

Lacan/

Zizek

by: Spencer, Chad, Alex, + Eugene

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Slavoj
Zizek
J. Feygin

Link: we construct
the

we construct our fantasies based on
acts we make.

Zizek, Slavoj 1991 Looking awry : an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture 34.

To analyze the logic of this kind of "answer of the real," let us recall the amusing adventure of Casanova analyzed in detail by Octave Mannoni in his classic article, "Je sais bien, mais quand même . . ."¹⁴ By means of an elaborate deception, Casanova attempts to seduce a naive country girl. To exploit the poor girl's credulity and make an appropriate impression on her, he pretends to be a master of occult knowledge. In the dead of night, he puts on the magician's clothes, marks out a circle on the ground, proclaiming it to be a magic circle, and starts to mumble magic formulae. Suddenly, something totally unexpected happens: a thunderstorm breaks out, lightning flares all around, and Casanova is alarmed. Although he *knows* very well that this storm is a simple natural phenomenon and that its breaking out precisely during his magical act is pure coincidence, he is seized with panic because he *believes* that the thunderstorm is a punishment for his blasphemous playing with magic. His quasi-automatic reaction is to enter his own magic circle, where he feels quite safe: "In the fear that apprehended me, I was convinced that thunderbolts would not strike me because they could not enter the circle. Without this false belief, I could not stay in this place for even a minute." In short, Casanova became a victim of his own deception. The answer of the real (the thunderstorm) functioned here as a shock that dissolved the mask of trickery. Once we are seized by panic, the only way out appears to be to "take seriously" our own pretense and to cling to it. The "answer of the real," which is the psychotic kernel that serves as a support for (symbolic) reality, functions in the perverse economy of Casanova in an opposite way: as a shock provoking the loss of reality.

Zizek
Jacob Regan

LITER. CONSTRUCTION
OF DISASTER

we construct our own ecological disasters Chernobyl proves

Zizek, Slavoj 1991 Looking awry : an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture '88-89
of Chernobyl.

The radiation from Chernobyl represented the intrusion of a radical contingency. It was as if the "normal" enchainment of cause and effect were for a moment suspended—nobody knew what its exact consequences would be. The experts themselves admitted that any determination of the "threshold of danger" was arbitrary; public opinion oscillated between panicked anticipation of future catastrophes and acceptance that there was no cause for alarm. It is precisely this indifference to its mode of symbolization that locates the radiation in the dimension of the real. No matter what we say about it, it continues to expand, to reduce us to the role of impotent witnesses. The rays are thoroughly *unrepresentable*, no image is adequate to them. In their status as real, as the "hard kernel" around which every symbolization fails, they become pure semblance. We do not see or feel radioactive rays; they are entirely chimerical objects, effects of the incidence of the discourse of science upon our life world. After all, it would be quite possible to persist in our commonsense attitude and maintain that all the panic provoked by Chernobyl resulted from the confusion and exaggeration of a few scientists. All the fuss in the media was much ado about nothing, while our everyday life simply followed its course. But the very fact that such an effect of panic was triggered by a series of public communications supported by the authority of the discourse of science demonstrates the degree to which our everyday life is already penetrated by science.

Chernobyl confronted us with the threat of what Lacan calls "the second death": the result of the reign of the discourse of science is that what was at the time of the Marquis de Sade a literary fantasy (a radical destruction that interrupts the life process) has become today a menace threatening our everyday life. Lacan himself observed that the explosion of the atomic bomb exemplified the "second death": in radioactive death, it is as if matter itself, the foundation, the permanent support of the eternal circuit of generation and corruption, dissolves itself, vanishes. Radioactive disintegration is the "open wound of the world," a cut that derails and disturbs the circulation of what we call "reality." To "live with radiation" means to live with the knowledge that somewhere, in Chernobyl, a Thing erupted that shook the very ground of our being. Our relation to Chernobyl can thus be written as $8\Delta a$: in that unrepresentable point where the very foundation of our world seems to dissolve itself, there the subject has to recognize the kernel of its most intimate being. That is to say, what is this "open wound of the world" if not, in the last resort, *man himself*—man insofar as he is dominated by the death drive, insofar as his fixation on the empty place of the Thing derails him, deprives him of support in the regularity of life processes? The very appearance of man necessarily entails a loss of natural balance, of the homeostasis proper to the processes of life.

DJWOS
Zizek
Jacob Fergin.

not exist

natural crises do not exist we construct it.

Zizek, Slavoj 1991 Looking awry : an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture 35.

Hence also the fact that the typical reaction of those who *do* take the ecological crisis seriously is—on the level of the libidinal economy—obsessional. Wherein lies the kernel of the obsessional's economy? The obsessional participates in frenzied activity, he works feverishly all the time—why? To avoid some uncommon catastrophe that would take place if his activity were to stop; his frenetic activity is based on the ultimatum, “If I don't do this (the compulsive ritual), some unspeakably horrible X will take place.” In Lacanian terms, this X can be specified as the barred Other, i.e., the lack in the Other, the inconsistency of the symbolic order; in this case, it refers to the disturbance of the established rhythm of nature. We must be active all the time so that it does not come to light that “the Other does not exist” (Lacan).¹⁵ The third reaction to the ecological crisis is to take it as an “answer of the real,” as a sign bearing a certain message. AIDS operates this way in the eyes of the “moral majority,” who read it as a divine punishment for our sinful life. From this perspective, the ecological crisis appears as a “punishment” for our ruthless exploitation of nature, for the fact that we have treated nature as a stack of disposable objects and materials, not as a partner in dialogue or the foundation of our being. The lesson drawn by those who react in this way is that we must cease our derailed, perverted way of life and begin to live as part of nature, accommodating ourselves to its rhythms, taking root in it.

Zizek
DW '03
C. Macumber

American
Defines
Ideology

Attempting to create 'others' like 'us' defines Zizekian ideology

Dave Maclean, Jan. 25th 2002, "Hegel, Zizek, and Substance as Subject: Multiculturalism, Sept. 11th, and the Afghan Refugee Crisis; (<http://home.mira.net/handy/seminars/daviel.htm>)

The target of Zizek's critique is the idea that if only 'they' were to become 'like us' then all would be well in the world, society would heal over the wound left from its encounter with the Real and ensure no more traumas lay in store for us. It is this illusion that defines ideology in Zizek's eyes.

Anner.
walks
Bad

For the source of the hole, the gap through which the Real appears, is not 'them' but we ourselves, in the incomplete structure of our own society, its inconsistency, which explains why long before Al Qa'eda came into existence Western culture had already written the script for Sept 11th. ↴

Zizek
DJW '03

C. Macleod

Consciousness
Negates
Reality

Using consciousness to interpret what reality should ~~be~~ necessarily
reflects the presence of reality.

Dave Macleod, Jan. 25th 2002, "Hegel, Zizek, and Substance
as Subject: multiculturalism, Sept. 11th, and the Afghan refugee crisis,
(<http://home.mira.net/~wandy/seminars/davel.htm>)

We live in a free society. We enjoy democratic rights. We have a high standard of living. We belong to an easy-going culture that tolerates difference. So what's the problem? From what standpoint can the Left hope to make a critique of the existing order, of capitalism in its current form?

For Zizek it is Hegel's conception of substance as subject that suggests one answer to this question. In the Phenomenology Hegel argues that substance — reality, has the same structure as the subject — consciousness, which is what makes possible their ultimate reconciliation in Spirit. In both cases this structure is incomplete, and its negation — what lies outside — is part of its very being, so that consciousness and reality are defined by constant movement, incessant change as they strive to close up this hole at the centre of their being. Spirit, in fact, is this movement which they share. Consciousness seeks to know the reality it is not, to make it its own, but it can never close the gap that makes it consciousness and not reality itself, while at the same time reality does contain consciousness, consciousness is real enough.

Without this striving to become something other than itself, there would be neither consciousness nor reality, for this is what they are. If consciousness were ever to merge with reality it would no longer be consciousness of reality, and reality would no longer be reality, the object of consciousness.

Biological reductionism through engineering reduces the 'identity' of the 'human' mind.

LRB, London Review of Books, 5 July 2003, (http://lrb.co.uk/v25/n10/zize01_.html)

Biogenetic (and, more generally, cognitivist-evolutionary) reductionism should be attacked from a different direction. Bo Dahlbom is right, in his 1993 critique of Daniel Dennett, to insist on the social character of 'mind'. Theories of mind are obviously conditioned by their historical context: Fredric Jameson recently proposed a reading of Dennett's *Consciousness Explained* as an allegory of late capitalism with its motifs of competition, decentralisation etc. Even more important, Dennett himself insists that tools, the externalised 'intelligence' on which human beings rely, are an inherent part of human identity: it is meaningless to imagine a human being as a biological entity without the complex network of his/her tools - it would be like imagining a goose without its feathers. But in saying this he opens up a path which should be followed much further. Since, to express it in good old Marxist terms, man is the totality of his/her social relations, Dennett should take the next logical step and analyse this network of social relations.

The problem is not how to reduce mind to neuronal activity, or replace the language of mind by that of brain processes, but rather to grasp how mind can emerge only from the network of social relations and material supplements. The real problem is not how, if at all, machines can imitate the human mind, but how the 'identity' of the human mind can incorporate machines. In March 2002, Kevin Warwick, a professor of cybernetics at Reading University, had his neuronal system directly linked to a computer network. He thus became the first human being to whom data could be fed directly, bypassing the five senses. This is the future: not the replacement of the human mind by the



↓ ↓ ↓ ctd. . .

computer, but a combination of the two. In May 2002, it was reported that scientists at New York University had attached a computer chip directly to a rat's brain, making it possible to steer the rat by means of a mechanism similar to that in a remote-controlled toy car.

It is already possible for blind people to get elementary information about their surroundings fed directly into their brain, bypassing the apparatus of visual perception; what was new in the case of the rat was that, for the first time, the 'will' of a living agent, its 'spontaneous' decisions about its movements, were taken over by an external agency. The philosophical question here is whether the unfortunate rat was aware that something was wrong, that its movements were being decided by another power. And when the same experiment is performed on a human being (which, ethical questions notwithstanding, shouldn't be much more complicated than it was in the case of the rat), will the steered person be aware that an external power is deciding his movements? And if so, will this power be experienced as an irresistible inner drive, or as coercion? It is symptomatic that the applications of this mechanism envisioned by the scientists involved and by the journalists who reported the story were to do with humanitarian aid and the anti-terrorist campaign: the steered rats or other animals could be used, it was suggested, to contact earthquake victims buried under rubble, or to attack terrorists without risking human lives.]

Biogenetics ~~contains~~ and the catastrophic potential for manipulation creates a loss of humanity.

LRB, London Review of Books, 5 July 2003, (<http://lrb.co.uk/v25/n10/zizek&zizek1.html>)

Do we today have an available bioethics? Yes, we do, a bad one: what the Germans call *Bindestrich-Ethik*, or 'hyphen-ethics', where what gets lost in the hyphenation is ethics as such. The problem is not that a universal ethics is being dissolved into a multitude of specialised ones (bioethics, business ethics, medical ethics and so on) but that particular scientific breakthroughs are immediately set against humanist 'values', leading to complaints that biogenetics, for example, threatens our sense of dignity and autonomy.

The main consequence of the current breakthroughs in biogenetics is that natural organisms have become objects open to manipulation. Nature, human and inhuman, is 'desubstantialised', deprived of its impenetrable density, of what Heidegger called 'earth'. If biogenetics is able to reduce the human psyche to an object of manipulation, it is evidence of what Heidegger perceived as the 'danger' inherent in modern technology. By reducing a human being to a natural object whose properties can be altered, what we lose is not (only) humanity but nature itself. In this sense, Francis Fukuyama is right in *Our Posthuman Future*: the notion of humanity relies on the belief that we possess an inherited 'human nature', that we are born with an unfathomable dimension of ourselves.*

Zizek
DOW '03
C. Macumber

Bioethics
BAD

Biogenetic engineering will be catastrophic to our understanding of life.

LRB, London Review of Books, 5 July 2003, (http://lrb.co.uk/v25/n10/zize01_.html)

The prospect of biogenetic intervention opened up by increasing access to the human genome effectively emancipates humankind from the constraints of a finite species, from enslavement to the 'selfish gene'. Emancipation comes at a price, however. In a talk he gave in Marburg in 2001, Habermas repeated his warning against biogenetic manipulation. There are, as he sees it, two main threats. First, that such interventions will blur the borderline between the made and the spontaneous and thus affect the way we understand ourselves. For an adolescent to learn that his 'spontaneous' (say, aggressive or peaceful) disposition is the result of a deliberate external intervention into his genetic code will undermine the heart of his identity, putting paid to the notion that we develop our moral being through *Bildung*, the painful struggle to educate our natural dispositions. Ultimately, biogenetic intervention could render the idea of education meaningless. Second, such interventions will give rise to asymmetrical relations between those who are 'spontaneously' human and those whose characters have been manipulated: some individuals will be the privileged 'creators' of others.

At the most elementary level, this will affect our sexual identity. The ability of parents to choose the sex of their offspring is one issue. Another is the status of sex-change operations. Up until now, it has been possible to justify these by evoking a gap between biological and psychic identity: when a biological man experiences himself as a woman trapped in a man's body, it is reasonable that (s)he be allowed to change her biological sex in order to introduce a balance between her sexual and her emotional life. Biogenetic





manipulation opens up much more radical perspectives. It may retroactively change our understanding of ourselves as 'natural' beings, in the sense that we will experience our 'natural' dispositions as mediated, not as given - as things which can in principle be manipulated and therefore as merely contingent. There can be no return to a naive immediacy once we know that our natural dispositions depend on genetic contingency; to stick to them through thick and thin will be as false as sticking to the old 'organic' mores. According to Habermas, however, we should act as if this were not the case, and thus maintain our sense of dignity and autonomy. The paradox is that this autonomy can be preserved only by prohibiting access to the contingency which determines us - that is, by limiting the possibilities of scientific intervention. This is a new version of the old argument that, if we are to retain our moral dignity, it's better not to know certain things. Curtailing science, as Habermas seems to be suggesting, would come at the price of widening the split between science and ethics: a split which already prevents us from seeing the way these new conditions compel us to transform and reinvent the notions of freedom, autonomy and ethical responsibility.

Zizek
DJW '03

C. Macumber

Western culture is flawed because of its O tolerance policy towards other cultures.

Dave Maclean, Jan. 25th 2002, "Hegel, Zizek, and Substance as Subject; Multiculturalism, Sept. 11th, and the Afghan Refugee Crisis"; (<http://home.mira.net/wandy/seminars/daniel.htm>)

How consistent is our society? How consistently do we apply the principles on which it is based? Take tolerance, for example.

Australia prides itself on the tolerance we practice towards difference within our multicultural society. Any cultural position is allowed, it is purely a personal matter, and no one should have to suffer for their ethnic, religious, sexual or cultural identity. But does this tolerance not have a blind spot? Is there not one cultural position that simply will not be tolerated within our tolerant society?

What about the person whose cultural identity involves telling racist jokes? Or sexist jokes for that matter, or homophobic, or... or... We will tolerate anything — except intolerance. That we will not tolerate.

So to what extent are we really a tolerant society?

For the Left, of course, the question is not about the right to tell racist jokes. The real issue, however, becomes clearer once we begin to explore further what is excluded from our 'tolerant' society, from our democratic political process.

Let us begin with the obvious — Islamic fundamentalism, clearly not acceptable, One Nation populism, likewise. But just why are these political options beyond the pale? Is it because they seek to impose a social project on society as a whole? That they stand for a social order that would apply to all?

And as such are they not condemned as fascist? Fascist they may well be — but the problem for the Left does not lie with them, it lies with us. What about our social project, what about socialism, or communism, or more loosely a commitment to social justice, to the environment? Are these not caught in the same net? Are they not fascist too?

In other words, is any social project whatsoever not excluded in this way? Is it not defined in advance as fascist, or totalitarian, and unacceptable as such?

It is here we find the hole in the centre of Western democracy — anyone can hold any political position they like so long as the existing social order is left untouched.

ZIZEK
DJW '03
S Burke

We ~~must~~ always question what enables someone to proclaim themselves cured of the social fantasy

Slavoj Žižek, Sr. Researcher Institute of Social Studies,
University Ljubljana, 01, On Belief p.15
[S Burke]

So, when we are bombarded by claims that in our post-ideological cynical era nobody believes in the proclaimed ideals, when we encounter a person who claims he is cured of any beliefs, accepting social reality the way it really is, one should always counter such claims with the question: OK, but where is the fetish which enables you to (pretend to) accept reality "the way it is"? "Western Buddhism" is such a fetish: it enables you to fully participate in the frantic pace of the capitalist game while sustaining the perception that you are not really in it, that you are well aware how worthless this spectacle is – what really matters to you is the peace of the inner Self to which you know you can always withdraw . . . (In a further specification, one should note that fetish can function in two opposite ways: either its role remains unconscious – as in the case of Shute's heroine who was unaware of the fetish-role of the dog – or you think that the fetish is that which really matters, as in the case of a Western Buddhist unaware that the "truth" of his existence is the social involvement which he tends to dismiss as a mere game.)

Žižek
DJW '03
S Burke

Capitalism trivializes genocides such as the Holocaust
with money

Slavoj Žižek, postsecular Univ Ljubljana, 01
On Belief p. 17-18 [S Burke]

So where does all this leave us? The first point to emphasize is that Lacan was well aware of the historical constellation within which psychoanalysis – not as a theory, but as a specific intersubjective practice, a unique form of social link – could have emerged: the capitalist society in which intersubjective relations are mediated by money. Money – paying the analyst – is necessary in order to keep him out of circulation, to avoid getting him involved in the imbroglio of passions which generated the patient's pathology. The psychoanalyst is thus effectively a kind of "prostitute of the mind," having recourse to money for the same reason some prostitutes like to be paid so that they can get sex without personal involvement, maintaining their distance – here, we encounter the function of money at its purest. And the same holds when, today, the Jewish community demands money for their suffering in the Holocaust: they are not indulging in cheap bargaining – it is not that thereby the perpetrators can simply pay the debt and buy their peace. One should recall here Lacan's claim that money's original role is to function as the impossible equivalent for that which has NO PRICE, for desire itself. So, paradoxically, financially compensating the victims of the Holocaust does not relieve us from our guilt – it rather enables us to acknowledge this guilt as indelible.

Cizek
DJV '03
Bettig

Lacan links

The proposed centre of "Green" ideology is
reassertion of utopian discourse

Yannis Stavrakakis, Center of Theoretical
Studies in Humanities and Social Science

October 1997

On the other hand, the centre, for Goodin, corresponds to a certain idea of the good that is suggested by the Greens, namely the intrinsic moral value of nature. This is a description not far away from our own proposed account. The consequences, however, that Goodin draws from it, are, to say the least, misleading. Instead of exploring the way in which the new nodal point totalizes a certain discursive field by retroactively articulating certain elements, Goodin goes in the opposite direction, suggesting that these elements are essential (?) 'manifestations of one and the same "green theory of value"... It is that theory of value that provides the unified moral vision running through all the central substantive planks in the Green political programme'.[19] Thus, by endorsing a Green essentialism, he is led to the conclusion that the Green ideological articulation cannot be broken into pieces for further reappropriation. Is this the end of ideology? In opposition to Goodin I will argue that the nature of the structure and function of Green ideological discourse itself--as it is with every ideological discourse, if our hypothesis is correct--does not permit anyone to guarantee the eternal stability of this--or, for that matter, of any--ideology. Any temporary stability and success can only be the result of an always uncertain contingent hegemonic play. One has to agree with Freedon that 'because political concepts do not have correct meanings, their mode of employment (as distinct from their philosophical validity or moral appeal) is subject to the test of acceptability to significant numbers of their users'.[20]

Zizek
DTW '03
Bettig

Lacan Link

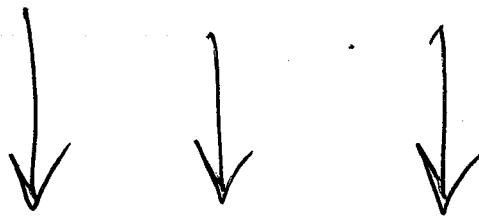
Unification of "Green" movements which seeks to mask a lack within this complete ideology, the "omnipotent" ideal of nature

yannis Stavrakakis, Center of Theoretical Studies in Humanities and Social Science

October 1997

But the unification on the basis of opposing a unified single foe is again problematic since 'viewed globally these issues..., do not fit into a scheme of clear cut causations, nor do they tally with the notion that all the conflicts are caused by one and the same social adversary, who can be blamed for 'deliberately' engineering them. Hence, it is no coincidence that abstract conceptual terms ('industrialism', 'the industrial society', 'capitalism', 'capital') fill---or ostensibly fill--the slots in the definition of causes and opponents'.^[83] This recognition of the lack in the centre of this constructed foe, the enemy of industrialisation or capitalism, also reveals the lack of a unifying ideological principle in Green ideological discourse itself. In that sense the paradox remains always unresolved: both in primary sources and in secondary literature the nodal point of Green ideology, which holds together--quilts--all the ideological moments of the Green signifying chain is revealed on the one hand as an impossibility--a lack covered by a mere word, a signifier--yet on the other hand as a point of supreme meaning, fullness, objectivity (natural objectivity) and moral value





(nature's intrinsic value). But this is not an unintelligible paradox, it is the way nodal points work in structuring ideological discourses. And the paradox of the work of the nodal point, of the point de capiton, has it that nodal points, although thought to be points of supreme plenitude of meaning, nevertheless operate in a self-referential, tautological, performative way.^[84] As we have already pointed out, the nodal point's signification coincides usually with its own enunciation; its role is purely structural and masks an 'underlying' constitutive lack. Thus, Green ideology proves to be a typical example of this paradoxical function of the nodal point. It is always making visible a lack and at the same time compensating for it by attempting to cover it with, in our case, an omnipotent conception of nature. Albeit divided, tautological or lacking, this nodal point of Green ideology is the differentia specifica of its structure. Its location at the centre of Green ideology is what differentiates it from other discourses in which it serves as a mere ideological moment articulated around another nodal point.

KALYAN
DIEZER
J. Feyqih

Lihks

GREEN MOVEMENTS LACK ACTION
YANNIS STAVRAKAKIS CENTER OF THEORETICAL
STUDIES IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
OCTOBER 1997

What is then the force that constructs the unity between those pre-existing elements? What is the force behind their transformation into a new political ideology? This is the crucial question. Here we are faced with a paradox. Manifestos and political programmes themselves do not provide any point of reference besides a mere signifier, usually the signifier 'Green'. Direct democracy is transformed into Green democracy because it is named Green by people who consider themselves (who have named themselves) Green. The same applies to the other

moments of Green ideological discourse. It seems as if this single naming is enough in order to transform a pre-existing element into a moment of Green ideology. On the other hand, Green ideologues, aware of the lack of a substantive positive point of reference perceive this to be a great problem. Thus, in the more philosophical manifestations of Green ideology, these simple words, the signifiers 'Green', 'nature', 'ecosystem', etc., are invested with every possible value, they become total embodiments of our lacking fullness, objectivity, positivity, harmony.

UW03
Zizek
J. Feyath

LINKS

GREEN IDEOLOGY IS FANTASMATIC

Yannis Stavrakakis, Center of Theoretical
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October 1997

The basic hypothesis behind this strategy is that, as I have already pointed out, Green ideology constitutes a 'new' articulation (due to its nodal points) of 'old' pre-existing elements. What differentiates this Green ideology from other discursive forms that include Green themes in their signifying chains is the location of the 'Green' component, that is to say the fact that it occupies 'the place of the nodal point instead of serving as a mere moment in the periphery of the ideological chain. Needless to say this Green nodal point (or family of nodal points) does not occupy the same structural position in any other ideology: Green ideology is 'a field populated by core concepts that, with the exception of variants of holism, are certainly not at the heart of other major ideologies'.[42] Anyway, the paradoxical nature of the nodal point, our hypothesis goes, does not permit the full closure of Green ideology nor does it guarantee its success or stability. |

Zizek
DJW '03
Bettig

Lacan Links

Proposing a "definite" identity to Green ideological discourse only seeks to cover up the constitutive lack of its discourse

Yannis Stravakakis, Center of Theoretical Studies
October 1997

Lacan and the theoretical interventions of Zizek, Laclau and Mouffe, Freeden, and Lefort, can help in resolving these questions. Within this framework, and using a number of empirical examples, I argued that what constitutes the identity of Green ideology, beyond any variation of its possible content, is its articulation around a particular nodal point or a family of nodal points (Green, nature, etc.). As it was clearly shown in our examination of German and British Green Party manifestos and of some of the loci classici of Green ideological literature: (1) Green ideology consists of different moments (Green democracy, decentralization, post-patriarchal principles, non-violence, etc.). (2) These moments pre-existed their articulation in Green ideology. Most of them were previously articulated in radical discourses. (3) They acquire their particular Green meaning due to the intervention of the Green nodal point. Their identity is modified as a result of their articulation around it; thus they become moments of Green ideological discourse. In that sense Green ideology constitutes a 'new' articulation (due to its nodal point) of 'old' pre-existing elements. Furthermore its *differentia specifca* is exactly the location of this 'Green' component in the articulatory centre and not at the periphery of the ideological discourse. This nodal point, however, is presented as a point of supreme density of meaning (intrinsic value, ethical priority, etc.) while, in reality, it only masks an 'underlying' constitutive lack, thus making visible the split and unstable character of Green ideology--a split characteristic of every ideological discourse. Green ideology is not 'the end of ideology'

jjwos
žižek
J. Fexqin.

ALTERNATIVE
reject fantasg

Reject your fantasies on the "nature" of the environment

Zizek, [redacted] 1991 Looking awry : an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture p 37-38

What can a Lacanian approach tell us about the ecological crisis? Simply ~~in-~~ we must learn to accept the real of the ecological crisis in its senseless actuality, without charging it with some message or meaning. In this sense, we could read the three above-described reactions to the ecological crisis—"I know very well, but just the same . . ."; obsessive activity; grasping it as a sign bearing some hidden meaning—
At 7. as three forms of avoiding an encounter with the real: a fetishistic split, an acknowledgment of the fact of the crisis that neutralizes its symbolic efficacy; the neurotic transformation of the crisis into a traumatic kernel; a psychotic projection of meaning into the real itself. The fact that the first reaction presents a fetishistic disavowal of the real of the crisis is self-evident. What is not so obvious is that the other two reactions also hinder an adequate response to the crisis. For, if we grasp the ecological crisis as a traumatic kernel to be kept at a distance by obsessive activity, or as the

bearer of a message; a call to find new roots in nature; we blind ourselves in both cases to the irreducible gap separating the real from the modes of its symbolization. The only proper attitude is that which fully assumes this gap as something that defines our very *condition humaine*, without endeavoring to suspend it through fetishistic disavowal, to keep it concealed through obsessive activity, or to reduce the gap between the real and the symbolic by projecting a (symbolic) message into the real. The fact that man is a speaking being means precisely that he is, so to speak, constitutively "derailed," marked by an irreducible fissure that the symbolic edifice attempts in vain to repair. From time to time, this fissure erupts in some spectacular form, reminding us of the frailty of the symbolic edifice—the latest went by the name

DJWUS
S. Zizek
J. Feyarah

THURSDAY

We must reject our idea there is a natural balance in the world

Zizek, Slavoj 1991 Looking awry : an introduction to Jacques Lacan through popular culture

ture is perhaps our only hope.

The basic weakness of the usual ecological response is thus its obsessive libido economy; we must do all in order that the equilibrium of the natural circuit will be maintained, in order that some horrifying turbulence will not derail the estab-

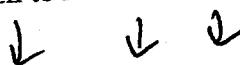
lished regularity of nature's ways. To rid ourselves of this predominant obsessive economy, we must take a further step and renounce the very idea of a "natural balance" supposedly upset by the intervention of man as "nature sick unto death." Homologous to the Lacanian proposition "Woman does not exist," we should perhaps assert that *Nature does not exist*: it does not exist as a periodic, balanced circuit, thrown off its track by man's inadvertence. The very notion of man as an "excess" with respect to nature's balanced circuit has finally to be abandoned. The image of nature as a balanced circuit is nothing but a retroactive projection of man. Herein lies the lesson of recent theories of chaos: "nature" is already, in itself, turbulent, imbalanced; its "rule" is not a well-balanced oscillation around some constant point of attraction, but a chaotic dispersion within the limits of what the theory of chaos calls the "strange attractor," a regularity directing chaos itself.

One of the achievements of the theory of chaos is the demonstration that chaos does not necessarily imply an intricate, impenetrable web of causes: simple causes can produce "chaotic" behavior. The theory of chaos thus subverts the basic "intuition" of classical physics according to which every process, left to itself, tends toward a kind of natural balance (a resting point or a regular movement). The revolutionary aspect of this theory is condensed in the term "strange attractor." It is possible for a system to behave in a "chaotic," irregular way, i.e., never to return to a previous state, and still be capable of formalization by means of an "attractor" that regulates it—an attractor that is "strange," i.e., that acquires the form not of a point or of a symmetrical figure, but of endlessly intertwined serpentines within the contours of a definite figure, an "anamorphotically" disfigured circle, a "butterfly," etc.

Permute:

Slavoj Zizek, "Law and the Banalities Mind", '98, pg. 91-94

Finally, the point about inherent transgression is not that every opposition, every attempt at subversion, is automatically "coopted." On the contrary, the very fear of being coopted that makes us search for more and more "radical," "pure" attitudes, is the supreme strategy of suspension or marginalization. The point is rather that true subversion is not always where it seems to be. Sometimes, a small distance is much more explosive for the system than an ineffective radical rejection. In religion, a small heresy can be more threatening than an outright atheism or passage to another religion; for a hard-line Stalinist, a Trotskyite is infinitely more threatening than a bourgeois liberal or social democrat. As le Carré put it, one true revisionist in the Central Committee is worth more than thousand dissidents outside it. It was easy to dismiss Gorbachev for aiming only at improving the system, making it more efficient—he nonetheless set in motion its disintegration. So one should also bear in mind the obverse of the inherent transgression: one is tempted to paraphrase Freud's claim from *The Ego and the Id* that man is not only much more immoral than he believes, but also much more moral than he knows—the System is not only infinitely more resistant and invulnerable than it may appear (it can coopt apparently subversive strategies, they can serve as its support), it is also infinitely more vulnerable (a small revision etc., can have large unforeseen catastrophic consequences). Or, to put it in another way: the paradoxical role of the unwritten superego injunction is that, with regard to the explicit, public Law, it is simultaneously transgressive (superego suspends, violates, the explicit social rules) and more coercive (superego consists of additional rules that restrain the field of choice by way of prohibiting the possibilities allowed for, guaranteed even, by the public Law). From my personal history, I recall the moment of the referendum for the independence of Slovenia as the exemplary case of such a forced choice: the whole point, of course, was to have a truly free choice—but nonetheless, in the pro-independence euphoria, every argumentation for remaining within Yugoslavia was immediately denounced as treacherous and disloyal. This example is especially suitable since Slovenes were deciding about a matter that was literally "transgressive" (to break from Yugoslavia with its constitutional order), which is why the Belgrade authorities denounced Slovene referendum as unconstitutional—one was thus ordered to transgress the Law... The obverse of the omnipotence of the unwritten is thus that, if one ignores them, they simply cease to exist, in contrast to the written law that exists (functions) whether one is aware of it or not—or, as the priest in Kafka's *The Trial* put it, law does not want anything from you, it only bothers you if you yourself acknowledge it and address yourself to it with a demand...



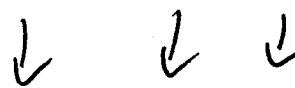
Zizek
DJW '03
C. Macumba

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When, in the late eighteenth century, universal human rights were proclaimed, this universality, of course, concealed the fact that they privilege white men of property; however, this limitation was not openly admitted, it was coded in apparently tautological supplementary qualifications like "all humans have rights, insofar as they truly are rational and free," which then implicitly excludes the mentally ill, "savages," criminals, children, women . . . So, if, in this situation, a poor black woman disregards this unwritten-implicit qualification and demands human rights also for herself, she just takes the letter of the discourse of rights "more literally than it was meant" (and thereby redefines its universality, inscribing it into a different hegemonic chain). "Fantasy" designates precisely this unwritten framework that tells us how we are to understand the letter of Law. The lesson of this is that—sometimes, at least—the truly subversive thing is not to disregard the explicit letter of Law on behalf of the underlying fantasies, but to stick to this letter against the fantasy that sustains it. Is—at a certain level, at least—this not the outcome of the long conversation between Josef K. and the priest that follows the priest's narrative on the Door of the Law in *The Trial*?—the uncanny effect of this conversation does not reside in the fact that the reader is at a loss insofar as he lacks the unwritten interpretive code or frame of reference that would enable him to discern the hidden Meaning, but, on the contrary, in that the priest's interpretation of the parable on the Door of the Law disregards all standard frames of unwritten rules and reads the text in an "absolutely literal" way. One could also approach this deadlock via Lacan's notion of the specifically symbolic mode of deception: ideology "cheats" precisely by letting us know that its propositions (say, on universal human rights) are not to be read à la lettre, but against the background of a set of unwritten rules. Sometimes, at least, the most effective anti-ideological subversion of the official discourse of human rights consists in reading it in an excessively "literal" way, disregarding the set of underlying unwritten rules.

The need for unwritten rules thus bears witness to, confirms, this vulnerability: the system is compelled to allow for possibilities of choices that must never actually take place since they would disintegrate the system, and the function of the unwritten rules is precisely to prevent the actualization of these choices formally allowed by the system. One can see how unwritten rules are correlative to, the obverse of, the empty symbolic gesture and/or the forced choice: unwritten rules prevent the subject from effectively accepting what is offered in the empty gesture, from taking the choice literally and choosing the impossible, that the choice of which destroys the system. In the Soviet Union of the 1930s and 1940s, to take the most extreme example, it was not only prohibited to criticize Stalin, it was perhaps even more prohibited to enounce publicly this prohibition, i.e., to state that one is prohibited to criticize Stalin—the system needed to maintain the appearance that one is allowed to criticize Stalin, i.e., that the absence of this criticism (and the fact that there is no opposition party or movement, that the Party got 99.99% of the votes at elections) simply demonstrates that Stalin is effectively the best and (almost) always right. In Hegel's, this appearance qua appearance was essential.

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This dialectical tension between the vulnerability and invulnerability of the System also enables us to denounce the ultimate racist and/or sexist trick, that of "two birds in the bush instead of a bird in hand": when women demand simple equality, quasi-"feminists" often pretend to offer them "much more" (the role of the warm and wise "conscience of society," elevated above the vulgar everyday competition and struggle for domination . . .) — the only proper answer to this offer, of course, is "No, thanks! Better is the enemy of the Good! We do not want *more*, just equality!" Here, at least, the last lines in *Now Voyager* ("Why reach for the moon, when we can have the stars?") are wrong. It is homologous with the native American who wants to become integrated into the predominant "white" society, and a politically correct progressive liberal endeavors to convince him that he is thereby renouncing his very unique prerogative, the authentic native culture and tradition—no thanks, simple equality is enough, I also wouldn't mind my part of consumerist alienation! . . . A modest demand of the excluded group for the full participation at the society's universal rights is much more threatening for the system than the apparently much more "radical" rejection of the predominant "social values" and the assertion of the superiority of one's own culture. For a true feminist, Otto Weininger's assertion that, although women are "ontologically false," lacking the proper ethical stature, they should be acknowledged the same rights as men in public life, is infinitely more acceptable than the false elevation of women that makes them "too good" for the banality of men's rights.

Capitalism + Communism are inherently built around fantasy
ideologies.

Slavoj Žižek, Sr. Researcher Univ Ljubljana, '01
On Belief p. 18 - 19 [SBarley]

What Marx overlooked is that, to put it in the standard Derridean terms, this inherent obstacle/antagonism as the "condition of impossibility" of the full deployment of the productive forces is simultaneously its "condition of possibility": if we abolish the obstacle, the inherent contradiction of

capitalism, we do not get the fully unleashed drive to productivity finally delivered of its impediment, but we lose precisely this productivity that seemed to be generated and simultaneously thwarted by capitalism — if we take away the obstacle, the very potential thwarted by this obstacle dissipates ... Therein would reside a possible Lacanian critique of Marx, focusing on the ambiguous overlapping between surplus-value and surplus-enjoyment. So the critics of Communism were in a way right when they claimed that Marxian Communism is an impossible fantasy — what they did not perceive is that Marxian Communism, this notion of a society of pure unleashed productivity outside the frame of capital, was a fantasy inherent to capitalism itself, the capitalist inherent transgression at its purest, a strictly ideological fantasy of maintaining the thrust to productivity generated by capitalism, while getting rid of the "obstacles" and antagonisms that were — as the sad experience of the "really existing capitalism" demonstrates — the only possible framework of the effective material existence of a society of permanent self-enhancing productivity.¹⁰

Zizek
DSW '63
S Burke

Shit is like the movie Alien

S (also), Žižek, S. Research this Zgubijana, or
On Belief - p. 61-62 (S Burke)

This externalized shit is precisely the equivalent of the alien monster that colonizes the human body, penetrating it and dominating it from within, and which, at the climactic moment of a science-fiction horror movie, breaks out of the body through the mouth or directly through the chest. Perhaps even more exemplary than Ridley Scott's Alien here is Jack Sholder's Hidden, in which the worm-like alien creature forced out of the body at the film's end directly evokes anal

associations (a gigantic piece of shit, since the alien compels humans penetrated by it to eat voraciously and belch in an embarrassingly disgusting way). 61-62

Zürich
DW 03
Büro

We shouldn't ask whether socialism works ~~or~~ we should ask if capitalism can last

István Mészáros, prof. Emeritus, Univ. of Sussex, '95
Reversing Capital

Those who might think that the socialist hegemonic alternative is 'unreal' — and have no vested interest in defending at all costs the established order — should ask themselves the question: is it actually feasible and logically tenable to project the permanence of a metabolic system of societal reproduction based on the fetishistic material imperatives of capital's destructive logic? Can those who are resigned to endure the inertia of capital's self-perpetuating 'realism' seriously maintain that the *destructive uncontrollability of capital* is not casting ever darkening shadows on the horizon of human survival? For by now even the most uncritical defenders of the ruling order are forced to concede that very big problems lie ahead. The 'only' difference is that they wishfully project that the repressive power of capital will forever be able to cope with all such problems. In truth, however, what is most *unreal* is not the socialist hegemonic alternative to the rule of capital in all of its historically known and still feasible forms, but the gratuitous projection that humankind can survive much longer within the necessarily destructive structural limits of the established mode of social metabolic reproduction.