Note for authors:

All queries, revisions, and suggestions appear **in bold** within [ **square brackets** ]. Deletions are shown as ~~struck through~~; additions are in [ ***italics*** ]. If the proposed changes are acceptable, simply leave them as is. If you wish to make other changes or to answer a query, please distinguish your comments from existing text (via italics, underline, another color, another font, etc.)

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1. The term “reload” designates a key aspect of myth as analyzed here. It appears already in the title and in the first line of the article. Although the entire article is focused on analyzing the reloading of myth today, would it be helpful to make explicit the meaning or valency of this term early on in the article?

The Power of Myth (Reloaded):

From Nazism to New Fascism

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WHEREIN LIES THE POWER OF MYTH TODAY? And what figures can potentially reload it? The answers to such questions are plural and cannot be traced back to a single origin, principle or form. Since classical antiquity *myth* has, in fact, been characterized by a protean power of figuration that challenged rational attempts to contain a multitude of mythic figures in unitary, universal, and intelligible Forms. In a sense, what Plato already says of the rhapsode in *Ion* continues to apply to the mythic characters that modern and contemporary actors impersonate on theatrical stages, be they fictional or political: these actors, writes Plato, are “just like Proteus,” as they “twist and turn, assuming every shape,” slipping through the philosopher’s rational “grasp.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

The stage for an *agôn* between philosophy and myth was thus clearly set from the beginning. It generated what Plato famously called, in *Republic,* an “ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry” whose effect was to split *muthos* and *logos* in rivalrous yet intimately related positions.[[2]](#endnote-2) This binary was, in fact, far from clear-cut. *Muthos*, as Jean-Pierre Vernant reminds us ~~in~~ *~~Myth and Society in Ancient Greece~~*, means “formulated speech,” “belongs to the domain of *legein* […] and does not originally stand in contrast to *logoi.*”[[3]](#endnote-3) And yet, **[*Vernant adds,* ]** ~~while remaining intertwined, Vernant also adds that~~ by the fourth century *muthos* **[ *, while remaining intertwined,* ]** was already in opposition to *logos* and contributed to shaping philosophy, in the sense that *logos* was defined by what *muthos* is not.[[4]](#endnote-4) Classicists like Vernant, but also Eric Havelock, and before them Friedrich Nietzsche, compellingly argue that this turn from *muthos* to *logos* was pregnant with meaning: it entailed a shift from mythic characters that are manifold and changeable to ideal Forms that are unitary and immutable, from embodied fictional figures to disembodied intelligible Ideas, from the singularity of examples to the universality of types, but also from irrationality to rationality, orality to writing, *pathos* to *nous*, and, more generally, an ontology of becoming to one of Being. The mirroring inversion at play in this ancient antagonism suggests, then, that philosophy was born by pushing against a mythic womb.

In the process, what is still arguably the most influential Western critique of myth, namely Plato’s *Republic,* offered an evaluation that was at least double. Plato was, in fact, as much concerned with the content (*logos*) of mythic representations and the lies they promote as with the form (*lexis*) of dramatic spectacles and the pathos they mediate. On the side of the message, the argument went, mythic texts like Homer’s *Iliad* and Hesiod’s *Theogony* do not represent the truth about the gods but promote fictional lies, which, as Plato famously says in Book X, are at “three removes” from intelligible Forms (Plato, *Republic* 597e). This is a picture of myth as an illusory copy, “shadow,” or as he also says, “phantom [*phantasma*]” (601c) of reality that splits philosophy and myth apart, and is well known on both sides of the divide. On the other, perhaps less-known side, Plato argues in Books II and III that because mythic figures such as Achilles in *The Iliad* or Uranus in the *Theogony* are not simply narrated from a diegetic distance, but rather dramatized on theatrical stages via actors or *mimes* who address in mimetic speeches imbued with pathos what Plato calls “the mob assembled in the theater” (604e), these figures, he says, have a mysterious *formal* power to penetrate the psychic life of subjects and give form to their characters. This is no longer a picture but rather a dramatization of myth as a formative model that has the power to generate not only copies or reproductions of reality, but also copies or productions of subjects. Either way, the language of forms and models, shadows and phantoms Plato convokes at the dawn of philosophy **[ *,* ]** already identifies a double, or rather, protean concept that, to this day, continues to give power to myth: namely *mimēsis,* understood *both* as an aesthetic representation of reality *and* as an affective formation of subjects.

In very broad and admittedly partial strokes, this is, I believe, the double-protean concept that Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe never ceased to mediate as a Janus-faced philosopher-poet working at the juncture where *logos* and *muthos*, literature and philosophy, poetics and politics, face, confront, and above all reflect (on) each other.[[5]](#endnote-5) If his work has remained somewhat in the shadows so far, following the conceptual protagonist he tirelessly chased throughout his polymorphous career (that is, mimesis), this did not prevent history **[ *from shadowing* ]** ~~to shadow~~ forth political fictions and fictional phantoms that are currently confirming his penetrating diagnostic of the power of myth in real life. Lacoue-Labarthe was, in fact, particularly sensitive to the mimetic principles at play in mythic figures endowed with the double power to disfigure the truth, and perhaps more seriously, to impress, form or in-*form*, via a process he called “typography,” impressionable and plastic subjects with the seal of authoritarian or fascist types. In the twentieth century, these types found their culmination in the horror of what Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy called “The Nazi Myth”; and as we are beginning to realize, far from being left behind by a grand mythic narrative of progress, these types are currently returning, phantom-like, to haunt the body politic in the twenty-first century as well. As Jacques Derrida puts it in “Desistance,” Lacoue-Labarthe’s thought belongs to “what will inevitably have to be thought tomorrow.”[[6]](#endnote-6) Since we are, *nolens volens*, that tomorrow, I take the invitation of this special issue literally, as an encouragement to rethink the power of myth *à partir de* Lacoue-Labarthe.[[7]](#endnote-7) That is, by considering his work, and what it shares with Jean-Luc Nancy, as a starting point to retrace the moving contours of mimetic figures that now cast a shadow on our present and future as well.

In particular, I would like to step back to “The Nazi Myth,” a text that, as Jean-Luc Nancy recently says in a **[ *foreword* ]** ~~Foreword~~ to a new French edition, was “often quoted” but “very little studied [*fort peu travaillé*],”[[8]](#endnote-8) in order to leap ahead to the resurgence of mythic figures in new fascist or neo-fascist movements that are haunting the contemporary political scene in Europe and, more recently, in the United States. **[ could the following long sentence be split up ?. ok ]** Building on Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s insight that “one of the essential ingredients in fascism is *emotion*, collective, mass emotion” (“Nazi Myth” 294), and **[ *on* ]** ~~with~~ Nancy’s Bataillean reminder that even when it is “interrupted,” myth “is always ‘popular’” and its power “cannot simply disappear,”[[9]](#endnote-9) I would like to pursue a diagnostic of the affective power of myth I began to make in *The Phantom of the Ego.* This diagnostic ~~ich~~ can perhaps be summarized under the following, **[ *two-sided* ]** ~~two-faced~~ question: if, on one side, mythic figures or types generate what Plato calls in *Republic* a “phantom [*phantasma*]” of reality (599a), that is, a copy or shadow without ontological value that turns the world into a fiction **[ *,* ]** and, on the other side, these figures bring into being what Nietzsche in *Daybreak*, writing with and against Plato, calls a “phantom of the ego [*Phantom von Ego*],”[[10]](#endnote-10) that is, a copy or simulacrum of man without psychic substance, the real-life consequences of which can reach massive proportions in modern life – if this Janus-faced diagnostic of *mimesis* is true (and I see little evidence today that convinces me of the contrary) – what, then, is the affective and formal mechanism that is currently reloading the power of myth?

I suggest that stepping back to Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s untimely diagnostic of myth as a mimetic instrument that was massively deployed to disseminate the Nazi myth in the twentieth century gives us a timely starting point to leap ahead to mythic principles that are now restaged by new fascist leaders in the twenty-first century. [History does not repeat itself and so I am not claiming that the two movements are equivalent or that the use of myth will lead to the same or even similar results]. My wager instead is that reloading a genealogy of the power of myth starting from (*à partir* *de*) Lacoue-Labarthe provides us a mirror to reflect *on* the mythic destinations where we *could* potentially, but not inevitably, end (*aller à finir*).

**A Genealogical Confession: Phantasmal Returns**

Given the Nietzschean inspiration of the diagnostic that follows, I might as well start this genealogy with a personal confession. As I first fell under the spell of Lacoue-Labarthe’s work, especially the early works, from “Typography” to *L’imitation des modernes*, I was based in the US and was preoccupied with tracing mimetic phantoms at play in modernist authors who wrote a few decades before the rise of fascism and Nazism but were already sensing its mythic (will to) power. **[ move note 11 here; do the terms in quotes in the following section need references, or is the reference to *The Phantom of the Ego* sufficient? The latter is sufficient; if so, should the text in note 11 provide more information about how these issues / these authors / are treated ? not necessary for the argument]** Nietzsche’s diagnostic of the case of Wagner as a “leader” (*Führer*) who “hypnotized” the “masses” (*Massen*) provided the paradigmatic case study that framed the whole project, but strikingly similar evaluations appeared on the side of literature, or **[ *,* ]** if you prefer, myth as well: in Joseph Conrad’s account of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* as a “leader” who, while “hollow at the core,” “electrified large meetings” “‘on the popular side,’” for instance, or in D. H. Lawrence’s dramatization of European aristocratic leaders who re-enacted mythic and sacrificial rituals that cast a “spell” on the “crowd” in New Mexico, or, closer to Western horrors, in Georges Bataille’s attention to the “psychological structure of fascism” centered on “leaders” (*meneurs*) that generate movements of “attraction and repulsion” in monocephalic societies.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Such accounts, I argued in the company of Lacoue-Labarthe and other mimetic theorists, foresee the rise of fascism and Nazism in the 1920s and 1930s **[ *,* ]** but also – and here comes the confession – in the wake of 9/11, of the political lies, the crusades, the media simulations, and the real invasions that ensued, I could not help but notice the power of myth to cast a spell on the contemporary political scene as well. In this context, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s diagnostic claim that myth serves as “an instrument of *identification* [*appareil* *d’*identification]” (“Nazi Myth” 298~~; their emphasis~~) **[ journal style is to indicate only the author’s emphasis ]** whose function is to “assure an identity” (297) redoubled its meaning **[ *. While* ]** ~~: while~~ their initial affirmation that “Nazism is a specifically German phenomenon” (295) remains historically indisputable, their genealogical evaluation of the Germans whose essential problem is, as they put it, “fundamentally a problem of *identity*” (296~~; their emphasis~~), seemed to be relevant for postmodern countries like the United States that, at an additional remove, share a concern for an identity that is not one.

This genealogical leap ahead from the moderns to the postmoderns, I was aware, did not follow Lacoue-Labarthe’s critique of myth *à la lettre*. In a 2002 interview with Peter Hallward, for instance, he explicitly refrained from stretching his critique of mimesis to include what Hallward calls “the national myth, or fantasy (the American dream).”[[12]](#endnote-12) Lacoue-Labarthe even goes as far as making the following, admittedly provisional claim: “I may be wrong but it seems that up until now there have not been any *serious* problems regarding American identity” (“Stagings” 64), a claim he nonetheless immediately qualifies by supplementing serious problems like “the unresolved problem of race,” the “foreclosure of the original genocide, that of Native Americans” (64), as well as the “mimetic” and “extremely conformist” (65) dimension of US identity politics. This supplement leads him to a second, more nuanced diagnostic: namely, that “if there is a problem of identity in the USA, the social organization is such that it gives rise to neurosis rather than psychosis” (64). The American national myth is thus pathologized. But even in the sphere of mental pathology, let alone political pathology, the binary dividing neurosis from psychosis is blurry at best. In any case, given Lacoue-Labarthe’s recognition that in the wake of 9/11 “we are witnessing a revival of American nationalism” (65), not to mention his repeated avowals that “he may be wrong” (64, 65) in his diagnostic of the American masses, his *political* evaluation did not seem to foreclose alternative *genealogical* investigations of the power of myth – quite the contrary.

Reopening the dossier on myth *à partir de* Lacoue-Labarthe in the wake of 9/11, then, could not be restricted **[ *simply* ]** to ~~simply~~ applying his political diagnostic, but involved reloading the general logic of mimesis to account for the return of mythic power in the modernist and the postmodern period. This **[ *move* ]** seemed, in many ways, a natural **[ *one.* ]** ~~move.~~ After all, according to a paradoxical logic, or hyperbologic, **[ *that* ]** Lacoue-Labarthe rendered us sensitive to, precisely because postmodern nations are even further removed than modern nations from their Western origins – *at three removes*, so to speak – they might **[ *paradoxically* ]** come ~~paradoxically~~ closer to the dangers of fascist identifications with mythic figures who offer the promise of a unitary, self-enclosed, and stable national identity. This **[ *hypothesis* ]** , at least, is **[ *one* ]** ~~a hypothesis~~ Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy leave open at the end of “The Nazi Myth,” when they say that the “mimetic will-to-identify [… ] belongs profoundly to the mood or character of the West in general” (*la volonté mimétique d’identité* **[…]** *appartient profondément aux dispositions de l’Occident en général*) (312) – a point they subsequently confirmed in the **[ *preface* ]** ~~Preface~~ to the French edition, in which they claimed, thinking explicitly of “the most important ‘democracy’ in the world [notice the quotation marks],” that “democracy asks, or must ask the question of its ‘figure’ [*sa ‘figure’*]” (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *Mythe nazi* 16, 15).

This suspicion, then, already in-*formed* **[ *my* ]** ~~the~~ readings of philosophical and mythic texts that constituted what then became *The Phantom of the Ego*, leaving visible diagnostic traces of fascist patho(-)logies behind.[[13]](#endnote-13) But by the time the book appeared, the diagnostic seemed somewhat out of joint with the general enthusiasm of the times, for the electoral pendulum had finally swung. And as the first African-American president gifted with a double cultural identity was elected, everything seemed possible again: For, yes, we were told – we can! Or at least, we could, until another phantom took office and decided to make America great again.

How, then, did a liberating dream turn into a political nightmare?

**Old Dream, New Nightmare**

The mythic greatness of a nation tends to be the product of a dream. It is thus no wonder that it is with fictional dreams, rather than political realities, that new populist qua fascist leaders are currently encouraging mythic identifications. Drawing on the Puritan myth of the “chosen people” constitutive of “American Greatness,” in the opening pages of *Great Again* Donald Trump conjures the image of the “shining city on a hill, which,” he says, “other countries used to admire and try to be like.”[[14]](#endnote-14) This mythic image is constitutive of the American Dream, but the dream is not deprived of a mimetic logic that is at least double and has real effects: on one side, the reference to a mythic past is instrumental in promoting the view that the US should again occupy the position of the model for all the world to copy in the future; on the other hand, other countries’ attempt to “be like” America in the past is used as a rhetorical strategy to direct US voters’ identification toward figures who dream to make America great again in the present. Either way, this double rhetorical move confirms that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s understanding of myth as an “instrument of identification” is currently being reloaded – and quite effectively so.

And yet, on the opposite political front, mirroring inversions of perspectives are already at play. Noam Chomsky, for instance, reminds us that this dream of greatness, while powerful, liberating, and inspiring in the past, has not been manifest in the present and casts a nightmarish shadow on the world’s future. Thus, in *Requiem for the American Dream*, Chomsky initially agrees *with* Trump that “the American Dream, like most dreams, has large elements of myth to it”;[[15]](#endnote-15) and yet, *contra* Trump, Chomsky sets out to remind us that while promising freedom for all in theory, in practice this exceptionalist, or better, nationalist myth was also founded on the extermination of a native population, racial segregation, working class exploitation, not to speak of the crusades, walls, nuclear threats, and anti-environmentalist politics it continues to generate on the basis of clear-cut mythic distinctions between good and evil, Christian and non-Christian, whites and non-whites, truth and alternative truths, or, as we used to call them, lies.

It is in response to the loss of distinction between truth and lies in particular that genealogical reminders about the power of myth are especially important. As Hannah Arendt puts it in *The* *Origins of Totalitarianism*, part of the “demoralizing fascination” of totalitarian leaders stems from “the possibility that gigantic lies and monstrous falsehoods can eventually be established as unquestioned facts.”[[16]](#endnote-16) Myth obviously plays a key role in the erasure of the difference between truth and falsehood.As historian of the Holocaust George Mosse reminds us in *Nazi Culture*, “Building myths and heroes was an integral part of the Nazi cultural drive” insofar as “the flight from reason became a search for myth and heroes to believe in.”[[17]](#endnote-17) And he adds, “It is unfashionable to speak of the lessons of history, but perhaps there is a lesson for the present hidden among these documents of the past” (Mosse xli). More recently, Timothy Snyder in *On Tyranny* confirms this genealogical point as he cautions American readers in the wake of Trump’s election that “[f]ascists rejected reason in the name of will, denying objective truth in favor of a glorious myth articulated by leaders who claimed to give voice to the people.”[[18]](#endnote-18) And on yet another front, in an article on the rise of **[ Connolly’s terms? Yes. then double quotes; otherwise single quotes for emphasis ]** “new” or “aspirational” fascism, political theorist William Connolly uncovers striking genealogical similarities between Hitler’s and Trump’s rhetoric, specifically in its power to cast a “contagious” spell that operates on what he calls the “visceral register of cultural life,” a mimetic register that triggers “thought-imbued affective memes,” and, Connolly adds, “focuses singular identification upon an authoritarian figure.”[[19]](#endnote-19)

These are just some recent examples; there are many more, and others will certainly follow. They should nonetheless suffice to indicate that after a period of marginalization, myth and its relation to identification **[ *are* ]** ~~is~~ clearly back **[ *on* ]** ~~to~~ **[ or *clearly have returned to; preference for back on* ]** the forefront of the theoretical and political scene. Theorists on different sides of the political spectrum agree on a series of related points: first, they posit myth at the centre of the logic of new fascist dreams that operates on an unconscious that has mimetic contagion as a *via regia*; second, they remind us of the ancient (Platonic) lesson that myth can be put to *both* totalitarian use (myth as a model to identify with) *and* critical use (myth as a lie to be unmasked); third, they caution us that the use of myth in emerging forms of authoritarian politics has the power to trigger massive identifications that generate a collective pathos on which new fascist movements prey; and fourth, they call for an urgent analysis of new fascist types – both in Europe and in the US – that have the power **[ *progressively* ]** to ~~progressively~~ erase the already thin line dividing truth from lies, fictions from politics – thus turning liberating dreams into a nightmarish reality.

There are thus sufficient reasons for bringing Lacoue-Labarthe back from the shadows. Confronted with the return of new fascist phantoms on the political scene, his work persistently urges us to look back to the use of myth in the past to avoid similar abuses in the future. Following this indication, a detour via a book Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy consider central to what they call “the construction of the Nazi myth” (“Nazi Myth” 304), namely Alfred Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the 20th Century*, will allow us to reload the problematic of mythic types, figures, and dreams central to Lacoue-Labarthe’s diagnostic of fascist identification along genealogical lines **[ *, a diagnostic* ]** that will eventually make us see and feel how the power of myth is currently being reloaded.

**Genealogy of Myth and Types**

Rosenberg referred to his book as “The Myth,” indicating that it did not simply represent the power of Nordic myths, but actually attempted to reenact it.[[20]](#endnote-20) First published in 1930, this book was certainly more bought than read and cannot be compared to its more popular double, namely, *Mein Kampf*, in terms of ideological influence and popularity; yet it sold more than a million copies by 1945 and constituted what Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy call one of the Nazi “programme’s most famous theoretical accompaniments” (“Nazi Myth” 304), famous enough for the French philosophers to take it seriously and place it at the center of their genealogy of fascism and Nazism.

This accompaniment, as you would expect, mainly follows the Nazi model in ideological orientation: aggressive racism, obsession with Nordic (Aryan) mythology, nationalism, homophobia, and of course virulent anti-Semitism that turns Jews into scapegoats, all of which was grounded in a *völkisch* conception of the German race rooted in “blood and soil [*Blut und Boden*]” – features that make the reading distasteful and **[ *explain* ]** ~~explains~~ the neglect of this book since the defeat of Nazism in 1945. Still, after half a century of relative political stability in the West, some elements of Rosenberg’s account of the rise of Nazism remain eerily relevant to our precarious, uncertain, and not particularly tasteful times. From his opening claim that “[f]inance with its golden meshes swallows States and Folk, economy becomes nomadic, life is uprooted” (Rosenberg 3), to his emphasis on a racist ideology that, he says, “still determines the ideas and actions of men, whether consciously or unconsciously” (12), from his observation that “the sacrifice [of men during the Great War] was to the advantage of forces other than those for which the armies were ready to die” (3) to his critique of common people’s “subjugation under the dictates of international finance,” to his realization that “[c]haos has today been elevated almost to a conscious programme point” (208)[[21]](#endnote-21) to other critiques that, both consciously and unconsciously, struck a chord among a suffering population, *The Myth of the 20th Century* reminds us that myth tends to be reloaded during periods of economic, political, national, and thus identity crisis, a crisis of identity that can always remerge in other centuries and nations as well, including ‘democratic’ **[ single stress quote marks ]** nations.

For our purpose, however, it is Rosenberg’s realization that the power of myth cannot be dissociated from the types that mediate it that is most directly relevant to our theoretical and political preoccupations. As Rosenberg points out, in the wake of the World War I economic crisis, “nationalistic rebirth appears as so dangerous because from it a power, capable of forming Types [*typenbildende Macht*], threatens to arise” (Rosenberg 5). And in a section titled “Myth and Type”(*Mythus und Typus*), he specifies that the problematic of “myth” cannot be dissociated from the “types” it forms, for these types can give a unity to an identity the German people have lost and need to dream of again. Hence, the task Nazism should set itself to recover this dream, he continues, is to “experience a Myth and to create a type [*einen Mythus zu erleben und einen Typus zu schaffen*]” (208); and, he adds, “from out of this type we must build our state” (208). Myth, type, and an experience out of which an ideal “image of the soul [*Gleichnis einer Seele*]” (13), and by extension, of the state, should serve as a “model [*Vorbild*]” (205) for other nations to copy **[ *. Of* ]** ~~: of~~ course, such formulations appear in the context of mythical qua mystical fictions about Nordic racial and anti-Semitic ideals that lack any historical grounding and are characteristic of myth understood in its classical opposition to a rational *logos –* what Lacoue-Labarthe disparagingly calls in *La fiction du politique* an “authoritarian, voluntaristic logorrhea.”[[22]](#endnote-22)

And yet, at the same time, such types are also symptomatic of an underlying mythic logic that is constitutive of the ontological foundations of what Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy call the “*logic of fascism*” (“Nazi Myth” 294~~; their emphasis~~) and, we should add, to an extent, of new fascism as well. Inscribing Rosenberg’s claims on myth and types in a broader genealogy that goes from Romanticism all the way back to classical antiquity, in Plato’s thought, they show that Rosenberg is reloading a conception of myth that rests on what Lacoue-Labarthe calls “typography,” by which he means the formative power of mythic figures or types to impress their seal or form on that malleable material that is a subject, a people, a nation.[[23]](#endnote-23) Thus, extending a problematic inaugurated in “Typography,” but with Rosenberg’s section on “Myth and Type” in the foreground, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy write, “Myth is a fiction, in the strong, active sense of ‘fashioning’ [*façonnement*] […] it is, therefore, a *fictioning* [fictionnement], whose role is to propose if not to impose, models or types […] types in imitation of which an individual, or a city, or an entire people, can grasp [*saisir*] themselves and identify themselves” (“Nazi Myth” 297). Myth, like mimesis, can, of course, have both negative or positive formative effects, for its *pathos* can generate both pathologies and patho-*logies* (or *logos* on mimetic *pathos*) depending on the models or types one imitates.[[24]](#endnote-24) But the point here is that myth and mimesis are two sides of the same coin, for it is through the medium of myth that a mimetic identification with a type is triggered.

To be sure, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s *political* evaluation of this mimetic phenomenon in “The Nazi Myth” is radically opposed to Rosenberg, and in *La fiction du politique* Lacoue-Labarthe will caution readers: “One should not attribute to me the position I am analyzing” (Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger* 101). Instead, the philosophers’ *diagnostic* of the logic of fascism *both* mirrors *and* inverses Rosenberg’s account of mythic types in a sense that is at least double, for it accounts for the emergence of both real and dreamed figures. On the side of reality, *contra* Rosenberg, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy critique this *political* recuperation of myth for anti-Semitic and nationalist purposes **[ *so as to unmask* ]** ~~unmasking~~ the idea driving this ideology as a pathological fable, but *with* Rosenberg they agree *theoretically* that the “greatest man” or “figures” are the “most powerful at Myth shaping” insofar as they have the “German will to power [*Machtwillen*]” to “dream” what Rosenberg calls “essential unity,” “type” or “form” that will allow the Germans to “become what [they] are” (Rosenberg 10). On the side of the dream, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy firmly oppose, *contra* Rosenberg, the idea that Jews “dream of world domination” (197) (they will reply, in another article that the “Jewish People do not Dream”),[[25]](#endnote-25) but **[ *they* ]** also agree *with* Rosenberg that Germany’s mythic unity is achieved by reawakening “primal dreams” that “have been lost and forgotten” but that the *Germans* have “begun to dream again” (198). On both sides of the fiction and political divide, which is far from impermeable, “The Nazi Myth” shows that it is through an identification with these types and the belief in national dreams these types promote that myth, understood as a formative and thus mimetic power, can be most powerfully reloaded.

This also means that in Rosenberg we find a confirmation of Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy’s first proposition concerning the power of myth: namely, that the problem Nazism, and by extension fascism as well, is confronting is first and foremost “a problem of *identity*” (“Nazi Myth” 296~~; their emphasis~~). That is, an identity that lacks unity and is in need of a form, figure or *Gestalt* embodied in mythic leaders or types who have the power to mediate what the philosophers call “the realization of the singular identity conveyed by the dream” (306). And they add: “A belief, an immediate, unreserved adhesion to the dreamed figure is necessary for the myth to be what it is, or, if this may be said, for the form to take form [*pour que la figure prenne figure*]” (305). Fascist and Nazi types, in other words, convoke the logic of myth and the dream they animate in order to provide an identity to a people dispossessed of proper being. For Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, this was true of the old Nazi myth and the types it generated in the wake of a characteristically German dispossession of identity that led to the most horrific crime against humanity in the history of the West – what Lacoue-Labarthe, echoing Conrad’s “mythic” **[ single stress quotes ? Lacoue-Labarthe’s terms]** tale, *Heart of Darkness*, also calls “the horror of the West.”[[26]](#endnote-26) And yet, we are beginning to realize that if not the horrors themselves, then the populist, nationalist, and neo-fascist types that are currently arising on the far-right, most visibly in the US but also in Europe and beyond the boundaries of the West as well, might serve similar patho(-)logical functions in the wake of an economic, political and environmental crisis that marks the dawn of the twenty-first century.

This is true both at the level of *what* these types say (*logos*) and *how* they say it (*lexis*). Let us briefly dissociate these two related aspects.

On the one hand, myth is currently reloaded at the level of the *content* of (new) fascist rhetoric, as is made manifest in the number of types that promote an ontology of sameness in place of difference at the heart of Western dreams: hypernationalism, racism, sexism, phallocentrism, homophobia, islamophobia, climate change denial, authoritarianism, and what all these “isms” entail – **[ punctuation modified to avoid two colons in one sentence ok ]** ~~:~~ scapegoating of minorities, exploitation of the working class, dismantling of public services, aggressive militarism, religious discrimination, erection of boundaries, subordination of science to myth, anti-environmentalism, and so on **[ . *The* ]** —~~the~~ list is long, the logic of pathos and terror it implies **[ *is* ]** visible, and there is no doubt that a problem of identity still plays a prominent role in reloading the mimetic power that informs what William Connolly calls, warning us against new fascism, a “collage that deepens anger and focuses singular identification upon an authoritarian figure who could soon call for unquestioning obedience from his followers” (28).

On the other hand, it is at the level of the *form* of fascist dreams that mythic power is most effectively deployed **[ *by* ]** both ~~by~~ old and contemporary fascist types on the political scene. As Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy remind us, again with Rosenberg clearly in mind, myth should not be confused with the mythological, just as mimetic *pathos* or affects should not be confused with mimetic representations. This is why they say that “Myth is a power more than it is a thing, an object, or a representation” (“Nazi Myth” 305). And they add, “Mythical power is the power of the dream, of the projection of an image with which one identifies” (305). Mythic power, then, is “an instrument of *identification*,” or better, it is “*the* mimetic instrument par excellence” (298~~; their emphasis~~), put to pathological use by authoritarian figures to generate the contagious *pathos* typical of fascism. Typically, what was true for the old fascism continues to be so for the new fascism. As Trump hyperbolically puts **[ *it* ]** in his account of the dream, triggering the phenomenon he apparently represents, “The rallies became massive. The crowds were unbelievable. The enthusiasm was based on pure love […]. The media, the politicians and the so-called leaders of our country reacted in horror” (Trump xii). The rhetorical style is comic when silently read, but the horror it generates when dramatically enacted via mimetic speeches is tragically real. While not the same as Nazism,[[27]](#endnote-27) this disquieting mass phenomenon is a manifestation of what Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy define as “Hitlerism”: namely, “the modern masses’ **[ this spelling in the quote? then [*sic*] or *masses’* ]** openness to myth” (“Nazi Myth” 312).

**Rebirth of Myth: Out of the Mimetic Unconscious**

The diagnostic of myth based on the distinction between content and form, *logos* and *lexis*, is of Platonic inspiration, but Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy supplement the ancient language of mimesis with the modern one of “identification,” operating a shift from philosophy to psychoanalysis. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy rely, in fact, on their previous work on Freud and Lacan to define the power of mythic figures to cast a spell on the masses in terms of what Freud, in his most political book, *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*, calls “identification,” understood as the desire “to *be*” the other[[28]](#endnote-28) – what Mikkel **[ *Borch* ]** ~~Broch~~-Jacobsen, also *à partir de* Lacoue-Labarthe, calls “*the* fundamental concept, or *Grundbegriff* of psychoanalysis.”[[29]](#endnote-29) This tendency to identification, as Wilhelm Reich also recognized in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, “is the psychological basis of national narcissism, that is, of a self-confidence based on identification with the ‘greatness of the nation.’”[[30]](#endnote-30) If we also recall Lacan’s emphasis on the ego’s imaginary assumption of an *imago* or *Gestalt* during “the mirror stage,” it is clear that this psychoanalytical tradition in-*forms* mythic identification with a dream image as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy understand it. And yet, the philosophers’ genealogy of myth reaches further back to the past, given **[ *that* ]** it adds a mimetic, bodily, and contagious supplement that opens an alternative, more embodied door to the unconscious that has mimetic *pathos* as a *via regia*. Thus, they specify that the “energy” or “force” of this identification is rooted in what they call “the Dionysian experience, as described by Nietzsche” (“Nazi Myth” 302).

There is a deft, complex, and destabilizing inversion of perspectives at play in this reframing of the power of myth in terms of both *visual* (or Apollonian) mimesis and *bodily* (or Dionysian) mimesis that inverts Rosenberg’s (Nordic) account of myth **[ *. In the process, it* ]** ~~,~~ complicates psychoanalytical accounts of unconscious identification, and generates doubling patho-*logical* effects that reach into the present. Their overturning move is double and can be summarized in two mirroring points:

1. Rosenberg, as we have seen, ties the problematic of myth to the question of types to account for the top-down vertical power of racist impressions of figures onto the racial soul. Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, on the other hand, invert perspectives by considering the problematic of mythic power from the angle of the mimetic crowd that identifies with such types to have an identity. Mythic power is thus mimetic in the sense that it rests on a desire “to *be*” a subject via an imaginary visual identification with what Lacoue-Labarthe, echoing Rosenberg but with Heidegger and Lacan in mind, calls image, figure or *Gestalt*; Nietzsche, following a classical terminology, calls these forms “representations,” “phantoms, or dream images.”[[31]](#endnote-31) Mythic power is thus mimetic power in the sense that it is visual, aesthetic, and formative, that is, *Apollonian* power.
2. Rosenberg advocates types that originate in Greek and Roman culture, celebrates “light over darkness” (Rosenberg 21) and, borrowing Nietzsche’s categories but fundamentally betraying his thought, celebrates and identifies with the Greek (read Nordic) Apollo over and *agains*t the racial and psychic “deterioration” (22) imported from the East by Dionysus.[[32]](#endnote-32) Thus, in this racist reconstruction of *The Birth of Tragedy*, he says, “Foreign barbarians [followers of Dionysus] became Athenians, much as in our era, eastern Jews became German” (25). On the other hand, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *contra* Rosenberg, trace a genealogy of German rituals back to what they call the “savage Greece of group rituals” (“Nazi Myth” 301) in which Dionysian *pathos* furnishes “the *identifying force*” (302~~; their emphasis~~) that has the power to reload myth in the twentieth century. Mythic power is thus mimetic power, in the sense that it is dramatic, intoxicating and transgressive, that is, *Dionysian* power.

“The Nazi Myth” is here facing *The Myth of the 20th Century*. And in this mirroring confrontation between Apollonian and Dionysian principles a certain conception of myth is reborn out of what I call, for lack of a better term, a mimetic unconscious that now casts a shadow on the twenty-first century as well.[[33]](#endnote-33) This unconscious has mimesis as a *via regia* for it oscillates, pendulum-like, between competing mimetic principles: visual identification (or dreams) and affective contagion (or frenzy); the formal language of *imago* and *Gestalt* characteristic of Apollonian forms (or representations) and the formless language of affect and *pathos* characteristic of Dionysian force (or impersonation).

Now, both Apollonian and Dionysian principles are at play in the birth of tragedy, as Nietzsche understands it; and both principles inform the birth of the Nazi myth, as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy interpret it. Still, their destabilizing, mirroring movement opens up an alternative path to the labyrinth of mythic power that still needs to be fully pursued. Namely, that in its affective force or power, myth can never be fully contained in a unitary, stabilizing, homogeneous form, figure or *Gestalt* represented from a visual distance. If only because the Apollonian image or type that triggers dreams and **[ *elicits* ]** ~~elicit~~ mythic identification **[ *generates* ]** ~~generate~~ a frenzy that always leaks **[ right word ? yes ]** in bodily, destabilizing, Dionysian experiences. That is, heterogeneous experiences that, as Georges Bataille also recognized, transgress the boundaries of individuation, generating feelings of “attraction and repulsion” constitutive of the “psychological structure of fascism.”[[34]](#endnote-34) Put differently, in imaginary fictions it may be possible to contain the Dionysian *pathos* of fascist types within a psychoanalytic notion of identification with an *imago* that erects the illusion of a unitary form in Apollonian dreams constitutive of the Nazi myth. And yet, in political practice, the emergence of new fascist movements urges genealogists of myth to invert the *telos* of this reading and unmask the apparent unity of this Apollonian form or dream as a *méconnaissance.* That is, a misrecognition **[ *suggesting* ]** that underneath the unitary *imago* flows a formless Dionysian *pathos* characteristic of a mimetic unconscious that triggers what Connolly calls a “visceral” or “affective contagion” (Connolly 29) in the crowd, especially as this crowd is caught in the spiraling, hypnotic spell of what Arendt identifies as “the perpetual-motion mania of totalitarian movements, which can remain in power only so long as they keep moving and set everything around them in motion” (Arendt 306).[[35]](#endnote-35) For it is ultimately via such hypnotic, mimetic, and contagious movements that the “identifying force” or “power” of myth is constantly reloaded. In short, new fascist power is, at its source, Dionysian power, for it is formless, affective, and intoxicating will to power.

Does this mean that the leader figure is as formless and improper as the crowd that mimics him? And what side of mimesis mediates his mythic power? The power of the dream image in paving the way for mythic identification should not be underestimated, especially in a mass-mediatized, digital culture characterized by mimetic, or better hypermimetic simulations that, more than ever, represent dreams, dreams of greatness that are attainable only for the few in reality, but that cast a hypnotic spell on the many disenfranchised working-class subjects who identify with virtual fictions. From professional success to economic power, entrepreneurial individualism to white-nationalist sentiments, phallocentric exploitation of women to narcissistic media celebrity, freedom to hire in political fictions and fire in fictional realities, it is clear that mythic identifications with typical simulations of the dream were already unconsciously at play in *fictional* images before they reappeared on the political stage in reality, triggering a redoubled enthusiasm among a formless, malleable, and rather divided mass qua public **[ *,* ]** programmed, from childhood on, to identify with ‘heroic’ **[ single stress quotes ? ]** dream figures. In this Apollonian sense, such types erect a narcissistic, unitary image that elicits a virtual identification with a typical manifestation of the dream, that is, an illusory representation, form or “simulation of sovereignty” that not only dissolves the shadow-line between truth and lies but also reloads old phantoms via new media generated by a technical, or better, digital revolution that has the “hypermimetic” power of turning real politics into a political fiction.[[36]](#endnote-36) As Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy observe, “the problem of myth is always indissociable from that of art” (“Nazi Myth” 298), the former going as far as saying that “the essence of the political is to be sought in art” (Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger* 77) – which does not mean that this art needs to be **[ single stress quotes ? ]** ‘Great Art’ or even “good” art.

Still, this aesthetization of politics, or “national-*aestheticism* [*national-*esthétisme],” as Lacoue-Labarthe calls it, cuts both ways, for its visual (Apollonian) efficacy ultimately rests on less visible but intoxicating (Dionysian) pathos. An identification with images, in fact, tends to rest on collective rituals that trigger massive doses of affective and contagious reactions that are formless in nature, chthonic in origin, and follow Dionysian principles that are constitutive of the mimetic unconscious – if only because this unconscious has actors, or mimes, as the all too human medium to reload enthusiastic outbreaks on political stages, both real and virtual. Dramatic manifestations of the mimetic unconscious include the use of gestures rather than words, *pathos* rather than *logos*, facial mimicry, dramatic poses, impersonations, histrionic expressions, but also aggressive accusations, the incitement to violence, the terror of nuclear escalations, not to speak of the phallocentric scandals, the lurid sexual fantasies, and other abject subject matters that, as Bataille was quick to sense, are not simply external to the psychology of fascism but are constitutive of its transgressive patho-*logy*, endowing fascist leaders without proper qualities with an energetic charge or Dionysian discharge, which, *nolens volens*, is constitutive of political nightmares.[[37]](#endnote-37)

**Coda: The Apprentice President**

The genealogical detour via mythic identification, then, brings us back to the mimetic principles with which we started – but in the process also offers a Nietzschean supplement that identifies emerging protean types on the political scene. In the context of a critique of actors turned masters in **[ *The* ]** *Gay Science*, Nietzsche provides the following diagnostic of mimetic principles we should now be in a position if not to fully contain, at least to partially identify:

Falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one’s so-called “character,” flowing **[ *flooding* ? yes]** it and at times extinguishing it; the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance*;anexcess of the capacity for all kinds of adaptations that can no longer be satisfied in the service of the most immediate and narrowest utility – all of this is perhaps not only peculiar to the actor?[[38]](#endnote-38)

And thus, we may add, of the (new) fascist leader? Especially since, as Nietzsche was the first to fear it, we live in a world in which “the ‘actors,’ *all* kinds of actors, become the real masters” (*Gay Science* 303).

In the end, following the twists and turns of such an “actor” qua “master” makes us see that this phantom figure may be a type, as Rosenberg suggested, and the type will appear to give form to a divided people without a proper identity, as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy indicated. But it is important to specify these claims by saying that this type or figure is not singular but plural; it is not unitary and rigid but protean and “plastic.”[[39]](#endnote-39) Or, to use Nietzschean categories, it **[ *derives* ]** ~~does not derive~~ its force **[ *not* ]** from Apollonian forms that remain at the level of virtual representation alone but from the interplay of Apollonian images that circulate on virtual interfaces, yet have the power to break through the wall of representation by triggering a formless Dionysian frenzy that is bodily in nature, affective in its efficacy, and contagious in its mimetic power to generate mass emotions that were constitutive of the logic of fascism in the past, but are currently being reloaded by new fascist movements. In sum, this figure is strictly speaking **[ comma deleted ]** *improper*, in a double conceptual/literal sense: on the conceptual side, it lacks proper, essential qualities that would guarantee an identity, even a dreamed, apparent, and fictional identity: on the literal side, it is also improper in the most basic sense of being inappropriate, unacceptable, illegitimately embodying the protean qualities of an actor – playing the role of an apprentice president.

Given that Lacoue-Labarthe was the first to caution us against the return of such mimetic phantoms, it is thus no accident that he concludes *La fiction du politique* with a cautionary note we are now perhaps in a better position to hear – and, thus, echo. This genealogy of the power of myth, in fact, “simply means that it would be better to learn to stop considering fascism a ‘pathological’ phenomenon [say, a psychosis or a neurosis] […] and recognize in it not only (at least) one of the age’s possible political forms […] but the political form that is perhaps best able to cast light on [*nous éclairer sur*] the essence of modern politics” (Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger* 107; translation modified).

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1. *Notes*

   Plato, *Ion*, Lane Cooper, trans., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961),227. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Plato, *Republic*, Paul Shorey, trans., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 832. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*, Janet Lloyd, trans. (Sussex: **[ *Harvester* ]** ~~Haverster~~ Press, 1980), 187. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. With Plato, and later Aristotle, Vernant continues, “the *logos* is no longer simply speech but has come to imply demonstrative rationality and, as such, it is set in opposition, both in form and in fundamental significance, to the speech of *muthos*” (Vernant 188). See ~~also~~ Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge MA: Harvard U P, 1963), esp. chap. 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. **[ delete “in conjunction with” or rewrite to explain what is “in conjunction” with what; in conjunction with MLN—see end of sentence ]** To commemorate the tenth anniversary of Lacoue-Labarthe’s death in conjunction with *L’Esprit Créateur*, thinkers as diverse as Jean-Luc Nancy, Jane Bennett, Christopher Fynsk, and Alain Badiou, among others, discuss Lacoue-Labarthe’s take on “poetics and politics” in a special issue of *MLN*, 132:5 (2017). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Jacques Derrida, “Introduction: Desistance,” *Typography: Mimesis*, *Philosophy, Politics*, Christopher Fynsk, ed. (Cambridge MA: Harvard U P, 1989), 6. For an introduction to Lacoue-Labarthe’s thought, see ~~also~~ John McKeane, *Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe: (Un)timely Meditations* (Oxford: Legenda, 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. This re-*productive* gesture urges genealogists to remember that Lacoue-Labarthe himself, while not a traditional philosopher, admittedly thinks “à partir de *la philosophie*” (“Intervention,” in *Les Fins de l’homme: À partir du travail de Derrida*, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, eds. (Paris: Galilée, 1981), 495~~; Lacoue-Labarthe’s emphasis)~~. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *Le mythe nazi* (La Tour d’Aigues: L’Aube, 2016), 8. Unless specified otherwise, I will refer to the English translation, “The Nazi Myth,” Brian Holmes, trans., *Critical Inquiry*, 16:2 (1990): 291-312. ~~; hereafter “Nazi Myth.”~~ [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Jean-Luc Nancy, “Myth Interrupted,” ~~in~~ *The Inoperative Community*, Peter Connor, trans. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1991), 47, 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, R. J. Hollingdale, trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1982), 106. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Nidesh Lawtoo, *The Phantom of the Ego: Modernism and the Mimetic Unconscious* (East Lansing, MA: Michigan State U P, 2013). **[ perhaps explain “monocephalic” here? Not necessary for the argument]**  [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. In the same interview, Lacoue-Labarthe adds, “I have the impression that the type of fusion that happened at the time of Nazism or of fascism more generally in Europe has never occurred in the USA,” and that, even under “the aggressive policies of George Bush” “‘[m]assification’ in America does not seem to be directly political” (“Stagings of Mimesis an Interview,” Jane Hiddleston, trans., *Angelaki*, 8:2 (2003): ~~pp. 55-72,~~ 65. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. I define mimetic patho(-)logy in the double sense of sickness (pathology) and critical discourse on mimetic *pathos* (patho-*logy*). See Lawtoo, *Phantom* 6-8. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Donald J. Trump, *Great Again: How to Fix Our Crippled America* (New York: Threshold Editions, 2015), 3. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Noam Chomsky, *Requiem for the American Dream: The 10 Principles of Concentration of Wealth & Power* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2017), x. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: **[ *Harcourt,* ]** ~~A Harvest Book,~~ 1994), 333. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. George Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich*, Salvator Attanasio et al., trans. (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1966), 96. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Timothy Snyder, *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2017), 12. In his longer genealogy of the Holocaust, *Black Earth*, Snyder specifies, “There is little reason to think that we are ethically superior to the European of the 1930s and 1940s, or for that matter less vulnerable to the kind of ideas that Hitler successfully promulgated and realized.” Timothy Snyder, *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning* (London: The Bodley Head, 2015), 320. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. William E. Connolly, “Rhetoric, the Working Class, and the Visceral Register of Political Culture,” *Theory and Event*, 20:1 (2017): ~~23-37,~~ 28. This groundbreaking article emerged from a graduate seminar on fascism I consider myself fortunate to have (marginally) contributed to; it is part of a special issue devoted to a critique of the neo-fascist tendencies explicit in the Trump phenomenon and implicit in what Bruce Baum, in his “genealogy of Trumpism,” calls “the racial underpinnings of American nationalism – including those manifested in ideas of equality and democracy,” which are often grouped under the rubric of “American dream” or myth (Bruce Baum, “Donald Trump’s ‘Genius,’ White ‘Natural Aristocracy’ and Democratic Equality in America,” *Theory and Event*, 20:1 [2017]: ~~pp. 10-22,~~ 11). I am grateful to Bill Connolly for numerous friendly conversations on (new) fascism, which we are currently pursuing on other platforms as well. See~~, for instance,~~ “Rhetoric, Fascism, and the Planetary: A Conversation between William Connolly and Nidesh Lawtoo,” z.umn.edu/30kh.

    [~~http://contemporarycondition.blogspot.de/2017/07/rhetoric-fascism-and-planetary.html~~](http://contemporarycondition.blogspot.de/2017/07/rhetoric-fascism-and-planetary.html) ~~[accessed 7 September 2017]~~. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1943). I refer to the following translation: Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century*, printed in La Vergne, TN, 2016 (translator and publisher unidentified). [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. In one of the few existing studies on Rosenberg, Fritz Nova points out that “Rosenberg seems to have been spokesman for what we may call the ‘Unconscious’ of National Socialism” (*Alfred Rosenberg: Nazi Theorist of the Holocaust* [New York: Hippocrene Books, 1986], 6). I shall return to the role the unconscious plays in the Nazi/fascist myth below. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *La fiction du politique: Heidegger, l’art et la politique* (Paris: **[ *Christian Bourgois,* ]** ~~Bourgeois,~~ 1987), 140. Unless specified otherwise, I will refer to the English translation, *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, Chris Turner, trans. (New York: Blackwell, 1990), 97. On Rosenberg see also 93-97. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, “Typography,” *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, Christopher Fynsk, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1989), 43-138. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Historian of religion Mircea Eliade calls this “the main function of myth,” which, he argues, is to “reveal the exemplary models of all rites and of all significant human activities”; if in his youth Eliade flirted with fascist themes, he would later critique the “racist myth of ‘Aryanism,’ which is periodically revalued in the West, especially in Germany,” writing, “The Aryan was the exemplary model to imitate in order to recuperate racial purity” (*Aspects du mythe* [Paris: Gallimard, 1963]), 19, 225; my translation). For a popular comparative account of the *positive* mimetic function of mythic models from ancient traditions to popular culture, see Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers*,Betty Sue Flowers, ed. (New York: Anchor Books, 1991). [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. See Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, “The Jewish People Do Not Dream (Part One),” *Stanford Literary Review*, 6:2 (1989): 191-209. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. See Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, “The Horror of the West,” Nidesh Lawtoo and Hannes Opelz, trans., in *Conrad’s* Heart of Darkness *and Contemporary Thought: Revisiting the Horror with Lacoue-Labarthe*, Nidesh Lawtoo, ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 111-22; on Lacoue-Labarthe, fascism and myth, see also Nidesh Lawtoo, “A Frame for ‘The Horror of the West,’” in *Conrad’s* Heart of Darkness *and Contemporary Thought*, 89-108. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe caution us against the danger of “democratic” countries that “identif[y] with a Commander in Chief [*chef d’État*], a flag, an army, an imagery,” yet also specify that simple “returns or repetitions are rare, if not inexistent, in history” (Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, *Mythe nazi* 16, 13). On the similarities and differences between Trumpism and Nazism, see ~~also~~ Connolly 24-25. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, James Strachey, trans. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), 38 ~~(Freud’s emphasis)~~. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Freudian Subject*, Catherine Porter, trans. (Stanford: Stanford U P, 1988), 10. See ~~also~~ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, “La panique politique,” in *Retreating the Political*, Simon Sparks, ed. (London: Routledge, 1977), 1-28. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Theodore P. Wolfe, trans. (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2015), 74. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 34. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. As Georges Bataille also noticed in his critique of Rosenberg’s appropriation of Nietzsche, “fascism’s hostility toward chthonic gods, the gods of the earth, is certainly what situates it in a psychological or mythological world” (“Nietzsche et les fascistes,” *Œuvres complètes*, ~~vol. I~~ (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), **[  *1:457* ]** ~~p. 457~~ (my translation); see ~~also pp.~~ 455-58). [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. I articulate the differences between the Oedipal and the mimetic unconscious in Lawtoo, *Phantom*, esp. 13-19. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Georges Bataille, “La structure psychologique du fascisme,” *Œuvres complètes*, **[ *1:339-71.* ]** ~~vol. I, pp. 339-71.~~ [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Arendt specifies that the “‘magic spell’” of the totalitarian personality rests not only on “‘the fanatical belief of this man in himself’” but also in society being “always prone to accept a person offhand for what he pretends to be, so that a crackpot posing as a genius always has a certain chance to be believed” (Arendt 305). [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. On Trumpism and simulation, see Cynthia Weber, “The Trump Presidency, Episode 1: Simulating Sovereignty,” *Theory & Event*, 20:1 (2017): 132-142; on hypermimesis as a form of simulation with real, all too real political effects, see Nidesh Lawtoo, “Hypermimesis: Horrorism *Redux* in *The Secret Agent*,” *Conrad’s Shadow: Catastrophe, Mimesis, Theory* (East Lansing: Michigan State U P, 2016), 293-330. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. I explore Bataille’s relation to (new) fascism in “The Mimetic Community: Revolting against (New) Fascism,” **[ under review]** ~~under review.~~ **[ is the article out yet ? if not, please let the editors know when it appears so the reference can be updated in proofs; it’s still under review. ]**  [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann, trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 316. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. In a genealogy of the concept of “figura” that implicitly informs Lacoue-Labarthe’s concept of “typography,” Erich Auerbach reminds us that “Originally *figura*, from the same stem as *fingere*… meant ‘plastic form,’” for “the meaning of *typos* developed the use of *figura* as ‘imprint of the seal,’” and expanded to “impinge on the domain of *statua* and even of *imago*.” Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984), 11, 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)