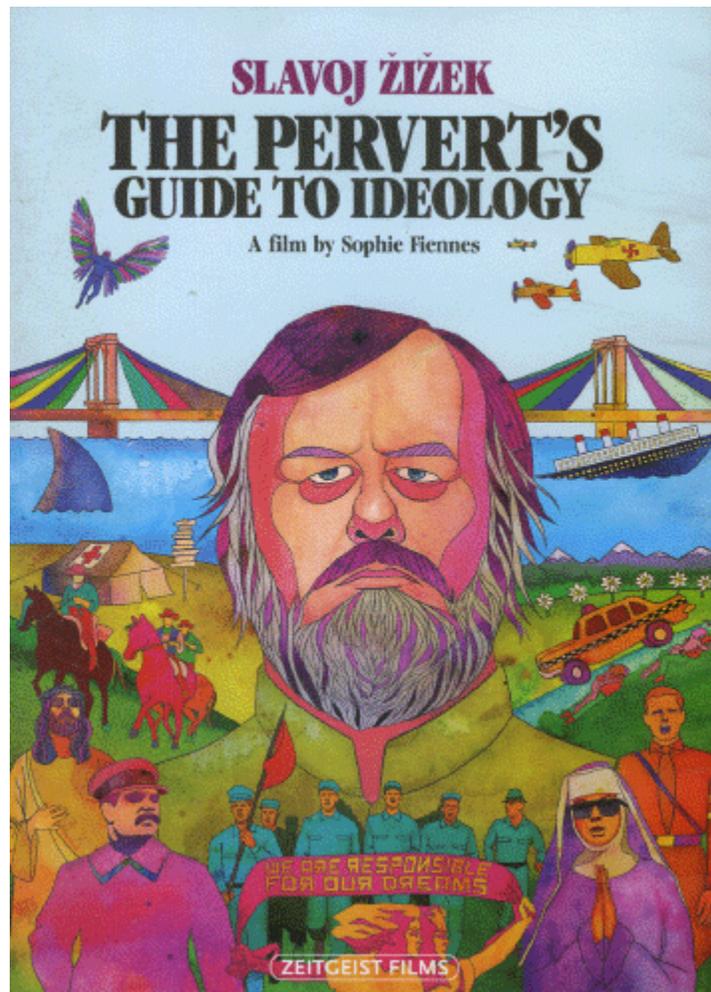


# THE PERVERT'S GUIDE TO IDEOLOGY -- ILLUSTRATED SCREENPLAY

Directed by Sophie Fiennes ["my Leni Riefenstahl"]

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[transcribed from the film by Tara Carreon]

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE AND FILM4 PRESENT

IN ASSOCIATION WITH ROOKS NEST ENTERTAINMENT AND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF BORD  
SCANNAN NA HEIREANN/THE IRISH FILM BOARD

A P GUIDE PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BLINDER FILMS

A FILM BY SOPHIE FIENNES



THEY LIVE (1988), JOHN CARPENTER, UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS INC.



[John Nada] I'm giving you a choice  
Either put on these glasses,  
or start eating that trash can.



[Slavoj Zizek] I already am eating from the trash can all the time.  
The name of this trash can is ideology.  
The material force of ideology ...  
makes me not see ...  
what I am effectively eating.  
It's not only our reality which enslaves us.  
The tragedy of our predicament,  
when we are within ideology,  
is that when we think that we escape it into our dreams,  
at that point we are within ideology.

THE  
PERVERT'S  
GUIDE  
TO  
IDEOLOGY

THE PERVERT'S GUIDE TO IDEOLOGY

FEATURING  
SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

FEATURING SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: KATHERINE BUTLER, TABITHA JACKSON, SHANI HINTON  
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PRODUCERS: JAMES WILSON, MARTIN ROSENBAUM, KATIE HOLLY, SOPHIE FIENNES

DIRECTED BY  
SOPHIE FIENNES

DIRECTED BY SOPHIE FIENNES



[Slavoj Žižek] *They Live* from 1988  
is definitely one of the forgotten masterpieces ...  
of the Hollywood left.

It tells the story of John Nada.  
“Nada,” of course, in Spanish means “nothing.”  
A pure subject,  
deprived of all substantial content.  
A homeless worker in L.A. who, drifting around,



one day enters into an abandoned church ...



and finds there a strange box full of sunglasses.  
And when he put one of them on,  
walking along the L.A. streets,  
he discovers something weird.  
That these glasses function ...  
like critique-of-ideology glasses.



[OBEY]

At the same time we have to become epistemologically aware of our well beloved gnostic or platonic glasses, with which we prefer to perceive every kind of overcoming the human body.

-- Gnosis in Cyberspace? Body, Mind and Progress in Posthumanism, by Oliver Krueger

They allow you to see ...  
the real message beneath ...  
all the propaganda, publicity, glitz,  
posters and so on.



You see a large publicity board ...



telling you, "Have your holiday of a lifetime,"  
and when you put the glasses on,  
you see just on the white background ...  
a gray inscription ...

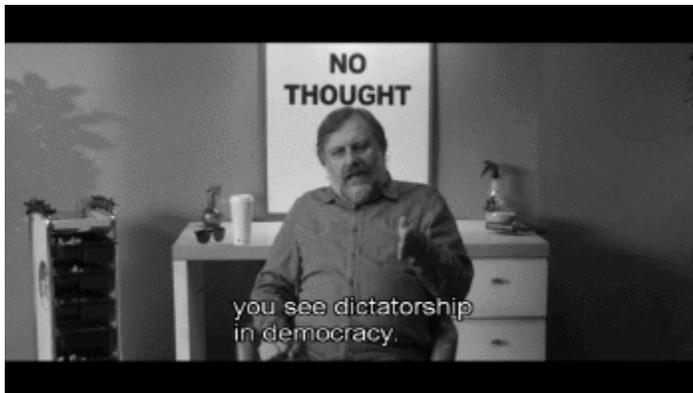


[MARRY AND REPRODUCE]

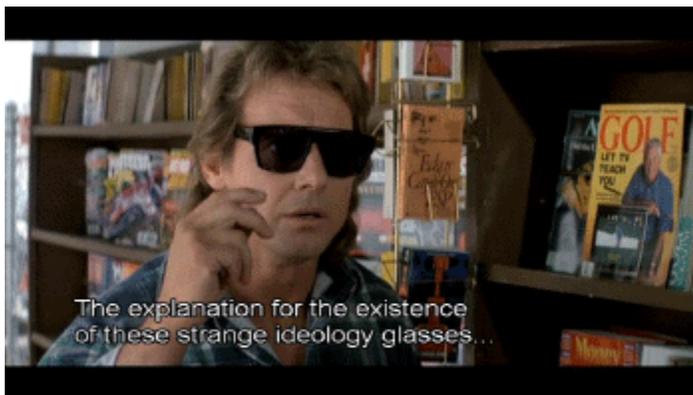
We live, so we are told,  
in a post-ideological society.  
We are interpolated,  
that is to say, addressed by social authority,  
not as subjects who should do their duty,  
sacrifice themselves,  
but subjects of pleasures.  
"Realize your true potential."  
"Be yourself."  
"Lead a satisfying life."



When you put the glasses on,



you see dictatorship in democracy.  
It's the invisible order ...  
which sustains your apparent freedom.

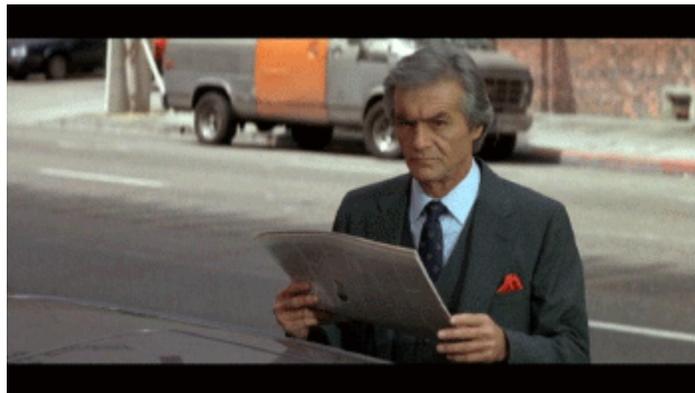


The explanation for the existence of these strange ideology glasses ...



is the standard story  
of the *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

is the standard story of the Invasion of the Body Snatchers.



Humanity is already under the control of aliens.

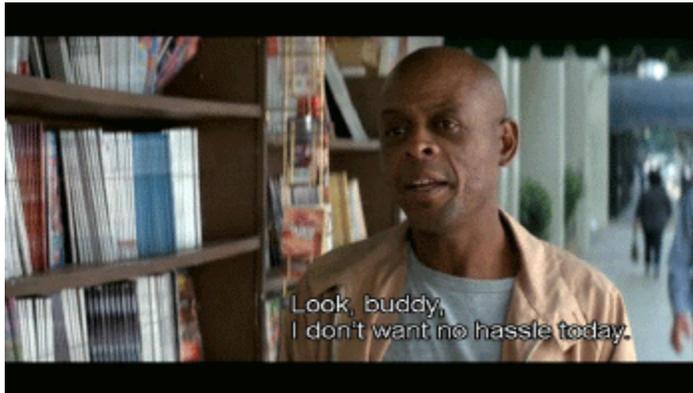


[ Man ]  
Hey, buddy.

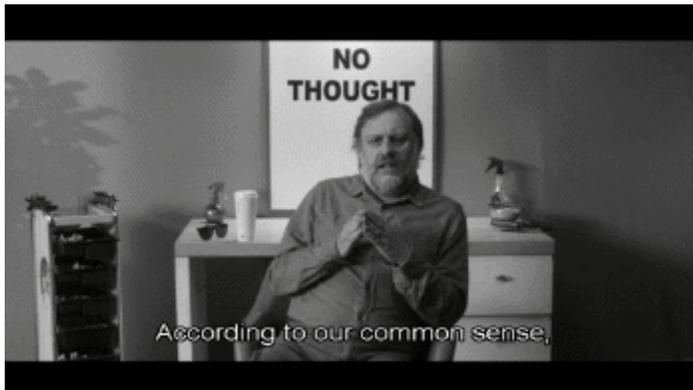
[Actor] Hey, buddy. You gonna pay for that or what?



[Money in his hand says: THIS IS YOUR GOD]



Look buddy, I don't want no hassle today.  
Either pay for it or put it back.



[Slavoj Zizek] According to our common sense  
we think that ideology is something ...

blurring, confusing our straight view.  
Ideology should be glasses ...  
which distort our view.  
And the critique of ideology  
should be the opposite  
like you take off the glasses ...  
so that you can finally see the way things really are.  
This precisely and here,  
the pessimism of the film, of *They Live*, is well justified.  
This precisely is the ultimate illusion.  
Ideology is not simply imposed on ourselves.  
Ideology is our spontaneous relationship to our social world,  
how we perceive each meaning and so on and so on.  
We, in a way, enjoy our ideology.

Imagine ideology as a kind of a filter, a frame, so that if you look at the same ordinary reality through that frame, everything changes. In what sense? It's not that the frame actually adds anything. It's just that the frame opens the abyss of suspicion.

-- The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, directed by Sophie Fiennes -- Screenplay

[John Nada] All right.

[NO THOUGHT]

Since these proficients are still at a very low stage of progress, and follow their own nature closely in the intercourse and dealings which they have with God, because the gold of their spirit is not yet purified and refined, they still think of God as little children, and speak of God as little children, and feel and experience God as little children, even as Saint Paul says, because they have not reached perfection, which is the union of the soul with God. In the state of union, however, they will work great things in the spirit, even as grown men, and their works and faculties will then be Divine rather than human, as will afterwards be said. To this end God is pleased to strip them of this old man and clothe them with the new man, who is created according to God, as the Apostle says, in the newness of sense. He strips their faculties, affections and feelings, both spiritual and sensual, both outward and inward, leaving the understanding dark, the will dry, the memory empty and the affections in the deepest affliction, bitterness and constraint, taking from the soul the pleasure and experience of spiritual blessings which it had aforetime, in order to make of this privation one of the principles which are requisite in the spirit so that there may be introduced into it and united with it the spiritual form of the spirit, which is the union of love. All this the Lord works in the soul by means of a pure and dark contemplation, as the soul explains in the first stanza.

As a result of this, the soul feels itself to be perishing and melting away, in the presence and sight of its miseries, in a cruel spiritual death, even as if it had been swallowed by a beast and felt itself being devoured in the darkness of its belly, suffering such anguish as was endured by Jonas in the belly of that beast of the sea. For in this sepulchre of dark death it must needs abide until the spiritual resurrection which it hopes for.

This was also described by Job, who had had experience and, in these words: 'I, who was wont to be wealthy and rich, am suddenly undone and broken to pieces; He hath taken me by my neck; He hath broken me and set me up for His mark to wound me; He hath compassed me round about with His lances; He hath wounded all my loins; He hath not spared; He hath poured out my bowels on the earth; He hath broken me with wound

upon wound; He hath assailed me as a strong giant; I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin and have covered my flesh with ashes; my face is become swollen with weeping and mine eyes are blinded.' ...

Inasmuch as not only is the understanding here purged of its light, and the will of its affections, but the memory is also purged of meditation and knowledge, it is well that it be likewise annihilated with respect to all these things, so that that which David says of himself in this purgation may be fulfilled, namely: 'I was annihilated and I knew not.' For, in order that the soul may be divinely prepared and tempered with its faculties for the Divine union of love, it would be well for it to be first of all absorbed, with all its faculties, in this Divine and dark spiritual light of contemplation, and thus to be withdrawn from all the affections and apprehensions of the creatures, which condition ordinarily continues in proportion to its intensity. And thus, the simpler and the purer is this Divine light in its assault upon the soul, the more does it darken it, void it and annihilate it according to its particular apprehensions and affections, with regard both to things above and to things below.

And this is the characteristic of the spirit that is purged and annihilated with respect to all particular affections and objects of the understanding, that in this state wherein it has pleasure in nothing and understands nothing in particular, but dwells in its emptiness, darkness and obscurity, it is fully prepared to embrace everything to the end that those words of Saint Paul may be fulfilled in it: *Nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes*. [Google translate: Having nothing, and yet possessing all things.] For such poverty of spirit as this would deserve such happiness.

-- Dark Night of the Soul, by St. John of the Cross

[Slavoj Zizek] To step out of ideology, it hurts.  
It's a painful experience.



You must force yourself to do it.  
This is rendered in a wonderful way ...  
with a further scene in the film where John Nada  
tries to force his best friend, John Armitage,  
to also put the glasses on.

[John Nada] I don't wanna fight ya.

[John Armitage] Come on.

[John Nada] Stop it!

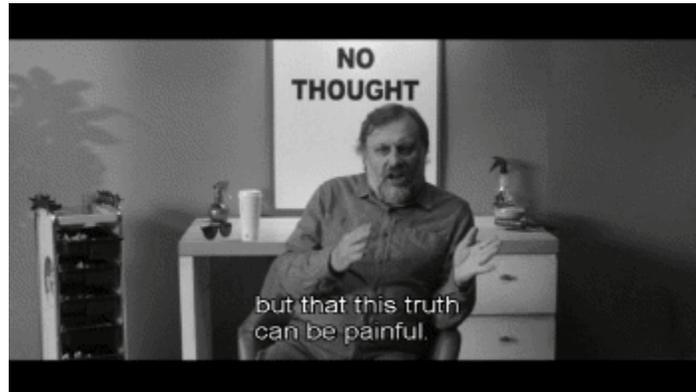
[John Armitage] No!

[Slavoj Zizek] And it's the weirdest scene in the film.  
The fight takes eight, nine minutes.

[John Nada] Put on the glasses.

[Slavoj Zizek] It may appear irrational,  
because why does this guy reject so violently ...  
to put the glasses on?

It is as if he is well aware ...  
that spontaneously he lives in a lie,  
that the glasses will make him see the truth,



but that this truth can be painful.  
It can shatter many of your, uh, illusions.

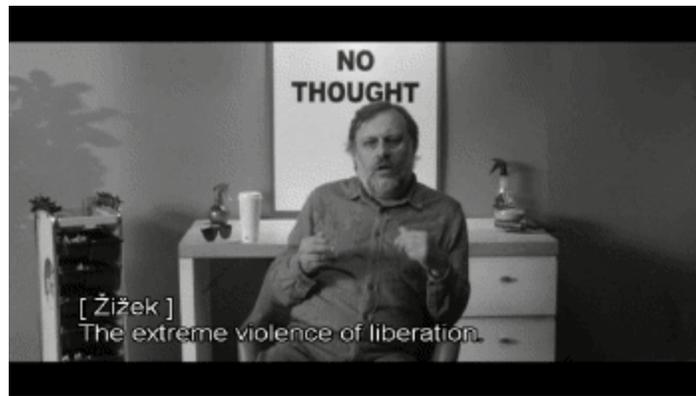
[John Armitage] [Grunting]

[Slavoj Zizek] This is a paradox we have to accept.



[John Nada] Put the glasses on! Put 'em on!

[Grunting]



[Slavoj Žižek] The extreme violence of liberation.

You must be forced to be free.

If you trust simply your spontaneous sense of well being or whatever,  
you will never get free.

[John Nada] Look!

[Slavoj Žižek] Freedom hurts.

[RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN'S THE SOUND OF MUSIC (1965), ROBERT WISE, TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION & ARGYLE ENTERPRISES]



[Slavoj Žižek] The basic insight of psychoanalysis ...

is to distinguish between enjoyment ...

and simple pleasures.

They are not the same.



Enjoyment is precisely enjoyment in disturbed pleasure.

Even enjoyment in pain.

And this excessive factor ...  
disturbs the apparently simple relationship ...  
between duty and pleasures.  
This is also a space where ...  
ideology up to,  
and especially religious ideology, operates.  
This brings me to maybe my favorite example,  
the great classical Hollywood film ...



The Sound of Music.  
We all know it's the story of a nun ...



who is too alive ...  
with too much energy,  
ultimately sexual energy,  
to be constrained to the role of a nun.



[Maria] Oh – Oh, Reverend Mother, I'm so sorry.  
I just couldn't help myself.  
The gates were open and the hills were beckoning, and before I –



[Mother Superior] Maria,  
I haven't summoned you here for apologies.

[Maria] Oh, please, Mother, do let me ask for forgiveness.

\*\*\*



[Maria] One, two, three. One, two, three.



One, two three. Step together.

[Slavoj Zizek] So Mother Superior sends her to the Von Trapp family ...  
where she takes care of the children –

[Kurt] Under, mmm.

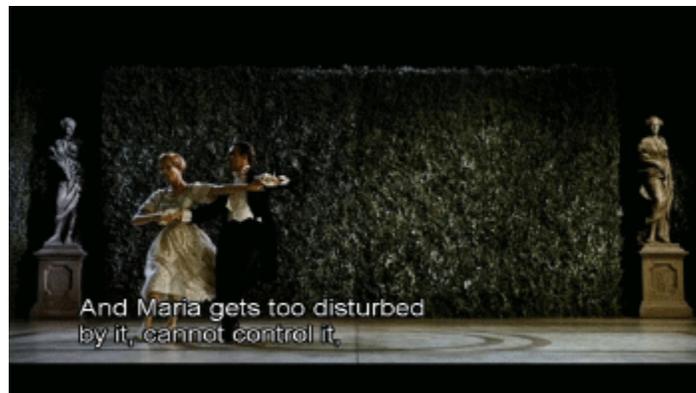


[Maria] Kurt, we'll have to practice –

[Baron Von Trapp] Um, do allow me, will you?

[Maria] Mm-hmm.

[Slavoj Zizek] ... and at the same time, of course, falls in love with the Baron Von Trapp.



And Maria gets too disturbed by it, cannot control it,  
returns to the convent.



[Maria] [To Mother Superior] Oh, there were times when we would look at each other --  
Oh, Mother, I could hardly breathe.



[Mother Superior] Did you let him see how you felt?

[Maria] If I did, I didn't know it.  
That's what's been torturing me. I was there on God's errand.



[Slavoj Zizek] No wonder that in old Communist Yugoslavia ...  
where I saw this film for the first time,  
exactly this scene,  
or more precisely,  
the song which follows this strange hedonist, if you want, advice ...  
from the Mother Superior.  
“Go back. Seduce this guy. Follow this path.  
Do not betray your desire.”  
Namely, the song which begins with “Climb Every Mountain.”  
The song which is an almost embarrassing display ...  
and affirmation of desire.



These three minutes were censored.



[Mother Superior] Climb every mountain  
Search high and low  
Follow every byway  
Every path you know

[Slavoj Zizek] I think the censor was a very intelligent man.  
He knew, as probably an atheist Communist,  
where the power of attraction of Catholic religion resides.

[Mother Superior] Till you find your dream

[Slavoj Zizek] If you read intelligent Catholic propagandists,  
and if you really try to discern what deal are they offering you,  
it's not to prohibit, in this case, sexual pleasures.  
It's a much more cynical contract, as it were,  
between the church as an institution ...  
and the believer, troubled with, in this case, sexual desires.



It is this hidden, obscene permission that you get.  
You are covered by the divine big Other.  
You can do whatever you want.  
Enjoy.

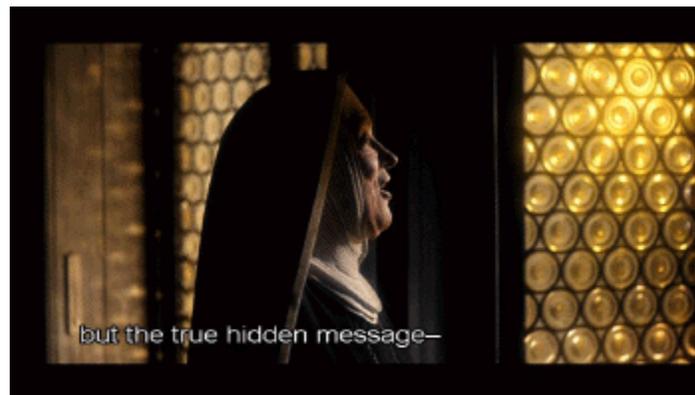
[Mother Superior] A dream that will need



[Slavoj Zizek] This obscene contract ...  
does not belong to Christianity as such.  
It belongs to Catholic Church as an institution.  
It is the logic of institution at its purest.

[Mother Superior] Climb every mountain

[Slavoj Zizek] This is again a key to the functioning of ideology.  
Not only the explicit message --  
renounce, suffer and so on --



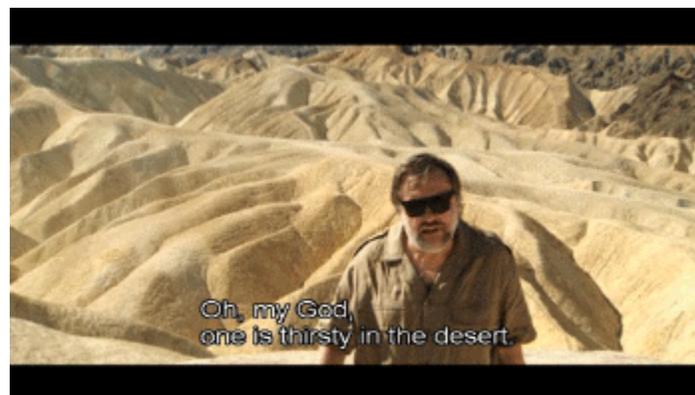
but the true hidden message --



pretend to renounce and you can get it all.



[Slavoj Zizek] My psychoanalytic friends are telling me that typically today ...  
patients who come to the analyst to resolve their problems ..  
feel guilty not because of excessive pleasures,  
not because they indulged in pleasures ...  
which go against their sense of duty or morality or whatever.  
On the contrary, they feel guilty for not enjoying enough.  
For not being able to enjoy.



Oh, my God, one is thirsty in the desert.  
And what to drink but Coke?



[ Meows ]

[ Žižek ]  
The perfect commodity. Why?

[WHITE PERSIAN CAT MEOWS]

The perfect commodity. Why?



It was already Marx  
who long ago emphasized it—

It was already Marx who long ago emphasized it --  
a commodity is never just a simple object that we buy and consume.

A commodity is an object ...

full of ideological, even metaphysical, niceties.

Its presence always reflects an invisible transcendence,

and the classical publicity for Coke ...

quite openly refers to this absent, invisible quality.

Coke is the real thing.

Or Coke, that's it.

What is that "it"? The real thing?

It's not just another positive property of Coke,  
something that can be described or pinpointed through chemical analysis.

It's that mysterious something more.



DIFFERENT DANCES (2000)  
MCCANN-ERIKSON  
THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

[DIFFERENCE DANCES, 2000, MCCANN-ERIKSON, THE COCA-COLA COMPANY]



The undescrivable excess,  
which is the object cause of my desire.

[DANCE]



In our postmodern – however we call them – societies,  
we are obliged to enjoy.



Enjoyment becomes a kind of a weird, perverted duty.

[ENJOY COCA-COLA, ENJOY]

The paradox of Coke is that you are thirsty, you drink it.  
But as everyone knows, the more you drink it the more thirsty you get.

A desire is never simply ...  
the desire for a certain thing.

It's always also a desire for desire itself.

A desire to continue to desire.

Perhaps the ultimate horror of a desire ...

is to be fully filled in, met,  
so that I desire no longer.

The ultimate melancholic experience ...  
is the experience of a loss of desire itself.

It's not that in some return ...

to a – a previous era of natural, uh, consummation ...

where we got rid of this excess and we're only consuming for actual needs,  
like you are thirsty, you drank water, and so on.

We cannot return to that.

The excess is with us forever.



So let's have a drink of Coke.

It's getting warm.

It's no longer the real Coke, and that's the problem.

You know, this passage from ...

sublime to excremental dimension.

When it's cold, properly served, it has a certain attraction.

All of a sudden this can change into shit.

It's the elementary dialectics of commodities.

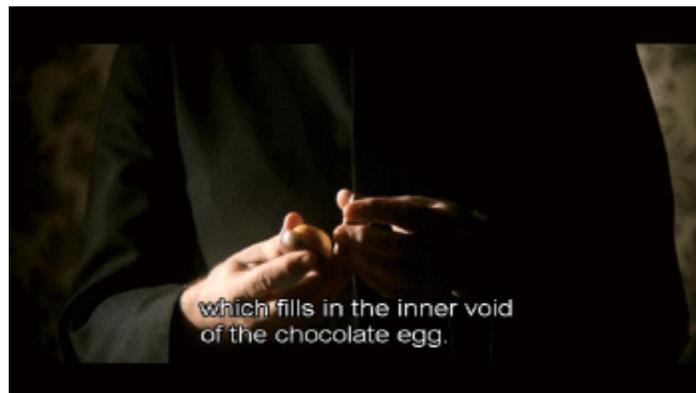


[WHITE PERSIAN CAT]

We are not talking about objective,  
factual properties of a commodity.  
We are talking only here about that illusive surplus.



Kinder Surprise egg.  
A quite astonishing commodity.  
The surprise of the Kinder Surprise egg ...  
is that this excessive object,  
the cause of your desire,  
is here materialized in the guise of an object,  
a plastic toy,



which fills in the inner void of the chocolate egg.



The whole delicate balance ....  
is between these two dimensions.  
What you bought – the chocolate egg --

and the surplus – probably made in some Chinese gulag or whatever --  
the surplus that you get for free.  
I don't think that the chocolate frame ...  
is here just to send you on a deeper voyage ...  
towards the inner treasure --



what Plato calls “the agalma” --  
which makes you a worthy person,  
which makes a commodity the desirable commodity.  
I think it's the other way around.  
We should aim at the higher goal.  
The goal in the middle of an object ...  
precisely in order to be able to enjoy the surface.  
This is what is the antimetaphysical lesson,  
which is difficult to accept.



[BEETHOVEN'S "ODE TO JOY"]

In those years, [Beethoven's] first serious mentor, Neefe the Schwärmer, was in an especially fervid phase of his spiritual life. For some time he had been a Freemason, a group then in its first century as a progressive, international, secular, semisecret order open to men of all faiths. (As such, the Masons were loathed by churches and regimes alike.) But Neefe was tired of the Masons' endless chatter of liberty and morality. He wanted a more ambitious and active kind of brotherhood—say, a new world order. That took him to one of the more bizarre sideshows of the Enlightenment: the Bavarian Illuminati. A Bonn lodge of the Illuminati formed, and Beethoven's teacher became head of it.

Founded in 1776 by a Bavarian professor named Adam Weishaupt, the Illuminati joined radical politics and Jesuit-style hierarchy to fanatical secrecy. The aims of the order were ambitious, all right: They intended to change the world and had a plan to do it. The means were not to be by violent revolutions. The idea was to

form a cadre of enlightened men who would stealthily infiltrate governments everywhere and slowly bring them to a kind of secular-humanist Elysium under the guidance of a secret ruling body. Said Adam Weishaupt: "Princes and nations shall disappear from the face of the earth peacefully, mankind shall become one family, and the world shall become a haven of reasonable people. Morality shall achieve this transformation, alone and imperceptibly."...

For all the moony mysticism, the Illuminati had a high-Enlightenment agenda, rational, humanistic, and universal. They published a monthly magazine, Contributions to the Spread of Useful Knowledge, which was partly Enlightenment cheerleading, partly practical items relating to husbandry, housekeeping, and the like. Duty was the essence of Illuminati teaching, but it was an Enlightenment kind of duty: duty not to God or to princes but to the order and to humanity.

In practice, the Illuminati amounted to a kind of activist left wing of the Freemasons, from whom they drew most of their members. The numbers were never large, but they included people like Goethe (briefly) and Christian Koerner, a close friend and confidant of Friedrich Schiller. Koerner's influence seems to be why some Illuminati-tinged ideas—universal brotherhood and the triumph of happiness bringing humanity to Elysium—turned up in Schiller's famous poem Ode to Joy, which was often set to music and sung in Masonic and Illuminati circles. The poem would later enter history via the finale of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

O friends, no more these sounds!  
Let us sing more cheerful songs,  
    more full of joy!  
Joy, bright spark of divinity,  
    Daughter of Elysium,  
Fire-inspired we tread  
    Thy sanctuary.  
Thy magic power re-unites  
All that custom has divided,  
    All men become brothers  
Under the sway of thy gentle wings.  
    Whoever has created  
    An abiding friendship,  
    Or has won  
    A true and loving wife,  
All who can call at least one soul theirs,  
    Join in our song of praise;  
But any who cannot must creep tearfully  
    Away from our circle.  
All creatures drink of joy  
    At nature's breast.  
    Just and unjust  
    Alike taste of her gift;  
She gave us kisses and the fruit of the vine,  
    A tried friend to the end.  
Even the worm can feel contentment,  
    And the cherub stands before God!  
    Gladly, like the heavenly bodies

Which He set on their courses  
Through the splendor of the firmament;  
Thus, brothers, you should run your race,  
As a hero going to conquest.  
You millions, I embrace you.  
This kiss is for all the world!  
Brothers, above the starry canopy  
There must dwell a loving Father.  
Do you fall in worship, you millions?  
World, do you know your creator?  
Seek him in the heavens;  
Above the stars must He dwell.

-- Lyrics in English for "Ode to Joy" ("Ode An Die Freude"), Beethoven's 9th  
Symphony

As an Illuminatus, an important part of Christian Neefe's duty was to covertly inculcate promising young people in the ideals of the order, then to recruit them when they came of age. Beethoven was as promising as young people get. So did Neefe inculcate this student? Surely he did. Was Beethoven recruited to the order?

No—the Illuminati dissolved in 1785, when he was 14.

-- Beethoven and the Illuminati: How the Secret Order Influenced the Great Composer, by Jan Swafford

[Slavoj Zizek] What does this famous “Ode to Joy” stand for? It’s usually perceived as a kind of an ode to humanity as such,

to the brotherhood and freedom of all people.  
And what strikes the eye here is the universal adaptability ...  
of this well-known melody.

It can be used by political movements,  
which are totally opposed to each other.



In Nazi Germany ...  
it was widely used to celebrate great public events.



In Soviet Union Beethoven was lionized ...  
and the “Ode to Joy” was performed ...  
almost as a kind of a Communist song.



In China during the time of the great cultural revolution ...  
when almost all Western music was prohibited,



the Ninth Symphony was accepted.  
It was allowed to play as a piece of progressive bourgeois music.

[CHANTING, CHEERING]



At the extreme right in South Rhodesia,  
before it became Zimbabwe  
it proclaimed independence to be able to postpone ...  
the abolishment of apartheid.



Therefore those couple of years of independent South Rhodesia,  
again, the melody of the "Ode to Joy,"  
with changed lyrics, of course,



was the anthem of the country.

[SHOUTING IN SPANISH]

At the opposite end,  
when Abimael Guzman, "Presidente Gonzalo,"

[PRESIDENT GONZALO IS THE SWORD OF THE SHINING LIGHT ...]

The leader of Sendero Luminoso, the “Shining Path,”  
the extreme leftist guerrilla in Peru --  
When he was asked by a journalist ...  
which piece of music is his favorite,



he claimed, again, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, "Ode to Joy."



[TOKYO OLYMPIAD, 1964, KON ISHIKAWA, THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR THE GAMES OF THE XVIII OLYMPIAD]



When Germanies were still divided ...  
and their team was appearing together at the Olympics,  
when one of the Germans won golden medal,



again, "Ode to Joy" was played ...  
Instead of either East or West German national anthem.  
And even now today ...



"Ode to Joy" is the unofficial anthem of European Union.



So it's truly that we can imagine ...  
a kind of a perverse scene of universal fraternity,  
where Osama bin Laden is embracing President Bush,  
Saddam is embracing Fidel Castro,  
white racist is embracing Mao Tse-tung,  
and all together they sing "Ode to Joy."  
It works.  
And this is how every ideology has to work.  
It's never just meaning.  
It always has to also work as an empty container,



open to all possible meanings.  
It's, you know, that gut feeling that we feel ...  
when we experience something pathetic and we say,  
"Oh, my God. I am so moved. There is something so deep."  
But you never know what this depth is.

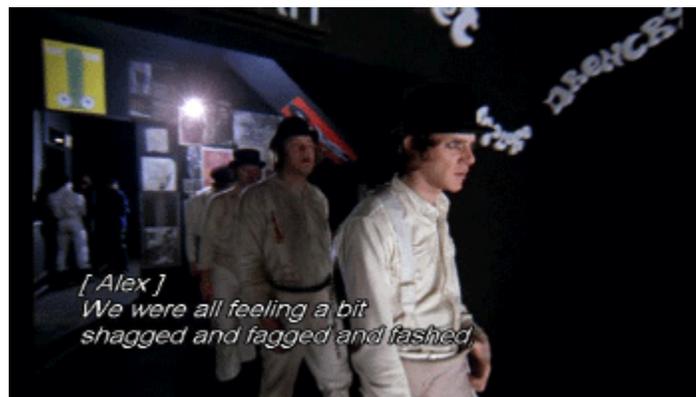


It's a void.  
Now, of course, there is a catch here.  
The catch is that of course this neutrality of a frame ...  
is never as neutral as it appears.



[CLOCKWORK ORANGE, 1971, STANLEY KUBRICK, WARNER BROS AND POLARIS PRODUCTIONS, INC.]

Here, I think the perspective of Alex from the Clockwork Orange enters.



[Alex] We were all feeling a big shagged and fagged and fashed, it having been an evening of some small energy expenditure, O my brothers.



So we got rid of the auto and stopped off at the Korova for a nightcap.



[Slavoj Zizek] Why is Alex, this ultimate cynical delinquent, the hero of Clockwork Orange -- why is he so fascinated, overwhelmed, when he sees the lady singing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"?



[Alex] And it was like for a moment, O my brothers, some great bird had flown into the milkbar, and I felt all the malenky little hairs on my plot standing endwise ... and the shivers crawling up like slow malenky lizards, and then down again.



Because I knew what she sang.



It was a bit from the glorious Ninth by Ludwig van.

[BLOWS RASPBERRY]



[Slavoj Žižek] Whenever an ideological text says ...  
all humanity unite in brotherhood, joy and so on,  
you should always ask, "Okay, okay, okay.  
But are these all, really all, or is someone excluded?  
I think Alex, the delinquent from Clockwork Orange,  
identifies with this place of exclusion.  
And the great genius of Beethoven ...  
is that he literally states this exclusion.  
All of a sudden, the whole tone changes ...  
into a kind of a carnivalesque return.  
It's no longer this sublime beauty.



[Alex] Excuse me, brother.  
I ordered this two weeks ago. Can you see if it's arrived yet, please?

[Clerk] Just a minute.

[Slavoj Zizek] We hear this vulgar music ...  
precisely when Alex enters a shopping arcade.  
And we can see from his movements that now he feels at home.  
He is like fish in the water.



[Alex] Pardon me, ladies.



[Slavoj Zizek] Beethoven is not a cheap celebrator of the brotherhood of humanity and so on --  
we are one big happy family enjoying freedom, dignity and so on.

[Alex] Enjoying that, are you, my darling?

[Slavoj Zizek] The first part, which is falsely celebrated today --  
you hear it in all official events --  
is clearly identified with Beethoven as ideology.



And then the second part tells the true story ...  
of that which disturbs the official ideology ...  
and of the failure of the official ideology to constrain it, to tame it.  
This is why Beethoven was doing something ...  
which may appear difficult to do.  
He was already in the purely musical work,  
practicing critique of ideology.  
If the classical ideology ...  
functioned in the way designated by Marx ...  
in his nice formula from Capital, Volume 1.



They don't know what they are doing, but they are nonetheless doing it.  
Cynical ideology functions in the mode of ...  
I know very well what I am doing,  
but I am still nonetheless doing it.



[WEST SIDE STORY, 1961, ROBERT WISE & JEROME ROBBINS, BETA PRODUCTIONS AND MESTRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIOS INC.]

This paradoxical constellation ...  
is staged in a beautiful way ...  
in the famous song "Officer Krupke" ...  
in Bernstein's and Sondheim's West Side Story.



[Officer Krupke] Hey, you.

[Boy] Who me, Officer Krupke?

[Officer Krupke] Yeah, you.

Gimme one good reason for not dragging you down to the station house, ya punk.



[Boy] Dear kindly Sergeant Krupke, you gotta understand  
It's just our bringin' up-ke that gets us out of hand



Our mothers all are junkies  
Our fathers all are drunks



Golly Moses, naturally we're punks



[All Boys] Gee, Officer Krupke, we're very upset

[Slavoj Zizek] The delinquent gang enacts ...  
a whole explanation as a musical number, of course,  
of why they are delinquents.

[All Boys and Girls] There is good, there is good  
There is untapped good  
Like inside, the worst of us is good

[Slavoj Zizek] Addressing the police officer Krupke,  
who is not there but all is addressed at the police officer.

[Boy] That's a touchin' good story.  
Let me tell it to the world!

[Officer Krupke] Just tell it to the judge.

[Slavoj Zizek] So one of them adopts the position of a judge.



[Boy] [Stammering] Dear kindly Judge, Your Honor  
My parents treat me rough  
With all their marijuana, they won't give me a puff

[Slavoj Zizek] Then the psychological explanation.

[Boy 2] He shouldn't be here  
This boy don't need a couch  
He needs a useful career  
Society's played him a terrible trick  
Oh, and sociologically he's sick

[Boy] I am sick

[Slavoj Zizek] The paradox here is,  
how can you know all this and still do it?  
This is the cynical function of ideology.



They're never what they appear to be – cynical, brutal delinquents.  
They always have a tiny private dream.  
This dream can be many things.  
It can even be something quite ordinary.



Let's take the English riots of August, 2011.

The standard liberal explanation ...  
really sounds like a repetition of "Officer Krupke" song.  
We cannot just condemn this riot as delinquent vandalism.  
You have to see how these people live in practically ghettos, isolated communities --  
no proper family life, no proper education.  
They don't even have a prospect of a regular employment.  
But this is not enough.



Because man is not simply a product of objective circumstances.

[MAN SINGING OPERA]

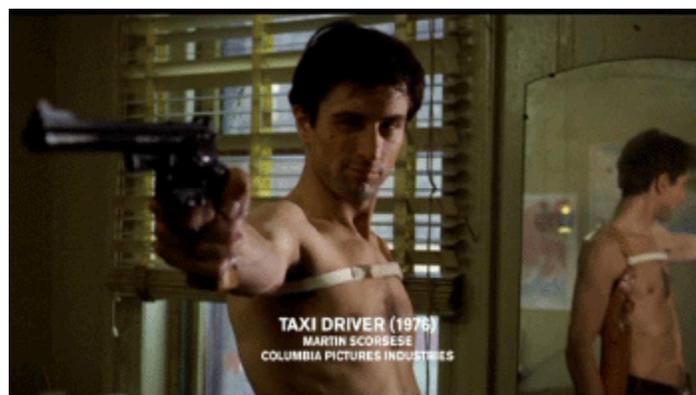


We all have this margin of freedom ....  
in deciding how we ...  
subjectivize these objective circumstances,  
which of course determine us.  
How we react to them ...  
by constructing our own universe.

Augustine's solution to the problem of evil was to insist on the fundamental guilt of mankind in his doctrine of hereditary or original sin (Blumenberg 133). Humans are both fundamentally responsible and at the same time completely dependent on divine grace. Augustine refused to compromise the element of human responsibility, and this refusal distinguishes Christianity from the various gnostic sects. Augustine saw quite clearly that gnosticism tends to undermine individual responsibility. The Manichees taught Augustine that "it is not we who sin but some other nature that sins within us" (Augustine 103). Augustine turned from the Manichees to the Platonists to help him understand the problem of evil, but the problem with both Platonists and Manichees was that they lacked "the tears of confession" (156), the imperative for repentance which alone can generate the experience of redemption. The influence of classical philosophy on Christianity can be seen here in the need Augustine felt to construct a system of theology that could reconcile the existence of evil and an omnipotent God.(3)

-- Christian Mystery and Responsibility: Gnosticism in Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, by Peter Goldman

The conservative solution is we need more police.  
We need courts which pass severe judgments.  
I think this solution is too simple.  
If I listen closely to some of David Cameron's statements,  
it looked as if, "Okay, they are beating people, burning houses,  
but the truly horrible thing is that they were taking objects without paying for them."  
The ultimate sin that we can imagine.  
In a very limited way, Cameron was right.  
There was no ideological justification.  
It is the reaction of people ...  
who are totally caught into the predominant ideology,  
but have no ways to realize ...  
what this ideology demands of them.  
So it's a kind of a wild acting out ...  
within this ideological space of consumerism.  
Even if we are dealing with apparently totally ...  
nonideological brutality --  
"I just want to burn houses to get objects" --  
it is the result of a very specific social and ideological constellation,  
where big ideology, striving for justice, equality, et cetera, disintegrates.  
The only functioning ideology is pure consumerism.  
And then no wonder what you get is a form of protest.  
Every violent acting out ...  
is a sign that there is something you are not able to put into words.  
Even the most brutal violence ...  
is the enacting of a certain symbolic deadlock.



The great thing about the Taxi Driver ...  
is that it brings this brutal outburst of violence ...  
to its radical suicidal dimension.  
We are not dealing here with something which simply concerns ...  
the fragile psychology ...  
of a distorted person,  
what Travis in Taxi Driver is.  
It has something to do with ideology.



[Travis] Listen, you fuckers, you screw-heads,  
here is a man who would not take it anymore,  
who would not let --  
Listen, you fuckers, you screw-heads,



here is a man who would not take it anymore,  
a man who stood up against the scum, the cunts, the dogs, the filth, the shit.  
Here is someone who stood up.

[Slavoj Zizek] In the Taxi Driver,  
Travis, the hero, is bothered by the young prostitute, played by Jodie Foster.  
What bothers him are, of course, as is always the case,  
precisely his fantasies,  
fantasies of her.  
Victimhood of her hidden pleasures.  
And fantasies are not just a private matter of individuals.  
Fantasies are the central stuff ...  
our ideologies are made of.



[Girl] Don't look at him.

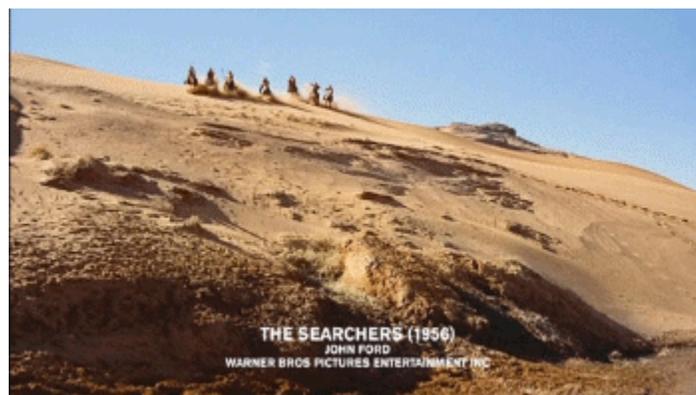
[Slavoj Zizek] Fantasy is in psychoanalytic perspective ...  
fundamentally a lie.

Not a lie in the sense that it's just a fantasy but not a reality,  
but a lie in the sense that fantasy covers up ...  
a certain gap in consistency.

When things are blurred, when we cannot really get to know things,  
fantasy provides an easy answer.



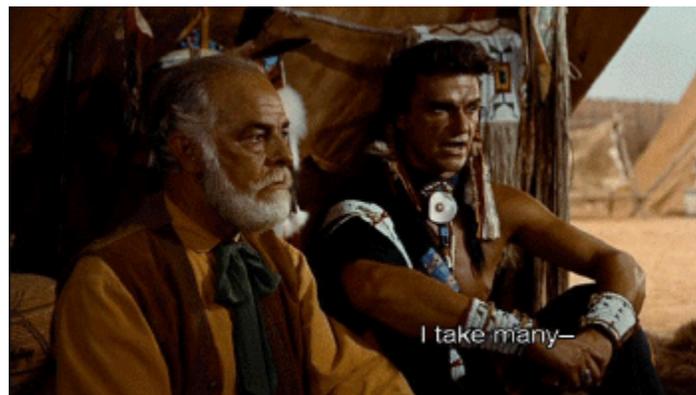
The usual mode of fantasy ...  
is to construct a scene --  
not a scene where I get what I desire,  
but a scene in which I imagine myself ...  
as desired by others.



[THE SEARCHERS, 1956, JOHN FORD, WARNER BROS PICTURES ENTERTAINMENT, INC.]



Taxi Driver is an unacknowledged remake ...  
of perhaps the greatest of John Ford's westerns,  
his late classic The Searchers.



[Indian] I take many –

[Man] Scalps –

[Indian] [Foreign Language]



[Slavoj Žižek] In both films, the hero tries to save a young woman ...  
who is perceived as a victim of brutal abuse.

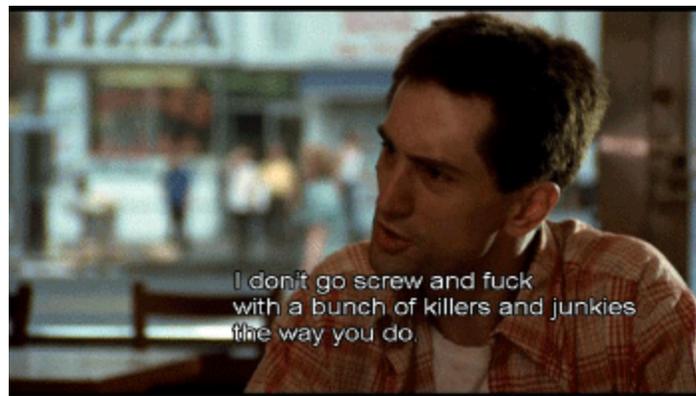


In *The Searchers*,  
the young Natalie Wood was kidnapped ...  
and lived for a couple of years as the wife of an Indian chief.  
In *Taxi Driver*, the young Jodie Foster ...  
is controlled by a ruthless pimp.

[Boy] You walk out with those fucking creeps and lowlifes and degenerates out on the street ...



and you sell your – sell your little pussy for nothing, man?  
For some lowlife pimp?  
Stands in a hall.  
I'm the – I'm square? You're the one that's square, man.



I don't go screw and fuck with a bunch of killers and junkies the way you do.

[Slavoj Zizek] The task is always to save the perceived victim.  
But what really drives this violence of the hero ...  
is a deep suspicion that the victim is not simply a victim,  
that the victim, effectively in a perverted way,



enjoys, or participates, in what appears as her victimhood.  
So that, to put it very simply,



she doesn't want to be redeemed.  
She resists it.

Comic books create sex fears of all kinds. In girls the identification of sex with violence and torture may cause fear of sex, fear of men and actual frigidity. A Western with a picture of Tom Mix on the cover has in one story no less than sixteen consecutive pictures of a girl tied up with ropes, her hands of course tied behind her back! She is shown in all kinds of poses, each more sexually suggestive than the other, and her facial expression shows that she seems to enjoy this treatment. Psychiatrically speaking, this is nothing but the

masturbation fantasy of a sadist, and it has a corresponding effect on boys. For girls, and those boys who identify themselves with the girl, it may become the starting-point for masochistic fantasies.

-- Seduction of the Innocent, by Fredric Wertham, M.D.



[John Wayne] Let's go home, Debbie.

[Slavoj Zizek] And this is the big problem --  
if I make an immediate jump to the political dimension --  
the big problem of American military interventions,  
especially so-called humanitarian interventions.  
From Iraq to already Vietnam, uh, half a century ago.

We try to help them.

But what if they really did not want our help?

The result of this debilitating deadlock ...  
can only be an outburst of violence.

[TAXI DRIVER]



We do get, towards the end of the film,  
Travis exploding in a killing spree.  
Killing the pimps,  
all the people around the young girl.

[Gunshot]

Violence is never just abstract violence.  
It's a kind of brutal intervention in the real ...  
to cover up a certain impotence ...  
concerning what we may call "cognitive mapping."

You lack a clear picture of what's going on.

Where are we?

Exactly the same holds for the terrifying outburst of violence --

Anders Behring Breivik's murderous spree in Oslo.

Exploding a bomb in front of the government building,

and then killing dozens of young members ...

of the Social Democratic Party in an island close to Oslo.



Many commentators tried to dismiss this ...

as a clear case of personal insanity.

But I think Breivik's manifesto is well worth reading.

It is palpably clear there how this violence ...

that Breivik not only theorized about but also enacted ...

is a reaction to the impenetrability and confusion of global capital.

It's exactly like Travis Bickle's killing spree ...

at the end of the Taxi Driver.

[TAXI DRIVER]

When he is there, barely alive,



he symbolically with his fingers points a gun at his own head.

Clear sign that all this violence was basically suicidal.

He was on the right path, in a way,

Travis in the Taxi Driver.

You should have the outburst of violence,

and you should direct it at yourself,

but in a very specific way --

at what in yourself chains you,

ties you to the ruling ideology.



[Boy] Oh, do you know the muffin man?

[Boy 2] Pippin? Pippin? Pippin?

[Slavoj Zizek] In Steven Spielberg's Jaws, a shark starts to attack people on the beach.

What does this attack mean?

What does the shark stand for?

There were different, even mutually exclusive, answers to this question.

On the one hand, some critics claimed that obviously ...  
the shark stands for the foreign threat ...

to ordinary Americans.

The shark is a metaphor for either natural disaster,  
storms or immigrants threatening United States citizens and so on.

On the other hand,

it's interesting to note that Fidel Castro, who loves the film,  
once said that, for him, it was obvious ...

that Jaws is kind of a leftist Marxist film ...



and that the shark is a metaphor for brutal big capital ...  
exploiting ordinary Americans.

So which is the right answer?

I claim none of them, and at the same time, all of them.



Ordinary Americans, as ordinary people in all countries,  
have a multitude of fears.  
We fear all kind of things.  
We fear, maybe, immigrants,  
or people whom we perceive as lower than ourselves attacking us, robbing us.  
We fear people raping our children.



We fear corrupted politicians.  
We fear big companies which can basically do with us whatever they want.



The function of the shark ...  
is to unite all these fears ...  
so that we can, in a way, trade all these fears ...



for one fear alone.

[Man] Smile, you son of a –

[Slavoj Zizek] In this way, our experience of reality gets much simpler.

Why am I mentioning this?

Because isn't it that, for example,  
the most extreme case of ideology maybe in the history of humanity,  
the Nazi fascist anti-Semitism, work precisely in the same way?



Imagine an ordinary German citizen ...  
in the late '20s, early '30s.

His situation is, in an abstract way,  
the same as that of a small child.

He's totally perplexed.

Social authority, symbolic order, is telling him ...  
you are a German worker, banker, whatever,  
but nothing functions.

What does society want from him?

Why is everything going wrong?

The way he perceives the situation is that newspapers lie to him.

He lost his work because of inflation.

He lost all his, uh --

all his money in the bank.

He sees moral degradation and so on.

So what's the meaning of this all?



[TRIUMPH OF THE WILL, 1935, LENI RIEFENSTHAL, REICHSPARTEITAGSFILM & L.R. STUDIO-FILM]



The original fascist dream is, of course, as the dream of every ideology,  
to have a cake and to eat it.  
As it was often pointed out,  
fascism is, at its most elementary,  
a conservative revolution.  
Revolution, economic development, modern industry, yes.  
But a revolution which would nonetheless maintain or even reassert ...  
a traditional hierarchical society.



A society which is modern, efficient,  
but at the same time controlled by hierarchic values,  
with no class or other antagonisms.



Now they have a problem here, the fascists.  
But antagonism, class struggle and other tensions ...  
is something inherent to capitalism.  
Modernization, industrialization, as we know from the history of capitalism,  
means disintegration of old, stable relations.  
It means social conflicts.  
Instability is the way capitalism functions.  
So how to solve this problem? Simple.



You need to generate an ideological narrative ...



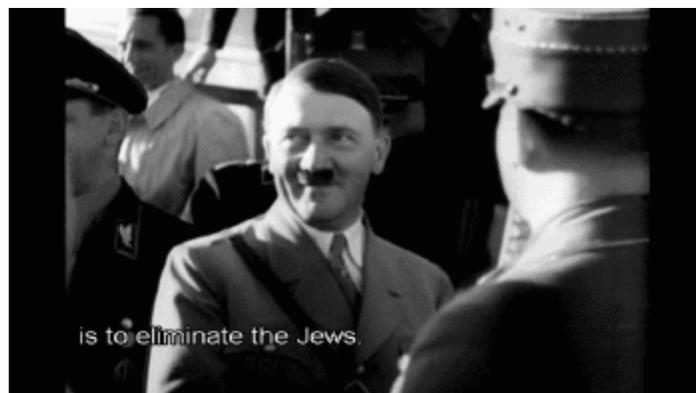
which explains how things went wrong in a society,



not as the result of the inherent tensions ...  
in the development of this society,  
but as the result of a foreign intruder.



Things were okay till Jews penetrated our social body.  
The way to restore the health of our social body ...



is to eliminate the Jews.



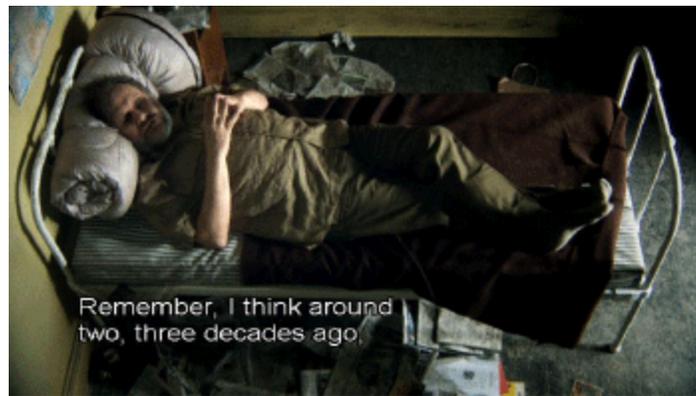
It's the same operation as with the shark in *Jaws*.  
You have a multitude of fears,  
and this multiplicity of fears confuses you.  
Like, you simply don't know what's the meaning of all this confusion.  
And you replace this confused multitude with one clear figure --  
the Jew -- and everything becomes clear.



[Male Reporter] The search for cuts in the social security provision ...  
to lone parent families in part spurred this report.  
The social security department fears that the accelerating budget for single mothers on benefits ...  
could reach nearly five billion pounds by the end of the decade.  
But the issue of the lone parent has increasingly been seen ...



as the heart of John Major's back-to-basics crusade.



[Slavoj Zizek] Remember, I think around two, three decades ago, when the prime minister of United Kingdom was John Major, there was a kind of ideological campaign ... to return to morality and so on. And all the evils of society ... were embodied in the conservative narrative ... in the figure of, uh, unemployed single mother.

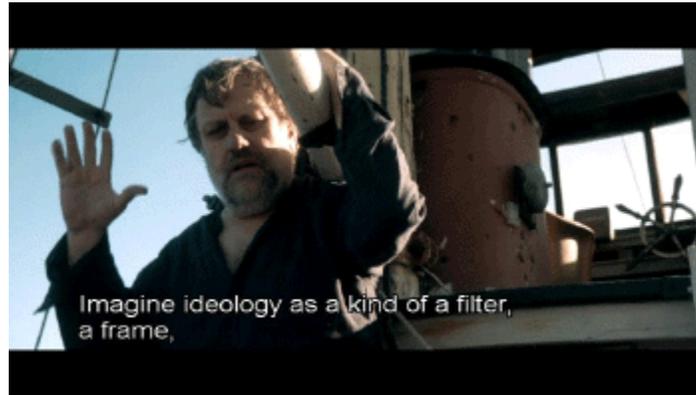
Like, there is violence in our suburbs, of course, because single unemployed mothers ... cannot take care of their children, don't properly educate them and so on. Uh, we have --- lack in our budget, not enough money, of course, because we have to support ... unwed single mothers and so on and so on. In an ideological edifice,



you need some pseudo concrete image like this ... to fixate your imagination.



And then this image can mobilize us.



Imagine ideology as a kind of a filter, a frame,  
so that if you look at the same ordinary reality through that frame,  
everything changes.  
In what sense? It's not that the frame actually adds anything.  
It's just that the frame opens the abyss of suspicion.

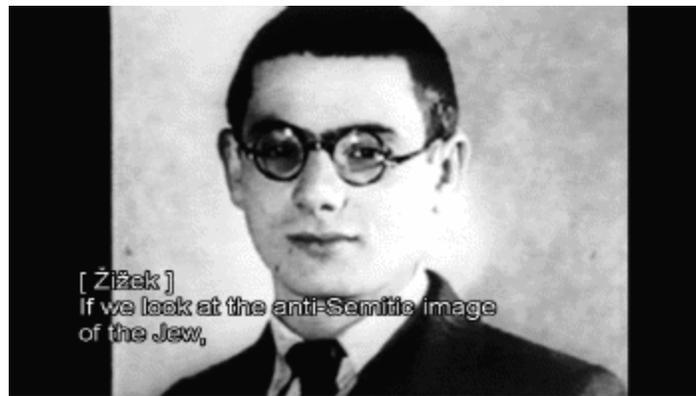
According to our common sense, we think that ideology is something blurring, confusing our straight view. Ideology should be glasses which distort our view. And the critique of ideology should be the opposite, like you take off the glasses so that you can finally see the way things really are. This precisely and here, the pessimism of the film, of *They Live*, is well justified. This precisely is the ultimate illusion. Ideology is not simply imposed on ourselves. Ideology is our spontaneous relationship to our social world, how we perceive each meaning and so on and so on. We, in a way, enjoy our ideology.

-- The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, directed by Sophie Fiennes

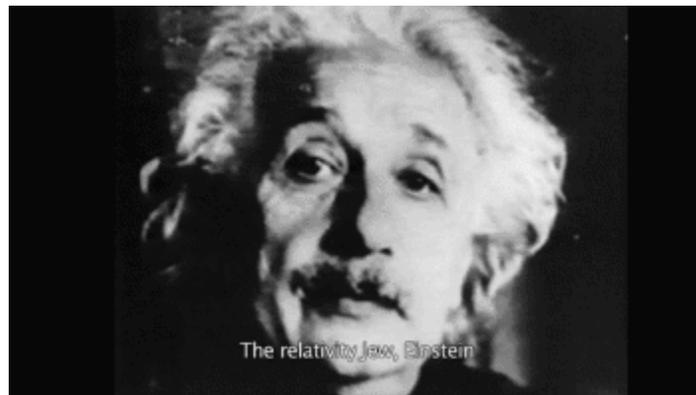


[THE ETERNAL JEW, 1940, FRITZ HIPPLER, DEUTSCHE FILMHHERSTELLUNGS-UND-VERWERTUNGS-GMBH BERLIN (DFG)]

[Man Speaking German] The Jews alter their appearance when they leave their Polish haunts for the rich world.



[Slavoj Zizek] If we look at the anti-Semitic image of the Jew, it's crucial to notice how contradictory this figure of the Jew is.



[Man Speaking German] The relativity Jew, Einstein who masks his hatred of Germans behind his obscure pseudo-sciences.



The Jew, Kestenberg, controller of German music in the Prussian Ministry of Culture.



[Slavoj Zizek] Jews are, at the same time, extra intellectual,  
like mathematicians, whatever, and vulgar.



[Man Speaking German] In plain language, Jewish dwellings are filthy and neglected.

[Slavoj Zizek] Not washing regularly.

[Man Speaking German] The Jew Charlie Chaplin  
was welcomed by an enraptured crowd when he visited Berlin.

[Slavoj Zizek] Seducing innocent girls all the time and so on and so on.

[Man Speaking German] Then much of the German public acclaimed the newcomer Jew,  
a deadly enemy. How could this happen?

Of course these ghetto Jews do not yet move well in their clean European clothes.



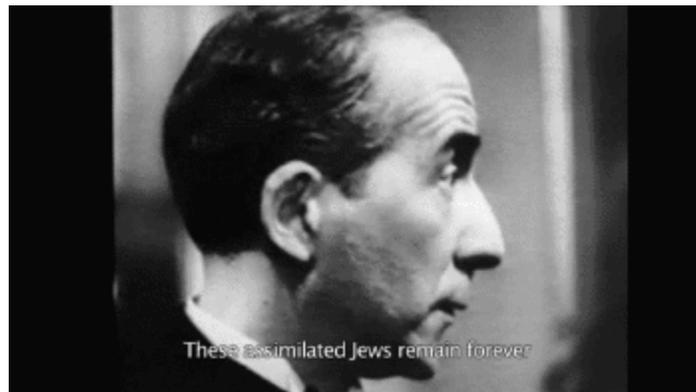
Somewhat more adept are the Jews of Berlin.  
Their fathers and grandfathers lived in the ghetto,  
but that's not outwardly noticeable.  
Here in the second and third generation,



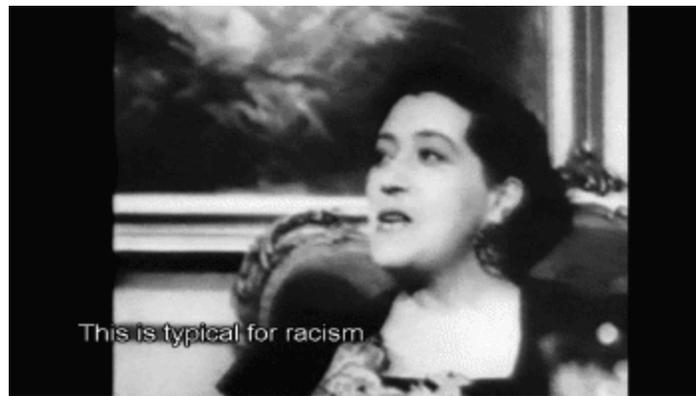
the assimilation has reached it's zenith.



Outwardly they try to act just like the host peoples.  
People without good instincts, let themselves be deceived by this mimicry  
and consider the Jews the same as they are,  
therein lies the enormous danger.



These assimilated Jews remain forever  
foreign bodies in the organisms of their host peoples  
regardless of appearances.



This is typical for racism.

[Slavoj Žižek] This is typical for racism.



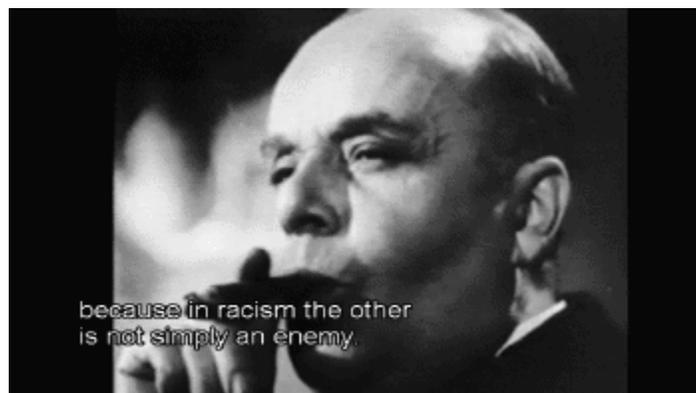
You try to imagine  
how the other enjoys...

You try to imagine how the other enjoys ...



all the secret orgies or whatever,

all the secret orgies or whatever,



because in racism the other  
is not simply an enemy.

because in racism the other is not simply an enemy.



Usually it is also invested with some specific perverse enjoyment,  
or, in an inverted way,  
the other can be someone who tries to steal from us our enjoyment, our --  
To disturb, as we usually put it, our way of life.



[TRIUMPH OF THE WILL]

We should be here very precise ...  
not to fall into the usual trap of disqualifying all elements ...  
out of which the Nazi ideological edifice is composed,  
to disqualify all of them as protofascist.  
We should never forget that the large majority of these elements,





which we today associate  
with fascism,

which we today associate with fascism,  
were taken from the workers' movement.



[Adolph Hitler] [German]



- [ German ]  
- [ Crowd Responding In German ]

[Crowd Responding in German]

[Slavoj Zizek] This idea of large numbers of people marching together,



this idea of strict bodily discipline  
as our duty—

this idea of strict bodily discipline as our duty --  
The Nazis directly took this over ...



The solidarity of the people.

The solidarity of the people.  
My God, there is nothing bad in this notion as such.

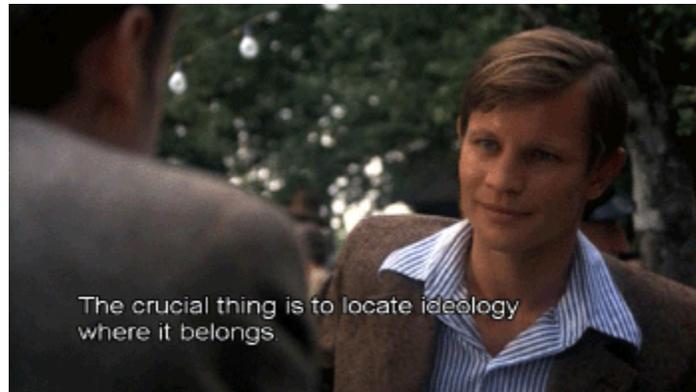


The problem is,  
solidarity to what kind of people?

The problem is, solidarity to what kind of people?  
If by people, you mean Volksgemeinschaft,  
the organic community of people,  
where then the enemy is automatically the foreign intruder --



in this case, we are in Nazism.



The crucial thing is to locate ideology where it belongs.

At one time, some of the 'tells' of the right-wing 'sock puppet' troll was their use of terms such as 'DemoRATS' or 'Demonrats' for Democrats ... Some current 'tells' are when they don't mention the GOP at all ...

-- Right-Wing Sock Puppets Pretending to Be Liberals Assault Progressive Websites, by R.S. Janes



Let's take a clear example.  
The well-known song "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" ...  
from the film Caberet.



[CABERET, 1972, BOB FOSSE, ABC PICTURE CORP & ALLIED ARTISTS PICTURES CORP.]



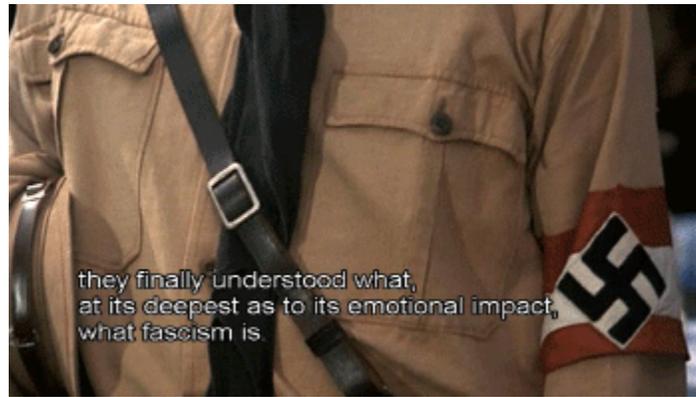
[Man] The sun on the meadow is summery warm



The stag in the forest runs free



[Slavoj Zizek] Some of my friends, after seeing the film, Bob Fosse's Cabaret, thought that after they heard this song,



they finally understood what, at its deepest as to its emotional impact, what fascism is. But I think this precisely is the mistake to be avoided.



This song is a rather ordinary popular song.



Incidentally it was composed while they were shooting the movie by a Jewish couple.



Nice irony.

If you look not only at the music, at the way it is sung, but even at the words --  
“Awakening of a nation, tomorrow belongs to me” --  
one can well imagine with a slight change of words,  
radically leftist, communist song.



[Boys] But soon says a whisper, arise, arise

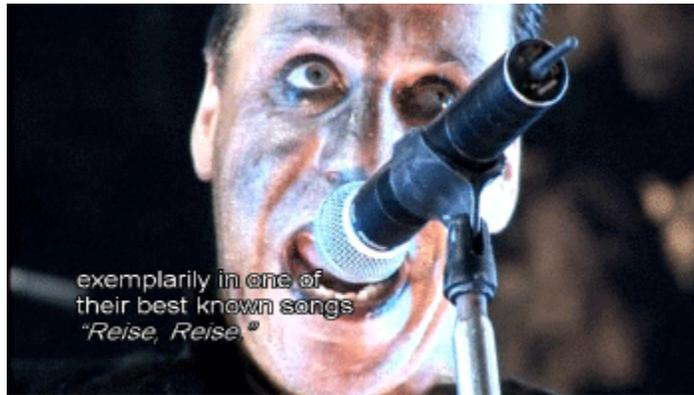


[RAMMSTEIN-VOLKERBALL, 2006, EMANUEL FIALIK, HAMISH HAMILTON, MATHILDE BONNEFOY,  
UNIVERSAL MUSIC DOMESTIC DIVISION]



[Hard Rock Intro]

[Slavoj Zizek] The German hard rock band Rammstein ...  
are often accused of flirting,  
playing with the Nazi militaristic iconography.  
But if one observes closely their show,  
one can see very nicely what they are doing,



exemplarily in one of their best known songs "Reise, Reise."



[Singing in German]



[Slavoj Zizek] The minimal elements of the Nazi ideology ...  
enacted by Rammstein ...



are something like pure elements of libidinal investment.  
Enjoyment has to be, as it were,  
condensed in some minimal tics, gestures,  
which do not have any precise ideological meaning.



What Rammstein does is it liberates ...



these elements from  
their Nazi articulations.

these elements from their Nazi articulations.



It allows us to enjoy them ...



In their pre-ideological state.

in their pre-ideological state.



The way to fight Nazism is to enjoy these elements,  
ridiculous as they may appear,



This way you undermine Nazism from within.

The basic insight of psychoanalysis is to distinguish between enjoyment and simple pleasures. They are not the same. Enjoyment is precisely enjoyment in disturbed pleasure. Even enjoyment in pain. And this excessive factor disturbs the apparently simple relationship between duty and pleasures.

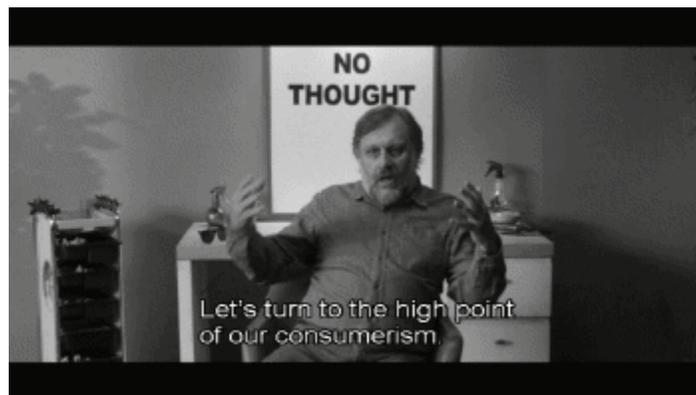
-- The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, directed by Sophie Fiennes

The conservative solution is we need more police



So how does nonetheless ideology do this?  
How does it articulate pre-ideological elements?  
These elements can also be seen as a kind of a bribe.  
The way ideology pays us to seduce us into its edifice.  
These bribes can be purely libidinal bribes,  
all those tics which are condensed enjoyment.  
Or they can be explicit discursive elements,  
like notions of solidarity, uh, of collective discipline,  
struggle for one's destiny and so on and so on.  
All these in itself are free-floating elements ...  
which open themselves to different ideological fields.

[NO THOUGHT]

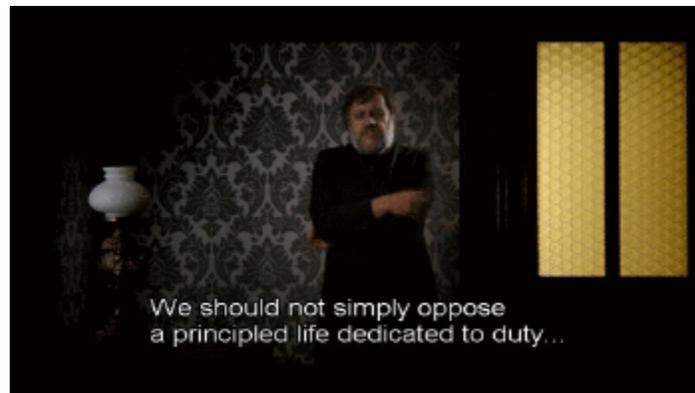


Let's turn to the high point of our consumerism.  
Let me take a drink.



[Stammers]  
Some of it – Starbucks coffee.

I am regularly drinking it, I must admit it.  
 But are we aware that when we buy a cappuccino from Starbucks,  
 we also buy quite a lot of ideology?  
 Which ideology?  
 You know when you enter a Starbucks store,  
 it's usually always displayed in some posters there their message,  
 which is, "Yes, our cappuccino is more expensive than others, but" --  
 And then comes the story. "We give one percent of all our income ...  
 to some Guatemala children to keep them healthy,  
 for the water supply for some Sahara farmers,  
 or to save the forests,  
 to enable organic growing coffee," whatever, whatever.  
 Now, I admire the ingenuity of this solution.  
 In the old days of pure, simple consumerism,  
 you bought a product, and then you felt bad.  
 "My God, I'm just a consumerist, uh, uh, while people are starving in Africa."  
 So the idea was you had to do something ...  
 to counteract your pure destructive consumerism.  
 For example, I don't know, you contribute to charity and so on.  
 What Starbucks enables you is to be a consumerist ...  
 and be a consumerist without any bad conscience,  
 because the price for the countermeasure, for fighting consumerism,  
 is already included into the price of a commodity.  
 Like, you pay a little bit more,  
 and you are not just a consumerist, but you do also your duty towards environment,  
 the poor starving people in Africa and so on and so on.  
 It's, I think, the ultimate form of consumerism.



We should not simply oppose a principled life dedicated to duty ...  
 and enjoying our small pleasures.  
 Let's take today's capitalism.  
 We have, on the one hand,  
 the demands of the circulation of the capital,  
 which push us towards profit making, expansion,  
 exploitation and destruction of nature,  
 and, on the other hand, ecological demands.  
 Let's think about our posterity and about our own survival.  
 Let's take care of nature and so on.

When the great Tao is forgotten,  
 Kindness and morality arise.  
 When wisdom and intelligence are born,

The great pretense begins.

When there is no peace within the family,  
Filial piety and devotion arise.  
When the country is confused and in chaos,  
Loyal ministers appear.

-- Tao Te Ching, by Lao Tsu



[WHITE PERSIAN CAT]

In this opposition between ruthless pursuit of capitalist expansion ...  
and ecological awareness,  
duty – a strange perverted duty, of course --  
duty is on the side of capitalism.

As many prestigious analysts noted,  
capitalism has a strange religious structure.

It is propelled by this absolute demand --  
capital has to circulate,  
to reproduce itself, to expand, to multiply itself.  
And for this goal, anything can be sacrificed,  
up to our lives, up to nature and so on.

Here we have a strange unconditional injunction.

And a true capitalist is a miser who is ready to sacrifice everything for this perverted duty.



What we see here in Mojave Desert at this resting place for abandoned planes ...  
is the other side of capitalist dynamics.



Capitalism is all the time in crisis.  
This is precisely why it appears almost indestructible.



Crisis is not its obstacle. It is what pushes it forwards towards permanent self-revolutionizing,  
permanent extended self-reproduction.  
Always new products. The other invisible side of it is waste.  
Tremendous amount of waste.



We shouldn't react to these heaps of waste ...  
by trying to somehow get rid of it.  
Maybe the first thing to do is to accept this waste,  
to accept that there are things out there which serve nothing,  
to break out of this eternal cycle of functioning.



The German philosopher Walter Benjamin said something very big.



He said that we experience history.  
What does it mean for us to be historical beings?  
Not when we are engaged in things, when things move.



Only when we see this, again, vast waste of culture being half retaken by nature,  
at that point we get an intuition of what history means.



[I AM LEGEND, 2007, FRANCIS LAWRENCE, WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT, INC.]

[Slavoj Zizek] Maybe this also accounts for the redemptive value of post-catastrophic movies,



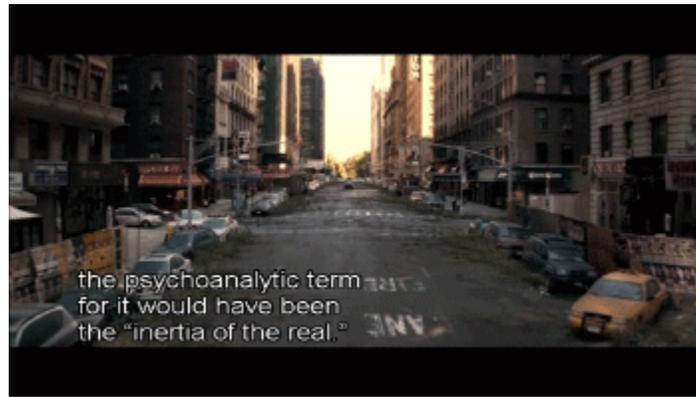
like I Am Legend and so on.



We see the devastated human environment,



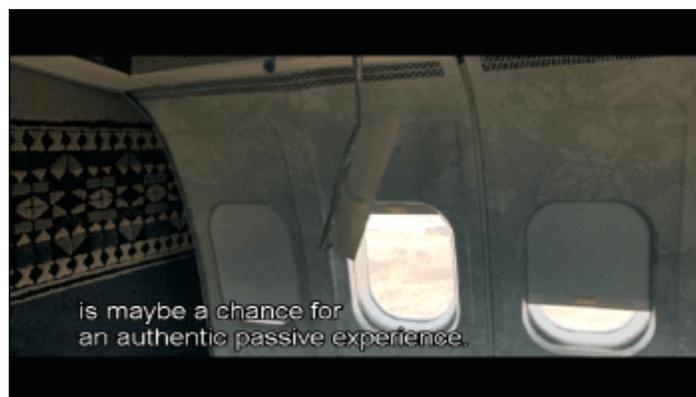
half-empty factories, machines falling apart, half-empty stores.  
What we experience at this moment,



the psychoanalytic term for it would have been the "inertia of the real."



This mute presence beyond meaning.  
What moments like confronting planes here in Mojave Desert bring to us ...



is maybe a chance for an authentic passive experience.



Maybe without this properly artistic moment of authentic passivity,  
nothing new can emerge.



Maybe something new only emerges through the failure,



the suspension of proper functioning ...  
of the existing network of our life work where we are.



Maybe this is what we need more than ever today.



What does the wreck of the Titanic stand for?



[TITANIC, 1997, JAMES CAMERON, PARAMOUNT PICTURES CORPORATION, A TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION]

We all know the standard reading of the impact of the sinking of the Titanic.

Not only the film, but the real accident.

This sinking had such an impact because it happened in a society ...

at that point still in all its glitz and glory,  
unaware of the decay that awaited it in the near future,  
the World Wars and so on.

But there is something in excess of this entire field of meanings,  
which is the very fascinating presence of the ruin of the Titanic at the bottom of the ocean.

When James Cameron organized a trip to the real wreck of Titanic,  
he also made a similar remark.

When the explorers approached the wreck,  
they had this almost metaphysical experience ...  
that they are approaching a forbidden territory ...



in which the sacred and the obscene overlap.

[Man] Yeah, roger that. Okay, drop down and go into the first-class gangway door.  
I want you guys working the D deck –

[Slavoj Zizek] Every effective political, ideological symbol or symptom ...



has to rely on this dimension of petrified enjoyment,



of the frozen grimace of an excessive pleasure in pain.

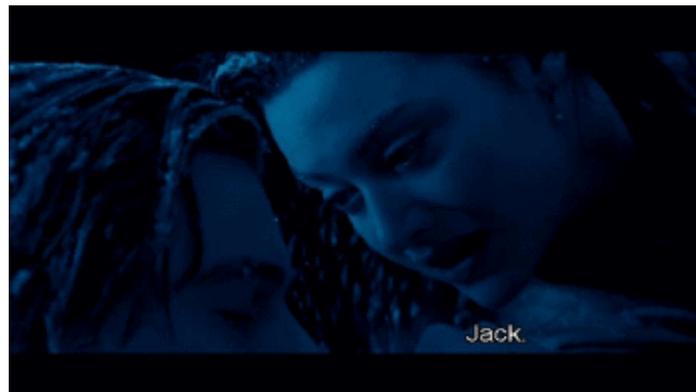


What am I doing here in the middle of the ocean, alone in a boat,  
surrounded by frozen corpses?



[Rose] Jack

[Slavoj Zizek] I am in a scene from James Cameron's Titanic,



[Rose] Jack.

[Slavoj Zizek] which is the supreme case of ideology in recent Hollywood.

Why?

Because of the imminent tension to the story of the film.



[Rose] I don't know the steps.

[Jack] Neither do I. Just go with it.

[Rose] Uh-huh.

[Jack] Don't think.

[Slavoj Zizek] You have at least three levels.  
First there is what people ironically refer to ...



as James Cameron's Hollywood Marxism.



This ridiculous fake sympathy with lower classes.



Up there, first-class passengers, they are mostly all evil, egotistic, cowardly –



[Ruth] [To Rose smoking a cigarette] You know I don't like that Rose.





[Slavoj Žižek] embodied in Kate Winslet's fiancé, played by Billy Zane.



[Caledon Nathan Hockley] She knows.



This whole narrative is sustained by a much more reactionary myth.



[Ruth and Jack] [Laughing]

[Jack] Did you see those guys' faces?

[Slavoj Žižek] We should ask what role does the iceberg hitting the ship ...  
play in the development of the love story?



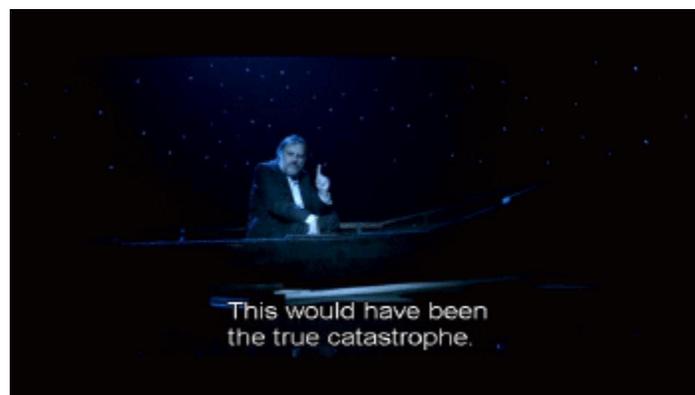
[Rose] When the ship docks, I'm getting off with you.

[Jack] This is crazy.

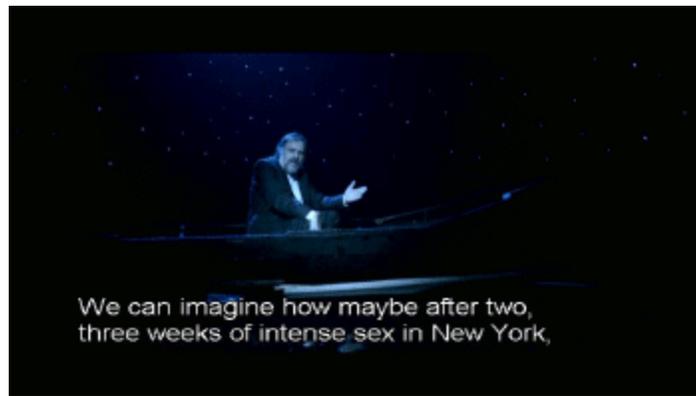
[Rose] I know.



[Slavoj Žižek] My claim is here a slightly cynical one.



This would have been the true catastrophe.



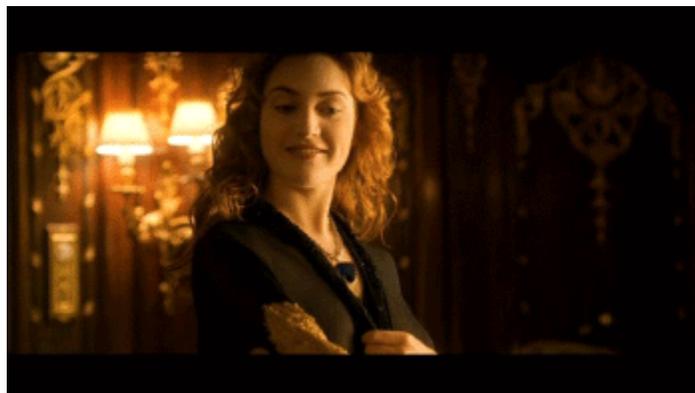
We can imagine how maybe after two, three weeks of intense sex in New York,



the love affair would somehow fade away.



[Rose] As a paying customer I expect to get what I want.





[Slavoj Zizek] Kate Winslet is an upper-class girl ...



in psychological distress, confused.



Her ego is in shatters.



And the function of Leonardo DiCaprio ...

[Jack] Over on the bed – the couch.



[Slavoj Žižek] is simply that he helps her to reconstitute her ego.



[Jack] Go. Lie Down.



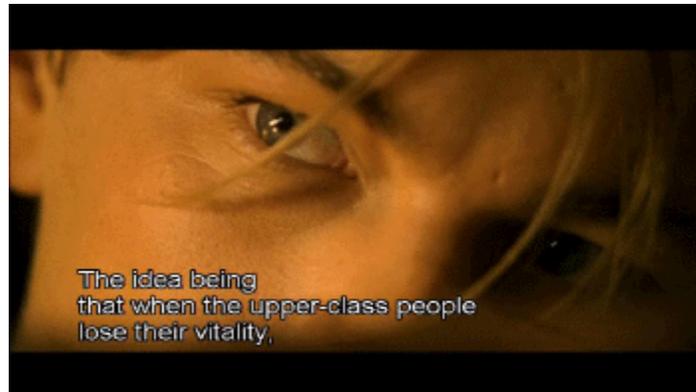
[Slavoj Žižek] Her self image. Literally, he draws her image.

[Rose] Tell me when it looks right.

[Jack] Keep that. Put your arm back the way it was.



[Slavoj Zizek] It's really a new version of one of the old favorite imperialist myths.



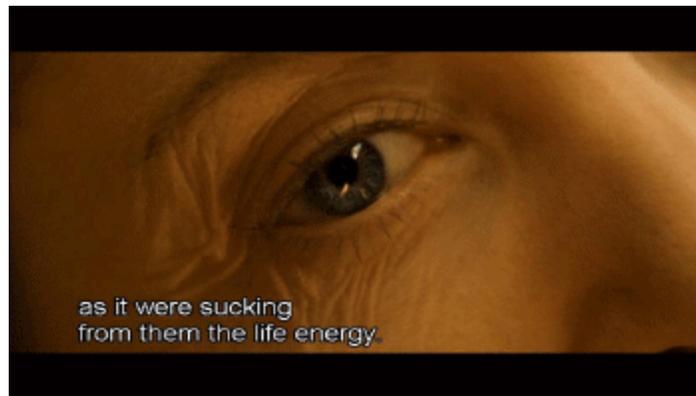
The idea being that when the upper-class people lose their vitality,



they need a contact with lower classes,



basically ruthlessly exploiting them in a vampire-like way,

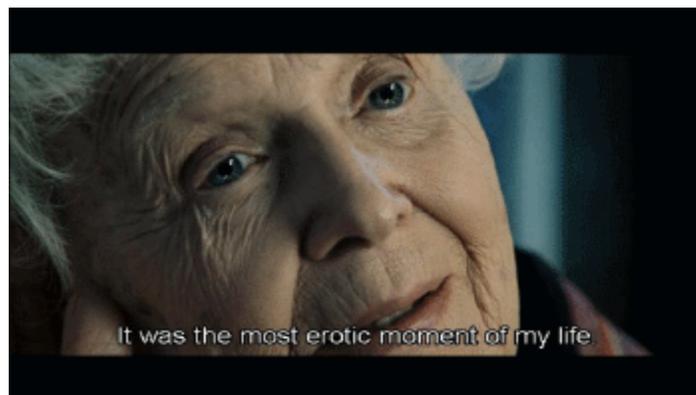


as it were sucking from them the life energy.



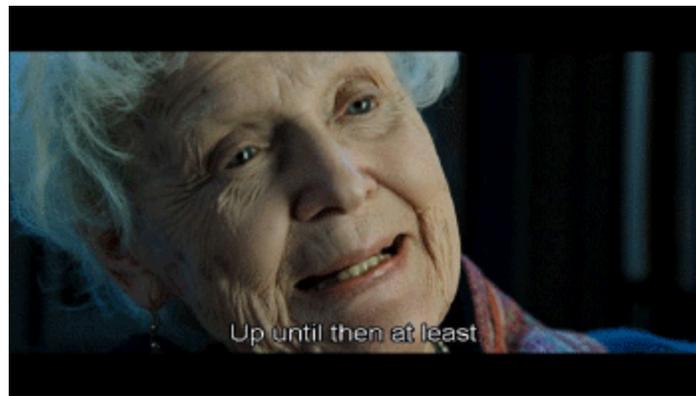
Revitalized, they can join their secluded upper-class life.

[Old Rose] My heart was pounding the whole time.

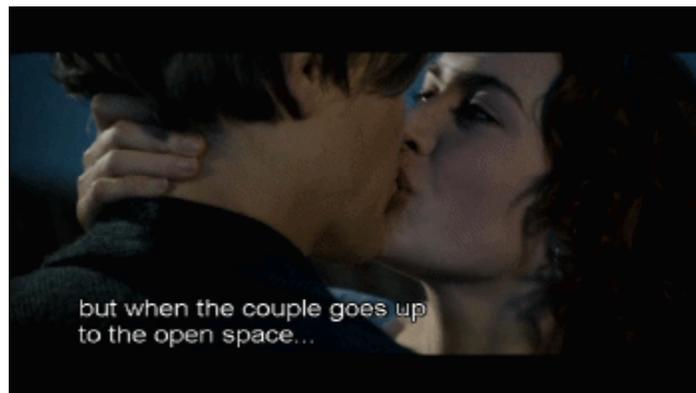
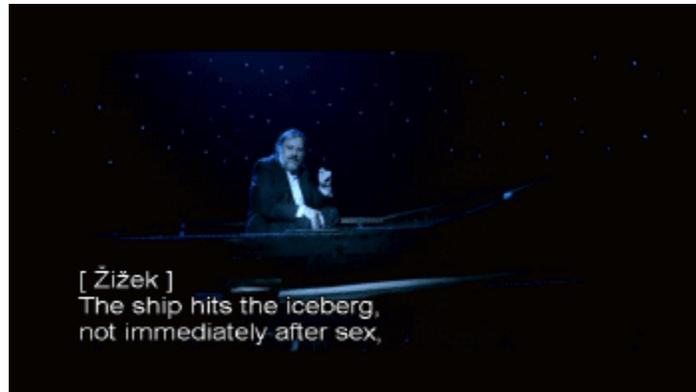


It was the most erotic moment of my life.





Up until then at least.



but when the couple goes up to the open space ...  
and decide to stay together.



[Sailor] Oh, yes. Hey, look at this.



[ORATORIO FOR PRAGUE, 1968, JAN NEMEC]



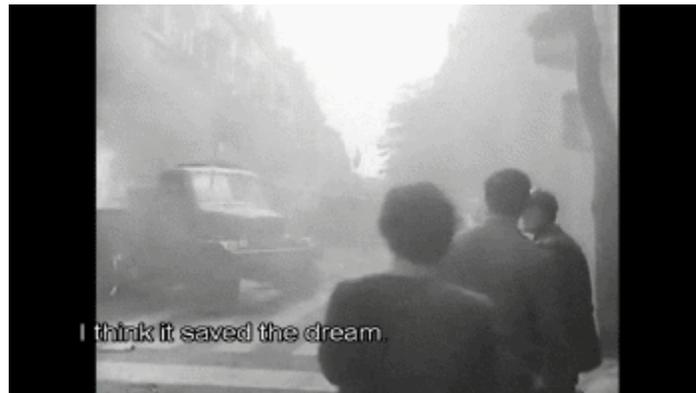
[Slavoj Žižek] You know, often in history, the event which may appear as a catastrophe ...



saves persons or an idea, elevating it into a myth.  
Remember the intervention of the Soviet army and other Warsaw Pact armies ...  
in 1968 in Czechoslovakia,  
to strangle the so-called Prague Spring.



The attempt of the Czech democratic communists to introduce a more human-faced socialism.  
Usually we perceive this brutal Soviet intervention ...  
as something that destroyed the brief dream of Prague Spring.



I think it saved the dream.  
Either Czechoslovakia would have turned into an ordinary liberal capitalist state,  
or at a certain point, which was usually the fate of reformist communists,  
the Communists in power would be obliged to set a certain limit.  
“Okay, you had your fun, your freedom.  
That’s enough. Now we again define the limits.”  
Again, the paradox is that precisely the Soviet intervention ...



saved the dream of the possibility of another communism and so on and so on.



So here, again, through the temporal catastrophe,

[TITANIC]

We have a love story which is, as it were,



redeemed in its idea,  
saved for eternity

redeemed in its idea, saved for eternity.

We can ultimately read the catastrophe as a desperate maneuver ...



to save the illusion of eternal love.

to save the illusion of eternal love.

We can see how ideology works effectively here.



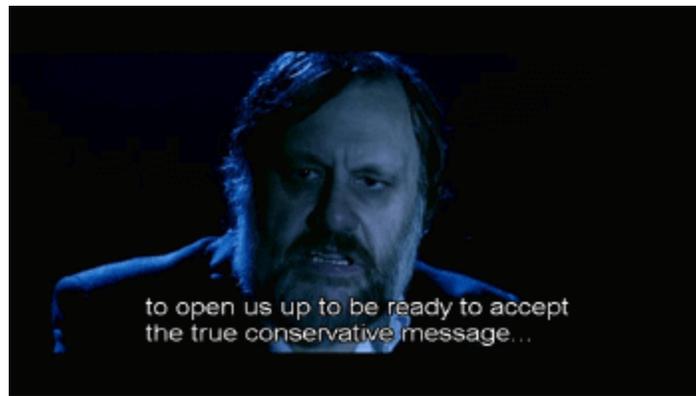
We have two superficial levels.  
All the fascination of the accident.  
Then the love story.



But all this which is quite acceptable for our liberal, progressive minds,  
all this is just a trap.



Something to lower our attention threshold, as it were,



to open us up to be ready to accept the true conservative message ...



of rich people having the right to revitalize themselves ...



by ruthlessly appropriating the vitality of the poor people.

[Sailor] There's nothing here, sir.



[Slavoj Zizek] There is a wonderful detail which tells everything.

[Rose] Come back.

[Slavoj Zizek] When Kate Winslet notices that Leonardo DiCaprio is dead,

[Rose] Come back.

[Slavoj Zizek] she, of course, starts to shout: “I will never let go. I will never let go,”



while at the same moment she pushes him off.



She is what we may call, ironically, a vanishing mediator.

The German hard rock band Rammstein are often accused of flirting, playing with the Nazi militaristic iconography. But if one observes closely their show, one can see very nicely what they are doing, exemplarily in one of their best known songs “Reise, Reise.” The minimal elements of the Nazi ideology enacted by Rammstein are something like pure elements of libidinal investment. Enjoyment has to be, as it were, condensed in some minimal tics, gestures, which do not have any precise ideological meaning. What Rammstein does is it liberates these elements from their Nazi articulations. It allows us to enjoy them in their pre-ideological state. The way to fight Nazism is to enjoy these elements, ridiculous as they may appear, by suspending the Nazi horizon of meaning. This way you undermine Nazism from within.

So how does nonetheless ideology do this? How does it articulate pre-ideological elements? These elements can also be seen as a kind of a bribe. The way ideology pays us to seduce us into its edifice. These bribes can be purely libidinal bribes, all those tics which are condensed enjoyment. Or they can be explicit discursive elements, like notions of solidarity, uh, of collective discipline, struggle for one’s destiny and so on and so

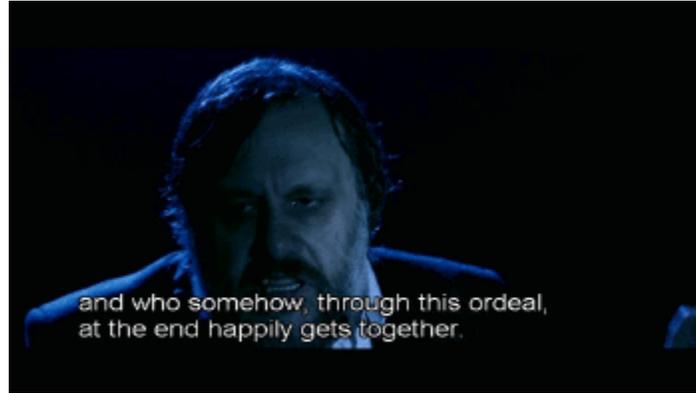
on. All these in itself are free-floating elements which open themselves to different ideological fields.

-- The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, directed by Sophie Fiennes

This logic of the production of a couple has a long history in Hollywood.

Whatever the story is about – it may be about the end of the world,  
an asteroid threatening the very survival of humanity or a great war – whatever.

As a rule we always have a couple whose link is threatened,



and who somehow, through this ordeal, at the end happily gets together.



[THE FALL OF BERLIN, 1949, MIKHAIL CHIARELI, MOSFILM CINEMA CONCERN & INTERNATIONAL HISTORIC FILMS, INC.]



This logic does not hold only for Hollywood films.

[Men Speaking Foreign Language]



[Man] Here is the Reichstag.

[Slavoj Zizek] In the late '40s, in Soviet Union, they produced arguably one of the most expensive films of all times, *The Fall of Berlin*, the chronicle of the Second World War from the Soviet standpoint. And it's incredible how closely this film also follows the logic of the production of a couple.



The story begins just before the German attack on Soviet Union,



when a model worker, who is in love with a local girl,  
but is too shy to propose to her,  
is called to Moscow to get a medal from Comrade Stalin.



There Stalin notices his confusion, distress.  
And Stalin gives him some advice, which poetry to quote and so on.

This part unfortunately was lost,  
because in the background of this scene there was Beria,  
a Soviet politician who after Stalin's death became a non-person --  
was shot as a traitor.

But we know from the screenplay what was there.  
If Stalin gives you love advice, it has to succeed, so the couple embraces.



[Natasha] Alexei!

[Alexei] Natasha!

[Natasha] Oh! [Laughs]



[Slavoj Zizek] He carries her, probably to make love.  
At that very moment there is the triumphant, violent entrance of the obstacle.  
German planes come, dropping bombs.



[German Police] [To Natasha] Quiet!



[Woman] Natasha! Natasha!



[Natasha] It's all right. It's fine.

[Slavoj Zizek] The girl is taken prisoner.



[Adolph Hitler] These slaves will be given into German iron hands.

[Slavoj Zizek] The boy of course joins the Red Army, and we follow him through all the great battles.  
The idea being that in a deeper logic of the film,  
what these battles were about was really to recreate the couple.  
The boy has to get his girl.  
This is what happens at the end,  
but in a very strange way which reconfirms Stalin's role as the supreme divine matchmaker.



The scene itself, Stalin immersing himself into a crowd of ordinary people, never happened.



Stalin was totally paranoiac about flying, about taking planes.  
But nonetheless, when he saw this scene he cried.



[Stalin] Comrades. Today we celebrate a great victory over German Fascism.



[Slavoj Žižek] Of course, he himself, as we know, wrote the lines.



When the couple encounters each other, the girl first sees Stalin.



Then she turns around and, surprised, sees her lover,  
for whom she was waiting all the time of the war.



So it's only through the presence of Stalin that the couple gets reunited.



[Natasha] Aliocha? Aliocha!

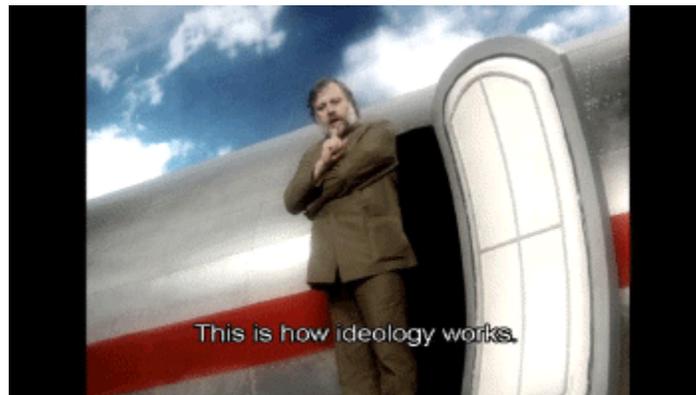


[Alexei] Natasha!

In *The Gift of Death*, Christianity is represented as a mystery religion, a religion of secrecy and sacrifice. Dostoevsky criticizes this strain of Christianity with devastating irony in "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov* (297-319). The Grand Inquisitor presents Christianity as a priestly religion of "miracle, mystery, and authority" which the ordinary people supposedly desire in place of the burden of freedom placed on them by Christ (309). Dostoevsky juxtaposes this false demonic form of Christianity with the true Christianity of Alyosha, which consists in faith and charity. The Grand Inquisitor's religion is based on a repression and denial of the historical Jesus, and, as such, is hardly representative of Christianity as a whole. While "miracle, mystery, and authority" play a not inconsequential role in Christianity, they constitute

a retrograde movement within its overall history.

-- Christian Mystery and Responsibility: Gnosticism in Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, by Peter Goldman



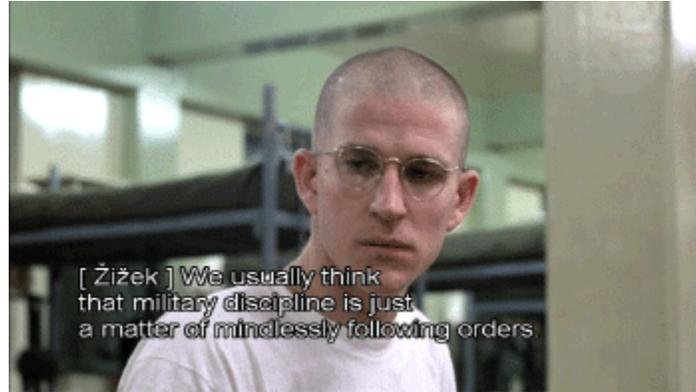
[Slavoj Žižek] This is how ideology works.  
Not the explicit ideology of the film which we hear at the end, Stalin saying:  
“Now all the free people will enjoy peace,” and so on and so on.  
But precisely ideology at its more fundamental.  
This apparently totally subordinated motive,  
unimportant in itself, the story of a couple,  
this is what is the key element which holds the entire film together.  
That small surplus element which attracts us, which maintains our attention.  
This is how ideology works.



[FULL METAL JACKET, 1987, STANLEY KUBRICK, WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT, INC.]

[Marine] Nice.  
everything clean.

Oiled.  
So that your action is beautiful.  
Smooth, Charlene.



[Slavoj Zizek] We usually think that military discipline is just a matter of mindlessly following orders.  
Obeying the rules.  
You don't think. You do what is your duty.  
It's not as simple as that.



If we do this, we just become machines.



There has to be something more.  
This more can have two basic forms.  
The first more benign form is an ironic distance,  
best epitomized by the well-known movie and TV series M\*A\*S\*H.



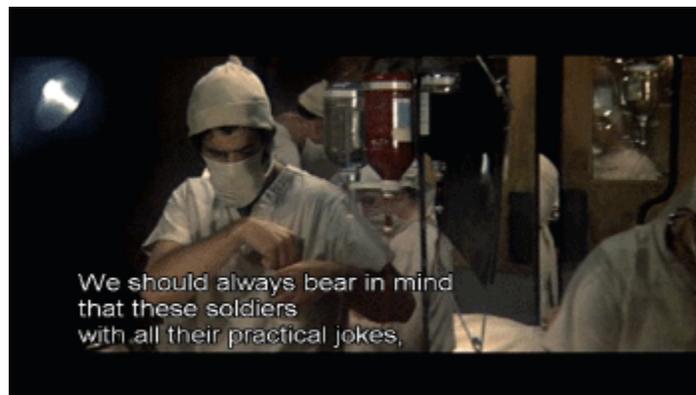
[M\*A\*S\*H, 1970, ROBERT ALTMAN, TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION & ASPEN PRODUCTIONS INC.]



[Boy] Hawkeye?

[Slavoj Zizek] Where the military doctors are involved in sexual escapades, make jokes all the time.

Some people took Robert Altman's movie M\*A\*S\*H ... even as a kind of an antimilitaristic, satiric product, but it's not.



We should always bear in mind that these soldiers with all their practical jokes, making fun of their superiors and so on, operated perfectly as soldiers.

They did their duty.

[Doctor] This one's for you, babe.

[Doctor 2] Knife.



Much more ominous is a kind of obscene supplement to pure military discipline

[Slavoj Žižek] Much more ominous is a kind of obscene supplement to pure military discipline.

[FULL METAL JACKET]

[Soldiers] [Chanting]



[Chanting]  
[Žižek] In practically all movies about the U.S. Marines,

FULL METAL JACKET (1987)  
STANLEY KUBRICK  
WARNER BROS ENTERTAINMENT INC

[Slavoj Žižek] In practically all movies about the U.S. Marines, the best known embodiment of this obscenity are marching chants, a mixture of nonsense ... and obscenity.

[Soldiers] I don't know, but I've been told.



Eskimo pussy is mighty cold.  
and obscenity.

Eskimo pussy is mighty cold.

[Slavoj Žižek] This is not undermining, making fun of military discipline. It is its innermost constituent. You take this obscene supplement away, and military machine stops working.



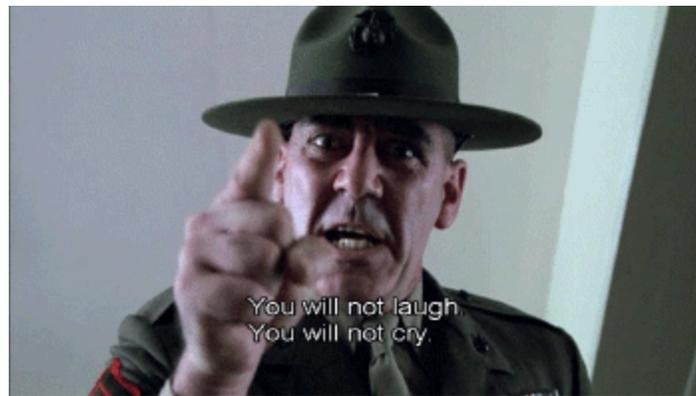
[Drill Sergeant] Well, no shit. What have we got here?  
A fucking comedian. Private Joker.  
I admire your honesty.



Hell, I like you. You can come over to my house and fuck my sister.



[Punches soldier in the stomach, who grunts]  
You little scumbag! I've got your name. I've got your ass!



You will not laugh.  
You will not cry.

You will not laugh.  
You will not cry.  
You will learn by the numbers. I will teach you!  
Now get up! Get on your feet!  
You had best unfuck yourself or I will unscrew your head and shit down your neck!

[Soldier] Sir, yes, sir!

[Drill Sergeant] Private Joker, why did you join my beloved corps?



I think that the drill sergeant,  
the way it is played  
in an exemplary way ...

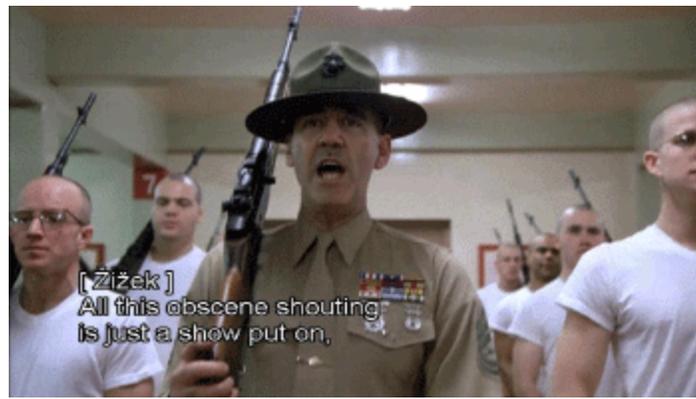
[Slavoj Zizek] I think that the drill sergeant, the way it is played in an exemplary way ...  
in Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket,  
that the drill sergeant is rather a tragic figure.  
I always like to imagine him as the person who,



after his work, returns home,  
is quite decent and so on.

after his work, returns home, is quite decent and so on.

[Drill Sergeant] This is my rifle. This is my gun.



[Slavoj Zizek] All this obscene shouting is just a show put on,



not so much to impress ordinary soldiers, whom he is training, as to bribe them with bits of enjoyment.

It's not just a question of these obscenities ...  
which sustains the military machinery.

It's another, more general rule ...  
which holds for military communities,  
but even more, I would say, for all human communities,  
from the largest nations, ethnic groups,  
up to small university departments and so on.

You don't only have explicit rules.  
You always, in order to become part of a community,  
you need some implicit, unwritten rules,  
which are never publicly recognized,  
but are absolutely crucial as the point of the identification of a group.



[IF ..., 1968, LINDSAY ANDERSON, PARAMOUNT PICTURES CORPORATION]

[Slavoj Zizek] In the U.K. everyone knows about the obscene unwritten rituals ... which regulate life in public schools.



[Minister] We all thank you, Finchley. I want to see your whips in my study after break.

[Man] Right, sir.

[Minister] Oh, how was India? Enjoy it?

[Man] Jolly good.

[Minister] Bridges.



[Professor] I'll labor night and day



[Slavoj Zizek] Just think about Lindsay Anderson's classic *If*. The public life is democratic. We have professors who interact with their pupils, nice atmosphere, teaching, friendship, spirit of cooperation. But then we all know what happens beneath the surface.



Older pupils torturing, sexually abusing the younger.  
This same mixture of obscenity and sadistic violence.  
And again, what is crucial here is we should not simply put all the blame ...  
or all the enjoyment on the older pupils.



[Boy] No, no! [Shouts]

[Boys laughing]

[Slavoj Zizek] The victims are part of this infernal cycle of obscenity.



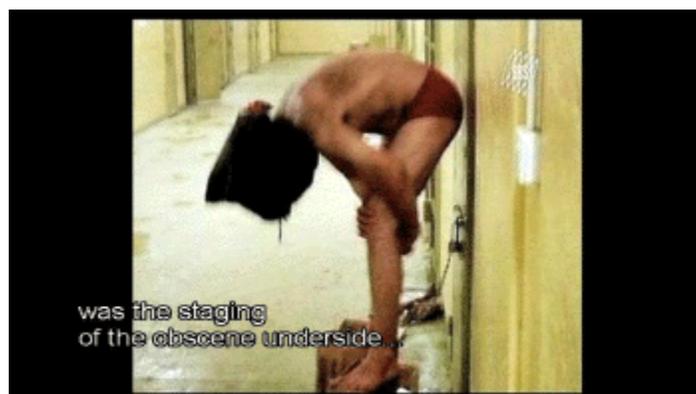
It is as if in order to really be a member of a community,  
you have to render your hands dirty.  
And I think that even the Abu Ghraib scandal ...  
of American soldiers torturing,  
or especially humiliating Iraqi prisoners is to be read in this way.



It's not simply we, the arrogant Americans, are humiliating others.



What Iraqi soldiers experienced there ...



was the staging of the obscene underside ...



of the American military culture.

[FULL METAL JACKET]



In Full Metal Jacket, it's the character of Joker, played by Matthew Modine, who is close to what we would call a normal soldier, a M\*A\*S\*H type of soldier.

He has a proper ironic distance.

He proves, at the end, militarily, the most efficient soldier.



Returning back to me. Why then will I soon shoot myself?  
Something went wrong there. But what?

[Marine] Lock and load!



[ Žižek ]  
I did not just run amok.

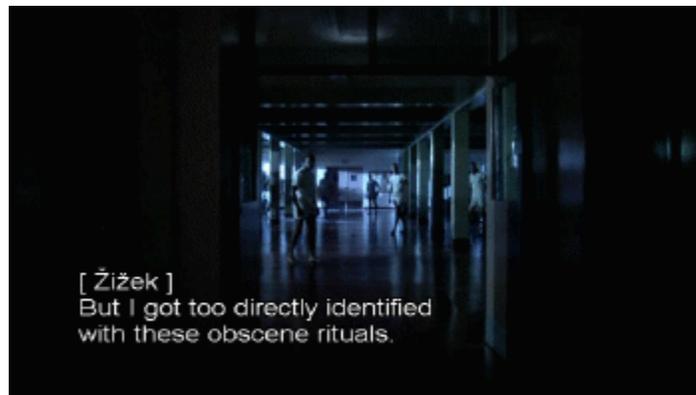
[Slavoj Zizek] I did not just run amok.



Order!  
[ Grunts ]

[Marine] Order! [Grunts]

This is my rifle! There are many like it, but this one is mine!



[ Žižek ]  
But I got too directly identified  
with these obscene rituals.

[Slavoj Zizek] But I got too directly identified with these obscene rituals.  
I lost the distance.  
I took them seriously.



[Drill Sergeant] What in the name of Jesus H. Christ are you animals doing in my head?



[Slavoj Zizek] If you get too close to it, if you over identify with it,  
if you really immediately become the voice of this superego,  
it's self-destructive.  
You kill people around you. You end up killing yourself.





[The Joker] Oh, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh.



So you think Batman's made Gotham a better place?  
Hmm? Look at me.



[THE DARK KNIGHT, 2008, CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, WARNER BROTHERS ENTERTAINMENT, INC.)



You see, this is how crazy Batman's made Gotham.  
If you want order in Gotham, Batman must take off his mask and turn himself in.  
Oh. And every day he doesn't, people will die.  
Starting tonight. I'm a man of my word.

[Slavoj Zizek] So who is Joker?



[Gordon] If we're gonna play games



[Slavoj Zizek] Which is the lie he is opposing?

[Gordon] I'm gonna need a cup of coffee.



[Joker] Ah. The good cop, bad cop routine?



[Gordon] Not exactly.

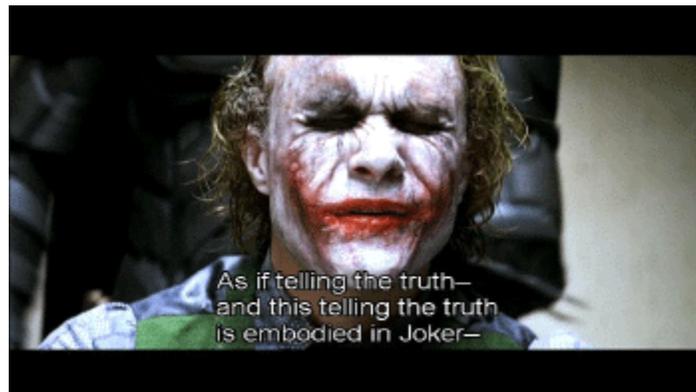
[Door Buzzes]



[Slavoj Žižek] The truly disturbing thing about *The Dark Knight* ...  
is that it elevates lie ...  
into a general social principle,  
into the principle of organization of our sociopolitical life.



As if our societies can remain stable, can function, only if based on a lie.



As if telling the truth – and this telling the truth is embodied in Joker --  
means distraction, disintegration of the social order.



[Joker] Never start with the head. The victim gets all fuzzy.  
He can't feel the next --  
[Grunts]

[Slavoj Zizek] Towards the end it is as if lie functions ...  
as a hot potato, passing from one person's hand to another person's hand.  
First there is Harvey Dent –

[Reporters Clamoring]

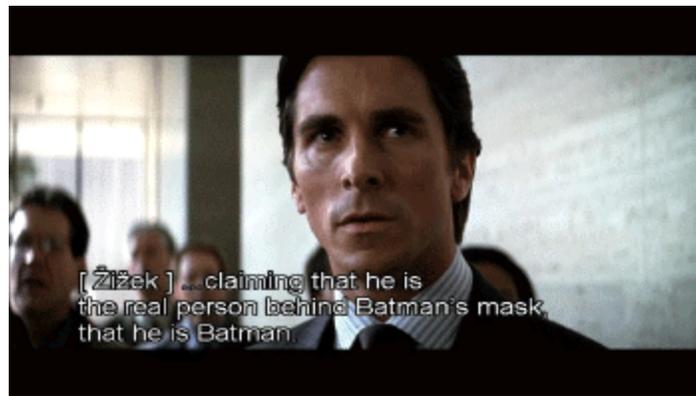


[Harvey Dent] So be it. Take the Batman into custody.

[Slavoj Zizek] the public prosecutor who lies --



[Harvey Dent] I am the Batman.

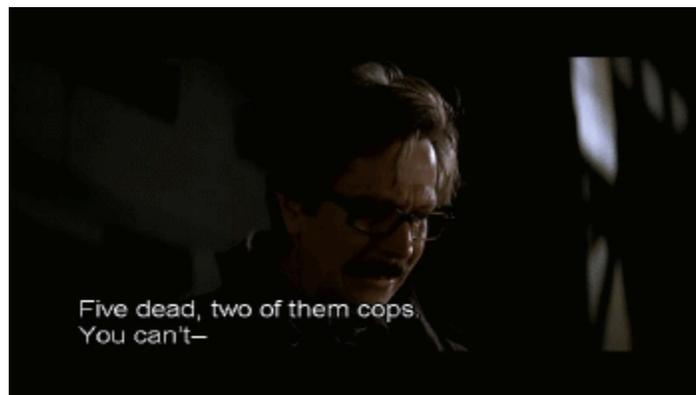


[Slavoj Žižek] ... claiming that he is the real person behind Batman's mask, that he is Batman. Then we have Gordon, honest policeman, Batman's friend, who fakes, stages his own death.



[Harvey Dent] I'll see you later.

[Woman] Where? Are you going back?



[Gordon] Five dead, two of them cops. You can't --

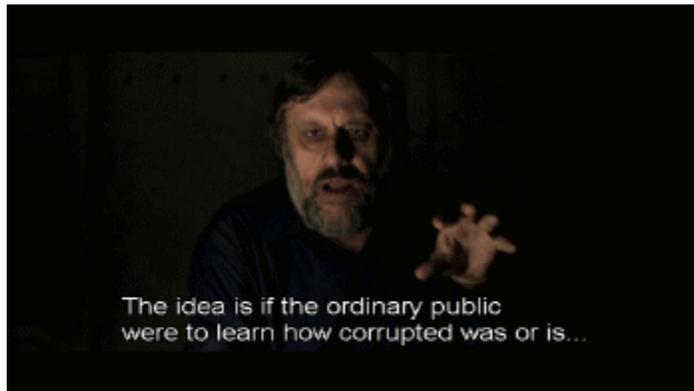
[Slavoj Žižek] At the end, Batman himself takes upon himself --

[Batman] The Joker cannot win.

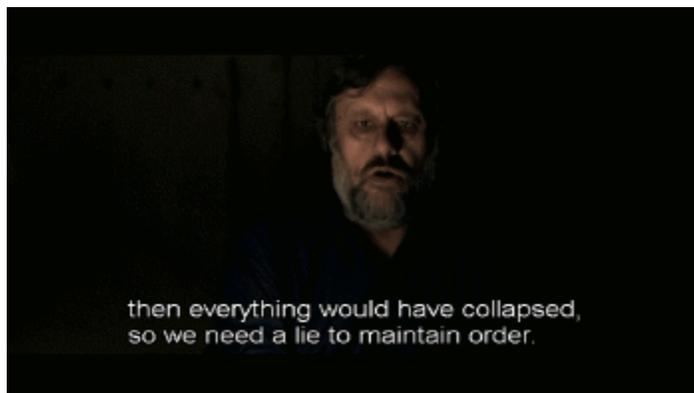
[Slavoj Žižek] the crimes, murders committed by Harvey Dent, the public prosecutor turned criminal --



[Batman] Gotham needs its true hero.



[Slavoj Žižek] in order to maintain the trust of the public into the legal system.  
The idea is if the ordinary public were to learn how corrupted was or is ...  
the very core of our legal system,



then everything would have collapsed, so we need a lie to maintain order.



[Gordon] A hero.  
Not the hero we deserved but the hero we needed.



Nothing less than a knight.  
Shining.

[Slavoj Zizek] There is nothing new in this.  
This is an old conservative wisdom ...  
asserted long ago by philosophers,  
from Plato especially, and then Immanuel Kant, Edmund Burke and so on and so on.



This idea that the truth is too strong.  
That a politician should be a "cynicist" who, although he knows what is true,



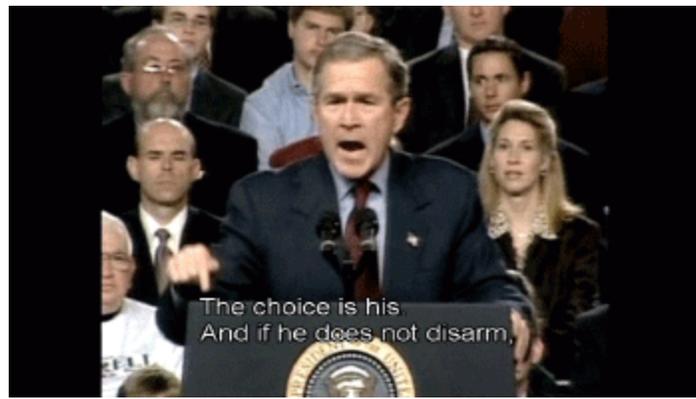
tells to ordinary people what Plato called a noble fable, a lie.



[Donald Rumsfeld] Um, the United States knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.  
The U.K. knows that they have weapons of mass destruction.  
Any country on the face of the earth with an active intelligence program ...  
knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.



[Tony Blair] Which could be activated within 45 minutes, including against his own Shia population.

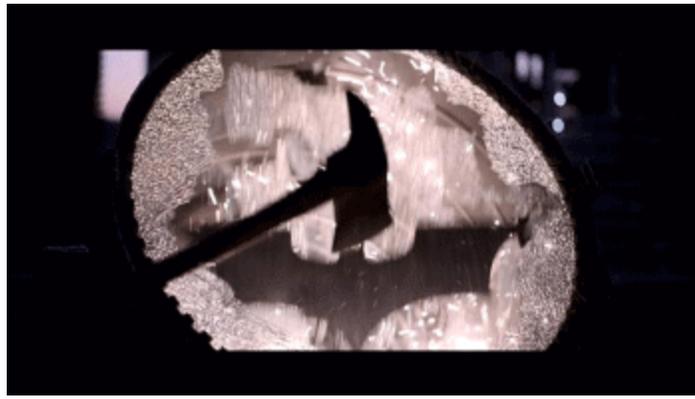


[George Bush, Jr.] The choice is his. And if he does not disarm, the United States of America will lead a coalition and disarm him in the name of peace.



[Slavoj Žižek] Let's be frank. We can have a state public system of power ... as legitimate as you want, submitted to critical press, democratic elections, and so on and so on. Apparently it just serves us. But nonetheless, if you look closely ... into how even the most democratic state power functions, in order for it to display true authority -- and power needs authority -- there has to be, as it were, between the lines, all the time this message of, "Yeah, yeah, yeah. We are legalized through elections, but basically we can do with you whatever we want."





[Batman] Because that's what needs to happen.  
Because sometimes truth isn't good enough.  
Sometimes people deserve more.



Sometimes people deserve to have their faith rewarded.



[Slavoj Zizek] One of the great platitudes which are popular today ...  
when we are confronted with acts of violence ...  
is to refer to Fyodor Dostoyevsky's famous statement from Brothers Karamazov:



"If there is no God, then everything is permitted."

Well, the first problem with this statement is that Dostoyevsky, of course, never made it. The first one who used this phrase, as allegedly made by Dostoyevsky, was Jean-Paul Sartre in '43.

But the main point is that this statement is simply wrong. Even a brief look at our predicament today clearly tells us this.



[Osama bin Laden] [Speaking Foreign Language]

[Slavoj Zizek] It is precisely if there is God ...



that everything is permitted to those who not only believe in God, but who perceive themselves as instruments, direct instruments of the divine will.

If you posit or perceive or legitimize yourself ... as a direct instrument of the divine will, then, of course, all narrow, petty moral considerations disappear.

[911 Crowd Exclaiming]

[Slavoj Zizek] How can you even think in such narrow terms ...  
when you are a direct instrument of God?

### WHAT DO YOU KNOW AND HOW DO YOU KNOW IT?

Many readers are by now spluttering with indignation. We can hear them expostulating: “The official version of 9/11 is a myth and a lie!” – followed by a string of obscenities worthy of Dick Cheney. But think for a minute: if you think you know all about 9/11, how do you know what you think you know?

The first identification of Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda as the perpetrators came during the day on September 11, as various commentators and announcers for cable, broadcast, and public television began floating the charge that Bin Laden and al Qaeda were behind the attacks. Apparently CNN was the first to mention Bin Laden, and the other myth-mongers immediately followed its lead. In retrospect, we know that many of these leaks came from two important functionaries in the Washington bureaucracy. These were George Tenet, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who should have been fired that same day, but who was allowed to resign in disgrace in June 2004, on the eve of the publication of a Senate Intelligence Committee report which pilloried him and his agency for gross incompetence. This was the same Tenet who later assured Bush that the case for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as a pretext for a US invasion was a “slam dunk.” The other prime myth-monger was Richard A. Clarke, the former terror czar of the Clinton administration who had been kept on by Bush. Clarke had a long history, of which many of his gulled victims at those hearings were unaware. He had been dropped from the State Department by James Baker III because he was accused of concealing Israeli exports of US military technology to the People’s Republic of China which were banned under US law, and which the Israelis had agreed in advance not to carry out. In some quarters, Richard Clarke’s name was mentioned at the time of the hunt for MEGA, the Israeli mole thought to be operating in the White House. Clarke is a close friend of Israeli defense officials, among them David Ivry of the Israeli Defense Ministry.

As Clarke recounts in his recently published memoir: “At the outset of the first Gulf War, Ivry and I conspired to get our governments to agree to deploy a US Army Patriot unit in Israel. No foreign troops had ever been stationed before in Israel. We also worked together to sell Patriots to Israel, and to tie in the Kiriath [the Israeli Pentagon] with American satellites that detected Iraqi Scud missile launches towards Israel. After the war, the CIA circulated unfounded rumors that Israel had sold some of the Patriots to China. Many in the State Department who thought I was ‘too close to Israel’ sought to blame me.” (Clarke 46) Clarke was a protégé of Arnold L. Raphael (killed in the same plane crash with Gen. Zia of Pakistan), and worked closely with Morton Abramowitz.

On the morning of Sept. 11, as the White House was being evacuated for fear that it could be hit after the strikes against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the first top official to say “This is Al Qaeda!” had been Richard Clarke. (New York Times, December 30, 2001). When Clarke arrived at the White House a little after 9 AM on 9/11, he found Cheney and Condoleezza Rice alone in Cheney’s office. “What do you think,” asked the horrified Cheney. Clarke’s immediate reply: “It’s an al Qaeda attack and they like simultaneous attacks. This may not be over.” (Clarke 2) This is the moment of conception of the 9/11 myth.

At this moment Clarke, as a New Yorker would say, didn’t know from nothing. Had he ever heard of strategic deception? Had he ever heard of diversionary tactics? Had he ever heard of feints?

Clarke tells us in his memoir that he attempted to collect his thoughts about the events going on around him as he walked from the White House Secure Videoconferencing Center just off the Situation Room across the

White House to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center, which was Cheney's underground bunker:

In the quiet of the walk, I caught my breath for the first time that day: This was the "Big al Qaeda Attack" we had warned was coming and it was bigger than almost anything we had imagined, short of a nuclear weapon.

(Clarke 17)

This is already one of the most fateful snap judgments in world history. Had Clarke utterly forgotten the lessons of Oklahoma City, when leakers had inspired the report that the explosion was the world of Moslems?

Clarke had no proof then, and has come forward with none since.

Rushing to overtake Clarke as the leading hipshot in snap strategic diagnosis was CIA Director Tenet. While Bush was cowering in his spider hole at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, he conducted a National Security Council meeting by means of teleconference screens. "Who do you think did this to us?" Bush asked Tenet. Tenet was emphatic: "Sir, I believe it's al Qaeda. We're doing the assessment, but it looks like, it feels like, it smells like Al Qaeda." (Bamford 2004 91) In other words, Tenet also had no proof, no evidence, no case – just his crude Lockean sense certainty.

Later, after World Trade Center 7 had gone through its inexplicable and embarrassing collapse at about 5:20 PM, Clarke addressed a high-level interagency meeting from the Situation Room. Present by video link were Armitage of State, General Meyers of the JCS, and other important officials. Clarke stated: "Okay, we all know this was al Qaeda. FBI and CIA will develop the case and see if I'm right. We want the truth but, in the meantime, let's go with the assumption it's al Qaeda. What's next.?" (Clarke 23) Before he went to bed in the White House, Bush jotted a note to himself: "The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today. We think it's Osama Bin Laden." (Bamford 2004 92)

Given the fecklessness of Bush, Cheney, and Rice, Richard Clarke was running the US government on 9/11, and it was he who made the myth of the exclusive responsibility of al Qaeda/Bin Laden into the official policy of the US. Clarke can thus claim pride of place as the originator of the 9/11 myth. And Clarke was more than a mythograph. Clarke also shared in the responsibility for the bungling and stupid attack on an aspirin factory in Khartoum, Sudan, after the bombing of US embassies in east Africa in the summer of 1998. If there were an Oscar for deception, Clarke's performance at the Kean-Hamilton Commission hearings in April 2004 would have won it. It was that virtuoso performance which launched Clarke on his current career as a television commentator predicting imminent WMD terrorist attacks on this country and advocating the speedy imposition of martial law. We will hear more about this gentleman later. All we need to note right now is that anyone would be foolish to buy a used car from Clarke or Tenet.

-- 9/11 Synthetic Terrorism Made in USA, by Webster Griffin Tarpley

This is how so-called religious fundamentalists work, but not only them.

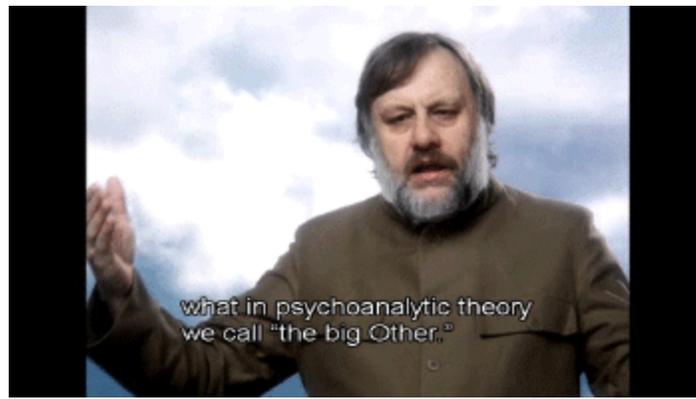
Every form of so-called totalitarianism works like that,  
even if it is presented or if it presents itself as atheist.

Let's take Stalinism.

Officially, Stalinism was based on atheist Marxist theories.

But if we look closely at the subjective experience ...  
of a Stalinist political agent, leader,  
we see that it's not a position of an arrogant master ...  
who can do whatever he wants.

It's, on the contrary, the position of a perfect servant.  
In the Stalinist universe there definitely is ...



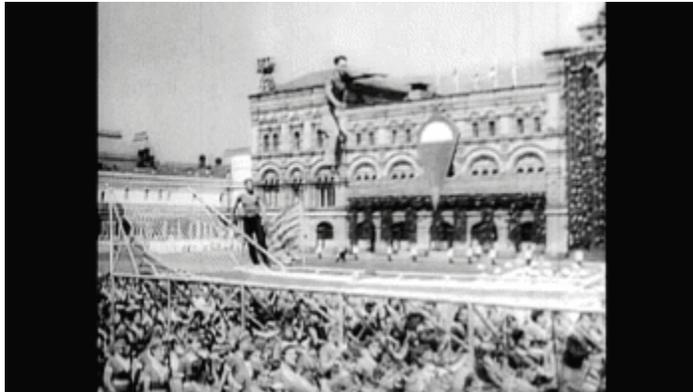
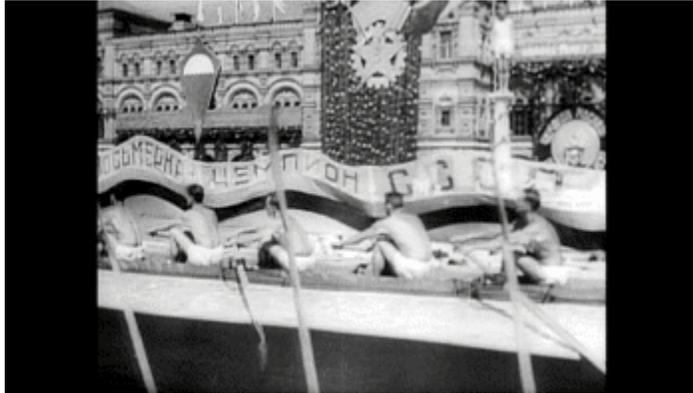
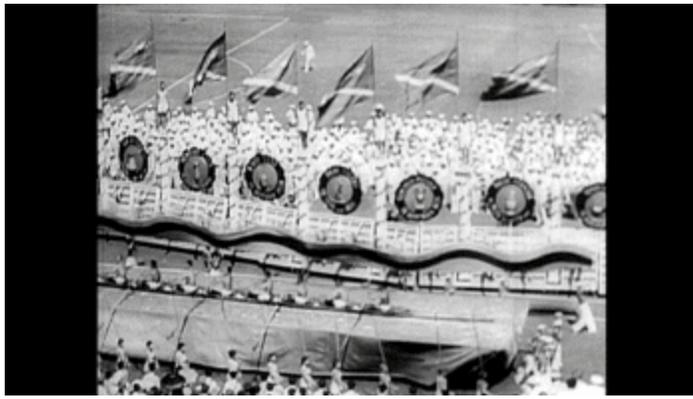
what in psychoanalytic theory we call "the big Other."

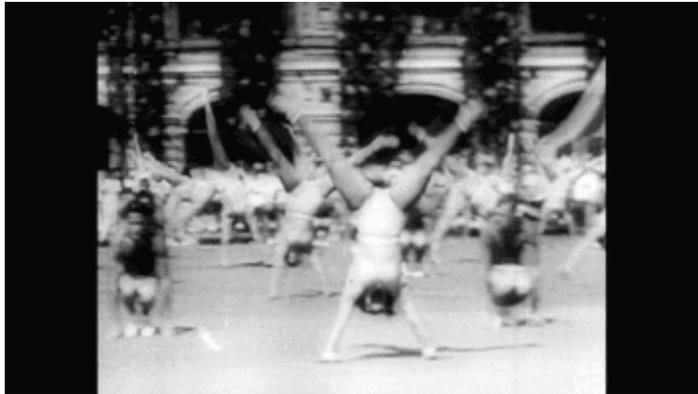
[March]

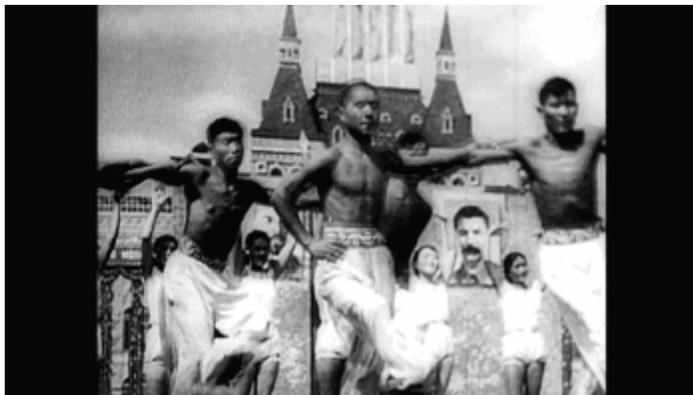
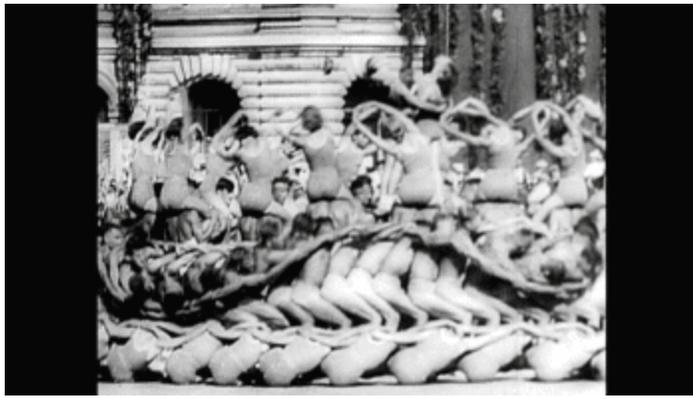










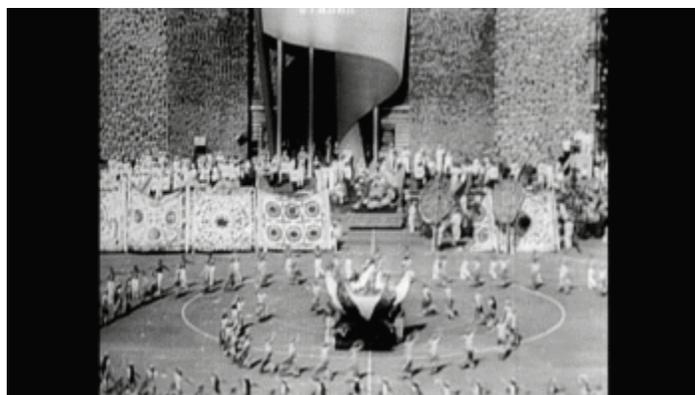


[Men Singing]  
[Continues]

[Slavoj Zizek] This big Other in the Stalinist universe has many names. The best known of them are the necessity of historical progress towards communism, of simply history.



History itself is the big Other,





history as the necessary succession of historical stages.

[Music continues]

[Slavoj Zizek] A Communist experiences himself as simply an instrument ...  
whose function is to actualize a historical necessity.

[Music ends]



[Slavoj Zizek] The people, the mythic people whose instrument the totalitarian leader is, are never simply the actually existing individuals, groups of people and so on.

It's some kind of imagined idealized point of reference ... which works even when, for example, in rebellions against the Communist rule, like in Hungary '56, when the large majority of actually-resisting people rises up, is opposed to the regime.

They can still say no. These are just individuals. They are not the true people.





When you are accused of -- "My God, how could you have been doing all of these horrible things?" --







you could have said -- and this is the standard Stalinist excuse --  
"Of course my heart bleeds for all the poor victims.  
I am not fully responsible for it. I was only acting on behalf of the big Other."

[Man Singing in Russian]



[Slavoj Zizek] "As for myself, I like cats, small children." Whatever.



This is always part of the iconography  
of a Stalinist leader.

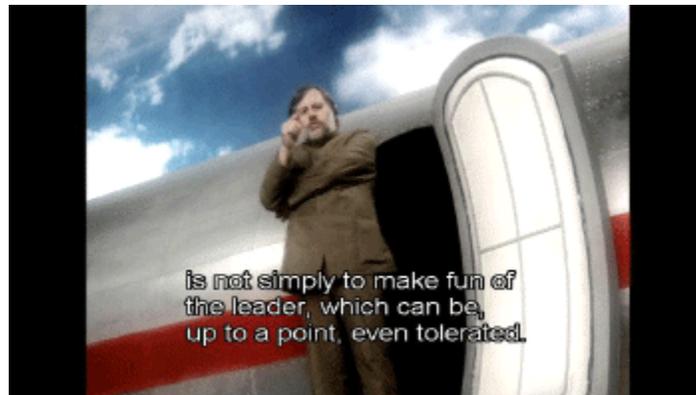
This is always part of the iconography of a Stalinist leader.

Lenin in Stalinism is always presented as someone who likes small children and cats.  
The implication being Lenin had to order many killings and so on, but his heart was not there.

This was his duty as instrument of historical progress, and so on and so on.



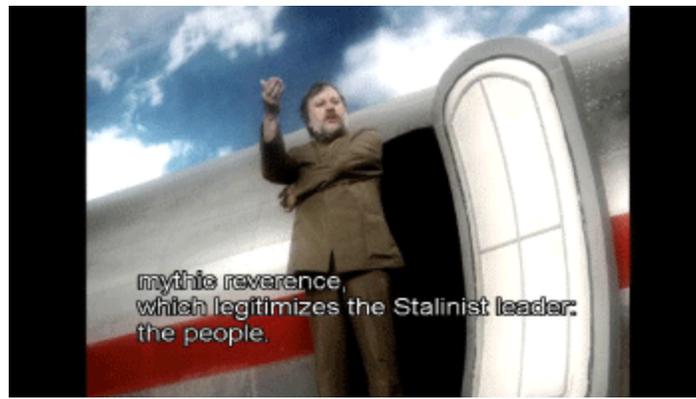
The way to undermine Stalinism ...



is not simply to make fun of the leader, which can be, up to a point, even tolerated.



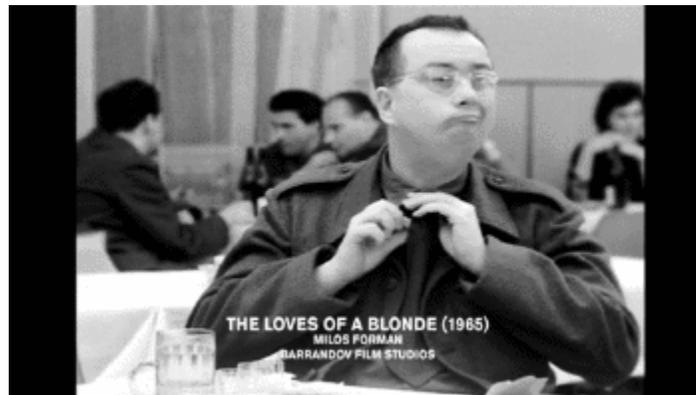
It is to undermine this very reverence,



mythic reverence, which legitimizes the Stalinist leader: the people.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

-- The United States Constitution



[THE LOVES OF A BLONDE, 1965, MILOS FORMAN, BARRANDOV FILM STUDIOS]



[Speakers: Singers Vocalizing]  
[Music Continues]



[Slavoj Zizek] This is how I read the, by far, best work of Milos Forman,  
his early Czech films.





[Ring tinkles]



where he mocks precisely the ordinary people ...



in their daily conformism, stupidity, egotistic lust and so on and so on.



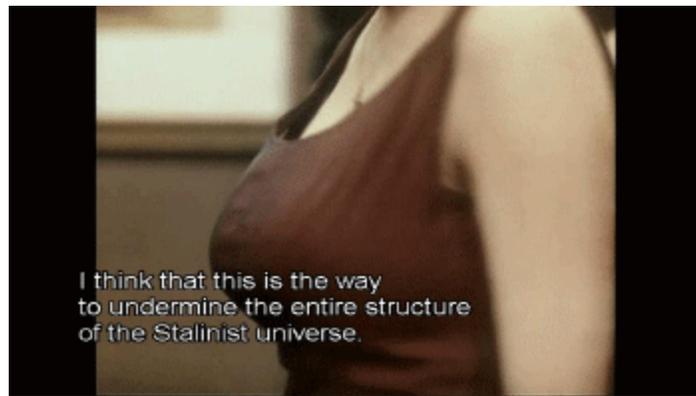
[THE FIREMAN'S BALL, 1965, MILOS FORMAN, BARRANDOV FILM STUDIOS]



[Fireman] Come on, look lively! Let's go.  
Come on girls, smile, look happy!  
Left, right ...



[Slavoj Zizek] It may appear that this is something very arrogant, but, no.



I think that this is the way to undermine the entire structure of the Stalinist universe.  
To demonstrate, not that leaders are not leaders --  
They are always ready to say, "Oh, but we are just ordinary people like you."



No! That there is no mythic people which serves as the ultimate legitimization.

[Fireman] Smile! Smile!



[Slavoj Zizek] So what is the big Other, this basic element of every ideological edifice?

It has two quite contradictory aspects.

On the one hand, of course, the big Other is the secret order of things,



like divine reason, fate or whatever,  
which is controlling our destiny.

But it is maybe the least interesting aspect of the big Other ...



[Knocking]

[Slavoj Zizek] as the agency which guarantees meaning of what we are doing.

[Fireman] Get dressed quickly!

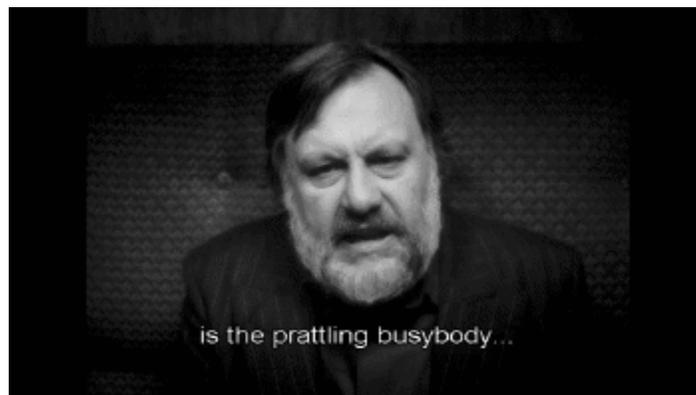


[Slavoj Zizek] Much more interesting is the big Other as the order of appearances.  
Many things which are prohibited are not simply prohibited,  
but they should not happen for the big Other.

[Knocking continues]

[Fireman] Hurry ... Jesus Christ ...

[Slavoj Zizek] A supreme example of this agency of the big Other as the agency of appearance ...



is the prattling busybody ...  
in David Lean's masterpiece, the Brief Encounter.  
At the very beginning of the film, the two lovers, Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard,  
arrange for their last meeting in a cafeteria of a small train station.



[BRIEF ENCOUNTER, 1945, DAVID LEAN, CARLTON FILM DISTRIBUTION LTD.]

[Dolly] Laura, what a lovely surprise.

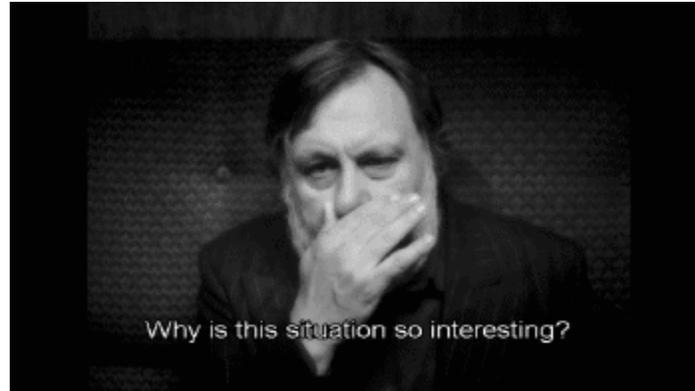
[Laura] Oh, darling.

[Dolly] My dear, I've been shopping till I'm dropping.  
My feet are nearly off, and my throat's parched.  
I thought of having tea at Spindles, but I was terrified of losing the train.  
Oh, dear.

[Laura] Oh. This is Doctor Harvey.

[Doctor Harvey] How do you do?

[Dolly] Would you be a perfect dear and get me my cup of tea?  
I don't think I could drag my poor old bones over to the counter.



[Slavoj Žižek] Why is this situation so interesting?  
Because, on the one hand, we cannot but experience ...  
this annoying lady as a brutal intruder.

[Bell Clanging]

[Laura] There's your train.

[Doctor Harvey] Yes, I know.



[Dolly] Oh, aren't you coming with us?

[Doctor Harvey] No, I go in the opposite direction. My practice is in Shirley.

[Dolly] Oh, I see.

[Doctor Harvey] I'm a general practitioner at the moment.

[Laura] Dr. Harvey's going out to Africa next week.

[Dolly] Oh, how thrilling.

[Slavoj Zizek] Instead of the two lovers being allowed at least their final moments alone, they have to maintain the appearances that nothing is happening between them,



that they are just acquaintances and so on and so on.



[Woman] He'll have to run or he'll miss it. He's got to get right over to the other platform.

[Slavoj Zizek] This precisely is the function of the big Other.  
We need for our stability ...



a figure of big Other for whom we maintain appearances.

[Dolly] ... and I arrived at the station with exactly half a minute to spare.  
My dear, I flew.

[Slavoj Zizek] But are things really as simple as that?  
The next scene, the scene of Celia Johnson, totally desperate.  
She knows that she will never again see her lover.

[Laura] Yes, he's a nice creature.

[Dolly] Have you known him long?

[Laura] No, not very long.  
I hardly know him at all really.

[Dolly] Well, my dear, I've always had a passion for doctors.

[Slavoj Zizek] Then we hear the line of Celia Johnson's thought.



[Laura] [Thinking] I wish I could trust you.  
I wish you were a wise, kind friend ...  
instead of a gossiping acquaintance I've known casually for years and never particularly cared for.

[Slavoj Zizek] What is the nature of this deadlock of Celia Johnson?



She is split between the two figures in the film of the big Other.



On the one hand, it's her husband,  
the ideal listener.



[Laura] [Thinking] Fred. Fred, dear Fred.  
You're the only one in the world with enough wisdom and gentleness to understand.



[Dolly] Wild horses wouldn't drag me away from England and home and all the things I'm used to.  
I mean, one has one's roots after all, hasn't one?

[Laura] Oh, yes, one has one's roots.



[Žižek]  
On the other hand,  
you hear this stupid person...

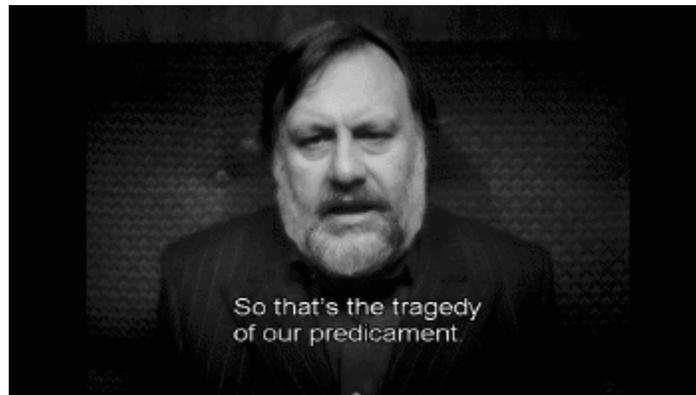
[Slavoj Žižek] On the other hand, you hear this stupid person ...  
who is available as a confessor, but there is not even an elementary trust.

[Laura] I wish you'd stop talking.  
I wish you'd stop prying and trying to find things out.  
I wish you were dead. No, I don't mean that. That was silly and unkind.  
But I wish you'd stop talking.

[Dolly] My dear, all her hair came out, and she said the social life was quite, quite horrid.  
Provincial, you know, and very nouveau riche.

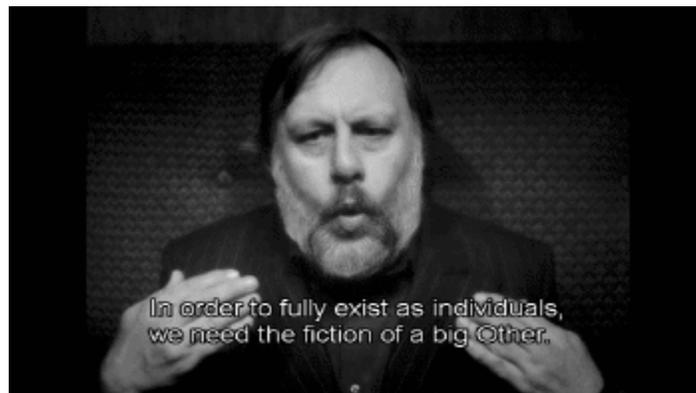
[Laura] Oh, Dolly.

[Dolly] What's the matter, dear? Are you feeling ill again?



So that's the tragedy  
of our predicament.

[Slavoj Žižek] So that's the tragedy of our predicament.



In order to fully exist as individuals,  
we need the fiction of a big Other.

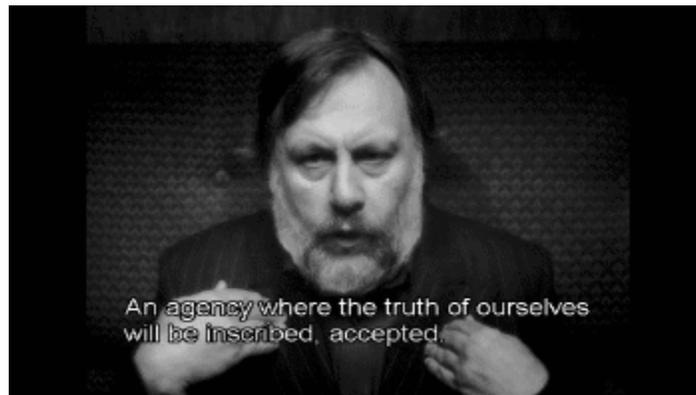
In order to fully exist as individuals, we need the fiction of a big Other.



There must be an agency which, as it were, registers our predicament.

It is by distortedly exalting some men, that others are distortedly debased, till the whole is out of nature. A vast mass of mankind are degradedly thrown into the background of the human picture, to bring forward, with greater glare, the puppet-show of state and aristocracy."

-- Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man"



An agency where the truth of ourselves will be inscribed, accepted.  
An agency to which to confess.

The Akashic Records or "The Book of Life" can be equated to the universe's super computer system. It is this system that acts as the central storehouse of all information for every individual who has ever lived upon the earth. More than just a reservoir of events, the Akashic Records contain every deed, word, feeling, thought, and intent that has ever occurred at any time in the history of the world. Much more than simply a memory storehouse, however, these Akashic Records are interactive in that they have a tremendous influence upon our everyday lives, our relationships, our feelings and belief systems, and the potential realities we draw toward us.

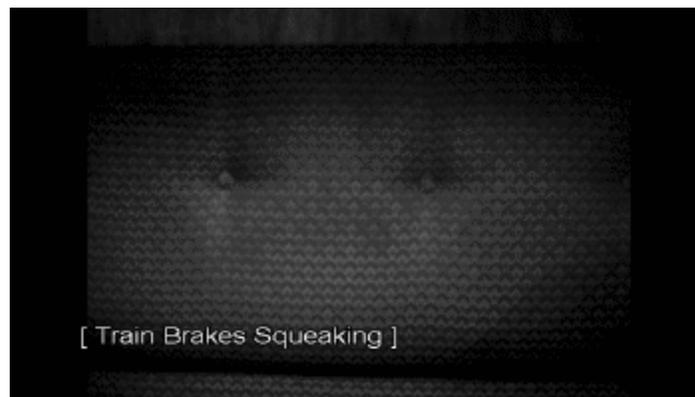
-- Akashic Records: The Book of Life, adapted from Edgar Cayce on the Akashic Records by Kevin J. Todeschi

But what if there is no such agency?  
of many women raped in the post-Yugoslav war ...  
in Bosnia in the early '90s.  
If when, if they survived, they made a terrible discovery.  
There is no one really to listen to them.  
Either some totally ignorant, bored social worker,

And so on and so on. They discovered the truth ...  
of what Jacques Lacan claims:  
There is no big Other.



There may be a virtual big Other to whom you cannot confess.  
There may be a real Other, but it's never the virtual one.  
We are alone.



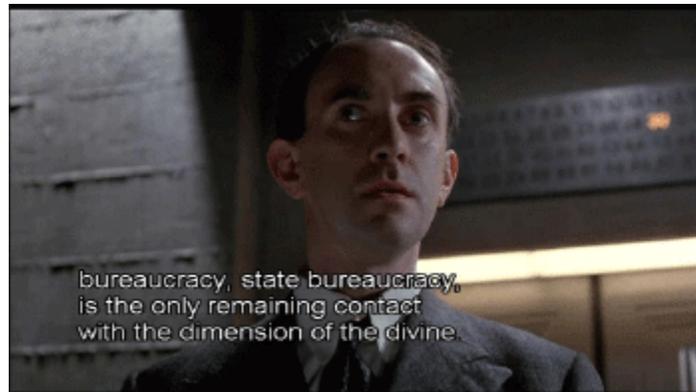
[Train Brakes Squeaking]



[BRAZIL, 1985, TERRY GILLIAM, EMBASSY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES]



[Slavoj Žižek] I think Kafka was right when he said that for a modern, secular, nonreligious man,



bureaucracy, state bureaucracy, is the only remaining contact with the dimension of the divine.  
It is in this scene from Brazil ...



that we see the intimate link between bureaucracy and enjoyment.



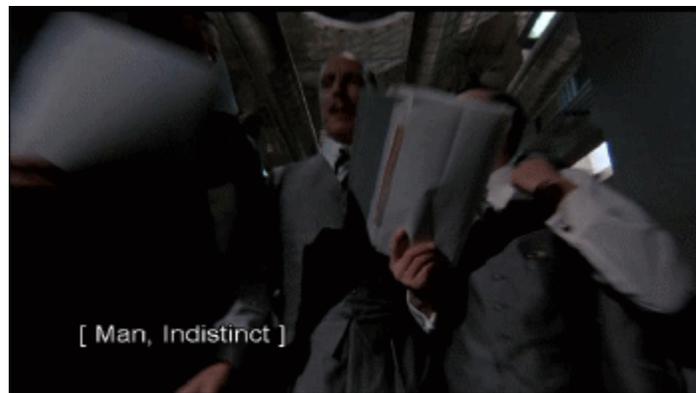
What the impenetrable omnipotence of bureaucracy harbors ...



is divine enjoyment ...

The basic insight of psychoanalysis is to distinguish between enjoyment and simple pleasures. They are not the same. Enjoyment is precisely enjoyment in disturbed pleasure. Even enjoyment in pain. And this excessive factor disturbs the apparently simple relationship between duty and pleasures.

-- The Pervert's Guide to Ideology, directed by Sophie Fiennes



[Man, indistinct]

[Men Clamoring] Mr. Warren. But Mr. Warren.

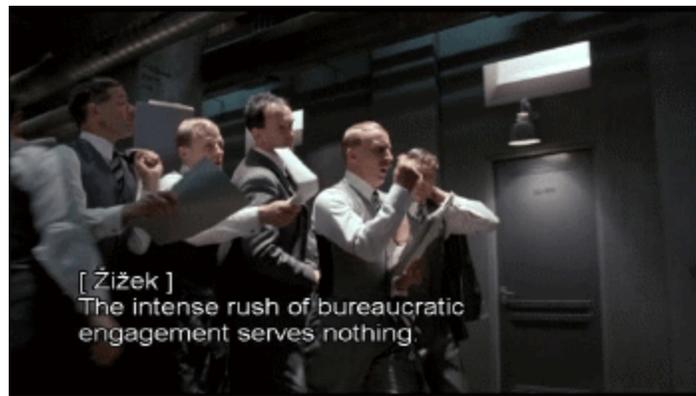
[Bureaucrat] Yes. No.

[Man, Indistinct]

[Bureaucrat] Definitely no.

[Sam Lowry] My name is Lowry, Mr. Warren, Sam Lowry.

[Bureaucrat] Ah, Lowry.



[ Žižek ]  
The intense rush of bureaucratic  
engagement serves nothing.

[Slavoj Zizek] The intense rush of bureaucratic engagement serves nothing.

[Bureaucrat] Glad to have you aboard!

[Man] These --

[Bureaucrat] Yes!

[Slavoj Zizek] It is the performance of its very purposelessness ...

[Bureaucrat] You'll like it up here.



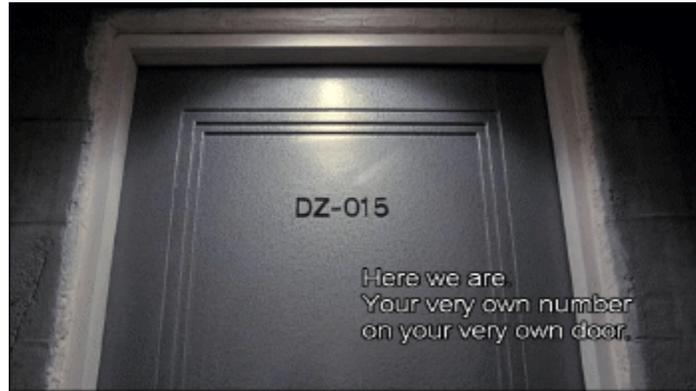
that generates an intense enjoyment,  
ready to reproduce itself forever.

[Slavoj Zizek] ... that generates an intense enjoyment, ready to reproduce itself forever.

[Bureaucrat] I'm expecting big things -- Off you go!

[All Clamoring]

[Bureaucrat] Get that progress. See those. Between you and me, Lowry, this -- No, no -- department -- Tell records to get stuff -- is about to be upgraded, and the -- Ah!



Here we are. Your very own number on your very own door.  
And behind that door, your very own office.  
Congratulations, DZ-015. Welcome to the team.  
Yes! No! Cancel that!  
Send two copies to Finance.

ROBERT ANTON WILSON: It was Greg Hill and Kerry Thornley who founded the Discordian Society, which is based on the worship of Eris, the Goddess of Chaos, discord, confusion, bureaucracy and international relations. They have no dogmas, but one catma. The catma is that everything in the universe relates to the number 5, one way or another, given enough ingenuity on the part of the interpreter. I found the Discordian Society to be the most satisfactory religion I had ever encountered up until that point, so I became a Discordian Pope. This is done by excommunicating all the Discordian Popes you can find and setting up your own Discordian Church. This is based on Greg's teaching that we Discordians must stick apart.

-- Interview with Robert Anton Wilson, by RMN, The Cosmic Trigger

[Slavoj Zizek] The obverse of this ...  
is a wonderful scene more towards the beginning of the film.



[Harry Tuttle] Harry Tuttle, heating engineer at your service.

[Slavoj Zizek] The hero, who has a problem in his apartment with plumbing, tries to get the state agency to fix it.



[Sam Lowry] Are you from Central Services?

[Harry Tuttle] Ha!

[Slavoj Zizek] Of course, two guys come. They just want forms to fill in. They do nothing.

[Sam Lowry] I called Central Services.

[Slavoj Zizek] And then the ultimate subversive figure comes, a kind of clandestine plumber, played by Robert De Niro,



[Sam Lowry] Just a minute, what was that business with a gun?  
Geez!

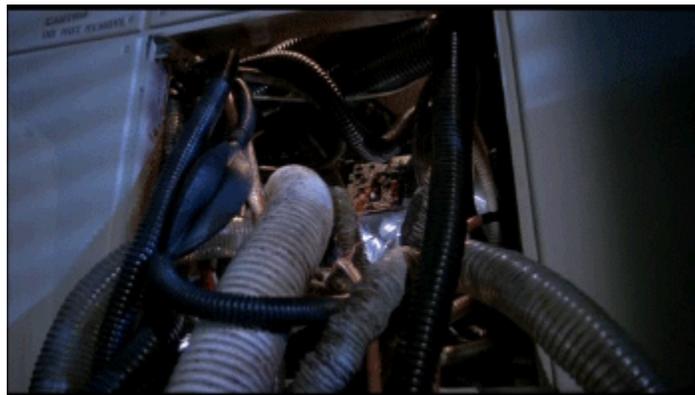
[Harry Tuttle] Just a precaution, sir. Just a precaution.

[Slavoj Zizek] who tells him, "Just tell me what is the problem," and promises quickly to fix it.



This, of course, is the ultimate offense to bureaucracy.

[Sam Lowry] Are you telling me that this is illegal?



[Beeping, High-pitched whirring]

[Sam Lowry] chuckles] Thanks.



[Harry Tuttle] Listen, kid, we're all in this together. Go on.

[Sam Lowry] [Chuckles]

[Slavoj Zizek] In the ordinary theological universe,  
your duty is imposed onto you by God or society or another higher authority,  
and your responsibility is to do it.  
But in a radically atheist universe,  
you are not only responsible for doing your duty,  
you are also responsible for deciding what is your duty.  
There is always in our subjectivity, in the way we experience ourselves,  
a minimum of hysteria.  
Hysteria is what?



Hysteria is the way we question our social, symbolic identity.

Duty was the essence of Illuminati teaching, but it was an Enlightenment kind of duty: duty not to God or to princes but to the order and to humanity.

-- Beethoven and the Illuminati: How the Secret Order Influenced the Great Composer, by Jan Swafford



[THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, 1988, MARTIN SCORSESE, UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS INC. & CINEPLEX ODEON FILMS CANADA, INC.]

[Woman] You're sure it's God? You're sure it's not the devil.



[Christ] I'm not sure. I'm not sure of anything.

[Woman] If it's the devil, the devil can be cast out.

[Christ] But what if it's God? You can't cast out God, can you?

[Slavoj Zizek] What is hysteria at its most elementary?  
It's a question addressed at the authority which defines my identity.



It's "Why am I what you are telling me that I am?"

In psychoanalytic theory, hysteria is much more subversive than perversion. A pervert has no uncertainties while, again, the hysterical position is that of a doubt,



which is an extremely productive position.  
All new inventions come from hysterical questioning.  
And the unique character of Christianity is that it transposes this hysterical questioning ...  
onto God himself as a subject.



[Christ] [Thinking] Who's that? Who's following me? Is that you?

[Slavoj Zizek] This is the ingenious idea of The Last Temptation of Christ,

[Piercing sound]



[Christ] [shouts] Ow! [Moaning, shouts]

[Slavoj Zizek] Kazantzakis's novel and Scorsese's film  
is told that he is, not only the son of God,



but basically God himself, he doesn't simply accept it.  
This is for Jesus Christ, boy, traumatic news.



Like, "My God, why am I dead? Am I really dead?"

[Men singing]

[Slavoj Zizek] How did we come to that unique point,



which I think makes Christianity an exception?



It all began with the Book of Job.  
As we all know, things turn out bad for Job.  
He loses everything. His house, his family, his possessions and so on.  
Three friends visit him,  
and each of them tries to justify Job's misfortunes.



The greatness of Job is that he does not accept this deeper meaning.



When, towards the end of the Book of Job, God himself appears,  
God gives right to Job.  
He says everything that the theological friends were telling Job is false.  
Everything Job was saying is true.  
No meaning in catastrophes.  
Here we have the first step ...



in the direction of delegitimizing suffering.

But Job is not shaken in his faith, and had already uttered an important truth when he said: "Behold, my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high . . . my eye pours out tears to God, that he would maintain the right of a man with God, like that of a man with his neighbour." [22] And later: "For I know that my Vindicator lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth." [23]

These words clearly show that Job, in spite of his doubt as to whether man can be just before God, still finds it difficult to relinquish the idea of meeting God on the basis of justice and therefore of morality. Because, in spite of everything, he cannot give up his faith in divine justice, it is not easy for him to accept the knowledge that divine arbitrariness breaks the law. On the other hand, he has to admit that no one except Yahweh himself is doing him injustice and violence. He cannot deny that he is up against a God who does not care a rap for any moral opinion and does not recognize any form of ethics as binding. This is perhaps the greatest thing about Job, that, faced with this difficulty, he does not doubt the unity of God. He clearly sees that God is at odds with himself -- so totally at odds that he, Job, is quite certain of finding in God a helper and an "advocate" against God. As certain as he is of the evil in Yahweh, he is equally certain of the good. In a human being who renders us evil we cannot expect at the same time to find a helper. But Yahweh is not a human being: he is both a persecutor and a helper in one, and the one aspect is as real as the other. Yahweh is not split but is an antinomy -- a totality of inner opposites -- and this is the indispensable condition for his tremendous dynamism, his omniscience and omnipotence. Because of this knowledge Job holds on to his intention of "defending his ways to his face," i.e., of making his point of view clear to him, since notwithstanding his wrath, Yahweh is also man's advocate against himself when man puts forth his complaint.

-- Answer to Job, by C.G. Jung

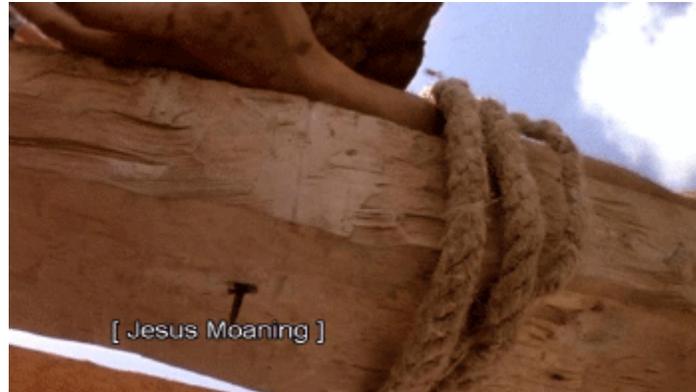




[Christ] [Thinking] Father, stay with me. Don't leave me.



[Women] [Shouts]



[Jesus] [moaning]



[Slavoj Zizek] The contrast between Judaism and Christianity ...



is the contrast between anxiety and love.

is the contrast between anxiety and love.

[Crowd clamoring]



[ Žižek ]  
The idea is that the Jewish God ...

[Slavoj Zizek] The idea is that the Jewish God ...

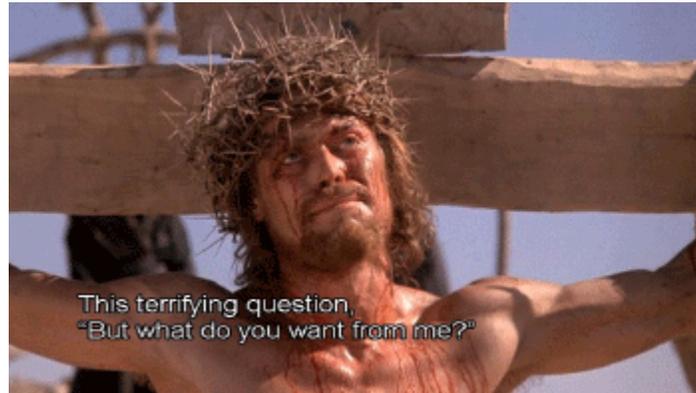


is the God of the abyss  
of the Other's desire.

is the God of the abyss of the Other's desire.



Terrible things happen.  
God is in charge,  
but we do not know what the big Other, God, wants from us.  
What is the divine desire?  
To designate this traumatic experience,  
Lacan used the Italian phrase, Che vuoi? "What do you want?"



This terrifying question, "But what do you want from me?"

The *mysterium tremendum* is "the terrifying mystery, the dread, fear, and trembling of the Christian in the experience of the sacrificial gift, . . . being paralyzed . . . by the gaze of God" (6), "a gaze that I don't see and that remains secret from me although it commands me" (27). Although the historical-textual basis for this description remains obscure (in both Patocka and Derrida), the emphasis on secrecy, terror, and death strongly suggests the demonic sacred.

-- Christian Mystery and Responsibility: Gnosticism in Derrida's *The Gift of Death*, by Peter Goldman

[Crowd clamoring]



[Slavoj Zizek] The idea is that Judaism persists in this anxiety,



like God remains  
this enigmatic, terrifying Other.

like God remains this enigmatic, terrifying Other.



And then Christianity  
resolves the tension through love.

And then Christianity resolves the tension through love.



By sacrificing his son,  
God demonstrates that he loves us.

By sacrificing his son, God demonstrates that he loves us.



So it's a kind of an imaginary,  
sentimental, even,

So it's a kind of an imaginary, sentimental, even,  
resolution of a situation of radical anxiety.

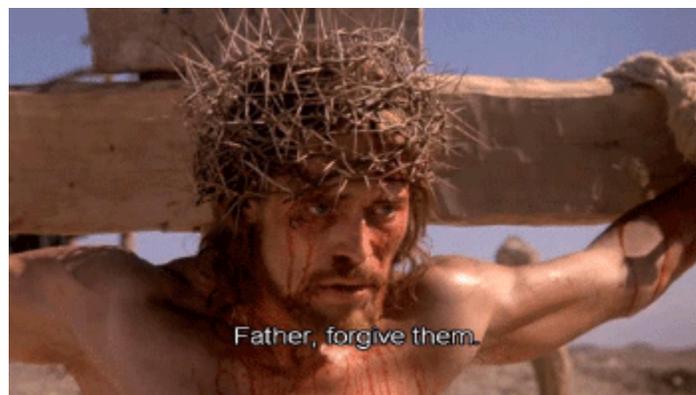
From a God who is a loving father, who is actually Love itself, one would expect understanding and forgiveness. So it comes as a nasty shock when this supremely good God only allows the purchase of such an act of grace through a human sacrifice, and, what is worse, through the killing of his own son. Christ apparently overlooked this anticlimax; at any rate all succeeding centuries have accepted it without opposition. One should keep before one's eyes the strange fact that the God of goodness is so unforgiving that he can only be appeased by a human sacrifice! This is an insufferable incongruity which modern man can no longer swallow, for he must be blind if he does not see the glaring light it throws on the divine character, giving the lie to all talk about love and the Summum Bonum.

-- Answer to Job, by C.G. Jung

[Crowd laughing, chattering]

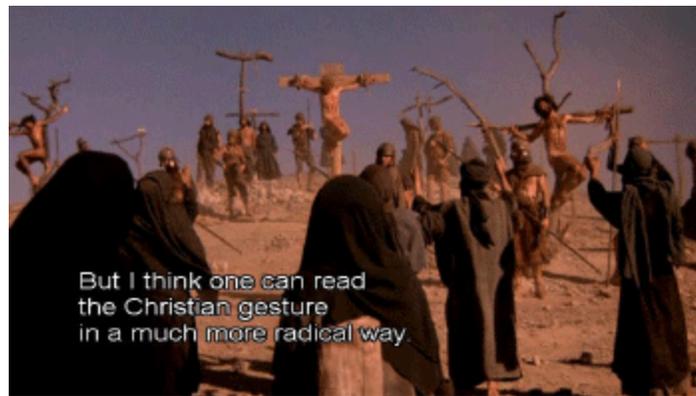


[No audible dialogue]  
[Indistinct]



[Christ] Father, forgive them.

[Slavoj Zizek] If this were to be the case, then Christianity would have been ...  
a kind of ideological reversal or pacification of the deep,  
much more shattering Jewish insight.



But I think one can read the Christian gesture in a much more radical way.  
This is what the sequence of crucifixion in Scorsese's film shows us.



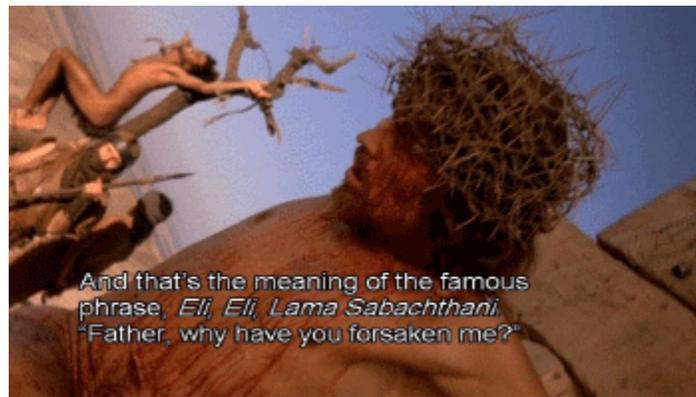
What dies on the cross is precisely this guarantee of the big Other.



The message of Christianity is here radically atheist.  
It's the death of Christ is not any kind of redemption ...  
or commercial affair in the sense of Christ suffers to pay for our sins.  
Pay to whom? For what? and so on.



It's simply the disintegration of the God ...  
which guarantees the meaning of our lives.



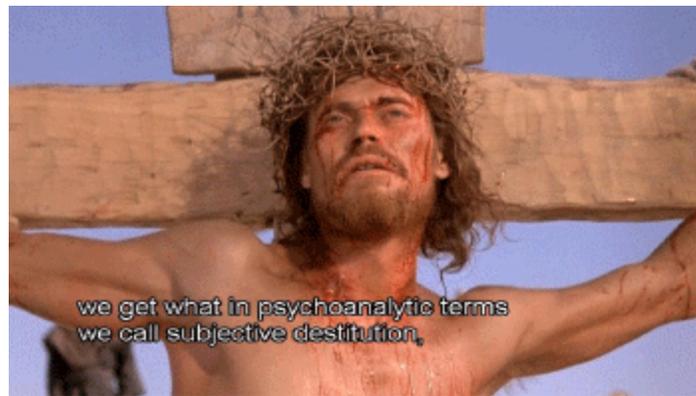
And that's the meaning of the famous phrase, Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani. "Father, why have you forsaken me?"



[Christ] Father! Why have you forsaken me?

[Thunderclap]

[Slavoj Zizek] Just before Christ's death,



we get what in psychoanalytic terms we call subjective destitution,  
stepping out totally of the domain of symbolic identification,



canceling or suspending the entire field of symbolic authority,  
the entire field of the big Other.

Of course, we cannot know what God wants from us, because there is no God.  
This is the Jesus Christ who says, among other things,



"I bring sword, not peace."



"If you don't hate your father, your mother, you are not my follower."



Of course this doesn't mean that you should actively hate or kill your parents.



I think that family relations stand here for hierarchic social relations.



The message of Christ is, "I'm dying, but my death itself is good news.  
It means you are alone, left to your freedom.



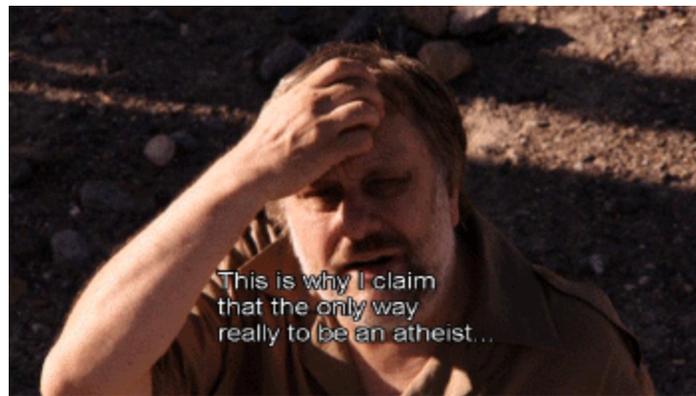
Be in the Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit,  
which is just the community of believers."



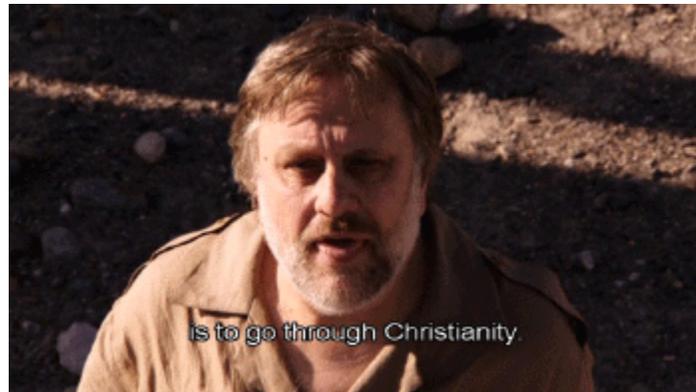
It's wrong to think that the Second Coming ...  
will be that Christ as a figure will return somehow.



Christ is already here when believers form an emancipatory collective.



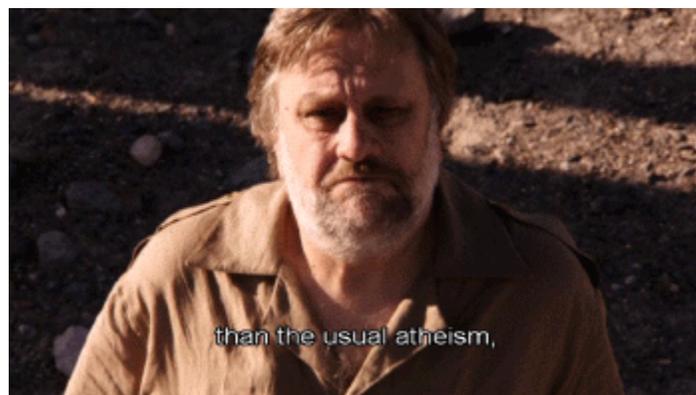
This is why I claim that the only way really to be an atheist ...



is to go through Christianity.



Christianity is much more atheist ...

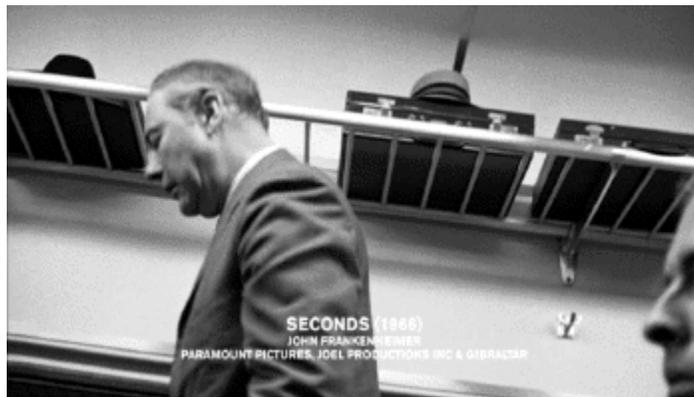


than the usual atheism,  
which can claim there is no God and so on.  
But nonetheless it retains a certain trust into the big Other.



This big Other can be called natural necessity, evolution or whatever.  
We humans are nonetheless reduced to a position ...  
within a harmonious whole of evolution, whatever.  
But the difficult thing to accept is, again, that there is no big Other,  
no point of reference which guarantees meaning.

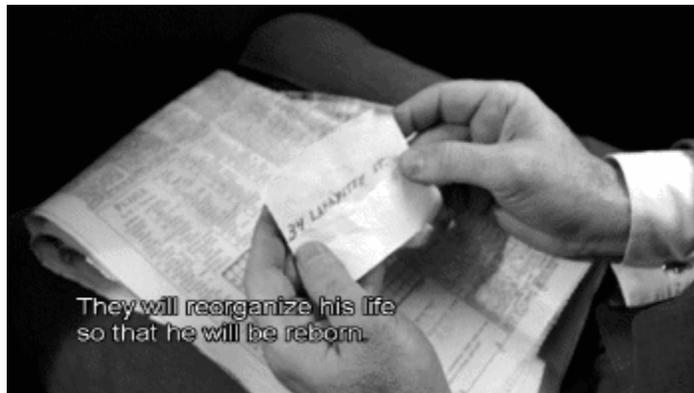
How unavoidable the struggle was in this whole range of myth-building becomes clear from the simple reflection that such conceptions are directly contradictory to the Jewish view of religion. Where does one find in the sacred books of the Hebrews even the slightest hint of the conception of the divine Trinity? Nowhere. Note also with what fine instinct the first bearers of the Christian idea take precautions that the "redeemer" should not be incorporated in any way with the Jewish people: the house of David had been promised everlasting duration by the Priests (2 Samuel xxii. 5), hence the expectation of a King from this tribe; but Christ is not descended from the house of David; [34] neither is he a son of Jehovah, the God of the Jews; he is the son of the cosmic God, that "holy ghost" which was familiar to all Aryans under different names -- the "breath of breath," as the Brihadaranyaka says, or, to quote the Greek fathers of the Christian Church, the poietes and plaster of the world, the "originator of the sublime work of creation." [35] The idea of a redemption and with it of necessity the conceptions of degeneration and grace have always been and still are alien to the Jews. The surest proof is afforded by the fact that, although the Jews themselves relate the myth of the Fall at the beginning of their sacred books, they themselves have never known anything of original sin! I have already pointed to this fact and we know of course that all the myths contained in the Bible are without exception borrowed, reduced from mythological ambiguity to the narrow significance of an historical chronicle by those who composed the Old Testament. [36] For this reason there grew up in regard to the cycle of myths of redemption a strife within the Christian Church which raged wildly during the first centuries, and signified a life and death struggle for religion, which is not yet settled and never can be -- never, so long as two contradictory views of existence are forced by obstinate want of comprehension to exist side by side as one and the same religion. The Jew, as Professor Darmesteter assured us (vol. 1. p. 421), "has never troubled his brain about the story of the apple and the serpent"; for his unimaginative brain it had no meaning; [37] for the Greek and the Teuton, on the other hand, it was the starting-point of the whole moral mythology of humanity laid down in the book of Genesis. These therefore could not help "troubling their brains" about the question. If like the Jews they rejected the Fall completely, they at the same time destroyed the belief in divine grace and therewith disappeared the conception of redemption, in short, religion in our Indo-European sense was destroyed and nothing but Jewish rationalism remained behind -- without the strength and the ideal element of Jewish national tradition and blood relationship.



SECONDS, 1966, JOHN FRANKENHEIMER, PARAMOUNT PICTURES, JOEL PRODUCTIONS INC. & GIBRALTAR]



[Slavoj Zizek] We are in John Frankenheimer's Seconds, a neglected Hollywood masterpiece from 1966, from the very heart of the hippie era which preached unrestrained hedonism: realize your dreams. Enjoy life fully. The film is the story of a late middle-aged business man ... leading a gray, totally alienated life. And then he decides at some point that he has enough of it. Through one of his friends he contacts a mysterious agency which offers him a deal.



They will reorganize his life so that he will be reborn.



The cost runs in the neighborhood of \$30,000.

[Mr. Ruby] The cost runs in the neighborhood of \$30,000. I know this seems rather high, but in addition to the rather extensive cosmetic renovation by way of plastic surgery for you,



C.P.S. has to provide a fresh corpse that perfectly matches, uh,

C.P.S. has to provide a fresh corpse that perfectly matches, uh, your physical dimensions and medical specifications.

[Arthur Hamilton] C.P.S.?

[Mr. Ruby] Oh, Cadaver Procurement Section.

[Slavoj Zizek] They use some corpse. They change it to look like his own body.



They plant this corpse, stage a pseudo accident, so that police think he is dead.

They plant this corpse, stage a pseudo accident so that police think he is dead.



[Man] Now, Mr. Wilson, you represent something of a milestone around here.



[Slavoj Zizek] And then the agency organizes an alternate life ...  
in a nice villa somewhere around L.A.  
They even organize a nice lady ...  
who conveniently stumbles upon him when he is taking a walk along the beach.



[Nora Marcus] Hello.  
I'm Nora Marcus.

[Slavoj Zizek] He is thus reborn,  
no longer as a boring businessman,  
but as a modernist painter called Tony Wilson,  
played by none other than Rock Hudson.



So, the woman, Nora, his new love, tries to engage him in life,  
even takes him to some wine orgy ...  
where people get drunk, dance naked and so on.  
Everything seems okay.

[Man] Yes! Yes! Yes!



[Slavoj Zizek] But Tony Wilson starts to miss his old life.  
More and more, he is haunted by his past.  
Finally, he breaks down, approaches again the agency,  
telling them that he wants to return to his old life.  
The boss of this mysterious company,



a kind of kindly-cruel superego paternal figure,  
tells him the truth.

[Old Man] Hello, son.

[Slavoj Zizek] He disappointed them by not being able to adapt himself to his new life.



[Old Man] Ah, you know, I sure hoped you'd make it. Find your dream come true.



[Tony Wilson] What?

[Old Man] I said I sure hoped that you'd make it.  
Find your dream come true.

[Chuckles] Oh, you can call it wishful thinking, son.  
Life is built on wishes, and you gotta just keep plugging away at 'em.  
You can't give up,



and you can't let the mistakes jeopardize the dreams.

[Slavoj Zizek] So what went wrong here? The problem was that his past ...  
in its material existence was erased.



[Old Man] Well, here's your transportation.

[Tony Wilson] What?

[Old Man] Surgery, sir.



[Slavoj Žižek] He lived in totally new environs, new job, new friends and so on.

What remained the same were his dreams.

Because when the company organized his rebirth,  
when the company provided a new existence for him,  
they simply followed his dreams.



His dreams were wrong dreams,  
and this is quite a deep lesson for the theory of ideology.



[Old Man] Just remember, son, we gotta keep plugging away at the dream. The mistakes teach us how.  
It wasn't wasted. Remember that.

[Slavoj Zizek] On the way to the operation hall, he discovers the horrible truth.  
He will not be reborn,  
but he will be used as a cadaver ...  
for another person who wants to be reborn.



[Tony Wilson] [shouting]

[Priest] [Speaking Latin]

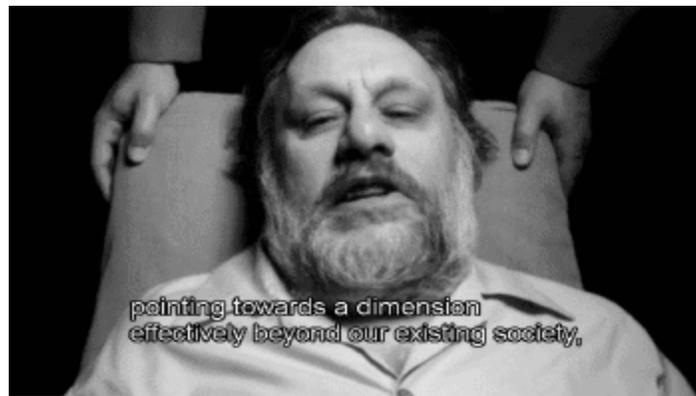
[Slavoj Zizek] We should draw a line of distinction within the very field of our dreams --

[Priest] "... shall keep it unto life eternal."

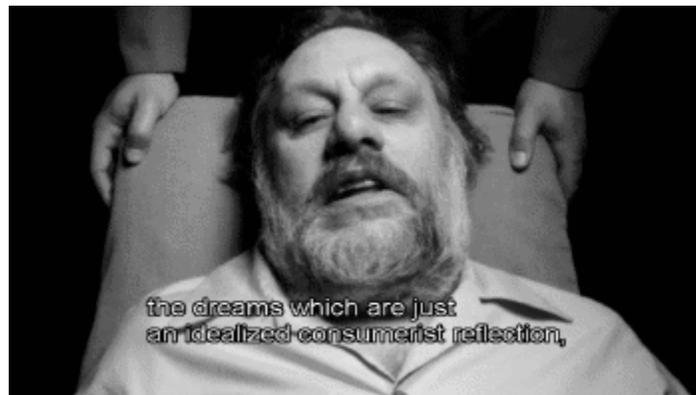
[Tony Wilson] [shouting]



[Slavoj Zizek] between those who are the right dreams,



pointing towards a dimension effectively beyond our existing society,  
and the wrong dreams,



the dreams which are just an idealized consumerist reflection,  
mirror image of our society.



[ZABRISKIE POINT, 1970, MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI, METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIOS, INC.]

We are not simply submitted to our dreams.  
They just come from some unfathomable depths,  
and we can't do anything about it.



This is the basic lesson of psychoanalysis and fiction cinema.



We are responsible for our dreams.



Our dreams stage our desires, and our desires are not objective facts.  
We created them. We sustain them. We are responsible for them.

Derrida's interpretation of Christian mystery is on the one hand directed towards deconstructing responsibility, but also, on the other hand, towards the articulation of a new "more radical form of responsibility" (27). On what, then, will Derrida found this "more radical" form of responsibility? He proposes the "experience of singularity" in the individual's "apprehensive approach to death," a Heideggerian "being-towards-death" (43). What is missing in "being-towards-death," however, is the recognition that "The real power of death is sacrifice," the death of the other (Girard, TE 241). The sacrifice of the other, specifically Jesus, is precisely what Derrida's metaphysical framework tends to displace. Whereas the death of Jesus on the Cross has ineluctable ethical implications, the "being-towards-death" does not suggest any overt ethical dimension.

This new "more radical form of responsibility" emerges as the result of his critique of the orthodox notion of responsibility. Derrida considers the idea that our responsibility exists in our relation to the other or, rather, every other--"an infinite number of them" (69). The "other" is defined here as "wholly other": "every other is every bit other" (68). Responsibility consists in responding to singularities, and thus every possible duty is absolute and non-negotiable. Since we are absolutely responsible to every other there is no way to negotiate conflicts of duty. By fulfilling one's duty to one singularity,

I am sacrificing and betraying at every moment all my other obligations: my obligations to the other others whom I know or don't know, the billions of my fellows (without even mentioning the animals who are even more other others than my fellows) . . . my family, my son, each of whom is the only son I sacrifice to the other, every one being sacrificed to every one else in this land of Moriah that is our habitat every second of every day. (69)

So this ordinary form of responsibility proves to be contradictory and incoherent (27, 68-69). If every other is completely and irrevocably other, as Derrida argues, then ultimately he is left alone with only the alterity of an inner secrecy (108-9). As a result, his only real and true responsibility is to himself and the event of his death: "My first and last responsibility, my first and last desire, is that responsibility of responsibility that relates me to what no one else can do in my place" (44). Derrida ends with a purely secret or private idea of responsibility. This is not only a "religion without religion," it is an ethics without ethics. If responsibility does not relate us to other human beings, then it seems fair to say we are not dealing with ethics at all, but a private aestheticism. The idea that one could have a purely private or personal sacred unmediated by any other(s) is the romantic myth of the autonomous subject of desire, the one who creates himself (as God) out of nothing. But this very desire for autonomy is itself mimetic, a function of social relations. There is really nothing "radical" about Derrida's concept of the self as an "irreducibly different singularity" which is threatened by modern technological civilization. This imperative for individual differentiation is the basis, after all, for consumer society, precisely because this imperative finds expression in consumption (cf. Gans, OT 166).

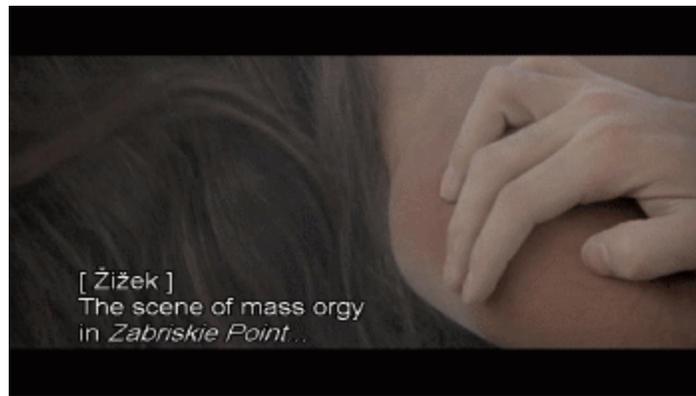
-- Christian Mystery and Responsibility: Gnosticism in Derrida's The Gift of Death, by Peter Goldman



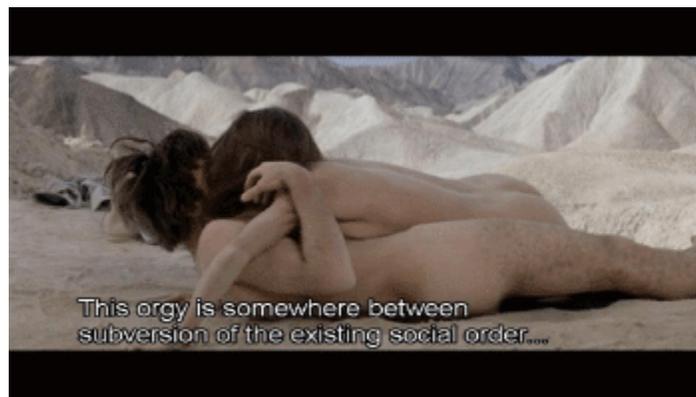
[Woman] This is an area of ancient lake beds deposited five to 10 million years ago.

This monograph quotes Louis Claude de Saint-Martin.... The monograph states that by going through karma and reincarnation, you will raise yourself to the state of "rose-croix" and will no longer have to live in the physical world.

-- The Prisoner of San Jose: How I Escaped From Rosicrucian Mind Control, by Pierre S. Freeman



[Slavoj Žižek] The scene of mass orgy in *Zabriskie Point* ...  
is a nice metaphor of what went wrong with the 1960s hippie revolution.  
It's crucial that *Zabriskie Point* was made in 1970,  
when the authentic revolutionary energy of the '60s was already losing its strength.



This orgy is somewhere between subversion of the existing social order ...  
and already the full aestheticized reincorporation ...



of these allegedly transgressive activities into the hegemonic ideology.  
Although Antonioni meant this as a kind of transcendence of the existing constraints,



we can easily imagine this shot in some publicity campaign.



The first step to freedom is not just to change reality to fit your dreams.  
It's to change the way you dream.



And, again, this hurts,  
because all satisfactions we have come from our dreams.

Of course, Žižek has long drawn the ire of activists involved in anti-capitalist struggles around the world. His overt authoritarianism and his apparent disdain for revolutionary practice mean that few grassroots organizers nowadays take his writings very seriously. Over the course of the past two years, Žižek has taken a number of sideways jabs at the leaderless social movements that emerged in response to the crisis of capitalism, first criticizing the Spanish indignados for expressing “a spirit of revolt without revolution”, then rather paternalistically urging Occupy protesters not to fall in love with themselves, and later telling activists not to act, but just to sit back and think. In an ultimate sign that he had completely misread the events of 2011, his book — *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* — confusedly interpreted the construction of hundreds of concrete Utopias around the world as little more than a “dangerous dream”. Apparently, while millions of

people were organizing real alternatives on the ground, Žižek was somewhere far away dreaming about some cataclysmic future Event.

In this respect it is very interesting to explore the profound sense of religiosity that permeates Žižek's work. Simon Critchly, for instance, has long noted how deeply Žižek's ideas are influenced by Christianity. At the end of the day, Žižek's conception of revolution reflects little more than the traditional Messianic vision of salvation, replete with apocalyptic references to "divine violence" and the Event of Rupture. In the conclusion to *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously*, Žižek literally compares his idea of communism to Pascal's *deus absconditus*, or "'the hidden god', discernible only to those who search for him." In this respect, it is remarkable that Žižek would end up criticizing the really-existing forms of direct democratic self-organization for being mythological in nature, where it is really the religiosity with which he proclaims the Second Coming of State Communism that should be considered mythological. In an excellent critique of his book on violence, Critchly neatly points out this contradiction in Žižek's philosophy:

On the one hand, the only authentic stance to take in dark times is to do nothing, to refuse all commitment, to be paralyzed like Bartleby. On the other hand, Žižek dreams of a divine violence, a cataclysmic, purifying violence of the sovereign ethical deed, something like Sophocles' *Antigone*. But Shakespearean tragedy is a more illuminating guide here than its ancient Greek predecessor. For Žižek is, I think, a Slovenian Hamlet, utterly paralyzed but dreaming of an avenging violent act for which, finally, he lacks the courage. In short, behind its shimmering dialectical inversions, Žižek's work leaves us in a fearful and fateful deadlock, both a transcendental-philosophical deadlock and a practical-political deadlock: the only thing to do is to do nothing. We should just sit and wait. Don't act, never commit, and continue to dream of an absolute, cataclysmic revolutionary act of violence.

Thus speaks the great obsessional.

-- The Dangerous Dreams of Slavoj Zizek, by Jerome Roos



[Man on Newsreel] The great supreme commander, Chairman Mao, issued a world-shaking call to us:



You should pay attention to state affairs,  
and carry the great proletarian cultural revolution through to the end.



[Slavoj Zizek] One of the big problems of all great revolutionary movements of the 20th century,  
such as Russia, Cuba or China,  
is that they did change the social body,

[Singing]



but the egalitarian communist society was never realized.



The dreams remained the old dreams,



and they turned into the ultimate nightmare.



Now, what remains of the radical left ...  
waits for a magical event ...  
when the true revolutionary agent will finally awaken,  
while the depressing lesson of the last decades ...



is that capitalism has been the true revolutionizing force,  
even as it serves only itself.

[No audible dialogue]



[Slavoj Zizek] How come it is easier for us to imagine the end of all life on earth,  
an asteroid hitting the earth,



than a modest change in our economic order?  
Perhaps the time has come to set our possibilities straight ...  
and to become realists ...  
by way of demanding what appears as impossible in the economic domain.



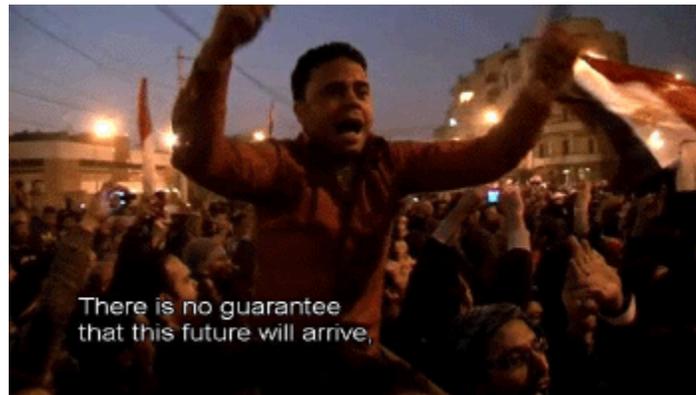
The surprising explosion  
of Occupy Wall Street protests,

The surprising explosion of Occupy Wall Street protests,  
the mass mobilization in Greece,  
the crowds on Tahrir Square --



they all bear witness  
to the hidden potential  
for a different future.

they all bear witness to the hidden potential for a different future.



There is no guarantee  
that this future will arrive.

There is no guarantee that this future will arrive,  
no train of history on which we simply have to take a ride.  
It depends on us,



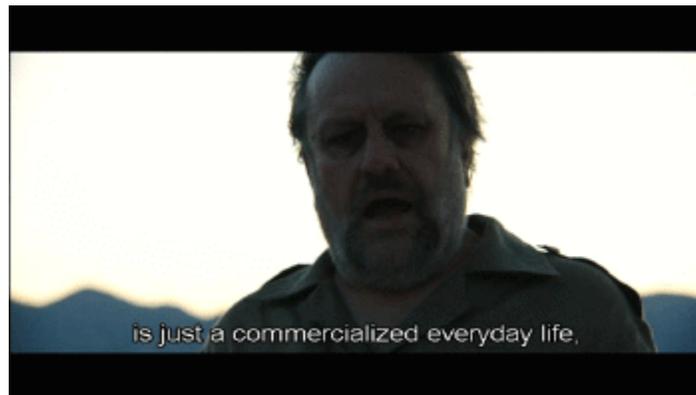
on our will.

[Foreign language]

[Slavoj Zizek] In revolutionary upheavals, some energy,  
or rather some utopian dreams take place.

They explode.

And even if the actual result of a social upheaval ...



is just a commercialized everyday life ...  
this excess of energy,  
what gets lost in the result,



persists not in reality but as a dream,



haunting us, waiting to be redeemed.  
In this sense, whenever we are engaged in radical emancipatory politics,  
we should never forget, as Walter Benjamin put it ...  
almost a century ago, that every revolution ...  
is not only -- if it is an authentic revolution --  
is not only directed towards the future,



but it redeems also the past failed revolutions.



All the ghosts, as it were, the living dead of the past revolution,



which are roaming around, unsatisfied,



will finally find their home in the new freedom.

We sacrificed innumerable victims to the dark depths, and yet it still demands more. What is this crazy desire craving satisfaction? Whose mad cries are these? Who among the dead suffers thus? Come here and drink blood, so that you can speak. Why do you reject the blood? Would you like milk? Or the red juice of the vine? Perhaps you would rather have love? Love for the dead? Being in love with the dead? Are you perhaps demanding the seeds of life for the faded thousand-year-old body of the underworld? An unchaste incestuous lust for the dead? Something that makes the blood run cold. Are you demanding a lusty commingling with corpses? I spoke of "acceptance" -- but you demand "to seize, embrace, copulate?" Are you demanding the desecration of the dead? That prophet, you say, lay on the child, and placed his mouth on the child's mouth, and his eyes on its eyes, and his hands on its hands and he thus splays himself over the boy, so that the child's body became warm. But he rose again and went here and there in the house before he mounted anew and spread himself over him again. The boy snorted seven times. Then the boy opened his eyes. So shall your acceptance be, so shall you accept, not cool, not superior, not thought out, not obsequious, not as a self-chastisement, but with pleasure, precisely with this ambiguous impure pleasure, whose ambiguity enables it to unite with the higher, with that holy-evil pleasure of which you do not know whether it be virtue or vice, with that pleasure which is lusty repulsiveness, lecherous fear, sexual immaturity. One wakens the dead with this pleasure.

-- The Red Book: Liber Novus, by C.G. Jung

[March]

[Men singing in foreign language]

[Women singing in foreign language]

[Men Joining]



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Costume Designer: Debbie Millington

Film Editor: Ethel Shepherd



Sound Designer: Steve Fanagan

Composer: Magnus Fiennes



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[Slavoj Zizek] I may be freezing to death, but you will never get rid of me.



All the ice in the world cannot kill a true idea



What you're referring to is what's called "theory." And when I said I'm not interested in theory, what I meant is, I'm not interested in posturing—using fancy terms like polysyllables and pretending you have a theory

when you have no theory whatsoever. So there's no theory in any of this stuff, not in the sense of theory that anyone is familiar with in the sciences or any other serious field. Try to find in all of the work you mentioned some principles from which you can deduce conclusions, empirically testable propositions where it all goes beyond the level of something you can explain in five minutes to a twelve-year-old. See if you can find that when the fancy words are decoded. I can't. So I'm not interested in that kind of posturing. Žižek is an extreme example of it. I don't see anything to what he's saying. Jacques Lacan I actually knew. I kind of liked him. We had meetings every once in awhile. But quite frankly I thought he was a total charlatan. He was just posturing for the television cameras in the way many Paris intellectuals do. Why this is influential, I haven't the slightest idea. I don't see anything there that should be influential...

Well, you say his work is becoming influential. I would question that. I think his posturing is becoming influential. Can you tell me what the work is? I can't find it. I'm asking a lot of, you know ... he's a good actor. He makes it sound exciting. But can you find any content? I can't. I would have no interest in having a conversation with him. But a conversation with Angela Davis is fine. She's an interesting person. She thinks about things. She has important things to say.

-- Noam Chomsky Discusses Post-Modern "Theory" and "Philosophy" on LBBS, Z-Magazine's BB