

Abstracts

Slavoj Žižek

Solidarity, Theology, and Materialism

Rowan Williams' *Solidarity* is read here as a major intervention for a renewed Left, one that implicitly resonates with Lacanian psychoanalysis: solidarity begins from the shared disorientation of subjects thrown into a symbolic field where the "big Other" does not exist, and where one's own desire is constitutively opaque. Against sentimental identification and other forms of false solidarity, Williams argues that authentic solidarity requires a double displacement: recognizing the irreducible specificity of the other's suffering while allowing this encounter to unsettle the coordinates of one's own. At the same time, the essay presses Williams on two points: the limits of a liberal injunction to "hear the enemy's story," and the underemphasized role of structural antagonisms (state power, exploitation) that cannot be resolved by openness alone. The final movement rethinks the theological dimension of solidarity through a materialist qualification: collective rituals and "necessary fictions" sustain social consistency even when recognized as fictions, allowing the figure of God to be read not as an external guarantee but as an immanent operator of imagining – an enabling supplement to fragile, imperfect practices of solidarity.

Keywords: fictions, God, Other, religion, solidarity, subject

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Dan Nădășan

Hegel and The Knots of the Understanding

The understanding (*Verstand*) occupies a central spot in Hegel's philosophy and yet it rarely steps into the interpretative spotlight. When it nevertheless does catch a glimpse of this spotlight, it is usually accompanied by a hermeneutical hypersensitivity and a splitting reactivity that hints towards its place as a shadowy symptomatic knot in the contemporary reception of Hegel: the understanding is either very bad or very good; either a force to be cherished or the very indication of ideological reification and narrow-minded thinking; either a preparatory stage to be transcended by conceptual thought or the very power of transcendence itself. Or, more radically, it is implied that Hegel's conflicting account of the knotty understanding is the ultimate indication for the greater inconsistency of Hegelian dialectics as such. In this essay, I seek to bring out the understanding from its shadows and to account for the very possibility of this shadow itself, by showing how Hegel identifies a repressed sensible moment at the very origin of the understanding's seemingly insensible abstract thinking. This serves as an introduction to Hegel's account of the origin of the dualisms between sense and thought, immediacy and mediacy, abstraction and concretion, which permeate not only what Hegel refers to as the pre-Kantian "metaphysics of the understanding," but much of the contemporary 'non-metaphysical' or 'postmetaphysical' philosophical terrain.

Keywords: Enlightenment, Hegel, Kant, sensibility, transcendence, understanding, Žižek

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Jure Simoniti

Why Are Truths Counterintuitive?

The article takes as its departing point the epistemological rupture between the nineteenth century – when we supposedly still lived in an intuitively comprehensible world – and the twentieth, when we found ourselves in a rationally and imaginatively unintelligible universe of the theory of relativity and quantum

mechanics. To overcome this false divide, it shows that truth has always already been counterintuitive, since all major insights in the history of knowledge are distinguished precisely by the collapse of our conceptual presuppositions. From the epistemological fact that truth is *a priori* counterintuitive, the article finally derives the ontological thesis that only such a truth can coincide with the real of the world, which takes place on the surface of phenomena only insofar as it possesses no eternal truth at its core.

Keywords: concept, counterintuitiveness, intuitiveness, reality, representation, truth

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Alenka Zupančič

Politics on the Couch

This article mobilizes psychoanalytic theory to analyze a contemporary form of authoritarianism that is gaining momentum across the globe. Drawing primarily on Freudian and Lacanian concepts, it proposes the notion of *paranoid power* – or more precisely, *perverse paranoia* – to describe a political configuration in which paranoia is structurally articulated with power and inflected by perverse logics of enjoyment. It examines how contemporary authoritarian discourse frames social and political antagonisms through the rhetoric of “castration,” how symbolic authority is displaced by the accumulation of real force, and how inconsistency itself becomes fetishized in this political strategy. The article further explores the exhibitionist dimension of this power, in which enjoyment circulates through the provocation of outrage in the Other, implicating supporters, opponents, and spectators alike.

Keywords: castration, enjoyment, paranoia, perversion, politics, power

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Lidija Šumah

From Turn to Affect to Return to Freud

While philosophy is often depicted as a succession of conceptual turns, psychoanalysis resists such periodization. If psychoanalysis constitutes a turn at all, it is the radical decentering inaugurated by Freud's discovery of the unconscious, famously condensed in the claim that the ego is not master in its own house. This article argues, following Lacan, that psychoanalysis advances not through new turns but through a return to Freud. Lacan's return to Freud functions both as a methodological project and a polemical intervention against postwar ego psychology. Central to this project is the concept of extimacy (*extimité*), introduced by Lacan to name a structure of subjectivity in which the most intimate core of the subject is irreducibly external. Far from an idiosyncratic neologism, extimacy condenses Lacan's rereading of Freud's theory of the unconscious as neither inside nor outside the subject but lodged at its core as Other – hence Lacan's claim that “the unconscious is the discourse of the Other.” The article proposes Lacan's theory of the symbolic and the notion of extimacy as a conceptual response to the dilemmas of contemporary affect theory, preserving Freud's decentering of the subject while translating it into a structural and linguistic framework. The analysis underscores that any engagement between affect and language must account for the non-representational, symbolic, or structural dimensions of the sign, rather than treating it as a transparent conduit for meaning and intention. As such, the analysis challenges contemporary dominant accounts of affect (Jameson, Lyotard, Deleuze, Guattari, Massumi) and unsettles the presumed divide between modernism and postmodernism.

Keywords: affect theory, Deleuze, extimacy, Jameson, Lacan, language, Massumi, poststructuralism

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Alejandro Cerda-Rueda

On Anxiety and Other Tales of Truth

The concept of anxiety remains a controversial term in Freudian theory. Not only does Freud establish two distinct theories in different moments of his career,

but the concept itself is left cryptic for other psychoanalytical schools to further expand on its definition. Both clinically and theoretically, anxiety is presented in various forms, starting from somatic discomfort up to psychological distress. The purpose of this article is to understand the relevance of this concept to psychoanalysis, given the rise of an anxiety epidemic in contemporary culture. If, according to Lacan, anxiety is an affect that deceives not, perhaps the presence of such phenomena may be taken as another form of thinking through sexuality and the core of trauma beyond the inhibitions it performs. While allowing a theoretical and clinical space for anxiety to embody psychical struggles, the place of anxiety is to be considered also as the aperture for truth.

Keywords: anxiety, Freudian metapsychology, psychoanalysis, thinking, sexuality, truth

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Simon Hajdini

Psychoanalysis and Fate

The text explores the Lacanian-Kierkegaardian concept of repetition, linking it to fate, subjectivity, and the unconscious. Taking its cue from Freud's concept of the compulsion of destiny as it relates to Lacan's radical reinterpretation of the Aristotelian couple of *automaton* and *tyche*, the article examines the idea of successful failure in psychoanalysis and its connection to fatalistic freedom. The latter challenges traditional notions of freedom as choice and embraces a more contingent and unpredictable understanding of fate.

Keywords: Aristotle, causality, contingency, destiny, fatalism, fate, freedom, Freud, Lacan

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Gregor Moder

Alienation in Yugoslavia: The Praxis Journal and the Problem of Anti-Humanism

For the circle of Yugoslav philosophers gathered around the journal *Praxis* (1964-1974) and the Korčula Summer School (1963-1974), the most decisive notion was that of alienation, which they adopted from Marx's *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. With the help of this concept, Gajo Petrović, Milan Kangrga, Zagorka Golubović and others presented their vision of an authentic humanist socialism as a space of free human creativity and criticized the doctrine of dialectical materialism as was characteristic of the Soviet Union, but still also of Yugoslavia. In the second part, the article addresses the question of why the Praxis group so firmly rejected Louis Althusser's influential intervention in classical Marxism, especially since their rejection was fraught with misunderstandings. Althusser's theses were inspired by structuralism and psychoanalysis, he explicitly advocated Marx as an anti-humanist, and his conception of ideology fell on fertile ground early on with the next generation of philosophers and sociologists in Ljubljana. The author argues that the humanist turn in Yugoslavia, which came about precisely through the work of the Praxis philosophers, eventually became part of the official Yugoslav doctrine and even a ubiquitous commonplace, which is why, during the heyday of the early "Ljubljana Lacanian School" in the 1980s, Althusser's anti-humanism could acquire the status of a battle cry that left no one unperturbed.

Keywords: alienation, Althusser, antihumanism, humanism, Marxism, Praxis, Yugoslavia

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Jela Krečič

Hamlet, Love, and Reasonable Doubt

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, one of the most debated works in literary history, also presents a compelling depiction of love between the protagonist and Ophelia.

This article approaches the interpretation of the play and its portrayal of love through the lens of doubt. In doing so, it draws on both Descartes' *Meditations* and Lacan's development of the concepts of thinking and being. Using these conceptual frameworks, we can see how Hamlet's relentless pursuit of knowledge beyond doubt transforms him into a toxic figure and a gaslighter, contributing to Ophelia's tragic demise. While *Hamlet* exposes the deadly side of love, a turn toward Hollywood comedy allows us to explore how a loving couple might navigate corrosive doubt – and what comic love could look like as a result.

Keywords: being, comedy, doubt, Hamlet, love, Ophelia, thinking

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Anthony Curtis Adler

Unmusical: The Politics of Music in Grillparzer's "Der arme Spielmann" and Kafka's "Josefine"

Taking its departure from Kafka's own admission, in a letter to Milena Jesenská, of his "unmusicality," the paper argues that this unmusicality, an incapacity for understanding grounded in the immediacy and reciprocal presence of speech, though standing in the way of ordinary communication, and hence blocking the project of "aesthetic education" as conceived by Schiller, nevertheless also makes possible a more radical form of understanding – the understanding of understanding itself – and hence allows for the thinking of a different kind of politics, a different kind of community. Crucial in this connection is Kafka's enthusiasm for Grillparzer's "The Poor Musician," which offers a powerful exploration of the political function of unmusicality. While deeply struck by Grillparzer's story, Kafka also recognizes that its perspective is fundamentally Christian; in just this way, his own "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse-Folk" can be understood as reformulating "The Poor Musician" from a Jewish perspective, in which the unmusical one is not a lonely outsider, but the entire people is characterized by unmusicality.

Keywords: aesthetic education, Judaism, musicality, politics, unmusicality

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Frank Ruda

Kafka's Proof: The Impossibility to Live

The article examines an early text by Franz Kafka. It is a text that contains a "proof" and the article elaborates what a literary proof could be by showing that it is a proof of something that is impossible to prove. It is a proof that directly concerns the very possibility of living a life.

Keywords: Fat Man, impossibility, Kafka, proof

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Mladen Dolar

On Application

The paper deals with the notion of application and its multiple layers. Following the etymology and the history of the term it singles out four meanings of application: (1) application as "bringing something to bear on something else," referring to conditions of abstract relationality; (2) application as devotion, commitment, diligence; (3) application for a job or for funding; and (4) a computer program or "app" designed to be used on smartphones. The four meanings can be conceived as a narrative connecting high philosophical abstraction with the triviality of the contemporary job market and digital technology. The paper then considers the philosophical implications of the term and argues that there is no such thing as a simple application, since the entity that is applied gets transformed through the process of application and thereby loses its alleged ontological precedence. Even more, one can argue that the entity that is applied, i.e., "brought to bear on something else," is ultimately retroactively constituted through the process of its application. If conceived in this way, application would shed new light on the basic workings of the Hegelian dialectic, of what Hegel called "self-othering." In conclusion the paper raises the question of how to apply this dialectical notion of application to the non-dialectical all-pervasive uses of application in the job market and the digital world. What seems to be missing in the present universe

of omnipresent applications is precisely a proper application which would have to be reinvented.

Keywords: alterity, app, application, dialectic, Hegel, job application

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Tadej Troha

The Latest, the Last, and the Least: Freud, Salomé, and the Freudian Method

This article is part of a broader investigation into the origins, development, and concept of Freudian metapsychology. Freud was always reticent about metapsychological speculation, opting for it only when it proved to be an inevitable complement to the standard empiricist approach. In this paper, we show that there is a clear continuity between Freud the empiricist and Freud the metapsychologist; that is, the metapsychological approach is merely a speculative amplification of the standard Freudian method. The latter, we argue, consists of three key features: the affirmation of provisionality, i. e., the unwavering activation of what was last revealed as certain; the affirmation of definiteness, i. e., the willingness to accept what had last been revealed as certain as a final, definitive, and absolutely valid proposition; and the minimalism of speculation, which allows for speculation but views it as an intrinsic requirement of empiricism. Drawing on some of Freud's texts, the diary entries of Lou Andreas-Salomé, and their correspondence, we show the crucial role of the notion of narcissism, understood as the *Grenzbegriff* of psychoanalysis, in the formulation of metapsychology. We conclude with an example of a genuine metapsychological insight, wherein Freud reveals the agency of the ego ideal, and subsequently, of the superego – an insight which, in an extremely reduced temporality, captures all three features of Freud's method.

Keywords: Freud, Lou Andreas-Salomé, psychoanalysis, metapsychology, narcissism, superego