

Suturing the Split

Coda on the Couple-Form

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We wrote “Against the Couple-Form” in 2010.
After some revisions, it appeared in 2012.
This text railed against every existing form of romantic coupling.
Which we considered a barrier to the triumph of a feminist revolution.
Since then, a number of things have happened.
Amongst us, between us, in the world.
We’ve been startled. swept. unsettled.
We’ve had to rethink.

A psychoanalytic turn in our thinking, circa 2013.
Not so much Freud or Lacan, but Klein.
The psychoanalysis of group experience that comes out of Klein’s object relations theory.
Wilfred Bion. Group relations.
We’ve been digesting.
Taken in new directions.
Thinking through projection and introjection:
Being unwilling to tolerate certain affects within ourselves so we ascribe them to others.
Being unwilling to tolerate our own affects, so we take on the feelings of others.
Which has led us to the trough of the feels.

The denunciation of the couple, the boyfriend, the partner, the plus one
may be a form of projection.
A way of banishing those things we are afraid to see in ourselves,
making them properties of the couple
The disavowal of one’s own aggression, externalized as men.

Feminists must be wary
Wary of projecting aggression onto men as a category
which then relieves women and non-cis-men of having to recognize
The forms of aggression that dwell within us
The forms of violence that we can and do unleash
We think it’s important for white women, cis-women, women with resources,
women living in the centres of empire, women of many different positions

To be able to recognize their own aggression.
Channeled both within and against this world.
Feminists must not idealize themselves.
Learning to let ourselves feel ambivalence.
Learning to let ourselves acknowledge ambivalence.
Towards ourselves. towards our political projects. towards our comrades.
In our experiments abstaining from the couple
We also encountered the difficulties of non-coupley kinship
The way that we fail each other and love each other and fail to love each other.
People, groups, are never one thing
Never a pure “fuck this” or “love this”
Letting the sadness seep up.
You have to be enlivened by the disappointments
Or you will die before you are actually dead.
Even in communism or whatever we mean by that
we will have moments of deceleration, of uncertainty.
We are learning to be supple with feelings
To engage them with the kind of thought and care that we use for the three volumes of *Capital*
To be as rigorous with understanding what we are feeling as we are with parsing political
economic categories.
We’ve also come to notice the way in which denouncing the couple-form is a defense
A crutch, an alibi, a means of hiding
From the challenges, the dangers, the vulnerabilities of being close
Of saying what we are thinking and feeling
Being willing to ask for what we want
Relationally, sexually, interpersonally.
We are still sick of couples and coupley people.
We think you are boring and pathetic
Every time you relinquish an opportunity to show up for your friends and comrades
In the street, at the party, at the police line.
For the rowdy and sexy and scary moments. All the juiciness of the social totality.
So that you can seclude yourself, couple down behind the locked doors of the world.
Infinite eye roll.
We have a venom cocktail ready for you.
We know that that this seclusion emerges from the unease that this world generates in us
The fear of being defenseless, alone, without aid
Without the simple, calming sensation of burrowing into another’s body
And also the exhaustion, the strain of being misunderstood, invisible, without witness
That drives us towards the pseudo-insurance policy of coupledness
And it’s not simply coupling
We have invented so many ways of hiding from the horrors of this world
And from the ways we inhabit them daily, hourly.
The couple is one form of hiding among many.
This is the tone and mode of (not) engaging with the social that disgusts us.
We feel the pull to be in a couple because everyone else is

And this is the same pull that convinces us that
 We have to pay rent because everyone else does
 Or work for money because everyone else does
 Of course, history can swerve abruptly
 Such that we don't know what landlords, bosses, or husbands are anymore.
 We're into this. We want this moment to cum.
 Certain modes of relating can crack us open.
 I didn't know I wanted to go up to the roof till you asked me.
 I didn't know I wanted to be fucked in public till you asked me.
 I didn't know I wanted to set a million dollars alight till you asked me.
 What we have found within our interactions with lovers
 The practice of paying attention to what quickens our breath
 Of noticing what arouses us
 Naming it, cultivating it, pursuing it
 We think this practice is ultimately connected to
 what will allow us to stop going to work, to take what we need.
 We are learning how to unleash our desires to the point that they rupture with capital
 We want to use them as weathervanes that point only
 Towards communism.
 And we think an emotional reflexivity, intelligence, and tenderness—what am I feeling? how can
 I describe it? how do my feelings affect how I interact with those around me?—
 Will be necessary for trusting each other
 Building the type of bonds that can pull us out of this world.
 Bonds long enough to sustain the growing of carrots and the expropriation of armaments.
 We've received some inquiries about the role of sex in struggle against the couple.
 We would like to clarify our position:
 We want to be slapped in the face when we cum
 To be penetrated in several orifices simultaneously
 To be fucked also by the intoxicating prose of women
 By the colors of the sun setting on this city.
 We would like to spend years touching every other part of your body besides your genitals.
 To spend years becoming intimate with our own physical dexterity
 Ready ourselves for the love, the riots that arrive unannounced.
 Under our breath, you can hear us humming:
 *without god
 without law
 without husband
 free beautiful and crazy*
 <3,
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