is not aimed at so much as it is assumed, and where it *is* desired, the wish is much better characterized as a blind fleeing, prompted wholly and terrifyingly by the world-shattering experience of separateness. Second, even when separateness becomes something minimally habitable, omnipotence does not immediately follow: coming to gain enough stability so as to provide sufficient "presence in absence" does not lead the "I" to feel entitled to any "grandiose ambitions."[67] It does, however, recast the "other" in the position of dreaded *other*, introducing the dimension of omnipotence, but not yet as a project of the ego. It is only in a final identification with this *other* that children,[68] aping the aggressive imposition to which they themselves have felt victim, become the kinds of beings who take an active and existential satisfaction in the domination of others.

Collapsing these three moves into one, Benjamin equates the coming "to understand the meaning of 'I, myself'" with "the desire to establish oneself as an absolute," leaving us to assume that aggressivity is a

natural correlate of an unaccepted dependence and thus that we simply *are* aggressive (rather than cripplingly depressed or terrorized) in the absence of intersubjective tension. If we are to explain rather than merely assert the fact that "minds tend toward an autonomous omnipotence," the "breakdown of tension between self and other" that is the "root of domination" must be understood as a positive *product* of that tension.[69]

In a curious attempt to reconcile intersubjectivity with Freudian drive theory, Benjamin asserts that omnipotence "is a manifestation of Freud's death instinct": "Omnipotence and loss of tension actually refer to the same phenomenon. Omnipotence, whether in the form of merging or aggression, means the complete assimilation of the other and self. It corresponds to the zero point of tension between self and other."[70] As I have argued, it is erroneous to equate the strivings toward a tension-less state characteristic of the urge to union and the omnipotent struggles of aggressivity. The infant attempting to maintain the tension-within position and the child out to subdue an other into nothingness are two very different beings, though they both could be said to be attempting to dissolve self/other tension. Distinguishing between these two is necessary not simply to redeem the innocent neonate from slanderous accusations of omnipotence—more or less standard fare in psychoanalytic theory ever since Freud crowned the infant "His Majesty the Baby"[71]—but, more important, to explain the recourse to omnipotence in the first place.

A False Decision: On René Girard

Further light can be shed on the theory proposed here through a comparison with that of René Girard, for whom all culture is in constant danger of an outbreak of violence due to the simple fact of what he calls the "mimesis of desire." We want, so Girard's thesis goes, as and what others want. This mimesis naturally leads to conflict, which in turn only strengthens the basic operation of human desire; in Girard's words, "the unchanneled mimetic impulse hurls itself blindly against the obstacle of a conflicting desire. It invites its own rebuffs, and these rebuffs will in turn strengthen the mimetic inclination."[72] Due to the self-propagating nature of violence, every society is in need of rites of sacrifice, which "serve to polarize the community's aggressive impulses and redirect them toward victims that may be actual or figurative, animate or inanimate."[73] This "scapegoating" operation, whereby a community finds cohesion in

the cessation of violence *by* violence, is, for Girard, the sole purpose and function of religion.

Girard is all too aware that his theory bears uncanny similarities to Freud's but argues that he ultimately succeeds where his double comes up short: rather than following through on the brief passages where he explains conflict in terms of *identification* (i.e., *mimesis*), Freud unfortunately falls back on his Oedipus theory to trace the origins of hostility. The distinction between their respective theories is easily summed up in Girard's claim that "the mimetic process detaches desire from any predetermined object, whereas the Oedipus complex fixes desire on the maternal object."[74] It further lavishes too much attention on the paternal rivalry: in Girard's words, "the father explains nothing. If we hope to get to the root of the matter we must put the father out of our minds and concentrate on the fact that the enormous impression made on the community by the collective murder is not due to the victim's identity per se, but to his role as unifying agent."[75] In short, the mother is not *the* object, and the father is not *the* rival.

Abandoning the basic psychoanalytic insight that the bond we have with our parents is the model for all future relationships, Girard thus emphasizes the essential *substitutability* of affect: for him, everyone is a potential rival, everything a potential object of desire.[76] The story told here, by contrast, does not begin with a world of others to fight and objects to want, recognizing that the boundaries that make possible aggressive drives do not exist at the beginning of life, that we are initially but one part of a "tension-within" *out of which* an external world slowly emerges. Furthermore, the initial confrontation with that world is not one of violent usurpation but of basic coping. In effect, Girard's story, like Lacan's and Benjamin's, begins two steps too late—and with curious consequences.

Girard takes as his "principal complaint against Freud" the latter's view that children *consciously* experience patricidal hate and incestuous desire, and only *then* relegate this experience to the unconscious.[77] He dismisses this idea that children are "fully aware" of their aggressive and libidinal impulses, claiming that they do not really process the "hostile colouring" of their relationships until initiated into the adult world of rivalry.[78] In other words, while children certainly aggress, they do not *mean* to aggress because they have not internalized the cultural logic wherein aggression can be consciously justified. Why would Girard pick out this point as his "principal complaint" instead of resting content with a demonstration of

the supposedly superior explanatory power of mimetic desire over the Oedipus complex?[79] In short, why must children be exculpated?

A kind of answer is offered in a follow-up work, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* where he reveals his hand, as it were. Girard claims there that the revelations of *Violence and the Sacred* are not just pieces of a theory of culture but rather descriptions of *Satan* himself, the paradoxical source of both order and disorder in society. Although "the three great pillars of primitive religion—myth, sacrifice, and prohibitions—are subverted by the thought of the Prophets," the Old Testament is "inconclusive" in its defeat of Satan because "we never arrive at a concept of the deity that is entirely foreign to violence."[80] Only the Gospels finally refute the "logic of violence" in full. "Christ," Girard contends, "is the only agent capable of escaping from these structures and freeing us from their dominance" and is thus the ideal bearer of the message "to abandon the violent mimesis involved in the relationship of doubles."[81]

In *Violence and the Sacred* we think we are getting a theory of *what is*. In *Things Hidden*, by contrast, we find that we have an option, that it is possible to vanquish "transcendent violence" with "transcendent love."[82] Like Kierkegaard in *Sickness Unto Death*, where the seemingly inescapable vicissitudes of despair are presented as a way of hyping the monumental "or" of faith, Girard backs his audience into corner and demands a decision. Without detracting from the finesse with which he accomplishes this rhetorical move, one cannot help but feel a bit cheated when he claims that it is Jesus who first exposes "the secret of social violence" and who unveils "the possibility of a life refusing mimetic rivalry, and, in consequence, violence."[83] For this possibility, in which Girard believes, is clearly no innocent conclusion: once revealed, it becomes rather transparent that all forms of human sociality have been lumped within the violence/sacrifice circuit (the "either") so as to prepare and package it to be neatly refused for the "or," thus the necessity of clearing the "presocialized" of the allegation that *they too* might consciously aggress.[84]

What ought to be refused, then, is not violence itself but the violence versus peace paradigm. Other stories can be told—the dialectic of death and mastery, for instance—and to more reasonable ends. For Girard, as we have seen, childhood must be clearly demarcated from the adult world of violence. With Freud, it is possible to see more continuity between the two, to see children as the kinds of beings that *mean to dominate,* and who do so for reasons having to do with the nature of preoedipal relations. Perhaps, with Girard, human desire and aggressivity are infinitely

malleable—"arbitrary," as he so often repeats—and children are "innocent" of knowledge of their aggressive impulses until initiated into culture at large. Or perhaps, with Freud, the groundwork for "adult" desire and aggressivity are molded from day one, in the course of interactions with the most important people in our lives at a time when we are more or less heteronomous.[85]

Overcoming Aggressivity

In this last section I want to offer a few tentative thoughts about how aggressivity is transcended (partially, at least). For Lacan, as I have already reviewed, aggressivity is overcome with the full initiation into the symbolic that attends castration: as Bruce Fink explains, "the overwriting of the imaginary by the symbolic (the 'normal' or 'ordinary neurotic' path) leads to the suppression or at least the subordination of imaginary relations characterized by rivalry and aggressivity . . . to symbolic relations dominated by concerns with ideals, authority figures, the law, performance, achievement, guilt, and so on."[86] This "subordination of imaginary relations" is, however, only half the story: for, in addition to addressing the narcissistic struggle in the imaginary, the symbolic is also the medium of taming the horrors of the *real*, of repressing the simultaneous attraction to and fear of the maternal "Thing."

The most important act associated with castration is, for Lacan, the acceptance of the infamous *Nom-du-Père,* the signifier of the mother's desire: the *non* (no) of the father prohibits access to *jouissance*, thus relieving the dread of the Thing, while the *nom* (name) of the father offers a reason why the Thing cannot be had, an explanation with a single *noun* (*nom*) of the impossibility of jouissance. With this pivotal nomination tying the question of desire to meaning, the child embarks on a new path: instead of tarrying with the Thing, to seek instead all of "the reasons why I can't have it." As Lionel Bailly explains, "it is far better for the child to 'go with' the paternal metaphor than to be constantly defeated by the inexplicability of Mother's behaviours, or its own inability to impose its will upon the exterior world"; thus, those who are not "duped" by the *Nom-du-Père* "err" in clinging to the possibility of oedipal victory (which is why, as Lacan jokes in *Seminar XXI, les non-dupes errent*).[87] Faced with the lack of the *imaginary phallus*, with the impossibility of maternal seduction, the subject thus turns its attention to the task of living up to the demands

of the *ego ideal* (the internalized ideal of the Other), which manifests in the more abstract and noncorporeal features ("charm," "sense of humor," "intelligence," etc.) of the *symbolic phallus*.[88]

One can thus read Lacan, as I have already hinted, as offering a theory of language similar to that of Loewald: the symbolic, in this view, takes over and finds new expression for the real contradiction between the pull and dread of jouissance, which is then allowed to play out in language rather than reality.[89] We would still be left to wonder, however, why some narcissistic worlds are shattered while others are left intact. As Jacob Rogozinski wonders, "by what magic is the subject able to pass from the imaginary to the symbolic, to assume castration as the law of its desire while overcoming the horror that it inspires in him?"[90] It is at this point that allowing in the developmental importance of the relative mainte-nance of the tension-within position—one might say, *the magic*—helps to unburden the symbolic of the great responsibility to socialize infants on its own.

One of the most important tasks in maintaining that level of care, for Donald Winnicott and Wilfred Bion, is to manage aggressivity properly when it manifests itself. According to Winnicott, for a parent to provide an adequate "holding environment" is not just to provide care but also to be able to cope with the frustration at breaks in care continuity, which inevitably lead, in his view, to a destructive lashing out. He speaks of a parent's capacity to "survive" infant attacks: that is, to just *be there* when they happen, to neither respond in kind nor to disappear, to "not retali-ate." For Winnicott, this positive nonretaliation is an important compo-nent in the emergence of reality in the child's world.[91] In my own terms, in being provided with a clear demonstration that the parent is not in fact the dreaded *other* of the tension-between position, even when provoked at the extreme, the child comes to recognize the distinction between its negative projection and the actual other.[92]

Bion proposes a very similar idea to Winnicott's "holding environ-ment" with his theory of containment: the mother, in his view, is a "con-tainer" for the infant's negative affect. When a child is excessively fearful, "an understanding mother is able to experience the feeling of dread, that this baby was striving to deal with by projective identification, and yet retain a balanced outlook."[93] Similarly, when the child lashes out aggres-sively, a good mother recognizes the act, and even experiences herself as an object of the aggressivity, but maintains her composure and feels neither victimized nor retaliatory.

Unlike Winnicott's mother, however, Bion's is charged with an additional task: not only to bear aggressive attacks and maintain her composure but also to translate raw destructive energy (what Bion calls "beta elements") into more usable thoughts ("alpha elements"). The containing mother absorbs a child's enraged actions and returns them in more manageable form: "I know you're mad about such and such, but this isn't going to help anyone. Let's try this instead." Rather than fleeing from or combating destructive energy, she transforms it into words; she changes a situation in which unprocessed psychic energy is being unleashed to one into which thought can enter. If the aggressive strivings of the child are beaten back with equal force, they will only be redoubled in strength and if they find no resistance, they will not be questioned. Only the patient, painstaking translation of nonsymbolized instinctual energy into words can "contain" aggressivity, can prevent it from becoming pathological. Bion calls this work "reverie."[94]

It is not, then, *that* we acquire language that allows the overcoming of narcissistic aggressivity but, according to Bion, *how* we acquire it. No doubt language ties us to others in a particular way conducive to sociability, but it only becomes a vehicle for healthy affective expression with the patience and skill of good others in early life. If, thus, any strict distinction can be drawn between psychosis and neurosis, it should be theorized not along the lines aggressivity suppressed/aggressivity uncontained (*le père ou pire*—the father or worse) but rather in terms of good enough or failed management of aggressivity.[95]

* * *

Having followed preoedipal conflict to a dialectical resolution with Loewald in the last chapter, I have proposed, in the present one, the existence of an unfortunate by-product, a kind of wrench in the gears, an unwelcome fourth in a process that would prefer only three. With some help, I arrived at this conclusion by carrying to its end a logic that Loewald only incompletely develops: if, as he argues, I am a schizoid being that grows by internalization, then I must necessarily become the threat that I have projected onto the *other*. The basic idea here is simply that we are aggressive because we perceive an aggressiveness directed toward us. We impinge upon others because we imagine ourselves to be impinged upon. I do not find this to be a particularly novel idea in itself, but hope to have couched it in a developmental story that frames it as a moment in our emergence

from the tension-within position. For this reason, I have portrayed my argument as an attempt to integrate a heavily revised theory of mimetic aggressivity (Lacan) into a dialectic of dependence (Loewald).

One of the primary victims of Lacan's theory of aggressivity is Freud's notion of *bewältigen*, which means literally "to bring in one's violence" (*in seine Gewalt bringen*), a definition that bears some of the ambiguity of the term *mastery* discussed in chapter 1.[96] To bring in one's violence could mean to subject to power, to mastery in the sense of *Bemächtigung*, but it could also mean to bring violence *in*, to tame the chaos of trauma, to exercise control. According to the theory proposed here, the outbreak of a kind of *Gewalt*, of what Lacan calls aggressivity, is a necessary part of psychic development, but it is not *primary*; it is rather an unfortunate consequence of *Bewältigung* that threatens *Bewältigung* itself. This move, it must be emphasized, is not simply a rejection of Lacan's rather bleak view of ego development: there are serious theoretical drawbacks to the assertion of aggressivity as baseline, drawbacks that are remedied in a more comprehensive narrative that takes it to be a derivative, though admittedly inevitable, perversion of more basic human drives.

100. His understanding of the agencies as temporally oriented attests most strongly to the truth of this claim: if "the superego would represent the past as seen from the future, the id as it is *to be organized*, and the ego proper represents the id as organized at present," then the collapse of any of these agencies into the other would mean the closing of a temporal mode (Loewald, *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, 49). Loewald argues here that seeing these three psychic structures as delimiting and modifying one another allows "a more refined concept of self" (ibid., 50).

101. Lacan, *Écrits,* 82.

3. Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis (Reprised)

1. Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, trans. Marjorie Kerr Wilson (London: Routledge, 2002).

2. Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 69.

3. Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 81.

4. Lorenz, *On Aggression*, 235; Arendt, *On Violence*, 5; Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, appendix.

5. As opposed to aggression (*agression*), which "originates in the frustration of a [biological] impulse," aggressivity has its origin in psychic conflict. Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud* (London: Routledge, 1991), 38. Although this term is admittedly rather awkward, I find it better than Bruce Fink's translation, "aggressiveness," which erases some of the distinction Lacan was trying to impose. At times, Fink himself tellingly translates *agressivité* as "aggression"; see, for instance, Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2002), 387.

6. The best treatment of these influences of which I am aware is Dany Nobus, "Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage," in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. Dany Nobus (New York: Other Press, 1999), 101–38.

7. Lacan typically situates the death drive in relation to the symbolic ("the death drive . . . is articulated at a level that can only be defined as a function of the signifying chain"), though a good case could also be made for its more essential relation to the real. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1997), 211; Lionel Bailly, *Lacan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 99, 140. Although I would agree that investigating these other connections (between Freudian death drive and Lacanian symbolic/Lacanian real) rather than the present one (between Freudian death drive and Lacanian imaginary) might more adequately elucidate Lacan's own understanding of the death drive, this task, as I explain here, is not the one I take up in this chapter.

8. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. John Forrester (New York: Norton, 1991), 148.

9. Jonathan Lear recognizes this fact in "The Thought of Hans W. Loewald," but argues that faulting him for this "grievous lapse" is "not a good way to read him:" "Rather, we should see Loewald as struck by the beauty of an ur-observation: that when human beings are located in a field of psychological complexity, there is a tendency for them to grow in complexity themselves. The differential in complexity thus serves as the occasion for dynamism. Psychological growth is regularly blocked, inhibited and sometimes attacked; but the tendency toward it is there." Jonathan Lear, "The Thought of Hans W. Loewald," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 93 (2012): 178. It seems to me, however, that the theorization of a major developmental obstacle to this growth should be part of his conception of growth. Furthermore, it is difficult to avoid those passages where he goes out of his way to avoid any talk of hatred and aggression: for instance, in "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex," when he interprets parricide (a rupturing of the "sacred bond" tying the child to the parents) in terms of guilt over one's autonomy and not in terms of any aggressive urges.

10. What I say of the concept "mother" in *n*5 of the previous chapter goes here as well.

11. Lacan, *Écrits*, 75–76.

12. Lacan, *Seminar I,* 79. Or in Philippe Julien's: "The mirror effects a victory over the fragmentation of the disjointed members and assures motor coordination." Philippe Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary*, trans. Devra Beck Simiu (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 31.

13. Lacan, *Écrits*, 120. Although his exemplary case is a nonvisually impaired child before an *actual* mirror, Lacan would claim both that "all sorts of things in the world behave like mirrors" and also that merely knowing that one "is an object of other people's gazes" is a sufficient condition of imaginary identification (and thus, contrary to the claims of some critics, that the blind do indeed have egos). Jacques Lacan, *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: Norton, 1991), 49; Lacan, *Écrits*, 56; Raymond Tallis, *Not Saussure: A Critique of Post-Saussurean Literary Theory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 153; Richard Webster, "The Cult of Lacan: Freud, Lacan, and the Mirror stage," *richardwebster.net,* 2002, http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html.

14. Lacan, *Écrits*, 78. Without investing itself in this image, the child would lack a "bridge to the Symbolic" (Bailly, *Lacan,* 96).

15. Lacan, *Écrits*. 94, 92. Julien argues that around 1964, the function of the mirror stage is detached from the task of "mastery through vision" and situated in the gap created by the gaze of the Other (Julien, *Jacques Lacan's Return to Freud*, 161–62). As I will argue in a moment, Lacan was already focusing on the gap created by the gaze of the Other as early as the 1956–57 seminar, not as an alternative to the mastery paradigm but as a supplement to it.

16. Lacan, *Écrits*, 89.

17. Ibid., 118.

18. Ibid., 91, 78.

19. Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 39. Boothby makes it seem as if the second interpretation of aggressivity is a gross misconstrual of Lacan's intentions, but there are passages to support both positions: though there are times when he speaks of a "need to aggressively strike out at this ideal," there are many others where he finds aggressivity in the pursuit of an ideal, most notably in "good-Samaritan" activities: "[aggressivity] underlies the activities of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and even the reformer" (Lacan, *Écrits*, 138, 79, 81).

20. Ibid., 286; Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 45.

21. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X: Anxiety, 1962–1963*, ed. Jacques Alain-Miller, trans. A. R. Price (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 32. Cf. Lacan, *Écrits*, 55–56.

22. Bailly, *Lacan*, 36.

23. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre IV: La relation d'objet*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 186.

24. Ibid., 169.

25. Ibid., 193. A child's relationship with its mother is, according to Lacan, "constituted in analysis not by the child's biological dependence, but by its dependence on her love, that is, by its desire for her desire," spurring the child to identify "with the imaginary object of her desire insofar as the mother herself symbolizes it in the phallus" (Lacan, *Écrits*, 462–63).

26. Lacan, *Séminaire IV*, 194.

27. Ibid.

28. Lacan, *Seminar I*, 81–82. Cf. "What the subject finds in this altered image of his body is the paradigm of all the forms of resemblance that will cast a shade of hostility onto the world of objects, by projecting onto them the avatar of his narcissistic image" (Lacan, *Écrits*, 685).

29. Quoted in Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 43.

30. Lacan, *Séminaire IV*, 194.

31. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. Douglas Brick (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 37. Samuel Weber and Jacob Rogozinski express similar concerns: Weber sees the symbolic as but "a lure of the Imaginary, the discursive continuation of the ambivalent strategy of narcissism," and Rogozinski wonders "why we do not stop identifying ourselves with these scintillating figures that are projected on the screen of the phantasm or the scene of the Spectacle, as if they are projected on the wall at the bottom of a cave where we are held prisoner." Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 98; Jacob Rogozinski, *The Ego and the Flesh: An Introduction to Egoanalysis*, trans. Robert Vallier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 61.

32. Lacan, *Seminar I*, 174. He also asserts—misleadingly I think—"the earliest dissonance between the ego and being . . . to be the fundamental note that resounds in the whole harmonic scale across the phases of psychical history" (Lacan, *Écrits*, 152–53).

33. Lacan, *Séminaire IV*, 193.

34. Lacan, *Écrits*, 697.

35. In its baldest formulation: "a theory of human development in which a child's relationship to a mirror is held to be more significant than its relationship to its parents is inherently implausible" (Webster, "The Cult of Lacan"). Borch-Jacobsen also accuses Lacan of eliminating the affective beneath the specular, which leads, in his view, to the "statue-fication" of the world: if only static, specular imagoes are at the root of ego development, the ego and its world can, in turn, only be static, rigidified entities (Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan*, 59). Rogozinski similarly asserts that the neglect of the affective makes "the Lacanian body... always immobile, frozen, and petrified as if under a *death sentence*" (Rogozinski, *The Ego and the Flesh*, 57).

36. Lacan, *Séminaire IV*, 185.

37. Ibid., 192.

38. Ibid., 195.

39. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 67.

40. Lacan, *Écrits*, 247.

41. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 68.

42. In an early article, "Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual" (1938), Lacan himself sees both positive and negative sublimations of this bond. Jacques Lacan, "Les complexes familiaux dans la formation de l'individu," in *Autres Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 35–36. As Borch-Jacobsen has noted, this article is remarkable, in general, for the way in which it very clearly describes an affective, bodily connection to the mother that both precedes and conditions specular identification (Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan*, 66–71). Although I disagree with Borch-Jacobsen that Lacan *eliminates* the affective in his later work, I agree that Lacan would never theorize the affective in the same manner.

43. Lacan, *Seminar II,* 107–8.

44. Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 53–54.

45. Lacan, *Seminar II,* 107. About this, at least, he is correct: one *shouldn't* give credit to Freud for imposing an alien theory upon his own.

46. See Paul Denis, "Emprise et théorie des pulsions," *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* 56, no. 5 (1992): 1337.

47. What's worse, he does so with a clean conscience: as he fathomed himself to be rescuing Freudian drive theory from a bad biologism, he felt free to impose. See Elizabeth Roudinesco, *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925–1985,* trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 146.

48. Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 51. Weber connects Lacan's mirror stage with the problem of mastery as it is discussed in the *Fort-Da* game of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* but follows Lacan in seeing more aggressivity than mastery: "Active control, revenge, rivalry, and the desire to 'make themselves master of the situation' dominates Freud's conjectures as to the impulses behind the playing of children" (Weber, *The Legend of Freud*, 95–96).

49. Lacan, *Séminaire IV*, 185, 169.

50. Lacan, *Écrits*, 574.

51. To review: Loewald follows Karen Horney in postulating a "dread of the vulva," but we need not go there to affirm something like a "dread of union." As the infant grows increasingly independent, and especially as fantasied mastery grows exponentially in comparison to actual mastery, the parent's once helpful interventions come to be seen as impositions, arbitrary and threatening limitations on freedom and desire. This perceived impingement on autonomy is what I have in mind when I speak of "engulfment" here.

52. See Roger Dorey, "The Relationship of Mastery," trans. Philip Slotkin, *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 13 (1986): 326 and 329.

53. In theorizing this "mechanism of defense," wherein the infant "assimilates" or "identifies" itself with the "dreaded external object," Freud explicitly invokes passages from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where her father describes the transformation of the passive reception of a threat into an active mastery over it. Anna Freud, *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, trans. Cecil Baines (London: Karnac, 1993), 110.

54. If this connection holds, then perhaps a better explanation of the overcoming of aggressivity can be tendered: if aggressivity has its energetic source in the urge to union, then the sublimation of the urge to union would entail a decrease in aggressivity. The "dream of absolute self-adequacy" would thus be abandoned for "an original being-at-a-loss" only when narcissistic aggressivity dries up at its instinctual source (Boothby, *Death and Desire*, 149). In other words, a drive for complete independence loses its motivating force without a drive for complete dependence.

55. In this view, it is not that all of the "statue-fied" features of Lacan's world are products of identification with a fixed image, but rather that the infant comes to see the world in petrified form, and perhaps even comes to emphasize static visual representation over dynamic affective interaction in the first place, as a result of an aggressive overbuilding of psychic structure. In short, *alienation follows from aggressivity and not vice versa.*

56. With Greenberg and Mitchell's claim that "*drives, for Klein, are relationships*" in mind, one might legitimately wonder if Klein belongs in this category. Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in Psychoanalytic Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 146. This question deserves more space than I have here, but briefly: although Klein counters Freud in claiming that drives "contain objects as a constitutive part of their nature," she does not explain why aggressivity seems invariably to be one of the two predominant "relational passions" (alongside love), and thus gives the impression that we simply *are* aggressive, even if that aggressivity is always elicited by and directed toward others. That being said, I imagine the Kleinian framework could easily incorporate the basic claim of this chapter: namely, that aggressivity is not an inborn *response* to objects but rather that there is something in the structure of the object-relation that necessarily gives rise to aggressivity.

57. See Jeremy Elkins, "Motility, Aggression, and the Bodily I: An Interpretation of Winnicott," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (2015): 943–73.

58. As Eli Zaretsky represents his argument, Reich thought "sexual repression turned a neutral drive toward mastery into aggression." Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 224.

59. See W. R. Bion, *Learning from Experience* (London: Tavistock, 1962), chapter 12.

60. "The intersubjective view maintains that the individual grows in and through the relationship to other subjects. Most important, this perspective observes that the other whom the self meets is also a self, a subject in his or her own right. It assumes that we are able and need to recognize that other subject as different and yet alike, as an other who is capable of sharing similar mental experience. Thus the idea of intersubjectivity reorients the conception of the psychic world from a subject's relations to its object toward a subject meeting another subject." Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), 19–20.

61. Ibid., 22.

62. Ibid., 33.

63. Ibid., 32 (my emphasis).

64. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 114. According to Stephen Mitchell, "in Benjamin's particular vision of intersubjectivity, minds tend toward an autonomous omnipotence in which other minds (and bodies) are treated as objects rather than as subjects in their own right." Stephen A. Mitchell, "Juggling Paradoxes: Commentary on the Work of Jessica Benjamin," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (2000): 261.

65. Jessica Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects: Essays on Recognition and Sexual Difference* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 88.

66. Ibid., 89.

67. Ibid.

68. Benjamin discusses this kind of identification but does not attribute to it the same developmental importance: "The child may switch places with the mother, from active to passive. The omnipotence once attributed to the 'good' all-giving mother now resides instead in the child" (ibid., 38).

69. Mitchell, "Juggling Paradoxes," 261; Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love*, 55.

70. Ibid., 67. See also Benjamin, *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, 191. Responding to Stephen Mitchell's criticism of her use of Freudian drive theory, Benjamin has since recognized that she "could have entirely dispensed with Freud in developing [the] thesis that the loss of intersubjective tension is like death"; see Mitchell, "Juggling Paradoxes," 263 and Jessica Benjamin, "Response to Commentaries by Mitchell and by Butler," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 1, no. 3 (2000): 295.

71. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966), 14:91.

72. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hokpins University Press, 1977), 148.

73. Ibid., 18.

74. Ibid., 180.

75. Ibid., 214.

76. Girard presents the "double bind" of the human being as follows: "Man cannot respond to that universal human injunction, 'Imitate me!' without almost immediately encountering an inexplicable counterorder: 'Don't imitate me!' (which really means, 'Do not appropriate my object')" (ibid., 147). According to the theory of aggressivity offered here, by contrast, imitation is the motor not only of the differentiation of I and other but also of the genesis of an external reality in which objects can be desired. If there is a "double bind" of imitation, it is that it is carried out in relation to an other that is both "other" and *other* as a result of projection.

77. Ibid., 176.

78. Ibid.

79. Girard does, of course, think the Oedipus complex lacks sufficient explanatory power: in his view, it is simply "not functional. One does not really know why it should go on generating substitute triangles." René Girard, "Superman in the Underground: Strategies of Madness-Nietzsche, Wagner, and Dostoevsky," *MLN* 91, no. 6 (December 1976): 1168. Whether we believe that our earliest relationships are unconsciously internalized, as relationalists do, or that drives are both formed in and survive those relationships, as I believe drive theorists ought to, a simple response is easily furnished.

80. René Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World,* trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 155, 157.

81. Ibid., 219 and 215.

82. Ibid., 217.

83. John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1990), 393–94.

84. This essentially theological point is made explicitly so by John Milbank, who, in his own account of the vicissitudes of despair (liberalism, positivism, sociology, postmodernism), offers us a simple choice: the peace of Christianity or the violence of everything else. Against Girard and Milbank, we should see the choice between violence and peace as itself part of the Christian *mythos*. The "either" here is determined by the "or."

85. To be clear, Girard thinks something like the Oedipus complex does indeed play out in childhood, but only because the parents are the content to the model of desire's form; as Mark Anspach explains, "Girard's imitating Oedipus is liable to find himself caught in the same triangle as Freud's desiring Oedipus." Mark R. Anspach, "Editor's Introduction: Imitating Oedipus," in René Girard, *Oedipus Unbound: Selected Writings on Rivalry and Desire*, ed. Mark R. Anspach (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), xxxvi.

86. Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 89.

87. Bailly, *Lacan*, 87.

88. Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading* Écrits *Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 137.

89. The symbolic might be said to find more equanimous expression for contradiction in the real through what Adrian Johnston calls the "transubstantiation of *das Ding* into *die Sache*." Adrian Johnston, *Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 193.

90. Rogozinski, *The Ego and the Flesh*, 236.

91. In his most fully formed articulation of his understanding of aggression, a dense little piece called "The Use of an Object," Winnicott argues that destruction is necessary to the creation of external reality. It is not, he contends (in much the same manner as Loewald), that the infant enters an already existent reality and becomes aggressive in butting up against it, but that external reality emerges in tandem with a mature "object user." However, whereas Loewald thinks of emergence from the primordial density in terms of a process of coping and mastery, Winnicott, like Lacan, emphasizes the need for destruction: "it is the destructive drive that creates the quality of externality." D. W. Winnicott, "The Use of an Object," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 50 (1969): 715.

92. Without, of course, recognizing the *source* of its negative projection.

93. Wilfred Bion, "Attacks on Linking," in *Melanie Klein Today: Developments in Theory and Practice*, ed. Elizabeth Bott Spillius, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1988), 1:96–97.

94. Bion, *Learning from Experience,* chapter 12.

95. To my knowledge, the phrase comes from Žižek, though the title of Lacan's nineteenth seminar is " . . . ou pire." Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (London: Routledge, 2013), 88.

96. Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 106. Both *Bewältigung* and *Gewalt* harken back to the Indo-German root *val* meaning "to be strong."

4. The Psyche in Late Capitalism I

1. Freud himself makes the connection between money and feces in "Character and Anal Erotism." Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1966), 9:173. See also Sándor Ferenczi's "The Ontogenesis of the Interest in Money," in *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis* (London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1952) and Otto Fenichel, "The Drive to Amass Wealth," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 7 (1938): 69–95.

2. As Adam Phillips argues in "Adam Phillips on money," YouTube video, 44:35, February 7, 2013, posted by "E.W.R. Many," https://youtu.be/K8wGZt-4ASg.

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality Among Men," in *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings*, ed.

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