

Notes

Introduction: Psychology and Its Doubles

1. Saxe et al., for example, ground their neurological theory of altruism in developmental psychology, but if one traces back the references of these psychological authors, one winds up back with neurology (Saxe, Carey & Kanwisher, 2004).
2. Remember the classic conception of hysteria as caused by the migration of the uterus (*hystera*) through the female body. In the times of the French neurologist Charcot, in the second half of the 19th century, it was observed that hysterical symptoms like paralysis could also migrate over different body parts.
3. This idea was then elaborated in the occasionalism of Nicole Malebranche.
4. For a more elaborate analysis see De Vos (2012).

1. Psychology, a Post-Cartesian Discipline: La Mettrie and the Perverse Core of the Psy-sciences

1. This chapter is an annotated and adapted version of an earlier paper on this subject (De Vos, 2011b).
2. http://www.childwellbeing.org/AtAGlance_pages/AAG-TOC-4-5.html.
3. http://helpguide.org/mental/adhd_add_adult_symptoms.htm.
4. By the psy-experts I mean those connected to the sciences and praxes which form the backbone of the so called psy-complex (Ingleby, 1984), a concept which, according to Nikolas Rose, should be understood in a Foucauldian way. For Rose, it is not the state which exercises power over the population and subjectivity, rather, “state” power becomes diffused through the population and has to be seen as a complex network of strategies (Rose, 1985).
5. It is to be noted that Ann Thomson in her translation of La Mettrie softens “la volupté” in translating it almost always as “sensuality”.
6. “La Volupté” moreover is the title of another of La Mettrie’s major work published in 1746.
7. For Lacan too, thinking is not, as such, reflexive. The existence of a thought does not presuppose that one thinks about the thought (Lacan, 1962).
8. Compare this with the controversy evoked by the film “Blue Lagoon” (1980) about a boy and a girl marooned at a tropical island. Although they are not siblings, but only cousins, critics argued that this only served to cover over the fact that the film was really an exploration of an incestuous fantasy.
9. Freud himself was well acquainted with Diderot. For example, he approvingly quotes a passage from *The Nephew of Rameau* to support his theory of the Oedipus complex (Freud, [1938]1961).

10. "HE: You've always taken an interest in me because I'm a good fellow whom you despise at bottom but who amuses you. MYSELF: I don't deny it" (Diderot, 2001, p. 18).
11. Žižek calls this the "substanceless void of the self-rotating abyssal vortex called 'transcendental apperception'" (Žižek, 2001, p. 135).
12. It is, as such, worth noting that *Le Philosophie du boudoir* was already written in the style of a "treatise on the education of girls" (Lacan, 1966, p. 787). Sade was already parodying and revealing something of the truth of these moralizing pedagogical books which are the precursors of today's psychologizing literature.
13. In many countries, this theoretical instruction in the psychology of puberty forms part of the official curriculum for the 12–14 year old.
14. As Aury and Wolfe remark, this also leads to a sort of dematerialized materialism, since materialism in its contemporary physical form begins from quantum and energetic principles.
15. See for example Bufkin and Luttrell (2005).

2. From Psychologism to Psychologization: Edmund Husserl's Life-World Revisited

1. This chapter is an annotated and adapted version of an earlier paper on this subject (De Vos, J. (2012). The deadlock of Husserl's life-world: from a critique of psychologism to psychologization. *Theory & Psychology*, 22(3), 324–341).
2. <http://www.circle-time.co.uk>.
3. I heard a teacher literally say this in a documentary on television.
4. "Modern brain-imaging technologies (...), have shown that the brains of people suffering from depression look different than those of people without depression". <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/women-and-depression-discovering-hope/what-causes-depression-in-women.shtml>.
5. For more on these issues, see (De Vos, 2012).

3. Therapeutic Culture and Its Discontents: Christopher Lasch's Critique of Post-War Psychologization

1. This chapter is an annotated and adapted version of an earlier paper on this subject (De Vos, 2010).
2. "As the workings of the modern economy and the modern social order become increasingly inaccessible to everyday intelligence, art and philosophy abdicate the task of explaining them to the allegedly objective sciences of society, which themselves have retreated from the effort to master reality into the classification of trivia" (Lasch, 1978, p. 91).
3. For another instance of how central dramatization is in the constitution of psychological theory, see (De Vos, 2009).
4. Identity politics is usually understood as political activity or theorizing on the basis of a cultural, racial, gender, ethnic, or other claim. Eric Hobsbawm (1996) sees the emergence of identity politics as a consequence of the "extraordinarily rapid and profound upheavals and transformations of human society"

- (p. 40) at the end of the 20th century, and the consequent weakening of both the nation-state and the old class-based political parties and movement (Hobsbawm, 1996).
5. In 1910 Ellen Richards wrote: “the child as a future citizen is an asset of the state, not the property of its parents” (as cited in Lasch, 1978, p. 155) – only recently, Ankie Vandekerckhove, a Flemish Children’s Rights official argued that the government should *force its way into the family as the last private cell of society* (“Bemiddeling erkennen en opvoeding ondersteunen [Acknowledging divorce mediation, supporting parenting]”, 2004).
 6. Žižek’s authorship of the introduction to the Croatian edition of *The Culture of Narcissism* seems indicative of the fact that he is quite indebted to Lasch. This influence is apparent in, for example, his approach to virtuality (Žižek, 1995), his use of the maternal superego (Žižek, 1991) and his leftist critique of the political correctness of the mainstream Left (Žižek, 1991, 1995, 2002a).
 7. For a more elaborate discussion, see (De Vos, 2012).
 8. One finds yet another example of this “in-between human” with Foucault’s suggestion of the coming of a new man while moderns man is “erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea” (Foucault, 2002, p. 442).

4. Psycho-Politics: Giorgi Agamben *homo sacer* as the *homo psychologicus*

1. However, Tocqueville should not be regarded as the mere champion of these developments, as he somehow laments the loss of the “natural elevation of sentiment and thought”. “The manners of the aristocracy draped human nature in beautiful illusions, and though the portrait was often deceptive”, he tells us, “there was noble pleasure in looking at it” (De Tocqueville, 2004, p. 714).
2. For more on this see (De Vos, 2011a).
3. For more on this see (De Vos, 2011c).
4. See the discussion on Gergen’s conception of the *enlightenment effect* in the introduction.
5. In *Commonwealth* global democracy is defined as “the multitude learning the art of self-rule and inventing lasting democratic forms of social organization” (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 8).
6. Later that month, due to macro-economics, the Honduran Lempira went into free fall against the US dollar, tripling food prices in one day, virtually bankrupting all the *micro-empresas* . . .
7. Hardt and Negri also situate the NGO as a “frontline force of imperial intervention” but see this as “moral intervention” (Hardt & Negri, 2000, p. 36), Žižek’s stance, however, opens up the interpretation that the NGO’s moral interventionism is in the first place situated within an academic and psychologizing discourse.
8. Tellingly, there are a lot of Foucault-inspired critiques of psychology (e.g. Hook, 2007 or Rose, 1990). In contrast, Agambian inspired analyses most often lack this critical approach to the psy-sciences.
9. The numerous authors detecting *homo sacer* figures at the borders of social space similarly leave aside the issue of the *homines sacri*. For a critique on the

proliferation of the *homo sacer* in scholarly and other literature see (Mills, 2008a).

10. Or in Lacanian: the “point de capiton”. I owe this remark to Calum Neill.
11. It can furthermore be argued that it is only in a society where science and knowledge come to the foreground, that the blind ground on which power and the law are founded becomes fully visible and starts to produce effects.
12. I understand Academia not simply as the academic world or the universities. Academia, rather, stands for a specific discourse in which scientific knowledge is the point of departure for what is said and what is done (in Lacanian terms this is the *discourse of the university*). It is thus understood as a modern phenomenon. Although expertise and knowledge historically has a role in a variety of praxes and power relations (e.g. shamanism), it can be argued that only in modernity does objective knowledge become a totally separate realm which, in its own right, could be called upon to claim sovereignty. This claim can be assumed by various agents within a whole array of societal spheres.
13. For more see (De Vos, 2009, 2012).
14. For more, see (De Vos, 2012).
15. David Ingleby defines the psy-complex as an ensemble of agencies “whose discourses are not confined to particular sites of professional intervention, but which traverse the family, school and work place – indeed, the ‘social’ itself” (Ingleby, 1984, p. 43).
16. See for example the American Psychological Association’s response to the 9/11 attacks: (APA, 2004) and their utterly technical, managerial and de-humanizing approach.
17. While Agamben points to the “medicalization of ever-widening spheres of life and of individual imagination” (Agamben, 2000, p. 8), one can claim that the neuro-biological discourse is never enough. It has to be amended or, better, made operational by a psychologizing discourse.
18. Note that here, of course, there is a first risk of psychologizing testimony.
19. One could furthermore argue that even a more sophisticated Agambian witness-model incorporating the idea of bearing witness “to the impossibility of speaking”, would remain in the same perspective. For the identities to be enacted would still remain pre-conceived, with a subsequent scenario of constitutive de-subjectivation still to go through.
20. The obverse question of course is, what makes Agamben’s analysis so compelling that it instigates so many authors to engage with him in order to seek vehemently that point where they can part ways.
21. De Kesel recognizes in Agamben’s alternatives a vitalist ontology which assumes that “life and nothing else than life” will save us from a sovereignty which reduces life to *bare life* (De Kesel, 2009).
22. Agamben’s *thought* is thus as such not something individual, but it equally cannot be called relational, although Agamben couples it to the “multitudo” linking to Karl Marx’s idea of the *general intellect*. Catherine Mills argues that relationality is absolutely absent from Agamben’s conception of thought as form-of-life (Mills, 2008a, p. 31).
23. “... study, in effect, is per se interminable. Those who are acquainted with long hours spent roaming among books, when every fragment, every codex, every initial encountered seems to open a new path, immediately left aside

- at the next encounter . . . know that not only can study have no rightful end, but does not even desire one" (Agamben, 1995, p. 64).
24. Mills also discusses how Agamben bases his ideas of potentiality both on Aristotle's discussion on potentiality and actuality and Walter Benjamin's politics of "pure means" or "means without end" (Mills, 2008a, pp. 30 & 78).
 25. Perhaps the peculiarity of psychoanalysis is that it, in its not wanting to be psychological, often tilts over to a philosophical approach. Here the philosophical stance with a hidden or even denied psychological agenda is redoubled as a psychoanalytical (non-psychological) stance with a philosophical agenda, the latter then often not accepted by those outside of psychoanalysis.
 26. Or put differently, it is only as the infant finds the flaw in the full potentiality of language, the crack in the symbolic edifice, which is eventually its own alienation, that it can become itself a subject within language.
 27. Recall Freud's example of a child tossing away and retrieving an object exclaiming fort!/da! (gone!/there!) (Freud, [1920g]1955). This game shows how language allows the child to modulate presence and absence of things and persons.
 28. Remember Milgram's phrase: "Now that you know, how do you feel?" Knowledge is the invested capital, the psychologized feelings constitute the surplus value (De Vos, 2009).
 29. See in this light Žižek's remark that in the film *The Matrix* it is off the jouissance of the human that the Matrix feeds (Žižek, 2002b, pp. 96–97).
 30. Are we furthermore not justified in drawing a parallel with the waning of the Freudian concept of the unconsciousness? As yet another atavistic gestalt of *terra incognita*, it was replaced with more naturalistic and supposedly objective conceptions by neurology and psychology which claim to be able to chart the totality of a person by scanning the brain.
 31. "HE: You've always taken an interest in me because I'm a good fellow whom you despise at bottom but who amuses you. MYSELF: I don't deny it" (Diderot, 2001, p. 18). Moreover, as the philosopher embeds his little pleasures in the service of science, the figure of the pervert, being merely the servant of a higher cause, returns. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, this also what Sade shows us, no perversion without the involvement of philosophy.
 32. The Lacanian concept of jouissance also always presupposes the *material* dimension of the so-called *objet a*.

5. Psychoanalysis and Its Doubles: Towards a Hauntology of Psychologization

1. This chapter is an annotated and adapted version of an earlier paper on this subject (De Vos, 2011, in press-b).
2. <http://blog.seniorennet.be/eenbeterewereld/archief.php?startdatum=1160949600&stopdatum=1161554400>.
3. <http://blog.seniorennet.be/eenbeterewereld/archief.php?startdatum=1160949600&stopdatum=1161554400>.
4. <http://www.kindengezin.be/img/triple-p-magazine.pdf> (my translation).
5. <http://www1.triplep.net/>

6. This French expression is about unlikely companions finding themselves together much to their own surprise.
7. http://www.nestle.lt/lt_en/products/water/waters/vittel.aspx Retrieved 2011.
8. <http://www.vittel.com.tw/> Retrieved July 7, 2011.
9. That is, to use Parker's words, as "everyday life bloated by media makeover and self-help nostrums" (Parker, 2010, p. 7).

Epilogue: Towards a Non-Psychology

1. This was the personal motto of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse (Lewis of Bruges, ca. 1422–1492), a Flemish diplomat and nobleman.
2. This position – from which politicians culturalize the private vices and from which the individual is called upon to come to a true and authentic assessment of himself – is of course similar to the position of the capitalist, who exploits the private vices (see Commers, 1995). The fact that in modernity this position opened up the sphere of subjectivity and of the psychological (in their modern meanings) seems to have laid the ground for the late-capitalist scheme where subjectivity itself has eventually become the principal commodity (De Vos, 2012).
3. The Belgian street-killer Hans Van Themshe's lamentation during his trial "I want to become human" (see Introduction) in this way perhaps betrays the true motive of his atrocities, stabbing two toddlers and a nanny to death in order to put his finger on life itself. This would mean that the deeds of psychopaths are epistemologically motivated. But of course, perhaps this epistemological *Hineininterpretierung* is the only way that we can understand them.
4. For a critique of the underpinning of torture by the psy-sciences, see (De Vos, 2012).
5. Passage translated by Stefan Hertmans.
6. Here I am inspired by Ray Brassier who, glossing the French philosopher François Laruelle, writes that the *suspension* of the traditional practice of thought opens up new possibilities of thought (Brassier, 2003). I owe this reference to Ian Parker.

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Index

Note: The letter 'n' following locators refers to notes

- Academia, 102, 163–4
 homo sacer and sovereignty of, 105–14
 psychology and, 117–18
 role of, 123–7, 152
 subjectivity and, 44, 122
- Accoyer Amendment, 135
- ADHD-related disorders, 3, 5, 19, 23,
 38, 41, 77, 92, 148–9
- Adriaenssens, P., 2
- Agamben, G., 13, 14, 15, 63, 76, 97,
 98–127, 157, 171n17, 171n20,
 171n21, 171n22, 172n23,
 172n24
- American Psychological Association
 (APA), 9, 74
- Anderson, K., 81
- Aquinas, T., 110
- Arendt, H., 38
- Aristotle, 110
- Atiyeh, G., 110
- Aury, M., 39, 40, 169n14
- Averill, A. K., 11
- Badiou, A., 82, 122, 132
- Baradon, T., 139
- bare life*, *homo sacer*, 99
- Barrett, M., 80
- Beck, J., 46
- Bindé, J., 44
- biopolitics
 aporias and, 111–14
 of *bare life*, 105–8
 central problems of, 108–11
 forms-of-life and, 118–22
 olkos, *polis*, 107–8
 State power, democracy and, 105–6,
 121–2
- biopolitics to psycho-politics,
 Agamben or Hardt and Negri
 critique of biopolitics, 99
- homo sacer* shadows, 99–100
 sans-papiers, 99
- Bland, K., 139
- Blank, R. H., 131
- Blass, T., 10
- Boon, L. -P., 97, 165, 166
- Boyers, R., 74, 81, 89
- Brassier, R., 173n6
- Brechman-Toussaint, M. L., 139
- Breuer, J., 32
- Brix, M., 33
- Brockelman, T., 96
- Bufkin, J. L., 169n15
- Burman, E., 131, 154
- Bushman, B. J., 79
- Campbell, W. K., 79
- Carey, S., 168n1
- Carr, D., 59, 60, 61
- Casey, N., 77–8
- Châtelet, G., 39–40
- Chesterton, G. K., 21–2
- Churchland, P. M., 39
- Churchland, P. S., 39
- Cioffi, F., 128
- circle time method, 45
- Claes, J., 23
- Clark, K., 80
- Commers, R., 173n2
- Connolly, W. E., 131
- The Crisis of European Sciences and
 Psychology* (Husserl), 111
- The Crisis of European Sciences and
 Transcendental Phenomenology: An
 Introduction to Phenomenological
 Philosophy* (Husserl), 44, 46–7,
 66–9
- Critique of Political Economy* (Marx),
 50, 86, 166

- The Culture of Narcissism* (Lasch), 14,
73–4, 79, 83, 90–1, 93–4
- Daunton, M. J., 30
- De Backer, H., 19
- Debord, G., 94
- De Kesel, M., 23, 24, 34, 118,
129, 135, 136, 137, 138, 142,
147, 149, 153, 155, 157, 164,
171n21
- Democracy in America* (de
Tocqueville), 98
- De Paradijsvogel* (Boon), 165–6
- Depondt, L., 148
- Derrida, J., 53, 144, 158
- De Sade, M. D. A. F., 31, 34, 36
- Descartes, R., 8, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, 43,
47, 50, 51, 72, 154
- de-subjectivization, 48
- De Tocqueville, A., 98, 123–4, 170n1
- De Vos, J., 126, 148, 154, 168n1,
169n1, 169n3, 169n5, 170n2,
170n3, 170n7, 171n13,
171n14, 172n1, 172n28,
173n2, 173n4
- Dews, P., 61
- Diderot, D., 31, 32, 33, 61, 62, 76,
124–6, 168n9, 169n10, 172n31
- Discours sur le Bonheur*
(La Mettrie), 21
- Dolar, M., 37, 38, 59
- Domenech, J., 27
- Donnellan, M. B., 79
- Druine, N., 148
- Egginton, W., 21
- Ellis, B. E., 70, 71, 72, 165
- enlightenment effect, 11–12
- epoché*, 50, 52, 55, 57–60, 65
- European Commission, 45, 120
- The Fable of the Bees: Private Vices,
Public Benefits* (Mandeville), 160
- Falvey, J., 21, 27
- Faure, E., 45
- Fechner, G. T., 87–8
- Feest, U., 47
- Felman, S., 136, 137, 146
- Fortin, E., 110
- Foster, J. D., 79
- Foucault, M., 60, 61, 105, 106, 107,
108, 110, 113, 115, 116, 132, 140,
170n8
- Frankenstein* (Shelley), 38
- Freud, S., 27, 32, 59, 78, 88, 92, 96,
142, 154, 155, 158, 166, 168n9,
172n27
- Furedi, E., 38
- Gabbard, K., 89
- Galileo, 46–8
- Gergen, K. J., 11, 12, 170n4
- Girard, R., 155
- globalization, 53–4, 82, 101, 124
- Glynos, J., 150, 151
- Goclenius, R., 23
- Goldberg, R., 89
- Goodwin, J., 150
- Haasse, H. S., 97
- Hardt, M., 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104,
123, 170n5, 170n7
- Harris, J., 94
- Heidegger, M., 55
- Hendrick, H., 140
- Hilton, M., 30
- Hobsbawm, E., 169n4
- Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare
Life* (Agamben), 105
- Hook, D., 170n8
- Hotchkiss, S., 84
- Hume, D., 51, 52, 56
- Husserl, E., 6, 43, 44, 46–70, 111
- Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology
and to a Phenomenological
Philosophy* (Husserl), 64
- imagination, La Mettrie's concept
of, 25
- Infancy and History* (Agamben), 121
- Ingleby, D., 130, 168n4, 171n15
- Israel, J., 8
- Jasper, J. M., 150
- Jennings, J. L., 58
- jouissance*, 21–2, 27, 29–31, 36, 41,
122–3, 134, 150–3

- Kant, I., 34–6, 52
 Katzev, R., 10–11
 Kanwisher, N., 168n1
 Katzev, R. D., 10, 11
 Kilminster, R., 78, 79
 Kingwell, M., 59
 knowledge society, life-long learning,
 44–46
 Kog, M., 148
 Kohut, H., 83
 Konrath, S., 79
- The Lacanian Left* (Stavrakakis), 150
 Lacan, J., 2, 13, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 30,
 35, 36, 64, 135, 136, 138, 162,
 168n7, 169n12
 Laclau, E., 87, 104, 132
 Lakoff, G., 131, 152, 153
 La Mettrie, J. O., 14, 16–42, 64, 72, 75,
 88, 111, 154, 155, 168n5,
 168n6
 La Mettrie's natural scientific
 hedonism, deadlocks
 Cartesian dualism solution, 23–5
 pornographic imagery, 27–31
 voluptuousness and, 25–7
 Lamia, M. C., 3
L'art du jouir (La Mettrie), 27
 Lasch, C., 14, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77,
 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86,
 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95,
 96, 97, 169n2, 170n5, 170n6
 Lasch's metapsychology
 psychoanalysis and, 86–90
 psychological politics critique,
 84–6
 stuck in psychologization, 81–4
 Lawler, S., 45
 Lefebvre, H., 125
Les fondements de la psychologie
 (Poltzer), 164
 Levant, R. E., 9
 Levi, P., 115
 Lévi-Strauss, C., 136
 Lippens, R., 131
 Locke, J., 124
Logical Investigations (Husserl), 65–6
Lunar Park (Ellis), 70–1
 Luttrell, V. R., 169n15
- Macmillan, M., 128
*Making a European Area of Lifelong
 Learning a Reality* (European
 Commission), 120
Malignant Self-Love: Narcissism Revisited
 (Vaknin), 75, 84
The Man Machine (La Mettrie), 14, 16,
 22–30, 154
 Mandeville, B., 160, 161, 162
 Marx, K., 50, 86, 166
 Massumi, B., 123
 mathematics, pure vs. of
 spatio-temporal forms, 49–50
 Matsuura, K., 44
 McGowan, K., 20
 McGowan, T., 30, 82
 McIntosh, M., 80
 Me Decade, 73, 78
 Meeker, N., 26, 29
 Milgram, S., 10, 112, 172n28
 Milgram experiment, 10–11, 112
 Miller, E., 95
 Miller, G. A., 9, 20
 Miller, J. A., 36, 58–9, 88, 93,
 133–5
 Mills, C., 120, 121, 122, 171n9,
 171n22, 172n24
 modernity's extra subject
 expert power, 17–18
 extra subject, perverse tricks,
 21–3
 scenarios, understudies, 18–21
 Montgomery, D. T., 139
 Moons, J., 148
 Moran, D., 55
 Mouffe, C., 87, 132
 Murray, B., 17, 74
Muselmann, 115
- narcissism culture, 73
 empirical evidence critique, 77–9
 Lasch's narcissism as clinical issue,
 74–7
 nostalgia, conservatism critique,
 79–81
 as psychologization critique, 74–81
 Negri, A., 100, 101, 102, 103, 104,
 123, 170n5, 170n7
 Neill, C., 162, 171n10

- The Nephew of Rameau* (Diderot), 31, 61–2, 76, 124–5
- neurologized psychology, 6–8
- Oksala, J., 60
- Parker, I., 16, 96, 103, 157, 173n9
- Peeters, J., 140
- Pellegrini, A. D., 139
- philosophization, 54
- plus est en vous*, 32, 160–1
- Politics* (Aristotle), 110
- politics, political factors, 15
see also biopolitics
- Politzer, G., 164, 165, 166
- Polletta, F., 150
- positivation of life-world
 life-world paradoxes, 60–4
 political stakes, philosophization, 53–5
 psychology of children, peasants and, 55–60
- post-Fordism, non-representational
 conception limits, 101–3
- psychoanalysis, 132–3
 critiques of, 128
fiction as fiction, 129–30, 135–8
 ontology to hauntology debate, 157–9
 politics to psychology, political stakes, 129–32
 really existing psychology vs., 150–3
 truth and its lies, 153–7
- psychoanalysis vs. psychology, three deadlocks
 reflexivity vs. (meta)reflexivity, 142–7
 subjectivity and
 de-psychologization, 147–50, 158
 truth as fiction vs. image culture, 138–42
- psychological human, 12–13
- psychological vs. psychologized man, 101–2
- psychologism to psychologization
 eidetic return to psychology, 64–8
 Husserl and, 68–70
 theory of psyche and, 70–2
- psychologization
 being and knowledge gap, 2–5
 critique of, 99
 lost in, 13
 meta-, 4
 psychology of, 3–4, 9–10
 reschooling society and, 44–6
- psychologization, psychology in
 times of
 contemporary symptomatology, 90–2
 Lasch's psychological politics and, 92–6
 in between times, 96–7
- psychology
 of the child, 131
 as discipline of reflexivity, 8
 emergence of, 8–9
 giving itself away, 9–13
 Husserl's argument and, 43–4
 neurologized, 6–8
 of psychologization, 3–4, 9–11
- psychology, perverse core
 Diderot's philosopher as enigmatic figure, 31–3
 La Mettrie to Sade via Kant, 33–6
 psychology and its potential obscenities, 37–42
- Psychology Today*, 20, 66–7, 143
- psycho-politics
 globalization and, 101
see also biopolitics to
 psycho-politics, Agamben or
 Hardt and Negri
- psychotainment, 54, 99, 138–42
- Pupavac, V., 143
- Quality Decree* (Flanders), 133–4
- Radcliffe, N., 148
- Radical Enlightenment, 8, 43
- Rajchman, J., 34, 35
- Remnants of Auschwitz: Homer Sacer III* (Agamben), 114
- Rilke, R., 97
- Robins, R. W., 79
- Roelands, J., 148

- Rose, N., 35, 140, 141, 147, 168n4, 170n8
- Rousseau, J. -J., 131
- Salecl, R., 30
- Sanders, M. R., 139, 140, 141
- Saramago, J., 1
- Saxe, R., 168n1
- Schmitt, C., 112
- Scialabba, G., 95
- Senge, P. M., 44
- Seibers, T., 80
- Sennett, R., 85
- Siebers, T., 80
- Shelly, M., 38
- skandalons*, 72, 96–7, 110, 155, 163
- Smees, R., 139
- Smith, C. U. M., 24, 26
- Smith, P. K., 139
- Spock, B., 81, 83
- Stavrakakis, Y., 150, 151, 152
- Stein, A., 139
- Studien uber Hysterie* (Breuer, Freud), 32
- subjectivity, 115–16
- enigma of, 46–50
- Survival*, 117
- Tagore, S., 51
- Taylor, E., 41, 149
- Taylor, P. A., 94
- Thomson, A., 33, 34, 168n5
- Timimi, S., 148
- Tonneau, O., 32, 33
- transcendental phenomenology, 50–3
- A Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume), 56
- Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions* (Mandeville), 161
- Triple P, 141, 145
- Trzesniewski, K. H., 79
- Twenge, J. M., 79
- Tyler, I., 78, 80
- The Uncanny* (Freud), 59
- Vaknin, S., 75, 84
- Vande Veire, F., 37, 38, 144, 145, 146
- Van Themsche, H., 1–2
- Vande Veire, F., 144–6
- Vartanian, A., 27, 31
- Verhaeghe, P., 37, 88, 91, 92, 162, 164
- Vesalius, A., 88, 155
- victim culture, 38
- voluptuousness, La Mettrie's concept of, 25–7
- Wanted: politics-free, science-based education* (Murray), 17, 74
- Wellman, K., 17
- Whimster, S., 39
- White Marches* (Belgium), 130, 132, 143
- Why is it always about you?: Saving Yourself from the Narcissists in Your Life* (Hotchkiss), 84
- Willinsky, J., 44, 45
- Wolfe, C. T., 24, 30, 39, 40, 73, 78, 169n14
- Wolfe, T., 73, 78
- Woodhead, J., 139
- Wright, K., 143, 145
- Žižek, S., 21, 22, 31, 35, 36, 38, 58, 63, 70, 77, 78, 80, 85, 86, 93, 104, 105, 119, 132, 136, 142, 143, 147, 151, 166, 167, 169n11, 170n6, 172n29
- Zupančič, A., 136
- Zwart, H., 25