

Fascist Libertarianism. Žižek and the Present

CRISIS & CRITIQUE

Volume 12/Issue 1

Frank Ruda

1. Too Late... Now!

The following is an attempt to think with and through a selection of Slavoj Žižek's most recent – that is from 2025 – diagnostic-conjunctural writings.¹ This thinking through his reflections is also a thinking through his account of our contemporary present. The form is that of an exploded commentary. Žižek's conjunctural interventions can easily appear to be nothing but political commentary and sometimes almost journalistic in form and style. But in spirit and methodology, they rather share a feature with the very late Hegel. For it is the latter who in 1831 wrote a text on the "English Reform Bill", a reformation attempt of the law, which granted the right to vote to a broader part of the male population as long as they would be property owners and came into effect in 1832. I do not want to get into too much of the details of neither the bill nor of Hegel's far reaching and critical account of this transformation of the English electoral set-up here – one of his basic lines is that it ultimately undermines the very constitutional principle of what a people is and erodes its inner customs and habits and does so by suggesting that a gradual reform of an internally exclusive and problematic electoral system could be considered an improvement – but he is unconvinced that what needs to be done is establishing "a greater degree of symmetry... [of] numbers, localities, and private interests."² The very assumption that a reform could improve a flawed system by means of an expansion of that very system conceptually avoids overcoming the flaws of the system and thereby is rather aimed at its reproduction.

That Hegel wrote – and 1831 is the very year of his death – of a bill that would reform and change the British constitutional system is in itself noteworthy. But it is especially so in relation to how Slavoj Žižek thinks and intervenes into the present world. Since one of Hegel's most famous remarks concerns determining the position of philosophy and therefore the very position of philosophical theory with regard to its time and its place in the world. This is what he called the attitude, stance or "position of thought toward objectivity [*die Stellung des Gedankens zur Objektivität*]."³ This remark concerns the fact that philosophy always and constitutively comes too late and does not arrive on time. In this very spirit, Hegel said somewhere about spirit, that "the later spirit is that it knows what the earlier was." But how and why does it then say anything about what is happening in its very own historical time and context?

Stressing that philosophy always comes too late means for Hegel that philosophy is never in the business of telling us what to do (next or in the everyday) or of giving us any instructions (how things ought to be, for any such ought is ultimately Kantian). And Žižek, being one of the reasons why there is a renewed interest in Hegelian thought and why there exists a novel possibility to rethink our entire conception of Hegel and Hegelian dialectics, is certainly aware of this. So, how does one square this circle, namely that philosophy conceptually, by definition, as

such always comes too late, Hegel and Žižek are certainly philosophers or understand themselves in such a way, yet they comment on everyday events, or what happens, what is and takes place objectively? The famous Hegelian account of philosophy's constitutive belatedness can, as is well-known, be found in the *Vorrede* or *Vorwort*, in the preface or preamble—Hegel uses both terms—to his *Philosophy of Right*. It can thus be found in the discourse that precedes the beginning of the proper philosophical discourse. If the *Vorrede* is structurally placed before the book that it prefaces, what is said about philosophy in it must be said structurally too early or pre-philosophically. Hegel begins to close the preface of the *Philosophy of Right* by stating: “But it is time to close this preface [*Vorwort*]. After all, as preface, its only business has been to make some external and subjective remarks about the standpoint of the book it introduces”⁴. This is what Hegel states right after he indicates that philosophy begins when “a shape of life has grown old.”⁵ It seems that as soon as one records that philosophy always comes too late, it is immediately time to close that which precedes philosophy. The time of philosophy is that of the “*now*, it is too late!”

When one states that philosophy always comes too late, it seems the right time to begin with philosophy. If philosophy comes too late, it also seems its very own belatedness can only be addressed from outside of philosophy or: too early. There thus seems to be a paradox here: if philosophy always comes too late, it seems to come too late to say that it comes too late and hence there is no philosophical way to say anything about philosophy's belatedness within philosophy. All philosophical thought therefore seems strangely rushed. Lenin – not necessarily a philosopher though, but someone who returned to Hegel after the historical shock that all social democratic parties with very few exceptions were ready to send their workers into what will turn out to be the cataclysmic hell of the 1st World War – will point out that time is so precious that he was rushed into finishing *State and Revolution*, which is why the whole text bears the stamp of conjunctural urgency, of precipitation, of a peculiar conceptual haste. And Žižek is certainly one of the most prominent thinkers today who also formulated several strong pleas never for a simple return to, but certainly for a repetition of Lenin.⁶

Philosophy comes too late for Hegel, but it can strangely appear as if it sometimes must rush to do so. The haste of belatedness. Coming too late involves a risk. The risk that now it is *really* too late and thus that it is right now the time of and for philosophy – to come too late. And this is what methodologically informs Žižek's approach. The wager that his thought so often exhibits. Philosophy therefore speaks the language of what is at the end of its life, of the life grown old: it is the language of old men—and one should here remember that this was Hegel's nickname from when he was in the Tübingen Stift, in the seminary: the old man. He had learned this language already rather early in his life. We thus are

confronted with a version of the joke cited by Lacan about the fiancé who is never late because the moment she is late, she is no longer my fiancé. Philosophy always comes too late, because the moment it is not too late, it would no longer be philosophy (and turn into, for example, journalism or mere political commentary). The way in which we see Žižek's thought operating always confronts and mobilizes the wager that is indicative of the philosophical act par excellence. Žižek's wager lies in proposing that no phenomenon of the objective world, the world of objectivity as such resists rational comprehension. It is a totalizing wager. For this purpose, as is well-known, Žižek sides with psychoanalysis and its quite far-reaching reconceptualization of the very concept of reason, because he aims to uphold that – to mobilize another famous Hegelian trope, there is reason in history. And maybe this holds paradoxically even when there is none. For how would one know that there is none without this presumption? How to explain the withering of reason – without reason. But as the frame of rationality as such suffered as historical crack, a historical breakdown and seemed abolished, in these moments, has to do what Lenin did in 1917, namely face one's despair and "articulate the Truth of the catastrophe."⁷

Even in the worst times Žižek aims at rationally grasping phenomena of the world – and be it the downfall of the rational structure of this very world – in a rational manner. This does not imply that it will all go (down) well, that there is reason (in history) as a big Other that finally has our back. It rather implies that one has to maintain rationalism in the moments of its decay and obvious ungroundedness – without assuming that it is on one's side at all.

One possible definition of philosophy in Hegel is that it is nothing, but its own time apprehended in thought. Žižek clearly also aims at rationally apprehending its own time and is thus philosophy. But apprehending one's own time now means to find the right moment to be too late. Apprehension needs timing and timing is thus – with Hegel and psychoanalysis and – combining both – with Žižek – a defining feature of philosophy. Philosophy must arrive on time, but its time is that of the too late. Only thereby it can apprehend its own time and grasp it in the medium of its rationally articulated concept. Philosophy thereby times and has to time oddly.⁸ And if coming too late always implies a wager, this wager has to do with a risky decision that right now the time is ripe to punctuate the world with an intervention, because a shape of spirit has grown old. However, sometimes shapes of spirit can look younger and more alive than they are. And some old shapes might drag on forever, even though their time has already come. This is what Gramsci referred to as the time of monsters.

Ernst Bloch once insinuated that one can compare philosophy's operation to that of a detective, since the latter also always comes after

the crime. But sometimes it is not only the murderer but also the crime that is difficult to detect – like when Sherlock Holmes states that the fact that the dog did *not* bark (when a horse was stolen) is a curious incident. Part of the philosophical act is to determine what exactly the shape of spirit is that we are now trying to comprehend. The wager thus concerns the *shape of the shape*.

Žižek calls the current shape that needs comprehension *fascist libertarianism*. There are a multiplicity of factors contributing to its constitution: including the potential transformations of the economic and political dynamic of present-day capitalism, new forms of authoritarianism, new forms of right-wing populism, new modes of domination, general ideological confusion, developments in the general ethical infrastructure of the world, biomanipulation, ecological crises, international conflicts, and many more forms of socio-political degeneration. Any attempt to apprehend one's own time in thought and concept unavoidably also implies the risk of totalization. It implies an act by means of which one extrapolates certain features and risks the declaration that they are constitutive to understand the very essence of our current moment, of our present time. This amounts to risking an identificatory claim that "this is X (techno feudalism, just capitalism, neo-authoritarianism...), because all these features are what is X."

Coming appropriately too late is risky because one must identify the very shape of spirit in the act of conceiving of it. It implies that it is previously unclear what the name of the shape is that we shape through the name. Already for Bloch – and certainly also for Žižek – philosophy, due to its constitutive belatedness, has always been a rather disastrous crime-preventer. This is why Adorno famously begins his *Negative Dialectics* with a claim addressing philosophy's present temporality. He argued that the only reason why there still is philosophy is because it came so late, it even missed "the moment" to be "realize(d)."⁹ After missing an appointment, it really should have attended – after really coming too late –, it began leading a strange afterlife, a *Nachleben*. It is as if it came too late to come too late. Now, it must come to terms with the problems newly created by missing its own realization. Therefore, it must "ruthlessly criticize itself."¹⁰ Philosophy's only task is to offer a critical account of its own failure to fail the right way, whereby philosophy ultimately must stop being philosophy and turn into critical theory.

This was not Hegel's and is certainly also not Žižek's position. Philosophy is neither the criminal doing the deed, nor is it the supposed hero turning out to be a crippled disappointment. Hegel claims that "philosophy in any case always arrives on the scene too late to give it."¹¹ "It" here being "instructions as to what the world ought to be."¹² Philosophy does not arrive early enough to offer prescriptions of how the world out to be or what to do. But it must draw a line of demarcation, namely between what seems to be and what truly *is*. This means that philosophy's task is to

think being from the perspective of truth or the absolute. And the latter's time is that of constitutive belatedness, of the delay. Philosophy must aim at the "*comprehension [Erfassen] of the present and the actual.*"¹³ But when it tells people what to do, it takes the present to be "something vacuous [*ein Eitles*] and looks beyond it with the eyes of superior wisdom."¹⁴ When philosophy does not comprehend the present-actual, it begins too early and cannot but help to speak about and aim at a "beyond, supposed to exist."¹⁵ Arriving too early comes with the arrogant temptation and displays the temptations of arrogance that one already has all (the knowledge) one needs – and that knowledge is all one needs.

Philosophy therefore must come too late to avoid voiding its own discourse in advance. It must operate at a distance from the state (of things). This implies that philosophy can easily – and always – fail to be philosophy. Starting to paint the grey in grey implies the wager of declaring that there is reason in the world or that there is reason for the downfall of a shape of spirit. It gets even more risky when one seeks to substantiate that there is a reason for there to be no reason (in a certain period of history).¹⁶ It might always happen that philosophy starts painting too early. If philosophy provides a grasp—*eine Fassung*—of its time in the form of thought, as the adage goes, the wager concerns this very time, namely that it reached an end, that one can get a hold of it. If it captures therefore a shape of spirit that is haunting or terrifying us, the ability to capture and grasp it is good news. Because thereby it is one can conceive of its end (even though there is no easy measurement for how quickly the adequate philosophical grasp will ever translate into the practice of the grasped shape disappearing – this is an intricacy linked to the entire history of Marxist thought of which Žižek in our present day is certainly also one most influential proponents). This obviously is reminiscent of the intricacies of psychoanalytic timing – which is ultimately not only about understanding the meaning of a certain shape of spirit or symptom.

Both are not that different in the end. As both are acts of transforming suffering into ordinary unhappiness, a transformation that Freud famously took as defining feature of analytic practice. Fredric Jameson has once raised the question of how to transition into a form of post-capitalist form of society by suggesting that the forming of a universal army could produce interesting results. But he also suggested that the degree of collectivization that such a move would generate an unavoidable new dimension of unhappiness produced by being together in such novel ways. Could one, against this background, not suggest that *communism* could be defined not as an organization that solves all kinds of social and economic problems but rather as an organization that allows for *collective* (and maybe even *shared*) *ordinary unhappiness*? Finally, an attempt to solve collective problems collectively and to find new means of forming collectivity by experimenting how one fails at solving them?

2. The Highest Stage of Liberalism

What is the name of our today? “Fascism” names our present in an imprecise and therefore inadequate manner for Žižek. For certain signifiers block systematic comprehension as they seem to represent an act of analysis but don’t and thereby operate in a disorienting fashion. They fulfil – as signifiers – a defence-mechanistic function. This is especially the case when they suggest that they are able provide orientation. As Hegel famously stated in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “What is familiar and well known (*bekannt*) as such is not really known (*erkannt*) for the very reason that it is *familiar and well known*. In the case of cognition, the most common form of self-deception and deception of others is when one presupposes something as well known and then makes one’s peace with it.”¹⁷ Often, with Hegel and Žižek, the adequate name for a phenomenon needs to be found and nuance is thereby of the essence. The issue is to name it in the right way and at the right moment in time. Concepts are timed. This is why Žižek provocatively asks “Is Trumpian populism really just a new form of fascism?” And he adds that the signifier “fascism” seems just all too familiar and leads to a form of self-deception as well as to the deception of others. One can give greater contour and precision to the signifier “fascist” if one locates its present-day occurrence within the historico-conceptual transformation of and *within liberalism*.¹⁸ The naming of the present is then determined on the basis of a different analysis of the conjuncture.

Žižek’s is a historical and dialectical materialist approach. It operates through the parallax between the two.¹⁹ He states: “what we are getting today is not fascism with a liberal mask, but liberalism brought to its (fascist) conclusion, to the actualization of its hidden immanent potentials.” We therefore do not move from democratic liberalism to fascism or from liberal democracy to fascist strategies. Rather the movement is a movement within liberalism: fascist liberalism brings out the actual truth of liberalism. This very truth manifests as fascist libertarianism. This is why those who see in the authoritarian forms of today a simple return of fascism or a move to neo-fascism miss a crucial conceptual point. The ground of the (conceptual and historical) genesis of fascist libertarianism is liberalism – or in other nomenclature: capitalism. Liberalism today brings out its own libertarian aspect. Because this side for Žižek has always been in conflict and contradiction with progressive liberalism (which manifests *inter alia* in the form of political correctness movements or affirmative action protests). It is precisely their antagonism which is constitutive of liberalism.

This is why Žižek states with Horkheimer that whoever does not want to talk about liberalism should remain quiet about fascism. In different terms: a figure like Trump is not adequately understood by only focussing on the authoritarian aspects of his political agenda, but rather

only by identifying him as a sovereign figure that is directly linked to the fascist libertarian side of liberalism. He is authoritarian mainly insofar as his aim is to create an entirely unregulated and, in this sense, harshly destructive form of market liberalism that suspends all ethical limitations and individual protections. This is why here again it is crucial to identify what the signifier “authoritarian” effectively means. Trump, for example, uses the power that his presidency, the house of representatives and the senate gives him. But the problem is not that he seems to assume the role of the master – often modifying and transforming the implicit rules of political conduct – but it is linked to the way in which he does it. All his obscenities, the ordinary perversions that have become predominant with him are a marker of this eroding transformation. It is here that Žižek adds that Trump can be identified as a fascist if in general we understand the fascist project to be one of conservative modernization, so inherently contradictory. Part and parcel of this development is that liberalism implies a defence of the freedoms of the individuals against whatever is seen as their infringement by state regulations. But today the individuals whose freedom needs to be protected are those addressed by Žižek as “neo-feudal masters”, who in turns infringe the freedom of all other individuals (and invent entirely new forms of exploitation, especially of those of the vulnerable and poor). This dynamic is part of Žižek’s concept of the obscene. It is a form of transforming the ethical substance, the very matter of the social bond that is constitutive of society. The signifiers at its core are now used as means to undo this very substance. Ethical substance in fascist libertarianism is privatized. This brings forth more than just a group of feudal lords. It is rather a series of private kings (private because they are and are not the kings of anyone anymore). We encounter a privatization even of the social functioning of kingdom or monarchy. A desocialization of the social functioning of kingdom.

What Žižek puts forth then is an account of the transformation of the contemporary forms of domination that are linked to the historicizing classification of the economic political order that we are no longer – or no longer only – living in. For capitalism, our current economic-political condition, needs to be rethought in terms of neo or techno-feudalism (an idea championed by a series of contemporary thinkers).²⁰ This transformation does not only address a new level of centralization of means of production, but rather, for Žižek, a general shift in the ontology of value. Certain forms of exploitation, for example, disappear today. An Uber driver is no longer exploited by Uber as Uber just mediates between someone who needs a ride and someone who offers one, so exploitation disappears. Thereby the predominant form of creating surplus value does no longer take the form of profit but the form of rent. This shift is even worse that it appears to be, because those who own what we rent from them – say our computer operating systems – also control us through the very media we rent from them in ways that are hardly at all fathomable.

This is the predominant form of fascist libertarianism in the West. In Russia, on the other side, Putin applies another type of harsh and brutal modernization in Žižek's account. One that rejects the European enlightenment by mobilizing a form of Eurasian Russian spirituality (that one can already detect something of this in Solzhenitsyn²¹) that is affirmed as something that ultimately will be resisting any appropriation by state power by taking state power. It is a form wherein there is a peculiar coincidence of the resistance to state power with the very seat of state power. Examples of this can be seen in phenomena like the storm of the capitol or, even more clearly, in all the work DOGE has done. This is undoing state agencies from the position of state power. There are thus different modes of conservative modernization that can be called fascist within the liberal framework. What Žižek identifies as fascist characteristics is thus a malleable and highly adaptable mode of operating: it can occur in different shapes and fulfil quite different functions, and thereby is even able to serve as surrogate for a truly emancipatory outlooks. This allows the highest stage of liberalism to perform an undoing of any universal and general political vision and any vision of the world. Capitalism has always proved its ability to remain operative in all kinds of contexts – democratic or otherwise, even paradoxically in those that are still nominally communist, in China there exists a communist capitalism – and it has now entered a stage where it appears to function best in fascist libertarian ways. The only global vision capitalism in its present form puts forth is the global undoing of any universal vision.

A crucial part of contemporary capitalism in its fascist libertarian form consists therefore for Žižek of implementing a novel form of domination, that of the “neo-corporate feudal masters.” They exert their power by suspending any possibility for public control and even public awareness. To modify an argument that Žižek made at another occasion, we could say that the difference between the West and China nowadays – when it comes to issues of population control and concrete forms of domination – is that the Chinese at least know that they live in China, while in the West still prevails the assumption that we are free (and are unsurveilled when, for example we surf the internet) or in his words: “the Chinese human rats are at least aware they are controlled, while we are the stupid rats strolling around unaware of how our movements are monitored.”²² The global spread of this invisibilized form of domination of the neo-corporate feudal masters produces the peculiar effect that we are all living under Chinese conditions today, even though only the Chinese know it. Capitalism's detotalizing tendency, its undoing or dissolving tendency, shows itself as a reified and reactionary form of what Freud and Hegel “Ungeschehen machen”²³, of undoing, of making undone, which today reaches a new height.²⁴ It consequently brings about the disintegration of public order all around the world. Fascist libertarianism

is a category that describes the undoing and unbinding, the dissolving of the social core of sociality as an effect of (almost) having been able to appropriate the very powers of truth, the very powers of the absolute.²⁵ Undoing, now, as domination.

3. Obscenities of the Present and the Diversification of Unemployment

Fascist libertarianism is not simply authoritarianism but aims at the undoing of the very matter of the social bond. A symptom of this, in Žižek's terms, is the omnipresent forms of obscenity in politics that manifest, *inter alia*, in being able to say or do things that just a while ago were entirely unthinkable.²⁶ Two examples (both are mine): A recent *Guardian* headline stated: "strikes on Iran ease pressure on Isreal to end starvation in Gaza"²⁷ and just a little later Friedrich Merz, the German chancellor, stated that Isreal with its attack on Iran is doing "the dirty work for us."²⁸ Žižek's approach appears to not let anyone get too used to what is now – the obscene dominating – the objective world. It aims at retaining the shock that results from such obscenity becoming a world-structuring principle. In this sense, one can identify his approach as an attempt to re-induce a form of shame for obscene times of shamelessness.²⁹ For a world whose structure is obscene – and in this sense fascist libertarianism and obscenity are intrinsically linked – loses the character of being a world, that is a space, which allows for the very possibility of a basic *Mit-Sein* (being-together), in other words, where – conceptually – everyone is provided a symbolic place. Badiou has therefore called capitalism wordless.³⁰ Žižek's discussion of the Kafue River catastrophe (an acid spill by a Chinese mining company that affected about 60% of Zambia's population) highlights such obscene structure of contemporary worldnessness.

He states: "The lesson is that the developed world is outsourcing even the catastrophes that ruin the environment to the Third World countries where people live in a much more unspoiled 'natural' world. If you want to enjoy unspoiled nature, go to a German or Norwegian forest; if you want to see ecological catastrophes caused by modern technology, go to an unspoiled African country." The obscenity of this situation is only increased by the fact that the worker's protests against the neglect of safety were dealt with by bringing over workers from China, ready to do the same work for less wage. Žižek brings to the fore the impasses that drive and constitute such a conjuncture. Because all this happens under the condition that the same Chinese investments provide thousands of jobs in the region and is thus, despite its destructive and undoing effects, a crucial infrastructural development factor. Such – inherently contradictory – phenomena allow, nevertheless, to grasp the very functioning of capital itself. For what one can see in this successful ruining of the Zambian conjuncture is the advancement of capitalism by means of catastrophe. It also demonstrates how its increase of productivity always

produces in the very same move a series of detrimental consequences. It comes with a depletion of natural resources. But this is not it. It always also generates another increase in unemployment.³¹ Capitalism always produced unemployment, but if capitalist liberalism has reached a new historic phase, one can infer that this holds as well for its production of unemployment.

For today, it no longer only fulfils the traditional function(s) of the industrial reserve army (which capital needed so that there is, *inter alia*, permanent competition among the workers whereby it can uphold its own level of operativity more easily and enslave them more indirectly³²). Ours is a situation, as Žižek states citing Fredric Jameson, in which “massive populations around the world... have, as it were, ‘dropped out of history’,... deliberately excluded from the modernizing projects of First World capitalism and written off as hopeless and terminal cases.”³³ This is, as it were, the prize one has to pay for the types of modernization that are constitutive for fascist libertarianism.³⁴ Such radicalized form of permanent exclusory unemployment is thus not simply an accident of history. It is a systemic and constitutive effect which does not only appear in the framework of so-called failed states where infrastructures and basic social life have collapsed. This is why Žižek argues that we should expand the category of the unemployed beyond its immediate remit. We should expand it such that it includes a broader array of undoings and can capture what is an essential part of capitalism’s contemporary doing, namely the dissolution that is part of its productivity-raising expansion and intensification.

Žižek’s conceptual expansion allows to make visible the dismissed and unbound masses of global populations and the possible stratifications that take place within this very mass of people. Today, there are for Žižek “the temporary unemployed”, the “no longer employable and permanently unemployed”, the “people living in slums and other types of ghettos (all those often dismissed by Marx himself as “lumpen-proletarians”)", then there are “whole areas, populations or states excluded from the global capitalist process, like the blank spaces on ancient maps”, there are “the formerly employed but now unemployable”, the “illegally employed” – this is a group that, to my mind, includes those who often work under conditions that come close to that of actual slavery. One can here think of the spam-email-industry, the so-called “cyberscam farms” which often operate by luring people who struggle for their livelihood into situations, where they have to move country and with promises of steady employment and solid pay and then take from then their very means of leaving, i.e. their passports.³⁵ Then there are those, to which some of contemporary academia belong. They have been “educated with no chance of finding employment: a whole generation of students have almost no chance of finding... employment... and the worst way to resolve the gap is to directly subordinate education to the demands

of the market”, because it is exactly the market the renders university education actively irrelevant. One can here think of all those lines from the people around the conservative party in the US which openly defend de-education by stating that avoiding spending money on a degree that is useless in the real world is the best way of attempting to be successful (without what might be called an educational detour).³⁶

However, in and with the potentially unemployed university educated – who are unemployed because their skill set is deemed useless in the present conjuncture – is nevertheless identifiable a potential that gives reason as to why Trump and his followers aim to undo and dissolve the useless knowledge production in and by, especially, even if not only, humanities departments. These departments are flagged as and therefore represented as being potentially politically threatening – because, for example, in the campus protests – that are not only humanities endorsed – they appear to uphold a certain degree of decency against or indicate the shamelessness of certain acts.³⁷ Universities are thus identified by their enemies as potential *institutions of shame*.

Žižek suggests that it is precisely such position of useless knowledge produced, and this especially in the university humanities department, which does today appear to be the locus of potential future emancipatory movements and ideas – one reason as to why the reaction to the campus protests in the US but also, say, in Germany was so harsh. Traditionally, universities have exactly *not* been places of potential radical transformation or resistance but rather proved to be quite problematic institutions as they administered and organized but never really produced any novel knowledge, which is part and parcel of Lacan’s account of the discourse of the university (and which is also why, for example, Nietzsche, Marx and Freud worked outside of the university).³⁸ But the potential that fascist libertarians identify in and with the university, what they perceive as dangerous is the potential that is linked to a break-up of the very framework of the university (as mere knowledge-mediation). Can a university do anything when the situation is so dire? Can it reframe or reinvent itself such that it becomes a place of exile (a university for Nietzsches, Marxes and Freuds)? And can it thereby serve as a mediator of the different strata of unemployment?

4. Unemployed Negativity and the Negativity of the Unemployed

With the diversification of unemployment, one could be reminded of the famous trope of unemployed negativity at the end of history. In the famous letter to Kojève George Bataille noted – with the intention to thereby refute what he saw as Hegel’s too synthesizing vision – that: “If action (‘doing’) is – as Hegel says – negativity, the question arises as to whether the negativity of one who has ‘nothing more to do’ disappears or remains in a state of

‘unemployed negativity’.³⁹ The question of the diverse types of unemployed therefore can be said to bring back the question of negativity in a novel manner, as negativity of the unemployed. Obviously, negativity is not always the same – how could it ever have been? But novel forms of unemployment allow us to also conceive of novel forms of negation.⁴⁰ The point can be grasped by reference to the famous joke from Lubitsch’s *Ninotchka* that Žižek has brought to prominence (the joke is – and I am leaving aside the context in which it is told in the movie – about someone ordering a coffee without milk, an order to which the waiter replies that they are out of mild but could bring a coffee without cream). The point of the joke is that distinctions cannot only be articulated in relation to actually existing things, but also in the “without”, in what they are lacking. A coffee without milk is thus different from one without cream (even though the coffee might look identical). In view of the diversification of the unemployed, one also must learn to perceive the differences in the “without”. I would like to suggest that this distinction cannot but imply a stratification (not an objective one but one that will be (mis)represented as objective): in some of these strata of unemployment there is – depending on the gaze and maybe only for the fascist libertarian eyes – a potential emancipatory potential and in others there is rather none. The diversification of the unemployed allows to more precisely situate the place of this potential potential of emancipatory politics if there is ever any.⁴¹

At one point in the book Žižek insinuates with regard to the diversification of the class or non-class of the unemployed that its analysis needs to be understood, today, in line with another regressive movement. For, he claims, we moved back from the political actuality of the concept of the proletariat to that of the rabble. Why? And what is the rabble? The rabble, in Hegel, is a subjective figure that emerges when someone employed has lost more than just her place in a given objective social framework (mediated by labour). She has lost more because she has also lost her subjective mindset that enables her to participate in a society’s everyday life. She has thus lost the very attitude that would allow her to be a part of the community she belongs to. This is why whoever belongs to the rabble becomes – for Hegel – shameless.⁴² But Hegel – and Žižek does not elaborate this specific point in the book – also noted that there are two types of rabble: the poor rabble and the rich rabble. The poor rabble is the contingent effect of a necessary and therefore unavoidable violence of the economic system itself. This is to say, who is going to be part of the rabble is contingent, but because the rabble-attitude forms in the poor and poverty is unavoidably a product of the existing economic system, the possibility of the rabble is structurally and constantly given. If the poor rabble emerges, they become shameless and claim that the existent legal system has no real right to exist, because it demands of everyone to work but structurally makes the fulfilment of this demand impossible and produces outcasts. Therefore, it loses its conceptual legitimacy.

The rich rabble is generated according to a different mechanism: by an individual excluding herself from the general system of social mediation through labour – because they can live and maintain themselves through wealth or inheritance for example. This tempts them to turn themselves into what Hegel describes as “gamblers”⁴³ before they then – in case they contingently win on the market and thus acquire wealth that was not mediated by any labour process – become rich rabble, a rabble who does not want to pay taxes, becomes shameless and also thinks the existent system has no right to exist because only they themselves have this very right to exist (due to their wealth).⁴⁴ This is one way of how to understand the contemporary attack on “empathy”, which is so prevalent in the ideological background of Trump. As Žižek rightly points out, it is crucial to be aware of the ideological framework of those who are behind the dark enlightenment orientation – prominently this is Curtis Yarvin,⁴⁵ to a lesser extent also Nick Land – and behind so-called dark MAGA, for the whole idea of replacing politics with a technocratic rule for and by the rich is not so different from Hegel’s depiction of the rich rabble.⁴⁶

Žižek’s point in all this – with the move from the proletariat to the rabble which aligns with a move from a mainly profit-based value production to that of a mainly rent-based value production in contemporary capitalism – is that we are clearly not in a situation anymore where emancipation could arise from organizing the proletarian workers in the factories who would be the truly politically relevant but for now politically excluded actor. We are rather in a situation where what Alain Badiou once described with the broad signifier of “the excluded” or Žižek now with Jameson with that of the “unemployed” is what is politically more significant and determining.⁴⁷ But if the, as Žižek states, “the rabble is back, emerging in the very core of emancipatory struggles”, such an insight changes the orientation in the present political conjuncture. Against the background of the potential role of the universities in forthcoming visions of emancipation, this brings to the fore a question that directly relates to a political issue that Žižek was one of the first to make people aware of vis-à-vis one of the last emancipatory attempts that spread around the world and originally came out of the university context, namely the occupy movement, which dissolved in 2016.⁴⁸ The political problem that it generated was *not* its lack of demands (this for some time this was rather one of its greatest strengths), but that it ultimately proved unable to expand its organizational form beyond those who were educated in the universities. The question that emerges from the diversified unemployed is then against the background of this historical experience: can the universities create an alliance, a necessarily internationalist one, of the different forms of the unemployed? A kind of exile for the unemployed excluded, a space for collective ordinary unhappiness?

Pierre Bourdieu once suggested in the early 2000s that one will have to conceive of an international of the unemployed. Where does

that even potentially begin? Who would organize it? Could it begin within the universities (one would also have to learn from all the political mistakes made in 68)? Or is this just the political dream of the potentially unemployed students and professors?

I am highlighting these questions, because things within the domain of the excluded get swiftly conceptually quite topsy turvy. On the one hand side, some of the excluded are included into the world market. Žižek's example here is how Congo after the fall of Mobutu – which is today socially a mere conglomerate, a *zonage*, in Badiou's terms, which no longer exists as a proper state, because it is controlled by warlords which mine wealth – the materials that are used for the construction of SIM cards and chips – from the region. This wealth-resource in Congo only exists because it is part of a global capitalist wealth production which benefits of having turned it into a *zonage*, thus into something is no longer in the position of having any political say or voice, as it is not really a state anymore. This led to massive land exploitation, to the dissolution of state structures and to the terrorizing of the local population. All of this is an effect of a mutually productive exchange interaction between high-tech companies and the local warlords, who are in an internal competition with each other, which – even though it is a direct effect of this very extraction process – is predominantly misrepresented as result of ongoing local ethnic warfare. There is even an interest to endorse local hostility as this makes any form of regional solidarity almost impossible. This example makes clearer what for Žižek the expansion of the concept of the unemployed enables to make visible. For it shows the naiveté to assume that warlords in Congo could ever be in solidarity with anyone but themselves, as their whole business-model, so to speak, is to gain from the disintegration of social integration. We here encounter an economy in and of exclusion. The scission that internally divides the unemployed – and makes their solidarity if not equally impossible then at least very difficult – indicates that there is nothing, maybe not even nothing that brings together all those who are unemployed. This is a true political problem and why Žižek highlights that there is a difference between the “strictly proletarian “nothing” of the modern workers generated by capitalism and the “less-than-nothing” of those not integrated into the system, not even as immanent negativity.”

For one conceptually and politically must make a distinction between those integrated through their being exploited – and as those producing value – and those who are not even exploited and whose living condition is ruined. We therefore have formally ultimately four strata of the unemployed: there are those integrated by exploitation that can vote and are at least abstractly politically relevant, then there are those who the system relies on but who are not politically part of the system (those who do unpaid work within capitalism), then there are those who are included by being exploited, who politically do not count and whose

living conditions are ruined (the Zambian mineworkers, the Congolese warlords), and then there are those who are not even exploited, do not count politically and whose living conditions are ruined – a kind of bare life produced by capitalism.

The idea that capitalism is productive of bare life and that the latter is a rather historical and not a metaphysical creation – or more precisely: why a specific metaphysics is created by a historical social formation – is one of the claims that was championed by Fredric Jameson in the very book that Žižek affirmatively refers to.⁴⁹ Integration by means of exclusion, integration by exclusion and material exclusion (undoing of living conditions), non-integration and exclusory exclusion, and non-integration and undoing even of the living conditions of the excluded. This is exclusory exclusion with no remedies; not only unemployed negativity but a negativity of unemployment that appears to even negate the possibility of restitution. This is how dissolution of the social bond has been reinvented in fascist libertarianism; new ways of dissolving the social bond, that is ultimately as if new ways of splitting the position of the proletariat into two, but repeatedly. Till it vanishes.

5. Against Naturalization

We thus encounter today a form of undoing, a dissolution that even undoes the form of emancipatory undoing and dissolution. It is like Hegel's movement of the absolute reified and put to the worst un-Hegelian realization, whereby it is no longer Hegelian. But how to undo differently? How to mobilize to undo differently? Žižek argues that the issue that one faces here and today – and this is a political one – is that people do not take to the streets when conditions are particularly dire and catastrophic. This is why no revolutionary attempts happen in Congo. But it rather occurs – as he argues – when there is a relative form of stability and people are off well enough, so that they can imagine themselves living even a little bit better. If thus a political organization seeks to avoid people marching the streets and emancipatory mobilization, one should make people live under dreadful conditions. Otherwise, they start to desire more. So, the conditions are worse for political mobilization when the conditions are worse. Part and parcel of establishing worse conditions is the operation of normalization – an operation that one can witness when whatever social, economic, political or even ecological horrors are presented as new normal. How to resist the normalization of catastrophes, downfall? What is crucial is to realize is that normalization is a weapon and Žižek alerts us to how it is operated.

He addresses it in a later part of his new book where he reminds his readers of Trump's 2025 inaugural speech where Trump announced the end to the recognition of any other than two, namely male and female, sexes. Trump framed this not only as return to reason and sanity, but also

as a return to common sense.⁵⁰ Key to Žižek's point here is that under Trump and Vance certain signifiers – like “equality” – are turned into operators for enforcing their exact opposite. The reclaiming of common sense ends up being the very opposite of actual common sense, and maybe even worse, the very undoing and dissolving of it. Once acting according to the most uncommon sense principles – actions that only make sense to a marginal number of people who hold all the power – is claimed to be acting in the name of common sense, common sense is appropriated for what makes neither any *common* sense (many of the measures imposed “defy our common sense”⁵¹) nor any common *sense* (it does not seem meaningful or comprehensible to most and capitalism thereby undoes the very idea of a meaningful life). This is another peak of the detotalization of meaning that is specific to contemporary capitalism or in Žižek's words: “the era of common sense, the era when in our daily lives we could rely on traditional values and customs is over” – and this concerns all kinds of fields of practice, from sexuality to the very definition of what it means to be human (this is the reason for Žižek's repeated insistence on how Musk's *Neuralink* (a supposedly direct link between brain activity and digital space) will affect what it is to be a human being.⁵²

This aspect of Žižek's argument is a far reaching and it has to do with what Pier Paolo Pasolini called an anthropological mutation implemented by capitalism; a mutation that for him was more annihilating than old forms of fascism, because subjects are now entirely turned into an object, to such a degree that it no longer recognizes its own subjection. Žižek indicates that the anthropological mutation will not lead to our representation in digital space becoming more nuanced, but rather that it will affect our human expressions negatively, for they will be enframed by the very digital space in which we move, reduced to increasing forms of thumb upping gestures. Some time ago, Giorgio Agamben has made a similar point – in his discussion of the work of Guy Debord –, as he stated that even individual gestures die and become extinct when they are so drastically normalized standardized. Then it becomes imaginable that the human species suffers a dispossession of the very means of expression in contemporary capitalism. But this is not only a matter of bodily expression or expressiveness rather it might affect, Žižek warns, the very elements constitutive of our actions: it might become unclear if we are controlled or not, since, it has already become quite difficult to perceive what the signifier “control” does effectively mean today – concretely.⁵³

This is why learning to not take anything for granted, as if needing to feel uneasy in one's own body is the only adequate subjective response to Žižek's diagnoses. It is not good to feel awkward and unwell when things are tolerable but it is important to keep feeling awkward and unwell when things are terrible. For already Hegel clearly indicated that we get used to things that are historical products, even products of historical struggles and treat them as if they were just given objective conditions.

Hegel's example for such naturalization were inter alia getting used to the existence of street-lightening and the feeling of safety when one walks the street and assumes that no one attacks one randomly on the street with a fire-arm or knife.⁵⁴ There exists thus an important basic form of ignorance that is part of the social bond and its normalization – it becomes our second nature. Hegel, as Žižek has argued many times, saw the productive side of such normalization as well as its negative and problematic side, which is why he argued that, every now and then, there needs to happen a process of denormalization and denaturalization. And this is an insight that Žižek revitalizes. As one terrain in which the problematic effects of normalization has today certainly taken hold of is that of ecology. The problem that he detects is that we “automatically take for granted... certain natural parameters” and even often imagine climate change according to them (as if global warming just means it will constantly and always get warmer and as if one could only climate change within the stable frame of the seasons that will all get a few degrees hotter). But to properly (and politically) be able to relate to the problem of climate change means not only that we have to accept that the earth has no manual or steering wheel, but also that the human species nevertheless transformed nature so profoundly on earth that it threatens its very own survival. One can therefore learn from Žižek – and especially in the monstrous times we live in⁵⁵ – that one should remain on the lookout for the spontaneous naturalizations and normalization. For our conjuncture is not normal. Things do not automatically return to any old normal after a while, neither in nature nor in politics. Therefore, one should consistently resist operations of normalization (today) and one thus should resist naturalizing – even nature. Žižek seeks to induce shame – in us – in shameless times and keep the shock alive that we experience under the catastrophic conditions of today. He keeps looking awry at what otherwise disappears in a new normal and teaches us to – in my reformulation of a point famously made by Fredric Jameson – to always denaturalize. For, today, we should never get used to and keep our eyes on the *terror praesentis*.

- 1 All unaccounted citations are from Žižek's manuscript of his most recent and not-yet published book: *Donald Trump: A Fascist Libertarian*.
- 2 Hegel 2004, p. 234.
- 3 Cf. Hegel 2010, p. 67ff.
- 4 Hegel 2008, p. 16
- 5 Ibid., p. 16.
- 6 Most recently: Žižek, 2017.
- 7 Ibid., p. xv.
- 8 Here one can detect a similarity with psychoanalysis, for it can only be terminated once we accept it as interminable, for only then we can start questioning the very ontology of analysis. For this cf. Dolar 2023a.
- 9 Adorno 2007, p. 3.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Hegel 2008, p. 16.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid., p. 13.
- 14 Ibid., p. 14. This is the line that allows to comprehend Žižek's fundamental rejection of any position that claims wisdom.
- 15 Ibid., p. 13.
- 16 Hegel argued that there are periods of history where nothing historically relevant happens. However problematic his own rendering of this argument has been, it seems to be crucial to defend any contemporary materialist rationalism (without unhistorically structuralizing the very concept of history), or what I have elsewhere termed an "Idealism without Idealism."
- 17 Hegel 2018, p. 20.
- 18 There is a discussion to be had how Žižek's argument relates to what Alain Badiou has called "generic fascism" and to what I tried describing with Foucault as "grotesque sovereignty" (to which Foucault counted German fascism). For this cf. Alain Badiou 2009, p. 72 and Foucault 2003, p. 11f.
- 19 For this parallax, cf. also Žižek 2009.
- 20 For this cf. for example Varoufakis 2024.
- 21 Cf. Ruda 2025.
- 22 Cf. Žižek 2014a.
- 23 On this concept cf. Žižek 2014b, pp. 70-82.
- 24 This is the reason as to why I have argued on several occasions that capitalism can ultimately be identified with what Badiou has characterized as an obscure subject.
- 25 This obviously raises the question if there can be a reified form of the very movement of the absolute and of truth (the answer is: no!), but appearances can here be quite deceptive.
- 26 One approach to the category of the obscene can be found in: Žižek 2020.
- 27 Graham-Harrison 2025.
- 28 Connor 2025.
- 29 For the role of shamelessness and the intricacies of reintroducing shame into the post-68 capitalist dynamics, cf. inter alia: Dolar 2023.
- 30 For this diagnosis cf. for example Badiou 2016 and cf. Žižek 2011.
- 31 One can here think of all the discussions surrounding AI and the kinds of labour branches it will not only affect but eradicate.
- 32 The debate about this concept is complex, as it cannot be properly understood without including the theses concerning the tendency of the rate of profit to fall into it. I leave the details of this debate aside for the present purpose.
- 33 This citation is from Jameson 2014, p. 149.
- 34 One can note here that a highly historical formation produces the suspension of historicity for a large number of people affected by it and living within it.
- 35 Cf. Cockayne 2024.
- 36 For a glimpse into these obscenities: just search for "the most successful people explain why a college degree is useless."
- 37 That J.D. Vance argued that universities are the institutions of the left and need to be overtaken, directly speaks to this; he also prominently stated in 2021 that "the universities are the enemy."
- 38 An instructive reflection on this issue can be found in: Dolar 2015.
- 39 Bataille 1988, p. 89.
- 40 Mladen Dolar, Alenka Zupančič and Slavoj Žižek have explored these forms for years through different lenses. One inspiration for this lies in Hegel whose system clearly knows more than just one type of negation. Just think of the famous peculiar double negation one encounters at the very beginning of his *Logic*, where Hegel states that being and nothing that both are so indeterminate that they could easily appear identical, also are "not without distinction (*nicht ununterschieden*)."

41 One question is how does this relate to Marx's critique of the Lumpenproletariat (or to the critique of what I have elsewhere called the "Lumpenbourgeoisie")?

42 Cf. Hegel 2008, p. 222. If the rich rabble appears at the very heart of power, the stance against the state is inscribed into the functioning of the state. This is when shamelessness reigns. For this also cf. Mladen Dolar's contribution to the present issue.

43 Hegel 2005, p. 223.

44 For a more detailed account, cf. Ruda 2011, p. 35-57.

45 Žižek describes this as follows: "Yarvin founded the *anti-egalitarian* and *anti-democratic* philosophical movement known as the *Dark Enlightenment*. He "sees liberalism as creating a *Matrix*-like *totalitarian* system, and who wants to replace American democracy with a sort of techno-monarchy". His premise is that democracy is obviously failing, and that libertarianism is a doomed project without the inclusion of *authoritarianism*. Actual politics occurs through the actions of elites which effectively control and regulate the apparent democratic or socialist rhetoric of the public discourse. If these elites will not be replaced by new better elites, history will inevitably progress toward left-leaning societies. Adapting a phrase from *The Matrix*, we should swallow a "red pill" to shatter of progressive illusions." And Žižek continues stating that: "For Yarvin, real political power in the US is held by "the Cathedral", an informal amalgam of universities and the mainstream press, which collude to sway public opinion. The progressive ideology of the Cathedral is delivered to and internalized by the general populace much in the same way religious authorities and institutions deliver religious dogma to fanatical worshippers. The Cathedral's commitment to equality and justice erodes social order, which is why an American "monarch" should dissolve elite academic institutions and media outlets within the first few months of their reign."

46 Here, it is crucial, that the rabble appears in the very heart and also at the margins or outside the centres of power. This brings Hegel's analysis surprisingly close to that of Foucault's of the infamous people (at the very margins of power – that is those who have been accidentally touched by power – but who sometimes also appear in its very heart: as grotesque sovereign). A longer elaboration of the potency of Foucault's description, cf. Frank Ruda, *Grotesque Sovereignty. On Obscurantism in Politics* (in preparation).

47 One ought to note here that Žižek and Badiou were not entirely in line with their respective characterization of these excluded – but this is a debate for another occasion – for Žižek has repeatedly problematized, even though not in the book I mainly refer to here, Badiou's conceptualization of the so-called nomadic proletariat.

48 Cf. for example: Žižek 2012.

49 Jameson 2014, p. 125.

50 In one particularly memorable stab, a Trump-propagandist Žižek cites claimed "Kamala is form them, President Trump is for you."

51 The specific choice of the American ambassadors to Israel by Trump or Trump's engagement with crypto currencies are Žižek's examples for such actions. One could easily add more if one just thinks of the shock that the ICE raids have produced; the idea that one can deploy the army on US soil against US citizens; that there ought to be a Trump I-phone, or that the idea that the new two state solution for Israel implies that the US is taking over Gaza.

52 This has been a trope that Žižek's has been following for some time. An extensive treatment can be found in Žižek 2020a. That the idea of this very digital space will nevertheless be privately owned, does not only make plausible why Žižek speaks of the reign of neo-feudal masters, but also why this privately owned space which is planned to affect the entire human species comes with its own meta-physics – conceived of, owned and regulated by individuals.

53 Is, for example, nudging nudging or controlling? What would it look like when it becomes part of a virtual space interaction that directly affects our cognitive abilities?

54 Cf. Hegel 2008, p. 241.

55 I have argued that it is obscure and Žižek argues that it is obscene. We might call it thus obscure-obscene times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adorno, Theodor W., 2007, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum).
- Badiou, Alain, 2009, *Logics of Worlds, Being and Event*, 2 (London: Bloomsbury).
- 2016, *Our Wound is Not So Recent: Thinking the Paris Killings of 13 November* (London: Polity).
- Bataille, George 1988, "Letter to X, Lecturer on Hegel", in: *The College of Sociology*, ed. by Dennis Hollier, tr. Betsy Wing, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 89-93.
- Cockayne, James, 2024, "The People Targeting you with Cyberscams May themselves be Victims of Slavery", in: *The Guardian*, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/nov/24/the-people-targeting-you-with-cyberscams-may-themselves-be-victims-of-slavery>
- Connor, Richard, 2025, "Germany's Merz Says Isreal is Doing "Dirty Work for Us" in Iran", in: *DW*, at: <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-merz-says-israel-doing-dirty-work-for-us-in-iran/live-72939104>
- Dolar, Mladen, 2015, "The Master and the Professor are Dead, and I am not Feeling Well Myself", in: In: Westergaard, E., Wiewiura, J.S. (eds.), *On the Facilitation of the Academy* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers), pp. 31-43.
- 2023, "On Hontology", at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXi23hB9Rt4>
- 2023a, "Interminable", in: Mohamed Tal, *The End of Analysis: The Dialectics of the Symbolic and the Real* (London: Palgrave), pp. v-ix.
- Foucault, Michel, 2003, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-75* (London: Verso).
- Graham-Harrison, Emma, 2025, "Strikes on Iran Ease Pressure on Isreal to End Starvation in Gaza", in: *The Guardian*, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/14/israel-attack-on-iran-slows-diplomatic-momentum-to-halt-gaza-war>.
- Hegel, G.W.F. 2004, "On the English Reform Bill", in: *Political Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 234-271.
- 2005: *Die Philosophie des Rechts. Vorlesung von 1821/ 22*, ed. By Hansgeorg Hoppe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005).
- 2008, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- 2010, *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*. Part I: Science of Logic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- 2018, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Jameson, Fredric, 2014, *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One* (London: Verso).
- Ruda, Frank, 2011, *Hegel's Rabble: An Investigation into Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (London: Continuum).
- 2025, "Scenes from A Conceptual History of Courage, Part 1 and 2", in: *Eflux Notes*, at: <https://www.e-flux.com/notes/677983/scenes-from-a-conceptual-history-of-courage-part-1>.
- Varoufakis, Yannis, 2024, *Techno-Feudalism: What Killed Capitalism* (London: Vintage).
- Žižek, Slavoj, 2009, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press).
- 2011, "Shoplifters of the World Unite", in: *London Review of Books*, at: <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v33/n16/slavoj-zizek/shoplifters-of-the-world-unite>.
- 2014a, "How WikiLeaks Opened Our Eyes to the Illusion of Freedom", in: *The Guardian*, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/19/hypocrisy-freedom-julian-assange-wikileaks>.
- 2014b, *The Most Sublime Hysteric: Hegel with Lacan* (London: Polity).
- 2017, *Lenin 2017: Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through* (London: Verso).
- 2020, "Power, Appearance, and Obscenity: Five Reflections", in: *The Philosophical Salon*, at: <https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/power-appearance-and-obscenity-five-reflections/>.