

Introduction to Ideology

Slavoj Zizek: A pervert's guide

[http://youtu.be/F4WAXQJyxCo?
list=PLh0Xn135HByZStbA1LdMDm5x1HMfQRAvC](http://youtu.be/F4WAXQJyxCo?list=PLh0Xn135HByZStbA1LdMDm5x1HMfQRAvC)

What is “ideology”?

What are examples of
“ideologies”?

Is ideology a bad thing?

Define: Ideology

Generally a disparaging term used to describe someone else's political views which one regards as unsound.

Define: Ideology

“Ideology presents an incomplete, inaccurate, and distorted understanding of social reality.”

Define: Ideology

A systematic scheme of ideas, usually relating to politics, economics, or society and forming the basis of action or policy; a set of beliefs governing conduct. Also: the forming or holding of such a scheme of ideas.

Define: Ideology

Communism

Capitalism

Feminism

Racism

Environmentalism

Define: Ideology

Ideology both gives meaning to the alterity of existence (we were meant to fall in love) and denies the logic of structurally determined events (the stock market crashed for a reason). (Zizek)

Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser)

Repressive State Apparatuses: gov't, army, admin, etc.

Ideological State Apparatuses: religion, education, family,
communications, culture

Side Note: Is the study
of ideology always
marxist?

NONONONO

Side Note: Is the study
of ideology always a
critique?

PROBABLY YES

Ideology and Science: How does ideology affect science?

Latour: Science vs Research

"I have a question for you," he said, taking out of his pocket a crumpled piece of paper on which he had scribbled a few key words. He took a breath: "Do you believe in reality?"

"But of course!" I laughed. "What a question! Is reality something we have to believe in?"

Latour: Science vs Research

To put it even more bluntly, science studies has become a hostage in a huge shift from Science to what we could call Research (or Science No. 2, as I will call it in Chapter 8). While Science had certainty, coldness, aloofness, objectivity, distance, and necessity, Research appears to have all the opposite characteristics: it is uncertain; open-ended; immersed in many lowly problems of money, instruments, and know-how; unable to differentiate as yet between hot and cold, subjective and objective, human and nonhuman. If Science thrived by behaving as if it were totally disconnected from the collective, Research is best seen as a *collective experimentation* about what humans and nonhumans together are able to swallow or to withstand. It seems to me that the second model is wiser than the former. No longer do we have to choose between Right and Might, because there is now a third party in the dispute, that is, the collective*; no longer do we have to decide between Science and Anti-Science, because here too there is a third party—the same third party, the collective.

Research is this zone into which humans and nonhumans are thrown, in which has been practiced, over the ages, the most extraordinary collective experiment to distinguish, in real time, between “cosmos” and “unruly shambles” with no one, neither the scientists nor the “science students,” knowing in advance what the provisional answer will be. Maybe science studies is anti-Science, after all, but in that case it is wholeheartedly for Research, and, in the future, when the spirit of the times will have taken a firmer grip on public opinion, it will be in the same camp as all of the active scientists, leaving on the other side only a few disgruntled cold-war physicists still wishing to help Socrates shut the mouths of the “ten thousand fools” with an unquestionable and indisputable absolute truth coming from nowhere. The opposite of relativism, we should never forget, is called absolutism (Bloor [1976] 1991).

Could there be an
ideological basis to the
things that we choose to
study?

Ideology and Science: Is there an ideology of science?

Case 1: Women in the Field

As an undergraduate student in biology, I spent several weeks in Costa Rica one summer with an older graduate student on a research project deep in the cloud forest. It was just the two of us, and upon arriving at our site, I discovered that he had arranged a single room for us, one bed.

Mortified but afraid of being labeled prudish or difficult, I made no fuss. I took the lodge owner aside the next day and requested my own bed. The problem ended there, and my graduate student boss never made any physical advances.

Reflecting back, I'm struck by how ill equipped I was to deal with this kind of situation, especially at 19. My university undoubtedly had a harassment policy, but such resources were thousands of miles away. I was alone in a foreign country and had never received any training on my rights and resources in the field.

I'd forgotten about this experience from two decades ago until I read a report published July 16 in the journal PLOS One. Kathryn Clancy, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and three colleagues used email and social media to invite scientists to fill out an online questionnaire about their experiences with harassment and assault at field sites; they received 666 responses, three quarters of them from women, from 32 disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, biology and geology.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents said they had been sexually harassed in the field. More than 20 percent reported being sexually assaulted. Students or postdoctoral scholars, and women were most likely to report being victimized by superiors. Very few respondents said their field site had a code of conduct or sexual harassment policy, and of the 78 who had dared to report incidents, fewer than 20 percent were satisfied with the outcome. – *New York Times*, Aug. 11 2014

Case 2: Botanical Transects

Little figures lost in the landscape, pushed off to the side as in a painting by Poussin, point at interesting phenomena with their fingers and pens. The first character, pointing at some trees and plants, is Edileusa Setta-Silva. She is Brazilian. She lives in this region, teaching botany at the small university in the little town of Boa Vista, the capital of the Amazonian province of Roraima. Just to her right another person looks on attentively, smiling at what Edileusa is showing him. Armand Chauvel is from France. He has been sent on this trip by ORSTOM, the research institute of the French former colonial empire, the “agency for the development of cooperative scientific research.”

Armand is not a botanist but a pedologist (pedology is one of the

soil sciences, not to be confused with either geology, the science of subsoil, or podiatry, the medical art of treating feet); he resides about a thousand kilometers away in Manaus, where ORSTOM finances his laboratory in a Brazilian research center known as INPA.

The third person, taking notes in a small notebook, is Héloïsa Filizola. She is a geographer, or rather, as she insists, a geomorphologist, studying the natural and social history of the shape of the land. She is Brazilian like Edileusa, but from the south, from São Paulo, which is thousands of kilometers away, almost another country. She is also a professor at a university, though one far larger than the one in Boa Vista.

As for me, I’m the one taking this picture and describing this scene. My job as a French anthropologist is to follow these three at work. Familiar with laboratories, I decided for a change to observe a field expedition. I also decided, being something of a philosopher, to use my report on the expedition as a chance to study empirically the epistemological question of scientific reference. Through this photophilosophical account I will bring before your eyes, dear reader, a small part of the forest of Boa Vista; I will show you some traits of my scientists’ intelligence; and I will strive to make you aware of the labor required for this transport and that reference.

Case 2: Botanical Transects

This is a situation so trivial that we tend to forget its novelty: here are four scientists whose gaze is able to dominate two maps of the very landscape that surrounds them. (Both of Armand's hands and I'dileusa's right hand must continually smooth out the corners of the map, otherwise the comparison would be lost and the feature they are trying to find would not appear.) Remove both maps, confuse cartographic conventions, erase the tens of thousands of hours invested in Radambrasil's atlas, interfere with the radar of planes, and our four scientists would be lost in the landscape and obliged once more to begin all the work of exploration, reference marking, triangulation, and squaring performed by their hundreds of predecessors. Yes, scientists master the world, but only if the world comes to them in the form of two dimensional, superposable, combinable inscriptions*. It has always been the same story, ever since Thales stood at the foot of the Pyramids.