

Subject Formation and the Dual Authority of Signification
in Melanie Klein and Julia Kristeva

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Abstract

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Is there an alternative to the dominant Western model of atomized egoic subjectivity? If there is, is it possible to *ontologically* (re)ground this alternate model of subjectivity in a relational alterity? In this paper, I answer in the affirmative. I offer this possibility by considering, ontologically, an other-than-egoic conception of the subject of the socio-Symbolic domain, through Julia Kristeva's theory of dual signification (comprising both semiotic and Symbolic systems). This theory is found in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) and is deepened through her later work *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980). Through these—and the psychoanalytic and signifying theories that underpin them—I demonstrate how such an alternative is possible due to a shared originary (re)grounding negativity, which is to be understood as the differential precondition for both subject formation and signification. In so doing, I offer a provisional theory of social solidarity which has at its basis a critique of egoic subjectivity and bourgeois ideology found in discourses of the (Western) subject and its socio-Symbolic representation.

Such a critique is guided by the Freudian and Kleinian psychoanalytic model of subjectivity (comprising both conscious and unconscious systems), and in terms of signifying practice, by the Lacanian structuralist developments of psychoanalysis. I trace these threads in

and through Kristeva's theory of signification to foreground a conception of socio-Symbolic subjective representation that is not predicated upon an egoic identity, alone. This offers a novel way to think being-with as structurally fundamental and always already inscribed *in the very processes* of subject formation and signification. By showing how language and subject formation are predicated upon a dual signification and dyadic psychic-structure, respectively, I reveal how such structures—as *dual processes*—open up other ways of enframing the world. The concern for the o/Other reveals these as grounded in what I call the “anterior negativity” of the relation to the Other, thereby inscribing the subject into socio-Symbolic structures that are neither linearly determined nor exclusionary. Such negativity is therefore foundational of the position of social relationality I contend grants the possibility for a subjective-Symbolic theory of social solidarity, operative *from within* the very structures of representation.

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Even at the innermost heart of interiority, it is always irruption of the outside, exteriority shaking everything. The encounter pierces the world, pierces the self; and in this opening, everything that happens, not happening (coming about with the status of what has not arrived) is the reverse side that cannot be lived of what on the right side cannot be written: a double impossibility that by a supplementary act—a fraud, a kind of falsehood, also a madness—must be transformed in order to adapt it to living and writing “reality.”

—Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*

The way in which mortals, called out of the dif-ference into the dif-ference, speak on their own part, is: by responding. Mortal speech must first of all have listened to the command, in the form of which the stillness of the dif-ference calls world and things into the rift of its onefold simplicity.

—Martin Heidegger, *Language*

Contents

Introduction	1
I. Psychic Negativity and Symbolic Subject Formation in Freud and Lacan.....	5
II. Kleinian Object Relations and Phantasy.....	14
III. Dual Signification of Socio-Symbolic Representation in Julia Kristeva.....	23
Concluding Remarks.....	31
Bibliography.....	33
Endnotes	36

Introduction

This essay explores socio-Symbolic subject formation and signification through a shared concern with what I call the “anterior negativity” of differential production. This shared concern operates in the work of Julia Kristeva and Melanie Klein. Such a concern with this interaction will offer a provisional theory of solidarity, as set out in a Kristevan-Kleinian model of subjectivity and signification. Indeed, my main contention is that social solidarity is inherent ontologically, to the very structures of subject formation and signification. This is first, because the human subject is a subject of language, and so such a formation then ought to be taken through the process of signification. While the subject has to carry a certain representational value (i.e., that the “self” of individuation and enunciation be understood and carry a sense of what-ness in the socio-Symbolic domain), I thus second, will show that this value is not predicated upon a rigid egoic identity alone, nor is it wholly determined by the phallic law of signifying mastery. This means that these ontological structures are open to *other* ways of enframing the world, and that such a mode of differing inheres in the very modality by which the subject and signification come to represent.

If such structures are more fundamentally open to change, this is because from the start they are not merely predicated upon an egoic psychic structure or an exclusionary Symbolic system. In turn, this is because such structures are *malleable* and *changeable* due to an originary grounding negativity, which is an anterior occurrence and yet in no way pre-exists. In terms of subject formation, this is demonstrated in the Kleinian model of psychic development, whereby subjectivity is grounded in pre-Oedipal and Oedipal object relations, recovering the Freudian thesis of negativity—understood as the death instinct—as the basis for psychic life. In terms of

signification, the Kristevan dual authority of signification refers to semiotic and Symbolic systems in language, where the semiotic motility is the force of “anterior negativity” that breaches the Symbolic authority of the signifying system. This theory of signification is primarily found through Kristeva’s *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) and is deepened through her later work *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980). By negativity, I mean the *differential force* of negativity (distinct from negation) which functions as an anterior structure for ontic-ontological production (of signification, and of subject formation).¹

This differing process of back and forth, as an oscillation, emerges through and between ontological and ontic temporality in signifying practices. To be sure, ontological time is the time of Being *qua* Being (as infinite, distinct from ontic *existential* time) and semiotic time is the time of (temporally finite) beings. These two modalities of temporalization are not merely compossible. Their friction generates a temporal tension between the dual processes of representation. Because such processes are predicated upon dual systems of representation—and so the *ἀρχή* emerges *between and through two co-constitutive referents*—it thus demonstrates the insufficiency of a grounding ipseity or phallic Symbolic function.² Such a temporal *tension* thusly isolates the impossibility of locating an *ἀρχή* generative of the origin of the subject, which therefore rightly directs the focus toward the *dual processes* of subject formation and signification, which we find in a Kristevan-Kleinian model.

In unpacking this, the remainder of this paper will consider the problematic which includes the subject (consisting of conscious and unconscious processes) and signification (here referring to the semiotic and Symbolic systems). These dual processes are split by the so-called inner world (that of psychic life) and outer world (that of representation). This thesis will take these moments and treat them in the manner below, so as to grasp—however provisionally—the

theory of social solidarity I contend we can find through them. While this task may at first glance seem to involve logics and spheres of focus that seem incommensurable—and this preliminary remark is not going to resolve that—I will simply give the basic form of the thesis so that it can be readily understood. These logics, as I will demonstrate, in fact overlap and interweave in fundamental ways that underscore my main argument, which is that a theory of social solidarity is inherent ontologically into the structures of subject formation and signification because of a shared grounding in a differential “anterior negativity.”

In the first section, I present the Freudian thesis of the death instinct as originary psychic negativity. Both Klein and Kristeva posit the Freudian negativity as the basis for signifying processes and subject formation. The Freudian problematic will be retrieved through the frame of the twentieth century (post-)structuralist French tradition, in particular, through the (middle period) of Jacques Lacan.³ The Lacanian developments clarify the Freudian position by giving Symbolic function to the unconscious. This will later form a key part of Kristeva’s theory of dual signification. Before I can reach Kristeva’s theory, however, I must first give an overview of the Freudian thesis. This will give the methodological, definitional groundwork to subsequently develop my contention that by taking seriously the negativity problematic in subject formation and signification there emerges a way to conceptualize—ontologically—a provisional theory of social solidarity.

The second section takes up the problematic of Freudian negativity through a more radical formulation, found in the work of Melanie Klein. The Freudian concept of negativity is foundational in the Kleinian school, which posits the concept as the basis for signifying power and subjectivity in object relations. It thus demonstrates the psychic, structural, developmental, and linguistic relevance of the negativity of the telic rupture originally posited by Freud. Klein

positions the death instinct at the developmental basis of pre-Oedipal and Oedipal life—without which reparative sublation is unthinkable. In this way negativity gives the grounds for the (dyadic) structure of the psyche. The Kleinian psychic structure is dyadic because the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal object relations are always already oriented toward the world, and its (part/whole) objects. This therefore demonstrates the crucial position of relationality, giving the ethico-political value in socio-Symbolic subject formation.

By way of conclusion, the final section will synthesize the results from the above and offer the possibility for a social theory of solidarity, by taking seriously the “social as a *signifying space*” (Kristeva 1984 49). This signifying process, however, must always demonstrate the *dual* authority of signification (*including* the semiotic). This duality without a dualism allows the socio-Symbolic to be capable of change, re-articulation, and novel ways of enframing the world. Through this novel consideration of subjective and signifying relationality, *ontologically*, I am able to demonstrate a theory of solidarity that offers a way to think being-with as *structurally fundamental* and always already inscribed in and through the structures by which language and subjectivity represent. To be sure, the *ontological* concern of Kristeva’s recovery of the negativity problematic in theories of subject formation and signification has not yet been fully appreciated in recent scholarship.⁴ It is for this reason that I turn my attention toward it. I hope that by tracing the (middle period) Lacanian (and so therefore by implication, Heideggerian) and Freudian roots to which such an ontological structure in Kristeva’s work is indebted, I can retrieve it from solely ontic concerns of the speaking-subject at the level of the atomized egoic subject, merely. Thus, ontologically, such a theory offers an other-than-egoic conception of the subject. Therefore, her relationship to o/Others in and through the very means of representability and relationality is one of relational alterity.

I. Psychic Negativity and Symbolic Subject Formation in Freud and Lacan

In this section I reveal insight into the Freudian concept of the death instinct as anterior psychic negativity. As is characteristic of Freud's later work, such a concept is operative through the interest of self-preservation. In this period Freud posits a dual theory of instincts: those of life and death. The negativity that Freud assigns to the death instinct has an 'impossible' origin: we only know that it functions as a *response* to trauma through the dual theory of the instincts of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. It is therefore neither a biological concept nor the effect of a prior causal sequence. Rather, the so-called trauma occurs at the moment of splitting (*Spaltung*) between self and Other in the process of psychic constitution—between the inner (*Innenwelt*) and outer (*Umwelt*) worlds. It is therefore a *structural psychic condition* and so, paradoxically, *is what gives the psyche the very possibility of persisting*. By grappling with the opacities in the Freudian schema and by approaching the problematic by way of its *structural* relevance, I will demonstrate how anterior negativity in the psychoanalytic model, originally posited by Freud establishes the constitutive ontological grounds for socio-Symbolic subject formation and the relational alterity found within the psychic structure in its relation to the outer world.

I proceed with an exegetical reading of Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," looking back from the Lacanian structuralist developments characteristic of Lacan's middle period. This period clearly foregrounds the Heideggerian problematic of language and subject formation on *ontological grounds*, taken through structural linguistics. This Lacanian development will secure the foundations for my later insights into Symbolic articulation and solidarity as specific derivations of the negativity problematic understood through the psychoanalytic psychic structure and its representation in signification.

I.I. Freud's Death Instinct—The Telic *Spaltung*

Historically, the question concerning anterior negativity in the psychoanalytic tradition finds its origin in the Freudian concept of the death instinct.⁵ Freud's metapsychological account in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" offers the death instinct as the irrepressible force of psychic negativity that *gives limits to* the psychic structure (at the moment of encountering the outer world of representation), and yet *crucially fails* to contain it. This failure produces an irresolvable tension; such tension can be mapped on to the antipodal schema of pleasure-unpleasure, which constitutes the very basic processes of psychic life, demonstrated in the thematic foci operative through the dual theory of the instincts in binding (i.e., what grounds the inner life of the mind in thetic intentionality) and (unbound) repetition.⁶

As the analytic observation of repetition-compulsion evinces (through the discovery of this negative instinct), there is no originary "trauma" to identify as an *ἀρχή*, as there is always already a psychic inscription for the trauma to *return* to, insofar as the death instinct is the limiting (telic) force of the psychic structure. This irresolvable origin, as the principle of anterior futurity to the inscriptive site—as the site of so-called originary trauma—emerges at the moment of ontologically distinguishing between subject/Other.⁷ Thus, the trauma of the originary severance (between subject and object, "self" and "other") propels the subject through life, remaining an ever-incomplete (re)search. Such a temporal consideration of repetition and propulsion transforms the problematic of anterior negativity into an ontological recovery of the possibility of absence and void, presence and withdrawal, operative at the psychic bounds. This dually oriented recovery contains and yet, crucially fails to master, what will become the excess of repressive psychic force.

As such, the death instinct repeats the (return of) irrepressible psychic trauma. It is helpful to recall that for Freud repetition is tied with a constitutive trauma. Trauma may be defined as “any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield [of the interior]” (Freud 1961 33). Trauma thus functions as a “breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli” which thus suspends the function and mastery of the pleasure principle (1961 33). The pleasure principle, then, no longer holds its position of primacy. For, if the *death instinct is a response* to breaching stimuli, then paradoxically it *is what gives the psyche the very possibility of persisting*. In fact, it invests efforts to reduce psychic tension through the dual function of release and inertial self-preservation in attempts to lower tensions in and of the psychic system in the process of somatization. Indeed, the “dominating tendency of mental life [...] is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli” (1961 67). Paradoxically, however, the death instinct also demonstrates an *increase* in psychic tension encountered in the repetitions of traumatic stimuli. Thus, the death instinct understood as a response to trauma generates an *increase* in psychic tension, establishing the link between (unbound) repetition in traumatic neuroses.

As *Thanatos*, the death instinct interrupts the posited sense of harmonious freely flowing energetics of the pleasure principle in and of psychic life. Thus, it *breaches* the self-preservatory mechanism of the pleasure principle, but this is emphatically neither an outward desire for aggression (though it may be the *basis* for aggressivity), nor a mortuary *desire-for-death*. Although the death instinct is coupled with the libidinous energetics governed by *Eros*,⁸ ontologically, and crucial to my overall argument, the death instinct functions as the non-Being (*qua* negativity) out of and through which being manifests, which thus allows the being to temporally (in the dyadic finite-infinite model) persist in itself. Such negativity, as Kristeva

demonstrates, “constitutes the logical impetus beneath the thesis of negation and that of the negation of negation, but is identical to neither since it is, instead, *the logical functioning of the movement that produces the theses*” (Kristeva 1984 109). It is “the liquefying and dissolving agent that does not destroy but rather reactivates new organizations and, in that sense, affirms” (1984 109). This “reactivating” organizational negativity is indeed a necessary structural condition of and for the psyche and its relation to the outer world, and to the alterity of the o/Other.

Structurally, the psyche has within it the capacity for primary processes (i.e., the unbound unconscious, driven by the “pleasure principle”) and secondary processes (i.e.,thetic intentionality, bound in the conscious processes of normal waking life, governed by the “reality principle”) which constitute the life of the mind, mediated in and through the split (*Spaltung*) between inner and outer worlds. This split demonstrates—in terms of subject-formation—an *irrecuperable tension*, as it sets up a barrier as a protective (as well as projective) shield, which serves the function of *unifying* the psyche. Such a split, Freud maintains, as the basis of psychic life, carries a wound—an originary trauma—which is understood as the *differentiation* between subject/Other which lies always already before the posited subject.⁹

To be sure, initially the pleasure principle—as the force of *Eros*, as libido—seeks “to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus—in short, to bind together” (Freud 1940 148). What this binding process in mental cathexis—taking place between primary and secondary processes—demonstrates is the pleasure principle’s primary aim to lower and maintain (indeed, *master*) the excitatory incursions upon the mental apparatus. Thus, the primacy of a “beyond” in psychic life has to take place *prior* to the reality principle in binding, and as such, “is a preparatory act which introduces and assures the dominance of the pleasure principle”

through the ego exerting mastery. However, in a dialectical turn, Freud claims “the pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts” (Freud 1961 77).

For the pleasure principle to function as a governing force, the reality principle would have to suspend the pleasure principle in order to serve an undetermined futural point where the pleasure being sought may be more appropriate. There is thus a deferred (dual and indeed temporal) nature to pleasure, for such pleasure cannot simply function as unbridled excess in the present: it must be withheld and sustained for future release so that the being can persevere in itself. This, however, cannot go on *ad infinitum* because beings are temporal, hence the death instinct *qua* negativity gains primacy. The death instinct is thus the telic force that ruptures the psychic system originally posited to be governed by pleasure and kept under control by a principle of constancy.

Controversially, Freud evinces it is “the most universal endeavour of all living substance—namely to return to the quiescence of the inorganic world” that impels psychic life onward—albeit through self-preservatory defenses and self-destructive and outwardly directed aggressive detours (Freud 1961 71). Such a formulation of a desire to return (*pour la recherché*)—as a repetition—would appear to have at its basis, in this formulation, a desire for regression. Surely the sense of repetition could not be solely constituted by regression—or else, why is it that there is anything at all?

Above we established dual signification in Freud. This duality forms the basis of the Lacanian suggestion that there *is indeed no (natural) subject*, but *only the signifying function* of the unconscious, as the subject, and also desire. To anticipate, the shift to the *signifying process*—to use Kristeva’s term—of the subject problematizes the sense of a so-called natural “subject” insofar as the subject of the unconscious is also therefore a desire, a subject of

language. This is a moment on which Kristeva dwells. As she puts it, the process considers psychic negativity as “separate from the body proper and, *at the very moment of separation*, fixes it in place as absent, as a sign [...] as signifiable (which is to say, *already taken on as an object within the signifying system and as subordinate to the subject who posits it through the sign*)” (Kristeva 1984 123). From this vantage point, my paper then takes its orientation out of Kristevan process philosophy, which is indebted to Lacan.

I.II. Negativity Restructured: The Lacanian Symbolic

In her late work *Melanie Klein* (2001) Kristeva reiterates how Lacan’s “epistemological lucidity, which sets forth his views on the role of the symbolic in constructing the subject, emphasizes language and verbalization. Not only is it speech that, particularly in psychoanalysis, structures the subject...” (Kristeva 2001 174). Speech, and the structure of it, thereby masters the subject of the unconscious in the Lacanian account: because of “the simple fact that language, prior to signifying something, signifies to someone” (Lacan 2006 83); and because “the signifier alone guarantees the theoretical coherence” of the subject (Lacan 2006 414). Here, Lacan’s now-famous catchphrase that the “unconscious is structured like a language” evinces that the subject is always split by—and indeed preceded by and therefore structured by—language, which is understood as the Symbolic, insofar as the subject is one who speaks (Lacan 1998 203). Insofar as it is barred (barred \$), the signifier (and subject) is a subject who also speaks—and thus the subject is a subject of language. In this, the sense of communicability, ontologically speaking, binds the *meaning* of the *word* “with” the *subject* of enunciation. Lacan finds this binding in the *word*, i.e., the signifier.¹⁰ Thus, the negativity—as that which binds and also as the emptiness of

the thing (*das Ding*)—is in the *word*. Thus, as is the case in the Freudian tradition, the *Thing* as the archaic repressed maternal figures sense and meaning-making *through the binding force of speech itself*.¹¹ The maternal object as more originary has to, thereby, be ‘repressed’ in order to move into the Symbolic social structure made up of developed (separate) individual subjects. The sense, however, of the wholeness (of naturalization and essentializing possibilities) of the subject who signifies *as whole* is but an *imaginary* construction, an idea. Lacan therefore makes it clear that “there’s absolutely no reason why we [psychoanalysts] should make ourselves the guarantors of the bourgeois dream” (Lacan 1997 7). Ontologically, therefore, such Symbolic efforts to designate a whatness (naturalization) of “self” are at origin grounded in a lack.

The passage of coming-into-being is emergent from the lack at the root of Being because, as metonymic, the signifying chain never closes. As such, the subject communicates—through ontological assumption—a discursive system in the *Innenwelt* that is *necessarily* infinite and incomplete. Thus, the processual coming-into-being always and only emerges in relation to, and indeed through, the Other of language, from an anterior structure of negativity.¹² Thus, the Symbolic serves as the rupturing force of the subject, which, as “the death instinct [...] is constitutive of the position of the human subject” (Lacan 1988 172). Thus, the barred subject—cut (i.e., *separated* but not dead) by the organizing structure of the phallic Signifier—demonstrates the death instinct as a grounding principle, as the lack/want of being (*manque à être*) which, as an ontological principle, is only capable of articulation through its Symbolic formation. Because such a phallic signifier for Lacan understands recursivity to be an ordering power (e.g., of intelligibility) that functions as a transcendental supplement for the Symbolic—as a divisive cut—it is not an arbitrary occurrence. This is because “the phallus is the privileged signifier” and so the barred subject is condemned to the very structure the Symbolic attempts to

articulate, but that the phallic symbol holds the master power over (Lacan 2006 692). Emilia Angelova rightly demonstrates that this structuring is an overestimation of “the subject’s having been the slave of language, which is to say, overestimating the *primacy of the symbol*” (Angelova 2020 549, my emphasis). Indeed, the Symbolic must be “anchored in an object that is designated as real, a process rooted in a desire for the desire of the other—in a social other who initiates a symbolic order in linear time” (2020 550). The subject, therefore, only functions *in response to the object of the symbol*, i.e., is located in the signifying chain in causally determined linear, sequential time.

The Symbolic thus grounds the coming-into-being of the subject, paradoxically, in an originary negativity of the word, which therefore leaves a wounded subject, one constitutively *and circumstantially* so, put together by the means in which it comes to represent.¹³ This simply means that there is no *natural* subject. Such a formulation of the subject rather demonstrates how the subject is mastered *through the signifying structure* of language itself. Indeed, Lacan tells us that “*it is not the Law itself that bars the subject’s access to jouissance—it simply makes a barred subject out of an almost natural barrier [that is to say] pleasure as what binds incoherent life together, until another prohibition—this one being unchallengeable*” (Lacan 2006 821). Thus, the barred subject—rooted in lack—functions as the first bar (the signifier barring the subject of signification, which is the subject in and of the socio-Symbolic domain) and the second bar, too, i.e., ‘prohibition’ being the ‘unchallengeable’ reality of finitude, comprising the domain of finite human subjectivity. This is paramount because “the function of desire must remain in a fundamental relationship with death” (Lacan 1997 303). Thus, the Symbolic demonstrates not only the ordering principle of signification in subject formation, but also the originary negativity

out of and through which, a signifying practice emerges, in and through the structure of ontological time.

We can restate the above results on the signifying process. If “the subject depends on the signifier” (Lacan 1964 209), then the subject *depends on* engendering first and foremost, and this *demands*—for its intelligibility—a certain representability in the Borromean knotted process of recognition in and through language. Therefore, because the subject is preceded by the anterior structure of language, the structure poses a problem, which in turn *generates a question* toward the very articulability of subjectivity. The attempt is to articulate the inarticulable—which points to *language* as a cut—in turn demonstrates the (im-)possibility of so-called natural representation. This attempt is simultaneously also genetic (mimetic), toward grafting the phallic *signifier* as the locus for production in ontic-ontological difference.¹⁴ More strongly, if the cut precedes the posited subject, it thus “condemns the subject to appearing only in that division” in and between signification and Being. Our corollary is that a) the structure (of language) therefore always remains insufficient; and b) this is because structure is premised on signification which is necessarily bound with desire for (recognition from) the Other, as the Other of language (Lacan 1998 210). I will now show how an alternative concern for the subject and the Other *can exist in excess of the Symbolic*, and that this excess takes the form of a concern for the o/Other that is guided by *the imaginary*.

II. Kleinian Object-Relations and Phantasy

The Kleinian retrieval of Freudian negativity underscores the connection between self/Other, but is offered through the theory of mother-infant development in object relations. Crucially, the negative foundation of a Kleinian psycho-political subject formation—against the dominant model of egoic subjectivity—has what I want to call “being-with” always already structurally inscribed in its dyadic formation.¹⁵ Such psychic structure is dyadic in the first place because the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal object relations are always already oriented toward the world and its (part/whole) objects; derivatively, it therefore demonstrates the crucial position of “relationality” which extends *beyond* socially demarcated boundaries (naturalized identities such as those privileged in repressive bourgeois models of subject formation).¹⁶ There are, I must stress, direct socio-political consequences to this, which are emergent from and inherent to the anterior-internal negativity (as differentiation) which is in fact always already operative within the socio-Symbolic structure.

For Klein, Freudian negativity *transforms* into (moral) reparation, through creative acts of phantasy in the imaginary. This is her revision of the Freudian developmental narrative. Here, then, I wish to recall the aim of this paper, which is to ultimately deepen and radicalize the consequences of an “anterior negativity” to demonstrate a theory of radical solidarity.¹⁷ This, as I argue, has to take place at the basis of how we understand subjectivity and signification as dual processes. Through the Kleinian formulation I demonstrate how the rupture of the death instinct as “anterior negativity” has the *generative* function of *relationality* which—temporally, ontologically—thereby inscribes the psyche in socio-Symbolic systems (i.e., the world with others) not predicated on an Oedipal function alone.

For Klein, this sense of relatedness *to* a world (and its “whole” objects *viz.* the imaginary) finds its primary figuration in the subject’s early object relations. Crucially, the Kleinian model of subject formation posits a subject not condemned to the signifying structure. Rather, at its basis is the observation that every sense of coming into the (historical) socio-symbolic has at its foundation the *capacity* for assimilating love and hatred in the process of relationality in the meaningful connection to the world, which is what then gives sense and representation in language in the Oedipal stage of life. This movement takes place between two developmental “positions”: the schizoid-paranoid and the depressive position. Klein’s construction of *phantasy* in the depressive position occurs at around six months of infancy in so-called “normal” development. As Hanna Segal puts it, these positions are “a specific configuration of object relations, anxieties and defences which persist throughout life” (Segal 1988 ix). This notion of “positions” allows us to carefully consider the sense of flexibility of the developmental process. By flexibility, I mean that Klein’s “positions” are plastic and malleable. I will now turn to the pre-Oedipal phase of the “Schizoid-Paranoid” position, and then to the “Depressive” position to demonstrate the relationality at the basis of language and psychological development.

II.I. On the “Schizoid-Paranoid” Position and Splitting

The “schizoid-paranoid” developmental position is characterized by persecutory anxiety in the pre-Oedipal stage of life. Understood through various internal and external threats, the infant (from birth until the six-month marker of life) encounters feelings of frustration with the absence of the nourishing breast, which has *yet to be understood* as a whole object: “mother.” Thus, it is not the mother-as-object to which the infant refers, only the partial object. Kristeva, on this

precise point, remarks that “we find, sooner (chronologically and logically speaking), if not objects at least pre-objects, poles of attraction of a demand for air, food, and motion? Do we not also find, in the very process that constitutes the mother as other, a series of semi-objects that stake out the transition from a state of indifferenciation to one of discretion (subject/object)?” (Kristeva 1982 32). To recast this observation in the affirmative, there exists, therefore, *prior to signification* and prior to whole-object relations, the partial-object of the maternal breast, which is simply split between good or bad (‘it is *good* when it feeds me, but when it is gone it is *bad*’).¹⁸ Because this precarious positionality occurs developmentally prior to (although returns to this position are in fact possible, as in for instance psychosis) a more organized egoic subject/object distinction, its affirmation allows the “schizoid-paranoid” position to give the grounds for symbol-formation and therefore communicability. Such a dynamic reveals that from the earliest stages of infancy—which crucially take place *before* the integration of the ego—the infant is capable of constructing the basis for introjective and projective functions in integration (of the partial object) and of primordial evaluations of “good” and “bad” values. Kristeva’s recovery of this pre-Oedipal “binary logic” in abjection will offer its semiotic correlate in linguistics as “a primal mapping of the body” which, “while being the precondition of language, it is dependent upon meaning, but in a way that is not that of linguistic signs nor of the symbolic order they found” (Kristeva 1982 72).

Klein’s “Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States” (1935) evinces that

the baby projects its own aggression on to these objects that it feels them to be ‘bad’ and not only in that they frustrate its desires: the child conceives of them as actually

dangerous – persecutors who it fears will devour it, scoop out the inside of its body, cut it to pieces, poison it [...] These imagos, which are a phantastically distorted picture of the real objects upon which they are based, become installed not only in the outside world but, by the process of incorporation, also within the ego (Klein 1975 262, my emphasis).

As such, the schizoid-paranoid position takes as its mooring points in and to the world *partial* objects (i.e., the good or bad breast as standing for abundance or annihilation, respectively, but not yet the “mother” as a whole object). The child therefore has a directedness to the world from the outset, but it is fragmentary and disorganized, albeit still connected. As Kristeva notes, the infant is capable of “object relations” (with part objects) “before” the object relationship to the “total object” following the “depressive position.” “Repairing,” i.e., loving, speaking, and thinking then become possible” (Kristeva 2010 210).

This sense of relatedness, however, is crucially *dyadic* through the mother-child, marking a clear revision of the privileged Freudian—and indeed Lacanian—subject. Furthermore, as Jacqueline Rose notes, this dyadic formation functions “against the idyll of early fusion with the mother [...] Klein offers proximity *as something which devours*” (Rose 2011 63, my emphasis). Thus, the psychic correlate of the death instinct, manifesting as anxiety (i.e., the persecutory fear), is the annihilatory fear of the (early, undeveloped) ego, which, upon mastery of the anxiety (and successful integration of the ego), allows the subject to move into the “depressive position.”

Klein’s “Notes on some Schizoid Mechanisms” (1946) clearly demonstrates the role of splitting in the early development of the child:

I have often expressed my view that *object-relations exist from the beginning of life*, the first object being the mother's breast which to the child *becomes split into a good (gratifying) and bad (frustrating) breast*; this splitting results in a severance of love and hate. I have further suggested that the relation to the first object implies its introjection and projection, and thus from the beginning object-relations are moulded by an interaction between introjection and projection, between internal and external objects and situations. These processes participate in the building up of the ego and super-ego and *prepare the ground for the onset of the Oedipus complex in the second half of the first year* (Klein 1975 99).

Kleinian splitting posits that the role of phantasy (in the modes of introjection and projection) generates a sense of understanding language and sociability, and therefore carries with it a sense of relatedness to the world. The role of phantasy at the stage of the acquisition of language and ego-formation (from three months onward of the child's development) rearticulates the *severance* between these so-called binaries privileged in Oedipal discourses between origin and ground, object and ego, inner and outer, nature and culture by giving meaning to the *placeholder* of signification.¹⁹ During the depressive position, the ego is integrated as formed and distinct, and thus the child is capable of experiencing the other as a whole object, which drives the force of reparation: as Klein puts it, "not until the object is loved *as a whole* can its loss be felt as a whole" (Klein 1975 264). This is crucially because "the child at six months was capable of *experiencing* the loss not just of a part object like the breast but of a whole object" (Miller 2014 139). The depressive position therefore gives meaningful connection to world and others *as whole objects*, which thus becomes the source for reparation.

II.II. *Melancholia* and Klein's Depressive Position

Thus, the pre-Oedipal orientation of the “schizoid-paranoid” position is succeeded (in so-called normal development assuming the Symbolic) by the “depressive” position. The depressive position critically comes onto the developmental scene at the same time as the capacity for language and is characterized by the ability to integrate whole objects (i.e., the part-object breast is now understood as “mother”). This therefore demonstrates the possibility of the signifying act in the meaningful phantasmatic production—made possible due to the grounding negativity of the death instinct—in the reparative (protolinguistic) gesture.

Klein radically posits the negativity of the death instinct as a grounding concept in early dyadic mother-child relations. This psychic negativity in Kleinian object-relations theory demonstrates coming-into-being as emergent from anterior negativity, which posits—much like Lacan's account in the above section, though differing in crucial respects concerning the role of the imaginary—the death instinct at the basis of subject formation. Developmentally, the depressive (and reparative and linguistic) position for Klein, occurs around the same time as the Lacanian mirror stage.²⁰ As Kristeva notes in her work on Klein, Lacan “likened” Klein's “depressive position” to his own “mirror stage” in the sense that both concepts attest to “the characteristically imaginary nature of the function of the Ego in the subject. He also paid tribute to ‘Melanie Klein's genius’ in having ‘reconstructed’ the ‘depressive core’ that is ushered in by the death drive” (Kristeva 2001 228). Crucially the formation, or formulation, of sense through language in Klein's account is figured differently than the Lacanian Symbolic: in Klein's formulation, the Symbolic is linked through *phantasy* (in imagination) in the “depressive” position. Phantasy in the depressive position is therefore the central focus for sense and

reparation, and therefore a *relationality* that can ground social solidarity. For, as Angelova rightly demonstrates, “imagination enables sublimation, substitution, transference, and rehabilitates the singularity and infinity of the loving imaginary third, within language: it does with speech what cannot be done with violence, transforming loss into intrasymbolic gain” (Angelova 2020 556). Indeed, without phantasmatic life the *possibility* of signification is unthinkable.

As Rose makes clear, with Klein “we find something negative, unavailable for celebration or release” (Rose 2011 65). This is the “anterior negativity” of the death instinct which thus denotes a limit to the subject and the psyche in representation. This limit, however, for Klein, is *generative* of “reparation” *viz.* the process of sense and meaning making in socio-Symbolic inscription. Thus, “death for Klein was *meaning*” (Rose 2011 69). Indeed, experience allows the structure of subjectivity in the child to take form, *through phantasy*. Phantasy, in the Kleinian vocabulary, develops in the depressive position (which, to be sure, is not to be taken in the clinical sense of the term). This technical term in Kleinian theory attempts to articulate the sense of loss of the archaic maternal, which in turn, as a loss, grounds the relationship the infant has to the world and signification (indeed, it’s very sense of autonomous subjectivity). The depressive, melancholic position therefore involves efforts to renounce the loss of the object (the archaic mother, no longer split into partial objects) in order to move into the symbolic order of (social) life. Indeed, “the maternal semiotic is repressed in order to inaugurate social relations that take precedence over it and that are prerequisites for adult life” (Angelova 2020 546).

To be sure, imaginary phantasy emerges from the centrifugal negative force, found in Klein’s “depressive” position which gives way to reparation through phantasy. Thus, the melancholia characteristic of the “depressive” position—*through phantasmatic* life—gives

meaning in language and to the world—without which the possibility of signification is unthinkable. Indeed, as Angelova demonstrates:

Melancholy is an effort at separation, at releasing the hold on the maternal thing, *das Ding* (the archaic maternal) [...] the question is under what conditions the maternal thing becomes a word, insofar as it becomes word (*ein Wort*) [...] this condition cannot be the linguistic symbol: the maternal thing cannot be symbolized yet must be spoken. This conundrum drives melancholy [...] in melancholy, what cannot be symbolized or separated from, is an undead mother, buried alive, a matricide, or a phantasm of the buried mother within language [...] melancholy concerns a separation from a dreamlike disruption, *a dream (Traum) and trauma that is crucial to every symbolic meaning-making, yet threatens to breach that very order of meaning-making, and even linear time, since this traumatism cannot be located in any sort of designatable meaning or symbolic law* (Angelova 2020 554, my emphasis).

To be sure, such subject formations come through language—in the sense that they pass through the Symbolic—but the Symbolic functions for Klein (notably in a critically different way to the Lacanian schema) because of *the inseparability of phantasy from the development of the depressive position*. As Kristeva makes clear, in that Lacan does distinguish “between the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic,” he does so “precisely so they can be *joined together*, [which] thus represents a considerable step forward” (Kristeva 2001 174, my emphasis and addition). Ultimately though, in order to arrive at the sense of concern for the o/Other as always already inscribed as the unconditioned future anterior of an ever diachronous semiotic structure,

a more radical sense of dyadic subjectivity will have to be foregrounded than the Lacanian formulation of mimesis and the mirror-stage.²¹ Because such a dyadic formation of individuation *temporally* figures the production of sense (via the phantasmatic life of the imaginary in the depressive position) then the rupturing force of the death instinct functions through its inscription in the unconditioned future-anterior of the subject.

III. Dual Signification of Socio-Symbolic Representation in Julia Kristeva

To recapitulate: in the above sections, I have sought to articulate the interactive dimension between signification and subject formation, emphasizing the differential structure of “anterior negativity.” First, beginning in the Freudian formulation, the death instinct as negativity gives the originary sense of the telic rupture necessary for the preservation of psychic life (and, indeed, for ontologically distinguishing between subject/Other). Second, we were able to ontologically expand the theory of psychic life *through language*, found in the Lacanian introduction of the Symbolic. Such Lacanian developments of the Symbolic importantly demonstrate the possibility of a linguistic function of the unconscious in the speaking subject, however, they ended up offering a rather limited view of the imaginary in psychic life, whereby the Symbolic asserts precedence by foregrounding the (egoic) subject placed under mastery of the object of the phallic signifier. Third, in the Kleinian development, the function of anterior negativity gave a more radical sense of meaningful (partial/whole) object relationality, and thus to the world and the o/Other through pre-Oedipal and Oedipal developments.

In the section which follows, I show how Kristeva’s recovery of both the Lacanian Symbolic and Kleinian Imaginary underscores the “anterior negativity” at the heart of signifying practise and subject formation but expands such processes through the diachronous temporality of the semiotic, thusly expanding—ontologically and politically (in the sense of politics)—the Symbolic to the social-semiotic body. This sense of negativity yields—through the logic of semiotic repetition as a breaching rupture—Symbolic representation of the subject (of language) as creatively figured; and it so becomes demonstrative of an ethical concern for the alterity of the Other. This latter is shown to be precariously yet *ontologically* inscribed in the very processes by

which such representation can take place, which are not merely Symbolic alone but depend on semiotic support. Therefore, Kristeva's revision of Lacanian signifying practice (which, to recall, condemns the subject to the order of the Symbolic) offers an expanded "theory of signification based on the subject, his formation, and his corporeal, linguistic, and social dialectic" (Kristeva 1984 15). She therefore ontologically and politically expands the Lacanian Symbolic *to the social* by offering the semiotic (as an "anterior negativity"). The sustaining force of the semiotic in the Symbolic is given through the precise temporal function of abjection, which is a logic of repetition driven by the phantasy of the repressed archaic maternal: *das Ding*. I first demonstrate the semiotic function, and then I will be able to give the development of abjection.

III.I. Revolution in Poetic Language: The Social, and the Semiotic *χώρα*

In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva evinces that "linguistic changes constitute changes in *the status of the subject*—his [sic] relation to the body, to others, and to objects" (Kristeva 1984 15).²² Thus, speech and language are also *material* (i.e., socio-historic) processes of signification. This materiality refers to the meaning and sense-making practices that are not necessarily—or not yet—of a discursive function. This therefore means that while the subject in and of Symbolic representation is produced in a system of signification that demonstrates the *inscriptive mark* of the subject's speaking, embodied, *and social* being, the subject is not limited to the Symbolic alone. For Kristeva, this is primarily demonstrated through speech in psychoanalytic and poetic practices. These creative modalities of speech *demonstrate the linguistic foundations as malleable*—through semiotic practices—without which there would be no social discourse.

In preliminary terms, the semiotic refers to (non-/pre-) verbal forms of speech. In Kristeva's work it is the subtending rhythmic, intonational, and sensuous support of the Symbolic function of social discourse. Given the ontological status of the Symbolic system to which the semiotic corresponds and thusly extends, it means that language cannot be merely concerned with speech acts or the purely denotative form of language alone. The semiotic demonstrates that, while the subject—and her relation to the o/Other and the world and its (partial and whole) objects—emerges *through* the very form of language, thusly underscoring the socio-Symbolic implications, language is also a quasi-*intentionality* inherent to the socio-Symbolic structure that in fact precedes and supports it. Thus, such systems are co-constitutive of how we access the world with others, and its representation. This representation, while necessary, is in fact open to other modalities of enframing due to the precise function of semiotic negativity. Kristeva variously refers to the disruptive function of semiotic negativity as that which “breaches” the Symbolic.²³

The semiotic breaching expresses a precise signifying mark that, as an affective trace, ruptures (from within) the Symbolic order. It is heterogeneous, ever shifting, and always subtending the Symbolic representation of language. Kristeva recalls Plato's *χώρα* (*khôra*) from the *Timaeus*, but politically extends its ontological status through the (social) function of language, which is not limited to speech, merely. The semiotic *χώρα* is a generative anterior negativity which therefore opens up the possibility of creative rupture in the process of signification. But, because such a rupture is *symbolically* inscribed, it is therefore social and capable of hermeneutical interpretation. This means that the Symbolic—as the ordering principle of signifying mastery which gives the subject representational value—cannot be *limited* to the signifying structure alone, because of the *materiality* of the semiotic (i.e., that the signifying

structure is always a *social one*). This materiality, however, must always be figured through the Symbolic and so cannot stand for the force of materiality alone.

The negative semiotic ruptures the stable form of Symbolic representation (i.e., unchanging over time and exclusionary) that presents as object to the unified egoic subject privileged in the Western philosophical tradition. Such an approach considers “negativity as the trans-subjective, trans-ideal, and trans-symbolic *movement* found in the *separation of matter*, one of the preconditions of symbolicity, which *generates the symbol*” (Kristeva 1984 117, my emphasis). As such, this generativity in the anterior negative structure means that such processes of representation cannot be exclusionary nor determined in linear sequential time under the auspice of a Master Signifier.

The semiotic, due to a mimetic signifying process *other* than Lacan’s but affinitive with Freud and Klein, therefore generates a disruptive force to the psycho-linguistic structure that it exceeds, and yet it functions within. It thus *depends* on the Symbolic but is also *disruptive* of the seeming stability of the very form that structures it, and that it structures. The structure is therefore *not fixed*. For Kristeva, there is a closed system of semiotics anterior to the Symbolic. This anteriority must rest on the psychoanalytic unconscious (i.e., negativity) so that it can lay bare the way in which the illusory stability (or totality) of the sign (referring to the denotated object of representation consisting of the signifier and signified) and the subject (of both conscious and unconscious processes) interact on unstable grounds. This unstable ground *conditions*—and exceeds—the representational structures that support it. As Kristeva makes clear, the “positing of the semiotic is obviously inseparable from a theory of the subject that takes into account the Freudian positing of the unconscious” (Kristeva 1984 30). This sense of the unconscious takes seriously the role of “anterior negativity” which is classically considered

as the repressed archaic maternal. Therefore, the conception of the egoic linguistic subject is rendered illusory, in both its transcendental and empirical optics. The semiotic functions, as Kristeva argues, by “decentering the transcendental ego, cutting through it, and opening it up to a dialectic in which its syntactic and categorical understanding is merely the liminary moment of the process, which is itself always acted upon by the relation to the other, dominated by the death drive and its productive reiteration of the “signifier” (Kristeva 1984 30).

To be sure, under the (post-)structuralist conditions which I follow, for Kristeva, the sign becomes a nodal point for so-called cultural (i.e., socio-historical) analysis. Such semiotic motility, holding together the sign, destabilizes the possibility of a Symbolic origin of homogeneity by questioning the supposed totality of the sign *as a stable referent* by showing how the logic of the sign functions by “repress[ing] the *chora* and its eternal return” (Kristeva 1984 14, my addition). This demonstrates how the *materiality* of the signifier in diachronous time (in which History itself is grounded) mobilizes the semiotic ruptures in and of the social-Symbolic order, providing the sense of malleability to the synchronic function of sequential Symbolic processes. Such a semiotic negativity as an anterior heterogeneous occurrence—which has at its basis an *ontological* recursivity to signifying power—therefore means that the processes of signification and subject formation become *differing structures* which temporally have a future-anterior diachrony governing the logic of production. This future-anterior diachrony is propelled by the repetitious return of the repressed archaic maternal, demonstrated in the function of abjection.

III.II. Abjection and the (Social) Body

Abjection gives the condition of “of the speaking being, always already haunted by the Other, to divide, reject, repeat” (Kristeva 1984 11). It “confronts us [...] within our personal archeology, with our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity even outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language” (Kristeva 1984 13). For Kristeva, the formulation of semiotic negativity that drives forth signification and subject formation is figured in and dependent upon the repressed archaic maternal: *das Ding*. By expanding the Symbolic to the maternal-semiotic of *das Ding*—which is in fact the heterogeneous precondition of and sustaining function for the socio-Symbolic domain—Kristeva draws out socio-Symbolic implications (thereby demonstrating the ontic-ontological distinction) of *das Ding*, driven by an “anterior negativity.” This leads her to place emphasis on the creativity in material- and meaning-making practices, thereby rendering signification and subject formation as open to change and re-articulation.²⁴ This is because of the precise temporal function that abjection reveals in subject formation and signification.²⁵

To be sure, the object “cannot be assimilated,” and is “not an object facing me, which I name or imagine”—it is “not my correlative” (Kristeva 1982 72). In other words, the object is conceived of as a pre-Oedipal process which “preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be” (Kristeva 1982 10). Logically and chronologically occurring at the same time as the semiotic, the object simultaneously reveals the “return of the repressed” m(O)ther of language that inscriptive social-Symbolic orders attempt to (unsuccessfully) repress in the presentation of socially autonomous Oedipal subjects in bourgeois society in the West.

Kristeva organizes her argument on a triadic temporal axis. First, while the abject thus “appears in order to uphold ‘I’ within the Other [...] *The abject is the violence of mourning for an “object” that has always already been lost [...]*” (Kristeva 1982 15). Furthermore, it takes the ego “back to its source on the abominable limits from which, in order to be, the ego has broken away—it assigns it a source in the non-ego, drive, and death” (1982 15). Finally, in this triadic reconstruction, “[a]bjection is a resurrection that has gone through death (of the ego). It is an alchemy that transforms death drive into a start of life, of new signifiante” (1982 15 my emphasis).

To summarize. In secular modernity, Kristevan abjection “becomes a substitute for the role formerly played by the sacred, at the limits of social and subjective identity” (1982 26).²⁶ These limits are the limits of negativity, which as an anterior occurrence thusly render the possibility of separation (and therefore of wholly determining the function of an Oedipal subject) an impossibility. This is due to the repetitious function of the repressed archaic maternal in subjective and Symbolic domains. Indeed, Kristeva makes it clear that:

If language, like culture, *sets up a separation* and, starting with discrete elements, concatenates an order, it does so *precisely by repressing maternal authority* and the corporeal mapping that abuts against them. *It is then appropriate to ask what happens to such a repressed item when the legal, phallic, linguistic symbolic establishment does not carry out the separation in radical fashion—or else, more basically, when the speaking being attempts to think through its advent in order better to establish its effectiveness* (1982 72, my emphasis).

In Kristeva's theory, separation (typically from the maternal body)—as a psychic process—is a constitutive violence that nonetheless drives socio-Symbolic development of the subject because repression of this anteriority is always incomplete, or as Kristeva puts it, an “impossibility.” Perhaps trivially, repression's insistence upon returning gives the concept its meaning (i.e., if repression didn't return, we wouldn't repress: the faces of “return” and “repressed” are inscribed on either side of a Janus-headed coin).²⁷ This constitutive incompleteness of severance gives the maternal semiotic its driving force as a rupture, both from *within* and from an unknown Other (in the sense, precisely, of the real of *das Ding*). Thus, this sense of rupture “cannot be inscribed in a symbol and rather stands as a hypersign for the *restorative* capacity associated with the imaginary” (Angelova 2020 556, my emphasis). The *imaginary*—its phantasy, if we recall Klein—extends the life of the psyche *beyond itself*, and gives access to an alterity within, from the position of extended subjectivity and signification.

Indeed, because Kristeva recovers Kleinian psychic negativity as that which gives the very articulation of subjectivity, and so therefore as that which is gives socio-cultural (i.e., Symbolic) systems their representation, then through such dual processes, we can conceive of a more radical sense of relationality, and therefore to the possibility of a reparative and restorative justice. Such relationality is always already at work in socio-Symbolic and subjective processes through the logic of the repressed archaic maternal. It is thus a matter of reconsidering, ontologically, the role of the (m)Other in and of the process of subject formation and signification.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have sought to demonstrate the possibility of an alternative system to the atomized form of egoic subjectivity, away from conceptions of the subject as the derivative and slave to language in Symbolic representation. Without discarding the surely critical Oedipal development in subject formation—through the Kleinian developments of the Freudian schema—I showed first, how such developmental positions (*viz.* Kleinian pre-Oedipal and Oedipal positions) are in fact malleable and necessarily open to rearticulation. Such a developmental structure, as I have demonstrated, emerges with language acquisition. This sense of language, however, is not *merely* denotative as if the object for an egoic subject alone. In my second major argumentation, I draw on Kristeva to formulate the semiotic-Symbolic articulation of signification. This shows that language has an *ontologically* and politically extended sense of representation, thus underscoring the potentiality for an ethics of alterity. This is so because such structures are grounded in an “anterior negativity” which thereby inscribe the subject into socio-Symbolic structures that are neither linearly determined nor exclusionary. As such, this negativity offers the foundation for a radical relationality—due to the sense of pre-Oedipal and Oedipal object relations in the Kleinian formulation—which offers an expanded sense of the Symbolic to the social in Kristeva’s semiotic theory and in abjection. The third and main point in my argumentation is the affirmation that the structures of subjectivity and signification, respectively, only function this way since they primarily emerge through ontological difference as a logic of production. Fourth, this latter expansion can, I hope, offer a way to see the possibilities for overcoming—as in the sense of time which is to come—the social-Symbolic structures which oppress and suppress. Overcoming in this sense offers a possibility for

demonstrating how the Other is always already inscribed in the psyche and in the words with which we speak, though, not necessarily, in the word *alone*.

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- Segal, Julia. *Melanie Klein*. London: Sage, 2004.

¹ See Kristeva 1974 p.118 on the distinction between “negation” and “negativity.” The former is not merely “the shadow of a false problem” but rather demonstrates a “logical inconsistency” which, through Freud, we discover in “the movement that *produces* negation and of which negation is only an oblique mark in the presence of consciousness.”

² By using the cosmogonical Ancient Greek term *arkhe*, I highlight the sense of the so-called origin as that which is not “outside” the beginning *qua* origin, but as that which is inherent and anterior (indeed, *archaic*) to origin as a generative principle.

³ While I remain weary of totalizing the tradition of French post-structuralist thinking (especially in the group of May ’68) I do think it can—however provisionally—be helpful. This is because there is a shared concern with subject-formation, temporality, and anti-capitalist revolutionary discord. To be clear, from a historical point of view it is apparent how the Freudian principle of negativity could *give the generative grounds* of demanding *viz.* the concept of “revolt” a creative way to reconfigure the mode of enframing the world and our approaches to it. On the psychoanalytic reception of the concept of the death instinct, it is especially the work of Klein, Winnicott, Bion, and Segal, that the Freudian concept gained its—however controversial—status.

⁴ I am particularly indebted to the secondary literature of Angelova (2020), Beardsworth (2004), Kristeva (2001), Margaroni (2005), Mills (2006), Nikolchina (2004), Oliver (1993), Rose (1993, 2011, 2005), Sánchez-Pardo (2003), Segal (1988).

⁵ I note here that I am using the death “instinct” instead of “drive” because I aim to dislodge the concept from its latent biologism under the latter term (as *Todestrieb* in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”). To be sure, the Strachey translation to which I refer switches back and forth between “drive” and “instinct.” This is certainly important sense of the term, but I choose to use “instinct.” It is also in alignment with the sense that Gilles Deleuze (1967, 1968) uses the term to demonstrate the structural-temporal nature of its function in individuation.

⁶ These repetitions are: (1) traumatic dreams in war neuroses, where trauma repeats itself in the dreams of war veterans following the first world war; (2) the *fort-da* game, where a child repeats—and relives *in attempts to master*—the painful disappearance of the mother and enacts her pleasurable retrieval by throwing a toy and exclaiming “fort” (which Freud interprets as “gone”) and “da” (interpreted as “there”) upon its return; (3) sado-masochistic sexual practices, which complicates the idea that one solely seeks to derive pleasure in sexual practices; (4) the psychoanalytic process of recounting and reliving—and thus *repeating*—traumatic events in transference between the analyst and analysand.

⁷ Here, see p.30 of Kristeva’s “L’Impossibilité de perdre” (1988) on the “infantile event” as structural precondition of trauma, specifically in the structure of “subject/other.” This is, as evinced by Kristeva, reviving the point of the “original unknown” of the origin of so-called trauma: “ce n’est pas un événement originaire, mais un second, réactivant le premier, qui constitue de cet «inconnu originaire» un *trauma*.” I thank Emilia Angelova for pointing me to this work of Kristeva’s in 2018.

⁸ Such forces converge in the ego—where the inner and outer worlds converge on the reality principle—although, the origin of the death instinct seems to lie within the super-ego as the encounter with the outside world takes place. It does also seem to be a function, however, of the ego.

⁹ On this final remark, see Kristeva 1988, page 29.

¹⁰ Lacan thus “gives language, or representation, central importance” (Rose 1993 43).

¹¹ See especially Lacan here on “The Freudian Thing or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis” (1955, especially pages 414-429 in the *Écrits*) and “The Object and the Thing” (1960, pages 101-114 of *Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*).

¹² As Richard Boothby makes clear: “when Lacan insists that human desire is the desire of the Other, he means that it is only in and through the Other, to whom I am linked *in a relation*

of symbolic interchange, that I am able to announce to myself my own desire” (Boothby 1991 119, my emphasis).

¹³ On the circumstantial/constitutive differentiation in and of Lacanian negativity, see Mari Ruti and Amy Allen, *Critical Theory Between Klein and Lacan: A Dialogue* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019), especially p.115.

¹⁴ The importance of signifiatory articulation in its relation to Being appears to mark the Heideggerian questioning that propels (middle period) Lacan’s concern with ontological difference as a logic of production.

¹⁵ This is a gesture toward the Heideggerian origins of ontological-ontic production which I recover from the language thematic in Lacan’s middle period, which was signaled above, and is signaled in Kristeva.

¹⁶ In the late period work of Heidegger’s “On the Way to Language” (1952) we find this reformulation of relationality, as Being-toward.

¹⁷ I note here that the use of “anterior” is recovered from and in reference to Angelova’s 2020 paper. I attach this meaning throughout, beginning with Freud and the death instinct. The term as such is a composite—I find it in Angelova’s paper and would like to make clear that it does not exist as a technical term otherwise.

¹⁸ As Allen puts it, this “is both outside and inside the ego. This means that the split object that’s characteristic of the paranoid-schizoid position goes hand in hand with a split inside the ego. The result of this splitting is that the ego is disintegrated or incoherent.” See especially page 12.

¹⁹ As Sánchez-Pardo makes clear, because “phantasy is a concept that problematizes the relationships between linguistic and visual representation, the issue of origin and ground” it means that “the system of appearances of external coherence that we present to the world is, in Kleinian theory, part of a complex process of introjections and projections that also gives shape to our inside. *Interiority and exteriority are constituted not as opposites but as intimately and problematically linked.* In these basic spatial forms, the struggle between the life and death drives repeats itself *ad infinitum.*” See particularly page 11.

²⁰ Amy Allen emphasizes the potential for fruitful comparison between the Kleinian depressive position and the Lacanian mirror stage, noting “for Klein *this isn’t just about recognizing the other but also about self-recognition:* the infant’s recognition of its mother as a whole object enables it to recognize itself as a *coherent* ego.” See especially page 5.

²¹ To be clear, the mirror-stage is a developmental stage in Lacanian theory, occurring between six to eighteen months. This developmental stage demonstrates the sense of self-recognition in subject formation which includes necessarily identifying with oneself *while simultaneously recognizing the alienation inherent to the process itself.* This is because it is impossible to narcissistically regain wholeness with the image of reflection, because of the other. As Lacan puts it in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience”: “this development is experienced in a temporal dialectic that decisively projects the individual’s formation into history: the mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressure pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation—and for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an “orthopedic” form of its totality—and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity that will mark his entire mental development with its rigid structure. Thus, the shattering of the *Innenwelt* to *Umwelt* circle gives rise to an inexhaustible squaring of the ego’s audits.” See especially page 97.

²² I am aiming for gender neutral usage, but the translation of the original noun in French does not make this possible.

²³ On the specific usage of the “breach” in Kristeva’s work, see Angelova 2020 p558n13. This draws attention to how “the word for “breaching” in French is *effraction*, a juridical term for “breaking and entering.””

²⁴ As Angelova makes clear on this connection between the semiotic and the Symbolic, via the logic of origins and the temporal function of the “return” (recall the Freudian formula of this logic, precisely): “the tension between the semiotic and symbolic in Kristeva is a matter of a specifically maternal semiotic that exceeds symbolization, where, however, the symbolic order can neither negate nor separate itself from the maternal semiotic. This tension drives psychic life to want to return to its maternal semiotic origins, breaching symbolic limits and this separation.” See especially page 544.

²⁵ Such a symbolic effort “of cleanly separated bodies, and negations, operates in retroaction upon a maternal semiotic that must be repressed—and from which we cannot, in fact, separate.” See especially page 546.

²⁶ As Beardsworth reminds us, “the failings of modern institutions and discourses have left the burden of connecting the semiotic and symbolic on the individual, and the suffering subjectivity that psychoanalytic practice encounters is the suffering of this burden.” See especially page 24.

²⁷ Jacqueline Rose demonstrates how “it is in fact a tenet of Freudian psychoanalysis that repression can never be absolute. If it were, the very concept of repression could not be thought” (See Rose 2005 221).