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## **Zizek Kritik**

Part 1 of 2

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A "SHOCKED"

INC NON-TRAD CRITIK

THE AFFIRMATIVES SO-CALLED "NON-TRADITIONAL" APPROACH TO DEBATE ATTEMPTS TO SHOCK THE AUDIENCE / COMMUNITY INTO ACCEPTANCE. INSTEAD OF BREAKING DOWN THE SYSTEM THE SYSTEM USES PERVERSION / RADICALITY TO SUSTAIN ITS DEATH GRIP.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

This superego-paradox also allows us to throw a new light on to the functioning of today's artistic scene. Its basic feature is not only the much-deplored commodification of culture (art objects produced for the market), but also the less noted but perhaps even more crucial *opposite* movement: the growing 'culturalization' of the market economy itself. With the shift towards the tertiary economy (services, cultural goods), culture is less and less a specific sphere exempted from the market, and more and more not just one of the spheres of the market, but its central component (from the software amusement industry to other media productions). What this short circuit between market and culture entails is the waning of the old modernist avant-garde logic of provocation, of shocking the establishment. Today, more and more, the cultural-economic apparatus itself, in order to reproduce itself in competitive market conditions, has not only to tolerate but directly to provoke stronger and stronger shocking effects and products. Just think of recent trends in the visual arts: gone are the days when we had simple statues or framed paintings – what we get now are exhibitions of frames without paintings, dead cows and their excrement, videos of the insides of the human body (gastroscopy and colonoscopy), the inclusion of olfactory effects, and so on.<sup>13</sup> Here again, as in the domain of sexuality, perversion is no longer subversive: such shocking excesses are part of the system itself; the system feeds on them in order to reproduce itself. Perhaps this is one possible definition of post-modern as opposed to modernist art: in postmodernism, the transgressive excess loses its shock value and is fully integrated into the established artistic market.<sup>14</sup>

EXCESS  
VALUE  
REPRODUCE  
CONCRETE

AAA  
A2:  
PERFORATE  
AFFIS  
w/SHOCK  
VALUE  
THE MORE  
WIERD  
IT FEELS  
THE MORE  
POTENTIAL  
TAKE THAT

[B] "LOVE"

INC NON-TRADITIONAL CRITIK

WE MUST BEGIN TO ANALYZE "SO-CALLED" TRADITIONAL DEBATE AND ITS TENTACLES OF POWER AS METAPHORS FOR REFORM. INSTEAD OF PRESUPPOSING THE "UGLY HEAD" OF DEBATE WE SHOULD SEARCH FOR LOVE IN ITS AGGRESSION. THIS IS VITAL TO RE-MAPPING, AND PACIFYING ITS VIOLENT TENDENCIES.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

AA  
A2:  
TRADITION  
= VIOLENCE  
- LOOK FOR  
LOVE IN  
AGGRESSION

< So here we have the difference between the series of ordinary signifiers and the central element ('horse', 'fucking Fatima') which has to remain empty in order to serve as the underlying organizing principle of the series. The homologous structure of the series and its exception underlies the figure of Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction: she is usually portrayed as a terrifying, Medusa-like entity with dozens of limbs making aggressive gestures - however, as every Indian knows, the key point is that, among these limbs, a kind of meta-message is hidden, a tiny hand stretched out in a pacifying gesture, as if to say: 'Do not take all this ridiculous spectacle of horror too seriously! It is just a show of force, while in fact I am not really so menacing, but actually love you!' This exceptional sign is the one we have to look for in certain forms of aggressivity. ... > 31

# ZNC IMPACT EXT: (K of NoI - TRADITION DEBATE)

THE AFFIRMATIVES ATTEMPT TO RUPTURE "TRADITIONAL DEBATE" REPLACES DEBATE WITH DEBATE II — THIS IS THE VERY PROBLEMATIC YOU ARE CRITIQUING AND FORECLOSES PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL RESISTANCE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

So we have here the structure of the Moebius strip: the subject is correlative to the object, but in a negative way — subject and object can never 'meet'; they are in the same place, but on opposite sides of the Moebius strip. Or — to put it in philosophical terms — subject and object are identical in the Hegelian sense of the speculative coincidence/identity of radical opposites: when Hegel praises the speculative truth of the vulgar materialist thesis of phrenology 'The Spirit is a bone', his point is not that the spirit can actually be reduced to the shape of the skull, but that there is a spirit (subject) only in so far as there is some bone

(some inert material, non-spiritual remainder/leftover) that resists its spiritual sublation—appropriation—mediation. Subject and object are thus not simply external: the object is not the external limit with regard to which the subject defines its self-identity, it is ex-timate with regard to the subject, it is its *internal* limit — that is, the bar which itself prevents the subject's full realization.

What happens in the suicidal *passage à l'acte*, however, is precisely the subject's *direct* identification with the object: the object is no longer 'identical' to the subject in the sense of the Hegelian speculative identity of the dialectical process with the very obstacle that sustains this process — they coincide *directly*; they find themselves on the *same* side of the Moebius strip. This means that the subject is no longer the pure Void of negativity (\$), the infinite desire, the Void in search of the absent object, but 'falls into' the object directly, becomes the object; and — vice versa — the object (cause of desire) is no longer the materialization of the Void, a spectral presence that merely gives body to the lack that sustains the subject's desire, but acquires a direct positive existence and ontological consistency. Or, to put it in the terms of the minimal gap between the Object and its Place, the Void/Clearing within which the object appears: what happens in the suicidal *passage à l'acte* is not that the object falls out of its frame, so that we get only the empty frame—void (i.e. so that nothing but the place itself takes place); what happens, rather, is the exact opposite — the object is still there; it is the Void—Place that disappears; it is the frame that falls into what it frames, so that what occurs is the eclipse of the symbolic opening, the total closure of the Real. As such, not only is the suicidal *passage à l'acte* not the highest expression of the death drive; rather, it is the exact opposite of the death drive.

1  
POLITICAL  
SUICIDE  
ATTEMPT  
TO FORECLOSE  
SUBJECT  
POSITION  
OF A LA  
THE OBJECT  
(COMPETITION)  
RESULTS  
IN THE  
SAME PROBL  
YOU ARE  
ATTEMPTING  
TO CRITIQUE

THEORE-  
CLOSES  
POLITICAL  
RESISTANCE

# ZNC ALTERNATIVE (S) EXTENSION

THE AFFIRMATIVES "NON-TRADITIONAL" ATTEMPT TO FILL, THE VOID IN DEBATE WITH 'BEAUTY, ART, AND POLITICS' SERVES TO LEGITIMATE THE POWER OF TRADITIONAL DBS. INSTEAD, WE MUST FILL "THE VOID" WITH TRASH TO CREATE CHANGE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

And the task of historical materialist analysis here is to locate these all too formal determinations in their concrete historical context. First, of course, there is the aestheticization of the universe of commodities mentioned above: its ultimate result is that – to put it in somewhat pathetic terms – today, the true pieces of trash are the 'beautiful' objects with which we are constantly bombarded from all sides; consequently, the only way to escape trash is to put trash itself into the sacred place of the Void. However, the situation is more complex. On the one hand, there is the experience of (real or fantasized) global catastrophes (from nuclear or ecological catastrophe to holocaust) whose traumatic impact is so strong that they can no longer be conceived of as simple events that take place *within* the horizon/clearing sustained by the Void of the Thing – in them, the very Thing is no longer absent, that is, present as a Void, as the background of actual events, but threatens to become *directly* present, to actualize itself in reality, and thus to provoke a psychotic collapse of the symbolic space. On the other hand, the prospect of a global catastrophe was not peculiar to the twentieth century – so why did it have such an impact precisely in that century, and not before? Again, the answer lies in the progressive overlapping of aesthetics (the space of sublime beauty exempt from social exchange) and commodification (the very terrain of exchange): it is this overlapping and its result, the draining away of the very capacity to sublimate, that changes every encounter with the Thing into a disruptive global catastrophe, the 'end of the world'.

No wonder, then, that in the work of Andy Warhol, the ready-made everyday object that found itself occupying the sublime Place of a work of art was none other than a row of Coke bottles.

AZ:  
PLAYS  
E OF  
TRADITION  
DBS  
MUST  
BE CORE  
TRADITION  
2. FILL  
VOID W/  
TRASH  
= ONLY  
MEANS  
TO A  
STRUCT.  
p. 39-40  
ALF  
A

ZNC: CHANGE IS VITAL : SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY/①

THE AFFIRMATIVE IS A SELF-FULLING PROPHECY, THE MORE THEY DESIRE SATISFACTION THE LESS SATISFIED THEY BECOME. THIS IS THE CYCLE OF SURPLUS VALUE/ENJOYMENT THAT INVITES SOCIAL PARALYSIS.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

TURN:  
THE MORE  
YOU DESIRE  
SATISFACTION  
THE LESS  
SATISFIED  
YOU ARE  
COKE IS IT  
PARADOX  
OF SURPLUS  
VALUE/ENJOY  
MENT  
THE FACT  
THE MORE  
YOU DRINK  
THE MORE  
YOU WANT

The unexpected result of this feature is not that, since Coke does not satisfy any concrete need, we drink it only as a supplement, after some other drink has satisfied our substantial need – rather, it is this very superfluous character that makes our thirst for Coke all the more insatiable: as Jacques-Alain Miller put it so succinctly, Coke has the paradoxical property that the more you drink the thirstier you get, the greater your need to drink more – with that strange, bitter-sweet taste, our thirst is never effectively quenched.<sup>11</sup> So, when, some years ago, the advertising slogan for Coke was 'Coke is it!', we should note its thorough ambiguity: 'that's it' precisely in so far as that's never actually it, precisely in so far as every satisfaction opens up a gap of 'I want more!'. The paradox, therefore, is that Coke is not an ordinary commodity whereby its use-value is transubstantiated into an expression of (or supplemented with) the auratic dimension of pure (exchange) Value, but a commodity whose very peculiar use-value is itself already a direct embodiment of the supra-sensible aura of the ineffable spiritual surplus, a commodity

whose very material properties are already those of a commodity. This process is brought to its conclusion in the case of caffeine-free diet Coke – why? We drink Coke – or any drink – for two reasons: for its thirst-quenching or nutritional value, and for its taste. In the case of caffeine-free diet Coke, nutritional value is suspended and the caffeine, as the key ingredient of its taste, is also taken away – all that remains is a pure semblance, an artificial promise of a substance which never materialized. Is it not true that in this sense, in the case of caffeine-free diet Coke, we almost literally 'drink nothing in the guise of something'? 722-3

ZNC: AZ: DO AWAY WITH AFL  
COMPETITION

THE AFFIRMATIVES ATTEMPTS TO DISPLACE COMPETITION  
IN DEBATE TOURNAMENTS IS AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE  
THE TENSION BETWEEN THE OBJECT AND THE VOID —  
THIS RESULTS IN A PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF SUICIDE THAT  
SERVES TO FULFILL NARCISSISTIC / SELF DESIRE. THIS IS  
POLITICALLY BANKRUPT.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. \_\_\_\_)

Another way to approach this tension between the Object  
and the Void would be through the different modalities of suicide.  
First there is, of course, suicide as an act that 'bears a message'  
(of protest against political, erotic, and so on, disappointment),

PUBLIC  
SUICIDE,  
AS IN LOVE  
B/C COMPETIT  
IS BORN  
AZ:  
CONCORDIA  
SHIT  
OF CONFLICT  
TO CREATE  
SPECTACLE  
OF POLITICS  
IS TO CLEAN  
IN A NARCISS  
TIC FCN  
AA  
MURDERS  
ARE IDENTICAL  
POLITICAL  
SUICIDE.

and is, as such, addressed to the Other (for example, political sui-  
cides like public burnings which are supposed to shock and  
awaken the indifferent public). Although it involves the dimen-  
sion of the Symbolic, this suicide is, at its most fundamental,  
imaginary — for the simple reason that the subject who accom-  
plishes it is sustained in it by the imagined scene of the effect his  
or her act will have on posterity, on its witnesses, on the public,  
on those who will learn about it; the narcissistic satisfaction pro-  
vided by such imagining is obvious. ... Then there is suicide in  
the *Real*: the violent *passage à l'acte*, the subject's full and direct  
identification with the object. That is to say, for Lacan, the sub-  
ject (\$ — the 'barred', empty subject) and the object-cause of its  
desire (the leftover which embodies the lack that 'is' the subject)  
are strictly correlative: there is a subject only in so far as there is  
some material stain/leftover that *resists* subjectivization, a surplus  
in which, precisely, the subject *cannot* recognize itself. In other  
words, the paradox of the subject is that it exists only through its  
own radical impossibility, through a 'bone in the throat' that for-  
ever prevents it (the subject) from achieving its full ontological  
identity. 727-8



# "ETHICS OF LOVE" ALTERNATIVE

ESTABLISHING AN ETHICS OF LOVE IS VITAL TO TRANSCENDING "ENEMY"/"OTHER" DISTINCTIONS. WE MUST ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK "TO LOVE THY NEIGHBOR" IN ORDER TO ACCOUNT FOR THE FETTERIZATION OF EVIL AND TRANSCEND THE DEATH GRIP OF SOVEREIGNTY, WHICH BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE TO ACCOUNT FOR!...

(EXPLAIN LINK)

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

Is not the opposition between the commandments of the Decalogue and human Rights grounded already in the tension between the Decalogue and the injunction to 'love thy neighbour'? This injunction prohibits nothing; rather, it calls for an activity beyond the confines of the Law, enjoining us always to do more and more, to 'love' our neighbour - not merely in his imaginary dimension (as our ~~semblant~~, mirror-image, on behalf of the

ETHICS OF LOVE  
"LOVE THY NEIGHBOR"  
TRANSCENDS LAW/LIFE  
REALM OF  
RELATION w/ OTHER  
QUANTAL

notion of Good that we impose on him, so that even when we act and help him 'for his own Good', it is our notion of what is good for him that we follow); not merely in his symbolic dimension (the abstract symbolic subject of Rights), but as the Other in the very abyss of its Real, the Other as a properly inhuman partner, 'irrational', radically evil, capricious, revolting, disgusting... in short, beyond the Good. This enemy-Other should not be punished (as the Decalogue demands), but accepted as a 'neighbour'.<sup>77</sup> (Tim Robbins's outstanding film *Dead Man Walking* stages this very deadlock of the 'love for one's neighbour': Sister Helen goes to the end, accepting the humanity of the Other, who is the most worthless racist and murderous rapist scum.) There is a double defence against this thorough 'love of thy neighbour': rationalist/humanist 'understanding' (we try to reduce the Other's traumatic abyss by explaining it as the result of social, ideological, psychological, etc. conditioning...), or the fetishization of the radical Evil of our neighbour into the absolute Otherness (say, of the Holocaust) which is thus rendered untouchable, unpoliticizable, impossible to be accounted for in terms of a power struggle.

CONTINUES... 1/2



11  
ETHICS OF LOVE<sup>1</sup> ALTERNATIVE

CONTINUES... 2/2

One can see how human rights and 'love for thy neighbour' *qua* Real are the two aspects of the same gesture of going beyond the Decalogue: the ultimate 'subject of human Rights' is precisely the Neighbour as the real/impossible *Ding* beyond the reach of the Law – the '(human) right' is the infinite right of the abyss of subjectivity beyond the Law. The Jewish refusal to assert love for the neighbour outside the confines of the Law aims at preventing this love from degrading into a narcissistic (mis)recognition of my mirror-image – is it possible, however, to conceive of love for the Other *qua* Thing which simultaneously avoids narcissistic

regression and remains outside the confines of the Law? The ultimate answer of the injunction 'love thy neighbour' is *Yes!*: imaginary mirror relationships and the symbolic Law are precisely the two *defences* against the Neighbour *qua* Real. One can also see, however, how human Rights are not simply opposed to the Ten Commandments, but are the 'inherent transgression'<sup>78</sup> generated by those Commandments – there is no space for human Rights outside the terrain of the Decalogue. Here one should recall again Saint Paul's famous passage on the interconnection between Law and sin – on how Law itself generates sinful desires. As Lacan pointed out, the very text of the Decalogue is ambiguous here: 'You will adore no God *before my countenance*': 'Does it mean that beyond the countenance of God, i.e., outside Canaan, the adoration of other gods is not inconceivable for a faithful Jew?'<sup>79</sup> In other words, does it mean that the important point is simply to maintain appearances – you can do it in private, where the big Other cannot see you? Does it mean that the jealous God of the Decalogue was like a wife whose message to her unfaithful husband is: 'Do it, just do it so that I won't learn anything about it!' And what does Christianity do here? Does it simply 'close up the space' by prohibiting even the inherent transgression: by demanding that we follow God's commandments not only 'before His countenance', but also deep in our hearts? Or does it endeavour to break the very vicious cycle of Law/sin? >114-113

CRUISE SHIP "NON-TRAD AFF" (L)

THE AFFIRMATIVE METAPHOR OF "SINKING DA' BOAT"  
SEVERES ALL LINKS TO POLITICAL REALITY. THIS SYMBOLIC  
SUICIDE REDUCES THE SUBJECT TO WASTE, A PIECE  
OF EXCREMENTAL TRASH—DISPLACED WITHOUT AN ANCHOR  
OR HISTORICITY WHICH ONLY SERVES TO EXPAND THE SOVEREIGN'S  
DEATH DRIVE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. )

(L)  
SYMBOLIC  
SUICIDE  
- ATTEMPT  
-ING TO  
MOVE AWAY  
FROM CONTACT  
-THE DEB  
OUTS OFF  
(L) TO  
SUBJECT  
THIS PROCESS  
REDUCES  
SUBJECT  
TO WASTE.  
AA

For Lacan, creative sublimation and the death drive are strictly correlative: the death drive empties the (sacred) Place, creates the Clearing, the Void, the Frame, which is then filled in by the object 'elevated to the dignity of the Thing'. Here we encounter the third kind of suicide: the 'suicide' that defines the death drive, symbolic suicide — not in the sense of 'not dying' really, just symbolically, but in the more precise sense of the erasure of the symbolic network that defines the subject's identity, of cutting off all the links that anchor the subject in its symbolic substance. Here, the subject finds itself totally deprived of its symbolic identity, thrown into the 'night of the world' in which its only correlative is the minimum of an excremental leftover, a piece of trash, a mote of dust in the eye, an almost-nothing that sustains the pure Place-Frame-Void, so that here, finally, 'nothing but the place takes place'. So the logic of displaying an excremental object in the sublime Place is similar to the way the Hegelian infinite judgement 'The spirit is a bone' functions: our first reaction to Hegel's 'The spirit is a bone' is 'But this is senseless — spirit, its absolute, self-relating negativity, is the very opposite of the inertia of a skull, this dead object!' — however, this very awareness of the thorough incongruity between 'spirit' and 'bone' is the 'Spirit', its radical negativity. . . . Along the same lines, the first reaction to seeing faeces in the sublime Place is to ask indignantly: 'Is this art?' — but it is precisely this negative reaction, this experience of the radical incongruity between the object and the Place it occupies, that makes us aware of the specificity of this Place. 730

# IDENTITY POLITICS (L/ALT)

THE AFF. LOCKS INDIVIDUALS INTO A PREESTABLISHED IDENTITY INCAPABLE OF SHIFTING THEIR STATUS — WE MUST UNDERSTAND IDENTITY AS AMORPHOUS/BORDERLESS.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

Is this not, more than ever, our reality today? Ericsson phones are no longer Swedish, Toyota cars are manufactured 60 per cent in the USA, Hollywood culture pervades the remotest parts of the globe. . . . Furthermore, does not the same go also for all forms of ethnic and sexual identities? Should we not supplement Marx's description in this sense, adding also that sexual 'one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible'; that concerning sexual practices also, 'all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned', so that capitalism tends to replace standard normative heterosexuality with a proliferation of unstable shifting identities and/or orientations? From time

to time Marx himself underestimates this ability of the capitalist universe to incorporate the transgressive urge that seemed to threaten it; in his analysis of the ongoing American Civil War, for example, he claimed that since the English textile industry, the backbone of the industrial system, could not survive without the supply of cheap cotton from the American South rendered possible only by slave labour, England would be forced to intervene directly to prevent the abolition of slavery. 7/3/11

# SEXUAL HARASSMENT (L) ~~✗~~

SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAWS ARE A DOUBLE NEGATIVE  
THEY OVERDETERMINE SEXUAL RELATIONS AND ARE  
PERMISSIBLE IN THE PROCESS OF SEDUCTION.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. \_\_\_\_)

There is a somewhat analogous situation with regard to the heterosexual seduction procedure in our Politically Correct times: the two sets, the set of PC behaviour and the set of seduction, do not actually intersect anywhere; that is, there is no seduction which is not in a way an 'incorrect' intrusion or harassment – at some point, one has to expose oneself and 'make a pass'. So does this mean that every seduction is incorrect harassment through and through? No, and that is the catch: when you make a pass, you expose yourself to the Other (the potential partner), and she decides retroactively, by her reaction, whether what you have just done was harassment or a successful act of seduction – and there is no way to tell in advance what her reaction will be. This is why assertive women often despise 'weak' men – because they fear to expose themselves, to take the necessary risk. And perhaps this is even more true in our PC times: are not PC prohibitions rules which, in one way or another, are to be violated in the seduction process? Is not the seducer's art to accomplish this violation properly – so that afterwards, by its acceptance, its harassing aspect will be retroactively cancelled? > III

SHAR  
LAW  
(L)  
✗  
ART OF  
SEDUCTION  
IS A 27%  
NEGATIVE  
LAWS OF  
SEXUAL  
HARASS  
ARE 2  
BE VIOLAT  
IN PROCESS  
OF SEDUC

# Biopolitics @ - LOGIC OF SOVEREIGNTY

THE LOGIC OF SOVEREIGNTY FINDS ITSELF THROUGH A SERIES OF UNIVERSAL EXCEPTIONS. BIOPOLITICS ALWAYS INCLUDE WITH THE ULTIMATE POTENTIAL TO EXCLUDE.

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

Secondly – and even more radically – when, in *Seminar XX: Encore*, Lacan developed the logic of 'non-all' and of the exception constitutive of the universal.<sup>84</sup> The paradox of the relationship between the series (of the elements belonging to the universal) and its exception does not lie only in the fact that 'the exception grounds the [universal] rule', that every universal series involves the exclusion of an exception (all men have inalienable rights – with the exception of madmen, criminals, primitives, the uneducated, children . . .). The properly dialectical point lies, rather, in the way a series and an exception directly coincide: the series is always the series of 'exceptions', of entities which display a certain exceptional quality that qualifies them to belong to the series (of heroes, of members of our community, of true citizens . . .). Recall the standard male seducer's list of female conquests: each of them is 'an exception', each was

seduced for a particular *je ne sais quoi*, and the series is precisely the series of these exceptional figures. . . .<sup>85</sup>

This same matrix is also at work in the shifts of the Lacanian notion of the symptom. That is to say: what distinguishes the last stage of Lacan's teaching from the previous stages is best approached through the changed status of the notion of the symptom: previously, the symptom was a pathological formation to be (ideally, at least) dissolved in and through analytic interpretation: an indication that the subject somehow and somewhere compromised his desire, or an indication of the deficiency or

malfunctioning of the symbolic Law that guarantees the subject's capacity to desire. In short, symptoms were the series of *exceptions*, of disturbances, malfunctionings, measured by the ideal of full integration into the symbolic Law, the big Other. Later, however, with his notion of the universalized symptom, Lacan accomplished the paradoxical shift from the 'masculine' logic of Law and its constitutive exception towards the 'feminine' logic in which there is *no* exception to the series of symptoms – in which there are *only* symptoms, and the symbolic Law (the paternal Name) is ultimately just one (the most efficient, the most established . . .) in the series of symptoms. This, according to Jacques-Alain Miller, is Lacan's universe in *Seminar XX*: a universe of radical split (between signifier and signified; between *jouissance* of drives and *jouissance* of the Other; between masculine and feminine) in which no a priori Law guarantees the connection or overlapping between the two sides, so that only partial and contingent knots – symptoms (quilting points, points of gravitation) can generate a limited and fragile co-ordination between the two domains. In this perspective, the 'dissolution of a symptom', far from bringing about the

non-pathological state of full desiring capacity, leads, rather, to a total psychotic catastrophe, to the dissolution of the subject's entire universe.<sup>86</sup> There is no 'big Other' to guarantee the consistency of the symbolic space within which we dwell: there are only contingent, local and fragile points of stability. 715-7

MNC ⊆ CAPITALISM ⊆

MNC SHIFT IS A CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENT OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

◀ The top censored story of 1998 was that of a secret international agreement called MAI (the Multilateral Agreement on Investment). The primary goal of MAI will be to protect the foreign interests of multinational companies. The agreement will basically undermine national sovereignty by assigning to these corporations powers almost equal to those of the countries in which they are located. Governments will no longer be able to treat their domestic firms more favourably than foreign firms. Furthermore, countries that do not relax their environmental, land-use, and health and labour regulations to meet the demands of foreign firms may be accused of acting illegally. Corporations will be able to sue sovereign states if they impose overstringent ecological or other standards – under NAFTA (the main model for MAI), Ethyl Corporation is already suing Canada for banning the use of its gasoline additive MMT. The greatest threat, of course, is to the developing nations, which will be pressured into depleting their natural resources for commercial exploitation. Renato Ruggerio, director of the World Trade Organization, the sponsor of MAI, is already hailing this project – elaborated and discussed in a clandestine manner, with almost no public consultation and media attention – as the 'constitution for a new global economy'.<sup>34</sup>

CRIT  
⊆  
-MAI  
GLOBAL IS  
ALL  
WTO SPECIF

# INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (L)

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS ARE A MEANS TO PLACE LAW ABOVE ALL ELSE. WE GET DUPED INTO ACCEPTING "TEMPORARY RIGHTS." THIS IS THE INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE FUNCTION OF SOVEREIGN POLITICS. — ITS A SELF-FULLING PROJECT THAT ENSURES MILITARISTIC CONFLICT.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

Just as for Marx, market relations provided the true foundation for the notion of individual freedoms and rights, this is the obverse of the much-praised new global morality celebrated even by some neoliberal philosophers as signalling the beginning of an

era in which the international community will be able to enforce a minimal code preventing sovereign states from engaging in crimes against humanity even within their own territory. In a recent essay, significantly entitled 'Kosovo and the End of the Nation-State', Václav Havel tries to bring home the message that the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia:

places human rights above the rights of the state. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was attacked by the alliance without a direct mandate from the UN. This did not happen irresponsibly, as an act of aggression or out of disrespect for international law. It happened, on the contrary, out of respect for the law, for a law that ranks higher than the law which protects the sovereignty of states. The alliance has acted out of respect for human rights, as both conscience and international legal documents dictate. (35)

Havel further specifies this 'higher law' when he claims that 'human rights, human freedoms, and human dignity have their deepest roots somewhere outside the perceptible world ... while the state is a human creation, human beings are the creation of God'. (36) If we read Havel's two statements as the two premisses of a judgement, the logical conclusion is none other than that NATO forces were allowed to violate existing international law, since they acted as a direct instrument of the 'higher law' of God Himself — if this is not a clear-cut case of 'religious fundamentalism', then this term is devoid of any minimally consistent meaning.

Havel's statement is thus the strongest assertion of what Ulrich Beck, in an article in *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* in April 1999, called 'militaristic humanism' or even 'militaristic pacifism'. The problem with this term is not that it is an Orwellian oxymoron — reminding us of 'Peace is war' and similar slogans from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* — which, as such, directly belies the truth of its position (against this obvious pacifist-liberal criticism, I rather think that it is the pacifist position — 'more bombs and killing never bring peace' — which is a fake, and that one should heroically endorse the paradox of militaristic pacifism). Neither is it that, obviously, the targets of a bombardment are not chosen out of pure moral consideration, but selectively, in accordance with unacknowledged geopolitical and economic strategic interests (the Marxist-style criticism). The problem is, rather, that this purely humanitarian-ethical legitimization (again) thoroughly depoliticizes the military intervention, changing it into an intervention in humanitarian catastrophe, grounded in purely moral reasons, not an intervention in a well-defined political struggle. In other words, the problem with 'militaristic humanism/pacifism' lies not in 'militaristic' but in 'humanism/pacifism': in the way the 'militaristic' intervention (in the social struggle) is presented as help to the victims of (ethnic, etc.) hatred and violence, justified directly in depoliticized universal human rights. Consequently, what we need is not a 'true' (demilitarized) humanism/pacifism, but a 'militaristic' social intervention divested of its depoliticized humanist/pacifist veneer. 755-7.



# WAR GAMES - SIMULATIONS TURN

WAR GAME SIMULATIONS FUNCTION AS PROTECTIVE SHIELDS  
AGAINST THE REAL — IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THE DEPERSONAL-  
-IZED WORLD OF TECHNOLOGICAL WARFARE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. \_\_\_\_)

Another example from war can help us to clarify this point further. The ultimate lesson of the latest American military interventions, especially Operation Desert Fox against Iraq at the end of 1998, is that such operations signal a new era in military history — battles in which the attacking force operates under the constraint that it can sustain no casualties. (The same point is repeated in every US discussion about military intervention abroad, from Somalia to ex-Yugoslavia — one expects a guarantee that there will be no casualties.) This tendency to erase death itself from war should not, however, seduce us into endorsing the standard notion that war is rendered less traumatic if it is no longer experienced by the soldiers (or presented) as an actual encounter with another human being to be killed, but as an abstract activity in front of a screen or behind a gun far from the explosion, like guiding a missile on a warship hundreds of miles away from where it will hit its target.

While such a procedure makes the soldier less *guilty*, it is open to question if it actually causes less *anxiety* — this is one way to explain the strange fact that soldiers often fantasize about killing the enemy soldier in a face-to-face confrontation, looking him in the eyes before stabbing him with a bayonet (in a kind of military version of the sexual False Memory Syndrome, they even often 'remember' such encounters when they never in fact took place). There is a long literary tradition of elevating such face-to-face encounters as an authentic war experience (see the writings of Ernst Jünger, who praised them in his memoirs of the trench attacks in World War I). So what if the truly traumatic feature is not the awareness that I am killing another human being (to be obliterated through the 'dehumanization' and 'objectivization' of war into a technical procedure) but, on the contrary, this very 'objectivization', which then generates the need to supplement it by fantasies of authentic personal encounters with the enemy? It is thus not the fantasy of a purely aseptic war run as a video

game behind computer screens that protects us from the reality of the face-to-face killing of another person; on the contrary, it is this fantasy of a face-to-face encounter with an enemy killed bloodily that we construct in order to (escape the Real) of the depersonalized war turned into an anonymous technological operation.

So our thesis should be clear now: the cruel reality of war relates to the notion of the virtualized war with no casualties in precisely the same way as *Festen* relates to Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*: in both cases, we are not dealing with the symbolic fiction (of virtual bloodless warfare, of protective narrative) concealing the Real of a senseless bloodbath or sexual violence — in both cases it is, rather, this violence itself which already serves as a fantasized protective shield. Therein lies one of the fundamental lessons of psychoanalysis: the images of utter catastrophe, far from giving access to the Real, can function as a protective shield against the Real. In sex as well as in politics, we take refuge in catastrophic scenarios in order to avoid the actual deadlock. In short, the true horror is not the rapist *Uroter* against whom the benevolent maternal father protects us with his fantasy shield, but the benign maternal father himself — the truly suffocating and psychosis-generating experience for the child would have been to have a father like Benigni, who, with his protective care, erases all traces of excessive surplus-enjoyment. It is as a desperate defence measure against this father that one fantasizes about the rapist father.

CULTURAL RIGHTS / IDENTITY (C) - REFLEXIVE RACISM

CULTURAL RIGHTS / MULTICULTURALISM REINFORCES ROMANTIC IDENTITIES, E.G. "AFRICANS HAVE THEIR OWN CULTURE SO WE SHOULD NOT INTEGRATE THEM." THE DIFF IS CONSERVATISM IN DRAG.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. )

RA(E)  
(F)  
- ROMANTIC  
IDENTITY  
& INTEREST  
B/C DESTROY  
CULTURE  
(C)  
TUDOUQUE  
"AFRICANS  
HAVE RIGHT  
TO CULTURE  
SO SHOULD  
LE PEN!!

This brings us to another key feature of this reflected racism: it revolves around the distinction between cultural contempt towards the Other and downright racism. Usually, racism is considered the stronger, more radical version of cultural contempt: we are dealing with racism when simple contempt for the other's culture is elevated into the notion that the other ethnic group is – for inherent (biological or cultural) reasons – inferior to our own. Today's 'reflected' racism, however, is paradoxically able to articulate itself in terms of direct respect for the other's culture: was not the official argument for apartheid in the old South Africa that black culture should be preserved in its uniqueness, not dissipated in the Western melting-pot? Do not even today's European racists, like Le Pen, emphasize how what they ask for is only the same right to cultural identity as Africans and others demand for themselves? It is too easy to dismiss such arguments with the claim that here, respect for the other is simply 'hypocritical': the mechanism at work is, rather, that of the disavowal characteristic of the fetishistic split: 'I know very well that the Other's culture is worthy of the same respect as my own: nevertheless... [I despise them passionately].'

RACE (K) ~ DESIRE (L)

THE DESIRE FOR THE "TREASURE" OF THE OTHER IS WHAT ENABLES HATRED. I DESPISE THE "OTHER" BECAUSE OF THEIR UNIQUE STATUS

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

AAA  
RACE  
(E)  
DESIRE  
FOR OBJECT  
OF OTHER  
SELF  
MOTIVATES  
HATRED  
= ENABLING  
MECHANISM  
ID EVIL

The more general point to be made here is the Hegelian lesson that *global reflexivization/mediatization generates its own brutal immediacy*, whose figure was best captured by Étienne Balibar's notion of excessive, non-functional cruelty as a feature of contemporary life:<sup>4</sup> a cruelty whose figures range from 'fundamentalist' racist and/or religious slaughter to the 'senseless' outbursts of violence by adolescents and the homeless in our megalopolises, a violence one is tempted to call *Id-Evil*, a violence grounded in no utilitarian or ideological cause. All the talk about foreigners stealing work from us, or about the threat they represent to our Western values, should not deceive us: on closer examination, it soon becomes clear that this talk provides a rather superficial secondary rationalization. The answer we ultimately obtain from a skinhead is that it makes him feel good to beat up foreigners; that their presence disturbs him. . . . What we encounter here is indeed *Id-Evil*, that is, Evil structured and motivated by the most elementary imbalance in the relationship between the Ego and *jouissance*, by the tension between pleasure and the foreign body of *jouissance* at the very heart of it. *Id-Evil* thus stages the most elementary 'short circuit' in the subject's relationship to the primordially missing object-cause of his desire: what 'bothers' us in the 'other' (Jew, Japanese, African, Turk) is that he appears to enjoy a privileged relationship to the object – the other either possesses the object-treasure, having snatched it away from us (which is why we don't have it), or poses a threat to our possession of the object.<sup>5</sup> > 8

RACISM (L) - XLE RACISM (F)

RACISM FUNCTIONS THROUGH MULTIPLE DIFFERENT FORMS:

- ① OLD FASHIONED RACISM; "DIXIE CHEER"
- ② REFLEXIVE RACISM, "WE LOOK DOWN" ON THE BARBARIC BALKAN OTHER.
- ③ ROMANTIC IDENTITY, THE NOBLE SAVAGE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

RACE  
(F)  
NOTES  
(L)

DIFFER  
MODES  
OF RACISM  
DISCLOSED  
IN SPECTERS  
OF BALKANS

This enigmatic multiple displacement of the frontier clearly demonstrates that in the case of the Balkans we are dealing not with real geography but with an imaginary cartography which projects on to the real landscape its own shadowy, often disavowed, ideological antagonisms, just as Freud claimed that the localization of the hysteric's conversion symptoms project on to the physical body the map of another, imaginary anatomy. However, it is not only that the Balkans serve as *Europe's ghost*, the persistent remainder of its own disavowed past; the further – perhaps even more important – point to be made is that precisely in so far as 'the Balkans' function as such a spectral entity, reference to them enables us to discern, in a kind of spectral analysis, the different modes of today's racism. First, there is the

old-fashioned unabashed rejection of the (despotic, barbarian, orthodox, Muslim, corrupt, Oriental . . .) Balkan Other on behalf of authentic (Western, civilized, democratic, Christian . . .) values. Then there is 'reflexive' Politically Correct racism: the multiculturalist perception of the Balkans as the terrain of ethnic horrors and intolerance, of primitive irrational warring passions, to be opposed to the post-nation-state liberal-democratic process of solving conflicts through rational negotiation, compromise and mutual respect. Here racism is, as it were, elevated to the second power: it is attributed to the Other, while we occupy the convenient position of a (neutral benevolent observer, righteously dismayed at the horrors going on 'down there'). Finally, there is the reverse racism which celebrates the exotic authenticity of the Balkan Other, as in the notion of Serbs who, in contrast to inhibited, anaemic Western Europeans, still exhibit a prodigious lust for life – this last form of racism plays a crucial role in the success of Emir Kusturica's films in the West.

OLD-FASHIONED RACISM REJXN OF OTHER  
② REFLEXIVE RACISM WE STAND BACK & LOOK DOWN ON BARBARIC BALKAN  
③ ROMANTIC IDENTITY

RACISM (K : L) REFLEXIVE / AMORPHOUS

RACISM IS A MONSTROUS CREATURE, THAT IS BECOMING AMORPHOUS, REFLEXIVE RACISM IS DANGEROUS.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

51 The example of Kusturica also enables us to identify another feature of the Western perception of the Balkans: the logic of displaced racism.<sup>3</sup> Since the Balkans are geographically part of Europe, populated by white people, racist clichés which nobody today, in our Politically Correct times, would dare to apply to African or Asian people can be freely attributed to Balkan people: political struggles in the Balkans are compared to ridiculous operetta plots; Ceaușescu was presented as the contemporary reincarnation of Count Dracula. . . . Furthermore, it is as if, within the Balkan area itself, Slovenia is most exposed to this displaced racism, since it is closest to Western Europe: when, in an interview about his film *Underground*, Kusturica dismissed the Slovenes as a nation of Austrian grooms, nobody even reacted to

(L)  
REFLEXIVE  
RACISM

the open racism of this statement – it was OK, since an 'authentic' exotic artist from the less developed part of ex-Yugoslavia was attacking the most developed part of it. . . . The Balkans constitute a place of exception with regard to which the tolerant multiculturalist is allowed to act out his/her repressed racism. Therein lies the main ideological lesson of 'the Balkans': when theorists like Anthony Giddens or Ulrich Beck define contemporary society as a 'risk society' characterized by 'global reflexivity', the reference to 'the Balkans' allows us to supplement their analysis by pointing out how, today, racism itself is becoming reflexive. 75-6

RACE  
(K)

# VICTIMIZATION (K) INC

THE LOGIC OF VICTIMIZATION ENABLES "HUMANITARIAN" MISSIONS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. THIS CREATES A "PATERNALISTIC" SYSTEM OF DEPENDENCY WHICH DOES NOT PERMIT THE VICTIM TO ESCAPE THE DEATH GRIP OF SOVEREIGN POLITICS — CARE!

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

A report by Steven Erlanger on the suffering of the Kosovo Albanians in *The New York Times*<sup>37</sup> perfectly encapsulates this logic of victimization. Its title is revealing: 'In One Kosovo Woman, an Emblem of Suffering'; the subject to be protected (by NATO intervention) is identified from the outset as a powerless victim of circumstances, deprived of all political identity, reduced to stark

suffering. Her basic stance is that of excessive suffering, of traumatic experience that blurs all differences: 'She's seen too much, Meli said. She wants a rest. She wants it to be over.' As such, she is beyond any political recrimination – an independent Kosovo is not on her agenda; she just wants the horror over: 'Does she favor an independent Kosovo? "You know, I don't care if it's this or that," Meli said. "I just want all this to end, and to feel good again, to feel good in my place and my house with my friends and family."' Her support of the foreign (NATO) intervention is grounded in her wish for all this horror to be over: 'She wants a settlement that brings foreigners here "with some force behind them." She is indifferent about who the foreigners are.' Consequently, she sympathizes with all sides in an all-embracing humanist stance: 'There is tragedy enough for everyone, she says. "I feel sorry for the Serbs who've been bombed and died, and I feel sorry for my own people. But maybe now there will be a conclusion, a settlement for good. That would be great."' Here we have the ideological construction of the ideal subject-victim in aid of whom NATO intervenes: not a political subject with a clear agenda, but a subject of helpless suffering, sympathizing with all suffering sides in the conflict, caught up in the madness of a local clash that can be pacified only by the intervention of a benevolent foreign power, a subject whose innermost desire is reduced to the almost (animal craving to 'feel good again')...

The ultimate paradox of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was thus not the one about which Western pacifists complained (by bombing Yugoslavia in order to prevent ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, NATO in effect triggered large-scale cleansing, and thus created the very humanitarian catastrophe it wanted to prevent), but a deeper paradox involved in the ideology of victimization: the key aspect to note was NATO's privileging of the now-discredited 'moderate' Kosovar faction of Ibrahim Rugova against the 'radical' Kosovo Liberation Army. This means that NATO was actively blocking the full-scale armed resistance of the Albanians themselves. (The moment this option was mentioned, fears started to circulate: the KLA is not really an army, just a bunch of untrained fighters; we should not trust the KLA, since it is involved in drug-trafficking and/or is a Maoist group whose victory would lead to a Khmer Rouge or Taleban regime in Kosovo. ...) After the agreement on the Serb Army's withdrawal from Kosovo, this distrust of the KLA resurfaced with a vengeance: the topic of the day was again the 'danger' that, after the Serb Army's withdrawal, the KLA would – as the NATO sources and the media liked to put it – 'fill the vacuum' and take over. The message of this distrust could not have been clearer: it's OK to help the *helpless* Albanians against the Serbian monsters, but in no way are they to be allowed actually to *cast off this helplessness* by asserting themselves as a sovereign and self-reliant political subject, a subject with no need for the benevolent umbrella of the NATO 'protectorate'...

ZNC  
EXT. VICTIMIZATION / ABJECT (L/R)

THE AFFIRMATIVE PORTRAYAL OF THE ABJECT AS VICTIMS?  
"IN NEED" REINFORCES "THEIR" VICTIM STATUS WHICH  
IS CORRESPONSIBLE FOR "THEIR" REPRESSION

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. \_\_\_\_)

In short, while NATO was intervening in order to protect the Kosovar victims, it was at the same time taking very good care that they would remain victims; inhabitants of a devastated country with a passive population, not an active politico-military force capable of defending itself. The NATO strategy was thus perverse in the precise Freudian sense of the term: it was itself (co-)responsible for the calamity against which it offered itself as a remedy (like the mad governess in Patricia Highsmith's *Heroin*, who sets the family house on fire in order to be able to prove her devotion to the family by bravely saving the children from the raging

victim  
+  
CASE  
RECREATES  
VIOLENCE  
OR  
100%  
C/T/O

flames . . .). What we encounter here is again the paradox of victimization: the Other to be protected is good in so far as it remains a victim (which is why we were bombarded with pictures of helpless Kosovar mothers, children and old people, telling moving stories of their suffering); the moment it no longer behaves like a victim, but wants to strike back on its own, it magically turns all of a sudden into a terrorist/fundamentalist/drug-trafficking Other. . . . The crucial point is thus to recognize clearly in this ideology of global victimization, in this identification of the (human) subject itself as 'something that can be hurt', the mode of ideology that fits today's global capitalism. This ideology of victimization is the very mode in which – most of the time invisible to the public eye, and for that reason all the more ineluctable – the Real of Capital exerts its rule. / 59-0

INCUSION (L) = TOLERENCE (K)  
INC

INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE EXCLUDED IS A PERVERSE MOVE THAT FUNCTIONS TO REINSTATE SOCIAL HIERARCHIES.

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

Of course, one should be careful here to avoid what psychoanalysis calls the perverse temptation: this 'unplugging' from the social body should not turn into perversion, in which we love the lowest outcast because he is the lowest outcast (thus secretly wanting him to remain so) – in this way, we do not actually 'unplug' from the hierarchic social order, but merely turn it around, set it on its head, and thus continue to parasitize on it (this perverse logic was brought to its extreme by the medieval sects whose members went so far as to eat the excrement of their fellow men in order to emphasize their compassionate solidarity even with the 'lowest in man'). And is not (on a different level, of course) a similar 'uncoupling' at work in passionate sexual love? Is not such love one of the greatest pulverizers of social hierarchy? When, in the balcony scene, Romeo and Juliet pathetically proclaim their renunciation and hatred of their own family names (Montague, Capulet), and thus 'unplug' themselves from their particular

(family) social substance, do they not provide the supreme example of 'hatred of one's parents' as the direct expression of love? Furthermore, do we not encounter something similar in democratic 'unplugging': we are all directly members of the democratic collective, irrespective of our place in the intricate set of relations that form our respective communities?

A2:  
2 REG  
EXCLUSION  
COMMUNITY  
TURNS  
- NO!  
YOUR  
INCORRECT  
INCLUDING  
ZINCUB  
FURTHER  
TENSION  
DEPOLITIC  
(F2NC)

7/25/26



Z<sup>NC</sup> TOLERENCE / POLITICALLY CORRECT (L)

TOLERENCE IS A GUISE FOR BEING POLITICALLY CORRECT THE  
ROOT OF THE PROBLEMS LIE IN OUR POLITICAL REALITY, WHICH  
THE AFFIRMATIVE FAILS TO QUESTION. THE "OTHER" BECOMES  
NATURALIZED TO THE "LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC" ORDER.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute,  
p. \_\_\_\_\_)

RACE  
(K)  
TOLERENCE  
IS A GUISE  
FOR BEING  
POLITICALLY  
CORRECT.  
THE ROOT  
OF THE PROB-  
LEM LIES  
IN OUR  
POLITICAL  
REALITY  
WHICH RE-  
MAINS  
UNQUESTIONED  
THEY BECOME  
NATURALIZED  
LIBERAL DEMO-  
CRATIC  
TOLERENCE  
RESPECT  
(L)

So the more today's social theory proclaims the end of Nature and/or Tradition and the rise of the 'risk society', the more the implicit reference to 'nature' pervades our daily discourse: even when we do not mention the 'end of history', do we not convey the same message when we claim that we are entering a 'post-ideological' pragmatic era, which is another way of claiming that we are entering a post-political order in which the only legitimate conflicts are ethnic/cultural conflicts? Typically, in today's critical and political discourse, the term 'worker' has disappeared, supplanted and/or obliterated by 'immigrants [immigrant workers: Algerians in France, Turks in Germany, Mexicans in the USA]' – in this way, the *class* problematic of workers' exploitation is transformed into the *multiculturalist* problematic of the 'intolerance of Otherness', and so on, and the excessive investment of multiculturalist liberals in protecting immigrants' ethnic rights clearly draws its energy from the 'repressed' class dimension.

Although Francis Fukuyama's thesis on the 'end of history' quickly fell into disrepute, we still silently assume that the liberal-democratic capitalist global order is somehow the finally found 'natural' social regime; we still implicitly conceive of conflicts in Third World countries as a subspecies of natural catastrophes, as outbursts of quasi-natural violent passions, or as conflicts based on fanatical identification with ethnic roots (and what is 'ethnic' here if not again a codeword for nature?). And, again, the key point is that this all-pervasive renaturalization is strictly correlative to the global reflexivization of our daily lives. For that

reason, confronted with ethnic hatred and violence, one should thoroughly reject the standard multiculturalist idea that, against ethnic intolerance, one should learn to respect and live with the Otherness of the Other, to develop a tolerance for different lifestyles, and so on – the way to fight ethnic hatred effectively is not through its immediate counterpart, ethnic tolerance; on the contrary, what we need is even more hatred, but proper political hatred: hatred directed at the common political enemy. 710-1

## A2: HEIDEGGERIAN KRITIK OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

TURN: YOUR KRITIK OVERDETERMINES THE SO-CALLED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND ONTOLOGY; IN FACT FANTASY AND METAPHYSICS SUSTAINS IDEOLOGY AND TRUTH.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

The ultimate *lethe* is thus not the vertiginous abyss of entities beneath the Clearing in which they appear, but the *phenomenon* itself at its most radical, that is, the schema which determines how things appear to us. This scenario literally 'deranges', throws out of joint, the 'proper order of things': it distorts our approach to the world by violently imposing upon it a certain partial perspective. Therein lies the ultimate scandal: when we are dealing with an individual's symptom at its strongest, the entire consistency of a person's self-experience is, in an unacknowledged way, held together by this 'symptomatic torsion', by some idiosyncratic pathological tic, so that when we untie this knot (when we disturb a particular, seemingly trifling, point that shouldn't be touched; when we make a trivial remark that shouldn't be uttered...), the person's universe literally falls apart. Now let us imagine, in the guise of Schelling's 'naïve' psycho-cosmic speculations, a kind of ontological hyperbole to this matrix, in which a

A2:  
SPINNING  
HEIDEGGER

FANTASY  
AND  
METAPHYSICS  
SUSTAIN  
IDEOLOGY  
AND TRUTH

"IT'S ALL  
ZIZEK/  
HEIDEGGER  
THAT'S THE  
DIFFERENCE

certain 'pathological' singular spin, inaccessible to us 'as such', none the less colours our entire approach to Being, the way entities are disclosed to us. Is not *this* the ultimate *monstrosity* of the truth – that it relies on a pre-ontological obscene idiosyncratic scenario, so that if this scenario is no longer operative, truth itself disintegrates? The paradox is thus that, far from simply deranging/distorting the 'proper balance of things', fantasy at the same time *grounds* every notion of the balanced Universe: fantasy is not an idiosyncratic excess that *deranges* cosmic order, but the violent singular excess that *sustains* every notion of such an order. Perhaps this is how one can understand Heidegger's notion that metaphysics is unable fully to endorse this interplay of truth and the monstrous concealed kernel at its very heart: the 'illusion' of metaphysics is that this monstrous foreign body is ultimately accidental, affecting not the truth itself but only our access to it – that is, metaphysics is not ready to admit that our distortion of truth is grounded in an inherent distortion constitutive of the truth itself.

85-6

A2: ŽIŽEK DIVIDES REAL/FANTASY

NO (L) : ŽIŽEK OFFERS A MEANS TO BRIDGE THE REAL AND FANTASY; HE BELIEVES THIS BINARY TO BE FALSE.

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

The lesson of all this is that, in the opposition between fantasy and reality, the Real is on the side of fantasy. Nowhere is this clearer than in the standard Hollywood procedure, under the pressure of the Hayes Code censorship rules, of retroactively transposing the main narrative into a nightmarish dream, so that at the end of the film, when the catastrophe is at its peak, we return to 'normal' everyday reality. To avoid the standard examples (from Robert Wiene's *Dr. Caligari* to Fritz Lang's *Woman in the Window*), let us turn to Robert Siodmak's *The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry* (1945): in the online *All-Movie Guide*, this film is qualified as 'OK for Children' but the 'keywords' used to characterize its plot are 'incest, kill, romance, schemer, sister' – an excellent example of how the 'innocent' reading can coexist with much more unsettling undertones.

A2:  
REAL/FANTASY  
DIVISION  
EXISTS  
- NO (L)  
ŽIŽEK  
OFFERS  
A MEANS  
2 PROBLEMS  
THIS BINA-  
RY AND  
OVERFURN

767

ZAC: SPANOS / HEIDEGGER  
(K F/L)

TURN: SPANOS / HEIDEGGER UTILIZES AN "EVOLUTIONARY ONTOLOGY" THAT SEARCHES FOR ORIGINARY TRUTH AS IF IT WERE THE "HOLY GRAIL" — THIS FETTERIZES HISTORY AND FORECLOSES POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE. WE MUST LOOK ~~BACK~~ FORWARD TO ANALYZE THE PAST.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000, Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

◀ This is what, on a totally different level, Walter Benjamin was trying to articulate in his explicitly anti-evolutionist notion of the Messianic promise of a revolutionary Act that will retroactively redeem the Past itself: the present revolution will retroactively realize the crushed longings of all the past, failed revolutionary attempts. What this means is that, in a properly historical perspective as opposed to evolutionist historicism, the past is not simply past, but bears within it its proper utopian promise of a future Redemption: in order to understand a past epoch properly, it is not sufficient to take into account the historical conditions out of which it grew — one has also to take into account the utopian hopes of a Future that were betrayed and

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crushed by it — that which was 'negated', that which did not happen — so that the past historical reality was the way it was. To conceive the French Revolution, one has to focus also on the utopian hopes of liberation that were crushed by its final outcome, the common bourgeois reality — and the same goes for the October Revolution. Thus we are dealing not with idealist or spiritualist teleology, but with the dialectical notion of a historical epoch whose 'concrete' definition has to include its crushed potentials, which were inherently 'negated' by its reality.

To put it in even clearer terms: when we say that the present redeems the past itself, that the past itself contained signs which pointed towards the present, we are not making a historicist-relativist statement about how there is no 'objective' history; how we always interpret the past from our present horizon of understanding; how, in defining past epochs, we always — consciously or not — imply our present point of view. What we are claiming is something much more radical: what the proper historical stance (as opposed to historicism) 'relativizes' is not the past (always distorted by our present point of view) but, paradoxically, the present itself — our present can be conceived only as the outcome (not of what actually happened in the past, but also) of the crushed potentials for the future that were contained in the past. In other words, it is not only — as Foucault liked to emphasize, in a Nietzschean mode — that every history of the past is ultimately

ZAC: SPANOS / HEIDEGGER (K) H/L

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the 'ontology of the present', that we always perceive our past within the horizon of our present preoccupations, that in dealing with the past we are in effect dealing with the ghosts of the past whose resuscitation enables us to confront our present dilemmas. It is also that we, the 'actual' present historical agents, have to conceive of ourselves as the materialization of the ghosts of past

generations, as the stage in which these past generations retroactively resolve their deadlocks.

How, then, are we to answer the automatic criticism that such a melancholic presentiment of the future can be perceived only if we read the past from the perspective of the future – that is, distorted through teleological lenses? Is it not that this melancholic presentiment was not 'really there', but is just a kind of perspective distortion, read into the past from our later standpoint? (This situation is not unlike the well-known circular explanation of the emergence of language, one of the elementary matrixes of ideology: 'people invented language signs because they had something to say to each other' – as if, before language, there was already a need for it . . .) However, did not Marx show us the way out of this predicament when he emphasized that it is man who provides the key to the anatomy of the ape, not vice versa? In other words, the mistake of the evolutionist perspective is to accept the 'obvious' presupposition that the past was simply there, fully ontologically constituted, not 'open', containing the traces that were pointing towards the future.

189-1

# ZAC: SPANOS / SOVEREIGN POLITICS

PERMUTE : ~~AT~~ OUR AFFIRMATIVE SERVES TO REWRITE HISTORY'S VIOLENT MEANS. THE NEGATIVE CRITIQUE FORECLOSES POTENTIAL FOR DISPLACING THE CHAINS OF RACISM, SEXISM, ETHNIC VIOLENCE ETC...

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p.\_\_\_\_)

Against today's onslaught of New Age neo-paganism, it thus seems both theoretically productive and politically salient to stick to Judaeo-Christian logic. Along these neo-pagan lines, John Gray, author of *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, recently proposed, in a series of Oprah Winfrey shows, a vulgarized version of narrativist-deconstructionist psychoanalysis: since we ultimately 'are' the stories we are telling ourselves about ourselves, the solution to a psychic deadlock lies in a 'positive' creative rewriting of the narrative of our past. What Gray has in mind is not only the standard cognitive therapy of changing negative 'false beliefs' about oneself into a more positive attitude of the assurance that one is loved by others and capable of creative achievements, but a more 'radical', pseudo-Freudian notion of regressing back to the scene of the primordial traumatic wound. That is to say: Gray accepts the psychoanalytic notion of a hard kernel of some early childhood traumatic experience that forever

marked the subject's further development, giving it a pathological turn – what he proposes is that after regressing to his primal traumatic scene, and thus directly confronting it, the subject should, under the therapist's guidance, 'rewrite' this scene, this ultimate phantasmic framework of his subjectivity, as a more 'positive', benign and productive narrative – if, say, your primordial traumatic scene that persisted in your unconscious, distorting and inhibiting your creative attitude, was that of your father shouting at you: 'You're worthless! I despise you! Nothing good will come out of you!', you should rewrite it into a new scene with a benevolent father smiling kindly at you and telling you: 'You're OK! I trust you completely!' (In one of these Oprah Winfrey shows, Gray directly enacted this rewriting-the-past

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ZAC: SPANOS / SOVEREIGN POLITICS

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experience with a woman who, at the end, gratefully embraced him, crying with happiness that she was no longer haunted by her father's contemptuous attitude towards her.) To play this game to the end: when the Wolf Man 'regressed' to the traumatic scene that determined his subsequent psychic development – witnessing the parental *coitus a tergo* – the solution would be to rewrite this scene, so that what the Wolf Man actually saw was merely his parents lying on the bed, Father reading a newspaper and Mother a sentimental novel.

Ridiculous as this procedure may appear, let us not forget that it also has its PC version – that of ethnic, sexual, etc., minorities rewriting their past in a more positive, self-assertive vein (African-Americans claiming that long before European modernity, Ancient African empires already had highly developed science and technology, etc.). Along the same lines, one can even imagine a rewriting of the Decalogue itself: is some commandment too severe? Let us regress to the scene on Mount

Sinai and rewrite it: adultery – yes, if it is sincere, and serves the goal of your profound self-realization. . . . What disappears in this total reduction of the past to its subsequent retroactive rewriting is not primarily the 'hard facts' but the Real of a traumatic encounter whose structuring role in the subject's psychic economy forever resists its symbolic rewriting.

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TURN: CAPITALISM'S WORST ENEMY IS ITSELF, INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS RESULT IN ITS DENISE OR REDEVELOPMENT

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

One is tempted to claim here that, in a way, *both sides are wrong*. Precisely as Marxists, in the interests of our fidelity to Marx's work, we should identify Marx's mistake: he perceived how capitalism unleashed the breathtaking dynamics of self-enhancing productivity – see his fascinated descriptions of how, in capitalism, 'all things solid melt into thin air', of how capitalism is the greatest revolutionizer in the entire history of humanity; on the other hand, he also clearly perceived how this capitalist dynamics is propelled by its own inner obstacle or antagonism – the ultimate limit of capitalism (of self-propelling capitalist productivity) is Capital itself, that is, the incessant development and revolutionizing of capitalism's own material conditions, the mad dance of its unconditional spiral of productivity, is ultimately nothing but a desperate forward flight to escape its own debilitating inherent contradiction. ... 17

TURN:  
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ZAC: CIST (K F/L

THE NEGATIVE ASSURES THAT "WE CAN WALK AWAY" FROM THE CHAINS OF CAPITALISM — THIS MOVE OVERLOOKS HOW CAPITALISM IS CO-CONSTITUTIVE OF OUR SOCIAL EXISTENCE — THE SPECTERS OF MARX

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

So yes, this global dynamism described by Marx, which causes all things solid to melt into air, is our reality — on condition that we do not forget to supplement this image from *The Manifesto* with its inherent dialectical opposite, the 'spiritualization' of the very material process of production. While capitalism does suspend the power of the old ghosts of tradition, it generates its own monstrous ghosts. That is to say: on the one hand, capitalism entails the radical secularization of social life — it mercilessly tears apart any aura of authentic nobility, sacredness, honour, and so on:

It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

However, the fundamental lesson of the 'critique of political economy' elaborated by the mature Marx in the years after *The Manifesto* is that this reduction of all heavenly chimeras to brutal economic

reality generates a spectrality of its own. When Marx describes the mad self-enhancing circulation of Capital, whose solipsistic path of self-fecundation reaches its apogee in today's meta-reflexive speculations on futures, it is far too simplistic to claim that the spectre of this self-engendering monster that pursues its path regardless of any human or environmental concern is an ideological abstraction, and that one should never forget that behind this abstraction there are real people and natural objects on whose productive capacities and resources Capital's circulation is based, and on which it feeds like a gigantic parasite. The problem is that

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ZAC: CISM (K) F/L

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this 'abstraction' does not exist only in our (financial speculator's) misperception of social reality; it is 'real' in the precise sense of determining the very structure of material social processes: the fate of whole strata of populations, and sometimes of whole countries, can be decided by the 'solipsistic' speculative dance of Capital, which pursues its goal of profitability with a blessed indifference to the way its movement will affect social reality. That is the fundamental systemic violence of capitalism, which is much more uncanny than direct pre-capitalist socio-ideological violence: this violence is no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their 'evil' intentions; it is purely 'objective', systemic, anonymous.

Here we encounter the Lacanian difference between reality and the Real: 'reality' is the social reality of the actual people involved in interaction, and in the productive process; while the Real is the inexorable 'abstract' spectral logic of Capital which determines what goes on in social reality. This gap is palpable in the way the modern economic situation of a country is considered to be good and stable by international financial experts, even when the great majority of its people have a lower standard of living than they did before – reality doesn't matter, what

matters is the situation of Capital. . . . And, again, is this not truer than ever today? Do not phenomena usually described as those of 'virtual capitalism' (the futures trade and similar abstract financial speculations) indicate the reign of 'real abstraction' at its purest, much more radical than it was in Marx's time? In short, the highest form of ideology lies not in getting caught up in ideological spectrality, forgetting about its foundations in real people and their relations, but precisely in overlooking this Real of spectrality, and pretending to address directly 'real people with their real worries'. Visitors to the London Stock Exchange are given a free leaflet which explains to them that the stock market is not about some mysterious fluctuations, but about real people and their products – this is ideology at its purest. 7/4/6

ZAC: STATISM / SOVEREIGNTY (R)  
- RADICAL ALIENATION TURN.

THE NEGATIVE PORTRAYAL OF THE STATE IS THE ENABLING IDEOLOGY OF SOVEREIGN POLITICS. THE STATE BECOMES THE EVIL MONOLITHIC LEADER SUCH AS STALIN AND RESULTS IN RADICAL ALIENATION - THIS RESULTS A DANGEROUS SEPERATION BETWEEN FANTASY / IDEOLOGY, STRUCTURE / AGENCY.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

How are we to understand this logic which, ridiculous as it may seem, is at work even today, with North Korea's Kim Yong Il?<sup>19</sup> These characterizations do not refer to the Leader's actual properties - the logic here is the same as that of the Lady in courtly love who, as Lacan emphasized, is addressed as an abstract Ideal, so that 'writers have noted that all the poets seem to be addressing the same person. . . . In this poetic field the feminine object is emptied of all real substance.'<sup>20</sup> This abstract character of the Lady indicates the abstraction that pertains to a cold, distanced, inhuman partner - the Lady is by no means a warm, compassionate, understanding fellow-creature:

By means of a form of sublimation specific to art, poetic creation consists in positioning an object I can only describe as terrifying, an inhuman partner.

The Lady is never characterized for any of her real, concrete virtues, for her wisdom, her prudence, or even her competence. If she is described as wise, it is only because she embodies an immaterial wisdom or because she represents its functions more than she exercises them. On the contrary, she is as arbitrary as possible in the tests she imposes on her servant.<sup>21</sup>

And is it not the same with the Stalinist Leader? Does he not, when he is hailed as sublime and wise, also 'represent these functions more than he exercises them'? Nobody would claim that Malenkov, Beria and Khrushchev were examples of male beauty - the point is simply that they 'represented' the function of beauty. . . . (In contrast to the Stalinist Leader, the psychoanalyst is 'objectively' ugly even if he is actually a beautiful or sexually attractive person: in so far as he occupies the impossible place of the object, of the excremental remainder of the symbolic order, he 'represents' the function of ugliness.) In this sense, the designation of the Stalinist Leader as 'sublime' is to be taken literally, in the strict Lacanian sense: his celebrated wisdom, generosity, human warmth, and so on, are pure representations embodied by the Leader whom we 'can only describe as terrifying, an inhuman partner' - not symbolic authority obeying a Law, but a capricious Thing which is 'as arbitrary as possible in the tests it imposes on its servants'. Thus the price the Stalinist Leader pays for his elevation into the sublime object of beauty is his radical 'alienation': as with the Lady, the 'real person' is effectively treated as an appendage to the fetishized and celebrated public Image. No wonder the practice of retouching was so widely used in official photographs, with a clumsiness that is often so obvious that it is difficult to believe it was not intentional - as if to show that the 'real person', with all its idiosyncrasies, is to be totally replaced by its alienated wooden effigy. (One of the rumours about Kim Yong Il is that he actually died in a car crash a couple of years ago, and that in recent years a double has replaced him in his rare public appearances, so that the crowds can catch a glimpse of the object of their worship - is this not the best possible confirmation of the fact that the 'real personality' of the Stalinist Leader is

thoroughly irrelevant, a replaceable object, since it does not matter if it is the 'real' Leader or his double, who has no actual power?) Is not this practice of elevating a common vulgar figure into the ideal of Beauty - of reducing beauty to a purely functional notion - strictly correlative to the modernist elevation of an 'ugly' everyday excremental object into a work of art?<sup>22</sup> 735-6

ZAC: LOGIC OF BIOPOLITICS (K) F/L

TURN: INCORPORATION OF EXCLUDED GROUPS IS VITAL TO CREATE COMMUNAL BONDS AMONGST THE MARGINALIZED — THIS ALLOWS A POLITICS CAPABLE OF TRANSCENDING STATUS QUO" POWER RELATIONS.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

It is precisely in order to emphasize this suspension of the social hierarchy that Christ (like Buddha before him) addresses in particular those who belong to the very bottom of the social hierarchy, the outcasts of the social order (beggars, prostitutes . . .) as the privileged and exemplary members of his new community. This new community is then explicitly constructed as a collective of outcasts, the antipode to any established 'organic' group. Perhaps the best way to imagine such a community is to locate it in the lineage of other 'eccentric' communities of outcasts that we know from past and present, from lepers and circus freaks to early computer hackers — groups in which stigmatized individuals are united by a secret bond of solidarity. In order to specify these communities further, one is tempted to risk the reference to Freud himself — in his *Crowd Psychology* he provides two examples of crowd formation: the Church and the Army. Usually, one takes them as equivalent, without considering the difference between the two. What, however, if this difference is crucial, along the lines of Laclau's opposition between the structure of differences and the antagonistic logic of equivalences? The Church is global: a structured Institution, an encompassing network of hierarchically differentiated positions, basically ecumenical, tolerant, prone to compromises, all-inclusive, dividing its spoils among its subgroups; while in the Army the emphasis is on antagonism, on Us versus Them, on egalitarian

universalism (we are all ultimately equal when we are confronted with Them, the Enemy), so that the Army is ultimately exclusionary, prone to annihilate the other. Of course, this is a notional opposition: empirically, the line can well be blurred, and we often have a militant Church, or, on the contrary, an Army that functions as a Churchlike corporate social institution.

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# ZAC : KRITIK OF SECULAR ETHICS E/L

TURN: WE SHOULD RE-READ CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST TEXTS TO UNDERSTAND THEIR INCONNECTION — THIS ENABLES AN ETHICS OF COMMUNITY AND LOVE.

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

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Christianity (and, in its own way, Buddhism) introduced into this global balanced cosmic Order a principle that is totally foreign to it, a principle which, measured by the standards of pagan cosmology, cannot but appear as a monstrous distortion: the principle according to which each individual has *immediate* access to universality (of nirvana, of the Holy Spirit, or, today, of human Rights and freedoms): I can participate in this universal dimension *directly*, irrespective of my special place within the global social order. For that reason, Buddha's followers form a community of people who, in one way or another, have broken with the hierarchy of the social order and started to treat it as fundamentally *irrelevant*: in his choice of disciples, Buddha pointedly ignored castes and (after some hesitation, true) even sexual difference. And do not Christ's scandalous words from Saint Luke's Gospel point in the same direction: 'If anyone come to me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple' (14: 26)? Here, of course, we are *not* dealing with a simple brutal hatred demanded by a cruel and jealous God:

family relations stand here metaphorically for the entire socio-symbolic network, for any particular ethnic 'substance' that determines our place in the global Order of Things. The 'hatred' enjoined by Christ is not, therefore, a kind of pseudo-dialectical opposite to love, but a direct expression of what Saint Paul, in Corinthians I 13, with unsurpassable power, describes as *agape*, the key intermediary term between faith and hope: it is love itself that enjoins us to 'unplug' from the organic community into which we were born — or, as Paul puts it, for a Christian, there are neither men nor women, neither Jews nor Greeks. . . . No wonder that, for those fully identified with the Jewish 'national substance', as well as for the Greek philosophers and the proponents of the global Roman Empire, the appearance of Christ was a ridiculous and/or traumatic scandal.

126-21

# HOLD-IT-UP<sub>2</sub> LETTER PERM

PERMUTE: THE AFFIRMATIVE IS A 9 MINUTE SUSTAINED FANTASY OF SOVEREIGN POLITICS. WE MUST HOLD UP THE STATE TO THE LETTER OF THE LAW IN ORDER TO TRAVERSE THE FANTASY OF SOVEREIGN IDEOLOGY.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_\_)

## 13 'You must, because you can!'

"HOLD IT UP LIKE YOU'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE"  
PERM:  
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UNCONSCIOUS  
IDEOLOGY  
WHICH  
SUSTAINS  
FANTASY

Let us specify this crucial point by reference to a well-known tasteless defence of Hitler: 'True, Hitler did some horrible things, like trying to rid Germany of Jews, but we should not forget that he none the less did some good things, like building highways and making the trains run on time!' The whole point of this defence, of course, is that although it formally denounces anti-Semitic violence, it is covertly anti-Semitic: the very gesture of comparing the anti-Semitic horrors to building highways, and putting them together in a statement whose structure is that of 'Yes, I know, but none the less . . .', makes it clear that praising Hitler's construction of highways is a displaced way of praising his anti-Semitic measures. The proof is that the critique of Hitler which *turns around* the terms of the first one (popular in some extremely conservative ecological circles) is no less acceptable, but implies an even stronger *defence* of Hitler, albeit in the form of criticism: 'True, Hitler did some good things, like trying to rid Germany of Jews, but we should not forget that he none the less did some horrible things, like building highways and thus ruining Germany's environment . . .'. And is not a similar reversal also the true content of the standard defence of the perpetrators of extreme-Right racist violence:

'True, he did participate in lynchings of African-Americans, but we should not forget that he was also a good and honest family man who went regularly to church . . .' – instead of this, one should read: 'True, he did do some good things, like trying to get rid of the nasty African-Americans; none the less, we should not forget that he was just a common family man who went regularly to church . . .'. The key to this reversal is that in both cases we are dealing with the tension between the publicly acknowledged and acceptable ideological content (building highways, going to church) and its obscene disavowed underside (Holocaust, lynchings): the first, standard, version of the statement acknowledges the public content and disavows its obscene underside (while secretly endorsing it); the second version openly dismisses the public aspect and endorses the obscene underside.

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HOLD-IT-UP<sub>2</sub> LETTER PERM

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So, in so far as, with regard to the duality of 'official' public symbolic narrative space and its spectral double, the public symbolic space is regulated by the symbolic Law, what kind of law is operative in the uncanny domain of its spectral double? The answer, of course, is: *superego*.<sup>89</sup> One should bear in mind here that the tension between the symbolic Law and the impossible/real Thing access to which is prohibited by the Law (ultimately, the maternal Thing prohibited by the paternal Law) is not Lacan's ultimate horizon – what lies beyond (or, rather, beneath) it is the uncanny Thing which itself 'makes the Law':

*Das Ding* presents itself at the level of unconscious experience as that which already makes the law. . . . It is a capricious and arbitrary law, the law of the oracle, the law of signs in which the subject receives no guarantee from anywhere.<sup>90</sup>

So we no longer have *das Ding* as the dark *beyond*, constituted by the prohibitory Law: the ultimate horror is that of the real Thing itself which directly 'makes the law'. And in so far as the Thing stands for *jouissance*, this Law which is the Law of the Thing itself is, of course, none other than the superego, the law whose injunction is the impossible command 'Enjoy!'. This is also the dimension that is the obverse of the Kantian logic of the infinite approach to the impossible goal: in Kant's horizon, the Thing remains inaccessible, a void beyond the Law, while the Law-Thing displays as it were the Sadeian obverse/truth of Kant, a perverse Law that is the Law of the Thing itself. 735-2

ZAC: PERMUTATIONS; NEW SYSTEMS OF RESISTANCE

PERMUTE: ENDORSE THE IAC SYSTEM TO CHANGE THE TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE.

Zizek (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, The Fragile Absolute, p. \_\_\_\_)

One of the most deplorable aspects of the postmodern era and its so-called 'thought' is the return of the religious dimension in all its different guises: from Christian and other fundamentalisms, through the multitude of New Age spiritualisms, up to the emerging religious sensitivity within deconstructionism itself (so-called 'post-secular' thought). How is a Marxist, by definition a 'fighting materialist' (Lenin), to counter this massive onslaught of obscurantism? The obvious answer seems to be not only ferociously to attack these tendencies, but mercilessly to denounce the remainders of the religious legacy within Marxism itself.

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Against the old liberal slander which draws on the parallel between the Christian and Marxist 'Messianic' notion of history as the process of the final deliverance of the faithful (the notorious 'Communist-parties-are-secularized-religious-sects' theme), should one not emphasize how this holds only for ossified 'dogmatic' Marxism, not for its authentic liberating kernel? Following Alain Badiou's path-breaking book on Saint Paul,<sup>1</sup> our premiss here is exactly the opposite one: instead of adopting such a defensive stance, allowing the enemy to define the terrain of the struggle, what one should do is to reverse the strategy by fully endorsing what one is accused of: yes, there is a direct lineage from Christianity to Marxism; yes, Christianity and Marxism should fight on the same side of the barricade against the onslaught of new spiritualisms - the authentic Christian legacy is much too precious to be left to the fundamentalist freaks. 71-2



ZAC: GENERIC KRITIK F/L

THE AFFIRMATIVES ATTEMPT TO "SPEAK-OUT" TO PROCLAIM/  
CONFESS "THEIR GUILT AND COMPLICITY WITH TRADITIONAL  
DEBATE, CAPITALISM, AND/OR SOVEREIGNTY IS A PARALYZING  
POLITICAL STRATEGY THAT IS INCAPABLE OF OVERCOMING  
POWER-RELATIONS AND REINFORCES DOMINATION

**Zizek** (Senior researcher @ Ljubljana, Slovenia  
and Schour, 2000; Slavoj, *The Fragile Absolute*,  
p. )

Here, as in so many matters, it was Hegel who showed the way. That is to say, was it not Hegel who, in his famous subsection on the 'world of self-alienated Spirit' in the *Phenomenology*, provided the definitive description of the passage from *tragique* to *moque-comique*, demonstrating how, in the process of dialectical mediation, every dignified, 'noble' position turns into its opposite – the truth of the 'noble consciousness' dedicated to its sublime ethical task of serving the Good is the manipulative, servile, exploitative 'base (knaveish) consciousness':

The content of what Spirit says about itself is thus the perversion of every Notion and reality, the universal deception of itself and others; and the shamelessness which gives utterance to this deception is just for that reason the greatest truth. This kind of talk is the madness of the musician 'who heaped up and mixed together thirty arias, Italian, French, tragic, comic, of every sort; now with a deep bass he descended into hell, then, contracting his throat, he rent the vaults of heaven with a falsetto tone, frantic and soothed, imperious and mocking, by turns.' (Diderot, *Nephew of Rameau*) To the tranquil consciousness which, in its honest way, takes the melody of the Good and the True to consist in the evenness of the notes, i.e. in unison, this talk appears as

a 'rignarole of wisdom and folly, as a medley of as much skill as baseness, of as many correct as false ideas, a mixture compounded of a complete perversion of sentiment, of absolute shamefulfulness, and of perfect frankness and truth.' . . . This latter mind perverts in its speech all that is unequivocal, because what is self-identical is only an abstraction, but in its actual existence is in its own self a perversion.<sup>31</sup>

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ZAC - GENETIC KRITIK FL

CONTINUES - 2/2

Two things about this remarkable passage should be emphasized. First, Marx's famous 'corrective' to Hegel's notion of historical repetition with which his *Eighteenth Brumaire* begins (history repeats itself, the first time as a tragedy, then as a farce) is already operative in Hegel himself: in his mad dance, Rameau's nephew *repeats* in a parodic way the *grandeur* of his uncle, the renowned composer, just as Napoleon III, the nephew, repeats in the mode of a farce the deeds of his uncle, the Napoleon. So it is already in Hegel that the two modes of repetition compete in a properly dialectical tension: the 'serious' repetition through which a historical contingency is 'sublated' into the expression of a historical necessity (Napoleon had to lose twice), and the 'comic' repetition that subverts the tragic identification. Secondly, we can see here clearly how the dialectical *passage* operates in Hegel - how we pass from In-itself to For-itself. Although the perverse speech of the 'nephew of Rameau' vocalizes the truth of the 'noble consciousness', his candid cynical admission of guilt none the less remains false - he is like a crook who thinks that he redeems himself by publicly acknowledging his crookedness (or, one is tempted to add, like a highly paid professor of Cultural Studies in Western academia who thinks that his incessant self-condemnatory critique of the

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Eurocentrist, etc., bias of Western academia somehow exempts him from being implicated in it).

The guilt here concerns the tension between the subject of the statement and the subject of the enunciation (the subjective position *from which* one speaks): there is a way in which one can lie in the guise of (telling the) truth, that is, in which the full and candid admission of one's guilt is the ultimate deception, the way to preserve one's subjective position intact, free from guilt. In short, there is a way to avoid responsibility and/or guilt by, precisely, emphasizing one's responsibility or too readily assuming one's guilt in an exaggerated way, as in the case of the white male PC academic who emphasizes the guilt of racist phallogocentrism, and uses this admission of guilt as a stratagem not to face the way he, as a 'radical' intellectual, perfectly embodies the existing power relations towards which he pretends to be thoroughly critical. So - back to Diderot's *Rameau* - the problem with Rameau's nephew is not that his perverse negation of his dignified uncle's 'noble consciousness' is too radical and destructive, but that, in its very excess, it is *not radical enough*: the exaggerated perverse content which seems to explode the uncle's dignified speech is there to conceal the fact that, in both cases, the subjective position of enunciation remains the same. The more the admission is candid, inclusive of openly acknowledging the inconsistency of one's own position (the more it is false) - in the same way, open confessions of the most intimate sexual, etc., details in today's talk shows really tell us *nothing* about the subject's inner truth (maybe because there is actually nothing to tell...).

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