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Rethinking a Case of Paranoia as a Workplace Complaint

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**Journal**

Studies in Gender and Sexuality, 18(1)

**ISSN**

1524-0657

**Author**

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**Publication Date**

2017-01-02

**DOI**

10.1080/15240657.2017.1276779

Peer reviewed



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To cite this article: Jennifer Doyle (2017) Rethinking a Case of Paranoia as a Workplace Complaint, *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*, 18:1, 4-12, DOI: [10.1080/15240657.2017.1276779](https://doi.org/10.1080/15240657.2017.1276779)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15240657.2017.1276779>



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## Rethinking a Case of Paranoia as a Workplace Complaint

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### ABSTRACT

This essay re-reads Freud's essay "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Theory of the Disease" (1963) through Marxist feminist writing on the division of labor. I approach the story presented in that essay as a workplace complaint and use it to meditate on sexual harassment as a haunting of the workplace.

"Some years ago," Freud wrote in his essay "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Theory of the Disease," "a well-known lawyer" brought a woman to him (Freud, 1963). She had a complaint: a co-worker had seduced her. She was afraid he was going to blackmail her with photographs that he had secretly taken of their encounters. Freud (1963) explained:

A young woman has asked [the lawyer] to protect her from the molestations of a man who had drawn her into a love-affair. She declared that this man had abused her confidence by getting [hidden] witnesses to photograph them in the act of love-making, and that by exhibiting these pictures he could bring shame upon her and force her to resign her position [p. 97].

Freud's essay is not a proper case history, as the woman in question did not seek treatment from him. Rather, her lawyer introduced them so that Freud might confirm his suspicion that his client was suffering from a paranoid delusion. Freud and his lawyer-friend bonded as professionals over the problem of her story. She was, in her view, seduced, exploited and vulnerable to persecution. In the view of the lawyer and the doctor, she was deluded. Paranoia's relentless symmetries assert themselves early in this story: everywhere people conspired against her.

In this essay, I re-examine Freud's writing on this woman's crisis with an eye toward what it has to offer to contemporary conversations about sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. I experiment with feminist interventions in psychoanalytic and Marxist theory in order to access the aspects of this woman's situation that speak to the contradictions which structure the workplace. My intention is to explore how, in this case, the division of labor manifests as a splitting and scattering of the self. Through a reading of this case, I position the problem of sexual harassment as a haunting of the workplace by the division of labor. Most workplaces disavow the violence of that division; complainants conjure it.

### Handsome girl

This woman's case is startling for its orientation around the problem that the sexual subject poses to the workplace. The man with whom she had this affair was a co-worker; her anxiety took the form of a fear that because she had sex with a co-worker she would lose her job. She was an employee at a "big institution" where she "held a responsible post" (Freud, 1963, p. 98). She was the sole support for her aging mother. Although she was a "singularly attractive and handsome girl" (p. 97), this 30-year-old woman had no serious romantic relationships. An "official" at the same institution where she worked, "a cultured and attractive man, had paid her attentions and she had inevitably been drawn towards him"

(p. 98). Marriage was, “for external reasons” (p. 98), out of the question—perhaps he was married, perhaps they were of different religions, perhaps class was the issue. Perhaps being public about their affair would have cost them both their positions; it would certainly have cost her hers. Perhaps, and this strikes me as really outside Freud’s imaginative capacity, she preferred working to not working and sought sex outside of marriage because the latter would have brought her professional life to a close. Perhaps the problem was not that he had a wife but that she preferred not to be one. The question then becomes not whence the fear but why sleep with a co-worker? Why create the conditions of possibility for losing one’s job? One confronts the incommensurability for women of especially a certain professional class at the turn of the 20th century to have both a working life in which her labor is explicitly valued and an active, publicly recognizable sexual life. Why should one accept the either/or of this scenario?

And so, they had two clandestine meetings: “As he promised not to expose her to any risk, she had at last consented to visit him in his bachelor rooms in the daytime” (Freud, 1963, p. 98). After one of the two trysts that she described in two separate interviews with Freud (their own meetings, which she attended with reluctance, were staged outside the commitment of analysis—thus mirroring the extramarital tryst), she saw two men in the hallway outside the man’s rooms. They were carrying a box covered in cloth. During one of these trysts, she told Freud, she thought she heard a “kind of knock or tick” (p. 98). It seemed to come from the direction of a window, which was partially obscured by a heavy curtain. Thinking of the cloth-covered box, she heard this noise as the click of a camera’s shutter.

Her lover explained that what she heard was not the click of the camera but the tick of a “small clock on a writing-desk” (Freud, 1963, p. 88) near the room’s window. But no amount of persuasion on his part could dispel her anxiety. She became fixated on the idea that he had conspired to photograph her in flagrante. Freud scandalously interpreted her fixation on the noise as a projection of her own desire. For him, she heard neither the tick of clock nor the click of camera. He argued instead, with a smug triumph (“I shall take the liberty of commenting . . .” [Freud, 1963, p. 98]), that the “knock” on which her story hinged was, in fact, the sonic projection of the throb of her clitoris: “I do not believe that the clock ever ticked or that any noise was heard at all. The woman’s situation justified a situation of throbbing in the clitoris. This was what she subsequently projected as a perception of an external object” (p. 105).

Freud’s interest in this woman’s case (the situation of a situation of the throbbing of the clitoris) was keen: the orientation of her persecution complex appeared to challenge his theorization of paranoia as a defense against homosexual desire. At first glance he saw “no sign of the influence of a woman, no trace of a struggle against homosexual attachment” (Freud, 1961, p. 100). Paranoia, Freud wrote, manifests as a spiraling sensitivity to “social humiliations and slights” (p. 3) that can carry increasing densities of meaning as they assemble into a persecutory delusion. In his model, these fantasies always mask a homosexual problem. Freud promised, “If we go into the matter only a little more deeply, we shall be able to see that the really operative factor in these social injuries lies in the part played in them by the homosexual components in affective life” (p. 30). This is, of course, one of Freud’s more infamous assertions. Repressed same-sex attachments are, in his view, projected onto social relationships (the “homosexual components in affective life”). Projective dynamics rewrite the paranoid’s world. “I, a man, love him (a man),” Freud explained, becomes “I (a man) am being persecuted by him (a man). I hate him” (Freud, 1961, p. 33). (This is just one version of paranoid displacement.) “The paranoiac is sick,” Jack Halberstam (1995) wrote of Freud’s model, “only inasmuch as he represents . . . both the homosexual and the fear of homosexuality” (p. 108).

When our woman first appeared in Freud’s office with her lawyer, it was not as a latent homosexual but (as Naomi Schor [1985] observed in her essay on this case) as a member of “that class of paranoiacs known as *querulants*” (p. 152). The lawyer was seeking this diagnosis as it identified his managerial problem.<sup>1</sup> For the querulous, there is no achievable resolution to their complaint. Unlike the “difficult complainant” pursuing justice (e.g., anti-rape activists using Title IX

<sup>1</sup>Querulous paranoids, or vexatious litigants, as they are sometimes called in literature on this subject, do not appear in a doctor’s office because they are unwell: they are, like the woman in this case, usually referred to a psychologist by lawyers, employers, and court officials (see Freckelton, 1988, pp. 127–129).

legislation to force campuses to address the problem of sexual assault), for whom resolution is at least theoretically possible, “querulousness” in a complainant “involves not just persistence but a totally disproportionate investment of time and resources in grievances that grow steadily from the mundane to the grandiose, and whose settlement requires not just apology, reparation, and/or compensation but retribution and personal vindication” (Mullen and Lester, 2006, pp. 340–341). There was something impossible to this woman’s complaint: this was what brought the lawyer to Freud.

The recognition of the litigious paranoid has been mediated by shifts in workplace practice as employees have been increasingly obliged to file complaints in order to regulate the abuse of power in the workplace (Freckelton, 1988; Mullen and Lester, 2006). In the 19th century, this set of behaviors was marked as a socially deviant behavior and could be prosecuted in court. In the 20th century, it became a hallmark of engaged community participation and corporate responsibility. Patrick Mullen and Grant Lester (2006) hypothesized,

The virtual disappearance of the querulous from the professional landscape corresponded to a period when complaints and grievance procedures were emerging as a central mechanism for resolving conflict in social systems which increasingly based their legitimacy on an ideology of individual rights. ... A privileged few can afford to go directly to the courts, but for most complaint resolution procedures are their bulwark against the power of private and public agencies [p. 335].

This *quérelant* does not ask for revenge or retribution, but for recognition and protection: “Did you hear that? Was my picture not taken?” she asks her lover; “Are they not out to get me?” she asks her lawyer. Her paranoid fantasy escalates in the face of her lover’s refusal (which becomes Freud’s refusal) to hear what she hears. Her “knock” becomes his “tick,” and Freud thinks she “hears” her clit, which is to say she hears nothing at all. The “liberty” Freud takes in making this turn throws her back on her body—her body neither speaks nor hears—it is mute feeling. Freud (1963) responds to her frank discussion of her sexual self, for example, not as evidence of her maturity but of her madness: “Neither in her manner nor by any kind expression of emotion did she betray the slightest shame or shyness, although some such state of mind would naturally arise on such an occasion in the presence of a stranger” (p. 98). Freud approaches her discourse as noise and her body as raw signal to be received, really, only by the right man.

## Sex and theory

“A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Theory of the Disease” (Freud, 1963) made steady appearances in feminist and lesbian feminist criticism from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s. It is a powerful example of the problem that women pose to theory as the not-normative, the bad example, as the unthinkable and inexplicable. As Schor (1985) writes, this case “bears blatant witness to precisely that aspect of Freud’s writing which has most angered his feminist critics: the unexamined priority and primacy of the male paradigm.” She continues: “Freud ... goes to great lengths to demonstrate that despite its apparent irregularity, when subjected to rigorous psychoanalytic investigation, even this contrary case conforms to the masculine model” (p. 150). It is also a spectacular example of the fear/fascination with which Freud approached women’s desire and women’s bodies. The narrative tension in his story is released, as it were, by the reveal of the problem of her clitoris. Schor, Mary Anne Doane (1987), Patricia White (1991), and Jack Halberstam (1995) each draw from the essay—Schor’s “Female Paranoia” mines it for a “psychoanalytic feminist hermeneutic” that might take account of the “militant materialism” that women bring to theory (p. 150). Doane and White both draw from the cinematic dimensions of this woman’s fantasy of being secretly photographed—the case is prominent enough in their work to lend it particular importance to feminist film theory. Halberstam, echoing Schor, argues that from this case one might recover “the power of feminine paranoia, or simply feminist critique,” which “lies in its ability to read lack and disfigurement productively” (p. 125).

Within queer theory, this kind of thinking with and against Freud has come to feel a bit old-fashioned, as scholars have de-emphasized the story of desire and its relationship to identity in favor of theoretical models anchored in the performative dynamics of affect theory. That shift pivots on theorizations of paranoia. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's turn, in the late 1990s, to the work of Sylvan Tomkins and Melanie Klein ("Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," originally published in 1997 and re-printed in *Touching Feeling* [2003]) re-scripted paranoia's relationship to criticism, as Sedgwick attempted there to unsettle the dominance of paranoid knowledge formations within queer theory. When Sedgwick asserted that "queer studies has had a distinctive history of intimacy with the paranoid imperative" (p. 126) it was with the authority of a scholar who wrestled with paranoia across three book projects. Paranoia, as a mode of relation and a problem, shapes the conventions of *The Coherence of Gothic Convention* (1980) and activates the homosocial vectors of the Girardian triangles of *Between Men* (1985). *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) signals a major shift as, in that work, Sedgwick approached theories of sexuality as not only knowledge systems but also as theories regarding what can be known and what knowledge is. An interest in understanding the overdetermined association of paranoia with homosexuality cuts across these projects.

For Freud, paranoia operates as a defense against the "homosexual components of affective life." And so he subjects this woman's story to a search for the woman behind the man, the woman for whom, theory predicted, the patient must have this unresolved same-sex attachment that is also, in the paranoid's case, a form of identification. This, of course, becomes her mother when it is revealed that her fear of losing her position takes the precise form of a fear that this male lover will show these possibly/probably imaginary photographs to her female boss—a white-haired older woman who, the patient tells Freud, reminds her of her mother (with whom, it should be noted, this patient lives: she is her mother's only child). For Sedgwick, the point was never to root out paranoia's queer cause (by, e.g., identifying the homosexual and the object of his desire) but rather to understand the performative effects of the entwining of paranoia and same-sex bonds. "Freud's formulation," Sedgwick (1990) observes, is useful because it locates paranoia as an effect of the contradictions produced by the fact that "intense male homosocial desire [is] at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds" (p. 187). And, somehow, Freud seems to miss the point. Feminists have turned to "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Theory of the Disease" (Freud, 1963) in part because it raises the question as to how women are engaged by and disturb these economies of homosocial desire—especially, in this story, as they are articulated in the exchange between lawyer and doctor and between one mother and another. The situation of Freud's reading of this woman's situation has grounded every feminist take on the essay, including this one.

### **A case of paranoia as a workplace complaint**

Our woman's case runs counter to Freud's theory of paranoia because the female patient is plagued by a paranoid fantasy that revolves around a male lover. Her desire and her fear, in his theory, must be—can only be—homosexual in its nature. For Freud, the affinity between her mother and the "white-haired elderly manageress" (Freud, 1963, p. 101) points to this particular sexual problem—the struggle of a daughter to mature, to separate from her mother and allow herself to be a sexual subject in relation to men:

The woman's attachment to her own sex hinders her attempt to adopt a person of the other sex as a love-object. Love for the mother becomes the protagonist of all those tendencies which, acting as her "conscience," would arrest the girl's first step along the new road to normal sexual satisfaction, in many respects a dangerous one; and indeed, it succeeds in destroying her relationship with the man [p. 101].

His analysis of her story steps over the problem written across its surface and also built into the architecture of her paranoid fantasy: it is a workplace complaint. It is, furthermore, a paranoid fantasy staged across the space of a professional man's bachelor apartment and the office in which

they both work. Both are haunted by the figure of the mother. Reading this case in light of the past few years of student activism and media fascination with the problem of sexual harassment on campus and in the workplace, one is arrested by the situation of this woman's problem. Paranoia emerges here not as a sexual problem per se but as an effect of a transgression of the boundaries that mark the difference between home and office, between the sexual and the social, and between the private and the public. She is positioned on one side of that line or the other: unlike the man in this story, she cannot be in both worlds at once.

Marx (1964) observes that the worker "is at home when he is not working and when he is working he is not home" (p. 110). He is "outside himself" when he works; his labor is "coerced; it is *forced labor*" (p. 111). This is differently true for the sexed worker—meaning here, the worker who is a sexual subject. Once productive labor has been externalized from the worker what remains in its wake is the worker's reproductive need. This split, for Marxist feminists, yields a form of primitive accumulation through which Capital naturalizes its claim on the body and its capacities (Federici, 2004). The job of the sexed subject is to meet this reproductive need; her meaning and "value" are expressed in this domain of those things that are marked as beyond price—sex, romance, love, and care. The sexual subject embodies the worker's condition; she is a living emblem for "the external character of labor," which, "for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs not to himself, but to another" (p. 111). If the system benefits that other to whom the worker belongs, it is because behind that worker is the unpaid sexual worker who, even if she labors alongside her partner in the office, is charged with providing the reproductive labor for them both (at least). Behind her, too, are yet more sexed workers—mothers, like the one our complaint supports and who, one assumes, takes care of the home to which she is confined.

Marxist feminists take up the definitional relationship between gender difference and this division of labor as a form of primitive accumulation in which, as Leopoldina Fortunati (1981) writes, "reproduction [is] posited as 'natural production,' which [enables] *two* workers [e.g., husband and wife] to be exploited with *one* wage, and the entire cost of reproduction to be unloaded onto the labor force" (p. 9). The scenario that Fortunati describes is not merely that of the woman confined to wageless housework; it is that of the gendered subject who embodies the splitting of work and sex.

Much as we are encouraged to imagine them in partnership, productive and reproductive labor do not form a platonic couple; they do not add up to a whole. "This range is not a unity," Fortunati (1981) argues, "because the two segments which must add up to become ... necessary ... labor-power, are supplied through two valorization processes which are complete in themselves" (p. 89). We should not think of productive and reproductive labor as two halves of a whole; one is, more nearly, a world contained in and carried by the other.

### Little boxes

Sexual intimacy with a co-worker is, for the woman in this story, associated with a visual reproduction of the scene of their encounter and the illicit distribution of that image within the workplace. Her complaint describes the translation of a consensual form of intimacy into a non-consensual form of publicity in which her sexual body is revealed within the social context of the workplace—a world in which she circulates only insofar as her sexual body is disavowed and hidden away. This photograph, she imagines, documents their daytime meetings; it captures the two of them as they steal time from the working day. The camera miniaturizes the scenario of their encounter: that cloth-covered box describes sex's enclosure and sex as a form of enclosure.

We are encouraged in our fear of the collapse of our private and our public lives; we nurture panic regarding the consequences of these forms of exposure. This form of paranoia is normalized, socially prescribed. What could be worse, we gasp, than the circulation of the image of your sexual self? We seize up with anxiety at the idea of it, as if these different worlds were not always already entangled in each other.

Freud's reading, which collapses the camera, the clock, and the *quérulant's* clit, performs this entangling of the reproductive and the working day without really enlightening us as to how and why her desire should take this spooky form. Freud makes a similar move elsewhere in his writing on a girl's obsessive nighttime rituals:

Our patient gradually came to learn that it was as symbols of the female genitals that clocks were banished from her equipment for the night. Clocks and watches—though elsewhere we have found other symbolic interpretations for them—have arrived at a genital role owing to their relation to periodic processes and equal intervals of time. A woman may boast that her menstruation behaves with the regularity of clockwork. Our patient's anxiety, however, was directed in particular against being disturbed in her sleep by the ticking of a clock. The ticking of a clock may be compared with the knocking or throbbing in the clitoris during sexual excitement [Freud, 1966, p. 330].

A dread of the following day, the climbing of anxiety with each "tick." Of course ticking clocks drive an insomniac mad. Who does not know the grip of that late-night despair; who has not felt anxiety's proximity to desire? Of course the grinding regularity of that tick might telescope out to the time of life itself. But although the clit might be said to "throb" with the beat of one's heart, it certainly can't be said to pulse according to any lunar cycle. Freud's move from the menstrual, the vaginal, and the clitoral (in both cases) is invasive (moving from the surface to the cavity, invading and leaking); it is the kind of reading one knows as both penetrative and lacking insight. And yet—it speaks of the adolescent girl's body as a kind of sex machine, the sense of which would keep one up at night.

As Naomi Schor (1985) argues in her compelling analysis of "A Case" and its *quérulant*, Freud's focus on the complainant's clit raises the material of the female sexual body as a problem; she repurposes that problematic turn for feminist theory. Provisionally accepting the mapping of the paradigm of the female hysteric onto the vaginal, Schor posits the clitoris as the anchor for a female—perhaps feminist—form of paranoia (p. 158), which she imagines as an insistently materialist practice of theory making oriented by "the detail figure," or the synecdoche. "The clitoris," she observes, "is coextensive with the detail" (p. 159). It is coextensive with a kind of detail that "juts out" above the "planar surface of the text" (p. 161). This detail stands for the body to which it is attached but seems to also signal its potential escape (as in the "hand" one lends to another).

We might build on Schor's (1985) attention to the stubborn detail and respond to her call for a radically different way of listening to each other as we struggle with the acknowledgment of what we already know but disavow: the workplace is a sexual space and people who work together create and inhabit forms of sexual community. In a sense, the *quérulant's* clit is most definitely the problem. Within the space of collective disavowal, the sexual body of the sexed worker is an assemblage of provocative details threaded into paranoid networks—networks defined by the masculinist, homosocial dynamics Sedgwick (1985) described. Colleagues joke anxiously about whether they can hug one another and go home to former students who have become their wives. Women sit in boardrooms and stare out the window as men laugh at each other's jokes. Pundits lament the death of sex itself and imagine the university campus as taken over by an army of junior *quérulants*. Who is the rightful paranoid in such a world?

Schor (1985) and Sedgwick (1997) both argued for another approach to reading paranoia, one more open, in particular, to formal play. I wonder if we might approach the "tick" in this woman's story as an instance of what Didier Anzieu (1990) described as a "formal signifier," meaning a psychic fantasy expressed as, in, and through formal crisis. This term, for Anzieu, describes a fantasy strongly oriented by problems of containment:

The configurations in question undergo deformations or produce transformations that result from their structure and from influences brought to bear on it. We are therefore dealing with signifiers that relate to changes in form. These signifiers are psychic representations not only of certain instincts, but also of various forms of organization of the self and the ego. On this account they appear to belong to the general category of representatives of things, most especially representations of space and bodily states in general. But is space a thing? Is it not rather a container of things? In this sense, formal signifiers are primarily representations of psychic containers. But each possesses a property, a mode of operation, that generates a transformation within them, and whose failures only produce deformations [p. 2].



Such an approach loosens the detail from the grip of an interpretive drive toward the “real story” (the truth of her desire) in favor of a description of the problem (the situation of her situation): a formal crisis that signals the contradictions of her structural position—one that this woman represents as a problem of containment.

The complainant heard the sound of an opening and a closure. An opening is shuttered. An interior is exposed. The private is made public; a moment of escape is captured. Time is stolen from work (their daytime meetings); it is then accounted for (as snapshots of these stolen moments return to the workplace to haunt and punish her). The men around her experience this “click” differently: the capture of time stolen from work (the “tick of the clock on the desk”), the “throb” of the inside pushing out (the beating of the heart, the pulse of desire). But for the *quérelant*, that sound represents a kind of puncture, a fixing, a capture and a form of destruction (“my sexual self is stolen and distributed,” “my sexual self has ruined my work”).

From a feminist perspective, it might seem strange that Freud would need a homosexual explanation for this woman’s complaint. The fear that a woman might be harmed through shared intimacy with a man would seem, in fact, not only not pathological but also perhaps reasonable—a healthy kind of paranoia. She slept with a co-worker, after all, and is anxious she might lose her job because of it. Her anxiety is pathological only insofar as it has settled into the form of a specific delusion rather than, say, a diffused sense of vulnerability—the latter being the hallmark of proper feminine comportment. It is, again, a socially acceptable form of paranoia (“all men are out to corrupt you”). Her problem originates in the accumulation of the differences represented by her lover, her mother, and her boss: paranoia emerges as a defense against an oppressive anxiety regarding the integrity of the social bonds organizing her work life, which, furthermore, sustain the relationship of her life to her work. These forces pressure her to become a woman like her mother—even as their survival depends on just the opposite. Unless, that is, she is supported by a man who will support them both—and, for reasons never specified by Freud, this lover is not that.

“No matter how many screams, sighs, and erotic exercises we make in bed,” Sylvia Federici (2012) writes, “we know that is a parenthesis and tomorrow both of us will be back in our civilized clothes (we will have coffee together as we get ready for work)” (p. 24). That parenthesis holds life apart from one’s work and keeps work out of one’s life. That, at least, is the mythology. This separation and its grounding conflicts subordinate the “living labor” of the bedroom and the kitchen to work (productive labor). The parenthesis folds reproductive labor into systems of enclosure ensuring that “every moment of our lives functions for the accumulation of capital,” even—or especially—those moments that feel like an escape (p. 35).

Workplace harassment and discrimination depend upon the disavowal of these enclosures and the painful conflicts they inflict on us. Sexual harassment’s particularity is anchored in the exploitation of that disavowal—confrontations with harassment yield a crisis for the workplace because they surface the “schizophrenic condition” of the sexual subject: the self is scattered, and we are plagued by the anxiety of tracking its bits and pieces (Federici, 2012, p. 24).

Freud, therefore, was not entirely wrong in his desire to line up paranoia’s etiology with same-sex attachments, nor was he entirely wrong to hear in the knock and the tick the sound of desire’s projection. But where Freud (1961) explained paranoia as a displaced homosexual desire (as a symptom expressing a latent disorder), a range of queer theorists (Sedgwick most prominently) see paranoia’s association with homosexuality as an effect of the phobic homosocial and as a defense against the powerful contradictions that structure those relations. Paraphrasing Guy Hocquenghem (1993), Sedgwick (1997) writes, “Paranoia is a uniquely privileged site for illuminating not homosexuality itself, as in the Freudian tradition, but rather precisely the mechanisms of homophobic and heterosexist enforcement against it” (p. 126). Thus much of *Between Men* (Sedgwick, 1985) tracks the emergence of homophobia “not most immediately as an oppression of homosexual men, but as a tool for manipulating the entire spectrum of male bonds, and hence the gender system as a whole” (p. 16). Paranoid fantasies give those bonds their shape and their purpose. The homosexual, from within these structures, appears to lurk in the shadows of the homosocial—which is to say, we find

these queer paranoid figures haunting the workplace as one the homosocial's paradigmatic spaces. "Masculine structures and behaviors are conflated with work," writes Ann McGinley (2016) in her analysis of sexual harassment and the operations of workplace masculinities. The performance of certain kinds of masculinity (by men, for men) "are conflated with work and management techniques" (p. 6) and staged almost uniformly against the bodies associated with feminine and reproductive labor.

The complainant who finds herself in Freud's office with her lawyer is caught in the sexual and social contradictions that ground her workplace. Within the social structures organizing capital, sex is not only administered as that which "happens" outside the sphere of work; it is positioned as "the opposite" of work. One space appears as the projection of the other. The sexed subject straddles the division between productive and reproductive labor in a value system built on the rendition of the reproductive as beyond or underneath that system. This is the central preoccupation of Marxist feminism. Leopoldina Fortunati (1981) writes,

Within reproduction the elements concerned, the family, prostitution, labor power, the exchanges, and their relations of production are not actually recognized as being agents of elements of capitalist production. Here the process of mystification occurred a long way back, so far back indeed that the content of the relations of production within reproduction do not seem to have ever represented an exchange between women and capital, but between her and her male worker [p. 21].

That mystification supports the "primitive accumulation" of reproductive labor. A wife is no ball and chain. She is, instead, Capital's loamy ground. The drive is, always, to mine from the domain of life making every fungible element. This is, of course, a grim view of the relationship between sex and work. We must insist on this line of thinking, however; we must remember the difficulty of the relationship of sex and work to each other if we want to understand why harassment is so endemic in institutional life and why sexual harassment complaints, in particular, tend to have little impact on the context in which that harassment was staged. Each new complaint generates a scandal, a collective gasp from within the impacted professional community, and a round of moral panic. And yet nothing changes. If anything, the institution's stranglehold on desire and pleasure tightens, making everything worse.

From a Marxist feminist angle the argument against sexual harassment is not only anchored in a moral prohibition against the use of power and authority to coerce sex from subordinates. One also opposes sexual harassment because these "seductions" absorb sexed and raced subjects into a work economy predicated on the splitting off and minimization of the value of their reproductive labor, whether that worker is raped, or married. That nauseating syntactical turn—"raped, or married"—is, on my part, a deliberate rhetorical turn against the discourse that represents sexual coercion as the exception rather than our system's rule.

The argument against harassment must not hinge on the patrolling of the boundary between sex and work, nor can it settle on the ritual of the criminal trial and expulsion hearing as our collective problem's solution. Harassment is an effect of that division of labor: sex shadows and haunts the anti-sexual workplace. The resistance to harassment is, potentially, in this sense, a form of anti-work—the resistance to harassment can unravel the very idea of what work is. But to do that, such forms of resistance must insist on surfacing the sexual dimension of labor and all forms of labor relations. To do so is to attempt to wrestle the anti-harassment struggle from the liberal (and left) managerial structures that make the workplace more sexist rather than less—not because Title IX enforcement (for example) makes sex on campus impossible (Kipnis, 2015) or because the university is more likely to demote and fire feminists and queers in the name of sexual safety (AAUP, 2016) but because these liberal organizational structures naturalize and reinforce a sexed division of labor and furthermore produce sex as a form of entitlement—as a property to which one has rights rather than an aspect of our common—meaning communal, meaning collective—life. These managerial practices (e.g., blanket bans against all sexual relationships between people within an organization or between people of different positions in that organization's hierarchy) deepen the vulnerability of sexual subjects. Not only do such policies force sexual relationships

underground (making the confrontation with abuse even harder), they also enforce the collective disavowal of the fact that “work” is always already sexed.

And so, we might read this case of paranoia, that of the *querulant*, as the story of woman who “hears” what her colleagues disavow. If, on her return to the office, she sees in conversations between her lover and her boss signs of a sexual conspiracy, perhaps she is not wrong. And if Freud sees her as having a problem with her mother and her boss, perhaps he is not wrong either insofar as her mother is the *querulant*’s housewife, and as such, she haunts the woman who works and whose wages hide her labor. When she accepted her male co-worker’s invitation to an affair, the *querulant* shed the skin of disavowal that had enabled her movement between home and the world. What, on finding herself naked in the office, was this “handsome girl!” with a remarkable lack of shame to do?

## Notes on contributor

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