Caring Against the Family: Kinship, State, and Social Reproduction

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Abstract

Traditionally, the nuclear family is posited as the prime location to meet both material and relational needs. Within poststructuralism, this primacy emerges out of a heteronormative framework of legitimation, in which certain forms of kinship become legible while others do not (Butler 2004). In a socialist feminist account, the nuclear family provides a specific form of organizing reproductive labor (Bhattacharya 2017b). Accordingly, it plays a role in reproducing labor power, as well as the systemic conditions of capitalism. The integrated approach to capitalism and heteronormativity developed here, presents the family as an institution constituted through a specific form of performative, reproductive, skilled labor within the normative regulation of the state (Floyd 2009; R. Ferguson 2004). The emergent institution, however, internalizes a number of contradictions. On the one hand, it is structured by public forms of normativity and on the other, it plays a role in upholding them. These contradictions are further embedded within the systemic contradictions in capitalism (Jaeggi 2018; Fraser 2017). This has a paradoxical result: While the family manifests these crisis tendencies, it also holds potential to resolve them that emerge out of the contradictions of reproductive labor. In line with this, the contradictions of capitalism and the family can structure a post-capitalist imaginary through the lens of more adequately organizing social reproduction. Finally, these contradictions take place in an environment structured by the state. To account for this, the final chapter presents a prefigurative image of reorganized social reproduction. The Swiss institution of civil service, or in German *Zivildienst*, works to illustrate this (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018). Specifically, it is discussed by virtue of its ability to externalize the contradictions that the family has internalized.

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Introduction

> You have to be with other people, he thought. In order to live at all (…)
>
> You can't go back, he thought. You can't go from people to nonpeople.
>
> In panic he thought, I'm dependent on them.
>
> (Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* 1968, 161)

In Philip K. Dick's seminal novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, J. R. Isidore has been abandoned by humanity. Left behind on a planet ravaged by environmental destruction, he has scavenged together what he needs to survive: a home in an abandoned apartment building, access to food and water, entertainment for long empty evenings. He is surviving all on his own. To survive without other people is impossible. Suddenly, unexpected visitors provide him with a sense of purpose. Having someone to care for does more than give him tasks with which to fill his days. Being needed, being tied into relationships, provides him with something more. It makes him feel more alive.

In the traditional sense, the family has been a form in which this need for relationships is frequently satisfied. In a narrow sense, it may be difficult to contest fundamental human needs like shelter or nourishment that the family purports to satisfy. However, this satisfaction takes place in a state of non-fungibility that lies at the heart of J. R. Isidore's discovery: the satisfaction of these needs is tied up in specific relationships. How reproductive labor takes place, exceeds the basic practice of administering care. In other words, carrying out a practice like cooking a meal or making a bed has impact beyond achieving a specific end (Penz and Sauer 2016).

This realization often informs continued commitment to the nuclear family, as a supposed *haven in a heartless world* (Brenner and Holmstrom 2000). The assumption underlying this is that the material needs met in the family are inseparable from the specific relational form that it presents. In that framework, contesting the nuclear family can be easily framed as a threat. However, even if needs satisfied in reproductive relationships are framed as simultaneously material *and* relational[1], this does not sufficiently explain the functional adequacy of the nuclear family to secure these. Nor can it account for the primacy of the nuclear family in the societal division of labor. In fact, generations of feminist, socialist, and anarchist

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[1] For the insight that the relational component of kinship structures can be encompassed in a broad definition of social reproduction, I thank Eva von Redecker (Phone call with author, 06.03.2020).

thinkers have worked on exposing the ways in which this form of kinship is not the only option. The anarchist activist and thinker Emma Goldman, for example, saw the family as perpetuating a form of patronizing control analogous to capitalism. In Goldman's view, this undermines the love and security that the family touts as its very *raison d'être*:

> Marriage is primarily an economic arrangement, an insurance pact. It differs from the ordinary life insurance agreement only in that it is more binding, more exacting. Its returns are insignificantly small compared with the investments. In taking out an insurance policy one pays for it in dollars and cents, always at liberty to discontinue payments. If, however, woman's premium is a husband, she pays for it with her name, her privacy, her self-respect, her very life, 'until death doth part.' Moreover, the marriage insurance condemns her to life-long dependency, to parasitism, to complete uselessness, individual as well as social. (Goldman 2012, 160)

Thus, Goldman calls for the abolition of the married family and for substituting it with "free love" that would "give birth to true companionship and oneness, not marriage" (Goldman 2012, 166–68). She sees this as the only way to overcome capitalist and patriarchal oppression.

In the now classic *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Friedrich Engels formulates a similar argument about the connection between individual liberation and resistance to capitalism (Engels [1884] 2010). According to Engels, bourgeois marriage practices are over-determined by property relations. This is what renders the family patriarchal. He argues that the "exclusive aims of monogamous marriage were to make the man supreme in the family and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own" (Engels [1884] 2010, 96). Patriarchy appears to him as an expression of the private property form. However, the connection he proposes between private property, patriarchy, and marriage is somewhat paradoxical. Even as marriage contracts are forged in the interest of preserving property, bourgeois love functions as the ideological cloak behind which this takes place. In other words, Engels argues that the bourgeois contract requires the two loving individuals to enter autonomously into a legitimate contract. At the same time, marriage itself remains structured according to patriarchal submission which emerge from capitalism.

The link that Engels established between marriage and property has proven to be a vital analytical and political development for the analysis of the family in capitalism. Nonetheless, since its publication, his interpretation has been challenged on a number of grounds. Comparing

his analysis to Goldman's, for example, indicates a different interpretation on the role between class and the family. For Engels, what is wrong with the bourgeois family is exactly that; it is its specifically bourgeois investment in the maintenance of property through strategic alliances and inheritance that makes the institution undesirable. Curiously, this means that his analysis excludes an understanding of working-class families which he views as not structured around the preservation of property. This is understandable because his intention was to develop a critique of specifically bourgeois institutions such as the married family. However, by declaring working class families as less constrained by bourgeois interests, he fails to grasp the extent to which these families, too, are also shaped in concordance with the capitalist mode of production. For Goldman, the object of contestation concerning the family is more fundamentally a part of the structure of the family itself. Her issue lies therefore with the material and symbolic concentration of caring responsibility in the household, and therefore on the shoulders of married women. Lise Vogel, for example, takes issue with Engels' reliance on Lewis H. Morgan's anthropological study *Ancient Society* (1877) to develop his argument on kinship (Vogel 2013). This leads him to reproduce much of the Eurocentrism present in Morgan's analysis. That is, if Morgan's analysis of what he called the "Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilisation" lies at the center of an analysis of kinship in Western, capitalist, states, this replicates an image of progress that implies Western society as its civilized pinnacle (Morgan quoted in Vogel 2013, 80). This remains the case even if the argument revolves around a negative conception of current society. The argument that Engels draws on the basis of Morgan's analysis runs into another issue too. Where pre-capitalist societies organized through kin arrangements valued women's labor and even saw a "supremacy of women", this status has been lost at the time of his writing (Engels 1884, 79). Historical progression, for Engels, is characterized by two parallel movements: a replacement of collective, pre-capitalist clan structures with industrial production and the transition from women's high status to their subordinated one. This grounds Engels analysis of patriarchy emerging from capitalism. Claiming that patriarchal rule is reducible to, and emergent with, capitalist property relations, allows Engels to make the political assertion that overcoming the latter would erase the former.

Both Goldman and Engels have made canonical contributions to situating the family in relation to capital accumulation and the state. As such, their writings are foundational to the questions I pose about the nuclear family in this thesis: how do capitalism and heteronormativity inform the status of the nuclear family within the current societal division of labor? Answering this, requires that at least two sub-questions are asked, developed from the

interventions presented by Engels and Goldman. If Engels' reduction of patriarchy to the capitalist mode of production is not tenable, how can the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy be explained more adequately as they inform the structure of the nuclear family? At the same time, the societal conditions described by Goldman characterized by women's rigid legal disenfranchisement may no longer adequately describe current society. With this in mind, how can the position of the nuclear family be situated within the current societal division of labor?

This current moment differs from the context of Engels and Goldman. It is more adequately characterized by the post-industrial transformation of the state, from an active welfare state to the ostensibly hands-off approach of neoliberalism (J. Lewis 2002; Dowling and Harvie 2014). Rosemary Hennessy describes the contemporary form of capitalist society as "late capitalism" (Hennessy 2018, 20). In the 1930s and 1940s, European socialists employed the term to describe a setting in which capitalism was nearing its decline. Hennessy uses the term less deterministically to describe a novel degree of bureaucratization and the interpenetration of governments and businesses. Yet she does not relinquish the potential to overcome capitalism, arguing that "the modifier 'late' signals both an intensification of capital as social relation and the possibility of its demise" (Hennessy 2018, 23). Hennessy cautions against using the term *neoliberal* to describe social conditions without their economic context. Overuse without systematically embedding it in an analysis of capitalism, runs the risk of depriving the term of its analytical teeth. To do this justice, requires foregrounding the concrete policy changes that took place in an increasingly globalized economy. In early welfare states, the family was structurally embedded in strong infrastructures of social security. This Fordist welfare state, named after the American industrialist Henry Ford, constituted a strategic triangle between state welfare, company, and home (Motakef 2015). For those who qualified for entry, this provided financial and social stability. Today, the neoliberal welfare state has been characterized by a shift in responsibilities. Although the North American Chicago School has become a key metonym for neoliberal economic and social policies, these trends shaped state intervention across the globe and continue to hold sway today. Contextualizing this shift, former British Prime Minister David Cameron described this in the following terms in 2009: the "alternative to big government is the big society" (Dowling and Harvie 2014, 870). Rather than signaling a withdrawal of the state, from society, this is more accurately described by a strategic restructuring. In other words, society is not ignored by the neoliberal state but is shaped in its image. For the government to reduce social responsibility, it needs a highly responsible and self-reliant society, that is, *big society*. State-funded provision of reproductive

care is replaced by a cheaper engagement by citizens, families, and their communities. In the Netherlands, since 2015, a systematic draining of professional and material resources to administer care has resulted in an offloading of caring responsibility onto municipalities and individual citizens in what has been called the "home-ification of care"[2] (Bredewold. et al. 2018, 7, my translation). Although taking place in different contexts, these changes have two major themes in common. Relocating reproductive responsibility from the state to families and communities aims to reduce government spending. This is accompanied by an implied improvement in the quality of reproductive care: families and communities are constructed as uniquely equipped to deliver the relational component of reproductive practices. That is, a retreat from reproductive responsibility is sold by the neoliberal welfare state as improving rather than undermining care.

As Johanna Brenner and Nancy Holmstrom put it, "[k]inship, love, and 'good things to eat' tend go [sic] together in our society; but they are tendentially connected" (Brenner and Holmstrom 2000, 173). The phrasing chosen by Brenner and Holmstrom indicates that the way these material and relational needs are currently organized could also be organized differently. Conceptually, the tendency of these components to *go together* takes place amid the organization of productive and reproductive labor as well as the constraints of heterosexual society (Rubin 2012). The project of this thesis is to investigate in more detail how exactly kinship, love, and good things to eat *tend to go together* in the heteronormative nuclear family and where these connections fail. As Lindsey German argues, "while the privatized family is not essential to the survival of capitalism, its abolition is not at all likely while capitalism exists" (German 1997, 152). Drawing on this, it would be too simplistic to say that organizing reproduction differently (beyond the nuclear family) would solve the problems generated by capitalism or, vice versa, that organizing production differently (beyond the capitalist mode of production) would result in radically different forms of interpersonal relationships. To say either would present the material or the normative as reducible to each other.

To avoid this reduction, chapter 1 develops an integrated analysis of the constitution of the family in the nexus of heteronormativity and capitalism. On the one hand, it is shaped by heteronormative state legislation (Butler 2004). Certain forms of kinship are rendered

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[2] This translation comes from the Dutch word "verhuizing". A more literal rendering of this word into English would be "relocation" or "move", as in, moving from one house to another. However, to translate it as "home-ification" conveys the pun that the Dutch word entails: the neoliberal restructuring of the welfare state does not merely *relocate* where care takes place in an open-ended sense. Instead, it specifically relocates it into the home. To talk of "home-ification" instead of relocation, then, renders the dual meaning of *moving* reproductive responsibility *away* from the state and *towards* the home.

legitimate owing to the extent that they conform to heteronormativity. On the other hand, the family functions as an institution that organizes reproductive labor (S. Ferguson 2019; Bhattacharya 2017b). In that sense, it appears to also uphold the very institutions that shape it. Understanding these factors requires investigating the relationship between capitalism and heteronormativity beyond reductionism or interactionism. Accordingly, chapter 1 develops a framework to situate the nuclear family that attempts to integrate heteronormativity and capitalism (Floyd 2009; R. Ferguson 2004). Within this, the family emerges as a contradictory institution, structured by the opposition of the public and private sphere, as well as the contradictory nature of reproductive labor.

In chapter 2, the normative consequences of these constitutive contradictions are discussed. Owing to these contradictions, the family emerges as an institution that is prone to crises (Jaeggi 2018). These crises are integrated with the systemic conditions of crises in late neoliberal capitalism (Fraser 2017). The second half of chapter 2 connects this analysis of crisis to potential avenues of resolution (Benhabib 1986). If the current form of the family appears to incorporate the social contradictions of capitalism, then how can a post-capitalist imaginary be galvanized out of its current shortcomings? This culminates in integrating a dialectical analysis of social reproductive crisis with a form of utopia that is specific to the reproductive capacities of the family (Lewis 2019; Adamczak 2017; Muñoz 2009).

Finally, chapter 3 outlines potential consequences this has within the societal division of labor that continues to be structured by the nation state. This is introduced by way of the Swiss institution of civil service, or in German *Zivildienst* (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018). As an institution that structures reproductive labor in between state provision and civic engagement, it serves here to intensify and expose the contradictions and crisis tendencies in the societal division of labor developed in the previous chapters. In this sense, it functions both as a litmus test of these contradictions and a prefigurative image of a society in which social reproduction may be less intimately connected to the nuclear family. That is, if it is necessary to enter into relationships to survive (to be with other people) is the nuclear family the most adequate form to ensure this?

Chapter 1: The contradictions of kinship

> Capitalism conditions the production of the familial order but does not
> exhaust the discourses constitutive of it.
>
> (Wendy Brown *Liberalism's Family Values* 1995, 139)

> The revolution did not topple all tyrannies. The evil which one blames
> on arbitrary forces exists in families, where it causes crises, analogous
> to those of revolutions.
>
> (Karl Marx *Peuchet: On Suicide* 1846, para. 11)

In popular parlance, the family constitutes a *haven in a heartless world*. This phrase posits two claims: on the one hand, the family is a *haven*, conjuring an image of warm hearths and loving relationships. On the other hand, it posits the threatening outside of the *heartless world*. Beyond the purview of the comfortable home, a dangerous world looms from which only the family can provide respite. The secluded inside of the family exists in an ostensibly opposition to an outside that renders it necessary. In the introduction, I noted that my context of engagement is late neoliberal capitalism. Characterized at least in part by a restructuring of reproductive responsibilities, to discuss the practices of kinship relations in this context assumes central importance. In Western welfare states, the emergence of neoliberalism constituted a shift from explicit state intervention into the organization of the family to a more implicit approach in which transformed state intervention generated a vacuum to be filled by familial reproductive responsibility. The earlier "Fordist triad" indicated a strict and formal division of labor between families, the companies that employed their (male) members, and the welfare state (Motakef 2015, 12, my translation). At the time of origin, corresponding to the advent of the Fordist factory model, the "male breadwinner model" of the family foresaw a male worker earning a wage at the factory that was extensive enough to cover the costs of a wife and children in the home (J. Lewis 2002, 332). This model of the family essentially institutionalized the Fordist triad in a way that rippled out to specific forms of social rights in various European countries (Motakef 2015). That is, the legislation of social security and the mediation of precarity built on just one form of family as a default societal unit.

　　　　Today, the "activating welfare state" has replaced the preceding welfare state and with it the central form of the family has changed as well (Motakef 2015, 12). As Jane Lewis puts

it, the "male breadwinner model" is replaced with the "adult worker model" of the family (J. Lewis 2002, 339). This accompanies a shift in the triadic division of labor. If workers and their families were supposed to be essentially passive recipients of welfare when and if they needed it, the main priorities of the contemporary neoliberal welfare state lie in stimulating its citizens to be autonomous and responsible for their own well-being. Instead of existing to mediate material needs, this new form of the state aims at encouraging its citizens to manage themselves as much as possible (Motakef 2015). Paradoxically, this state designed to encourage self-determination and autonomy is characterized by reformulation, rather than a straightforward reduction, of previously interventionist welfare state models. This form of state that characterizes itself as low-intervention, is more adequately characterized through transformed intervention (Dowling and Harvie 2014).

For an ostensibly unregulated market society to work, individuals need to be tied into reproductive structures that pose little burden on it. In this context of reduced social security, the nuclear family assumes new importance. As Chicago School economist Milton Friedman remarked, "[t]his is really a family society, not an individual one" (Milton Friedman in Cooper 2019, 59). This reflects a conviction that a society built around the self-sufficiency of its members requires an infrastructure that meets their needs while being hidden from view. It does not immediately follow, however, that the structure called upon to meet this reproductive need of neoliberal societies would necessarily take the form of the heteronormative nuclear family. Wendy Brown points out that capitalism may be a significant but is by far not the only social relation that determines the form of the family: "Capitalism conditions the production of the familial order but does not exhaust the discourses constitutive of it" (1995, 139). That is, to understand a moment whereby the nuclear family experiences an influx in reproductive responsibility, requires also understanding the normative parameters that govern that institution.

In line with the last point, one could ask whether the form of the heterosexual nuclear family is adequately equipped to deliver on its promises. This is especially pertinent since those parameters which the nuclear family often claims as its exclusive purview are frequently satisfied in ways that already circumnavigate it (Peukert et al. 2018). The extent to which the family fails functionally and normatively will be discussed in chapter 2. How many people need to organize their own reproduction in ways that does not conform to the nuclear family until it no longer holds that place in the societal division of reproductive labor? Before that can be asked, however, a more fundamental problem has to be addressed. What is the condition of

possibility for a family constituted as a private safe haven? As socialist feminists Johanna Brenner and Nancy Holmstrom argue, the home is rendered necessary by an outside that is devoid of those conditions that make it appear homely (2000). Their political program therefore sketches a direct line between the possibility of survival in a broadly conceived public sphere and the privacy of the home. This leads them to demand "No Haven, No Heartless World" (Brenner and Holmstrom 2000, 173). After a hard day's work in an inhospitable world, a comfortable home filled with warm food and loved ones is not a luxury but assumes the status of a necessity.[3] It can follow from their pronouncement that the specific relational need of the family that renders it a *haven*, would be less necessary in a world that were less *heartless*.

This chapter explores the relationship between the nuclear family and the conditions that enable in it in its current form in two senses. On the one hand, this concerns the normative regulation of legitimate kinship especially through the state. On the other hand, this is contextualized by the material conditions that underpin and cement this regulation. Accordingly, a triad similar to the Fordist triad will emerge, which sketches a relationship between family, normativity, and capital. This conceptualization is structured by a consideration of a poststructuralist account to heteronormativity and socialist feminist accounts of the role of material constraints in generating a particular kind of family. To conceptualize the difficulty and limitations in framing normative and material constraints as distinct processes, the chapter is rounded out by queer Marxist approach.

1. Practicing kinship

Kinship is neither a fully autonomous sphere, proclaimed to be distinct from community and friendship—or the regulations of the state—through some definitional fiat, nor is it 'over' or 'dead' (…).

(Judith Butler *Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual* 1994, 103)

Marriage and its legal recognition have occupied much of mainstream LGBTQ+ politics on the topic of the family. Notably, in the United States, this appeared to culminate in the 2015

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[3] In *Global Justice and Desire: Queering Economy*, the authors outline the ways in which an opposition between luxury and basic goods is skewed towards white, middle-class notions of propriety (Dhawan et al. 2015). Without going into this in more detail, contesting such a hierarchy of needs provides another fruitful approach to contesting the ways in which life- and love-styles are arranged hierarchically through the granting or denying of material security.

Supreme Court decision to recognize same-sex marriage across the country (Liptak 2015). In Western Europe, the Netherlands was the first country to legally recognize same-sex marriage in 2001 (COC, n.d.). Other countries, such as Switzerland, continue to restrict access to the married family form, which accrues systemic privileges that other forms of partnership and family are denied (Nay 2017). Limiting emancipatory demands to the demand for inclusion in the married family form, however, runs into a number of limitations. This is what Judith Butler discusses when she asks, in *Undoing Gender*, "Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?" (2004, 102). She contends that the concept of kinship is potentially more expansive than a narrow focus on marriage would allow:

> If we understand kinship as a set of practices that institutes relationships of various kinds which negotiate the reproduction of life and the demands of death, then kinship practices will be those that emerge to address fundamental forms of human dependency, which may include birth, child rearing, relations of emotional dependency and support, generational ties, illness, dying, and death (to name a few). (Butler 2004, 102–3, emphasis added)

Two terms are of particular importance here: what Butler calls "kinship practices" and the "fundamental forms of human dependency" to which these practices respond (2004, 103). Kinship practices are defined as a variety of activities that meet the needs of others within a given kin structure. The act of doing this, creates and sustains kin relationships. To say that "kinship is a kind of *doing*", indicates that it is constituted performatively through reiterative actions (Butler 2004, 123 emphasis in original). Relating back to her work in *Gender Trouble*, the idea of performativity indicates the way that identities become intelligible by recognizably citing the norms prescribed in the "heterosexual matrix" (Butler 1990, 6). Performativity also leaves open the possibility for reiterating the prescription of this matrix unfaithfully. This means that performances can constitute and widen cracks in that matrix which creates space practices that can subvert it.

Since the requirement for legibility is the intelligibility within that heterosexual matrix, however, the practices that constitute kinship are to the point that leads Butler to claim that "kinship is always already heterosexual" (Butler 2004, 123). This statement does not mean that kinship relations that are not heterosexual do not exist. Rather, it indicates that for these relationships to become legible *as kinship* (and not, for instance, merely friendship), they need

to recognizably reference kinship practices that are inscribed as heterosexual. Even if a performative iteration of kinship empirically does not conform to heteronormativity, this does not negate that the definition of what legitimate kinship is remains indebted to that normative framework. Butler states to this effect: "The social variability of kinship has little or no efficacy in rewriting the founding an pervasive symbolic law" (2004, 124). This can extend, too, to not shaking the position of the nuclear family within the societal division of labor. That is, the married household continues to hold a privileged place even as more same-sex couples enter its doors. The role of the family in assuming responsibility over particular forms of labor will be made more concrete in section 2 of this chapter, as well as in chapter 2. For now, it suffices to say that the normative parameters performatively cited by kinship practices "hegemonic rather than totalizing in its reach" (Butler 1990, 53). This means that the possibility is left open to unfaithfully cite and therefore subvert the symbolic law that Butler describes. For this reason, it becomes possible to practice kinship in ways that make reference to but subvert the heterosexual nuclear norm.

Kinship is not only performative, but it is structured to respond to "fundamental forms of human dependency" (Butler 2004, 103). On the one hand, this defines human existence as fundamentally dependent or vulnerable. This means that practices that mitigate this dependency cannot be merely abandoned without adequate replacement. On the other hand, throughout Butler's analysis it becomes clear that kinship is not reducible to its heteronormative variant. Even as the nuclear family is hegemonic, the possibilities for responding to fundamental human dependency can extend beyond it. Nonetheless, if kinship is to be normatively tasked with the mediation of human dependency, and different forms of kinship are rendered legible and legitimate to different extents, then the normative regulation of kinship impacts the possibility of people's fundamental needs being met. In other words, if kinship is the chief institution that mediates this dependence, then differential recognition of kinship relations should be seen as a central way in which life chances are hierarchically distributed.

The problem of dependency that roots this definition of kinship can be related to Butler's later work on "precarity" and "precariousness". In *Frames of War*, Butler defines *precariousness* as a basic ontological status of vulnerability that "imposes an obligation upon us" (2009a, 2). By virtue of being alive, we are vulnerable to each other. Mediated and potentially mitigated by institutional and interpersonal relationships of support, these can fail or be withdrawn. This works to increase or decrease precariousness. *Precarity*, on the other

hand, characterizes the hierarchical organization of social life, according to which some people's lives are rendered more precarious than others. In other words, while all living beings have in common a basic ontological vulnerability, some experience heightened vulnerability because they are constituted as expendable. Thus, performativity and precarity are related because the norms governing identities function through the hierarchical distribution of precarity. The norms that govern intelligible gender presentation and legitimate kin relationships, Butler clarifies, function through being embedded in material conditions. That is, membership in an ontological category defined as worthy of protection constitute the parameters of survival. This hinges also on the legible citation of the norms that govern category membership. In this sense, survival through access to material conditions of support requires entering into legitimate subjectivity and, "to be a subject at all requires first complying with certain norms that govern recognition – that make a person recognizable" (Butler 2009b, iv). As mentioned above, the recognizable mode of kinship is one that sufficiently references heterosexuality. Consequently, the legal recognition of non-heterosexual kinship relations is a contradictory affair. On the one hand, it promises real material benefits. These facilitate adequate responses to the forms of human dependency Butler describes and therefore partially intervene in precarious conditions. On the other hand, however, any demand for inclusion into an existing heteronormative institution runs the risk of losing its transgressive potential. Instead of subverting the kinship form of the married nuclear family, including same-sex couples in the institution of marriage merely inflates that form. Butler argues that this further excludes those who cannot or do not wish to organize their kinship relations this way and fails to intervene in the definition of kinship as chiefly *heterosexual* arrangements. The expansion of marriage therefore fails to contest the heterosexual symbolic order. Accordingly, it does not intervene in the ontological hierarchy that defines some as more precarious than others. In other words, it does not fundamentally subvert the condition by which married couples are defined as worthy of more social protection than unmarried people living in other kinship constellations.

Politically, demanding inclusion into the married nuclear family forecloses the possibility of a more fundamental critique of the desirability of the couple-form to organize "the reproduction of life" (Butler 2004, 103). In this account, the focus on marriage in LGBTQ+ emancipatory politics, obscures the way the structure of the married nuclear family is embedded in broader processes of social exclusion. If the debate around kinship becomes reduced to questions of marriage or raising children, then this only reifies the "lost horizon of

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radical sexual politics" (Butler 2004, 130). That is, it foregoes redefining the normative parameters of defining kinship and accepts the epistemological framework of heteronormativity. As Clare Chambers argues, it restricts the discussion of kinship to a narrative of love and personal choice instead of contesting the concentration of privileges within the boundaries of the nuclear family (2017). This only strengthens the exclusionary nature of the family form and sustains its central contradiction: it concentrates kinship responsibility in an expanding number of limited family units. That is, it continues to exclude people but only grows in importance as a pillar that upholds society as more people are able to fit into the family form it prescribes.

Understanding the full extent of this contradiction requires a look at the family's broader conditions of possibility. This, in turn, is facilitated by briefly considering Butler's own foray into situating her theory of identity and kinship in relation to a theory of material conditions. In her essay "Merely Cultural" that a perceived "resurgence of leftist orthodoxy" has attempted to undermine poststructuralist analyses of culture and gender (1997, 268). Butler insists that, instead of distinguishing between material inequality and cultural normativity, the two should be seen as more intimately linked. Drawing on insights from socialist feminists of the 1970s and 1980s, she argues that gender and sexuality play a part in production. This is enabled through the organization of kinship, which she gleans from her reading of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Accordingly, she argues that kinship and sexual practices constitute a point of contact between the organization of sociality and the economy in a way that paradigmatically informed feminist theory. In Butler's account, Lévi-Strauss' approach provides a necessary insight into the inseparability of culture and economy to understand gendered subordination.

In the process of making her argument, Butler refers to Nancy Fraser's *Justice Interruptus* (1997) as indicative of a contemporary Leftist disregard for the material effects of seemingly cultural elements such as gender. She does not read in Fraser an egregious disregard of gendered difference that other Marxist theorists expose. Rather, Butler argues that Fraser's conceptual distinction between "recognition" and "redistribution" aligns with an epistemological distinction between culture and materiality that Butler understands as enabling those other approaches (Butler 1997, 273). In her response, Fraser expresses surprise that her work would be centered in a critique of "neoconservative Marxists" and their disregard for gender and sexuality (Fraser 1997, 279). She makes clear that she shares many of Butler's political commitments, such as her attempt to bring Marxist and socialist feminist thinking to bear on political questions of the day. Nonetheless, she diverges on a number of points. She

disagrees with Butler on what to gain from socialist feminism and finds her reading to reproduce a functionalist account of the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy. She also differs on the method of analysis which she supports through a defense of her fundamental concepts; to distinguish "misrecognition" and "maldistribution" does not attempt to subordinate the former to the latter as a more fundamental form of inequality (Fraser 1997, 280). Instead, she conceptually distinguishes them to be able to better grasp their distinct functioning in specific social formations. Unlike in Butler's reading of this distinction, Fraser contends that the "patterns of disrespect and disesteem" that she associates with misrecognition can become institutionalized and then result in material maldistribution through economic and legal channels (Fraser 1997, 280). Nonetheless, they are better understood in their specificity so that they can be analyzed as distinct, if interrelated, processes.

As already mentioned, Fraser concludes that her approach differs from Butler's chiefly in regard to methodology. This becomes clearest in Butler's reading of Lévi-Strauss, which Fraser interprets to be de-historicizing. While attempting to relate norms of sexuality to material and economic processes is something Fraser endorses, she ultimately sees Butler as failing because of the way she applies an analysis of pre-capitalist social formations (such as the ones studied by Lévi-Strauss) to capitalist societies. In Fraser's view, Lévi-Strauss' conclusions on the relationship between culture and economy through the prism of kinship cannot hold for social relationships in capitalism, where economy and culture are distinguished more sharply. A historicized approach, rather than Butler's "destabilization or deconstruction", can more adequately grasp the evolving relationship between economy and culture and the social justice concerns that emerge alongside them (Fraser 1997, 287).

While Fraser and Butler diverge in their methods and their theoretical homes, they agree on the necessity of integrating the analysis of identity in a thorough analysis of material conditions. It is this overlap in topic, rather than method, that grounds the juxtaposition here. For the purposes of my exploration on the conditions of possibility for the nuclear family, the account on this point has focused primarily on the normative parameters that shape it. As the debate between Butler and Fraser has indicated however, the issue of material conditions has been largely left from view. Accordingly, the next section will outline a conceptualization of the relationship between cultural and material conditions, with particular attention to the family. This will be chiefly carried out through the nexus of *social reproduction*. In Butler's approach to kinship, this concept has appeared in a latent form. As the following exploration will show, what Butler describes as kinship practices can be conceptualized with an eye to its

role in capitalism through the reproductive labor discussed in Marxist and Marxist feminist traditions. At the same time, the issue of heteronormativity cannot be entirely excluded from sight and we will be able to see how socialist feminist approaches to reproduction take up many of the points that Butler locates at the core of her definition of kinship practices.

2. Is a queer feminist materialism possible?

> If the formal economy is the production site for goods and services, the people who produce such things are themselves produces outside the ambit of the formal economy, in a 'kin-based' site called the family.
>
> (Tithi Bhattacharya *Social Reproduction Theory* 2017b, 3)

Louis Althusser's *On the Reproduction of Capitalism* ([1995] 2014) presents an incisive exploration of reproduction in which he argues that no social formation can exist without being productive. To enable this, a social formation needs to "*reproduce* the conditions of its production" (Althusser 2014, 48 emphasis in original). The term reproduction refers to two distinct but interrelated processes, namely the reproduction of labor power and the reproduction of the capitalist relations of production. In the former, the needs of the worker are met in so far as is necessary to ensure their continued capacity to carry out waged productive work. In the latter, the social conditions in which this work takes place are maintained, which includes the normative and ideological structures that guarantee this. In Althusser's account, the reproduction of labor power is mediated by wages. This wage enables the worker to acquire the necessary resources reproduce *himself* so that he can "present himself at the factory gate again *the next day*" (Althusser [1995] 2014, 49–50 emphasis in original). The use of the masculine in this description is indicative of more than merely a literal translation of the grammatical gender in the French original text. More importantly, it can indicate that the worker discussed by Althusser is assumed to be male. The labor at the center of this analysis is the productive labor in the factory, in a way that obscures the labor that has to take place to transform the wage received by the worker into the actual use value that sustain him. In other words, the worker who is assumed to be male has reproductive labor tacitly provided to him by an unpaid laborer conspicuous in her theoretical absence. By failing to develop in more detail what has to occur between wage payment and the worker's reproduced labor power,

Althusser generates a black hole between the paid wage and the worker who returns to the factory fed and well rested in the morning.

In an attempt to reconcile feminist principles with an analysis of capitalism, this reproductive myopia has since caught the attention of Marxist feminists. Tithi Bhattacharya's recent edited volume *Social Reproduction Theory* (2017) collects recent interventions in Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) to fill this gap. Initially, she maintains Althusser's distinction between "societal and social reproduction" (Bhattacharya 2017, 6). This places the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production on one side and the reproduction of labor power on the other. Maintaining this distinction does not mean that the two kinds of reproduction are conceived as distinct processes. Instead, the SRT perspective understands reproduction as a process occurring on two related levels: the reproduced labor power of the worker and the systemic reproduction of overarching social relations. While Althusser relegates the labor that goes into these processes of social reproduction into a black box, Bhattacharya points out that much of this labor takes place in the "kin-based site called the family" (2017, 3). To situate this reproductive site in its broader material context of capitalism, the following section parses out how this location of social reproduction has been theorized by divergent views in Marxist, socialist, and materialist feminist theory. This serves to highlight components determining the normative constraints on kinship which the poststructuralist approach above did not attempt to conceptualize.

2.1.   Marxism, Feminism, and Social Reproduction

In her article "A Materialist Feminism is Possible" (1980), Christine Delphy defines and defends the French feminist brand of materialist feminism to which she subscribes. According to Delphy, patriarchy constitutes a "domestic mode of production" (Delphy 1980, 80). This exists in a way that is structurally the same but spatially distinct from the mode of production in which male Marxists conceptualize the exploitation of male workers. That is, within her framework it becomes possible to conceive of a particular form of "patriarchal exploitation" which exists alongside the capitalist mode of production and comes "with its own material base" (Delphy 1980, 102). In another canonical essay, American economist Heidi Hartmann laments that the interaction between Marxism and feminism has frequently led the analysis of class conflict to take precedent over women's liberation (1979). Conversely, when radical feminism argues that the "basic class division is between the sexes", it foregoes a historical analysis of patriarchy in favor of a chiefly psychological theory of men's domination over

women (H. I. Hartmann 1979, 10). Hartmann develops her argument by applying historical materialist categories of analysis to patriarchy, such as "laws of motion of a patriarchal system", "contradictions", indicating that her analysis of women's oppression is at the very least informed by those analyses (1979, 22). At the same time, she maintains a clear distinction between the two systems, although a "healthy and strong partnership exists between patriarchy and capital" (H. I. Hartmann 1979, 14). For example, patriarchal control over women can play out through the organization of labor, as when men refuse to do housework at the expense of their wives. Notwithstanding, their interests can sometimes be at odds. Capital's imperative for waged labor can be problematic for patriarchy's imperative committing women to unwaged work in the home. To mitigate this, the two systems "adjust" to each other, as patriarchy "reinforces capitalist control, and capitalist values shape the definition of patriarchal good" (H. I. Hartmann 1979, 17, 21). When women do unwaged work for their husbands, they are "serv[ing] two masters": male domination and capitalist production (H. I. Hartmann 1979, 15). Male domination and capitalist exploitation are distinct but exist in a relationship in which they are beneficial to each other.

Although posing different conceptualizations of the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy, the above perspectives have become characterized as "dual-systems" analyses (Young 1997, 95). According to Iris Marion Young, the difficulty with these approaches is the way they merely transpose the existing Marxist analysis of capitalism and historical progress onto the specificities of female oppression. Her argument allows that different dual-systems approaches may conceptualize the relation between capitalism and patriarchy differently, as the above approaches by Delphy and Hartmann would bear out. She nonetheless concludes that they avoid a structural integration of gender and other identity markers into an analysis of the functioning of capitalism. In dual-systems theories, patriarchy ends up being posited as existing entirely independently from the economic system of capitalism. This results in an analysis that "allows Marxism to retain in basically unchanged form its theory of economic and social relations, onto which it merely grafts a theory of gender relations" (Young 1997, 98). In this way, the framework's blind spots are retained in its critique.

Linda Nicholson has made attempts from the perspective of feminist Critical Theory to at least partially rehabilitate approaches like the one taken by Delphy and Hartmann. In her estimation, the structure of these theories can be explained by the fact that they originally arose to critique mainstream Marxism by account for its theoretical gaps concerning reproductive labor and gender (Nicholson 1996). Nonetheless, as Susan Ferguson and David McNally point out, methodological limitations remain when capitalism and patriarchy are seen as distinct

systems that merely interact rather than being integrated (2013). This shortcoming maintains even if patriarchy is framed in economic terms (as in Delphy's domestic mode of production) or is a chiefly cultural phenomenon (which Young criticizes).

Marxist feminists since then have continued to attempt integrating analysis of capitalism and patriarchy. The Wages for Housework campaign has been incredibly influential on this terrain. Initiated by the International Feminist Collective, of which Silvia Federici was a founding member, the campaign sought to bring attention to the exploitation of unwaged workers that mainstream Marxism had left out of their narrow definition of class. Accordingly, their revolutionary class were housewives. As Federici put it in her seminal essay "Wages Against Housework", the "cooking, smiling, fucking" of countless wives that reproduce the lives and labor power of their husbands is in fact equally productive as the work in factories (Federici [1974] 2012, 82). In a recent review of debates around reproductive labor, Federici points out that the political and theoretical goal of the Wages for Housework campaign was to promote the idea "that every mother is a working woman and a producer of wealth" (Federici 2019, 56). Federici, Dalla Costa and James align themselves critically with the autonomist Marxist tradition. Adapting from Carmen Teeple Hopkins' definition (2016), I define their approach as Autonomist Feminist Marxism (AFM). This resembles Delphy's argument that housework is also economically productive, but they arrive at this point via a different path. For autonomist Marxists [4], the focus of social analysis lies on labor and specifically "the conflict between those who create and those who appropriate" commodities (Teeple Hopkins 2016, 123). This insight explains the focus of the Wages for Housework feminists on defining housework as productive work. The struggle between worker and employer is at the forefront of their social analysis. If the women doing housework cannot be defined as participating in this struggle, it is impossible to frame them as participants in society. Unwaged work in the home, Federici argued, was just as much work as what their male husbands and sons were doing in the factory (Federici 2012b). In Delphy's case, she also centers a struggle over work, but situates the social opposition somewhere else, namely between men and women. In AFM, to demand wages for this work makes it visible *as* work instead of conceiving it as the

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[4] Carmen Teeple Hopkins concisely describes the ways in which the autonomist *feminist* Marxists distinguish themselves from their male autonomist Marxist colleagues. Specifically, she argues that the AFM approach to what Mario Tronti dubbed the "social factory" departs significantly from the way their male colleagues employed the term (Teeple Hopkins 2016, 127). With that term, the male autonomist Marxists attempted to expand the understanding of production beyond the walls of the factory into society. That is, production does not merely play out within the walls of the factory but relies on an extended social fabric. Society, and not just the building, constitutes the factory. In AFM, this insight is taken on board and then further specified to capture the labor that takes place in this expanded factory floor (Teeple Hopkins 2016; Federici 2019). In other words, not just the space of production but the labor of production is expanded in the AFM account.

naturalized responsibility of the housewife. This re-definition through the wage extends the terrain of political contestation to domestic labor and is therefore the first step towards abolishing this private form of social reproduction. In materialist feminism, this demand would not address the central issue of patriarchal exploitation.

Accordingly, AFM argues that housework is only ideologically framed as an unproductive labor of love so that capitalism can continue accumulating on the backs of wives and mothers who are "unwaged but happy" (Federici 2012b, 78). There are two key problems in this ideological disguising of housework: first, it obscures the fact that "housework as work is *productive* in the Marxian sense" (Dalla Costa and James 1975, 53). That means, just like work in the factory, it transforms use value into surplus value in the process of producing commodities. The commodities in this case are the satisfaction of the husband or the warm meal. Second, "[t]o have a wage means to be part of a social contract" (Federici 2012b, 76). The absence of a wage removes people from this contract and therefore undercuts the possibility for political contestation. As a result, autonomist feminists see the solution to capitalist exploitation in the refusal to participate in the "fraud that goes under the name of love and marriage", which is seen as a purely ideological distortion to coerce women into unwaged work (Federici 2012b, 82). In other words, for autonomist feminists, the key lies in creating communities that have withdrawn from the ideological forms that exist under capitalism. Organizing community-based childcare instead of childcare in the nuclear family, for example, can "produce a revolution in (…) our social power as women" (Federici 2012b, 75).

Instead of expanding the concept of production, as AFM does, in the perspective of Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) the two processes are maintained as distinct entities. Unlike the dual-systems materialist feminism of Delphy or Hartmann, it emerges primarily from the "unitary theory" approach to capitalism, influentially developed in Lise Vogel's *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (S. Ferguson and McNally 2013, xvii; Vogel 2013). Susan Ferguson defines reproductive work succinctly by saying that it "produce[s] life not value" (S. Ferguson 2019, 129). While the framework of AFM can define housework as productive (it produces the surplus value of the well-fed husband), for SRT the fact that housework and kin work satisfies needs renders it incomparable to the productive work in the factory. As a result, SRT sees a discrepancy opening up between work for the production of surplus value and reproductive work that satisfies needs.

This insight draws on the Marxist analysis of production as organized in specific social relations. Value production, Ferguson argues, needs both direct productive work and work that aims at the reproduction of labor power, which is structurally different. Unlike productive

labor, reproductive labor is contradictory and ambiguous. Although capitalist production requires labor power to be reproduced, reproductive labor always also reproduces a "living human being, whose life needs can and will assert themselves against capital time and again" (S. Ferguson 2019, 126). In this sense, the social relationships in which reproduction is organized, are ambivalently related to capital. Although reproductive labor has played out in a number of institutions, the family and its "household has been essential to the reproduction of both sides of the equation – capital and labor" (Mohandesi and Teitelman 2017, 39). Because it is built to organize reproductive labor and in the SRT perspective reproductive labor is contradictory, the household comes to internalize the contradiction of reproductive labor. In this sense, the family, just like reproductive labor itself, stands in an ambiguous relationship to capitalism. On the one hand, capitalism relies on it. On the other hand, the fact that it satisfies human needs that extend beyond it, means that reproductive institutions hold the potential for resistance. Working class survival facilitated through the household is therefore at once necessary to maintain the capitalist system and at odds with its interests of unfettered accumulation.

As a result of this contradiction of social reproduction, the SRT conception of struggle against capital looks different than the AFM approach. For AFM, liberation is achieved by gaining freedom from the ideologically imposed forms of production which compel women to work in the home. This plays out as a revolutionary struggle over the conflicting interests of workers and employers. The assumption is that, outside of the capitalist relationship between worker-employer, the reproduction of life can take on an emancipatory form. For SRT on the other hand, liberation is achieved through a "collective *struggle against* capital" from within it (S. Ferguson 2019, 133). This results in a resistance against the capitalist subsumption of reproductive labor and form of relating. Because reproductive labor is ambiguous, strategies of resistance can be enacted by leaning into the contradiction of reproductive labor. In other words, to assert the satisfaction of people's needs means leaning into the contradiction between the reproduction of labor power and the production for capital. For the SRT perspective, potential for this lies uniquely within institutions designed to organize reproductive labor because they embody the contradictory nature of reproductive labor. In this discussion, the nuclear family emerged as a unit with a specifically reproductive function. Therefore, it also provides a potential site for disruption. However, this can only explain one half of the equation: structures that carry out reproductive labor are necessary for the reproduction of capitalism.

Beyond simplistic reductions to biological reproduction[5], this does not yet why these institutions are organized in specifically heteronormative ways. To this we turn now.

2.2.   More than just economies

In Queer Marxism (QM), these processes are situated within a critique of social formations like racism and heteronormativity. Importantly, these areas of concern are not forgotten by social reproduction theorists. Recent work comes to mind such as Bhattacharya's deep reading of Marx' economic theory that integrates class within social relations of race and global trade relations (Bhattacharya 2017a). Similarly, Alan Sears situates the hegemonic reproduction of sexual identity within a specifically capitalist context (Sears 2015). However, in the words of Rosemary Hennessy, thinking about social reproduction in a queer Marxist framework enables the appreciation that both "social reproduction and social change take place across social structures and human relations" (Hennessy 2006, 378). That is, social transformation has to intervene in social relations in a way that goes beyond merely changing the social organization of labor that accompanies the capitalist mode of production. To launch a queer Marxist critique means to articulate more than just a "desire for other, more just economies" (Dhawan et al. 2015, 1). Instead, it requires thinking about the realization of other, not directly economic, needs and desires. This has to rise to a complex challenge: to unite an analysis of the reproduction of labor and society with an analysis of the heteronormative regulation of desire and relationships. Accordingly, a queer Marxist account needs to reckon with the fact that "[a]s human beings we work and desire, we have needs and sensations – all at the same time" (Hennessy 2006, 388). In my reading, a queer Marxist analysis can be read as a 'yes, and' to SRT. They are both present on each other's theoretical horizons as both are capable of situating identity in relation to the social relations of production. However, they allocate their analytical weight differently: SRT puts weight on an analysis of the relations of production and reproduction while QM puts weight on the analysis of identity within those relations.

The first foray into a queer theoretical approach to capital is guided by Roderick Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black* (2004). Not strictly a queer Marxist, his Queer of Color Critique that "disidentifies with historical materialism" nonetheless critically intervenes in Marxist thought and therefore bears mentioning here (R. Ferguson 2004, 5). At the outset of this chapter, the welfare state was mentioned in the way it explicitly or implicitly creates

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[5] On this note, however, Bhattacharya pointed out that the nuclear family is not the only way by which labor power is reproduced (2017b). In the context of capitalism's globalized accumulation, slavery has also been a central way in which new labor power has been procured.

conditions of possibility for specific forms of kinship. A combination of assuming or refusing reproductive responsibility in conjunction with the legal regulation of relationships weaves together cultural and material strands into a tapestry that pervades kinship. The difficulties of distinguishing and then relating these strands to each other has resurfaced repeatedly throughout the ensuing discussion. Ferguson's account of the role of the state, heteronormativity, and racism in the capitalist mode of production can provide necessary context to these considerations.

His argument departs from a critical analysis of what he identifies as a naturalizing impulse in Marx' account of the impact of capital on human relationships. Specifically, in *The German Ideology* and *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Ferguson finds Marx positing a natural unity between humans and nature that is then disrupted by capital (Marx and Engels 1974; Marx 1964). The relationship between humans and nature is defined by Marx as analogous to the "direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person [which] is *the relation of man to woman*" (Marx quoted in R. Ferguson 2004, 7). This is the foundational unity which capital disrupts. Ferguson argues that departing from this naturalized, heterosexual unity means that Marx is reproducing the exact bourgeois ideology of his liberal predecessors such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo. It is emblematic of this that even Marx' writing in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* identifies the existence of urban sex workers as indicative of the negative effect of capital on ordered and sustainable social relations. As Ferguson summarizes: "The prostitute proves capital's defilement of man" (R. Ferguson 2004, 4). In doing so, bourgeois heterosexuality is seen as the norm that capital disrupts so that Marx ultimately makes "the heteronormative subject the goal of liberal and radical politics" (R. Ferguson 2004, 10). The ostensibly unbridled sexuality of the sex workers became a symbol of similarly disquieting developments in working-class women. Ferguson argues that this ultimately also devalued Black women's sexuality in coded form, although not explicitly addressed by Marx. In both images, capital has disrupted previously unified social relations. While Marx integrates this assessment into a critique of capitalism, he perhaps inadvertently aligns himself with the perspective of his liberal counterparts. In both, a specifically white image of legitimate bourgeois sexuality is presented as the lost object to be regained.

To counter this supposed social disruption, the state assumes the role of a universalizing agent. Capital creates the particularities of property, education, or religion, as Marx writes, to which Ferguson adds the particularities of race, gender, and sexuality. The state responds to this by reasserting the lost form of bourgeois unity through imposing the "universality of the

citizen" (R. Ferguson 2004, 12). In other words, capital is not primarily interested in race and gender. It functions primarily via an "amoral logic" that seeks to reproduce labor power (R. Ferguson 2004, 16). In the interest of accumulating surplus value, capital will therefore transcend "boundaries of age, home, race, and nation" that bourgeois morality would otherwise wish to maintain (R. Ferguson 2004, 16). If capital transgresses racial and gendered boundaries, making use of ever more abject social groups for cheap and available labor power, the state stands in opposition to this by reaffirming an "illusory universality" (R. Ferguson 2004, 17). In the case of New Deal welfare policies in the US, for example, the white, middle-class nuclear family becomes the universal against which other forms of kinship and identity are actively delegitimized. This was not a merely symbolic legitimation; it constituted non-normative forms of kinship as materially abject, by reserving the resources for social reproduction exclusively for white single-earner households.

As a result, a contradictory relationship emerges between unity and particularity, capital accumulation and state regulation, normativity and normative transgression. The ruptures of capital do not decimate identity, but they reproduce new forms of racial, gendered, and sexual identities. These ruptured identities come to assume the constitutive outside of "the sanctity of 'community', 'family', and 'nation'" (R. Ferguson 2004, 17). That is, the instability of capital transgressions constitute the particularized opposite of state-driven universality. In this context, racial formations that are nonheteronormative present the "historic accumulation of contradictions" (R. Ferguson 2004, 17). Ferguson develops this phrasing out of Louis Althusser's discussion of the conditions transforming the social conditions of capitalism (1969). In Althusser's argument, the continued conditions of possibility for capitalism are curtailed when enough contradictions have accumulated to form a significant rupture. Ferguson interprets this as explaining the contradictory status of nonheteronormative racial formations: they are at once subjugated as well as implicated in such accumulated contradictions to also enable overcoming the conditions of their subjugation. This contradictory status exists in the nexus between capital destabilization and the re-stabilization of the liberal state.

The reproduction of labor power, which Ferguson describes as the "production of labor", forms a key component in these contradictory relations (2004, 14). In this context, the family emerges as not just an image of unity to be maintained and regained at the expense of nonheteronormative, racialized others. It also resurfaces in light of its reproductive role, as introduced in the socialist feminist perspective above. As the Wages for Housework campaign indicated, the home is a location of production without which for-profit productive labor could

not occur (Federici 2012b). As SRT further specified, the form of reproductive labor that takes place in the home forms an integral pre-condition for productive labor (Mohandesi and Teitelman 2017). At the same time, the way it functions to satisfy the needs of workers it stands in potential opposition to capitalist production. Read together with Ferguson's analysis, the family emerges as uniting a symbolic and material function within. Symbolically, it is one institution participating in the reproduction of the universalized, white, heterosexual bourgeois citizen. Materially, it provides the conditions for continued capitalist accumulation. In this sense, although the family is ostensibly private, it appears to be participating in decidedly public processes. By uniting the two within the same overarching process through the mechanism of state regulation, Ferguson's approach appears to aligns with the unitary theory interpretation of SRT. Capital and patriarchy do not function as distinct processes (Vogel 2013; Young 1997). In other words, what in SRT is posted as the integrated functioning of capital and patriarchy, Ferguson's framework can further narrow done by ascribing this interaction to mechanisms of stabilization of the liberal state. the middle of this interaction, the family emerges as not entirely private. Although ostensibly playing out in the private sphere, it plays a role in reproducing the conditions of existence for capitalism, the liberal state, and its own role between in between the two.

While in the preceding account the family plays a role in shaping structures that lie outside of it, the opposite is true as well. Any discussion of the normative regulation of kinship could not avoid the ways in which it is, in turn, shaped by those same structures. Here, Butler's conceptualization of the family returns. In her account, kinship structures are designed to respond to "fundamental forms of human dependency" (Butler 2004, 103). The way in which they actually do this, however, is determined by the "hegemonic structure of patriarchy" (Butler 1990, 6). When Ferguson speaks of the regulating and universalizing function of the state in response to the destabilizing drive of capital, then the normative regulation of kinship is a prominent way in which this occurs. As his account foregrounds, this is not an issue restrained merely to the regulation of sexuality but plays out along racialized modes of difference too. In this sense, the private sphere of kinship is regulated by publicly governed mechanisms of normativity.

The active role that Ferguson attributes to capital is something that Butler's poststructuralist approach did not attempt to conceptualize in the same way. As the debate between Butler and Fraser indicated, however, the role of materiality in the normative regulation of both gender and kinship cannot be merely sidelined. Kevin Floyd's analysis in

The Reification of Desire (2009) provides one such account of situating Butler in an analysis of capitalism. Floyd's proposition lies in interpenetrating Marxian and poststructuralist analyses. This responds to many of those issues covered in the debate between Butler and Fraser on the relationship between culture and materiality raised in the Butler and Fraser debate. He reads Butler's analysis of performatively constituted gender to be "mediated by capital" rather than rendering an analysis of capitalism "unspeakable" as critics have levelled against her (Floyd 2009, 81). Instead, he advances the claim that "capital is not simply incidental to her analysis of the performative subject but simultaneously excluded from it and constitutive of it" (Floyd 2009, 96). As Floyd grants, this assessment requires reading Butler in a way that has "critically and dialectically appropriated" her analysis to a certain degree (2009, 83). In appropriating Butler this way, Floyd attempts to expand both her theoretical purview as well as that of a classically Marxist account of society. Rather than indicating an unwillingness to let go of Butler's theoretical contributions, Floyd pursues his analysis with the intention of supplementing her poststructuralist theory of identity. His analysis of capital ties into what he sees as implied, but intentionally not further developed, components of her account of performativity.

Butler's reading of Louis Althusser in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997b) forms the base of Floyds analysis of capitalism in her work. She draws specifically on Althusser's theory of subjectivation as the "corporeal mastery" of ideologically posited practices (Floyd 2009, 95). In (Floyd's account of) her interpretation, to master a practice posited by ideology has two paradoxical effects: it constitutes a subject subjugated to a norm but this subjugation only functions by the subject mastering that very norm. That is, to performatively reiterate a given practice is to execute "skilled labor" characterized by the embodied knowledge (skill) of the content of that practice (Floyd 2009, 94). Put briefly, submission requires mastery. Capital is not incidental to this process but presents its constitutive outside. Floyd concludes this based on Butler's assertion that gender performativity plays out amid multiple forms of signification that extend beyond the heterosexual matrix. Capital presents one fundamental sphere of these extended forms of signification. He finds evidence for this in the way that Butler reads Althusser. We can recall here Althusser's theory on the reproduction of the conditions of possibility for the capitalist mode of production. For a social formation, including capitalism, to continue existing, it must "*reproduce* the conditions of its production" (2014, 48). We can recall, also, that there are two forms of social reproduction that follow from Althusser's understanding: the reproduction of labor power and systemic reproduction. When Butler

stresses the importance of specifically skilled labor for the reproduction of subjugated subjectivities, she situates her thinking in the context of the latter. That is, the condition for the continued existence of, in Butler's account, regimes of subjugation, is that their norms are acquired as skills to be performatively reiterated. In other words, for a system to continue existing, the norms that it posits need to be learned to the extent that they can be enacted spontaneously as forms of embodied knowledge. Floyd reads Butler and Althusser as agreeing on the skilled labor of subjectivation. Both Butler's performatively constituted and Althusser's interpellated subject operate "at some structural distance (…) from the direct employment of labor by capital" (Floyd 2009, 96). That is, in both cases the labor they describe is not reducible to reproductive labor on the level of labor power. Instead, they both describe subjectivation (the reproduction of subjectivity) at the level of systemic reproduction.

In Floyd's reading, Butler and Althusser diverge on the role they afford to the reproduction of labor power within their discussion of systemic reproduction. Althusser's concept of the "*interpellated subject*" operates at a distance from capital because it is chiefly concerned with the reproduction of systemic conditions (Floyd 2009, 96). At the same time, the reproduction of labor power continues to be central in his theory of capitalism. Floyd therefore concludes that Althusser develops a theory of a subject distinct from capital, as the reproduction of subjectivity is divorced from the reproduction of labor power. Butler's contribution in this context is to push this distance from capital even further: if Althusser develops a subject distinct from capital, Floyd finds in Butler's theory of the skilled performative iteration of gendered practices a form of "*labor* without capital" (Floyd 2009, 96). Where her critics might find this distance to be obscuring the relation between subjectivation and capital, Floyd finds this distinction uniquely useful. The clue for Floyd lies in an attempt "to read this distance [between subject and capital] as determine, to read it as mediation" (2009, 97). That is, the distance is not a shortcoming of Butler's analysis but indicative of the particular way in which capital mediates the performativity of gender. Exactly her limited scope that does not attempt to analyze capitalist totality assists in an understanding of the effect of capital on the constitution of gender.

To better understand what Floyd is arguing here, we need to turn briefly to his reading of the concept of reification. Influentially developed by Georg Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*, Floyd reads the concept against the grain (Lukács 1971). In developing the concept, Lukács drew on the historical development of Taylorism, a North American theory to increase production efficiency through its scientific management. Worker's skilled labor was extracted and externalized in machine-driven production processes. This subordination of

workers to the minute management of production resulted in a state where "knowledge is expropriated from [worker's] bodies" (Floyd 2009, 45). Knowledge and skills that were previously an endemic part of workers are now extracted and invested into an abstract system that controls them. On the base of this, reification is frequently framed in a negative light, as is evidenced in critiques of "instrumental reason" in Frankfurt School Critical Theory (Floyd 2009, 26). In Critical Theory, reification plays a role in ideologically obscuring processes that constitute the social totality, and in that sense also hinders political action that could transform them. This approach also appears in more recent feminist Critical Theory. Hanna Meissner, for example, describes reification as the process by which "people have let themselves become reduced (…) to objects in blindly mechanical economic dynamics" (Meissner 2019, 244 my translation).

Floyd draws a slightly different conclusion. He bases this on a comparison between reification and another process of what he calls "epistemological objectification": the scientific definition of sexuality around the 18th and 19th centuries described in Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (Floyd 2009, 45). In Floyd's comparison, the scientific management of production processes in Lukács and the scientific codification of sexuality in Foucault are comparable processes of extracting knowledge from bodies. In the case of Lukács this is the worker's skill and in the case of Foucault the embodied knowledge of desire. By isolating sexuality from the body as a distinct scientific category instead of embodied knowledge, an individual's knowledge over their own desire is extracted and externalized. In other words, it is reified. While Lukács acknowledges that reification allows for subjugated subjects to gain a specific critical vantage on society through the "proletarian standpoint"[6], Floyd proposes an expansion of this conclusion by linking it to an objective process of subjectivation (Floyd 2009, 11). That is, what in Lukács is a subjective epistemological effect becomes an objective ontological outcome for Floyd. This distinction between subjective and objective draws on Lukács' own distinction between the two. Floyd expands the objective effect of reification by way of a Foucauldian account of subject formation. Epistemological developments bring forth actual embodied identities and not only ideologically distorted views of social reality. In addition to the epistemological effects that Lukács describes, Floyd expands the concept of reification with

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[6] This concept has been central to the development of critical feminist epistemologies, for example in Nancy Hartsock's work (Hartsock 1983). In the feminist account, Lukács' *proletarian standpoint* forms the basis to conceptualize a feminist critical vantage point on social relations that exposes not only the exploitation of capitalism, but the oppression of patriarchy rooted in reproductive labor.

an account of subject formation, so that reification can be understood as a (epistemological) process with ontological effects.

Floyd's interpenetration of Lukács and Foucault allow him to argue that historically specific epistemological developments (Foucault) in the organization of labor (Lukács) constitute the conditions of possibility for a specific gendered ontology. Taylorism's scientific management of production extracted the knowledge of skilled labor from laboring bodies in the 19th century. In the 20th century, Floyd argues for a return of the body through forms of what we might call *re-skilled* "recreational labor" (2009, 108). In more recent post-industrial developments, skill has returned to the constitution of reified sexual identity. Butler's analysis of gender performativity that relies on the mastery of subjugating gender norms underlies Floyd's argumentation on this point. In this context, the "skilled labor" of gender performativity assumes a new meaning (Floyd 2009, 94). It does not just describe a process whereby subjugation to gendered norms also means becoming skilled in its normative parameters. Seen from the perspective of reification, it signals a bodily re-absorption of knowledge previously extracted from that same body. Floyd describes this form of gender performativity as *"labor* without capital" (Floyd 2009, 108). His definition hinges on a purposefully paradoxical reading of a Marxian definition of labor. The skilled labor of performatively constituted gender is labor, in accordance with Marx, because it transforms matter from one state to another. It generates gendered bodies alongside the "ontological illusion" that gendered identities preceded that labor (Floyd 2009, 108). That is, it produces both an effect and the illusion that it did not, in fact, produce anything. Against Marxian terms, however, this transformation occurs before entering into a relation to capital. Productive labor turns material into "formal equivalents" through the extraction of surplus value (Floyd 2009, 107). In the case of gender performativity, however, this reduction to equivalence occurs before and even entirely without that extraction. Instead, it merely "'transform[s] abstractions into abstractions'" (Floyd 2009, 107). That is, Floyd frames the labor of gendered subjectivation that Butler describes as always already abstract (there is no pre-labor referent) and nonetheless productive (it produces identity as the illusion of such a referent).

When Floyd says that Butler "productively limits her attention" he means that her framing of gendered performativity would lose from sight the specificity of reified practices being reabsorbed into the body as skills if it focused on the social totality instead (2009, 118). In other words, exactly because she does not analyze capitalist totality, her theory of subjectivation allows Floyd to develop an approach to identity in capitalism at the level of embodiment. As Lukács showed, scientifically managed capitalist production extracted

knowledge from the worker's body and externalized it within the production process. For this reason, a Butlerian analysis of the gendered body is at least latently concerned with capitalism too. Put differently: the economy, and in this case specifically the capitalist mode of production, can be read as surrounding identity[7]. As Floyd's reading of Lukács shows, this realization allows a complex appreciation of the relationship between the material and the normative. There is no straightforward functional reliance of one and the other. Instead, their interplay produces objective forms of being that could only be possible within the discreet contexts of the late industrial capitalist form of heteronormativity.

How can Floyd's "dialectically appropriated" reading of Butler contribute to an understanding of the relationship between capitalism and heteronormativity to understand the material context in which the normative regulation of kinship takes place (Floyd 2009, 83)? To begin answering this, and to bring together elements discussed in this chapter, the framework of SRT appears here again. When I first introduced debates in socialist feminism, I framed them as responding, although not always explicitly, to a myopia in Althusser's theory on the reproduction of capitalism. His theory of social reproduction sublimates reproductive labor into the wage. In this way, a space opens up between wage payment and the return to productive work of the reproduced wage recipient that is unaccounted for. To say that socialist feminists saw in Althusser an inadequate theorization of labor is truest of social reproduction theorists with their explicit focus on reproductive labor. In short, this inserts a theory of necessary reproductive labor into Althusser's theory of social reproduction.

By contrast, Floyd's reading of Butler frames her as intervening in Althusser's theory of identity. Where SRT expands Althusser's theory of social reproduction with a theory of specifically reproductive labor, Butler expands Althusser's theory of subjectivation with an elaborated account of the internal, affective, processes that underly it. As Floyd points out, a key thing she takes away from her reading of Althusser is the way he describes subjectivation

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[7] This point can be clarified by considering an opposite interpretation of the relationship between capitalism and identity such as Rosemary Hennessy's account provides. Her analysis can be read as remaining closer to a Marxist understanding of the relationship between the material and the cultural; rather than the economic conditions providing something like a backdrop to identity, she foregrounds material conditions which are surrounded and supplemented by cultural ones. This reversal of priorities is understandable because she does not pursue Floyd's interest in re-assessing the relationship of Marxist and poststructuralist social theory. As Hennessy puts it: "The 'real individuality' of our particular living personalities that accompanies labor power does so through the normative, symbolic meanings that are a sort of second skin. (…) It is supplemental in the sense that it is both necessary and a bonus, an aspect of a worker's subjectivity that can be managed and disciplined in ways that will potentially increase the value of the labor power the capitalist purchases" (Hennessy 2006, 390). For Floyd, capitalism is the context in which identities are constituted performatively. By contrast, in Hennessy, the material conditions structuring labor and the accumulation of value exist in the context of culture and identity. Hennessy's notion of the "second skin", at least at this point in her argumentation, sees identity as enabling capitalism. Floyd's account suggests a more fluid mutual reliance, perhaps a co-constitution, between the two.

as the "corporeal mastery" of ideologically posited practices (Floyd 2009, 95). That is, she both conceptualizes what his theory tacitly presupposes and relies on him to expand her own thinking. This is how she supplements her theory of gender performativity with the idea of the internalization of knowledge, resulting in gendered "skilled labor" (Floyd 2009, 94). That is, the internalization of ideology that Althusser attributes to subjectivation is comparable to learning the skills required to legitimately perform gender. This traces a line from normative interpellation to the acquisition of a skill, to its (performative) externalization in adequately skilled expressions of gender. In this extended sense, Butler can be read as inserting a theory of gendered labor into Althusser's theory of subjectivation.

This comparison proves informative to the question of kinship posed in this thesis. It may, also, provide a way to think of kinship in a way that does not have to see heteronormativity and capitalism as operating on two distinct planes. As Susan Ferguson argued, reproductive labor is internally contradictory (2019). In addition to reproducing labor power, it always also reproduces life in excess of this. This describes needs and wants that extend beyond the mere tank-refueling quality of replenished labor power. Thinking beyond her immediate conclusion, this excess of reproduction may be able to account for the constitution of identities and relationships. Butler's analysis of the effects of "kinship practices" would suggest that this is possible (2004, 103). That is, these practices do not merely provide reproductive services. They also create relationships in a normatively qualified sense: a tray of microwaved foods slapped lovelessly onto a dirty table constitutes a different kind of relationship entirely to a slowly cooked meal laid out carefully on a candlelit table.

Assisted with Floyd's argumentation, SRT and poststructuralism together can provide an articulation of how, exactly, the quality of reproductive practices comes to matter. Expanding SRT with poststructuralism can open up a space in which the excess of reproductive practices can provide a gap in which an account of identity and relationships may be situated. That is, the excess of labor power reproduced in reproductive practices can be conceptualized, with Butler, as a specifically relational component of reproduction. At first glance, to speak of a relational component of reproduction appears similar to the perspective in AFM, that the "cooking, smiling, fucking" of housewives is productive in the sense that Marxists describe factory work (Federici 2012b, 82). Floyd's conceptualization of gender performativity's skilled labor can shed a different light on this. Although he is not concerned with reproductive labor, his approach remains closer to the SRT distinction between productive and reproductive labor. The performative constitution of gender as well as the performative constitution of kinship

relations both take the form of labor before it enters into capital production. Nonetheless, this "*labor* without capital" is transformative, in that it generates relationships (Floyd 2009, 96). In this sense, the performative constitution of identities and relationships is compatible with maintaining a distinction between productive and reproductive labor. Like Floyd's labor without capital, SRT positions reproductive labor as occurring before the productive labor that transforms goods into commodities, thus producing surplus value. Nonetheless, for reproduction to work, it needs to have at least a minimum degree of relational components. This means that relational ties need to be at the very least transformed, if not produced out of nothing. Community is not produced in the way AFM presents its. Instead, to propose a phrase synthesized out of this discussion, it could be performatively reproduced. The fact that this process does not involve the valorization of capital makes it no less transformative. An added benefit is that the term does not rely on a pre-reified form of either identity or community to hold up to analytical muster. However, there is not only a gap in SRT that poststructuralism can fill. As Floyd shows in his contextualization of gender performativity, it becomes necessary to appreciate a theory of kinship contextualized in a similar manner. Read together with SRT, we can infer that kinship practices always also reproduce labor power. In other words, if reproductive practices can be read as also reproducing relationships, then the opposite may be true too: kinship practices always also produce something in excess of the kin relationships they constitute. They always also reproduce the conditions of possibility for capital.

In conclusion, this indicates the second central contradiction of kinship: kinship internalizes the contradictory nature of reproductive labor by always reproducing both labor power and its excesses. The normative consequences of this are subject of the first section in chapter 2. In anticipation, suffice it to say here that the quality of reproductive practices matters on a systemic level. The transformative impetus that this indicates, relies on the notion that kinship can only be transformed away from its affectively and reproductively isolated status when kinship *per se* is not the center of attention. In other words, to achieve change in the status quo where the nuclear family constitutes a *haven in a heartless world*, may require rendering the world that surrounds it less heartless.

Chapter 2: Kinship then and there

[T]here are some people around who constantly give care, who can't keep their hands closed, who just don't know how to say no. You might have thought they are from a patriarchal past, trapped in some female victim role. But care sluts are from the future! What they do makes sense. Just not here and now.

(Eva von Redecker *Hommage to Care Sluts* 2016, para.6)

The only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction.

(José Esteban Muñoz *Cruising Utopia* 2009, 22)

In the previous chapter, the nuclear family emerged at the intersection of a number of contradictions. On the one hand, even as the family assumes legitimacy because of its private status, its conditions of possibility are dependent on parameters that lie outside of, which partially take the form of the normative regulation of the state. On the other hand, reproductive labor within the family unit performatively reproduces labor power and in excess of this the relationships in which this plays out. The first contradiction situates the family in a contradictory relationship towards its constitutive outside. The second contradiction sketches a more fundamental contradiction endemic to the practices that sustain the institution. In the context of both, the process of meeting the needs of its members emerge on a contested terrain.

This chapter picks up where the previous one left off by exploring the consequences of these contradictions. That is, how do these contradictions relate to the potential untenability of the current form of nuclear family? To answer this question, this chapter first presents a sharpening of the contradictions introduced in chapter 1. The structure of the nuclear family relates to its systemic conditions of possibility which is itself beset by fundamental contradictions. As a result, it is situated as responding in a specifically socially mediated manner to these contradictions. In other words, the nuclear family presents a particular, normatively mediated response to its systemic conditions. The crisis-prone form that this will be shown to assume, will then lead on to a discussion of how this crisis can be resolved. That is, if the social division of reproductive and relational labor produces an institution that is prone

to contradictions and crisis, what avenues exist to resolve this? This chapter traces a trajectory analogous to the first chapter through a critical interpenetration of queer and Marxist theory. Echoing a long-standing Marxist question, how do the crises of the present require us to envision a better future? Sharpening the focus slightly, how can this be brought to bear on a reconceptualization of our kin relationships?

1. No haven - the family in crisis

> "The couple functions as both the problem and its solution."

> (Clémence X. Clementine and Associates from the Infinite Venom Girl Gang 2012, 49)

1.1. Social contradictions

Bridging Critical Theory and Social Reproduction Theory (SRT), Nancy Fraser attempts to develop a theory of the current reproductive crisis facing late neoliberal capitalism. What is often decried as a "crisis of care", she argues, has not in fact emerged solely out of the current moment (Fraser 2017, 21). Instead, it is indicative of something "rotten" at the core of the capitalist system expressing itself in "social contradictions" (Fraser 2017, 22). Crisis tendencies in social reproduction are not incidental. They are systemically related to the crisis tendencies inherent to capitalism. In other words, the crisis of care is indicative of capitalism's tendency to systematically fail to reproduce its own conditions of possibility. As the previous chapter discussed, the capitalist mode of production needs social reproduction. As that discussion also bore out, this is contradictory because social reproduction always also reproduces more than capitalism needs. In addition to this, Fraser highlights that not only is capitalism inherently disinterested in satisfying the additional needs of its workers, but it actively works to undermine them. This occurs as a result of the way it privileges accumulation over reproduction.

The form that these problems take, however, are subject to historical contingency. Her argument therefore departs from the presentation of various "historically specific forms or regimes of accumulation" (Fraser 2017, 25). Each accumulation regime sees a shift in the relationship between market, state, and social actors, specifically emancipatory social movements. In its historical progression, capitalism has moved from liberal competitive market

societies through state-managed market societies to the current regime which she calls "financialized" capitalism (Fraser 2017, 32). For Fraser, each of these regimes is characterized by privileging one social component over another: either marketization, social protection, or emancipation. This always also produces "social contradictions" central to that regime (Fraser 2017, 22). As each contradiction is resolved, a new one emerges. For example, in state-managed capitalism, marketization and social protection were privileged over emancipation. The neglect of emancipatory elements led to a contradiction between emancipatory social movements and the role of the state in upholding stable economic growth and social protection. As those were resolved, a new regime entered the picture, in which emancipation and marketization are privileged over social protection. In other words, twentieth-century Keynesian economics entailed both a focus on the stable and consistent generation of profits and state-driven efforts to secure this through the provision of social welfare. The state was enlisted for capitalist accumulation. The socially and economically stable society that followed, Fraser points out, appeared at the cost of emancipatory social movements. The neoliberal financialized capitalism that followed, participated in a tradeoff. Unlike before, emancipatory social movements were privileged. However, this took place in conjunction with unregulated markets and a depression in social protection through reduced welfare responsibility. A clever form of capitalism that paired market liberalism and reduced welfare provisions with an admittedly selective embrace of emancipatory politics resulted in a form of "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser and Sunkara 2019, 10).[8] In other words, form the 1960s onwards, the double freeing of the market and of people coupled emancipation with uncertainty. As a result, a new fundamental social contradiction emerged.

Fraser's account on the transformation of the relationship between state, economy, and civil society, draws on similar phenomena that I have already discussed in chapter 1. The transition from state-managed forms of capitalism to neoliberal forms of uncertainty with an emancipatory patina can contextualize fundamental shifts in the nuclear family. The Fordist model of the family privileged social security and financial stability over emancipation, which is why its benefits were restricted by definition to those fitting into the white, heterosexual norm. This can also explain, however, why the demand for same-sex marriage constitutes a limited political horizon. It may make an emancipatory political claim, but fails to challenge the underlying systemic conditions of social insecurity that render the safe haven of the married

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[8] An emblematic example of this is Sheryl Sandberg's brand of corporate feminism, popularized in the 2013 book *Lean in: Women and the Will to Work* (Sandberg 2014).

family attractive to begin with. Fraser's analysis can sharpen this argument to a crucial point. The changing relationship between the spheres of social security, emancipation, and the market, plays a role in capitalism's tendency to undercut the conditions for its own reproduction. The context in which the family's role changes is structured by the current form of financialized capitalism. In Fraser's estimation, this "promot[es] state and corporate disinvestment from social welfare while recruiting women into the paid workforce. Thus, it is externalizing care work onto families and communities while diminishing their capacity to perform it" (Fraser 2017, 32).[9] First, this produces a crisis of care by structurally bleeding resources away from the public institutions that have been tasked with reproductive responsibilities. Second, however, the outcome of these developments "is to intensify capitalism's inherent contradiction between economic production and social reproduction" (Fraser 2017, 33). This is all the more pernicious, in Fraser's estimation, because it takes place under the guise of emancipation. The emancipatory social and legal gains made by some social groups work to disguise the underbelly of these processes constituted by increased market deregulation and shrinking state safety nets. A contradictory outcome follows, in which *de facto* reductions in welfare provision stand at odds with the *de jure* emancipation.

Nowhere can these contradictions appear more clearly than in the context of same-sex marriage and kinship. In *Redistribution of Recognition?* Fraser argues that either legalizing same-sex marriage or "deinstitutionaliz[ing] heterosexual marriage" are theoretically equal from the perspective of "deinstitutionalizing the heterosexual value pattern" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 39)[10]. That is, in both cases, the heterosexual norm is decentered. From the perspective of Fraser's argument on capitalism's crisis tendencies, the answer appears differ slightly. Legalizing same-sex marriage falls on the side of emancipatory gains but can, as Fraser argues, be structurally related to a general destabilization of social protection. In other words, the legalization of same-sex marriage can take place amid a general shift towards market liberalization and a reduction in social protection. Deinstitutionalizing heterosexual marriage, on the other hand, intervenes at a different point. Financialized capitalism produced a context

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[9] Fraser's point of reference is the United States while these processes are not unique to that context. For example, the Netherlands has seen pernicious processes of neoliberalization (Bredewold. et al. 2018).

[10] The context of that argument is a slightly different one than she pursues in her discussion of social reproduction introduced here. Her formal equation of same-sex marriage and the deinstitutionalization of heterosexual marriage occurs in the context of discussing "participatory parity" (Fraser and Honneth 2003, 38). It is beyond the scope of my argument to analyze in detail how the concept of participatory parity relates to Fraser's discussion of capitalism's crisis tendencies. For my purposes, however, the way that Fraser integrates the issue of material redistribution into the concept, suggests that her assessment of (heterosexual) marriage provides relevant context here.

in which emancipation and marketization override social protection. By undermining the conditions of reproduction enabled by high social protection, this produces a crisis. Fraser's desired resolution to the crisis of care is not a return to Fordism's exclusionary distribution of social protection. Rather, she argues for a social structure in which emancipation and social protection are privileged over marketization. From the perspective of achieving this resolution, the deinstitutionalization of heterosexual marriage appears preferable. This requires an analysis of social reproduction that extends beyond the limited scope she attributes to some feminist analyses, which make claims only on the terrain of "balance between family and work" (Fraser 2017, 35). Instead, for Fraser, the resolution of the crisis must involve broader collective struggles over the organization of social reproduction, such as housing, health care, and domestic working conditions. In other words, it needs to intervene in the societal division of labor in which certain institutions are normatively posited as responsible for reproduction and receive the resource to accomplish this at the expense of others.

1.2.   Normative Crisis

To relate the crisis tendencies discussed by Fraser to this societal division of labor, requires a look at how these responsibilities are normatively distributed. One such account is offered by Rahel Jaeggi's *Critique of Forms of Life* (2018). In a conversation between Fraser and Jaeggi in the collaboratively developed *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* (2018), they engage with the points of contact in their respective work in developing a critique of contemporary capitalism. When Fraser introduces their project, she situates them both at the forefront of a "return of interest in capitalism" in contemporary Critical Theory (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 12). Nonetheless, they put theoretical emphasis at different points. In Fraser's summary, her own work concerns the crisis tendencies in an "institutionalized social order", while Jaeggi is concerned with "forms of life" that constitute the social fabric of the capitalist mode of production (2018, 12). Fraser's approach was demonstrated in the previous section. In the scope of my overarching argument, it laid a link between the discussion of contradictions in social reproduction in chapter 1 and crisis tendencies inherent in the capitalist mode of production. Jaeggi, on the other hand, provides what she calls a "practice-oriented approach" in which the practices that constitute forms of social organization in the capitalist mode of production are foregrounded (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 16). As becomes clear in the process of their conversation throughout the volume, their approaches do not constitute a fundamentally different approach to their object of study. Instead, I read them as presenting a different scale

of analysis. It is this difference in scale, manifesting in what might be termed a different unit of social analysis, that leads me to frame their approaches here as complementary rather than oppositional. The crisis-tendencies in the capitalist mode of production described by Fraser manifest also at the level of the practices that constitute what Jaeggi terms "forms of life" (2018, 133). Jaeggi's analysis of these can conceptualize the normative consequences of the aforementioned crisis tendencies. In the following section, I therefore introduce Jaeggi's thinking as an addition to Fraser's analysis of capitalism.

The impetus for Jaeggi's analysis is to refuse reducing questions of what constitutes a good life to a liberal "inaccessible black box" (Jaeggi 2018, x)[11]. In the liberal perspective, questions of the ethical content of forms of life are reduced to an incontestable matter of personal and therefore private preference. To avoid this reduction, Jaeggi proposes "forms of life" to be analyzed as structurally embedded normative units, rather than individualized questions of taste (2018, 133). Refraining from doing this would result in rendering non-contingent and incontestable what is, in reality, eminently contingent and contestable. This means that a form of life is both potentially changeable and a valid object of critique. A form of life is constituted through practices that purport to solve a specific problem. The term problem here assumes two meanings: one, a problem in the sense of a puzzle with a specific solution or resolution and, two, in the sense of a deficiency. This second meaning, discussed in more detail in the next paragraph, explains why forms of life can sometimes be problematic in a way that needs to be addressed. First, it bears emphasizing here that forms of life do not emerge as unmediated responses to fundamental human needs. Instead, "*the* human form of life is accessible only as something that is socioculturally and historically mediated" (Jaeggi 2018, 136). For this reason, a form of life is contingent in two ways. On the one hand, it interprets a problem in a specific way according to a particular norm (it could have been interpreted differently). This normative positioning can be critiqued on its own basis. On the other hand, the interpretation that has emerged through socially mediated practices, can be transformed (other practices are possible).

Depending on the state that a form of life is in, these other practices are not only possible, but necessary. That is, a form of life can pose a problem in the second sense. To this end, Jaeggi states: "We criticize a form of life insofar as it is not only different from what it

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[11] Elsewhere, Jaeggi picks up the image of the black box to describe how specifically an analysis of capitalism suffers from not being framed as a form of life. The approach to the economy taken by Rawlsians and analytical Marxist G.A. Cohen is emblematic of this for Jaeggi, but is also reflected in developments in Critical Theory: the economy figures centrally in their analysis but is never, in fact, examined at the level of its component parts and how they function (Jaeggi in Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 14).

could be, but also different from what it *should* be" (2018, 86). When a critique reveals that a form of life is undergoing "normative crises", then there is an imperative for it to change (Jaeggi 2018, 154). This follows from the first component of a form of life: the practices themselves have normative content. Put succinctly, when the practices fail functionally, they fail normatively as well. This connection requires some further clarification on what it means to say that a form of life posits a norm. On the one hand, this has to do with the adequacy of the posited form of life to respond to the problem it takes responsibility for. On the other hand, it has to do with the position assumed by a form of life in relation to other forms of life. Regarding the first issue, Jaeggi explains: "there is no such thing as pure functioning without reference to criteria of goodness immanent in the practice" (2018, 112). This does not yet have to do with judging the moral worth of the problem a form of life attempts to solve. Instead, it describes how addressing a specific problem through practices always constitutes the norms by which those practices are considered successful. In other words, embedded in the interpretation of a problem are the norms by which that interpretation is measured. Failure is measured as failure by its own standards.

The second issue comes forth out of the first one. A form of life does not merely posit to be one viable option among many. It claims to be the *only* and *most* viable option. It is in this context that Jaeggi can say that the practical failure of a form of life results in a normative crisis: "Functionally and (ethically) *good* functioning (…) are inseparable" (2018, 112). That is, if a form of life has posited to be the only viable form of life addressing a problem and then fails on the level of a "normative-practical structure" a normative failure ensues as well (Jaeggi 2018, 154). This does not mean that a form of life has a "normative core" that it in some sense violates (Jaeggi 2018, 129). Instead, forms of life emerge out of a triangulation between the following: what it *is* (its current form), *ought to be* (its normative content within the current form) and what Jaeggi describes as its "changing objective conditions" (Jaeggi 2018, 129). As a result, a form of life assumes a position within the "division of labor of the functional nexus of a form of life" (Jaeggi 2018, 125)[12]. By responding to a problem, it assumes a position within that division of labor. If a form of life fails practically or functionally (Jaeggi uses both terms), the problem continues to go unaddressed because it "still to a certain extent occupies the place

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[12] This may appear to be an oxymoron: a form of life existing within the "functional nexus of a form of life". However, an individual form of life always interacts with forms of life constituted at various different scales. A form of life therefore can describe something as limited as an individual city, but also the entire state, or, as Jaeggi's conversation with Fraser bears out, an entire mode of production such as capitalism (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018).

where the practices and institutions" belonging to it fit into that division of labor (Jaeggi 2018, 125). It is this point that transforms the functional failure into a normative crisis.

As the term division of labor might suggest, an emblematic form of life is the family. Of central concern in chapter 1, it returns here in the context of Jaeggi's discussion to situate it in relation to the functioning of society. She draws predominantly on Hegel's reading of the bourgeois nuclear family. He situates it within the societal division of labor as creating a bridge between supposedly natural needs and "ethical life" (Jaeggi 2018, 151). That is, the family relates the needs of people to society and shapes them in accordance with the normative parameters of society. In this process, it also mediates between human dependence and independence to ensure survival. In Jaeggi's conceptualization, this mediation manifests in the family in two ways: through external normative expectations from society as well as internalized normative aspirations. Importantly, Jaeggi does not intend to describe a form of coercive submission to externally generated rules. Rather, external normative expectations become embodied as internalized normative expectations in the practices that enact them. The distinction is upheld because it indicates the fault lines that continue to exist between the two levels. That is, even though the individual practices internalize the external norms, the practices themselves can come to stand at odds with those external norms. In other words, a crisis ensues when the actions that people undertake to fulfil the normative requirements of a form of life (internalized) undermine the conditions of those normative requirements (external). the case of the nuclear family, Jaeggi argues that this form of life is supposed to facilitate independence from the birth family in the long run, for the function of the family is to produce individuals capable of living as autonomous subjects in society beyond the confines of the family itself. However, this can only be brought to fruition within certain parameters of mutual responsibility and loyalty. These same conditions, by definition part of the family, could prevent its normative intent from becoming realized. In that sense, the *raison d'être* of the family is obstructed by the practices that carry it out. As in the case for all other forms of life, when the family fails, its "failure can be understood as such only against the background of the norms embodied in the corresponding form of life" (Jaeggi 2018).

Sabine Hark connects this approach to the family explicitly to the issue of queer kinship (2015). Albeit summarized for a non-academic audience, Hark's remarks make clear the theoretical potential that opens up when Jaeggi's analysis is followed for a critical analysis of same-sex marriage claims. If kinship relations solve problems, then a queer approach to the family could posit that "marriage is not the solution" as the title of her article suggests (Hark

2015). Legally recognizing same-sex marriage is a necessary interim step and in the context of widespread legal disenfranchisement it is not difficult to see what specific problem legally legitimate same-sex marriage is solving. At the same time, Hark points out the necessity of recognizing that "another live is possible" that extends beyond marriage (2015, para. 9).

The difficulty opens up on the issue of defining the problem solved by kinship in the current moment. The problem addressed by Hegel's bourgeois nuclear family may be irreconcilable with the problem solved by the family today. A detailed reconstruction of the changes in the family's objective conditions since his writing lies beyond the scope of my analysis. Instead, the next section puts the heteronormative nuclear family as introduced in chapter 1 into conversation with the discussion of crisis elaborated in this chapter until now.

1.3.   Where is the haven?

As Johanna Brenner and Nancy Holmstrom's claimed, the existence of the family is shaped within the context of a world that renders it necessary, calling for "No Haven, No Heartless World" (2000, 173) . The relationship between the haven and the heartless world, however, requires more detailed conceptualization. This far, this chapter situated individual forms of life, the haven, in relationship to the overarching societal division of labor, the (heartless) world. The form of life of the nuclear family emerges as a normatively posited reproductive unit. To situate this further in the framework proposed by Jaeggi, form of life of the nuclear family normatively posits to satisfy what is excessive to the reproduction of labor power. That is, it promises to supply not just food and shelter, but, to function normatively, it needs to supply (ethically) *good* food and *good* shelter. Not merely keeping people off the street but integrating them in satisfying and loving relationships in which their needs are also affectively met. In other words, it posits itself as an ethically good guarantor of those components which exceed just the reproduction of labor power.

Following from Jaeggi's conceptualization of the functioning of a form of life, if it fails on these counts, this amounts to a normative failure. This failure occurs in two ways. First, the family fails there where it fails to deliver on its promises. Wherever the nuclear family does not provide (ethically) *good* food or *good* shelter, it is normatively deficient (a roof over one's head does not a family make). To return to Jaeggi's formulation, a form of life becomes "uninhabitable", and therefore enters into normative crisis, when it does not function in a way that is also *good* functioning (2018, 154). In my conceptualization of the nuclear family, it does not initially matter if it reproduces labor power. The normative crisis ensues there where it does

not carry out *good* reproductive labor, that is, the extra contradictory component of reproductive labor that reproduces life and not just labor power. Second, the normative content of a form of life implies that it is the most adequate and only form of life equipped to address a problem. If the nuclear family fails to deliver *good* reproductive labor (it is normatively deficient), it cannot be qualified as the most adequate form of life to address the problem of social reproduction. In the case of the family, the fact that it does not deliver *good* reproductive labor (first contradiction) connects with the objective conditions in which it is not the only provider of reproductive labor (second contradiction). Here, we can recall the way in which the welfare state and non-familial institutions assume reproductive responsibilities that the nuclear family still normatively posits as its sole responsibility (e.g. elderly and childcare). Simultaneously, there are forms of reproduction that are not familial in a more informal setting: non-normative romantic relationships or friendships. In other words, the nuclear family is already not the only form of life ensuring social reproduction. It therefore emerges to be in normative crisis in the second sense: it is not the most adequate form of life to resolve that problem.

According to a careful reading of the previous paragraph, it could be interpreted that two distinct problems are being addressed as one: the problem of the reproduction of labor power and the problem of the reproduction of life. In a "dual-systems" conceptualization of capitalism and patriarchy, it might be possible to locate the problem posed by the former in capitalist production, and the latter in the cultural sphere (Young 1997, 95). That is, in the context of capitalism, the form of life of the nuclear family normatively posits itself as solving the problem of the reproduction of labor power. In the context of patriarchy, it posits the solution to the reproduction of life (i.e. the nuclear family is the most adequate form of life to create the ethically *good* life). However, following the way that Susan Ferguson conceptualizes social reproduction, these are not distinct problems (2019). As much as their co-existence is contradictory within reproduction, they participate in the same process. Accordingly, the performatively reproduced relational component of kinship emerges as responding to the joint problem of capitalism and patriarchy. In other words, within the objective conditions of late neoliberal capitalism, the performatively constituted form of life of the nuclear family responds to a normatively mediated interpretation of the problem of social reproduction.

This can become more concrete if we recall Judith Butler's concept of "kinship practices" from chapter 1 (2004, 103). According to her definition, those practices constitute kinship relations by responding to "fundamental forms of human dependency" (Butler 2004,

103). In Jaeggi's terminology, the form of life of kinship is defined by proposing a solution to the problem of human dependency. It assumes normative import, further, because the heterosexual nuclear family is posited as the most adequate form of life to address this. Butler discusses in this context that non-heterosexual forms of kinship become legible *as* kinship only insofar as they successfully cite heterosexual family. This satisfaction of human dependency, however, has a material component as well. In chapter 1, the "skilled labor" of gender performativity and, by extension the practice of kinship, was contextualized by virtue of reproductive labor (Floyd 2009, 94). That is, Butler's kinship practices appeared to be able to account for that excess of reproduction that Susan Ferguson discusses (2019). Reproductive labor is contradictory because it always also reproduces life in excess of labor power. This excess can be conceptualized, with Butler, as the specifically relational component of reproduction. The skilled labor of performatively reproduced kinship, here, can be expanded through the internalization of the norms by which a form of life posits itself as successful. In other words: the concept of subjection as skilled labor can account for the way the performance of reproductive practices is structured through the learning and internalization of normative parameters that allow these to register as kinship practices. Because the practices constituting a form of life depend on the internalization of its norms, they too can be conceptualized as skilled labor. In conclusion, the form of life of the nuclear family emerges as performatively constituted through normatively qualified and therefore skilled reproductive practices.

This has now contextualized the internal functioning of the form of life of the nuclear family internally functional. However, a form of life is also structured by virtue of its objective conditions and position within a social division of reproductive labor. The current objective conditions of the nuclear family is constituted by what Fraser conceptualized, at the outset of this chapter, as a "crisis of care" (2017, 21). This crisis extends beyond the surface-level phenomenon of a dearth in reproductive resources. Instead, it is symptomatic of capitalism's inherent crisis tendency emerging out of its inability to reproduce itself in the long term. On the one hand, this expresses itself in the way capitalism privileges production over reproduction. On the other hand (and as a result), marketization asserts itself over social security in a way that is obscured by its ostensible alliance with emancipation. That is, Fraser describes systemic conditions characterized by unprecedented social insecurity under the guise of what neoliberalism sells as liberty. In her discussion with Jaeggi, Fraser contends that a critique of capitalism requires a look at more than what appears "simply 'economic'" in a way that also pays attention to "the deepening stresses on family life: why and how the pressures of

paid work and debt are altering the conditions of child-rearing, eldercare, household relations, and community bonds – in short, the entire organization of social reproduction." (Fraser in Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 13). Especially within this context where the family assumes novel responsibilities as its external conditions of possibility are eroded, it deserves new attention.

If this understanding is structured in light of the preceding discussion, contradictions are rendered visible on two levels: First, in the context of the systemic crisis diagnosed by Fraser, the nuclear family resurfaces in a world in which production and marketization are privileged over reproduction and security. The family's role as a reproductive and emotional haven is intensified in an attempt to mediate the increasingly heartless social conditions of the systemic crisis of care. Second, the ensuing structure of the family becomes uninhabitable in the normative sense described by Jaeggi. On the one hand, the family internalizes the contradictory structure of reproductive labor, both reproducing labor power and reproducing life. That is, if reproductive labor is structured in a tension between reproducing labor power and reproducing the conditions of possibility for capitalism, as well as between the reproduction of labor power and of life, these contradictions are constitutive of the form of life of the family. On the other hand, and more fundamentally, as the family assumes more reproductive responsibility, its external conditions of possibility are increasingly undermined. The changing objective conditions from the Fordist to the post-Fordist welfare state from chapter 1 can assist in illustrating this. Under the Fordist welfare state, the family assumed explicitly delegated reproductive responsibilities. These were, however, heavily supported by public state structures from the outside. In the post-Fordist model, the family assumes responsibility for reproduction at the same moment that its external, public, conditions of possibility for securing reproductive labor are undermined as the state retreats as a provider of social security. The family enters into normative crisis because the very move of (normatively) assuming more reproductive responsibility occurs simultaneously with external factors that render it (functionally) unable to do so.

In the face of a form of life that is problematic in this sense, Jaeggi argues that there is not just the possibility for change but an imperative. That is, the contingency of a form of life indicates that it not only *could* change but that, if it is in crisis, it *should* change. Fraser too launches a normative appeal. In the specific context of the current "crisis of care", a fundamental restructuring of society is required. "What is required, above all, is to overcome financialized capitalism's rapacious subjugation of reproduction to production (…) Whether the result will be compatible with capitalism at all remains to be seen" (Fraser 2017, 21, 36).

As Roderick Ferguson's account in chapter 1 indicated, a resolution to this crisis would be inadequately emancipatory if it advocated solely for a return to a universalized form of family or state provision of reproductive services (2004). Following from the preceding analysis, a possibility to avoid this may have presented itself. More adequately solving the problem of relationally organizing social reproduction may require more broadly intervening in the division of labor of brought about this form of life to begin with. In other words, this requires thinking about the family in a way that does not directly think about the family.

Juxtaposed like this, the analysis of social contradictions and normative crisis indicate the necessity and the possibility to consider systemic alternatives to the current conditions of possibility for the organization of reproductive relationships. That is, following from the diagnosis of current crises and contradictions, comes a realm of open space which can be filled in ways that *remain to be seen*. As the epigraph at the outset of this section attested: "[t]he couple functions as both the problem and its solution" (Clémence X. Clementine and Associates from the Infinite Venom Girl Gang 2012, 49). Read in the context of this section, the family poses a specific problem (reproduction in a wide sense) and then responds with a solution (the specifically familial organization of reproduction). The failures of solving the problem of reproduction, however, ushers in new problems that emerge in conjunction with the fundamental contradictions in capitalism. Resolving these may require a broader horizon.

2. Queer horizon and social transformation

The only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction.

(José Esteban Muñoz *Cruising Utopia* 2009, 22)

The way the preceding section connected critique of normative failures in the present to the hope for a better future is not merely incidental. For feminist social theory, conceptualizing utopian visions of the future has often functioned to highlight the limitations of the present. Frequently, this has taken place in a balance between literature and theory, such as in the work of Octavia Butler, Marge Piercy, or Ursula K. Le Guin (Daniel and Klapeer 2019). Feminist science-fiction writer Joanna Russ has pointed out how this indeterminacy between fiction and theory has often been strategic: "utopias are not embodiments of universal values, but are

reactive; that is, they supply in fiction what their authors believe society (…) and/or women, lack in the here-and-now" (Russ quoted in Silbergleid 1997, 161). At this point in the argument, utopia appears partially for that reason: as a response to a tradition in feminist critique of the untenable present. We can recall here, too, the way Butler critiqued the limited political horizon of only same-sex marriage politics. If kinship politics is reduced to debating inclusion into heteronormative marriage, this constitutes a "lost horizon of radical sexual politics" that forecloses redefining the norms structuring that debate (Butler 2004, 130).

Considering utopia can also do more than just expand the scope of possible politics. Utopian anticipation also has a normative function within Critical Theory and its mode of critique of current conditions. As Seyla Benhabib argues, Critical Theory must develop both "explanatory-diagnostic" and "anticipatory-utopian" components (Benhabib 1986, 142). Critique of current society does not occur for the sake of it, but always in the interest of a society transformed with an emancipatory intention given shape by normative parameters. The utopian element ensures that it retains normative commitments to realize political emancipation. To retain the form of an immanent critique, this requires that current society is not measured by standards or ideals arising outside of it. Rather, institutions are measured by the norms they have posited themselves. This approach to critique appeared in the reconstruction of Jaeggi's concept of the normative crisis above. In Benhabib's conceptualization, the utopian emerges out of such a critique. For this reason, the *anticipatory-utopian* element of Critical Theory is linked indelibly to *explanatory-diagnostic* work. This allows Critical Theory to be normative without being normatively prescriptive, because emancipatory norms emerge dialectically out of practices of critique.

Amy Allen argues that Benhabib reproduces a flawed conception of emancipation (2015a). In line with other Critical Theorists (Benhabib draws specifically on Jürgen Habermas), Allen finds the concept of emancipation to rely on ideals inherited from Enlightenment thought. Accordingly, the normative goal of emancipation is reproduced with inadequate attention to the subject of that emancipation. A poststructuralist account of identity, on the other hand, runs the risk of developing a "critique of male dominance with almost no exit" (Brown quoted in Allen 2015, 518). That is, it lacks the normative direction that Benhabib's approach to utopia integrates in her approach to Critical Theory. She therefore proposes a meeting in the middle, by way of what Michel Foucault termed "heterotopias" or "counter-sites" (Allen 2015, 524). Emerging from within society, these can subvert existing lines of power and subjectivation that (Allen 2015, 524). Accordingly, she finds that a

Foucauldian analysis of identity supplies the subjective context of emancipation. An example of such a form of "emancipation without utopia" can be found in José Esteban Muñoz' *Cruising Utopia* (Allen 2015, 518; Muñoz 2009). He draws her attention because he also cautions against the "rote invocation of poststructuralist pieties" motivates his turn to historical materialism (Allen 2015, 524; Muñoz 2009, 12). Concretely, she sees in both her approach and in that of Muñoz a critical engagement with both poststructuralism and the historical materialism that informed early Frankfurt School engagements with utopia. In her interpretation, Muñoz' approach is closely related to Foucault's genealogical approach to critique in which "writing a history of the present" serves to ground "anticipatory illumination" of a transformed future (Allen 2015, 524).

Rather than interpreting Muñoz' conceptualization of the past a direct point of contact between historical materialism and poststructuralism, I read his interdisciplinary analysis as more uneasily relating the two. Instead, by drawing on both a Blochian account of the past and a poststructuralist approach to subjectivation, he consciously teases out the potential and limitations in both. To contextualize this claim, I will briefly introduce the roots of Bloch's method in the context of a historical materialist approach to utopia, before returning to Muñoz and his approach to the "queer utopianism" that Allen attributes to him (Allen 2015, 524). The question that remains to be answered in the remainder of this section interrogates Allen's claim about the function of the utopian in a critical and emancipatory analysis of the present. What are the conceptual consequences of her decision and does this reflect an adequate treatment of the utopian? That is, Allen resolves the problem of an inadequately conceptualized subject of emancipation by expanding the conception of emancipation. Here, I propose that an expanded image of utopia is necessary to fully address the limitations that she sees in the form of emancipatory politics proposed by the Frankfurt School. This will also guide a return to the crises of the nuclear family introduced at the beginning of this chapter, by way of a utopian resolution. As Muñoz put it, "there is something queer about the utopian" (2009, 26). In line with this, the utopian is ushered in to integrate a specifically queer vantage on the question of redistributing resources in the societal division of reproductive labor.

2.1.   Materialism and utopia

Any discussion of utopia in the context of historical materialism needs to reckon with the often fraught relationship between the two strands of thought. As Ruth Levitas points out in *The Concept of Utopia,* the issue of utopia has appeared across multiple political traditions and

genres of engagement (1990). In both liberal and Marxist political thought, as well as in theoretical and literary forms, the image of utopia has concerned writers ever since the publication of Thomas More's *Utopia* which is considered foundational to the tradition. In Levitas' estimation, these accounts have in common that "[u]topia is the expression of the desire for a better way of being" (Levitas 1990, 8). Utopias can be conceptualized by virtue of their function in catalyzing social transformation. Levitas discusses how this conceptualization of utopia emerged out of Marx and Engels' tendentious relationship with utopian thinking. At the time of their writing, utopian socialism was emerging in British and French socialist thinking. Utopian socialists such as Charles Fourier and Robert Owen designed detailed blueprints of alternative societies that sometimes specified concrete institutional changes that were necessary to bring those images to fruition (Levitas 1990). Initially, Engels viewed these theories of social change favorably, because he saw them as more critical than writing by his fellow German socialist writers. By the time he began collaborating with Marx, however, he had altered his assessment. In *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels discusses Marx' criticism of utopian socialism and ultimately sides with him. In their brand of *scientific*, rather than utopian, socialism, they did not aim to "manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to (…) discover in the economic conditions (…) the means for ending the conflict [between proletariat and bourgeoisie]" (Engels quoted in Levitas 1990, 54). In other words, they understood their historical materialist approach to socialism as more concerned with mechanisms of transformation rather than static plans and blueprints. While the former drives revolutionary change, the latter prevents it from unfolding.

This focus on mechanisms of transformation and historical movement is where Bloch situates his discussion of utopia. Bloch frames historical materialism as driven by a tension: the present stands in a tense exchange relationship to a future that has been politically transformed (Bloch 1979). Even though the future has not arrived, it drives change in the present that will then realize it. Bloch describes this as the "knowledgeable-hoping movement of the not-yet" (Bloch 1979, 213). This hope for a better future, in turn, emerges out of an engagement with the past. If the "not-yet" pulls historical movement forward, then the motivation to undergo this movement comes from investments generated in the past. This is where his thinking bridges the historical materialist description of an overarching historical trajectory with a psychoanalytic approach. According to this thinking, historical movement towards utopia is characterized by *latency* and *tendency* in the present (Bloch 1985). The latent emerges out of desires and wishes generated either in the present or by lingering attachments

to the past. These then interact with an "objective *tendency*" that transform this into an active, tendency moving forward into a different future (Bloch 1985, 144). Desire is not enough but in conjunction with external conditions it can be brought to fruition. By creating this link, Bloch argues that resigning transformative politics only to the current conditions prevents overcoming them.

Fredric Jameson contextualizes this strand of historical materialist thought with the claim that social change requires a "suspension of the political", at least temporarily (Jameson 2004, 43). This does not mean leaving out existing constraints from political consideration. Rather, it entails temporarily looking imaginatively beyond the confines of the present. On one level, this exposes the limitations of the present that are otherwise ideologically obscured. On another level, it generates the momentum necessary to act on these analytical findings. That is, Jameson's suspension is anticipatory in that it outlines a utopian future. It derives its depth, however, by being related back to a critique of the present which is a diagnosis of its underlying contradictions. This critique of the present, in turn, is enabled by hope for the future. To recapture the analysis at the outset of this chapter, this means exposing the contradictions inherent to capitalism and the crises manifesting in underlying forms of life. The hope for a better future is the driving force that fills in the normative imperative to develop forms of life which are less prone to normative crisis. That is, the imperative that emerges to organize functional forms of life in response to changing objective conditions, is completed with an image of the future. Nonetheless, Allen's cautions against an undefined subject of these processes needs to be heeded: a dialectical arc between analyzed present and utopian future, requires systematic embedding in an understanding of identity.

2.2.   Queer horizon

This is the project that José Esteban Muñoz addresses in *Cruising Utopia*. Like Bloch, he is concerned with the problem of overcoming the ideologically limited horizon of social transformation (2009). In response to a trend in mainstream LGBT politics that structure their demands in a limited framework, Muñoz proposes to expand the horizon of queer politics to envision "queerness as horizon" (Muñoz 2009, 32). Concretely, he is describing a form of politics that restricts its demands to being included in existing forms of life. In the context of queer kinship, this process is visible on the debate surrounding same-sex marriage. To demand inclusion into marriage, does not intervene in the fact that it will continue to materially and culturally privilege a particular form of kinship over others. The problem that Muñoz is framing

here fits directly into the problems introduced until this point. The limited political horizon that Muñoz is arguing against is not only incapable of contesting the limited field of legibility for reproductive and kin relationships. It is also incapable of developing a broader conception of why these are currently in crisis. That is, the analysis is incapable of situating the normative crisis of the family within its current conditions of possibility shaped by the neoliberal erosion of reproductive resources. This means that the interlocking normative crisis of the nuclear family with its crisis-prone conditions of possibility cannot be overcome.

To oppose this assimilationist political strategy, Muñoz draws on a historical materialist account of the driving forces of social transformation beyond the present. To achieve this, he reads Bloch in two ways. In one way, he reads the longing that emerges out of a long-gone past as stretching into the present. In another way, the hope for a better future motivates critique of the present. In this sense, he mirrors the arc that Bloch traced between the mobilization of the "the no-longer conscious (…) to push beyond the impasse of the present" (Muñoz 2009, 31). Accordingly, Muñoz does not contest about the same-sex marriage movement the desire it exposes to live in less precarious circumstances. Instead, he is reframing the root of that desire: desire for a more livable world can stretch beyond the present *and* transform it. This works if that desire is brought to bear on the present as a dissatisfaction and therefore a critique of its conditions. The tension generated between the imagined world and the status quo can stretch beyond the confines of the present. Conversely, to merely demand inclusion into the unchanged present rather than to stretch demands beyond it, undermines the possibility of overcoming its inequalities. This enables a form of politics that resists being reduced to demanding "mere inclusion in a corrupt and bankrupt social order" (Muñoz 2009, 20). Instead, however, Muñoz proposes a "queer visuality" which commits us "to squint, to strain our vision and force it so see otherwise, beyond the limited vista of the here and now" (Muñoz 2009, 22). To put this in Blochian terminology, the latent desires for a more adequate, less violent life, that emerge in the oppressive present, are inserted into a forward moving tendency (Bloch 1978). Rather than demanding inclusion into the here and now, the tension generated between the deficiency of the present and another world rendered (imaginatively) visible works to push beyond the latter.

This visuality is queer because of the way that Muñoz argues that "queerness is not yet here" (Muñoz 2009, 185). The particular social location of queer subjects is defined not only by non-normative sexuality but by materially untenable living conditions. Overcoming these conditions, generates an investment in the future at the same time that this future enables living on in the present. It motivates action in the present, in the way conceptualized by Bloch,

because it generates investments before it comes to exist that then bring it about. In almost too simplified terms: the hope for a better world makes its realization possible. In this way, Muñoz links the frustration at current disenfranchisement to a theory of historical materialist social transformation. This exceeds the limited horizon of merely reforming queer politics that he sets off from. When Muñoz speaks of "queerness as horizon" he is indicating this: that queerness is something not-yet realizable in the present. It is the realization of this infeasibility that drives the transformation of conditions to allow queerness to be realized.

Seen in this perspective, Muñoz' demand mobilizes an image of the future that is markedly different from another queer approach to futurity: the "antirelational" thesis in queer theory, posits a disengagement from specifically heteronormative forms of relationality (Muñoz 2009, 17). That is, if the modes of relationality that are normatively legible are governed by heterosexuality, then a queer critique can only result in its rejection. Lee Edelman's *No Future* is exemplary of this argument. He argues that the "future is nothing but kid stuff", concerned with heteronormative reproduction that was never meant to be inhabited by "[t]hose queered by the social order" (Edelman 2004, 30). Queer politics should therefore aim to resist the "reproductive futurism" that can never include them (Edelman 2004, 39). Like Edelman, Muñoz sees the limitations in a white middle-class heterosexual future. The solution, however, is not to reject futurity *per se*. Instead, his integration of a historical materialist movement crafts a specifically queer image of utopia. Rather than rejecting the world that renders itself nearly uninhabitable by non-normative subjects this allows Muñoz to engage a tension: Bloch's future "not-yet" propels political motion through the uninhabitable present towards a more habitable future (Bloch 1979, 213). By claiming the future as a mechanism to critique the present, Muñoz reclaims the future that reproductive futurism would frame as a strictly heteronormative matter.

His critique of Edelman makes clear why he centers utopia while Allen, as discussed above, opts to displace it. Allen privileges a poststructuralist approach to systemic subversion. This is precluded by an image of utopia that appears almost external to these processes of subjectivation. Muñoz, on the other hand, argues for a dialectical analysis of the crises in the present, informed by the particularly queer experience of living in an uninhabitable present. Utopia, in this interpretation, is a resolution a distraction. Edelman's rejection of futurity therefore undermines transformation in a similar way that a merely reforming focus in mainstream LGBT politics does: both avoid utopia and therefore factor out its transformative capacities.

The fact that Muñoz does not reject utopia is crucial to understanding how he is relevant to resolving the crises of kinship as manifest in the nuclear family. Without retaining an image of utopia, the only tools available are a return to an illusory whole. As his critique of Edelman indicated, however, Muñoz retains a specifically queer commitment to a utopia. In doing so, he articulated a desire for future in which queer forms of relating are rendered more livable. Relating this back to the family can also highlight on another level why a distinction between the spheres of capitalist exploitation, on the one hand, and the oppression of patriarchy and heteronormativity, on the other, is not tenable. He provides, to borrow a term from Floyd, a specifically "queer vantage" on transforming the societal division of reproductive labor (Floyd 2009, 37). To trace the line of this argument requires briefly recapturing the constitution of the form of life of the nuclear family as introduced thus far: The labor that constitutes the nuclear family is normatively qualified and skilled reproductive labor. First, it is normatively qualified because the form of life of the nuclear family is reproduced through practices that are functional by virtue of the normative parameters of that form of life. Second, the resulting kin relationships are constituted by specifically skilled forms of labor because they rely on the embodied internalization of those norms. Only if both of these things are true, are relationships reproduced that register normatively as kin relationships. Third, according to the contradictory structure of reproductive labor, these practices do not only reproduce relationships but always also reproduce labor power. As has been discussed, by virtue of this, reproductive labor always straddles an unstable divide. Reproductive labor both satisfies the needs of capital for labor power and, perhaps begrudgingly, has to satisfy the needs of the workers who supply this. The only way to overcome the crisis tendencies of capitalism would be to assert the latter needs over the former.

Until this point, all this has already been covered. What is new here, is how Muñoz' queer utopian desire fits into the picture. Like the needs dissatisfied by the organization of reproductive labor in capital, the queer desire for a more livable life is equally dissatisfied in the present. These come together in the consideration of re-organizing the social division of reproductive labor. That is, the normative restrictions on kinship privilege the nuclear family as the prime form of life to organize reproductive labor. When this form of life is embroiled in normative and systemic crises, it is not just the needs of workers that can potentially resist the current social division of reproductive labor. The specifically queer desires that have been precluded from this form of life drive this forward as well. Seen from this perspective, Muñoz' utopia is not incidentally related to the discussion of social reproduction. To need a society in

which reproduction is privileged over production and to desire a future in which queer modes of relating are made livable are structurally equivalent demands. Each in their own way, the constitute a "utopian demand" that can say as much about the anticipated future than it can about the present to be transcended (Weeks 2011, 176). In both cases, a future is anticipated where the social division of reproductive labor may have deinstitutionalized the form of life of the nuclear family. Also in the context of both, the need or desire for change may not be enough. In keeping with Bloch, they have to meet with an "objective *tendency*" in the world so that they can come to fruition (Bloch 1985, 144). The following section accordingly discusses the way the conditions of possibility for the family's current form relate to it in the process of transformation. To reformulate the entire social division of reproductive labor to transform the family, requires engaging with that overall structure.

3. "Call it dialectics, call it utopianism"[13]

> If it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism, it is still perhaps
> easier to imagine the end of capitalism than the end of the family.
>
> (Sophie Lewis *Full Surrogacy Now* 2019, 119)

The outline of utopian tendencies, in Critical Theory and beyond, in the previous section, aimed to illustrate the way that these crisis tendencies can be responded to with the articulation of utopias. Not as an evasion, but as a resolution of these tendencies, in partial keeping with Benhabib's link between a an explanatory diagnosis of the present and a anticipatory utopia of the future (1986). What this can look like, and how this specifically relates to the transformation of relationships, as the discussion of kinship suggests, is outlined in the rest of this chapter. By the end of this chapter, a line will have been traced between crisis and utopia, in a way that paves the way for the reconceptualization of reproductive relationships beyond the family in chapter 3.

3.1.   Against the "utopia fetish"[14]

I proposed Muñoz' expansion of utopia as an alternative to Allen's displacement of it. For Allen, the commitment to utopia in Critical Theory is linked to a decontextualized

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[13] (S. Lewis 2019, 55)
[14] B. Adamczak 2017, 274.

understanding of emancipation as its chief theoretical and political aim. What still requires resolving, is the relation between utopia – "the there of queer utopia" – and the practices that occur in the present – "here and now" – that may be working towards it (Muñoz 2009, 22, 29). In addition to his framing of utopia as imaginatively relating back to the present, he does address the level of transformative practices in his discussion of performativity. However, I want to use this opening as an opportunity to reintegrate specifically reproductive practices into my account. In doing so, the above considerations of a dialectical crisis analysis and utopian resolution is brought to bear on the issue of reproductive relationships and kinship that were introduced earlier. That is, how does the reproductive form of life relate to other forms of life in the social division of labor? Additionally, how can these relationships be transformed?

On the relationship between revolutionary transformation of the present and a utopian imaginary of the transformed society, Bini Adamczak proposes two ways in which this connection can become fetishized, therefore undermining lasting transformation: through the "revolution fetish" and the "utopia fetish" (Adamczak 2017, 264, 274 my translation). The former describes a state in which the process of revolution is elevated to its own end. That is, the process of struggle is prevented from completing in achieved transformation at a material level because participants have become affectively attached to the conditions of unrest. This can lead to a directionless avantgarde – a small revolutionary group identifies as the warden of social change by virtue of their identification with the revolution. This prevents visions of a post-revolutionary future from coming to fruition because it would entail the dissolution of their identity and their community. It also stands in the way of transformations becoming structurally embedded because participants in transformation have to, by definition, remain committed to provocation and contestation. In the case of the utopia fetish, the opposite is true. To fetishize utopia, is to posit an image of harmony which is uninhabitable by the revolutionary subjects who brought it about. It reduces an image of the improved society to one in which the human capacities for both cooperation and disagreement are left out of consideration.

Adamczak proposes a resolution to what she sees as ultimately a false opposition between revolutionary action and realized transformation. The key lies in foregrounding the relationships that are constituted and changed in transformative processes. This leads her to develop the idea of "modes of relation" (Adamczak 2017, 38 my translation). On the one hand, the term can describe any number of relationships such as those between friends, lovers, or comrades. On the other hand, the term consciously mimics the term *mode of production*. A mode of production is always accompanied by a corresponding mode of relation, which

describes an interaction between subjectivity, institutions, and the relationships between both of them.

To develop this idea, Adamczak draws on the limitations she finds in the theories of transformation undergirding the 1917 Russian Revolution and 1968 emancipatory social movements. In the former, the oppositional revolutionary subjects could not inhabit their imagined post-revolutionary world. This was because their way of relating to each other was incompatible with the image of harmony that was supposed to reign after the revolution. In the latter case, the current moment became the reduced horizon of social transformation. Focusing on the constitution of relationships instead of a post-revolutionary image, undermined the development of structural alternatives to the present. In both cases, what was desirable during the revolution was ultimately negated by the outcomes of political struggle. Adamczak argues that this was the case because they inadequately grasped the need for continuous dynamic re-articulation of social relationships in societal transformation. To mitigate this opposition between revolution and post-revolution, Adamczak proposes conceptualizing change processes as simultaneously both means *and* end. This integration of means and end within the process of social transformation is also able to more adequately conceptualize the relational component of social transformation. The state of beginning, participating in, and ending processes of social transformation emerge as a form of "*community without unity*" (Adamczak 2017, 270 emphasis in original). This has effects on both ends, transforming the image of both revolution and utopia. Relationships are constituted already in the process of political contestation as it unfolds. Community is already established. Rather than positing a stable, harmonious end-state once this process is completed, this conceptualizes transformation by virtue of ongoing forms of contestation. There is no unity, that is, the community forged through transformative practices must be continuously renegotiated. This also means that the analysis of crises to be resolved is not relegated to the past. The critical mode of contestation is incorporated into the utopia.

To conceptualize the subjectivizing effects of the above, Adamczak critically incorporates a poststructuralist account of identity. In chapter 1, Floyd's reading of Butler was introduced to situate her theory of identity in relation to the capitalist mode of production (2009). As he put it, this formed the conditions of possibility for her theory of identity. In Adamczak's estimation of poststructuralism, the focus it lays on subversion instead of on revolutionary transformation inadequately theorizes the role of changing conditions of possibility for realized social change. To illustrate this with a nod to Butler, poststructuralism

may be inadequately equipped to distinguish a moment in which drag is *just* drag from the moment where drag successfully revolutionizes the gender binary. Historical materialism, on the other hand, can provide a theory of social transformation and revolutionary catalysts, but cannot account for the effect this has on subjectivity. A poststructuralist account of identity can explain the effects that a revolutionary transformation of material conditions would have on identities. In the context of Adamczak's theory of transforming modes of relation, this means that poststructuralism also enables a theoretical grasp on changing interpersonal relationships. This is something she tries to remedy when she proposes her theory of transformation as a "relational event" (Adamczak 2017, 257). Change occurs in the relationship between objects and the system they find themselves, between relata *as well as* relationships, in an attempt to answer the question: "How can the relationships between pieces be constructed in a novel way so that both the game and its pieces are transformed?" (Adamczak 2017, 238 my translation)

The question of how normative and material conditions interact in social transformation, can be made more concrete if we recall how exactly this problem first surfaced in chapter 1: where and how do heteronormative regulation of identity and kinship relations *relate* to the capitalist mode of production? Adamczak specifies this through the concept of the mode of relation by integrating an analysis of subjectivation in an analysis of the structural conditions of possibility for capital. Identities and relationships, such as kin relationships, are constituted in interpersonal relationships *in relation to* norms that govern sexuality and material circumstances. To transform how we relate to each other on a purely interpersonal level, for example by eschewing the bourgeois nuclear family in favor of a non-monogamous polycule, is therefore not socially transformative in itself. Instead, by focusing on the mode of relation that structures societies in moments of stability and of transformation, Adamczak centers the way that these relationships do not only describe ties between people, but the way that these relationships *relate* to overarching structural factors. Adamczak's motivation in conceptualizing change in this relational way is to avoid reproducing the conditions that are being contested. Specifically, her attempt at relating interpersonal relationships to structural ones, is motivated by an attempt to reconceptualize how the former *are currently* related to the latter.

Adamczak illustrates how this connects to the family by way of the communist women's rights activist Alexandra Kollontai. In a more just world, Kollontai argues "'[t]he cold of emotional loneliness', from which people not infrequently seek refuge in love and marriage, would disappear, diverse forms of connection would emerge that connect people through emotional and intellectual ties" (Kollontai quoted in Adamczak 2017, 273). In this

perspective, it makes sense to address the issue of reproductive responsibility from a location to which it is not normatively allocated. In other words, if the problem to be addressed is the concentration of reproductive responsibility within the nuclear family, the place where a solution to this lies would be outside the family. Organizing reproductive labor in ways that circumnavigates the family both intervenes in the concentration of that labor solely within the family (as critique) and diverts material and symbolic resources away from the family (as prefiguration). This results in a state "where societal divisions between, for example, production and reproduction, the intimacy of the private sphere and politics of the public sphere are not reproduced but also not unilaterally dissolved" (Adamczak 2017, 283–84). This would, as Adamczak frames it, change much more than the relationships between those participating in the practices. It would change the players *as well as* the game.

3.2.   Squinting towards the "gestational commune"

An attempt to reorganize the players in a way that upends the game of the family, can be found in Sophie Lewis' book *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism Against Family* (2019). Her aim in the book is "to use bourgeois reproduction today (stratified, commodified, cis-normative, neocolonial) to squint toward a horizon of gestational communism" (S. Lewis 2019, 21). Through an analysis of gestational surrogacy, she proposes the realization of a "reproductive commune" that is built on "[r]ecognizing our inextricably surrogated contamination with and by everybody else" (S. Lewis 2019, 167–68). in a way that does "not so much 'smash' the nuclear family as make it unthinkable" (S. Lewis 2019, 167). Perhaps unsurprisingly, the book was met with not merely critical reviews but sometimes outright violent resistance. Alex Jones, a prominent far-right news show host declared: "Feminist Says Family Must Be 'Abolished' to 'Dismantle Capitalism'" (Jones quoted in S. Lewis 2020, para. 9). As one commenter put it: "Behold, Feminism's True Agenda, Unmasked!" (Lewis 2020). Tucker Carlson invited Lewis to appear on his Fox News show to comment on *Full Surrogacy* – which she declined (S. Lewis 2020). In his segment, he featured a promotional video for the book in which she discusses the politics of abortion and the possible necessity of loss of life that this entails. Carlson takes her statement to draw the following conclusion: "Honest liberals admit it [abortion] is in fact killing" (Fox News 2019).

Lewis received critical rebuttals from within more academic commentary as well. Literary theorist Lise Wesseling finds in *Full Surrogacy* a "failed Marxism" because of the way Lewis fails to draw on socialist feminist traditions outside of the autonomist tradition in her argument

(2020, 34 my translation). Writing in *The Catalyst*, Nivedita Majumdar takes issue with Lewis' treatment of a variety of Marxist terminology. The way that Lewis connects "gestational labor" to bodily autonomy (which Lewis does in reference to a tradition of sex worker led feminism) misrepresents the degree to which contracted gestation interferes in rather than enables autonomy (S. Lewis 2019, 54). Majumdar also takes issue with Lewis' conceptualizes the infant born through surrogacy as a commodity. She finds that Lewis fails to reckon with the way that the commodity manifests the worker's alienation and stands outside of her as a "source of oppression" in capitalism, while surrogates often experience "deep despair" when they give up the products of their labor (Majumdar 2019, para. 9). Finally, Majumdar assesses surrogacy to be more ambiguous than Lewis' framing of surrogate-led emancipation might suggest. For Majumdar, however, interpreting surrogates' attachment to surrogacy as a reason to preserve it, runs the risk of interpreting a lack of alternative employment options as an enthusiastic affirmation.

These points of contention notwithstanding, Lewis would be the first to note that gestational surrogacy in its current form is far from a readymade utopia worth replicating. In much gestational surrogacy, remuneration is low. Contracts are often made with clients in the Global North with little or no involvement by the gestators themselves. Further, like much work that involves heavy physical strains, it is not without physical risks. It is exactly its imperfection that leads Lewis to focus on gestational surrogacy. Through critiquing it in its current state, images for social transformation can emerge. This image of "full surrogacy" could only be achieved if the industry were to "change beyond recognition" (S. Lewis 2019, 20, 30). Accordingly, her analysis straddles conceptual approaches, as she says of her approach: "call it dialectics, call it utopianism" (2019, 55). As a reviewer in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* notes, Lewis presents a "historical materialist case against (…) 'realism' on the one hand, and something of a science fiction on the other" (Lane-McKinley 2019, para. 2). Accordingly, it functions in my argument to illustrate the possibility of integrating a dialectical critique of crises in the present with a prefigurative image of utopia.

Working through the existing problems and contradictions in surrogacy does not lead Lewis to reject the institution. Accordingly, she differs from vocal strands of radical feminism that advocate for its prohibition. The Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering, FINRRAGE for short, is a key proponent of this "anti-surrogacy" approach (S. Lewis 2019, 35). In their eyes, the commodification of infants entailed in surrogacy poses a violent interference into pre-existing natural female wholeness. Theirs is

perhaps also the same ontological framework in which Majumdar critiques Lewis' theory of commodification. Not only does Lewis see this as reproducing a Trans-exclusionary theory of female embodiment in the context of gestation[15], but it also fails to take the self-determination of surrogate workers seriously. Instead, Lewis proposes an "anti-anti surrogacy" approach (2019, 51). This means that she still sees significant room for change within the institution but disagrees with its mainstream detractors on what requires changing. Through this approach, a critique emerges of current contradictions in the organization of the biologically based nuclear alongside a prefigurative image of an alternative. On the first count, unlike what members of FINRRAGE charge, commercial surrogacy does not pose the threat of rendering the nuclear family *more* infiltrated by economic transactions or technological mediation. Instead, it exposes that the institution, what we could call the form of life, has *already* been infiltrated. In other words, the practices that constitute the family are not naturally immediate. It already emerges as a socially mediated approach to a narrowly defined problem of kinship. Gestational surrogacy does not attempt to solve "the *problem* of pregnancy" posed by the physical risks of gestation or birth (S. Lewis 2019, 1). It also does not attempt to intervene in a myriad of reproductive issues that follow after birth and determine quality of life of gestator and gestatee. Instead, it emerges out of a specifically normatively mediated interpretation of how to solve the problem of bourgeois reproduction. Accordingly, this form of life reproduces the specific problems of legitimate white, middle-class, bourgeois heredity. As a form of "culturally assisted reproduction", this poses less a break with an un-assisted or unmediated form of family (Preciado quoted in Lewis 2019, 175). Unlike Butler's assertion in *Undoing Gender* that new technological interventions into kinship arrangements constitute a break with the heteronormative order (Butler 2004), Lewis' argument points out how the heterosexual nuclear family has "been substantially techno-fixed already, when it comes to those whose lives really 'matter'" (S. Lewis 2019, 3).

In Lewis' analysis, the hypervisibility of surrogacy only exposes how hegemonic forms of kinship were always already contradictory: reliant on a constitutive, technological outside, but also subordinating the care and intimacy that justified them to the solution of a much more limited problem: the "demand for genetic parenthood" (S. Lewis 2019, 4). Kai Bosworth and

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[15] In arguing against the exclusion of non-cisgendered bodies from her analysis, Lewis also makes the semantic point of replacing the terms "women" and "female" with the notion of "pregnant people" or "gestational laborers" (Lewis 2019, 22; 54). Not only does this more accurately represent the "heterogenous gender identity of those who gestate", which necessitates thinking about procreation and gestation in the context of critical analyses of gender, but it also does justice to the complex link between pregnancy, reproductive labor, and wider debates on gender and work (Lewis 2019, 24). That is, when Lewis speaks of gestation, she can be describing the physical process if bearing out a pregnancy as well as the socially organized forms of labor that follow after birthing.

Elizabeth Johnson point out that Lewis is not idealizing a commodified form of gestation. Rather, they argue, she "seeks to deprivatize the possessive individualism that inheres in the nuclear family structure" (Bosworth and Johnson 2020, para. 4). The contradictions that are exposed this way assume the form of multiple "normative crises" as described by Jaeggi (2018, 173). The practice of surrogacy whereby the nuclear family is supposed to be upheld, in fact indicates the contradictions that exist within that form of life between securing genetic reproduction and constituting a unit of reproductive care. That is, the practice that constitutes the biologically defined unit ostensibly for the organization of caring practices results in the caring practices being deprioritized. The functional failure of the family, here, is a normative one: even as the family is transcending its genetic limits through surrogacy, it continues to hold space in society for exclusively genetically linked reproductive relationships. Biological reproduction is exposed as inherently contradictory: not standing in the service of the relational reproduction of *kinship practices*, the securing of bio-genetic reproductive coherence potentially undermines securing the qualified reproduction of caring relationships.

Through this prefigured reorganization through the family, Lewis' analyses can illustrate the way the family's normative crisis linked to emerge out of capitalism's "social contradiction[s]" described by Fraser (2017, 22). The normative crisis by which genetic heredity is privileged over actual caring reproduction is undergirded by the systemic privileging of production over reproduction. In this way, Lewis' description of the surrogated family illustrates a central contradiction in the current state of the nuclear family that I introduced at the outset of this chapter. The restructuring of the reproductive responsibilities of the state results in two things: an increased relegating of reproductive responsibility to the family and a liberation of the market. Surrogacy renders this visible: the technologically and economically mediated surrogated nuclear family exposes the bones that underly the late capitalist neoliberal family. This is not to say that it constitutes a break with previous forms of family. These, too, were mediated by forces external to them (as in the Fordist family model). However, it intensifies their contradictions to the point at which they become untenable. Fraser argues that the crisis of care needs to be resolved in a way that may no longer "be compatible with capitalism" (2017, 36). This aligns with the account proposed by Lewis and is also where she differs from the radical feminists. There is no natural, undisturbed feminine intact family to be restored from the ravages of surrogacy. Rather, the way that surrogacy breaks apart that image needs to be worked through. In this way, a form of life can be achieved that adequately addresses the problem of reproduction and not genetic parenthood. By focusing on surrogacy,

which lies outside of the private confines of the family, Lewis' analysis pinpoints where the problem lies. The family is in crisis as a result of its contradictions. These can only be resolved in an emancipatory way, however, if they are generalized and externalized. This means that instead of privatizing and internalizing conditions of crisis into the family, they are reflected back to prefigure a transformed societal division of reproductive labor.

Surrogacy does not merely intensify and expose the contradictions of the nuclear family. In Lewis' reading, it can also propose alternate solutions to the problem of reproduction that the family's functional failures render necessary. To trace the outline of this solution, she aims "to use bourgeois reproduction today (…) to squint toward a horizon" that exceeds it (S. Lewis 2019, 21). The image of squinting and the horizon invites comparison to a "queer visuality" of a different kind: Muñoz' image of queer futurity commits us "to squint, to strain our vision and force it so see otherwise, beyond the limited vista of the here and now" (Muñoz 2009, 22). Drawing more closely on Bloch, Muñoz' argument hinges on generalizing hopeful glimpses of a better life that are visible in the present. Of course, Muñoz could not and would not deny how the "moments of queer relational bliss" in the present are constrained and play out in the cracks of heteronormativity (Muñoz 2009, 25). Lewis' approach focuses on the conditions within these constraints that create and intensify those cracks. In this sense, their analyses are doing the opposite, and yet they can both be sorted within a Blochian tradition of dialectically analyzing utopian tensions. In both cases, the contradiction between the norm and its negation is central to social transformation. In both cases, too, their project is driven by a particularly queer desire to find conditions of possibility for satisfying, livable, relational forms of life. This is why for Muñoz the resignation of mainstream demands for same-sex marriage are doomed to fail any emancipatory aspiration and why for Lewis there can be only "full surrogacy" (S. Lewis 2019, 20). *Partial* surrogacy, in this perspective, is akin to the reform that Bloch argued against. Finally, this combination of dialectical analysis and utopian *squinting* makes Lewis' analysis emerge as yet something else. The analysis she provides is not one mired only in the hopelessness of the present, nor is it merely a prefigurative sketch of a different world. Instead, she presents what could be termed an everyday *dys*topia – an image of a desirable future emerging out of a critique of the present[16].

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[16] Feminist legal scholar Davina Cooper has famously developed the concept of "everyday utopias", which "perform regular daily life (…) in a radically different fashion" (D. Cooper 2014, 2). The book describes forms of collective organization that are already taking place in ways that prefigure future, more desirable, forms of organization. Her approach is therefore the direct opposite of Lewis'. They both attempt to show how, in some

This method of utopia is further compatible with Adamczak's image a "community without unity" (2017, 270). In the process of carrying out gestational labor, the surrogates form bonds of community. They are formed through the process of work, when surrogates live together for extended periods of time in surrogate dorms. While the dormitory structure enables the forming of such non-familial bonds, it is also contentious. On the one hand, the dormitories are frequently designed to keep surrogate workers under continuous observation during gestation. On the other hand, surrogate workers frequently maintain relationships to family members outside of it. The community dormitory is in that sense neither unambiguous nor exclusive. Nonetheless, it facilitates particular bonds of solidarity. At the same time, a particular kind of bond is shaped between surrogate workers and their clients. Unlike the commodification argument of FINRRAGE, the state in which the clear designation of an infant's genetic origin is destabilized prefigures a more open definition of kinship. In this sense, it can be read as prefiguring a world in which genetic heredity is not predictive of care and solidarity. In other words, where it does not predict access to qualitatively good forms of kinship practices. This does not presuppose community but sees it as enacted through potentially conflicting practices. In this sense, it posits neither a harmonious post-revolutionary world, nor does it overidentify with the agitation of revolutionary movement. To phrase it differently: while not perfect, the infrastructure of surrogacy does not merely attempt to deconstruct the nuclear family. Instead, it reproduces social change by positing a framework of generalized reproduction that does "not so much 'smash' the nuclear family as make it unthinkable" (S. Lewis 2019, 167). This both builds on the existing contradictions of the family and prefigures altered conditions of possibility in which novel relational forms of life become possible. In Lewis' account, this diagnostic and utopian moment mutually enable each other.

In a favorable review of *Full Surrogacy*, Will McKeithen contextualizes her book with three topics for further exploration (2020). The status of gestation work in broader anti-work politics, the potential and limitations of family abolition in a socialist feminist project, and, finally, ways in which her analysis could be extended to account for the role of the state. In the context of my argument, this is exactly where the analysis will go next to explore the question: what would a dialectical-utopian analysis of the nuclear family as laid out in this chapter look like if it were extended to include the state? This is the question to which the last chapter turns.

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ways, the desired future is already here. Cooper elects to do this by showing replicable models, while Lewis' ideal society has to be brought about by inverting a frequently violent and dangerous present.

Chapter 3: Caring against the family

> Revolutionary reconstruction cannot just intervene in the modes of relation between commodity and love, market and family, but must also want to thwart, mix, and recombine the modes of relation between the state, bureaucracy, party, and friendship.
>
> (Bini Adamczak *Beziehungsweise Revolution* 2017, 285)

> How can you materially come to the place where the state is your servant?
>
> (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak *Planetary Utopias* 2019, 72)

As the previous chapter discussed, resolving the current crises of the nuclear family may require not initially working with it at all. That is, in the discussion of its fundamental contradictions, that form of life appeared to exist within a contradictory nexus of responsibility and resources. It has been increasingly saddled with reproductive responsibilities, while at the same time seeing its ability to do being undermined. From an emancipatory perspective, however, the resolution to this crisis does not have to beg for a return to an illusory moment before this crisis. Instead, to resolve this crisis requires renegotiating the societal division of reproductive labor that form the conditions of possibility for the nuclear family in its current form to begin with. The joint structure of reproductive needs that cannot be satisfied under capitalism and queer relational desires that cannot thrive under heteronormativity can provide a nod in the right direction. To structure this exploration, this last chapter returns to considering the role of the state. Particularly in chapter 1, the state was already featured: as the legal regulator of heteronormative kinship practices in Butler (2004), and as the agent that creates a unified front of home and nation against a multitude of constitutive outsides in Roderick Ferguson's account (2004).

This exploration is informed by provocative question posed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She argues that if the state plays a role in addressing the needs of its citizens, then emancipatory politics cannot avoid appealing to it. Instead, it becomes politically pertinent to ask: "How can you materially come to the place where the state is your servant?" (Spivak in Davis and Spivak 2019, 72). That is, if the state also structures the conditions of possibility within which performatively reproductive relational practices play out, then it becomes necessary to consider the way that the state can be made to facilitate more adequate structures. As Spivak argues, this does not constitute a pragmatist reduction to the political horizon of the

state. Instead, it constitutes demanding a more adequate response to people's needs from an institution that has refused or failed to do so. We can recall here how the structure of specifically reproductive needs can corroborate such an account of what amounts to a "utopian demand" (Weeks 2011, 176). The need for the adequate provision of reproductive services launches a demand against the societal division of reproductive labor that, in capitalism, privileges production over reproduction (Fraser 2017; S. Ferguson 2019). The desire for satisfying and safe relationships launches a demand, in accordance with the previous demand, to normatively organize society in a way that allows those desires to come to fruition (Muñoz 2009). To demand these satisfactions from the state while not limiting the political horizon to only state mechanisms, therefore holds considerable transformative potential and can point into the right direction[17].

In this final chapter, the role of the state in organizing the societal division of labor is explored through the lens of the Swiss institution of civil service. Dubbed *Zivildienst* in its original German, it was introduced in 1996 following a popular vote approving the introduction of a "conscription replacement" service (C. Hartmann 2016; Loepfe 2016, 24). That it, it formalized an infrastructure of enabling citizens to perform forms of service that did not fall within mandatory military service. Discussed in more detail below, forms of service span work in healthcare, care for children or the elderly, as well as agricultural labor or assistance in administrative tasks (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018). Military conscription in Switzerland follows from its particular history that is both unique and contradictory in a number of ways. Since 1874, Switzerland has implemented military conscription but has fought no wars, earning an international reputation of neutrality[18] (C. Hartmann 2016; Stüssi-Lauterberg 2020). Rather than pertaining to an entirely voluntary form of civic engagement, the resultant form of service was integrated into a form of citizenship responsibility akin to the military training and service it was intended to replace. A tangible remnant of this continued link is the persistent obligation for these civil servants to undergo mandatory basic military training before taking up alternative engagements. In line with this, what would translate into

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[17] This thought is linked to the idea developed by Erik Olin Wright of the "socialist compass" (2010, 128). According to him, certain directional coordinates exist that do not so much map a clear road towards socialist utopia but nonetheless provide an indication of whether or not a given path is moving towards it or running into a swamp.

[18] Although beyond the scope of this analysis, it is worth mentioning here that this image of Swiss neutrality is not entirely accurate. Illustrative of this is the way military historian Jürg Stüssi-Lauterberg celebrates that Adolf Hitler described Switzerland as "the most wretched and abominable people and state" (Stüssi-Lauterberg 2020, para. 5). To be disliked by an enemy is equated with acting in resistance. The very core of his account, that the military is a necessary component for Switzerland's independence, however, betrays a truth about neutrality in the face of oppression: that it relies on and perpetuates violence.

English as the aforementioned *civil servant* does not provide an entirely accurate depiction of the role. Rather than being employed within state administration, they fulfill a distinct role in civil society that is nonetheless logistically structured by the military. Accordingly, in this chapter, their informal German designation is used in order to distinguish them from state employees: as an abbreviation of the German "Zivildienstleistende[r]", or "civil service provider" they are referred to as "*Zivis*" (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2020; Loepfe 2016, 24). This describes an actor executing labor that exists halfway between voluntary and obligatory work in a way that is not reducible to paid employment. Accordingly, *Zivis* emerge in a position uniquely equipped to call into question the current societal division of reproductive labor. They at once indicate the potential of deploying resources from the state in practices of social reproduction while modeling a form of civic engagement that exceeds both state and military intervention. The same logic is applied to the institution: *Zivildienst* instead of the English translation *civil service*. In the following, the labor performed by *Zivis* within the framework of *Zivildienst*, is discussed by virtue of its function to performatively reproduce forms of community that exceed the nuclear family. That is, *Zivi* labor is exposed as reproducing community in ways that both addresses current crises in the organization of reproduction and provides avenues for continued contestation. This last point is particularly important: only through continual contestation of the societal division of reproductive labor, can the broader sense of reproductive solidarity prefigured by the *Zivildienst* be prevented from reproducing a universalized, exclusionary, and hierarchical form of life. In the same way that Lewis claims for the case of gestational surrogacy, *Zivildienst* can only be prefigurative when it "change[s] beyond recognition" (S. Lewis 2019, 20).

1. The state as your servant

> The conflict between military service and civil service takes place on a higher plane: on the one hand, it deals with the necessity of collectively satisfying the needs of the community – in which case the individual must take a step back – and on the other hand it is about the satisfaction of an individual's egocentric desire; here, the collective pales.
> (Peter Schneider *Military Service or Civil Service* 2020, para. 1 my translation)

The structure of civil service is determined by its three basic functions as defined by the Swiss Federal Department of Civil Service (2018). First, as already mentioned, it functions as a

replacement activity for military service. In this sense, it satisfies a form of civic obligation in which military service figures prominently. Second, it functions to "provide services in the public interest, where existing resources are lacking for the fulfillment of important tasks for the community" (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018, para. 4). Third, even though the civil service is not strictly a military unit, it is still concerned with matters of internal security policy, such as disaster relief (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018). All three of these functions are designed to reproduce the Swiss nation state and its members. Thus, civil service exists in the interest of "securing the survival of state and society" (Loepfe 2016, 75).

In the way *Zivildienst* is discussed here, it does not posit the reproduction of the nation state as utopian horizon in itself. Instead it intervenes in the existing crisis-prone state of the societal organization of reproductive labor in the context of the postindustrial activating welfare state. To briefly recapture the argument from the previous chapter, this context ushers in "deepening stresses on family life" that occur in the context of the post-industrial activating welfare state (Fraser in Fraser and Jaeggi 2018, 13). These stresses occur in a crisis-prone form because of a dual movement: an increase in responsibility on civil society and, accordingly, the family in securing reproduction, at a time when the conditions of possibility for this form of family are increasingly being undermined. As Fraser argues, the particularly neoliberal relationship between marketization and emancipation play out here at the expense of social security (2017).

This is the context in which the family emerges in a state of normative crisis as Jaeggi describes (2018). On one side of this crisis lie forms of life which are explicitly at odds with the heteronormative parameters of the nuclear family. That is, as Butler's discussion indicated, forms of life which explicitly situate themselves as kinship formations that performatively subvert the heteronormative parameters of kinship (2004). The fact that kinship as kinship can empirically exist beyond the normative nuclear family undermines the normative singularity of that form of life – it cannot be the only viable form of life to address specific problems in the relational organization of social reproduction.

On the other side of this lie institutions that do not normatively posit to constitute forms of kinship but that nonetheless organize reproductive practices. Accordingly, they can intervene in the family's singular location in the societal division of reproductive labor. That is, if the nuclear family's normative proposition is, at least in part, to relationally organize social reproduction and there are other forms of life which purport to do the same, this indicates the family's failure to be the sole provider of reproductive practices. As the accounts of both

Jaeggi and Fraser indicate, to understand the fragility and contingency of a specific form of life does not merely indicate the possibility that it *could* be constituted differently. Since its failures result in acute failures for the people who live in uninhabitable forms of life, this also generates the necessity that its practices *should* be organized differently, in a way that reorganizes the societal division of labor. That is, an imperative to more adequately contrive of the societal division of reproductive labor emerges out of these functional failures.

This is the specific context in which *Zivildienst* is discussed. To locate it within the societal division of specifically reproductive labor first requires a closer definition of the labor it includes. First, a closer definition of the labor performed by *Zivis* is required. Their deployment takes place in a number of sectors: it spans health care, care for children and the elderly, agricultural labor on alpine farms, archeological heritage preservation, or work in public administration activities, most commonly in the integration of asylum seekers (Loepfe 2016; Martini 2020). While all of these activities form part of the *Zivildienst*, deployments in the care sector take on a particularly central role. This focus can be explained by way of the origins of the institution. In early debates on institutionalizing a conscription replacement service, care work was proposed as part of efforts to present it "as unattractively as possible" (Bernhard 2020, para. 9 my translation). Committing *Zivis* "work in less attractive sectors, such as health care, which not coincidentally formed a central part of the service from the beginning" was meant to discourage conscripts from choosing *Zivildienst* over military service (Bernhard 2020, para. 12 my translation). More recently, the caring labor within the *Zivildienst* has been afforded more positive attention. Similar to other Western countries, the Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sport in charge of coordinating the *Zivildienst* has assessed that Switzerland finds itself within a "care emergency" (Loepfe 2016, 64). Since the function of *Zivis* is to be "active where Swiss society requires the most support", their deployment within the care sector has assumed the function of responding to an acute social need (Bundesamt für Zivildienst ZIVI 2018, para. 4). However, even within this space endorsement has been tentative at times. Liberal proponents of the *Zivildienst* caution against it interfering in the competitiveness of the Swiss market. One such voice, the think tank *Avenir Suisse*, *Zivildienst* is to be commended because it means that "young women and young men can provide care to elderly people who no longer have close relatives" by providing necessary "personalized care" (Service Citoyen 2015, 22–23). They hedge their endorsement, however, with the caveat that any public sector involvement cannot interfere in the ability of private enterprise to provide those same services.

While explicitly reproductive activities in the care sector therefore form a key part of *Zivildienst* activities, it would inaccurately present it to exclude other forms of labor. These do not immediately appear to constitute reproductive labor, however, they may still fit into an expanded conception of reproductive labor. Historically, social reproduction has not merely played out within the confines of the family and what we would understand today as chiefly familial or reproductive labor. As Maria Mies' landmark essay has argued, conceiving of reproductive labor as solely *domestic* labor, is indicative of a bias in favor of Western forms of reproduction (1983). Instead, she argues that certain forms of subsistence agriculture cannot be excluded from the scope of reproductive labor. That is, reproductive labor can become characterized as reproductive labor not by virtue of a specific form of labor, but by its function in sustaining life and communities. Rather than reducing reproductive labor to the act of cooking meals or washing clothes, it can become conceptualized by the way it upholds specific relationships. The relational composite of the nation state can also be conceptualized as something that is specifically reproduced. Mai Taha and Sara Salem emphasize the role of reproductive labor in the specific context of the nation state (2019). "[S]erving the nation through social reproduction" has informed a variety of nationalisms, both conservative and revolutionary (Taha and Salem 2019, 49). Specifically, in the case of the British colonial occupation of Egypt and the anti-colonial resistance, social reproduction was centrally included in efforts to reproduce the nation. Even though Taha and Salem focus on a particular post-colonial context, their argument can carry across contexts. This can inform an expanded understanding of the reproduction of nation states, beyond merely focusing on narrow forms of public sphere civic engagement. To expand social reproduction in these senses does not merely expand the scope of labor that falls under its purview. It allows considering the way that communities are instantiated through forms of labor that are specifically reproductive.

Contextualizing this requires a closer look at the way *Zivildienst* does, in fact, function to specifically reproduce community. In a report published in 2016 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of a formalized *Zivildienst*, this image of community produced through the labor performed by *Zivis* reappears repeatedly. (C. Hartmann 2016). Some accounts, perhaps closest to a formal understanding of military deployment and its 'boys in barracks' narrative, described a sense of community with fellow *Zivis*: completing service activities in groups of similarly aged young people and sometimes in secluded locations, for example on remote alpine farms, created a sense of camaraderie and connection (Häfner 2020). Additionally, it enabled many *Zivis* to build relationships with members of the communities in which they worked across

barriers of language, class, age, and political convictions. For example, *Zivis* describe bonding with the farmers on whose land they worked, building relationships with elderly residents in care-homes, or developing friendships with asylum seekers they accompanied in their asylum processes (Martini 2020; Praz 2016). In all these cases, relational ties are generated seemingly inadvertently in addition to the work carried out.

In line with this, we can recall the expanded conception of performatively reproductive labor developed in the previous chapters. Chapter 1 contextualized Butler's kinship practices as always also reproductive practices (2004), building on the productive aporias that Floyd found in her account of gender (2009). At the same time, the ambiguous reproduction of labor power conceptualized by Susan Ferguson (2019), was shown to always also reproduce relationships akin to the performative constitution of kinship in Butler. In keeping with another component of Floyd's approach, both of these conceptualizations of reproductive labor, in turn, emerge as forms of skilled labor. In chapter 2, this skilled, performatively reproductive labor was shown to be compatible with Jaeggi's framework of forms of life (2018). The process of carrying out skilled, performatively reproductive practices is always also normatively qualified by virtue of the form of life in which they are carried out. Discussing the relationships ambiguously reproduced by *Zivildienst*, highlights yet another component of reproductive labor. The state is not merely a form of life that is reproduced through practices that sustain it. In addition, it provides the structure that cements the normative parameters in which the skilled, performatively reproductive labor can even begin to take shape. Not just the normative parameters of kinship are determined by the state. Instead, as Roderick Ferguson argued, the state imposes specific forms of normative stability that can organize society that has been dis-organized by capital (2004). The labor that plays out in these parameters is specifically reproductive because it occurs in an ambiguous manner: for the state to be reproduced, it cannot merely overpower its citizens, but it must provide for a bare minimum of their needs, in a way that is structurally analogous to the contradictions of social reproduction under capitalism. *Zivildienst* can illustrate in this context that the reproduction of community and the organization of reproductive labor are not incidentally related. The performance of labor in the interest of sustaining the nation qualifies it as reproductive in both senses of the word. It both satisfies specific needs for the individual and community while also reproducing the systemic conditions in which it continues to exist.

This ambiguity of reproductive labor at the level of reproducing the nation state can also support the critique of AFM developed in chapter 1. To briefly recall the AFM

perspective, it equates reproductive labor, conceptualized chiefly as domestic labor, with the productive labor produced by male workers in the factory (Federici 2012b; Dalla Costa and James 1975). Accordingly, alternative forms of community that are less hierarchical or patriarchal than current forms, must also be *produced*[19]. By contrast, the conceptualization of skilled, performatively reproductive labor presented here, exposes the way labor that satisfies needs and reproduces relational ties always both internalizes and exceeds its current conditions of possibility. In the context of *Zivildienst*, this means there is no way but through. To reconfigure the societal division of labor requires making an explicit demand to more adequately satisfy reproductive needs to the institutions as they exist now-

Arguing that *Zivildienst* is a reproductive form of life because of the way it reproduces a particular form of community is not entirely sufficient to support its connection to the nuclear family. The normative parameters posited by that form of life, however, are able to shed light on the relationship between the two within the societal division of reproductive labor. As the preceding discussion indicated, its practices primarily serve the purpose of reproducing the community of the nation state as practices are carried out in the interest of "securing the survival of state and society" (Loepfe 2016, 75). By expanding the scope of citizens who can sustain the nation state in this way, it does not constitute a significant break with the military even though it was first designed to circumvent it. It achieves this normative goal through providing a service that is functionally required for the reproduction of community. Additionally, the provision of reproductive resources at a point where these are lacking in the care sector, demonstrates how the normative reproduction of forms of life requires material reproduction.

In a way that now emerges as apparently analogous to the *Zivildienst*, the normative problem to be solved by the nuclear family revolves around the organization of reproductive labor in the context of a kin-based community. However, this comparison exceeds mere analogy. Instead, it indicates more fundamental moments of overlap between the family and nation by virtue of their position in the societal division of labor. On the one hand, the way in which *Zivildienst* assumes reproductive responsibility provides a form of public intervention into reproductive labor. Rather than signaling a break with a preceding familial whole or

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[19] Although in more recent work on this topic, this point is presented in a more differentiated form. Silvia Federici's approach in *Revolution at Point Zero* is indicative of this more detailed differentiation (2012a). Nonetheless, she maintains an emphasis on the production of alternative forms of community, for example when she speaks of the "production of 'commoning' practices", in the context of politics of the commons (Federici 2012a, 12). This still allows her to collapse the distinctions between reproductive and productive labor.

bourgeois unity, it can indicate ways in which the reproductive unit of the family was always already publicly mediated. The assumption or delegation of reproductive responsibility have enabled specific forms of community and kin organization in the state's (negative) image. On the other hand, the relational components of reproductive labor function to sustain community, in ways that are both explicitly intended by *Zivildienst* and in ways that are not. That is, the relational ties forged between *Zivis* can indicate ways in which reproductive and relational practices always already existed in ways that circumnavigated the nuclear family. While it is still constrained by the normative parameters of the military, it functions to indicate how the nuclear family already never was the sole provider of ethically qualified relational reproductive labor.

If the previous discussion can situate *Zivildienst* and the nuclear family as, in a sense, solving the same normative problem, then we need to ask to what extent their crises are compatible. The family exists in a state of normative crisis which *Zivildienst* does not. To recall the argument presented in chapter 2, the contemporary objective conditions of the nuclear family relegate reproductive responsibilities to it in its current from have undermined its ability to do so. That is, in the context of neoliberal welfare restructuring, the solid base by which the stability of the bourgeois nuclear family was guaranteed is eroded. Simultaneously, alternative forms of reproduction are already *de facto* assuming responsibility for the family's normatively posited reproductive responsibilities (a contradiction of which *Zivildienst* is also symptomatic). Nonetheless, the family is posited as the place in which the withdrawal of the state is to be compensated. *Zivildienst*, by contrast, is experiencing the opposite. Through its proximity to the military, it is practically well-equipped to carry out its own normative parameters. This is not to say that it cannot be normatively judged. In fact, the norms on which the militarized reproduction of the nation state rests can and should be subject to scrutiny. However, from the perspective of its own normative parameters, it is normatively functional in the way described by Jaeggi. That is, unlike the contradictory status of the family in which reproductive responsibilities are delegated to it while its resources to do so are practically undermined, the *Zivildienst* is afforded the resources it needs to carry out its goals. The way it is housed within the infrastructure of the military locates it at the center of the nation state, and therefore enjoys a symbolically and materially privileged status.

This public location of reproductive labor indicates one way in which *Zivildienst* appears to prefigure a transformed societal division of labor. The dual normative and functional crisis in which the family emerged throughout chapter 2, and again in this section, stemmed

from the fact that within the neoliberal restructuring of the state, reproductive responsibility was ever more privatized. This is the reason why the demand for inclusion into marriage appeared repeatedly to be inadequate: while it would extend the scope of people who would be able to marry, it would not intervene in the material that continued to undermine social security. In other words, it would extend the safe haven of the married family without contesting the heartless world in which that safety was required in a privatized form. To locate reproductive resources at the heart of the nation state, to be executed by regular citizens, on the other hand, presents a glimpse of a world in which reproduction provides an anchor at the center of society. As part of a public institution, *Zivi* labor externalizes the contradictions of reproductive labor. Even in their labor, reproductive labor continues to play out in the contradictions between the reproduction of systemic conditions, labor power, and life. Instead of privatizing these tensions into the nuclear family, they are externalized and explicitly inserted into the public sphere. Accordingly, an avenue is presented by which negotiating the satisfaction of people's needs is rendered an explicit political concern.

As the discussion of social reproduction and nationalism introduced, however, merely providing enough resources for reproductive labor and declaring reproductive labor a core value of civic engagement, is not enough to be transformative. The intervention into the societal division of reproductive labor posed by *Zivildienst* points into a direction of generalized reproductive responsibilities. However, this fails to be emancipatory without ongoing contestation over the type of community that this reproduces.

2. Social reproduction and the contestation of community

As a staunch opposer of the military I wanted to avoid military service or to be indebted to the army in any way. This does not mean, however, that I did not want to perform any kind of service.

(Marius Klinger *Field Service in Nepal* 2020, para. 2 my translation)

Originally, the *Zivildienst* was developed as a pacifist project. It was designed to formalize conscientious objection to military service and responded to an interest in some of the objectors themselves to find an alternate avenue for service. Some conservative proponents of the military welcomed this possibility, as it continued to conscript male citizens into Switzerland's military legacy, even if they did not end up fulfilling their service as trained soldiers. *Zivildienst*

therefore fits into a legacy of "independence and freedom" that is safeguarded by the presence of a military, in the opinion of military historian Jürg Stüssi-Lauterberg argues (Stüssi-Lauterberg 2020, para. 4). Other proponents of the military felt it threatened that same military legacy. As discussed in the previous section, the focus on reproductive labor was initially intended to curb interest in forms of extra-military service. This stance has continued to inform the very structure of the institutionalization of *Zivildienst*: until 2009, conscripts had to testify in front of military court before being admitted to civil service, today the choice still comes coupled with financial penalties, and the required service time is 1.5 times longer than regular military service (Buzzi 2020; Kreis 2020). This year, a further obstacle was put in the path of switching to civil service after having completed mandatory basic training by implementing a one-year waiting period (*Swissinfo* 2020).

On other side of this, lie progressive stances on the military. Most prominently, the pacifist organization *GsOA* (*Group for a Switzerland without an Army*). The organization points out how continued conscription cements antiquated gender roles by committing able-bodied young men to military training and, by omission, relegating women to domestic work (GSoA 2013). This is more than an arbitrary accusation. In the same article, they quote Ueli Maurer, member of the right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP) and, at the time, head of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection, and Sport saying that "soldiers serve in the military, and the women take care of home and children" (GSoA 2013, para. 6). Other pacifist organizations like the *Center for Non-Violence in Italian Switzerland* (CNSI, *Centro per la nonviolenza della Svizzera italiana*), advocate for an expansion of *Zivildienst* so that its contribution to community building can be accessed by a broader section of the population (Buzzi 2020). Specifically in the context of migrant integration, this would create the material conditions for broader and non-discriminatory contributions to building community. If this were accompanied by the possibility to complete only part-time deployments, this could also structure more equitable division of childcare labor. Similarly, Green Party politician Anita Lachenmeier-Thüring argues that expanding *Zivildienst* to all citizens would correct its regressive effects, rendering the dissolution of the institution unnecessary (Lachenmeier-Thüring 2012). She frames *Zivildienst* as providing benefits of social enrichment, professional development, and societal integration. Expanding these to all, rather than disbanding the institution, would more adequately serve an emancipatory goal. However, her parliamentary motion to that effect was rejected with the justification that those benefits were secondary and not, in fact, central characteristics of the civil service infrastructure.

Lying in between the above stances, is the Service Citoyen project by the self-styled neoliberal think tank *Avenir Suisse*. They advocate for the development of a general "citizen's service" (Service Citoyen 2015, 6). The momentum for their initiative is derived from the specifically Swiss "militia principle" (Service Citoyen 2015, 16). The term is distinct from the colloquial understanding of the word 'militia' that describes a paramilitary (Schneider 2020). In the Swiss context, it describes a system of integrated citizen obligations and mutual responsibility that transcends the army proper. This allows the proponents of the initiative to assert that "the militia principle transcends the imperative of national defense" and instead to conceptualize it as a form of "active citizenship" where "those who constitute society are also those immediately responsibly for its success" (Service Citoyen 2015, 16).

The stance of *Avenir Suisse* is interesting because of the contradictory relationship they cultivate to neoliberal processes of marketization. The necessity for an expanded sense of citizenship emerges from an observed decrease in social cohesion as a result of increasingly globalized market relations. In this sense, their stance is remains in keeping with the normative parameters of *Zivildienst* introduced in the previous section. Accordingly, they want to build a more integrated society, as evidenced in the following quote: "Harmony and social inclusion are suffering under the enormity and speed of this transformation. The traditional nuclear family is disintegrating, ethnic communities are clutching to their identities, and intergenerational relationships are diverging" (Service Citoyen 2015, 11). This arguments appears to endorse a regressive image of family and nation that has informed resurgences in right-wing populism across Europe (Mayer et al. 2018). Social atomization is attributed to economic globalization and deregulation. In seeming direct opposition to this, however, the proposal they develop still remains squarely within the parameters of the free market: civil service activities can intervene in care deficits only in an attempt to maintain or increase Switzerland's international competitiveness. Their solution to create a more connected society through an expanded civil service remains committed to the conditions which have produced the problems that they seek to address. The contradiction of *Avenir Suisse* appears to fit within the image of capitalism's current form that Fraser proposed: one in which emancipation and marketization are opposed to social security (2017). Nonetheless, their envisioned avenue of emancipation is rooted within a reproductive infrastructure emerging from the state.

The return to a threatened national unity that this approach espouses requires contextualization. As Jaeggi argued, the solution proposed by a form of life can beget new problems that need to be resolved. In the previous section, the *Zivildienst* was introduced as

not beset by normative crises. From the perspective of its solution to the problem of social reproduction, it appeared to be equipped to carry out its own normative parameters. Here, the solution it proposes to that problem emerges as problematic in another sense. That is, in the case of solving the problem of social reproduction, it is more adequate than the nuclear family. Instead of privatizing the contradictions of social reproduction, it externalizes them and therefore redistributes reproductive responsibility in the societal division of labor. However, in doing so, it also reaffirms the "illusory universality" of the state against its constitutive outsides (R. Ferguson 2004, 17). Briefly, in Roderick Ferguson's account, the role of the state in capitalism is to account for the destabilizing effects of capital. That is, it reasserts forms of universal national and familial unity against the racialized and gendered particularization that capitalism enacts. By definition, it reserves *Zivi* positions to citizens and does so in a way that is located within an infrastructure of national defense. Even if, in the case of Switzerland, this involves only passive military involvement, it is indistinguishable from an overarching infrastructure of European border patrol. This universalizing impulse of the nation state in opposition to its constitutive outside is an integral part of the reproduction of a national community. It also continues to stabilize, instead of undermine, the conditions of possibility for capitalism.

Exactly because the *Zivildienst* reproduces what we might call the problem of the nation state, it can provide a specific cog in this prefigurative machine. While it does not posit a blueprint to be replicated, it does point towards a form of everyday *dys*topia, as introduced in chapter 2. That is, it highlights a central contradiction in the present that requires resolving to enable a better future. Following Ferguson's framing, both the family and the nation assume their universalized status at the expense of delegitimized, constitutive others. The privacy of the family relies on non-familial others, which are both those who do not form part of one's own family as well as those whose kinship is not as legitimate as one's own. The nation state relies on similar excluded others: those to whom the reproductive responsibility of the nation state does not extend, and those whose forms of belonging, either within their own communities or attempted within the same national community, are delegitimized from the perspective of that state. Within the normative parameters of the nation state or the family, it could be argued that their normative intent never was to provide reproductive services to those who fall outside of its boundaries. However, in light of the current functional and normative crises of the family, this issue is rendered moot. In the context of neoliberal transformations which erode the conditions of possibility for even the normative nuclear family, the reproduction of the family's

constitutive outside continues to be a problem. In other words, the family, and by extension the nation state, rely on their constitutive outsides for survival. This means that in the long run their own conditions for survival are undermined, too, if resources are drawn away from them.

Accordingly, continued negotiation over the conditions of meeting people's reproductive needs and desires has to inform any future societal division of reproductive labor. The needs for adequate reproduction stretches past the present. The desire for a future in which the meeting of reproductive needs does not constrain the possibility for the formation of relationships is inextricably tied to them. This introduces one last way in which the reproductive responsibility of *Zivildienst* can emerge to be prefigurative. Adamczak's notion of "community without unity" resurfaces here again (2017, 270). In her account, overcoming a strict opposition between the present and a utopian future requires conceptualizing both on a spectrum. The practices of today lead into the envisioned future. This has two consequences: current practices need to prefigure what is to come (already embody the future community), and the image of futurity cannot be posited as entirely harmonious and therefore sealed off from the present (envision the future as also open to contestation). *Zivildienst* emerged out of pacifist contestation to the military and continues to be marked by new contestations. Still remaining within the infrastructure of the military causes stauncher pacifists to oppose it, while defenders of the military see it as interfering in the functioning of this institution. Yet others call for its expansion, often from progressive perspectives. Accordingly, it has incorporated its original conditions of emergence rather than shedding them to be replaced with an image of harmony. In the terms proposed by Adamczak, this means that *Zivildienst* has avoided succumbing to either a "revolution fetish" or a "utopia fetish" (2017, 264, 274). The ongoing contestation over the nature of *Zivildienst* and the community it constitutes is exactly what qualifies it for consideration as a form of everyday *dys*topia. In other words, the way it is marked by continuous contestation allows it to emerge as prefigurative of a form of social transformation that does not eschew the necessity of political disagreement even within the image of utopia.

The particular form of contestation that this chapter presented on the topic of *Zivildienst*, takes a form similar to the form Lewis proposed in her approach to gestational surrogacy, by way of an "anti-anti surrogacy" (2019, 51). What makes *Zivildienst* worth opposing, is not the way it takes up reproductive responsibilities from otherwise private forms of family, or because it intervenes in the unfettered functioning of the market. Instead, its continued reproduction of a constitutive outside render it worthy of continued contestation.

However, this does not present it from introduced a form of reproductive solidarity that extends beyond the limits of the nuclear family. Crucially, it extends also beyond the limits of kinship. Capital cannot explain all components of society. Neither can social reproduction. Nonetheless, material conditions can constitute constraining parameters within which a specific form of life launches a socially mediated interpretation of the problems to be addressed. To intensify the public intervention in social reproduction, can generate new material conditions of possibility for the development of altered interpretations of the problem of social reproduction.

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