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ARTICLE

Hacking Reproductive Justice: Solomon's Judgment and the Captive Maternal

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Abstract
Sylvia Wynter's sociogenic principle, Chiara Bottici's feminist mythology, and Denise Ferreira da Silva's Black feminist praxis of hacking, all underscore the importance of working through the myths, codes, and origin stories that discursively form our world. We identify the biblical story of Solomon's judgment as an origin story which constitutes an understanding of justice in matters of reproduction that is still hegemonic today, and that must be subverted to realize the Black feminist aim of reproductive justice. Through Solomon's judgment, justice in reproduction got established as what Édouard Glissant terms, an "obsession with the chain of affiliation" inscribed with the "tragedy of miscegenation," capturing the maternal in the arché-form of the future subject. We differentiate between the patriarchal configuration of "justice in reproduction" and the feminist concept "reproductive justice," which is a popular, strong, and important activist concept. To arrive at reproductive justice, a "hack" of the patriarchal configuration of justice in Solomon's judgment is orchestrated: through a radical affirmation of the events of both abortion and birth, we aim to "explode" the narrative code that constitutes the hegemonic patriarchal understanding of justice, in order to liberate the captive maternal and reimagine reproductive justice within a true *feminist* mythology.

1. Of discursive origin stories, feminist mythology, and hacking ourselves to the end of the world.

In Chiara Bottici's *Feminist mythology*, femininity is rewritten not through theory, law, or critique, but through stories. More specifically, through an insertion of new stories in age-old myths, such as those of Sherazade, Ariadne, and Europa.[1] According to the Caribbean philosopher Sylvia Wynter, the stories we tell each other about being human define who we are.[2] These stories are so naturalized and deeply engrained in our epistemology and ethical-juridical understanding of the world that certain narratives discursively define the nature and the limits of who are and who we can be: they tell us what it is and must be like to be human, and importantly, along the lines of sex, race, and

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class, who is considered more or less human than others. Wynter names these myths "origin stories" as they contain, in a discursive sense, the origin of our being. The changes in origin stories are, according to Wynter, not contingent (as with Foucault), but they present fundamental shifts in the "politics of being," and should thus be considered political ontological questions that "unearth a struggle" (rewriting Marx's class struggle) between *different* "descriptive statements of the human ... about whose master code of symbolic life and death each human order organizes itself."[3] Consequentially, Bottici and Wynter argue that we must change myths and origin stories, as a way to change our world and ourselves. This is the promise of humans as "*bios/ mythoi* enacted orders of supraindividual consciousness," meaning that humans are constructed through the intersection of biology and mythology in a collective lifeworld.[4] It is the praxis of storytelling, that is the praxis of being human together, and hence the key to deconstructing the way we are so that we can become human together *otherwise*.

In five short essayistic steps, we are concerned with the rewriting of a particular origin story, namely that of reproductive justice. The claim to, and administration of, justice in matters of reproduction is a practice that is, both currently and historically, rife with patriarchal ideology and racializing state interference. Our hegemonic conceptualization of justice in reproduction defines what the moral good is in sexual reproduction, and often this (implicit) understanding makes a normative and discursive claim on how sexual reproduction should take form. Behind the patriarchal racializing eugenic formation of sexual reproduction through state policy, for instance, lies the implicit moral claim that it is "good" and "just" to structure kinship-making in nuclear and white supremacist ways. The Black feminist concept "reproductive justice" aims to challenge these patriarchal and colonial configurations of justice in reproduction and reveal them as, in fact, deeply engrained structures of injustice. Reproductive justice is commonly defined by three principles: the right to have children, the right not to have children, and the right to raise children in safe and sustainable environments—and Sister Song adds the fourth principle of bodily autonomy.[5] We could hence state, broadly speaking, that there are at least two conflicting origin stories, in the sense that they discursively shape practices, policies, and activism, of what justice is in the case of reproduction.

The fight for reproductive justice hence did not arrive in a void, but is a battle against age-old existing patriarchal configurations of justice in reproduction. The patriarchal claim to "justice" in reproduction serves as the implicit justification of invasive policy regarding sexual reproduction, and is fully integrated in Western thought on femininity, kinship, genealogy, motherhood, family, and patriarchy. In this article, we aim to differentiate in more detail the patriarchal configuration of justice in reproduction from the Black feminist conceptualization of reproductive justice by way of laying bare and dismantling the logic at the heart of patriarchal narratives of justice in reproduction that are, we believe, still hegemonic today in the practices and moral justifications of obstetric violence and obstetric racism, the criminalization of abortion, forced contraception, sterilization, etc. Through dismantling these patriarchal configurations, we attempt to further reappropriate justice in the field of reproduction as something to be practiced and theorized by feminists only, as well as to urge ourselves to be wary of any unconscious repetition of patriarchal logics in our fight for reproductive justice. The claim of our article is thus that the call for justice in reproduction is not new: also before the term "reproductive justice" was coined, reproduction was rife with (oppressive) configurations of justice which feminists have been uncovering as patriarchal myths

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responsible for grave injustices. The struggle for reproductive justice can hence be seen as the reconfiguration and reappropriation of justice in reproduction. For the sake of clarity, we use "justice in reproduction" for the patriarchal configuration of justice in reproduction, and the Black feminist concept "reproductive justice" for the feminist configuration of justice in reproduction, which aims to break reproduction free from patriarchal and colonial ties.

If we want to reappropriate justice in feminism, and reimagine what reproductive justice might come to mean in a feminist world, we must deconstruct the hegemonic myths about justice in reproduction still inherent in laws on fertility, birth, and abortion, and in the institutions that govern pregnancy, birth, and childcare. According to Bottici, Silva, and Wynter, in order to truly reconfigure concepts, codes, and origin stories, it is not only necessary to pose a counter-narrative in the form of a new configuration of justice, but to also hack, subvert, and dismantle the old patriarchal configuration of justice in reproduction. Bottici points out that we cannot simply get rid of old myths by rationalizing them, as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer have shown in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: the mythical will come back to haunt us in destructive, repressed, and rationalized forms.[6] "Overcoming mythology," according to Chiara Bottici, rather means that we must go "through its retelling because only by traversing the fantasy can one hope to reach a different place."[7] In the case of reproductive justice, this would mean to traverse patriarchal myths around justice in reproduction. We can work with the scraps of stories that we have inherited and start rewriting reproductive justice through a feminist mythology: "We become wo-men by endorsing, embroidering, rejecting, modifying, rehearing and rehearsing, in sum, by re-telling the myths we have inherited, as well as those we have ourselves created."[8]

Sylvia Wynter understands this becoming as defined by the hybrid relation of *bios* and *mythos*, with a concept borrowed from Frantz Fanon: the sociogenic principle. For Wynter, the sociogenic principle is not an object of knowledge, but a manifested site of enunciation that makes explicit, for instance, that race is not a biological but a social construct that nevertheless forms us so fundamentally that we can now speak of racial differences within the body that have socially constructed, rather than biological, origins.[9] Humans are hence "words made flesh, muscle and bone animated by hope and desire, belief materialized in deeds, deeds which crystallize our actualities."[10] The sociogenic, or storytelling, principle thus materially organizes and shapes our world, and is consequently something that we can work with, in the sense that we can use feminist mythology to change the world and ourselves for the better. As Bottici writes: "myths are self-fulling prophecies: they do not wait for reality to prove their truth, they just go ahead and build it."[11] It is, consequently, through taking charge of these origin stories with Wynter, and through the reappropriation of the myth for the writing of a feminist mythology with Bottici, that the "we" that we are and reproduce together, according to implicit ideas on what justice is in reproduction, can be reimagined and reinvented *otherwise*.[12]

In a similar vein as Wynter and Bottici, the Brazilian philosopher Denise Ferreira da Silva proposes in her article "Hacking the subject: Black feminism and refusal beyond the limits of critique," the "hacking" of stories as a way to deconstruct the "arché-subject"—the arché-form of the human constructed in hegemonic narratives that defines the limits of who we are and can be—in order to liberate the plurality of ways of being human *otherwise*.[13] For Silva, this is not done through rewriting the narrative of the story, but through laying bare the code underneath the story—what Bottici would

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call the "logos" of "mythos", the "reason of myth"—and hacking it, in order to change it and, again with Bottici, bring forth the logos of mythos *otherwise*.[14] "Hacking", Silva writes,

> moves to transfigure "woman" (and with her the female and the feminine), to deface her, and release her to accomplish what she alone can perform, which is the dis/ ordering of the modern grammar in which the patriarch remains the presupposed bearer of self-determination in its ethical and juridical renderings, respectively liberty and authority.[15]

Silva uses hacking to move beyond critique toward a more abolitionist dismantling of the discursive codes that shape our subjectivity and the world in order to arrive at the end of the world as we know it. In the quote above, hacking is seen as a way to untie self-determination from the patriarch by liberating "woman" from the code, a case in point when it comes to reproductive justice.[16] It is a praxis of decolonization, which is, for Silva, the only way to truly achieve justice. Through hacking the code underneath the story, a feminist mythology can be constructed to, in Wynter's words, fulfill the potential of humans as hybrid storytelling species by building another, more just, world out of the ashes of this one. Having "hacked" something hence means that we have managed to dissolve a hegemonic logic, by first laying bare and then changing its formulae, that gives rise to the modern subject, and that we have managed to generate a different code, a different origin story, a different feminist mythology, and thus, potentially, a different way of being human.[17] The praxis of hacking is envisioned by Silva as follows:

> Hacking here is de\ composition, or a radical transformation (or imaging) that exposes, unsettles, and perverts form and formulae. It is an active and purposeful mis-understanding, mis-reading, mis-appropriation. Hacking is a kind of reading, which is at once an imaging (in Benjamin's sense, in reference to the work done by the dialectical image) and a composition (as description of a creative act), but also recomposition of elements, in the sense the term has in alchemy.[18]

To be able to lay bare the form and formulae of the patriarchal claim to justice in reproduction, and to expose, unsettle, and pervert it, to make a recomposition in the form of a feminist story of reproductive justice, we will attempt a hack in this article of one particular origin story about sexual reproduction and its intersection with justice, namely the story of Solomon's judgment from the Old Testament.[19] Before we close read and decompose the story in section 3, we first elaborate on the lack of origin stories about the event and praxis of giving birth, and the Western focus on stories about genealogy, justice, and futurity when it comes to reproduction.

2. The captive maternal: how sexual reproduction is concealed and captured by a claim to justice and futurity

According to Wynter, at this moment in time, the hegemonic origin story about who we are is an evolutionary one, both in an economic and biological sense, responsible for a racialized, gendered, neoliberal, and individualistic understanding of "Man." Humans

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are "storytellers who now storytellingly invent themselves as being purely biological."[20] But while the biocentric perspective is over-represented as the only narrative through which the possibilities of human life are articulated and envisioned, tellingly, the biological events of fertility, pregnancy, and giving birth stay severely under-represented in our philosophical understanding of the human and hence our modern cultural scripts concerning the subject. While Heidegger's understanding of being as "being in light of death" has fundamentally shaped us in understanding ourselves as individual beings who live on a path towards our own death and therefore have the potential to live an authentic idiosyncratic life, there is little philosophical narrative on what living in light of pregnancy and birth means to us. Even the Arendtian understanding of being as defined by natality, which grounds our capacity for new acts on the fact that we once began new, does not consider what being pregnant or giving birth mean for our human condition—or how they would possibly fit in an individualistic conception of the subject. There is little philosophy, art, or literature in modernity that takes the *capacity or the act of giving birth* (rather than being born) seriously as a story that could tell us something about ourselves, let alone as a story that shapes us.[21] Rather paradoxically, our biological origin hence remains an empty signifier within our biocentric origin story. As a result, the occurrence of pregnancy and birth *in* human beings, and thus the bringing forth of human beings *by* human beings, renders the ones with the capacity for pregnancy "closer to nature" through philosophical silence, and therefore "less human" than their unpregnant counterparts.

At the same time, eugenics and the control of reproduction (rather than the event and act of giving birth) do play an essential role in hegemonic myths about society, the nation state, and the subject as we know it. The philosopher Édouard Glissant identifies the origin story of Western culture as one of genealogy and the purity of affiliation. Glissant identifies in many famous Western narratives, such as Hamlet, a story about reproduction, focused on blood, lineage, and purity, through which the community understands itself. Consequently, forms of imperialism and exclusion, and a strong hold on sexual reproduction, are (of course, faultily) justified to keep on ensuring the "origin" of the community as consisting of the same blood and the same race, as belonging to the same chain of filiation: "The retelling (certifying) of a "creation of the world" in a filiation guarantees that this same filiation—or legitimacy—rigorously ensues simply by describing in reverse the trajectory of the community, from its present to this act of creation."[22] The Western story of filiation is tied to a claim on justice when it comes to ensuring the future of that community: it is considered to be the moral good to protect the purity of lineage as it is understood to mean the survival of the community. It is therefore no surprise that many canonical tragedies in Western culture are constructed precisely around the "threat" of miscegenation.[23]

Justice in reproduction here becomes constructed as a moral praxis aimed at the protection of racial purity, while miscegenation is constituted as a moral evil. Through this *mythos* around rightful reproduction, the obsessive European *logos* with bastards, inheritance, birthright, and race is constituted, taking hold of our imagination when it comes to sexual reproduction, at the cost of discursive stories about the messy, chaotic, fleshy events of giving birth, abortion, and miscarriage. Our absent origin story of our real origin, namely the event of childbirth, with the one *giving* birth as its protagonist, is concealed by an origin story about patriarchal lineage, genealogy, blood, kinship, and, consequently, coloniality, race, and the reproductive futurity of the atavistic community.[24] The question is now how to untie justice in matters of

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reproduction from a patriarchal and colonial obsession with policing lineage, kinship, and filiation, that determines how we should behave, and unleash the imagination of reproductive justice when it comes to the care for, and the experience of, unpoliced reproductive events, such as giving birth, abortion, pregnancy, parenthood, and motherhood.

The concealment of the event of birth not only has consequences for the way we understand ourselves, but also for the material events and processes of sexual reproduction and childbirth. Even the little left over of the event of birth in our cultural scripts has to be managed in highly risk-aversive and often violent ways, or it must be negated or prevented completely, depending on what sort of human life is created, in terms of gender, racialization, and class.[25] A lack of origin stories on giving birth, while there is an abundance of discourse on patriarchal lineage and race, has, as we saw with Wynter above, material consequences, such as (neo)eugenics, the criminalization of reproduction, forced sterilization and abortion according to race, enhanced morbidity and mortality rates for people of color in pregnancy and childbirth, and the saturation of the event of giving birth with obstetric control, violence, and racism.[26]

Pregnancy and birth (but also abortion and other facets of reproductive health) are in the Global North seen as purely biological affairs for which we need the authority of a doctor and, on an ethical-juridical level, also the state with regards to institutional policy and intervention. This need for patriarchal authority when it comes to childbirth and abortion is often motivated by the possible death of the fetus or child, which is understood as a severe injustice, or a moral evil.[27] Traditionally, the justification for patriarchal interference was the need to secure the genealogy and heritage of the child by making sure it is registered to have a father and is baptized, to secure the child's future.[28] It is both the threat that the death of the child poses, often also mythologized as a threat of infanticide (especially nowadays in anti-abortion discourse), as well as possible miscegenation or illegitimacy, that poses a threat to the reproductive futurity of the community. The usage of this constructed threat (since there is no real danger here) to justify the control over pregnant people, *captures*, as Joy James has it, the maternal in the carcerality and disciplination of the state, through an implicit claim on what is considered to be *justice*.[29] The stories of genealogy, race, and affiliation, constructed through a certain conception of justice, hence conceal the ambiguous and messy existential, experiential, and ontological dimensions of the events of still-, aborted-, and childbirth, and thereby effectiveley erases all subjective dimensions of the maternal, to replace it with myths on good motherhood, promiscuity, and hysteria, that strengthen the hold on the captive maternal. The womb of the captive maternal, which ensures the reproductive futurity of the Western world, is what Joy James therefore calls the "womb of Western theory"—merging precisely the biological and the mythological origin of the world as we know it. For the maternal is captured by a patriarchal mythological configuration of a certain opressive understanding of *justice* and hence must be, if we want reproductive justice, liberated from it.[30]

Solomon's judgment—we will lay out and close-read the story in section 3—is a good example of an origin story which explicitly inscribes state authority and patriarchal violence into the narrative code of justice in reproduction, succesfully concealing the event of childbirth by questions of genealogy, and effectively separating and capturing the maternal, based upon threats of infanticide. The story constitutes the need for ethical and juridical wisdom of a patriarchal institutionalized power in the form of the king, and is still considered one of the fundamental examples of ethical-juridical wisdom. It is a story about

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the genealogical lineage of the child, hence of affiliation, which is based on a naturalized ethical judgment of how a good mother should be. At the same time, the story conceals the actual event of childbirth itself; childbirth is written as a natural given, dangerous outside of patriarchal lineage, while it becomes coded with the problematic of affiliation and good motherhood. Solomon's judgment can hence be regarded as one of the foundational stories on institutional patriarchal authority over pregnancy, birth, and motherhood, not only because it is a foundational story within the Jewish and Christian tradition and exists in different forms in different cultures around the world, but since it shows one of the ways how James's captive maternal became captured, and very clearly lights up the narrative that Glissant identifies as typical of Western culture, namely its preoccupation with the chain of affiliation of blood and paternal lineage. Solomon's judgment, laid out below, marks the eugenic moment when a patriarchal institution decides, based on a normative descriptive claim on justice, what the best biological affiliation *is*, and thus the moment when, as characteristic of eugenics, a patriarchal definition of justice *becomes* biology. As such, the story clearly brings James's womb of Western theory and Wynter's sociogenic principle to the fore; it tells how words are made flesh, how the discursive capacity of the arché-form of sexual reproduction ensures an atavistic form of reproductive futurity.

3. Captive maternals, swords, and babies: Solomon's justice

The story of Solomon's judgment, as recounted in the Old Testament, goes as follows:

> Two women who were harlots live in the same house and gave birth to two children, three days apart, together in the house—no one else was present. One woman's child was smothered by its mother. This mother switched the children and claimed the alive child as her own.
>
> They go to Solomon, and both say: "The living one is my son, and the dead one is your son." Solomon says: "Bring me a sword and divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other." Then one woman says: "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!" But the other says, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him."
>
> Solomon answers "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she is his mother." And all Israel hears the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice.[31]

We will first close-read the story below, cut in seven steps, to bring to the fore some details and possibilities of interpretation, alternative to the ones inherited by tradition.

Step 1. "Two women who were ***harlots*** *live in the* ***same house*** *and* ***gave birth to two children****, three days apart, together in the house—****no one else was present****."*

It is no coincidence that the women are in the first instance described as "harlots" rather than mothers, it attests to the traditional dichotomy between the feminine oppositional identities of the mother and the whore between which the women in the story switch. They are in first instance described as harlots, rather than mothers, because there is no father, i.e., no patriarchal family, or authority, or family-name, which is what makes them vulnerable and why they come to eventually rely on other patriarchal

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authority. It is an essential element of the story that it figures *two* women, otherwise the story could not have been played out along the dichotomous lines of mother and whore, the one good (meaning sacrificial) and the other evil (meaning crazy/hysteric/narcissistic/murderous/talking back). It is furthermore exactly because the women are unnamed, and it stays unclear who is who—they are continuously only referred to as "the one" or "this woman/ mother"—what makes the dangerous end of the dichotomy always potentially extrapolatable to all mothers, meaning to any mother; no mother is truly safe from the potential crazy of "the one," especially when she lives and reproduces outside of patriarchal regulation.

In an alternative counter-reading, their situation could, of course, be positively interpreted as one of queer kinship where two sex workers live together, take care of each other, are possibly lovers, and perhaps even midwifed each other's births.

Step 2. "One woman's child was ***smothered*** *by its mother. This mother* ***switched the children*** *and claimed the alive child as her own."*

This is the first moment where an infanticide appears in the story. Interestingly, the infanticide is constructed as having happened in the past, not in the real-time of the narrative. It is thus an assumed or a "given" infanticide—we have no proof that it indeed was an infanticide since we, as readers, were not made part of it. Then, the mother who supposedly killed her child switches the children, both drawing the alive child into her dangerous hands, and replacing the alive child with a dead one. This can be read as installing a potential repetition of supposed infanticides: where there was an alive child, there now lies a dead one, and where there was a dead child, another child is now in danger. This move places potential evil on the part of both women, as both children are no longer safe, and thereby extrapolates the murderous madness of one particular woman to a danger on the part of the maternal as a whole, which is congruent with the fiction of the maternal as dangerously life-giving *and* taking. The women, who are already positioned as morally ambiguous due to their profession, and perhaps also their relation, are now read as urgently in need of the regulation of their kinship by the patriarch: due to the threat of injustice in the form of infanticide on the part of the potentially murderous maternal, justice must be installed by the king. The supposed event of infanticide, and the following switch of the children, thus justifies patriarchal authority, imprinting a life-threatening danger into maternal subjectivity. So much so that the women supposedly hand over their authority and ethical judgment to the patriarch *themselves*: even they see that *they* are in need of patriarchal regulation.

*Step 3. "****They go to Solomon****, and both say: 'The living one is my son, and the dead one is your son.'"*

It is rather dubious, and therefore important to note in a story written and read in a patriarchal scheme, that two queer, independent, feminine, possibly single, potentially lesbian, sex-working, probably polyamorous, mothers decide to go to a patriarchal authority to resolve their conflict, rather than solving it either together or within their own community. Remember that the story constructs the narrative in such a way that there is no apparent community to which they could turn, which is why the state/institution/king is needed to intervene. In the story, there is no commons to which they belong, no elders, no friends, seemingly no other people than the patriarch to solve their situation. These lines therefore read as a classic justification for authoritative power–still pertinent in modern times when it comes to policymaking, criminal law, and the prison industrial complex: the people cannot possibly solve conflicts amongst themselves. The going to Solomon and the claiming of the child as their own, both only make sense

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within both carceral and property logic. First, a carceral logic, warranting juridical justice and punishment, is imposed on us, since the infanticide is the assumed effect of an evil deed rather than—if we already want go along with the story that there even was an infanticide—a postpartum psychosis, for instance, or a natural death, which would not warrant punishment but rather a transformative justice in the form of extra social support or mental care. And second, property logic is assumed in the story, since, rather than regarding *both* children as their own–the mothers were living in the same house, were potential lovers, partners, or friends, and the children would grow up together like siblings–they both claim one child as *their* child, which is something that only makes sense within an already existing property logic where questions of care and kinship are dominated by genealogy and affiliation.

Step 4. "Solomon says: 'Bring me a sword and ***divide the living child in two****, and give half to one, and half to the other.'"*

It is worth emphasizing that, contrary to popular opinion, threatening infanticide is a very violent rather than wise move—it is a fiction that there was no other way to come to justice. Here, justice becomes tied to the violent manipulation of parents through threatening the child's life—something that is still one of the most common forms of obstetric violence, currently termed "playing the dead baby card," where the threat to the baby's life is exaggerated through shroud-waving and/or not well explained when a birthing person does not comply with a proposed intervention.[32] The accusation of murdering a child is also the most common narrative in anti-abortion propaganda and intimidation. While the first moment of infanticide happened in the past (effectively functioning as a presupposed unproven threat and not told in the story in real-time), the second moment of infanticide is a real-time threat, i.e., an infanticide that might happen in the close future; the sword is already drawn. It is hence the (imagined/assumed/fear of/attempted control of the) first infanticide in the past and the (threatened) second infanticide in the real-time future which fully places the baby's life in the king´s hands for the sake of justice. Note also that this moment wherein both infanticides are present—one being the justification of the other which is about to happen—captures the maternal through her guilt for both: even the threatened second infanticide is not truly the responsibility of the king but actually the consequence of the "crazy" mother who killed the first child.

Step 5. "Then one woman says: 'O my lord, ***give her the living child****, and by no means kill him!' But the other says, 'Let him be neither mine nor yours, but* ***divide him****.'"*

The responses from both mothers beg many questions. Why does the second mother say something evil, while she also wanted the child? She could have simply accepted the child, but instead she decides to say exactly that which fully discredits her being the mother. Could she be fighting back, provoking the institution that has threatened her? And if the child was so easily given away by the first mother upon a threat of patriarchal violence, and by the second mother out of a refusal to sacrifice herself, why did they not simply resolve the matter on their own, why go to Solomon in the first place? Here, the ambiguity and implausibility of the story installs a good mother/ bad mother dichotomy that only works when it is uncritically accepted. Only because there are, supposedly, "good" and "evil," i.e., fully sacrificial and fully murderous mothers (the implication of the story is that the murderous mother would kill twice: first by smothering a child and then by splitting another child in half, thus again establishing the murderous threat of the maternal for which patriarchal supervision and control is needed) is Solomon even able to "reveal" who the real, that is, the good, that is, the sacrificial mother is. What is

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justice in reproduction is tied in this scene to a traditional good mother/bad mother (and consequently, good woman/whore, sacrificial mother/narcissistic mother) dichotomy. Compliance of the reader with these misogynous dichotomies is essential to make the story work. At the same time, we must remember that, because of their lack of names, the dichotomy always extrapolates to both women, that is to all women, rather than their positions clearly being tied to one individual.

At this moment, both maternal positions get caught in a mutually exclusive situation of either being with their child *or* being autonomous and talking back. One woman, the (supposed) mother, sacrifices herself by giving up the child, and what she knows to be true; her own truth, her own word, and her own desire, to save her child. The maternal is captured, loses her knowledge, authority, and right to truth and self-determination, for the sake of the child—a captivity that will last since it is precisely this moment of capture that will return the child to her: it is her sacrifice that will be constitutive of her motherhood. Through being forced to lie and sacrifice their knowledge, *or* through being provoked to talk back and lose their child forever, the maternal as such gets captured, as having no liberty, no authority, no right to self-determination, while still being the one who, bound by love, will nurture and care for the child depending on what the king will decide—for we have to understand the plurality of mothers in the story as a merging of multiple iterations of the maternal entity rather than as idiosyncratic separate individuals. As James says: "The captive maternal is one who is tied to the state's violence through their non-transferable agency they have to care for another."[33] For both mothers, there is no relationality anymore, neither with their community (so with each other) nor with their child, since both are controlled and mediated by the patriarch.

*Step 6. "Solomon answers '**Give the first woman the living child**, and by no means kill him; **she is his mother**.'"*

First, it is important, and perhaps redundant, to note that there are many reasons why Solomon's judgment would be unjust and untrue: the story does not actually prove the first woman to be the mother. It is Solomon's subjective assessment based on his conception of good motherhood, and hence a moralistic fallacy—in other words: "justice" turned flesh. What is important here, however, is not so much the question of whether this judgment is true, which is only interesting if we share the Western obsession with affiliation, but that because of the moralistic fallacy, the judgment and the patriarchal conception of justice take on a eugenic character. The patriarchal authority decides what the best conditions for the reproduction of future subjects are—a mother that sacrifices her own truth, her own authority, and her own ethical judgments, someone who fully succumbs to the threats of patriarchal authority rather than reacts against them—and consequently makes this judgment biology. Solomon does not say, for instance, that the child should be raised by the one woman because she would be a better mother. No, the point of the story and Solomon's divine wisdom lie precisely in the presented fact that this woman *is* the biological mother. Solomon thus "reveals" or "proves" biology through an ethical judgment, and pretends to serve justice by revealing the truth, while he in fact turns his conception of justice into the truth, into biology. Here, the authority to eugenically constitute reproductive futurity through the regulation of kinship and sexual reproduction is attributed to the patriarch concealed as, and based on conceptions of, justice in the realm of reproduction. A rendering of justice that was in fact not even safeguarded by the king himself, for he actually was about to kill the child with a sword, but by the care work of the captive maternal through

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her sacrifice of her subjectivity and truth—however humiliated, and however violent the world, the care of the captive maternal must carry on.[34]

*Step 7. "And **all Israel** hears the judgment which the king had rendered; and **they feared the king**, for they saw that **the wisdom of God was in him to administer justice**."*

In this last sentence, the story becomes connected to the greater political body, namely "all Israel." The judgment avowed by this broader societal body ties the question of good motherhood and kinship to the state. The ethical judgment and the authority over the maternal become inscribed within the ideas of reproduction of the society as a whole, and the maternal thus becomes immanent to the reproduction of the people, as an instrument, rather than a subject in and of itself. In the same breath, the patriarch becomes accepted as the one who indeed has the wisdom to administer justice in reproduction, based on his eugenic move of turning justice into biology, and back again. The rendering of justice in reproduction is an act with which the king apparently establishes authority—the judgment installs "fear" of the king into the community—through a new-won connection to the wisdom of God in his assumed capacity to reveal biology, which is, as we know now, his capacity to *make* biology, i.e., his judgment turned flesh. The establishment of Solomon's jurisdiction in the realm of justice in general, through his control over sexual reproduction, then connects the reproductive and political realm, and thus the future of the kingdom and the future subject, tying justice in reproduction to affiliation and to reproductive futurity. It is thus via the control of reproduction through the administration of justice that the ultimate, threatening, and divine authority of the king is constituted—underscoring once more that, indeed, all politics are reproductive politics.[35]

4. How to untangle king and kinship: revealing the code

To recap until here, the four main things that are effected by the story are: (1) the event of childbirth is concealed by a question of biological lineage embedded in property and carceral logic; (2) reproduction is institutionalized *through* two moments of infanticide, meaning that it is the two moments of infanticide that eugenically constitute the institutionally mediated child, and that it is the constructed narrative of the event of infanticide in the story that gives the authority to administer justice in reproduction to the patriarch;[36] (3) the story establishes that questions of justice regarding reproduction should be resolved by the patriarchal authority, establishing the maternal as possibly dangerous to justice, i.e., it places the capacity to administer justice in reproduction *in* the hands of patriarchal state institutions, thereby capturing the maternal and depriving her of liberty, authority, self-determination, and ethical judgment; and (4) the story establishes a logic wherein it is the administration of justice in reproduction which engulfs the maternal subject, as being merely sacrificial, into the subject of the child; meaning that justice in reproduction and free maternal subjectivity become mutually exclusionary, since the maternal is, in fact, enclosed *through* the administration of justice in reproduction—for any feminist reimagination of justice it would hence be essential that reproductive justice is truly untied from any form of capture of the maternal.[37]

For Silva, hacking consists of three moves: "translation," "transposition," and "transformation."[38] The first move, translation, consists of exposing in a certain story or societal structure a logic or code that functions as, what she calls, the "arché-form of the subject." The second and third move are to transpose this code and transform its elements to dismantle the arché-form of the subject as we know it. In what follows, we

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start with the first step, translation, which involves translating the story of Solomon's judgment, and its former interpretation, to expose the elements that constitute its "code," specifically focused on how the code of the story makes up the arché-form of, in our case, two subjects, namely mother and child.[39] Below, we will show how the arché-form of the captive maternal, on the one hand, and the child as the subject of reproductive futurity on the other hand, are constituted, through an overarching code that ties them together through the concealment of the real event of childbirth by a patriarchal conception of justice in reproduction.

Let us take a closer look at the "code;" at what is driving the *logos* of *mythos* here. We can identify the two infanticides as the events that set the story in motion. It is these infanticides that are responsible for the mothers going to the institution, and the consequent sacrifice of maternal subjectivity, and the related eugenic establishment of biological kinship, and finally the establishment of the king as the authority to administer justice over a whole people. Since infanticide is literally murder, and hence negation of life, the infanticides can be understood as two moments wherein life is negated, or where life is threatened by negation—below, we will translate these negation into code as "–1." It is two negations that drive the logic of the story, and are hence part of the code that constitutes institutionally mediated life, in the sense that it constitutes biological lineage based on patriarchal authority. Together, these negations constitute the reproductive futurity wherein new life should be embedded: *not* in a queer lesbian community, but in a clear patriarchally constructed biological lineage. There is hence a code present that consists of a basic form of logic, where the two negations of a thing constitute the thing itself (as far as, in logic, the opposite of the opposite is the thing itself):

First negation. The first infanticide (–1)

This factor reveals the supposed infanticide resulting in a dead child without lineage, which is why we have understood it as a negation and thus as –1. It is the "given" infanticide functioning as the reason why patriarchal authority in matters of reproduction is needed and that pushes the mother to Solomon.

Second negation. The second infanticide (–1)

This factor reveals the threatened future infanticide that makes one mother sacrifice her truth and her word—again, a negation and thus written as –1. This is the potentially "real" infanticide (in contradiction to the first "given" or alleged/assumed infanticide), since it is this infanticide that could happen in real-time in the story, and hence also could still be prevented, which is why it is this second infanticide that is used to capture the maternal.

*Code. (–1) * (–1) = (1); (first infanticide) * (second infanticide) = (a living child with a biological lineage)*

This calculation of the two negations (–1 * –1) represents the logic of infanticides present in the story. It constitutes the child (1) embedded in a biological lineage by the patriarch as the positive outcome, based on two moments of infanticide that drove the story to this culmination. This code of two infanticides, one in the past

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and one in the future, leading to a living child with biological lineage that is determined by the patriarch, or the institution, can be taken as the arché-form of the subject of reproductive futurity that is given by this myth.

As becomes clear in the code above, what constitutes the arché-form of the future subject is not biopolitically, but in fact necropolitically constituted, i.e., mediated by a past, presupposed, or haunting death, and the threat of future death.[40] The first negation represents the threat of death of *both* children, since the alive child is replaced by the dead one, which dissolves the polymaternal maternal community, pushing them to an external authority in search for justice. Infanticide is thus necropolitically instrumentalized as the justification for administering justice *by the patriarchal institution*—a logic that is also present in the witch-hunts, in abortion debates, and in obstetric violence. And it is due to the necropolitical thread of the second infanticide that the child is consequently eugenically (i.e., through an ideologically motivated repurposing of biology) inscribed in a chain of filiation. Both infanticides, the "given" one and the "threatened" one, are still present in current patriarchal configurations of justice and now go by the name of "playing the dead baby card."

If we switch our lens to the arché-subject formation of the maternal, we see that the same two moments of negation add up to maternal isolation and capture. They represent the separation of relationality from both her child and her maternal community, as well as the sacrifice of her own subjectivity. Since the maternal always consists of a relation with the child and with a community, the separation of these relations amount to a negation of the maternal subject. Together, this constitutes a new maternal position that is not so much that of a subject itself, but a position that is held captive by the patriarchal institution, or that is "engulfed," to use another Silvaen concept, by the arché-form of the subject of reproductive futurity that is the child.[41] Following a similar logic as before, the subjectivity of the mother is constituted through negations of her former subjectivity, now as institutionally mediated, isolated, individualized, and sacrificial to the child, and thus engulfed by the arché-form of the child, rather than possessing her own differentiated relational subject position. If we apply the corresponding factorization and calculation, we obtain:

First negation. The separation of the mother-maternal community relation (–1)

This factor refers to the supposed infanticide which breaks up the maternal community into fear and suspicion. Rather than solving the problem together within their own community, the polymaternal household breaks up, forcing their inhabitants to turn to the patriarchal institution for justice as separate and competing individuals, rather than turning to forms of transformative or healing justice. The negation here, again written as –1, consists of the breaking up of a maternal community of othermothers, family, lovers, partners, the whole polymaternal "village" that is constitutive of the maternal, since no mother can raise a child truly alone.

Second negation. The separation of the mother–child relation; the sacrifice of maternal subjectivity (–1)

This factor refers to the threat that the second infanticide poses to the relation between mother and child, as the child is about to be killed, which leads to the

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sacrifice of the mother as a subject. The child can only be saved by giving up the other subject that constitutes the relation between mother and child, namely, the mother. The negation, again written as –1, here consists of the installment of an either-or logic between mother and child, which negates the idiosyncratic and ambiguous "two-in-oneness" of the relationality of pregnancy, birth, postpartum, and early motherhood. Only by sacrificing herself as an ethical and epistemic subject, can she win back the child. Hence, only by sacrificing herself can the child be saved, and can the relation between mother and child consequently be saved. The mother who does not sacrifice her subjectivity loses her child, and thus her motherhood anyway. The "saved" relation between mother and child is now necropolitically mediated by the institution through a threatened infanticide, on the one hand, and the matricide of the maternal subject, on the other.[42]

*Code. (–1) * (–1) = (1); (first relational separation) * (second relational separation) = (captive maternal)*

This code represents the logic present in the story that constitutes the mother as the captive maternal. Congruent with, and driven by, the two moments of infanticide, two negations that dismantle the relational whole that the maternal subject is, eventually add up to her being written as a captive womb that ensures the reproductive futurity of the kingdom headed by the patriarch. It is the patriarch who, based on the sacrifice of the mother, establishes the future subject of the child in the nurturing of a new mother–child relation, one consisting of an engulfed, captive mother. The arché-form of the mother should hence be understood as captive, i.e., as sacrificially engulfed, by the eugenically constituted arché-form of the child, in service of the reproductive futurity of the community as a whole.

The above formulae amount to a code that translates the necropolitically mediated administration of justice in reproduction, which engulfs the maternal into the institutionally mediated eugenic reproductive futurity of the child, and, consequently, the community. The code inherent in this origin story of justice in reproduction hence justifies *and* constitutes eugenics, altering biology in such a way that it ensures reproductive futurity through the capture of the maternal. The explication of this code reveals how the hegemonic administration of justice, and for instance the playing of the dead baby card, can, in fact, never be "just," as it results in maternal separation and capture. It is, on the contrary, exactly the keeping intact of these two forms of relationality (mother–maternal community and *polymaternal* mothers–child) that is the precondition for the flourishing of reproductive justice.

5. The polymaternal affirmation of child/still/aborted birth

How do we proceed now? How can we hack this story and turn it into feminist mythology? What is its inner logic, where should we interfere? How does the maternal get back her truth, her word, her relationality, her dignity, and her self-determination? How do we get reproductive justice into the hands of people who birth, and out of the hands of those who do not need to birth but hold authority over it derived from patriarchal institutions? How to reshape relations of reproduction? One way to hack the

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story and make it a chapter in a feminist mythology (Bottici also dedicates a whole chapter explicitly to the direct experience of childbirth in her feminist mythology) would be to turn the code around, which is what Silva terms the "transposition" of the elements of the code by their transformation. Transposition and transformation of the elements of the code is precisely what Louise Glück does at the end of her poem based on Solomon's judgment 'A Fable':

Two women with
the same claim
came to the feet of
the wise king. Two women,
but only one baby.
The king knew
someone was lying.
What he said was
Let the child be
cut in half; that way
no one will go
empty-handed. He
drew his sword.
Then, of the two
women, one
renounced her share:
this was
the sign, the lesson.
Suppose
you saw your mother
torn between two daughters:
what could you do
to save her but be
willing to destroy
yourself—she would know
who was the rightful child,
the one who couldn't bear
to divide the mother.[43]

By stating that the rightful child is the one who cannot bear to split the mother in two, Glück brings the absurdity of the story to the fore: as if there could be only one rightful child, which translates to: as if there could be but one rightful mother. It is thereby a critique of Solomon's judgment. At the same time, Glück addresses in a beautiful and subtle way the violence done to the maternal in the original story with the three final words, "divide the mother," echoing the division of the maternal in the original story through the separation of relationalities that constitute her subjectivity. If we understand this poem indeed as a rewriting of an origin myth on reproductive justice, Glück brilliantly moves the focus from conceiving justice as ensuring the "good" mother for the child, to saving the wholeness and subjectivity of the mother *by* the child. In a move that counters the logic of infanticide, the infanticide is finally proposed by the child itself, resisting the manipulative capture of the maternal by offering to destroy herself.

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At the same time, however, Glück does remain stuck within the eugenic logic that binds an ethical judgment to biology. Here too the "rightful" child, i.e., the deserving child, but also the true and hence the "real" child, is the one who is willing to sacrifice herself, which is understood as the moral thing to do, and as that which proves the "true" lineage of the daughter (and, in terms of sacrifice, it is telling that the poem figures a daughter and not a son). But the way in which Glück uses this same eugenic logic which rests upon a moralistic fallacy is only to bring to the fore the absurdity of the logic in the first place: it shows that the logic only works when already supported by misogynous dichotomies, as discussed in the section above. Glück's rewriting thus turns the code of the story upside-down: she resists the capture of the maternal, but does keep on working with a eugenic logic, albeit ironical. The question remains, however, if this is a "deep enough" hack to truly explode the arché-forms of both subjects and hence traverse the "fantasy" of the myth to end up in "a different place."[44] Following Silva,

> the second move, *transposition*, is the placing of relevant terms and concepts in equations, which I then proceed to resolve, using a few simple mathematical signs and procedures that allow me to explode the *arché-form* of the subject through a *transformation* of its elementary parts or de\ composition. The symbols used in the equations operate like pieces of an imaging designed to break a code, and not as particles of signification.[45]

While Glück completed both these moves in her retelling of the myth, and she indeed manages to transform the arché-forms of both subjects, we can wonder whether, by leaving intact the code that ties justice in reproduction to infanticide, to sacrifice, and to "true lineage," the hack explodes the maternal enough to protect her from being captured again—what prevents this upside-down logic from being turned upside-down again?—and, thus, if it truly unties reproductive justice from any matricidal logic. Let us consider one more way of decomposition, of breaking the code that locks the arché-form of the future subject and the engulfed arché-form of the captive maternal together in a eugenic code that claims justice in reproduction.

What if we could refuse the code altogether by refusing the concealment of birth by questions of reproductive lineage? It would mean to resist both infanticides by affirming the event of birth as the center of the story. Then, perhaps, the story could be about two women who are queer sex workers who assist each other's freebirths. These could be two births that happen in a sequence, installing a new repetition in place of the repetition of infanticide. This would work even if we stick to the narrative that one child died, since sometimes birth does go wrong. Perhaps our new feminist myth could affirm that the death was even on purpose as a radical affirmation of on-demand abortions—affirming that any reproductive justice politics must be both pro-abortion and pro-humane childbirth, indeed explicating two of its foundational principles. In other words, we could affirm the first infanticide not only as an acceptance of death as a risk that could be part of life, but indeed as something that we can do, and that we sometimes want to do, in the form of an abortion. Rather than one child being killed by the mother after birth, we can transpose this element of the infanticide in the story to a planned abortion during pregnancy.

The latter would mean rewriting the story in such a way that yes, indeed, the first fetus was killed by the mother, but not as the murder of the child but as an abortion; not as a negation of a life that needs patriarchal disciplination, but as an affirmation of other life (the other life that becomes possible when one aborts their child). If both, the birth

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and the abortion, could be an affirmation of life, then we would have dismantled the way in which the arché-form of the subject of reproductive futurity is constituted through a negative logic of infanticides. There would be no necropolitical justification for the patriarchal administration of justice in reproduction, and reproductive justice could be reimagined as expressed within the material events of child-, aborted, or stillbirth, outside of any patriarchal institution. Reproductive justice could be a form of care during these events, an abolitionist and transformative "healing justice."[46] This would mean to affirm both births with the same autonomous and self-determined conviction, but without separating them: for instance, the mother who gave birth to the live birth would have gone to the village to get the herbs needed for the abortion, would have given them to the other mother, and would have been her doula through the process. The mother who had the abortion, in turn, would have gotten everything ready for the live birth of the baby, assisting the other mother as her midwife. The mourning mother who aborted her child would have been taken care of by the other mother, while she in turn would have helped her to raise the baby, reconstituting a healing relational polymaternalism in the place of the otherwise proposed captive isolated motherhood. Now, both the arché-forms of the child, as eugenically constituted by a double negation, and the maternal, as captured by a double negation, can explode: neither the infanticides nor the relational separations form any longer the constitive codes of the subjects involved.

In this transposition and transformation of Solomon's judgment, the events of the abortion and the birth, rather than questions of lineage, take center stage as life-affirming episodes that can both be true at the same time: one can abort and birth a child out of love, out of self-love, and out of love for one's community. The focus on the real event of birth gives us the possibility to explore the possibilities for reproductive justice that the experience—one of circlusion, transgression, intuitive and/or calculated rationality, communal pushing, screaming, pain, awe, etc—offer us. Rather than concealing the event of birth with affiliation, infanticide, and separation, we release the captive maternal from the engulfment by the arché-form of the child, into a polymaternal protagonist who births and aborts. We hack the arché-form of the child by taking out its necropolitically and eugenically mediated constitution, replacing it instead with the polymaternal relational event of giving birth as the proliferation of creolized life within a community. As such, with birth center stage, and thus care, self-determination, proliferation, and the affirmation and interdependent bodily nature of life that comes with it, we open up *an origin story of reproductive justice*. This new origin story consists of practices of healing and care, of aborting and giving birth, of polymaternal kinship, and hence makes possible a being human together in an abolitionist *otherwise*, outside of the grip of the patriarchal institution. Refusing eugenic, carceral, and property logic when it comes to justice in reproduction, we let *reproductive justice* come to life in terms of a practice of care *in this feminist mythology:*

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A Fable
Two women with
the same claim
came to the feet of
the wise king. Two women,
but only one baby.
The king knew
someone was lying.
What he said was
Let the child be
cut in half; that way
no one will go
empty-handed. He
drew his sword.
Then, of the two
women, one
renounced her share:
this was
the sign, the lesson.
Suppose
you saw your mother
torn between two daughters:
what could you do
to save her but be
willing to destroy
yourself–she would know
who was the rightful child,
the one who couldn't bear
to divide the mother.

Louise Glück

A Fable
Two lovers in
the same condition
came to the event of
birth. Two sex workers,
but only one baby.
The lovers knew
they could not raise
both children.
What they said was
Let one child be
born and let us abort
the other. We will raise
the one together, that way
no one will go
empty-handed. They
induced the abortion
and waited for the birth.
Then, the two
women both birthed
gloriously—one child lived,
the other died:
this was
the pain, the loss.
Suppose
you could put
your aborted child
for one night
in the arms of your lover
so you wouldn't
have to carry it alone,
and you could take
her baby, which would also
be yours, for a walk that stills
grief, for a nighttime feed
with the milk you
had extra.

Reproductive justice is a popular feminist concept through which a fight for reproductive autonomy, liberty, safety, and self-determination is waged. We must not forget, however, that justice in matters of reproduction is already densely coded by patriarchal, colonial, and religious scripts. Demanding justice in the field of reproduction is not an emancipatory call for justice where there first was no configuration of justice, it is rather an ideological fight between different cultural narratives and configurations of what justice in reproduction is. If we do not work through patriarchal configurations of justice in reproduction, we can either unwittingly reproduce elements of patriarchal codes, or patriarchal narratives on justice in reproduction continue to exist since they are not dismantled. Bottici, Wynter, and Silva have theorized that the way to change discursive narratives is to work through them by

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rewriting myth or hacking the codes fundamental to our origin stories. We have argued that Solomon's judgment functions as a discursive origin story when it comes to the patriarchal configuration of justice in reproduction by replacing the event of birth and care for reproduction with an obsession with affiliation. Two key elements of the patriarchal configuration of justice in reproduction are the logic of infanticide, and maternal capture—two elements that are still used to discipline reproduction. In order to tell a new feminist origin story of reproductive justice, we have hacked this logic by affirming the *event* of birth, and by subverting questions of lineage and infanticide by exploding the arché-forms of the subject of mother and child. When infanticide and maternal separation are taken out of the code of justice in matters of reproduction, the maternal can be liberated as self-determined and polymaternal, with the capacity to have *and* not have children, and to raise the children she has in relational, safe, and nourishing communities. Our hack is a contribution to the scholarship and activism around reproductive justice by providing an alternative origin story and a starting point for more feminist mythology on reproductive justice, as much as it tries to urge current writers of reproductive justice to take care to truly explode all patriarchal codes.

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Notes

1 Bottici 2021.

2 Wynter 2003.

3 Of course, Michel Foucault had already coined the notion of discursivity by then, which was expanded upon through the development of theories of subversivenss and performativity by Judith Butler. Denise Ferreira da Silva points out, however, in what ways Wynter diverges from Foucault, namely by fundamentally introducing the notion of coloniality and race as the story that shapes the origin of both the modern and the classical episteme. Foucault's flaw of not seeing how fundamental coloniality is for the constitution of the classical and the modern episteme is not merely superficial ignorance to which we can now add the logic of racism, but in fact pushed him toward a couple of misconceptions, as Silva following Wynter shows: 1) that the emergence of universal reason was in fact only possible through the rewriting of the medieval Spirit/Flesh dichotomy in a rational/irrational dichotomy, particularizing Europe and the white cis gender man; and 2) taking into account coloniality would have enabled Foucault to see the "outside" to hegemonic discourses and understand the classic and modern episteme not simply as versions and reproductions of the human as the Same, but in fact as only one very specific form of the human, namely Man. Wynter 2003, 319, 317. Quoted in Silva 2015, 96, 98–99.

4 This does not mean, however, in an Arendtian or Heideggerian way, that we must tell our own stories in order to differentiate ourselves authentically from *das Man*. Wynter understands humans always-already as a "referent-we": "we are no longer, as individual biological subjects, primarily born of the womb; rather, we are both initiated and reborn as fictively instituted inter-altruistic kin-recognizing members of each such symbolically re-encoded genre-specificity referent-we." Our aim must therefore not be to individualistically differentiate ourselves from the we, but to change our world and way of being together through the change of our hegemonic stories that we tell each other. Wynter and McKrittick 2015, 34–35.

5 SisterSong 2023, https://www.sistersong.net/visioningnewfuturesforrj (accessed May 13, 2023).

6 Adorno and Horkheimer famously laid bare the dialectic of enlightenment as a dialectic between myth and rationality. While we understand enlightenment as the progression of rationality and the dismantling of

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myth and superstition, the enlightenment is in fact the suppression of myth by rationality, and, eventually, the coming back of myth in naturalized and seemingly rational versions that are, because of that, much more violent and dangerous than superstitious myths ever were, their prime example being German fascism. Adorno and Horkheimer 2007.

7 Bottici 2021, 1.

8 Bottici 2021, 7.

9 Mignolo 2015, 116; Wynter 2001.

10 The problem, however, is that it is difficult, as subjects of the hegemonic subjectification practices that propagate only one genre of the human, namely "Man" (Western European white cis gender man), to make the naturalized myths that shape us explicit. But it is only when we make these stories, and their inherent logic, explicit, that we can change them. Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 11. Wynter 1995.

11 Bottici 2021, 3.

12 Wynter understands this as fulfilling the potential of the "Third Event." She roughly theorizes history as consisting of three foundational events: the origin of the universe, the explosion of all forms of biological life, and the "origin of the human as hybridly auto-instituting, language cum storytelling species." The fulfilling of the potential of the Third Event, would be to create the world we desire through telling different stories. Wynter and McKrittick 2015, 31.

13 Silva 2018.

14 Silva 2018; Bottici 2021, 9.

15 Silva 2018, 22.

16 Silva 2018, 22, 25.

17 Silva 2018, 27. This is what Wynter would call fulfilling the potential of the Third Event.

18 Silva 2018, .27.

19 Solomon's judgment has been the object of critique by feminist theorists when it comes to ethics and epistemology, but, to our knowledge, not so much from the perspective of reproductive studies or the philosophy of birth, apart from some feminist critiques on the image of motherhood in the story. It was hence already recognized as a foundational story for ethics and patriarchal epistemic authority, and perhaps even as a foundational story for "good motherhood" but never, to our knowledge, as a foundational story for the eugenic understanding of reproduction or justice in matters of reproduction. See, for instance: Puente 2014; Ashe 1991; Fuchs 1985.

20 Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 11.

21 Heidegger 2001;Arendt 1998.

22 Glissant 1997, 47.

23 Glissant 1997, 50.

24 Lee Edelman (2004) coined the concept of reproductive futurity or reproductive futurism to capture the cis heterosexual tendency to place all our hope on the future, in the form of the children yet to come, rather than dealing with or affirming our current situation. It is, in other words, an obsession with the reproduction of the future subject, and doing that in a just and rightful way, so much so that life, the future, or indeed, justice, becomes dependent upon reproductive futurity rather than realizable now.

25 Verges 2020.

26 For more information, please search for obstetric violence, obstetric racism, weathering, racial mortality and morbidity differences, neo(eugenics).

27 Federici 2004.

28 Dehue 2023.

29 Infanticide, miscarriage, and stillbirth have a history of being one of the primary ethical justifications to control women's bodies. It was the primary justification for the witch-hunts and is still the main reason for invasive child protective services and the reproductive disciplining of reproductive bodies through anti-abortion laws.

Federici 2004.

30 James 2016, 253–96.

31 There are multiple versions of the story in different religious traditions. This is the story told in the most straightforward way, not the story most common seen in English, namely the King James version. 1 Kings 3:16–28.

32 Van der Waal 2024.

33 James 2021.

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34 James 2016, 2021.
35 Briggs 2017.
36 This logic can be seen as deeply entrenched in modernity when it comes to sexual reproduction in other dichotomies such as hysteria on the part of women vs. reason on the part of medical men, female irrationality vs. male rationality, wild nature vs. civilized state, and so on.
37 Green 2012.
38 Silva 2018.
39 Silva 2018, 27–28.
40 Mbembe (2011) theorizes how the necropolitics inherent in all systems of biopolitics are responsible for supposedly biopolitical societies characterized by relations of enmity.
41 According to Silva, the scene of engulfment is characteristic of the subject of European modernity that establishes his own imperialist subjectivity by engulfing "everything else." For an exploration of how the scene of engulfment plays out in the relation between the state and the pregnant mother, see Van der Waal et al. 2021. Silva 2007, 255.
42 This can indeed be read as an Irigarayan foundational matricide, and thus, in the rewriting of the myth of Solomon as an origin story of Reproductive Justice, it would be of importance to do that in a non-matricidal way, as developed by Green 2021.
43 Glück 1990.
44 Bottici 2021, 9.
45 Silva 2018, 27–28.
46 Healing justice was developed by the Kindred Collective as an abolitionist intervention to policing. It responds to intergenerational trauma and is an effort to transform systemic oppression and make collective healing possible. It honors collective and ancestral wisdom, wellness and joy as essential tools of liberation, our fundamental interdependence and the value of all bodies. Kindred Collective (2007), http://kindredsouthernhjcollective.org/values/ (accessed May 17, 2023).

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