

## Abstracts

### Ibi Rhodus, Ibi Saltus!

*Slavoj Žižek*

The article discusses Marx's *Capital*, the October Revolution, and the Shanghai Commune as the marks of the three stages of the Communist movement. Marx's *Capital* outlined the theoretical foundations of the Communist revolution, the October Revolution was the first successful attempt to overthrow the bourgeois state and build a new social and economic order, while the Shanghai Commune stands for the most radical attempt to immediately realize the most daring aspect of the Communist vision, the abolishment of state power and the imposition of direct people's power organized as a network of local communes. The author then proposes the fourth stage, the 500-year anniversary of 1517 when Martin Luther made public his ninety-five theses, and claims that it is the reference to Protestantism which provides the coordinates for an ethics that fits the unorientable space, an ethics for today's subject caught into Plato's cave.

Key words: ethics, freedom, Marx, Protestantism, revolution

### Nuclear Deterrence and the Metaphysics of Time

*Jean-Pierre Dupuy*

Is nuclear deterrence rational? The only rationality those who ask this question have in mind is the one familiar to economists, game theorists, planners and decision makers of all stripes. It is unable to provide foundations for the standard theory of nuclear deterrence. I show that another doctrine, called "existential deterrence," can be grounded in a

very different metaphysics of time. It belongs to a philosophical tradition that includes names like Henri Bergson, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others. Its major categories have nothing to do with rational choice or cost-benefit analysis. They include notions such as fate and accident, and imply the absolute renunciation of strategic thinking. In this metaphysics, being guided by reason is no guarantee of goodness either. In its light, nuclear deterrence appears to be grounded in reasons, but is nonetheless abominable.

Key words: nuclear deterrence, mutually assured destruction, madman theory, rationality, metaphysics, time

## Reason Reborn: Pietistic Motifs in Kant's Moral Philosophy

*Zdravko Kobe*

The article tries to trace the presence of Pietistic motifs in Kant's moral philosophy, whereby the core matrix of Pietism is found in the motif of rebirth as presented in Francke's sequence of Humiliation—Resolution—Conversion—Moral Perfecting. It is strongly suggested, first, that the conversion towards the good in Kant's philosophy of religion was developed under the direct influence of the theme of rebirth, as it is structurally identical to the latter and at once incompatible with Kant's critical ontology. The same applies to the genesis of the moral feeling and the postulate of the immortality of the soul, which lack proper justification in Kant's moral philosophy, yet correspond neatly to Pietistic habits of thought. In conclusion it is argued that Kant's conception of the moral act, performed out of respect for the moral law, can be read as a secularized extension of the *sola fide* doctrine.

Key words: August Hermann Francke, Immanuel Kant, Nikolaus Ludvig von Zinzendorf, intelligible character, justification, morality, moral feeling, Pietism, rebirth

## Laughing with Kafka *after* Promethean Shame *Jean-Michel Rabaté*

The political function of laughter in Kafka's works deriving from the "comic grotesque" prevalent in Expressionist German culture can find a new focus thanks to Günther Anders's groundbreaking insights. Anders highlights the political and atheistic dimension of the work while criticizing Kafka's Promethean nihilism, before developing a theory of technology and the "posthuman" condensed by "Promethean shame." Promethean shame can be construed as leading back to a Promethean laughter to be deduced from readings of Kafka's parables. Kafka's laughter will thus be shown *in statu nascendi*.

Key words: Franz Kafka, Günther Anders, Prometheus, laughter, the grotesque, comic theology, shame, technology

## Reason Inclined: Zones of Indifference in Schiller and Kant *Lidija Šumah*

The feeling of respect is considered to be one of the two key elements of Kant's concept of the ethical act, the second being the moral law. For Kant, an act is considered to be in accordance with the categorical imperative, and thus autonomous, only insofar as it is delivered of any "pathological determination." In this respect, the feeling of respect as the structural companion of the ethical act permits for no application to sensible pleasure and does not concern the matter or content of our actions, but rather their very form. However, although the feeling of respect is understood in the same manner as the moral law, i.e., as an element of pure will conditioned by reason alone, at its very core the notion of the feeling of respect is nonetheless not entirely free of the field of sensuality. And precisely herein resides one of the main paradoxes of Kant's ethics: How is it possible that the formal pureness of the moral law, or the autonomy of an ethical act, is in fact accompanied,

or perhaps even conditioned, by this heteronomous and hence “pathological” companion? In short, how is it possible that Kant situates, in the very midst of a free and autonomous ethical subject, this inherent, yet heterogeneous element, testifying as it is to a conceptual hinging of freedom on its seemingly residual opposite?

Key words: affectivity, beauty, ethics, indifference, Kant, Lacan, illusion, respect, Schiller

## Inside, The Real: Moses Mendelssohn’s Speculative Realism *Ywval Kremnitzer*

Part of the appeal of Quentin Meillassoux’s *After Finitude* is the prospect opened up by it to go beyond the limitations of the Kantian experience. The recent “speculative turn” in philosophy can be distinguished from previous historical attempts to overcome the strictures of Kantian experience by its allegiance with modern science’s claim to knowledge, in particular its independence from the realm of sense and understanding (its mathematizability). It is science, not poetry, that is capable of delivering a truly “alien” knowledge. The project of absolutizing contingency strikes at the heart of what makes Kant’s notion of experience such an overbearing “reality principle,” namely, the very restricting sense given by it to the notion of “possibility.” And yet, Kant, as if preemptively, had made a strong argument for this restriction, and its superiority over a non-restricted, or absolute notion of the possible: it offers a yardstick to distinguish between the possible and the actual, the yardstick of actualization in empirical experience. We seem to be forced to choose between a notion of possibility that is all too close to our experience (reducible to empirical actuality), or one that is utterly divorced from it. In the essay, I argue that it was Moses Mendelssohn, known in the history of philosophy as the last “pre-critical” philosopher, that cleared the path to avoid such a choice, by developing a notion of possibility that exceeds the Kantian restrictions from “within,” retaining the yardstick

of actualization while allowing for the scope of possibility to achieve its independence from empirical actuality.

Key words: Kant, Lacan, Meillassoux, Mendelssohn, potential, speculative realism, subjectivity

## Self-evidence Derailed: Descartes's Cogito and its Anticipations

*Aleš Bunta*

The article is a comparative study of Descartes's cogito and its anticipations in St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. Even though the Cartesian cogito is generally perceived as one of the most important turning points in philosophy, arguments that strongly resemble the cogito appear already in Augustine and later, in a modified version, in Aquinas. Therefore, the articulation of the true novelty of Descartes's insight seems to depend on finding an essential difference that distinguishes his own argumentative principle. However, this task is by no means simple. Not only did Descartes's own attempt at distinguishing his argument from Augustine's clamorously fail; also probably the best known explanation of the difference between Augustine's argument and Descartes's cogito, the famous Hintikka's performative theory, comprises a serious difficulty. The fact is that even though Hintikka's explanation arguably resolves the problem of Augustine's anticipation, it is itself probably more convincingly connected to Aquinas's anticipation than to Descartes's own arguments. The article also includes an analysis of one of Descartes's earliest fragments, which can be regarded as Descartes's own miniature theory on originality. The analysis of this passage sheds new light on Descartes's own partial refusal of the Augustinian anticipation.

Key words: anticipations, cogito, Descartes, originality, self-evidence

## The Absent Universal: From the Master Signifier To the Missing Signifier

*Todd McGowan*

The association of the universal with the master signifier seems commonsensical. It is also responsible for the suspicion that greets reference to universality, which comes to seem like an act of violence. This essay contends that the universal is actually not the master signifier at all but rather what is missing in the signifying field. It is thus a call for an unabashed embrace of universality in political contestation.

Key words: identity, master signifier, particular, quilting point, universal

## A Certain Logic of Professing Love

*Jure Simoniti*

The paper exploits love and its professing as a pretext to demonstrate a very particular phenomenology of language use, in which *the direction of reference reverses*. In love, arguably, we no longer use words in order to refer to things, but exploit the object of love as a mere occasion, at which we begin to refer to the word “love” itself. With the intention to outline the new logical space established by professing love, the paper defines the declarations of love to be abstract, conventional, mirror-symmetrical, and finally ritually and ceremonially repeated, thus defying the pragmatic constraints of ordinary language. As such, the technique of professing love is placed in opposition to the tenor of twentieth-century philosophy of language, most notably Wittgenstein’s, which a priori reduced enunciation to the place of enunciation and curtailed sentences into mere statements uttered in this or that situation. Inversely, love is shown to transform the *word as word* into the object of its own specific reference and reverence, thereby reversing the Wittgensteinian operation and elevating the statement back into a full-blown, trans-contextual, ideally motivated sentence.

Key words: idealism, love, sentence, Wittgenstein, word

## Twice Two: Hegel's Comic Redoubling of Being and Nothing

*Rachel Aumiller*

Comedy teaches us how to count to four: One—Charlie Chaplin, Two—Abbott and Costello, Three—The Three Stooges, Four—The Marx Brothers. But the comic dialectician begins with the double to count to four through the formula  $2 \times 2$ . My paper treats Being and Nothing of Hegel's *Science of Logic* as the original dramatic duo. I explore the comic effect that results in the immediate redoubling of the uncanny double of Being and Nothing. I enact this first movement in *Logic* through the figures of Laurel and Hardy in two shorts in which the comic duo play themselves and their double.

Key words: Being, Nothing, the double, the mirror phase, the uncanny, comedy, repetition, Hegel, Freud, Lacan

## “Freudful Mistakes”: On Forgetting and On Forgetting Psychoanalysis

*Benjamin Noys*

Today we are called to forget psychoanalysis in order to escape the confines of the subject and language and so to embrace the “great outdoors” of materiality. In the face of this call to forget psychoanalysis and to forget that language matters, I return to psychoanalysis and language through Freud's account of forgetting proper names. What Freud reveals in the moment of forgetting is the insistence of the drive as that which occurs in the absence of language and in the “material” of the body. In Lacan's formulation, this is the eruption of *lalangue*, the eruption of a “language” that intersects with the drive. This is forgotten in the turn to materiality, which turns away from language and the drive. Sebastiano Timpanaro reduces the Freudian lapsus to the mere material play of language itself, while Catherine Malabou moves to a neurophysiological plasticity that resists inscription in meaning. The symmetry of

these gestures lies in a common materialism that erases the relation to language. To complete the return to language and matter I conclude by reexamining Freud's discussion of negation. In negation, the saying of "not," we find a cancelling of language that reveals the insistence of the drive and the material in language.

Key words: forgetting, language, materialism, matter, psychoanalysis