# 1NR

### Fight Club - Overview

#### This argument turns and outweighs their business – war machines against the state turn lines of flight into lines of death.

Bülent Diken, lecturer in Sociology at Lancaster University, and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, Ph.D. student at the University of Copenhagen, Department of Political Sciences, September 2001, online: http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Diken-Laustsen-Enjoy-Your-Fight.pdf, accessed August 24, 2004

Interestingly, whereas the movie clearly makes a self-reflexive mockery of Project Mayhem in the context of the first danger (macrofascism), the aspects of Fight Club that do not resonate in Project Mayhem (that is, its microfascist aspects) escape its ironic perspective. It seems as if the movie assumes that power predominantly pertains to molar lines. But lines of flight are not exempted from power relations, and there is a microfascism in Fight Club that cannot be confined to Project Mayhem. It is in this context remarkable that Fight Club operates as a deterritorialized line of flight, as a war machine that is violently opposed to the state; its members are not merely the Oedipalized paranoiacs of the capitalist state order. Its micro-fascism can be understood best as a transgressive delirium. “What makes fascism dangerous is its molecular or micropolitical power, for it is a mass movement”, a proliferation of molecular interactions, “skipping from point to point, before beginning to resonate together in the National Socialist State” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 214-5). If Project Mayhem is the ridiculous Nazi-type organization with unreflexive skinheads who just repeat Tyler’s orders, Fight Club is the molecular face of fascism. The third danger: a line of flight can lose its creative potentials and become a line of death. This is precisely what happens in Fight Club: “the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion for abolition” (1987: 229). In fact, fascism is the result of an intense line of flight that becomes a line of death, wanting self-destruction and “death through the death of others” (Ibid. 230). A line of flight that desires its own repression. The point at which escape becomes a line of death is the point at which war (destruction) becomes the main object of the war machine rather than its supplement. Fight Club, transforming into Project Mayhem, becomes an instrument of pure destruction and violence, of complete destratification, a war machine that has war as its object. In other words, the regression to the undifferentiated or complete disorganization is as dangereous as transcendence and organization. Tyler, the alluring and charismatic, the free-wheeling pervert of Fight Club, is as dangerous as society. If there are two dangers, the strata and complete destratification, suicide, Fight Club fights only the first. Therefore a relevant question, never asked by microfascists, is whether it is not “necessary to retain a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and functions, a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects, and assemblages” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 270). The test of desire is not denouncing false desires but distinguishing between that which pertains to the strata, complete destratification, and that which pertains to line of flight, a test, which Fight Club does not pass (Ibid. 165). Let’s qualify this point by investigating the way the logic of the cut works in the film.

#### Impact is that it turns case:

#### They will inevitably say ‘that’s not our line of flight’ or ‘lines of flight are still good’, however, you should assess the impact of our disad as bigger than whatever impact they’ve got – lines of flight turning into lines of death removes any of the benefit of the original line of flight.

Bülent Diken, lecturer in Sociology at Lancaster University, and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, Ph.D. student at the University of Copenhagen, Department of Political Sciences, September 2001, online: http://www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/papers/Diken-Laustsen-Enjoy-Your-Fight.pdf, accessed August 24, 2004

The first danger is that a line of flight can become re-stratified: in the fear of complete destratification, rigid segmentation and segregation may seem attractive. Whenever a line of flight is stopped by an organization, institution, interpretation, a black hole, etc., a “reterritorialization” takes place. In spite of the fact that Fight Club makes a mockery of an “illusion of safety” in the beginning, its line of flight is followed by reterritorialization. It evolves into a project, Project Mayhem. Becoming a “bureaucracy of anarchy” (Palahniuk 1997: 119), Project Mayhem is the point at which Fight Club reterritorializes as “the paranoid position of the mass subject, with all the identifications of the individual with the group, the group with the leader, and the leader with the group” (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 34). In comparison with Fight Club, Project Mayhem is centralised around Jack/Tyler who gives the multiplicity of lines of escape a resonance. Methods change too: “We have to show these men and women freedom by enslaving them, and show them courage by frightening them” (Ibid. 149). The new rules are: “you don’t ask questions”; “you have to trust Tyler”, and so on (Ibid. 125). Fight Club was a gang, Project Mayhem is more like an army. Fight Club produces a microcosm of the affections of the rigid: it deterritorializes, massifies, but only in order to stop deterritorialization, to invent new territorializations.

### Line by Line

#### Deleuzo-Guattarian nomadic politics are not liberatory and instead only lead to new, if less visible, forms of control. In a world of flows and lines of flight, the subject is free to consume and move wherever it wants, but this freedom is accompanied by nightly, passionate attachments to violent rituals.

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The de-traditionalized, increasingly reflexive individuals no longer have ready-made symbolic authorities, and they complain, as does Tyler in Fight Club, “we are a generation of men raised by women”. He never “knew his father” (Palahniuk 1997: 49). In the social space within which Fight Club emerges there is no father, only a ruse of signs, an experience of a smooth space without symbolic hierarchies. A place no longer determined by the law and tradition or by the solidity of a habitus. What follows is the burden of reflexivity as one has to choose one’s place in the social, because identity is no longer a matter of occupying an already given subject position. Hence one desperately searches for a true identity, tries to find an objective correlate to being. “I loved my life. I loved my condo. I loved every stick of furniture. That was my whole life. Everything—the lamps, the chairs, the rugs—were me. The dishes were me. The plants were me. The television was me”. This “friction-free”, smooth space is of course the space of contemporary capitalism, of flows. What is often overlooked is that in this social space fantasies are violated, not because they are forbidden but because they are not. Today fantasies are subsumed under capital, and a market for the extreme and the perverted is growing. In our post-Oedipal era, the paradigmatic mode of subjectivity is the “polymorphously perverse” subject that follows the command to enjoy; no longer the Oedipal subject integrated into the symbolic order through castration (Žižek 1999: 248). If, in the reflexive society, the symbolic father of the uncompromising “No!” is in retreat, the void is filled with either ersatz authorities (e.g. ethical committees) or authorities that make transgression or perversion of the Law a rule in the service of enjoyment. Thus, the standard situation of the disciplinary subject is reversed: “we no longer have the public Order of hierarchy, repression and severe regulation, subverted by the secret acts of liberating transgression ... on the contrary, we have public social relations among free and equal individuals, where the ‘passionate attachment’ to some extreme form of strictly regulated domination and submission becomes the secret transgressive source of libidinal satisfaction, the obscene supplement to the public sphere of freedom and equality” (Žižek 1999: 345). The problem of authority today is not that of the symbolic authority that forbids enjoyment but that of the superego, of the obscene authority that enjoins one to enjoy. This is a scenario in which transgression does not result in freedom but in new, and even more rigid, authority structures. The distinction between societies of discipline and societies of control, in which power goes nomadic, is illuminating here. Deleuze claims that capitalism is no longer characterized by panoptic, place-bounded discipline forcing people to overtake given subject positions, but by a permanent movement, in which the subject is always in a state of becoming. “Control”, he says, “is short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded, whereas discipline was long-term, infinite and discontinuous” (Deleuze 1995: 181). If the geography of discipline worked in terms of fixed points or positions, control operates in terms of mobility, speed, flexibility, anonymity and contingent identities, in terms of “the whatever” (Hardt 1998: 32). The symptom of control society is the collapse of the institutional walls: not that discipline ends with the deterritorialization of institutions. Rather, discipline, now freer than ever from territorial constraints, has become more immanent to the social field (Hardt & Negri 2000). In control society subjectivity is “produced simultaneously by numerous institutions in different combinations and doses”; hence social space tends to lose its delimitation: one “is factory worker outside the factory, student outside the school, inmate outside prison, insane outside the asylum—all at the same time. It belongs to no identity and all of them—outside the institutions but even more intensely ruled by their disciplinary logics” (Hardt & Negri 2000: 331-2). This unfinished, constantly mutating status of everything does not bring with it freedom, but control, which corresponds to the immanent, axiomatic logic of capital. Capitalism does no longer function according to the discourse of the master (Žižek 1999: 373). Control is not given by castration, that is, by a restriction of the subject’s ability to move and to act, by a limitation in being. It pertains to flows; the universe of capitalism is immanent, infinite, without an end. As Fight Club says, living in it is like living in “The IBM Stellar Sphere, The Philip Morris Galaxy, Planet Starbucks”. The source of anxiety in this open, smooth space is not lack of being; rather, too much pseudo-freedom, e.g. freedom to consume. “[T]he anxiety generated by the risk society is that of a superego: what characterizes the superego is precisely the absence of a ‘proper measure’—one obeys its commands not enough / or too much; whatever one does, the result is wrong and one is guilty. The problem with the superego is that it can never be translated into a positive rule to be followed” (Žižek 1999: 394). Thus, permitted enjoyment—You may!—turns into the prescriptive enjoyment—You must!—(Žižek 2000: 133). In other words, the demise of the symbolic authority does in no way imply the demise of authority as such, and herein lies the paradox of the theory of reflexivity, its blindness to the (re)emerging non-symbolic forms of authority. The paradox of postmodern individuality: the injunction to be oneself, to realize one’s creative potential, results in the exact opposite, that is, the feeling of the inauthenticity of all acts. No act, no commodity is really it. My “inner being” is not expressed that way, either (Ibid. 22-23). Extreme individuality reverts to its opposite, causing the subject experience to be uncertain and faceless, changing from mask to mask, trying to fill the void behind the mask by shifting between idiosyncratic hobbies (Žižek 1999: 373).

#### Individual identity isn’t enough – forming a collective identity is crucial, and this can only be made with the friend-enemy distinction.

Norman 9 (Emma R. Norman, University of the Americas Puebla, Mexico Department of International Relations and Political Science, September 4th 2009, Applying Carl Schmitt to Global Puzzles: Identity, Conflict and the Friend/Enemy Antithesis, p28-9)

The emphasis on the exclusive nature of identity construction leads to the conclusion that an inter-national (or other plurality of identities) context is required to provide the contrast necessary for the clear definition of a collective identity. But this theory does not stipulate that just any form of “other” is needed—neutral toleration of others, or half-hearted partnerships to foster security or prosperity fail on this model to provide the required clear definition. At some point, the intensification to the friend-enemy status on at least one front is, for Schmitt, required. But it is also inevitable. On this model, if one enemy disappears (as a direct result of enemy actions or for other systemic reasons) a vacuum is created that at some point needs to be filled

## Case

### Oil

#### They drop that oil is abiotic. This means that it WILL never run out. They have a really terrible starting point. Oil will always be there to maintain the economy. That’s Vey.

#### They can’t lead to overconsumption. Peak oil has been adapted to by tech and industry modifications.

#### No peak - Oil companies are increasing knowledge, technology, and drilling ability

Roberts 4 (Paul Roberts, energy expert and writer for Harpers,2004, The End of Oil, pg. 54-6)

But as in times past, depletion anxiety was quickly replaced by a surge of oil optimism. In 1975, spurred on by the high prices caused by the Arab oil embargo, oil companies began producing enormous volumes of oil from the North Sea, a deep-sea frontier previously dismissed as too techni­cally challenging to develop economically. Two years later, huge volumes began to flow from extensive fields on Alaska’s equally inhospitable North Slope. Optimists say that these successes and the many more since highlight a major flaw in the pessimists’ theory: namely, their failure to credit the oil industry for becoming much cleverer since the gloomy 1970s. Barred from access to “easy” Middle Eastern oil, oil companies were forced to reinvent how they looked for and produced oil, and the results have been aston­ishing. Drills today can now reach ten miles underground, move in any direction — even horizontally — and electronically detect oil and gas. Operators employ powerful supercomputers to create stunning three-dimensional seismic images of underground structures, showing precisely where oil- and gas-bearing rocks are and even identifying the best routes for drilling. For the industry, this explosion of technological advances has had three major effects. First, companies can now work in nearly any climate or environment, from permanently frozen tundra to a floating platform an­chored two miles above the ocean floor — places previously dismissed as technically or economically impractical, like the Caspian or even frigid Si­beria, which is widely regarded as the “next” oil frontier. Thus, each year oil that was regarded as unreachable — or “unconventional” — becomes con­ventional. For example, new production technologies are even allowing oil companies to produce previously unusable oil, such as the molasseslike “heavy” oil of Venezuela and the massive reserves of tar sands in Alberta, Canada; indeed, the government of Alberta now claims to have “reserves” equivalent to more than a trillion barrels of oil. Second, companies have dramatically increased the amount of oil they get from a given field. As recently as the 1970s, drillers were lucky to extract 30 percent of the oil from a field, while effectively leaving 70 percent in the ground as “unrecoverable.” Even today, in less-developed oil re­gions, like Saudi Arabia, recovery rates are said to average just 25 percent. But with new mapping and drilling technology, operators can see where the remaining oil lies within a reservoir, and then drop in a precisely tar­geted new well to reach it. Such techniques have raised recovery rates to as high as 8o percent — a success that not only has boosted yields at new fields but is allowing companies to revive declining and even abandoned fields. Worldwide, according to the USGS, enhanced recovery technologies will add another seven hundred billion barrels of oil to the world’s tally of remaining oil — and delay by years the peak in production. Dan Butler, an analyst at the Energy Information Agency, the very optimistic forecasting arm of the U.S. Energy Department, says some of the biggest potential for improving recovery is in the Middle East. “The Saudis have very primitive operations,” says Butler. “They just let the oil gush out. But if you could get another ~ percent out of Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Middle East, you would up your reserve base by at least a hundred billion barrels.” Third, companies are much smarter at knowing where to look for oil. New geological understandings — for example, that oil can form anywhere within dozens of miles of a river delta, even in superdeep waters — have led to a welter of new discoveries in unexpected places, like the deep waters off the coast of West Africa. Deep-water oil is touted as the real frontier of the future and is the place where most oil companies and many analysts ex­pect to find the bulk of the undiscovered oil. Excitement is particularly keen over “deltaic” prospects in the deep-water Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Africa and Brazil, as well as in the Arctic provinces of Canada and Greenland, Norway, and Siberia, where seismic surveys reveal subterranean structures identical to those beneath the oil-rich North Sea, but far larger. “The Arctic is going to be the next big play,” promises Tom Ahlbrandt, the director of the USGS world assessment project and a prominent oil opti­mist. “We feel that more than half of all undiscovered resources are in the deep offshore, of which half are in the Arctic. And we’ve looked at only seven Arctic provinces; there are twenty-eight more we need to look at. We haven’t even begun to discover all the oil that is out there.”13 But even the USGS is not the last word in oil optimism. When U.S. policymakers want the most positive energy forecast, they turn to the U.S. Energy Information Agency (EJA). Whereas USGS forecasts take into ac­count only oil that could be extracted with today’s technology and at to­day’s oil prices, the ELA assumes substantial improvements in both — with encouraging results. So, for example, while most optimists believe that the Caspian region might hold 100 billion barrels, ELA numbers show a stag­gering 292 billion barrels of “ultimately recoverable reserves” in Kazakh­stan, Azerbaijan, and other “-stans.” The ELA further believes that newly discovered fields off West Africa and South America may, when combined, come close to rivaling those of some Middle Eastern states. “It’s probably not a new Saudi Arabia,” says EIA’s Butler, smiling faintly, “but certainly enough to push the world production peak to 2O35.”

#### Companies will work to avoid. They won’t run themselves out of supply.

### Deleuze

#### They lead to dualisms, which are bad. They reject everyone has not transcended and followed lines of flight. This recreates the binaries that they criticize. That’s Hallward. They kill movements by deciding that movements can no longer exist. We have to flee from binaries and boundaries. Abolitioning constraints leads to constraints

#### Our first political priority should be to REJECT the call of the affirmative’s war machine and align ourselves with a more committed, principled, and modest political engagement. Those who desire to make the world a better place must look elsewhere than their rhizomatic war machine.

Peter Hallward, Professor in the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University, London, 2006, Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation, p. 162-164

Deleuze writes a philosophy of (virtual) difference without (actual) others. He intuits a purely internal or self-differing difference, a difference that excludes any constitutive mediation between the differed. Such a philosophy precludes a distinctively relational conception of politics as a matter of course. The politics of the future are likely to depend less on virtual mobility than on more resilient forms of cohesion, on more principled forms of commitment, on more integrated forms of coordination, on more resistant forms of defence. Rather than align ourselves with the nomadic war machine, our first task should be to develop appropriate ways of responding to the newly aggressive techniques of invasion, penetration and occupation which serve to police the embattled margins of empire. In a perverse twist of fate, it may be that today in places like Palestine, Haiti and Iraq, the agents of imperialism have more to learn from Deleuzian rhizomatics than do their opponents. As we have repeatedly seen, the second corollary of Deleuze’s disqualification of actuality concerns the paralysis of the subject or actor. Since what powers Deleuze’s cosmology is the immediate differentiation of creation through the infinite proliferation of virtual creatings, the creatures that actualise these creatings are confined to a deriv­ative if not limiting role. A creature’s own interests, actions or decisions are of minimal or preliminary significance at best: the renewal of creation always requires the paralysis and dissolution of the creature per se. The notion of a constrained or situated freedom, the notion that a subject’s own decisions might have genuine consequences -the whole notion, in short, of strategy - is thoroughly foreign to Deleuze’s conception of thought. Deleuze obliges us, in other words, to make an absolute distinction between what a subject does or decides and what is done or decided through the subject. By ren­dering this distinction absolute he abandons the category of the subject altogether. He abandons the decisive subject in favour of our more immediate subjection to the imper­atives of creative life or thought. Deprived of any strategic apparatus, Deleuze’s philosophy thus combines the self-grounding sufficiency of pure force or infinite perfection with our symmetrical limitation to pure contemplation or in-action. On the one hand, Deleuze always maintains that ‘there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the inten­sification of life’. Absolute life or creation tolerates no norm external to itself. The creative movement that orients us out of the world does not depend on a transcendent value beyond the world. After Spinoza, after Nietzsche, Deleuze rejects all forms of moral evaluation or strategic judgement. Every instance of decision, every confronta­tion with the question ‘what should we do?’, is to be resolved exclusively in terms of what we can do. An individual’s power or capacity is also its ‘natural right’, and the answer to the question of what an individual or body should do is again simplicity itself — it should go and will always go ‘as far as it can’ (WI~ 74; EP, 258). But on the other band, we know that an individual can only do this because its power is not that of the individual itself. By doing what it can, an individual only provides a vessel for the power that works through it, and which alone acts — or rather, which alone is. What impels us to ‘persevere in our being’ has nothing to do with us as such. So when, in the conclusion of their last joint project, Deleuze and Guattari observe that ‘vitalism has always bad two possible interpretations’, it is not surprising that they should opt for the resolutely in-active interpretation. Vitalism, they explain, can be con­ceived either in terms of ‘an Idea that acts but is not, and that acts therefore only from the point of view of an external cerebral knowledge; or of a force that is but does not act, and which is therefore a pure internal Feeling [sentir]’. Deleuze and Guattari embrace this second interpretation, they choose Leibnizian being over Kantian act, pre­cisely because it disables action in favour of contemplation. It suspends any relation between a living and the lived, between a knowing and the known, between a creating and the created. They embrace it because what feeling ‘presents is always in a state of detachment in relation to action and even to movement, and appears as a pure contem­plation without knowledge’.’8 As Deleuze understands it, living contemplation proceeds at an immeasurable distance from what is merely lived, known or decided. Life lives and creation creates on a virtual plane that leads forever out of our actual world. Few philosophers have been as inspiring as Deleuze. But those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere.

### Life First

#### Deleuze, their own basis for their philosophy concedes that the purpose of their philosophy is remove death. Not because Deleuze but because it’s their philosophy. Discusses preventing people dying.

#### Our first political priority should be to REJECT the call of the affirmative’s war machine and align ourselves with a more committed, principled, and modest political engagement. Those who desire to make the world a better place must look elsewhere than their rhizomatic war machine.

Peter Hallward, Professor in the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University, London, 2006, Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation, p. 162-164

Deleuze writes a philosophy of (virtual) difference without (actual) others. He intuits a purely internal or self-differing difference, a difference that excludes any constitutive mediation between the differed. Such a philosophy precludes a distinctively relational conception of politics as a matter of course. The politics of the future are likely to depend less on virtual mobility than on more resilient forms of cohesion, on more principled forms of commitment, on more integrated forms of coordination, on more resistant forms of defence. Rather than align ourselves with the nomadic war machine, our first task should be to develop appropriate ways of responding to the newly aggressive techniques of invasion, penetration and occupation which serve to police the embattled margins of empire. In a perverse twist of fate, it may be that today in places like Palestine, Haiti and Iraq, the agents of imperialism have more to learn from Deleuzian rhizomatics than do their opponents. As we have repeatedly seen, the second corollary of Deleuze’s disqualification of actuality concerns the paralysis of the subject or actor. Since what powers Deleuze’s cosmology is the immediate differentiation of creation through the infinite proliferation of virtual creatings, the creatures that actualise these creatings are confined to a deriv­ative if not limiting role. A creature’s own interests, actions or decisions are of minimal or preliminary significance at best: the renewal of creation always requires the paralysis and dissolution of the creature per se. The notion of a constrained or situated freedom, the notion that a subject’s own decisions might have genuine consequences -the whole notion, in short, of strategy - is thoroughly foreign to Deleuze’s conception of thought. Deleuze obliges us, in other words, to make an absolute distinction between what a subject does or decides and what is done or decided through the subject. By ren­dering this distinction absolute he abandons the category of the subject altogether. He abandons the decisive subject in favour of our more immediate subjection to the imper­atives of creative life or thought. Deprived of any strategic apparatus, Deleuze’s philosophy thus combines the self-grounding sufficiency of pure force or infinite perfection with our symmetrical limitation to pure contemplation or in-action. On the one hand, Deleuze always maintains that ‘there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the inten­sification of life’. Absolute life or creation tolerates no norm external to itself. The creative movement that orients us out of the world does not depend on a transcendent value beyond the world. After Spinoza, after Nietzsche, Deleuze rejects all forms of moral evaluation or strategic judgement. Every instance of decision, every confronta­tion with the question ‘what should we do?’, is to be resolved exclusively in terms of what we can do. An individual’s power or capacity is also its ‘natural right’, and the answer to the question of what an individual or body should do is again simplicity itself — it should go and will always go ‘as far as it can’ (WI~ 74; EP, 258). But on the other band, we know that an individual can only do this because its power is not that of the individual itself. By doing what it can, an individual only provides a vessel for the power that works through it, and which alone acts — or rather, which alone is. What impels us to ‘persevere in our being’ has nothing to do with us as such. So when, in the conclusion of their last joint project, Deleuze and Guattari observe that ‘vitalism has always bad two possible interpretations’, it is not surprising that they should opt for the resolutely in-active interpretation. Vitalism, they explain, can be con­ceived either in terms of ‘an Idea that acts but is not, and that acts therefore only from the point of view of an external cerebral knowledge; or of a force that is but does not act, and which is therefore a pure internal Feeling [sentir]’. Deleuze and Guattari embrace this second interpretation, they choose Leibnizian being over Kantian act, pre­cisely because it disables action in favour of contemplation. It suspends any relation between a living and the lived, between a knowing and the known, between a creating and the created. They embrace it because what feeling ‘presents is always in a state of detachment in relation to action and even to movement, and appears as a pure contem­plation without knowledge’.’8 As Deleuze understands it, living contemplation proceeds at an immeasurable distance from what is merely lived, known or decided. Life lives and creation creates on a virtual plane that leads forever out of our actual world. Few philosophers have been as inspiring as Deleuze. But those of us who still seek to change our world and to empower its inhabitants will need to look for our inspiration elsewhere.

#### **This is a horrific misreading of Deleuze – death is clearly bad.**

Gilbert, et. al, ‘8

[Jeremy (Reader in Cultural Studies at the University of London, where he is co-director of the Centre for Cultural Studies Research); Eric Alliez (Professor of Contemporary French Philosophy at Kingston University London); Claire Colebrook (Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of English at Penn State); Peter Hallward (Canadian political philosopher, best known for his work on Alain Badiou and Gilles Deleuze); Nicholas Thoburn (Lecturer in Sociology at Manchester University), “Deleuzian Politics? A Roundtable Discussion”, New Formations, RSR]

Jeremy: I’m glad you’ve raised this, Claire, because it brings us to an interesting question. Although I’m probably more broadly in sympathy 164 New Formations with your perspective, I think that Peter’s tradition is entitled to ask of the Deleuzian perspective: on what grounds do you even recognise it as a problem that the human species might destroy itself? I have actually had people say to me, claiming Deleuze (and, admittedly, Delanda) as authorities: ‘who cares? who cares about the destruction of the human race? why should we care? let the capitalist movement of deterritorialisation carry on to its logical conclusion …’ Peter: ‘Let the desert grow …’ Éric: Do we have to answer this Pseudo-Deleuzianism? It’s a patently hallucinated and pathologically interested interpretation. Politically absurd, and philosophically so weak, so ignorant of what it is supposed to know! An Embedded Deleuzianism! Claire: I think this is a problem with taking some of Deleuze and Guattari’s language in a literalist manner - which is always the problem with DeLanda. When you talk about becoming-imperceptible, if you take it absolutely literally, then this does strictly follow, and it follows that if there is a tendency in life towards deterritorialisation then prima facie that deterritorialisation is a good thing, so the human being can deterritorialise itself, life goes on, and that’s okay. But there’s also a fold-back movement in their thought. If you look at What is Philosophy?, you can see that they are fascinated by the fact that from the production of material processes something immaterial can emerge, which is philosophy. And there seems to me to be a normative prima facie value attached to that as well, because it’s a higher deterritorialisation - it’s an example of life creating something which somehow has gone beyond life. From this normative perspective, insofar as humanity is a subject, if humanity can create a virtual body beyond itself, like the philosophical archive, then it ought to. And it seems to me that there’s no stronger defence of human life than that because everything else is probably dissolved by such a perspective.

#### Caring about survival is also good That’s Psyzinski. Necessary to provide any ethical value because logical prerequisite.

### Psychoanalysis

#### They say they aren’t Lacan. Oops, they use the lack and focus on desire. That’s psychology. Undercovering here is a devastation for their methodology.

#### You should default to the middle ground – psychology is good FOR PEOPLE – but empirical studies prove you can’t scale it up to explain IR or revolutionary politics.

Epstein, senior lecturer in government and IR at the University of Sydney, ‘10

[Charlotte, “Who speaks? Discourse, the subject and the study of identity in international politics,” European Journal of International Relations XX(X) 1–24]

To be clear, this move is not intended to deny the intimate links between discourse and subjectivity. The earlier foray into Lacanian thought served precisely to underline the centrality of discourse to both the making and subsequent analysis of the subject. But by the same token it also drew out what is required to wield the discourse approach effec­tively in IR. Indeed Lacan’s analysis emphasizes the sheer complexity of the dynamics of a highly individual phenomenon (identity), and consequently the difficulties in taking this level as the starting point for analysing all other levels at which identity is politically at play.13 As the discipline that positions itself at the highest level of analysis (the supra­national), IR cannot maintain its focus at the level where some of the finer debates around subjectivity take place (see for example, Butler, 1997). The issue here is one of discipli­nary specificity, or, in other words, equipping IR for what it wants to do; and the solu­tion proposed is one of suspension or bracketing. To restate this important point differently, at the individual level, subjectivities and subject-positions remain coextensive. The distinction between subject-positions and subjectivities becomes operative once the analysis shifts beyond the individual level. This distinction thus offers a theoretically cogent way of studying identity while bracket­ing some of its more unwieldy dimensions that may, moreover, not be pertinent at the levels at which IR casts its focus. It renders the discourse approach operative for IR, because it makes it possible to study *state* identities, without having to presume that states have feelings, or indeed enter into questions of how much exactly are they like people, or what kind of selves do they possess. What the discourse approach analyses, then, is the ways in which actors — crucially, whether individuals or states — define themselves by stepping into a particular subject-position carved out by a discourse. In taking on the ‘I/we’ of that discourse, actors’ identities are produced in a very specific way. In doing so, they are establishing them­selves as the subjects of particular discourses, such as the anti-whaling discourse, and thereby marking themselves as ‘anti-whalers’. How, then, do discursive subject-positions differ from Wendt’s (1999: 227–229) role identities, where the actor is similarly seen as stepping into institutionalized roles (such as professor and student)? The crucial differ­ence is that the concept of subject-position does not harbour any assumption about any primordial self supporting these roles. Importantly, this is not to say that the self does not exist — that the professor or student have no selves — but simply that the concept is not relevant to the analysis of the discursive construction of identity, especially when taken to the interstate level.

#### Scaling up psychoanalysis fails for both SOLVENCY and DESCRIPTIVE POWER.

Sharpe and Goucher, ‘10

[Matthew (lecturer in philosophy and psychoanalytic studies at Deakin University) and Geoff (senior lecturer in literary and psychoanalytic studies at Deakin University), Žižek and Politics: An Introduction, p. 186]

• So here is the force of the second, methodological component to Žižek’s untenable erasure of the difference between politics and psychoanalysis. By looking at the contemporary world as a contemporary subject–object in need of the theorist’s liberating ‘psychoanalysis’, Žižek is unable to make a series of key sociotheoretical distinctions long recognised in political and socialtheoretical literature on complex societies. • The key one of these, as we saw in ‘Vanishing Mediations’, is the distinction between the lifeworld of subjects (their lived world of meanings wherein a psychoanalytic ideology critique can be highly informative) and the mediasteered subsystems – principally the economywhose workings demand an objectifying socialscientific analysis, not a psychoanalytic account. • The problem Žižek elides, in the words of his own teacher Althusser, is that modern posttraditional societies are a complex totality of ‘relatively autonomous’ instances – in Althusser’s thinking, the economy, the ideological and the political instances. • Then there is the question of which instance or level might be the predominant one in any particular historical regime. One practical consequence of this theoretical observation is that the peoples or potentials that might be either ‘symptomatic’ or particularly vital at one level (say, the ideological level) may be either well integrated or wholly disempowered at the other levels.

#### Psychoanalysis can’t explain complex sociopolitical events – there’s no methodology for applying it past the individual.

McDermott et al., ‘11

[Rose (Professor of Political Science at Brown University, “Applying Psychology to International Studies: Challenges and Opportunities in Examining Traumatic Stress,” International Studies Perspectives, Vol. 12 Iss. 2, May]

Concern about the external validity (that is, generalizability) of applying psychological constructs to real-world situations is a fundamental issue that has long been noted as problematic, as Irving L. Janis noted over 40 years ago (1958). The “gold standard” for research in psychology is the laboratory experiment. These setting are often dissimilar to real-world political situations in multiple ways, including the distilled nature of the hypothetical laboratory situation as well as the nature of the sample population, which is often comprised of college undergraduates. Also, psychological studies are dissimilar to real-world political situations in their operationalization of variables, which are often assessed by simple behaviors, such as choosing from an inventory of foreign policy choices in reaction to a news report in a study of fictional warring nations (Beer, Sinclair, Healy, and Bourne 1995). Such psychological research also tends to be dissimilar to real-world situations in its setting (often occurring within a laboratory in a psychology department of a university), timeframe (typically examining behavior occurring within a period of less than an hour), number of actors (often involving as few as two or three), and motivations of the participants (often for a modest payment or course credit). However, such laboratory studies also offer the benefit that they allow for control of the independent variables in ways that cannot be replicated in the analysis of complex real-world cases. Such control offers unrivalled possibilities for drawing accurate causal inferences. Political science often offers a way to test the external validity of ideas established in psychological laboratory experiments within real-world contexts. Increasingly, political scientists and psychologists have combined some of the strengths of rigorous experimental methods in the context of either embedded nationally representative surveys (Kuklinski, Sniderman, Knight, Piazza, Tetlock, Lawrence, and Mellers 1997) or in field experiments both within the United States (Gerber and Green 2000) as well as abroad (Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein 2007). However, the question of the value of laboratory vs field experimentation, like the larger issue of internal as opposed to external validity which it reflects, extends beyond questions of generalizability to incorporate ethical concerns as well. Even the most sophisticated experimental designs in a laboratory cannot come even close to generating the kind of traumatic experience that a person would endure if they were to lose a loved one in a war, nor should such a replication ever be sought. However, as a result, scientists’ ability to approximate the real-world experiences of something like, say, traumatic stress will be necessarily limited to either lesser forms of induced stress, or the study of those who have endured such events in their real lives. In the latter case, questions of self-selection and unknown pre-morbid experiences and vulnerabilities will always complicate the analysis and limit the degree of generalizability to the larger population we seek to characterize. Methods outside of the laboratory—such as surveys—are frequently used in applying psychological and political constructs to international issues and can also incorporate experimental manipulations that allow for control of the independent variables (for example, Koopman, Snyder, and Jervis 1990; Kuklinski et al. 1997). However, every methodological approach has its limitations, with the findings yielded by surveys also brought into question because of possible biases in sampling due to large numbers of potential respondents who refuse to participate and possible biases in the responses (for example, social desirability) that can affect the internal validity of the results. The application of psychological interpretations to analyzing actual political cases is not without limitations. Inevitably, methodological limitations raise concerns in using any available methodology to apply psychological perspectives to real-world situations in the international context.

#### This is overwhelmingly, empirically true.

Boettcher, Professor of Political Science and Public Administration at North Carolina State University, ‘4

[William, “The Prospects for Prospect Theory: An Empirical Evaluation of International Relations Applications of Framing and Loss Aversion,” Political Psychology, Vol. 25, No. 3]

Unfortunately, the process through which decisions are “framed” remains poorly understood. We lack a theory of framing because the psychologists have yet to give us one and we have failed to develop one on our own (rare attempts are discussed below). Despite a decade of work exploring prospect theory empirically, there has been little progress in developing clear and consistent criteria for simply identifying the frame used by a particular decision-maker (or group of decisionmakers). Although we have happily borrowed intuitively compelling notions such as reference points, gain/loss coding, preference reversals, and loss aversion, we have failed to specify the scope conditions that may limit the applicability of prospect theory within our field of study. In part, this may be due to a lack of familiarity with (or understanding of) recent research on prospect theory in other fields; but it also stems from a reluctance to test prospect theory using experiments that mimic “real world” decisions. These experiments are difficult to construct and costly to execute, and they sometimes produce inconclusive (or even worse, incoherent) results. Nonetheless they are absolutely necessary, because they provide an empirical foundation and practical “road map” for more ambitious adventures.

### New Cards

#### Their impact doesn’t escalate.

Hinde and Pulkkinnen, 2k

[Robert (Professor in Psychology at Cambridge) and Lea (Psychology Professor at the University of Jyväskylä), DRAFT Background Paper for Working Group 1: HUMAN AGGRESSIVENESS AND WAR, 50th Pugwash Conference On Science and World Affairs: "Eliminating the Causes of War" Queens' College, Cambridge,

http://www.pugwash.org/reports/pac/pac256/WG1draft1.htm]

People are capable of perpetrating the most terrible acts of violence on their fellows. From before recorded history humans have killed humans, and violence is potentially present in every society. There is no escaping the fact that the capacity to develop a propensity for violence is part of human nature. But that does not mean that aggression is inevitable: temporary anger need not give rise to persistent hostility, and hostility need not give rise to acts of aggression. And people also have the capacity to care for the needs of others, and are capable of acts of great altruism and self-sacrifice. A subsidiary aim of this workshop is to identify the factors that make aggressive tendencies predominate over the cooperative and compassionate ones. Some degree of conflict of interest is often present in relationships between individuals, in the relations between groups of individuals within states, and in the relations between states: we are concerned with the factors that make such conflicts escalate into violence. The answer to that question depends critically on the context. While there may be some factors in common, the bases of individual aggressiveness are very different from those involved in mob violence, and they differ yet again from the factors influencing the bomb-aimer pressing the button in a large scale international war. In considering whether acts which harm others are a consequence of the aggressive motivation of individuals, it is essential to recognise the diversity of such acts, which include interactions between individuals, violence between groups, and wars of the WW2 type. We shall see that, with increasing social complexity, individual aggressiveness becomes progressively less important, but other aspects of human nature come to contribute to group phenomena. Although research on human violence has focussed too often on the importance of one factor or another, it is essential to remember that violence always has multiple causes, and the interactions between the causal factors remain largely unexplored.

#### Psychoanalysis can’t be scaled up to explain society or politics – they can’t explain our impacts and definitely can’t solve

Sharpe and Goucher, ‘10

[Matthew (lecturer in philosophy and psychoanalytic studies at Deakin University) and Geoff (senior lecturer in literary and psychoanalytic studies at Deakin University), Žižek and Politics: An Introduction, p. 182-185]

Can we bring some order to this host of criticisms? It is remarkable that, for all the criticisms of Žižek’s political Romanticism, no one has argued that the ultraextremism of Žižek’s political position might reflect his untenable attempt to shape his model for political action on the curative final moment in clinical psychoanalysis. The differences between these two realms, listed in Figure 5.1, are nearly too many and too great to restate – which has perhaps caused the theoretical oversight. The key thing is this. Lacan’s notion of traversing the fantasy involves the radical transformation of people’s subjective structure: a refounding of their most elementary beliefs about themselves, the world, and sexual difference. This is undertaken in the security of the clinic, on the basis of the analysands’ voluntary desire to overcome their inhibitions, symptoms and anxieties. As a clinical and existential process, it has its own independent importance and authenticity. The analysands, in transforming their subjective world, change the way they regard the objective, shared social reality outside the clinic. But they do not transform the world. The political relevance of the clinic can only be (a) as a supporting moment in ideology critique or (b) as a fullyfl edged model of politics, provided that the political subject and its social object are ultimately identical. Option (*b*), Žižek’s option, rests on the idea, not only of a subject who becomes who he is only through his (mis) recognition of the objective sociopolitical order, but whose ‘traversal of the fantasy’ is immediately identical with his transformation of the sociopolitical system or Other. Hence, according to Žižek, we can analyse the institutional embodiments of this Other using psychoanalytic categories. In Chapter 4, we saw Žižek’s resulting elision of the distinction between the (subjective) Ego Ideal and the (objective) Symbolic Order. This leads him to analyse our entire culture as a single subject–object, whose perverse (or perhaps even psychotic) structure is expressed in every manifestation of contemporary life. Žižek’s decisive politicaltheoretic errors, one substantive and the other methodological, are different (see Figure 5.1) The substantive problem is to equate any political change worth the name with the total change of the subject–object that is, today, global capitalism. This is a type of change that can only mean equating politics with violent regime change, and ultimately embracing dictatorial government, as Žižek now frankly avows (*IDLC* 412–19). We have seen that the ultrapolitical form of Žižek’s criticism of everyone else, the theoretical Left and the wider politics, is that no one is sufficiently radical for him – even, we will discover, Chairman Mao. We now see that this is because Žižek’s model of politics proper is modelled on a precritical analogy with the total transformation of a subject’s entire subjective structure, at the end of the talking cure. For what could the concrete consequences of this governing analogy be? We have seen that Žižek equates the individual fantasy with the collective identity of an entire people. The social fantasy, he says, structures the regime’s ‘inherent transgressions’: at once subjects’ habitual ways of living the letter of the law, and the regime’s myths of origin and of identity. If political action is modelled on the Lacanian cure, it must involve the complete ‘traversal’ – in Hegel’s terms, the abstract versus the determinate negation – of all these lived myths, practices and habits. Politics must involve the periodic founding of entire new subject–objects. Providing the model for this set of ideas, the fi rst Žižekian political subject was Schelling’s divided God, who gave birth to the entire Symbolic Order before the beginning of time (*IDLC* 153; *OB* 144–8). But can the political theorist reasonably hope or expect that subjects will simply give up on all their inherited ways, myths and beliefs, all in one worldcreating moment? And can they be legitimately asked or expected to, on the basis of a set of ideals whose legitimacy they will only retrospectively see, after they have acceded to the Great Leap Forward? And if they do not – for Žižek laments that today subjects are politically disengaged in unprecedented ways – what means can the theorist and his allies use to move them to do so?

#### Psychoanalysis can’t be applied at the social level and falls into conservatism.

**Robinson**, Visiting Fellow at Wolfson College, Cambridge University, ‘**10**

[Andrew, “Symptoms of a New Politics: Networks, Minoritarianism and the Social Symptom in Žižek”, Deleuze and Guattari Deleuze Studies, Volume 4, Page 212-214 DOI 10.3366/dls.2010.0004, ISSN 1750-2241

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:YTLqYnQiLmoJ:www.euppublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/dls.2010.0004+Symptoms+of+a+New+Politics:+Networks,+Minoritarianism+and+the+Social+Symptom+in+%C5%BDi%C5%BEek,+Deleuze+and+Guattari&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us, RSR]

Hence, the concept is useful in making sense of contemporary conflict. On the other hand, there are difficulties with how Žižek deploys the concept. Firstly, Žižek’s approach retains the emphasis of clinical psychoanalysis on the individual patient. This is problematic when psychoanalytic categories have been transferred to the social field. The transformation involved in a Žižekian Act is subjective and personal, rather than relational, yet is assumed to have wide-reaching socio-ideological effects. This approach fails to situate ideological relations in social relations, and hence exaggerates the effect which a simple ideological gesture can have. This personalised approach also risks reproducing a therapeutic, self-adapting approach in which, ‘under conditions we recognize as desperate, we are told to alter ourselves’, not the conditions (Nielsen 1978: 168–70). It risks producing adaptation to social ‘necessities’ rather than their transformation. The difficulty is that, while a personal fundamental fantasy can be traversed by an individual patient, a homologous social ideology could presumably only be shattered at the social or intersubjective level. Secondly, as a result of this personalised approach, Žižek does not attempt to formulate a politics of the excluded themselves. In his theory, the radical potential of the excluded derives from their structural position. Hence, it resides primarily in the excluded as they appear for others. This appearance is exploited for ideological disruption without being reconstructed as alternative social relations. Partly because he frames the question in terms of identification rather than a politics of the excluded, Žižek does not attempt to reconstruct the political forms which could arise from the excluded acting for themselves. As a result, he does not progress from the idea of the social symptom to an exploration of alternative forms of social life emerging at points of exclusion. This precludes engaging with the difficulties of analysis of concrete exclusion, hiding complexities beneath the apparent simplicity of structural logic. What if the actually existing excluded do not identify with their position, but construct their identities within the dominant fantasy-frame, or within an alternative neurotic frame which re-conceives their own position as that of the ‘trunk’? What if a group is interpellated by the dominant fantasy-frame as a social symptom, but operates in its own fantasy-frame as the master-signifier? One cannot simply overlay the distinct levels of the structural-cultural position of a phenomenon, the distinct identities and meanings immanent to a social group, and the structures of individual psyches, each with different fantasmatic connections into or ruptures with the wider social field. Social fantasy and social symptoms doubtless impact on the other levels, but are not identical to them. In Žižek’s theory, no distinction is made between different types of movements of the excluded – between ethnic conflict, ‘terrorism’, innercity revolt, anti-capitalist protest and so on. This is not surprising given the choice of framing. In terms of their significance for the gaze of the dominant system, phenomena such as the Bosnia war, the banlieue revolts and the 9/11 attacks are indeed isomorphic. In terms of their immanent construction and meaning for participants, however, the events are heterogeneous. Furthermore, while Žižek generally identifies the social symptom with non-oppressive excluded groups such as immigrants, there is little structural reason why his theory should distinguish such groups from others, such as child abusers or suicide bombers, who are similarly subject to outrage and demonisation, but who are also engaged in harmful or oppressive actions. What is lacking, in short, is a clear account of how the radical potential of the excluded is, or can be, sometimes actualised and sometimes dissipated. Instead of a politics of the excluded, what Žižek provides is a problematically representational emphasis on identification. This approach demands too little in terms of recomposition of social relations. Anyone can obtain the radical potential of the excluded subjectively, without relational transformations. Hence, for instance, a privileged academic such as Žižek can perform an authentic Act without at all altering their lifestyle or social inscription, simply by identifying with anathemas (Butler, Laclau and Žižek 2000: 122). A third limit to this framing of the social symptom is a certain theoretical conservatism, particularly as regards the possibility of overcoming alienation and hierarchy (see Robinson 2005). Indeed, Žižek seems to treat the analogically neurotic structure of reality as inevitable. While Lacanian theory may allow for a passage beyond the field of neurotic desire through the concept of drive (Noys 2003), it is not apparent that any such passage occurs in the case of Žižek’s Act. Rather, the social field is recomposed around a master-signifier. Žižek is very clear on the point that an Act leads to the re-emergence of an arborescent social order, but one in which certain blockages are overcome (Butler, Laclau and Žižek 2000: 92; Žižek 1999: 90–1, 331, 368; 1997b: 72–3; 1989: 211). Žižek constructs his idea that lack is a feature of desire as such in opposition to the idea that alienation results from present, contingent capitalist conditions (Žižek 1990: 56). In particular, the master-signifier is taken to be necessary (Žižek 1994: 43, 59, 1993: 49, 1992a: 103), and it is impossible to move beyond social exclusion or alienation (Butler, Laclau and Žižek 2000: 100–3). Hence, the change involved in a process of identifying with the symptom is rather limited. The specific characteristics of social life do not necessarily change; what changes is how one relates to these characteristics (Žižek 1994: 57, 61). Identifying with the symptom may disrupt a particular system and its particular master-signifier, but it does not do away with the arborescent structure of the dominant society. One simply moves from neurotic incapacity to normal alienated subjectivity. The result – a change in perception which breaks blockages in the present order – falls well short of a recomposition of social relations. Ultimately, transformation remains subjective and ‘ideological’ (in the expanded Althusserian sense), and does not pass over into the overcoming of ‘ideology’. For all its radical pretensions, Žižek’s politics can be summed up in his attitude to neoliberalism: ‘If it works, why not try a dose of it?’ (Žižek and Salecl 1996: 32).

#### Zero truth value to psychoanalysis – can’t make truth claims, encourages infinite regress and transforms even the clearest components of reality into a poetic phantasmagoria

**Perpich**, Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, **‘5**

[Diane, “Figurative Language and the “Face” in Levina’s Philosophy, Philosophy and Rhetoric, Vol. 38: 2, RSR]

Levinas's hesitations about the value of psychoanalysis—indeed, what might be called his allergic reactions to psychoanalysis—are similarly based. Psychoanalysis, he writes, "casts a basic suspicion on the most unimpeachable testimony of self-consciousness" (1987b, 32). Psychological states in which the ego seems to have a "clear and distinct" grasp of itself are reread by psychoanalysis as symbols for a "reality that is totally inaccessible" to the self and that is the expression of "a social reality or a historical influence totally distinct from its [the ego's] own intention" (34). Moreover, all of the ego's protests against the interpretations of analysis are themselves subject to further analysis, leaving no point exterior to the analysis: "I am as it were shut up in my own portrait" (35). Psychoanalysis threatens an infinite regress of meaning, a recursive process that leads from one symbol to another, from one symptom to another with no end in sight and no way to break into or out of the chain of signifiers in the name of a signified. "The real world is transformed into a poetic world, that is, into a world without beginning in which one thinks without knowing what one [End Page 111] thinks" (35). Put less poetically, Levinas's worry is that psychoanalysis furnishes us with no fixed point or firm footing from which to launch a critique and to break with social and historical determinations of the psyche in order to judge society and history and to call both to account. Indeed, his uncharacteristic allusion to "clear and distinct" ideas betrays his intention: to seek, against both religious and psychoanalytic participations, for a relationship in which the ego is an "absolute," "irreducible" singularity, within a totality but still separate from it, that is, still capable of a relation with exteriority. To seek such a relation is, Levinas says, "to ask whether a living man [ sic ] does not have the power to judge the history in which he is engaged, that is, whether the thinker as an ego, over and beyond all that he does with what he possesses, creates and leaves, does not have the substance of a cynic" (35). The naked being who confronts me with his or her alterity, the naked being that I am myself and whose being "counts as such" is now naked not with an erotic nudity but with the nudity of a cynic who has thrown off the cloak of culture in order to present himor herself directly and "in person" through "this chaste bit of skin with brow, nose, eyes, and mouth" (41). Levinas picks up the thread of this worry about psychoanalysis in "Ethics and Discourse," the main section of "The Ego and the Totality." To affirm humankind as a power to judge history, he claims, is to affirm rationalism and to reject "the merely poetic thought which thinks without knowing what it things, or thinks as one dreams" (40). The impetus for psychoanalysis is philosophical, Levinas admits; that is, it shares initially in this affirmation of rationalism insofar as it affirms the need for reflection and for going "underneath" or getting behind unreflected consciousness and thought. However, if its impetus is philosophical, its issue is not insofar as the tools that it uses for reflection turn out to be "some fundamental, but elementary, fables . . . which, incomprehensibly, would alone be unequivocal, alone not translate (or mask or symbolize) a reality more profound than themselves" (40). Psychoanalysis returns one, then, to the irrationalism of myth and poetry rather than liberating one from them. It resubmerges one within the cultural and historical ethos and mythos in a way that seems to Levinas to permit no end to interpretation and thus no power to judge. He imagines psychoanalysis as a swirling phantasmagoria in which language is all dissimulation and deception. "One can find one's bearings in all this phantasmagoria, one can inaugurate the work of criticism only if one can begin with a fixed point. The fixed point cannot be some incontestable truth, a 'certain' statement that would always be subject [End Page 112] to psychoanalysis; it can only be the absolute status of an interlocutor, a being, and not a truth about beings" (41). In this last claim, the fate of Heideggerian fundamental ontology that is an understanding of Being rather than a relation to beings (or to abeing, a face) is hitched to the fate of psychoanalysis and both linked to participation, the "nocturnal chaos" that threatens to drown the ego in the totality.