Today, the least that we can say about Marxism is that, if it were not for the use of attenuating prefixes such as “post” or “neo,” its mere mention has become an unmistakable sign of obsolescence. Thus, while in second-hand bookstores from Mexico City to Tierra del Fuego, the old manuals of historical and dialectical materialism from the Soviet Academy of Sciences keep piling up, almost nobody really seems to be referring to Marxism anymore as a vital doctrine of political or historical intervention. Rather, Marx and Marxism in the eyes of the not-so-silent majority have become things from the past. In the best scenarios, they simply constitute an object for nostalgic or academic commemorations; in the worst, they occupy the bench of the accused in the world-historical tribunal for the trial of crimes against humanity.

Álvaro García Linera, the current Vice-President of Bolivia under Evo Morales, in an important text from 1996, written from prison where he was being held under maximum security rule on charges of subversive and terrorist activity, a text titled “Tres retos al marxismo para encarar el nuevo milenio” (“Three Challenges for Marxism to Face the New Millenium”) and included in the collective volume Las armas de la utopía. Marxismo: Provocaciones heréticas (The Arms of Utopia. Marxism: Heretical Provocations), describes the situation as follows:

Yesterday’s rebels who captivated the poor peasants with the fury of their subversive language, today find themselves at the helm of dazzling private companies and NGOs that continue to ride the martyred backs of the same peasants previously summoned. [...] Russia, China, Poland, El Salvador, Nicaragua, communist and socialist parties, armed and unarmed “vanguards” without a soul these days no longer orient any impetus of social redemption nor do they emblematize any commitment to just and fair dissatisfaction; they symbolize a massive historical sham. (García Linera, Tres retos 77)1

With regard to the destiny of Marx’s works and the politics associated with them, however, something else appears to be happening as well. The story is not

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
just the usual one of crime, deception, and betrayal. There are whole generations who know little or nothing about those rebels of yesteryear and much less understand how they would have been able to captivate the impoverished peasants and workers with the fury of their language. On one hand, all memory seems to have been broken and many radical intellectuals and activists from the 1960s and 70s, for a variety of motives that include guilt, shame, the risk of infamy, or purely and simply the fear of ridicule if they were to vindicate their old fidelities, are accomplices to the oblivion insofar as they refuse to work through, in a quasi-analytical sense of the expression, the internal genealogy of their experiences. Thus, the fury of subversion remains, without elaboration, in the drawer of nostalgias, with precious few publicly traversing self-criticism. What is more, the situation hardly changes if, on the other hand, we are also made privy to the opposite excess, as a wealth of personal testimonies and confessions accumulates in which the inflation of memory seems to be little more than another, more spectacular form of the same forgetfulness. As in the case of the polemic about militantism and violence unleashed in Argentina by the recent letter-confession of Óscar del Barco ("No matarás: Thou shalt not kill"), we certainly are treated to a heated debate, but what still remains partially hidden from view is the theoretical archive and everything that might be contained therein in terms of relevant materials for rethinking the effective legacy of Marx in Latin America. And the same is true, though the effect in this case is less spectacular because oblivion also has been so spontaneous, with regard to the legacy of Freud and that strange hybrid of Freudo-Marxism in Latin America.

How to go against the complacency that is barely concealed behind this bipolar consensus with its furtive silences on one hand and its clamorous self-accusations on the other? In the first place, we should insist on something that we know only all too well when it comes to household appliances but that we prefer to ignore when we approach the creations of the intellect, namely, the fact that everything that is produced and consumed in this world bears from the start a certain expiration date or the stamp of a planned obsolescence. Theories by no means present an exception to this rule, no matter how much it pains scholars and intellectuals to admit it. As a secondary effect of this obsolescence, however, we should also consider that novelty often is nothing more than the outcome of a prior oblivion. As Jorge Luis Borges remarks in the epigraph to his

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2 Most of the documents have been collected in Spanish in the volume Sobre la responsabilidad: No matarás. In English, see the translation of Óscar del Barco’s original letter and the accompanying dossier with responses by leading intellectuals in the Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies. Some of the most provocative replies to del Barco do not appear in this special dossier in English, for instance the answer from León Rozitchner (originally published in El Ojo Mocho), as well as the debate between Elías Palti, “La crítica de la razón militante. Una reflexión con motivo de La fidelidad del olvido de Blas de Santos y el ‘affaire del Barco’” and Horacio Tarcus, “Elogio de la razón militante. Respuesta a Elías J. Palti,” in Políticas de la memoria. More generally, the overload of memoirs and testimonies about the militant past of the 1960s and 1970s has been commented upon by Beatriz Sarlo, by Omar Basabe & Marisa Sadi, and by Hugo Vezzetti. For a wider variety of perspectives, see also the essays collected in La memoria en el atril: Entre los mitos de archivo y el pasado de las experiencias; in Crítica del testimonio. Ensayos sobre las relaciones entre memoria y relato; as well as in Pasados en conflicto. Representación, mito y memoria.
story “The Immortal,” quoting Francis Bacon: “Solomon saith: There is no new thing upon the earth. So that as Plato had an imagination that all knowledge was but remembrance; so Solomon giveth his sentence, that all novelty is but oblivion” (Borges 7). This grave sentence applies equally to the products of criticism and theory. Here, too, all novelty is perhaps but oblivion.

In fact, the history of the concepts used in studies about art, literature, politics, and culture today appears to be riddled with holes that are due to the kind of silence mentioned above, as a not-saying that is partly the result of voluntary omissions and partly the effect of unconscious or phantasmatic slippages. Forgetfulness, in other words, is never entirely by chance, nor can it be attributed simply to a taste for novelty on the part of overzealous artists or intellectuals in search of personal fame and fortune. After all, as the Situationist Guy Debord observes already more than twenty years ago, in his Comments on the Society of the Spectacle: “Spectacular domination’s first priority was to eradicate historical knowledge in general; beginning with just about all rational information and commentary on the most recent past.” And, about the events of 1968 in particular, Debord adds: “The more important something is, the more it is hidden. Nothing in the last twenty years has been so thoroughly coated in obedient lies as the history of May 1968” (13–14). If today the vast majority of radicals from the 1960s and ’70s dedicate mere elegies to the twilight of their broken idols, those who were barely born at the time can only guess where all the elephants have gone to die while radical thinking disguises itself in one fancy terminology after another, each more delightfully innovative and path-breaking than the previous novelty. Thus, instead of a true polemic, let alone a genealogical work of counter-memory, what comes to dominate is a manic oscillation between silence and noise, easily co-opted and swept up in the celebrations in honor of the death of communism as the worldwide victory of neoliberalism.

The appeal of cultural studies, beyond their official birthplaces in the Frankfurt and Birmingham Schools, for example, is inseparable from a process of oblivion or interruption with regard to the once very lively debates about the causality and efficacy of symbolic practices—debates that until the late sixties and early seventies, in terms of the relative autonomy and specific efficacy of the superstructure, were dominated by the inevitable legacies of Marx and Marxism. In the United States, where these legacies never achieved the status of a cultural dominant to begin with, any potential they might have had was further curtailed by the effects of deconstruction, the earlier textual trend of which was then only partially compensated for, both by deconstruction’s own turn to ethics and politics and by the short-lived rivalry with new historicism. As for Latin America, if we were to ask ourselves in which countries the model of cultural studies, or cultural critique, has achieved a notable degree of intellectual intensity and academic respectability, the answers—Argentina, Chile, Brazil—almost without exception include regions where the military regimes put a violent end to the radicalization of left-wing intellectual life, including a brutal stop to all public debates about the revolutionary promise of Marxism, while in other countries—Mexico or Cuba, for instance—many authors for years might seem to have been

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3 The epigraph appears in English in the original.
doing cultural criticism already, albeit sans le savoir like Molière’s comedian, perhaps because in these cases the influence of Marxism, though certainly waning today, has nevertheless remained a strong undercurrent.

In Latin America, in fact, the reasons for amnesia are, if possible, even more complex. Not only has there been an obvious interruption of memory due to the military coups and the catastrophe of neoliberalism but, in addition, this lack of a continuous dialogue with the realities of the continent can already be found in the context of Marx and Freud themselves. In fact, we could say that the history of the relation of Marx and Freud to Latin America is the history of a triple desencuentro, or a three-fold missed encounter:

1. In the first place, we find a missed encounter already within the writings of Marx. Thanks to José Arico’s classical but long out-of-print study, Marx y América Latina, we can unravel the possible reasons behind Marx’s inability to approach with even a modicum of sympathy the realities of Latin America. His infamous attack on Simón Bolívar (whom Marx in a letter to Engels labels, “the most cowardly, brutal and detestable swine”) or his and Engels’s notorious early support for the United States invading Mexico (about whose inhabitants Marx in another letter to his collaborator writes: “The Spaniards are completely degenerated. But all in all, a degenerate Spaniard constitutes an ideal compared to a Mexican. All the vices, the showing-off, the bragging and Quixotism of the Spaniards to the third power, but with none of the solidity of the latter”) are indeed compatible with three major prejudices that Arico attributes to Marx: the linearity of history; a generalized anti-Bonapartism; and a theory of the nation-State inherited, albeit in inverted form, from Hegel, according to which there cannot exist a lasting form of the State without the prior presence of a sense of national identity at the level of civil society—an identity whose absence, on the other hand, tends to provoke precisely the intervention of despotic or dictatorial figures à la Bonaparte and Bolívar. In this sense, the three prejudices are intimately related. It is only due to a linear conception of history that all countries must necessarily pass through the same process of political and economical development in the formation of a civil society sufficiently strong to support the apparatuses of the State.

One paradox alluded to in the second half of Arico’s study, however, still deserves to be unpacked in greater detail. In his final texts on Ireland, Poland, Russia or India, after 1870, Marx indeed begins to catch a glimpse of the logic of uneven development of capitalism, which could have served him as well to reinterpret the postcolonial condition of Latin America. “From the end of the decade of the 1870s onward, Marx never again abandons his thesis that the uneven development of capitalist accumulation displaces the center of the revolution from the countries of Western Europe to dependent and colonial countries,” writes Arico. “We find ourselves before a true ‘shift’ in Marx’s thinking, which opens up a whole new perspective for the analysis of the conflicted problem of the relations between the class struggle and the national liberation struggle, that genuine punctum dolens in the entire history of the socialist movement” (65–68). If, in spite of this paradigm shift, provoked by his reflection on

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4 As part of Arico’s vast effort at divulging the classics through the journal and book series of “(Cuadernos de) Pasado y Presente,” Marx and Engels’s dispersed writings on Latin America have been collected in a single volume in Spanish, Materiales para la historia de América Latina. This volume should be read in conjunction with Marx, Imperio y colonia: Escritos
the supposed backwardness of cases such as Ireland or Russia, Marx is still unable to settle his accounts with Latin America by critically reevaluating the revolutionary role of peripheral countries, this continued inability would be due, according to Aricó, to the stubborn persistence of Marx’s anti-Bonapartist bias and his unwitting fidelity to the legacy of Hegel.

In his painstaking study of Marx’s complete œuvre from the point of view of peripheral countries, *De demonios escondidos y momentos de revolución: Marx y la revolución social en las extremidades del cuerpo capitalista* (*On Hidden Demons and Revolutionary Moments: Marx and Social Revolution in the Extremities of the Capitalist Body*), García Linera nevertheless raises two objections to Aricó’s interpretation. On one hand, the Bolivian theorist accuses his Argentine comrade, exiled in Mexico, of proceeding too hastily while accepting the absence of a massive or even national-popular capacity for rebellion in Latin America. According to García Linera, Marx himself never ceases to insist, over and against his allegedly regressive Hegelian baggage, on the importance of mass action, whereas Aricó would somehow be seduced by the direct revolutionary potential of the State. The “blindness” or “incomprehension” of Marx toward Latin America, then, would be due to the lack of historical sources and reliable studies on the indigenous rebellions that shook the continent since at least the end of the eighteenth century. “This is the decisive factor. In the characteristics of the masses in movement and as a force, their vitality, their national spirit, and so on, there lay the other components that Aricó does not take into account but that for Marx are the decisive ones for the national formation of the people,” affirms Linera: “There exists no known text from Marx in which he tackles this matter, but it is not difficult to suppose that this is because he did not find any at the time of his setting his eyes on America” (García Linera, *De demonios* 252).5 The missed encounter between Marx and Latin America, therefore, would be due not to the lingering presence of Hegelianisms so much as to the fact that “this energy of the masses did not come into being as a generalized movement (at least not in South America); it was for the most part absent in the years considered by Marx’s reflections” (252). It would be Aricó, not Marx, who misjudges the Latin American reality due to a blinding adherence to Hegel.

In fact, García Linera goes so far as to suggest that the supposed “not-seeing” on the part of Marx is the result of a “wanting-to-see” on the part of his most famous and prolific interpreter from Argentina: “The terrain on which Aricó places us is not that of the reality or that of Marx’s tools for understanding this reality, but rather the reality that Aricó believes it to be and the tools that Aricó believes to be those of Marx” (250). In the final instance, however, even for García Linera it cannot be a matter of denying the unfortunate missed encounter, or *desencuentro*, between Marx and América Latina. To the contrary, in a recent lecture, “Marxismo e indianismo” (“Marxism and Indigenism”), García Linera himself in turn speaks of a *desencuentro* between two revolutionary

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5 See also Ramos and Saladino García.
logics, the Marxist one and the indigenist one, before providing an overview of the different reasons that hampered their finding a middle ground throughout most of the twentieth century, all the way to the tentative promise of a possible reenounter among a small fraction of indigenous intellectuals in the last decade: “Curiously, these small groups of critical Marxists with the utmost reflective care have come to accompany, register, and disseminate the new cycle of the indigenist horizon, inaugurating the possibility of a space of communication and mutual enrichment between indigenisms and Marxisms that will probably be the most important emancipatory concepts of society in twenty-first-century Bolivia” (García Linera, *Marxismo e indianismo*).  

Following Arico’s example in the case of Marx, we could elaborate a similar critique of the missed encounter between Freud and Latin America. Georges Politzer, in his 1928 *Critique of the Foundations of Psychology*, a work that would take three quarters of a century to be translated into English but that was widely read and discussed in Spanish-speaking countries, already tries to unmask some of these prejudices. Politzer thus criticizes Freud’s “fixism” which tends to give his thought an idealist-metaphysical rather than a concrete-historical bent. “We can observe two fundamental limitations,” as the Argentine psychoanalyst José Bleger concludes after giving an overview of Politzer’s writings on Freud, “the first is that the key in the development of normal and pathological behavior turn out to be libidinal fixations and in this way the emphasis is put on the repetitive element, so that evolution becomes an epigenesis; the second limitation is a consequence of abstraction: to the extent that psychoanalytic theory becomes more abstract and replaces human realities with forces, entities, instances, the criterion of evolution becomes lost in favor of a ‘fixism’ of metaphysical allure” (Bleger 88–89). This might begin to account for some of Freud’s more glaring blindnesses with regard to the world outside of Western Europe, particularly as concerns the New World.

In fact, even if he saw himself as the Columbus of the unconscious, the founder of psychoanalysis never refers specifically to the realities of Latin America—at least not beyond his personal and anthropological interest in the culture of the Bolivian coca leaf. There are, to be sure, a number of eyebrow-raising assertions similar to what Marx or Engels have to say early on about Mexicans, as when Freud refers metaphorically to the unconscious, in his paper of the same title from 1915, by speaking of the mind’s “aboriginal population” or again, else-

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6 This is the inaugural lecture for the *diacritics* conference “Marx and Marxisms in Latin America,” which took place at Cornell in September 2007. A different version appears as “Indianismo y marxismo. El desencuentro de razones revolucionarias,” in *La potencia plebeya: Acción colectiva e identidades indígenas, obreras y populares en Bolivia* (qtd. 391–92).

7 Georges Politzer’s *Critique des fondements de la psychologie*, first published in 1928 by Rieder, became even more influential upon its reissuing in 1968 by Presses Universitaires de France. In English, see Apprey’s translation. In addition to this work, Bleger also comments on two other crucial texts by Politzer: the first, “Un faux contre-révolutionnaire: Le Freudo-marxisme,” *Commune* (November 1933); and the second, “La fin de la psychanalyse,” written under the pseudonym Th. W. Morris when Politzer was already mobilized on the war front and published in 1939, the year of Freud’s death, in the newly founded Marxist journal *La Pensée*, where it would later be reissued in 1955. See Bleger, “Georges Politzer. La psicología y el psicoanálisis,” first published in 1955 in Brazil.
where, about the “dark continents.” And in Freud’s case, too, we could try to systematize the underlying prejudices, aside from a certain metaphysical fixity of concepts, which lead to such affirmations: the universalist trend of his interpretation of evolution, with identical stages for all of humanity; the correspondence between the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic aspects of development, which leads to the utilization of metaphors of primitivism above all with reference to neurosis and the early stages of infancy as in his 1913 text *Totem and Taboo*, significantly subtitled *Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*; and the Lamarckian faith in the possibility of the hereditary transmission of acquired traits, which likewise renders superfluous the study of other or earlier cultures beyond the confines of modern Western Europe. “These assumptions,” as Celia Brickman sums up, “did not invalidate the potential of psychoanalysis, but their presence lent credence to readings of psychoanalysis that could perpetuate and seemingly legitimate colonialist representations of primitivity with their associated racist implications, in much the same way that psychoanalytic representations of femininity were able to be enlisted for some time as an ally in the subordination of women” (51).

And yet, we might as well invert the conclusion to be drawn from Freud’s prejudices. The fixed, timeless and ontogenetically inherited nature of the unconscious, even while being modeled upon evolutionary schemes of development from and regression to primitivism, could thus be read as a radical subversion of the superiority of the West: “Supposedly primitive behaviors were seen to lurk not only in the pathological and in the past but in the everyday customs and in the great cultural institutions of modern European civilized public and private life,” the same commentator is quick to add: “In the end, we are all more or less neurotic; we are all more or less primitive; we are all saurians among the horse-tails” (89). Or, to make the same point in the words of Ana, the sickly artist-character from José Martí’s novel *Lucía Jerez*: “Of wild beasts I know two kinds: one dresses in skins, devours animals, and walks on claws; the other dresses in elegant suits, eats animals and souls, and walks with a walking stick or umbrella. We are nothing more than reformed beasts” (133). Similarly, when Freud writes in *The Interpretation of Dreams*: “What once dominated waking life, when the mind was still young and incompetent, seems now to have been banished into the night—just as the primitive weapons, the bows and arrows, that have been abandoned by adult men, turn up once more in the nursery,” we could infer from this, aside from a conventional gender portrayal, the possibility of a truly revolutionary—rather than merely evolutionary—awakening of that which lies dor-

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8 See Celia Brickman and Ranjana Khanna. While they are no match for Marx and Engels’s *Materiales para la historia de América Latina*, Freud’s *Cocaine Papers* (translated into Spanish under the title *Escritos sobre la cocaína*), nonetheless show an impressive familiarity with the cultural, ethnographic, religious and medicinal issues surrounding the coca leaf in Latin America. As a matter of fact, I would suggest that we read these Freudian texts by taking a clue from Marx: if religion, as the principal form of ideology for Marxism, is the opium for the people, then could we not read treatises on opium or cocaine as surreptitious theories of ideology? This hypothesis certainly works for other texts such as Charles Baudelaire’s *Artificial Paradises*, which not surprisingly ends up in the phantasmagoric (re)creation of the self as God.
mant in the present, similar to the way in which Marx imagines his task as a radical thinker in a letter to Arnold Ruge: “It will then be shown that the world already possesses the dream of something, of which it must also possess the consciousness, before it can actually take possession of it. It will be shown that the task is not to insert a line between the past and the future, but the fulfillment of the thought of the past. Finally, it will be shown that humans begin no new task, but consciously bring old tasks to fruition.”

What is more, in Freud’s case, too, we come across an interesting paradox similar to Marx’s belated discovery of the logic of uneven development. As the late Edward Said has shown in his lecture *Freud and the Non-European*, not only could we have expected Freud to have arrived at a critique of the ideological notion of primitivism based on his own experience with racism and anti-Semitism in Europe which forced him to seek refuge in London and eventually brought him for a visit to America: “Little do they know we are bringing them the plague,” Freud is famously said to have proclaimed when just a little over 100 years ago he, Carl Jung and Sándor Ferenczi disembarked in New York, perhaps still secretly comparing himself to Columbus in terms of their epidemic effects. But, what is more, the later so-called “social” or “culturalist” works of Freud, above all *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism*, also contain radical concepts of the structural lack of adaptation of the human species and the presence of a kernel of non-identity at the heart of every identity, including that of the Jewish faith, which could have brought the founding father of psychoanalysis to the point of questioning the effects of his limited historicism. “For Freud, writing and thinking in the mid-1930s, the actuality of the non-European was its constitutive presence as a sort of fissure in the figure of Moses—founder of Judaism, but an unreconstructed non-Jewish Egyptian none the less,” proposes Said: “Yahveh derived from Arabia, which was also non-Jewish and non-European” (42).

Applying this radical principle to other non-European cultures could have led our discoverer of the unconscious at least in theory to have more than just a metaphorical connection to Latin America.

2. In addition to these missed encounters between Marx and Latin America or between Freud and Latin America, we also have to take into account the obstacles that stand in the way of a proper articulation between Marx and Freud themselves. These are the obstacles that the various attempts at formulating some type or other of “Freudo-Marxism” have tried to overcome to varying and in the eyes of many highly questionable degrees of success—from the earliest efforts by Wilhelm Reich and Otto Fenichel, via the parallel yet unfortunately non-synchronous tracks of the likes of Herbert Marcuse or Erich Fromm in the

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9 Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, quoted in Brickman, 84; and Karl Marx, letter to Arnold Ruge (Kreuznach, September 1843), included in “Letters from the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher,” 133–45.

10 Said sees in Israel’s policy toward Jewish identity the exact opposite of Freud’s final work: “What we discover is an extraordinary and revisionist attempt to substitute a new positive structure of Jewish history for Freud’s insistently more complex and discontinuous late-style efforts to examine the same thing, albeit in an entirely diasporic spirit and with different, decentring results” (46). Compare Betty Bernardo Fuks, *Freud y la judeidad: la vocación del exilio*. 
Frankfurt School in the 1950s and 1960s and French thinkers such as Jean-François Lyotard or the tandem Gilles Deleuze-Félix Guattari, who in the 1970s throw Nietzsche into the Marx-Freud mix, all the way to the recent work of someone like Slavoj Žižek who would rather have to be considered a proponent of “Lacano-Althusserianism” by way of Hegel. In Latin America, though by and large this too tends to be forgotten, there also exists a fascinating tradition in this regard—from the presence of Fromm in Mexico between 1950 and 1973 or the establishment of a psychoanalytical community between 1961 and 1964 in a Cuernavacan monastery by the soon-to-be ex-communicated Benedictine monk of Belgian origin Gregorio Lemercier, via the collective project for a Freudian Left spearheaded throughout much of the continent, from Uruguay to Argentina to Mexico, by the Austrian exile Marie “Mimi” Langer, all the way to the Sartrean-inflected Lacanianism of Oscar Masotta in Argentina or the Brazilian Suely Rolnik’s schizoanalytical collaborations with Guattari.  

Here, I should admit, we might be victims of amnesia to the second degree. Indeed, as I realized only recently, already in Social Amnesia: A Critique of Contemporary Psychology from Adler to Laing, the historian of Western Marxism Russell Jacoby begins with a critique of obsolescence that is strictly speaking identical to the one I am advocating here. “In the name of a new era past theory is declared honorable but feeble; one can lay aside Freud and Marx—or appreciate their limitations—and pick up the latest at the drive-in window of thought,” Jacoby writes with unmatched sarcasm: “The intensification of the drive for surplus value and profit accelerates the rate at which past goods are liquidated to make way for new goods; planned obsolescence is everywhere, from consumer goods to thinking to sexuality” (3–4). Nowhere does the dilemma posed by this obsolescence make itself felt more clearly than in the case of the debates surrounding attempts to amalgamate a certain Freudo-Marxism. To be more precise, the dif-

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11 For a detailed overview of the various trends and schools in Freudo-Marxism from Wilhelm Reich up until the Frankfurt School, including their students, critics and interlocutors in Latin America, see the richly documented bibliography by Guillermo Delahanty; and Víctor Raggio. A good sample of the Freudian Left in Latin America can be found in Marie Langer et al. See also Felipe Campuzano, and compare with Paul A. Robinson. To my knowledge, Erich Fromm’s role in the dissemination of psychoanalysis and a Frankfurt-style Freudo-Marxism in Mexico has yet to receive the critical study it undoubtedly deserves. Another important figure is the German exile Igor A. Caruso, several of whose works were translated and highly influential in Latin America. Aside from the collection “Biblioteca de Psicología” started by Fromm for Fondo de Cultura Económica, the left-leaning publishing house Siglo Veintiuno, with major seats in Mexico and Argentina, from the seventies onward also published many texts in this tradition, including translations of European critical theorists as well as original studies by Latin American psychoanalysts. See, above all, the collections by Armando Suárez, Salvador Millán and Sonia Gojman de Millán, Víctor Saavedra, or the translation of Helmut Dahmer, by Félix Blanco. On the role of the psychoanalytical experiment in the Benedictine monastery in Cuernavaca, see Juan Alberto Litmanovich Kivatinetz. In Argentina, aside from the work of León Rozitchner, see also the earlier writings of José Bleger, Elías Castelnuovo, and Enrique Pichon Rivière. On the work of Oscar Masotta, a contemporary and one-time collaborator of Rozitchner’s in the journal Contorno, see Germán García, Correa, and the articles in Oscar Masotta: El revés de la trama, ed. Marcelo Izaguire. In English, see Philip Derbyshire. Suely Rolnik’s work with Guattari is only now beginning to be translated into English. See Rolnik.
ficulty of the task of articulation in this context consists in avoiding a purely external relation of complementarity between the social and the psychic, the collective and the individual, the political and the sexual. “The various efforts to interpret Marx and Freud have been plagued by reductionism: the inability to retain the tension between individual and society, psychology and political economy,” Jacoby also remarks, before proposing what he calls a dialectical counter-articulation, inspired by the example of the Frankfurt School: “Critical theory does not know a sharp break between these two dimensions; they are neither rendered identical nor absolutely severed. In its pursuit of this dialectical relationship it has resisted the two forms of positivism that lose the tension: psychologism and sociologism” (77–78). Marxism and psychoanalysis can be articulated, in other words, only if the articulation at the same time retains the antagonistic kernel that defines the core of their respective discourses.

Through the critique of amnesia and oblivion, however, we should not come to overestimate the importance of memory. Today, history and memory, too, whether in personal memoirs, nostalgic reminiscences or public apostasies, have become little more than commodities that risk concealing more than they may be able to reveal. Nor should we ignore the recent past by resorting exclusively to the alleged orthodoxy of the founding texts of Marxism and psychoanalysis. “The critique of sham novelty and the planned obsolescence of thought cannot in turn flip the coin and claim that the old texts—be they of Marx or Freud—are as valid as when written and need no interpretation or rethinking,” warns Jacoby: “To the point that the theories of Marx and Freud were critiques of bourgeois civilization, orthodoxy entailed loyalty to these critiques; more exactly dialectical loyalty. Not repetition is called for but articulation and developments of concepts; and within Marxism—and to a degree within psychoanalysis—precisely against an Official Orthodoxy only too happy to freeze concepts into formulas” (10–11). Whence the need not just for a counter-memory to break the spell of amnesia, but also for a form of active forgetting to avoid what we might call the becoming-culture of memory.

As Gilles Deleuze posits in “Five Propositions on Psychoanalysis,” a text from 1973 included in the posthumous collection Desert Islands and Other Texts: “In the end, a Freudo-Marxist effort proceeds in general from a return to origins, or more specifically to the sacred texts: the sacred texts of Freud, the sacred texts of Marx. Our point of departure must be completely different: we return not to the sacred texts that must be, to a greater or lesser extent, interpreted, but to the situation as is, the situation of the bureaucratic apparatus in psychoanalysis, which is an effort to subvert these apparatuses” (276). At the most fundamental level of our theoretical and quasi-ontological presuppositions, this means that the articulation of Freudianism and Marxism must proceed by undoing the developmental logic that would be common to both. Deleuze adds:

In Marxism, a certain culture of memory appeared right at the beginning; even revolutionary activity was supposed to proceed to this capitalization of the memory of social formations. It is, if one prefers, Marx’s Hegelian aspect, included in Das Kapital. In psychoanalysis, the culture of memory is even more apparent. Moreover, Marxism,
like psychoanalysis, is shot through with a certain ideology of development: psychic development from a psychoanalytic point of view of psychoanalysis, social development or even the development of production from a Marxist point of view. (277)\textsuperscript{12}

To deconstruct this ideology of memory and development, we might even be able to find an unexpected resource in the very notion of the missed encounter.

3. Indeed, there is still a third perspective from which we might tackle our problem, namely, by taking the logic of the desencuentro itself as a key to understand the emancipatory nature of the contributions made by Marxism and psychoanalysis. The founders of these discourses, to be sure, intended their work to be read as laying the foundation for new sciences, respectively, of history and of the unconscious. However, what these sciences at bottom encounter, despite their subsequent fixation and positivization, is something that does not belong to the realm of hard facts so much as it signals a symptomatic interruption of all factual normality:

Marx sets out, absolutely, not from the architecture of the social, deploying its assurance and its guarantee after the fact, but from the interpretation-interruption of a symptom of hysteria of the social: the uprisings and parties of the workers. Marx defines himself by listening to these symptoms according to a hypothesis of truth regarding politics, just as Freud listens to the hysteric according to a hypothesis regarding the truth of the subject. (Badiou 20)

If Marxism and psychoanalysis can still be called scientific against all odds, it is not because of the objective delimitation of a specific and empirically verifiable instance or domain of the social order—political, psychic, or libidinal economies—but because they link a category of truth onto a delinking, an unbinding, or a coming-apart of the social bond.

The commonality between Marx and Freud, in other words, lies in their willingness and ability to propose the hypothesis of a universal truth of the political or desiring subject in answer to the crises of their time—whether these are the uprisings of the 1840s to which Marx and Engels respond in The Communist Manifesto with the hypothesis of an unheard-of proletarian capacity for politics, or the hysterical fits and outbursts that spread like wildfire through fin-de-siècle Vienna to which Freud responds with his hypothesis regarding the universality of a certain pathological subject of desire, as in his “Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria,” better known as Dora’s case. A certain logic of the missed encounter, as structural-historical maladjustment or as constitutive discontent, would thus be the ultimate truth about politics and desire that is the conceptual core of the respective doctrines of Marx and Freud.

These two figures, however, did not merely follow vaguely comparable or parallel tracks in the direction of a radical kernel of antagonism. Rather, the true

\textsuperscript{12} This standpoint could be developed through an analysis of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea’s 1968 film Memorias del subdesarrollo (Memories of Underdevelopment).
insight behind the various attempts at Freudo-Marxism derives from the hypothesis that the questions of political, economical, and libidinal causality that their work poses also mutually presuppose each other. As the Argentine León Rozitchner writes in *Freud y el problema del poder* (*Freud and the Problem of Power*), a book whose title should not hide the extent to which Freudian psychoanalysis is actually put in dialogue both with Marxism and with the theory of war of Carl von Clausewitz:

> I think that the problem at issue is the following: on one hand we have the development of state power since the French revolution to this day—whether capitalist or socialist—and, at the same time, the emergence of a power of the masses which with ever more vehemence and activism has begun to demand participation in it. This access, of those who are distanced from power all the while being its foundation, presents us with a need linked to the search for the possible efficacy as well as the explication of the failure in which many attempts to reach it culminated: the need to return to the subjective sources of that objective power formed, even in its collective grandeur, by individuals. Trying to understand this place, which is also individual, where that collective power continues somehow to generate itself and at the same time—as is only too clear—to inhibit itself in its development. In a few words: what is the significance of the so-called “subjective” conditions in the development of collective processes that tend toward a radical transformation of social reality? Is the condition of radicality not determined precisely by deepening this repercussion of the so-called “objective” conditions in subjectivity, without which politics is bound to remain ineffective? (Rozitchner 11–12)\(^\text{13}\)

After all, as Rozitchner also observes, especially in the notebooks from 1857–58, better known as the *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx had already pointed out this unity of the subjective and the objective, as opposed to the usual opposition between the “merely” internal and the “merely” external. Speaking of the objectification of labor, which turns individuals immediately into social individuals, Marx writes: “The conditions which allow them to exist in this way in the reproduction of their life, in their life’s process, have been posited only by the historic economic process itself; both the objective and the subjective conditions, which are only the two distinct forms of the same conditions” (*Grundrisse* 832).\(^\text{14}\) Conversely, in *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, Freud famously starts out by insisting that to speak of a social psychology is perhaps more redundant than truly insightful, insofar as the unconscious is always already socialized through and through: “In the individ-

\(^{13}\) The five chapters in the first part of *Freud y el problema del poder*, subtitled “Más allá de la cura individual” (“Beyond the Individual Cure”), were first presented in the early 1980s as conferences at the UAM (Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana) in Xochimilco, Mexico City.

\(^{14}\) See also Rozitchner, *Freud y el problema del poder*, 136.
ual’s mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent; and so from the very first individual psychology, in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words, is at the same time social psychology as well” (Group Psychology 3). This also means that power and repression are not simply external to the subject; instead, they feed on what we otherwise consider to be our innermost idiosyncrasies. For Rozitchner, this paradox of the subjective inscription of power is ultimately what psychoanalysis strives to uncover: “It is the emergence, beyond censorship and repression, of significations, lived experiences, feelings, thoughts, relations, drives, etc., present in our subjectivity, very often without their having reached consciousness, but actualized in objective relations, which break with that stark opposition that the system organized in ourselves as though it were—and in some way it is—our own” (Freud y el problema del poder 34–35).

Of course, this relation of mutual presupposition between the psychic-libidinal and the politico-economical—a relation which is frequently seen as part of a larger problematic that can be described in terms of what Freud calls overdetermination—should not serve to hide the profound asymmetries between the two; nor should we ignore the shifting priorities variously given to one instance or the other by the different followers of Marx and Freud. Indeed, the question of knowing which would be the instance that is determining in the final instance is still open and I certainly do not lay any claim on providing this question with a definitive answer. The aim is rather to dwell in the tensions of the struggle between the subjective and the objective, between the psychic and the historical, precisely as struggle, conflict, transaction. “Transaction: objective-subjective elaboration of an agreement, the result of a prior struggle, of a combat in which the one who will become subject, that is, I, is not that sweet angelical being called child, such as the adult imagines it, which would come to be molded with impunity by the system without resistance,” Rozitchner insists: “If there is transaction, if the I is its locus, there was a struggle at the origin of individuality: there were winners and losers, and the formation of the subject is the description of this process” (20–21). It is with an eye on studying the intricacies of such a struggle that I propose that we can also turn to literary texts and artworks. Indeed, if we start from the premise that Marxism and Freudianism are neither philosophical doctrines nor positive sciences but rather intervening doctrines of the subject, respectively, in political and clinical-affective situations, then I would argue that art and literature—the novel, poetry, theater, film—no less than the militant tract provide symptomatic sites for the investigation of such processes of subjectivization, on a par with more straightforward theoretical accounts. It is my hope that an investigation of this kind, urged on by the missed encounters of Marx

15 In order better to understand Freud’s reception in Latin America, for instance in the work of Rozitchner, it is important to recall that Freud’s term translated in English as “group psychology,” namely, Massenpsychologie, is usually translated far more appropriately as psicología de masas, or “mass psychology,” in Spanish. In the end, though, Freud appears to want to reinscribe the social into the psychic as its unfolds in the family: “Our expectation is therefore directed towards two other possibilities: that the social instinct may not be a primitive one and insusceptible of dissection, and that it may be possible to discover the beginnings of its development in a narrower circle, such as that of the family” (5).
and Freud with Latin America, may also reinvigorate the tradition of critical theory so as to overcome the perceived obsolescence and/or deadlock in the disciplines of Latin Americanism.

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