# TOC r3

## 1

#### Interpretation: If the affirmative garners offense off of the consequences of a fiated plan then, the affirmative must defend a governmental actor that bans private appropriation. To clarify, they can’t just defend private entities stop appropriating.

#### Violation: they don’t

#### Vote neg:

#### Utopian Fiat – the aff inherency means private entities want to obviously appropriate, but they don’t explain at all why they would stop – they don’t get magical access to that – impacts – A] kills real world and policymaking education – B] topic literature – no one argues against it because it is utopian which kills negative ground and engagement C] Ground – circumvention, politics, process CPs, - we loose all possible DA’s of how the plan is actually implemented or works, which means the negative can never generate offense to the plan if it o/w its core generics agaisnt a super tiny plan aff which they read.

#### 2) Fragmentation – forms of fragmented politics by lacking a movement completely cedes the political to capitalism. Engagement in individualized communication resists collective and concrete change, constituting enjoyment of melancholic pleasures of being distanced and accommodated to the real world, stopping any possibility of solving oppression – Dean 13:

“Communist Desire”, Jodi Dean, , 2013, LHP AM

An emphasis on the drive dimension of melancholia, on Freud's attention to the way sadism in melancholia is 'turned round upon the subject's own self', leads to an interpretation of the general contours shaping the left that differs from Brown's**. Instead of a left attached to an unaclmowledged orthodoxy,** **we have one that has given way on the desire for communism, betrayed its historical commitment to the proletariat, and sublimated revolutionary energies into restorationist practices that strengthen the hold of capitalism**. **This left has replaced commitments to the emancipatory, egalitarian struggles of working people against capitalism - commitments that were never fully orthodox, but always ruptured, conflicted and contested - with incessant activity** (not unlike the manic Freud also associates with melancholia), and so **now satisfies itself with criticism and interpretation, small projects and local actions, particular issues and legislative victories, art, technology, procedures, and process**. It sublimates revolutionary desire to democratic drive, to the repetitious practices offered up as democracy (whether representative, deliberative or radical). **Having already conceded to the inevitably of capitalism, it noticeably abandons 'any striking power against the big bourgeoisie',** to return to Benjamin's language. For such a left, **enjoyment comes from its withdrawal from responsibility, its sublimation of goals and responsibilities into the branching, fragmented practices of micro-politics, self-care, and issue awareness**. Perpetually slighted, harmed and undone**, this left remains stuck in repetition, unable to break out of the circuits of drive in which it is caught** - unable because it enjoys. **Might this not explain why such a left confuses discipline with domination, why it forfeits collectivity in the name of an illusory, individualist freedom that continuously seeks to fragment and disrupt any assertion of a collective or a common?** The watchwords of critique within this structure of left desire are moralism, dogmatism, authoritarianism and utopianism - watchwords enacting a perpetual self-surveillance: has an argument, position or view inadvertently rukeo one of these errors? Even some of its militants reject party and state, division and decision, securing in advance an inefficacy sure to guarantee it the nuggets of satisfaction drive provides. **If this left is rightly described as melancholic, and I agree with Brown that it is, then its melancholia derives from the real existing compromises and betrayals inextricable from its history - its accommodations with reality, whether of nationalist war, capitalist encirclement, or so-called market demands.** Lacan teaches that, like Kant's categorical imperative, the super-ego refuses to accept reality as an explanation for failure. Impossible is no excuse - desire is always impossible to satisfy. A wide spectrum of the contemporary left has either accommodated itself, in one or another, to an inevitable capitalism or taken the practical failures of Marxism-Leninism to require the abandonment of antagonism, class, and revolutionary commitment to overturning capitalist arrangements of property and production. **Melancholic fantasy (the communist Master, authoritarian and obscene) as well as sublimated, melancholic practices (there was no alternative) shield this left, shield Ltd, from confrontation with guilt over such betrayal as they capture us in activities that feel productive, important, radical.**

#### TVA: Pick a goddamned actor instead of swimming around in the utopian fantasy of making everyone on the planet follow your will without having to think about how that actually is implemented. There is nothing worse than impossible demands in terms of *actually* roleplaying policy makers.

**Impossible demands maintain the status quo—we can passionately play the role of radicals without risking actual change.**

**Zizek 2** (Slavoj**,** International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, president of the Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis,  *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*, “Passions of the Real, Passions of Semblance”, p. 59-61) MH

In a strict Lacanian sense of the term, we should thus posit that 'happiness' relies on the subject's inability or unreadiness fully to confront the consequences of its desire: the price of happiness is that the subject remains stuck in the inconsistency of its desire. In our daily lives, we (pretend to) desire things which we do not really desire, so that, ultimately, the worst thing that can happen is for us to get what we 'officially' desire. Happiness is thus inherently hypocritical: it is the happiness of dreaming about things we do not really want. When today's Left bombards the capitalist system with **demands that** it obviously cannot fulfil (Full employment! Retain the welfare state! Full rights for immigrants!), **it is basically playing a game of hysterical provocation, of addressing the Master with a demand which will be impossible** for him to meet, and will thus expose his impotence. The problem with this strategy, however, is not only that the system cannot meet these demands, but that, in addition, those who voice them do not really want them to be realized. For example when, 'radical' academics demand full rights for immigrants and opening of the borders, are they aware that the direct implementation of this demand would, for obvious reasons, inundate developed Western countries with millions of newcomers, thus provoking a violent working-class racist backlash which would then endanger the privileged position ofthese very academics? Of course they are, but they count on the fact that their demand will not be met - in this way, they can hypocritically retain their clear radical conscience while continuing to enjoy their privileged position. In 1994, when a new wave of emigration from Cuba to the USA was on the cards, Fidel Castro warned the USA that if they did not stop inciting Cubans to emigrate, Cuba would no longer prevent them from doing it - which the Cuban authorities in effect did a couple of days later, embarrassing the USA with thousands of unwanted newcomers.... Is this not like the proverbial woman who snapped back at a man who was making macho advances to her: 'Shut up, or you'll have to do what you're boasting about!' In both cases, the gesture is that of calling the other's bluff, counting on the fact that what the other really fears is that one will fully comply with his or her demand. And would not the same gesture also throw our radical academics into a panic? Here the old '68 motto 'Soy0ns realistes, demandons l'impossible!' acquires a new cynical and sinister meaning which, perhaps, reveals its truth: 'Let's be realists: we, the academic Left, want to appear critical, while fully enjoying the privileges the system offers us. So let's bombard the system with impossible demands: we all **know** that these **demands won't be met**, so we can be sure that nothing will actually change, **and we'll maintain our privileged status**!' If someone accuses a big corporation of particular financial crimes, he or she is exposed to risks which can go right up to murder attempts; if he or she asks the same corporation to finance a research project into the link between global capitalism and the emergence of hybrid postcolonial identities, he or she stands a good chance of getting hundreds ofthousands of dollars.

#### Vote neg:

#### Fairness is a voter – it’s intrinsic to any competitive activity

#### Education’s a voter – it’s why schools fund debate

#### Competing interpretations—it tells the negative what they do and do not have to prepare for. Reasonability is arbitrary and unpredictable, inviting a race to the bottom and we’ll win it links to our offenset this is not frivolous theory, and something where optimal norms matter.

#### Drop the debater to deter future abuse and because the 2N doesn’t get new disads to whole rez so it’s permanently skewed.

#### No RVIs – a] illogical – you can’t say I’m fair vote for me, which is a metaconstraint on all argumentation B] baiting – people will be abusive to bait out theory and then win on the rvi, which invites infinite abuse that outweighs on magnitude

## 2

#### The aff is an act of ideological fantasy creation – ideology is created by the initial illusion of our mental beliefs and concepts representing something real followed by the secondary illusion of forgetting the first was an illusion at all, allowing for ideology to inform reality and not the reverse – Zizek 09:

Zizek, Slavoj. [Slavoj Zizek is a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic. He is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, and a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His books include Living in the End Times, First as Tragedy, Then as Farce, In Defense of Lost Causes, four volumes of the Essential Zizek, and many more. Slavoj Žižek, the maverick philosopher, author of over 30 books, acclaimed as the “Elvis of cultural theory”, and today’s most controversial public intellectual. His work traverses the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, theology, history and political theory, taking in film, popular culture, literature and jokes—all to provide acute analyses of the complexities of contemporary ideology as well as a serious and sophisticated philosophy. His recent films The Pervert’s Guide to the Cinema and Žižek! reveal a theorist at the peak of his powers and a skilled communicator. Now Verso is making his classic titles, each of which stand as a core of his ever-expanding life’s work, available as new editions. Each is beautifully re-packaged, including new introductions from Žižek himself. Simply put, they are the essential texts for understanding Žižek’s thought and thus cornerstones of contemporary philosophy.] The Sublime Object of Ideology. Verso Books, 2009. // LHP BT Recut LHP PS

If we want to grasp this dimension of fantasy, **we must return to the Marxian formula 'they do not know it, but they are doing it', and pose ourselves a very simple question: where is the place of ideological illusion**, in the 'knowing or in the 'doini in the reality itself? **At first sight, the answer seems obvious**: ideological illusion lies in the 'knowing'. It is a matter of a discordance between what people are effectively doing and what they think they are doing - **ideology consists in the very fact that the people 'do not know what they are really doing'**, that they have a false representation of the social reality to which they belong (the distortion produced, of course, by the same reality). Let us take again **the classic Marxian example of so-called commodity fetishism: money is in reality just an embodiment**, a condensation, a materialization of a network **of social relations** - the fact that it functions as a universal equivalent of all commodities is conditioned by its position in the texture of social relations. **But to the individuals themselves**, this function of **money** - to be the embodiment of wealth - **appears as** an immediate, **natural** property of a thing called 'money', as if money is already in itself, in its immediate material reality, the embodiment of wealth. Here, we have touched upon the classic Marxist motive of'reification': behind the things, the relation between things, we must detect the social relations, the relations between human subjects. **But such a reading of the Marxian formula** **leaves out** an illusion, an error, **a distortion which is already at work in the social reality** itself, at the level of what the individuals are doing, and not only what they think or know they are doing. **When individuals use money, they know very well that there is nothing magical about it** - that money, in its materiality, is simply an expression of social relations. The everyday spontaneous ideology reduces money to a simple sign giving the individual possessing it a right to a certain part of the social product. So, on an everyday level, the individuals know very well that there are relations between people behind the relations between things. **The problem is that in their social activity itself, in what they are doing, they are acting as if money, in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such**. They are fetishists in practice, not in theory. **What they ' do not know', what they misrecognize, is the fact that in their social reality itself, in their social activity - in the act of commodity exchange - they are guided by the fetishistic illusion.** To make this clear, **let us again take the classic Marxian motive of the speculative inversion of the relationship between the Universal and the Particular. The Universal is just a property of particular objects which really exist, but when we are victims of commodity fetishism it appears as if the concrete content of a commodity (its use-value) is an expression of its abstract universality (its exchange-value) - the abstract Universal, the Value, appears as a real Substance which successively incarnates itself in a series of concrete objects**. That is the basic Marxian thesis: **it is already the effective world of commodities which behaves like a Hegelian subject**substance, **like a Universal going through a series of particular embodiments**. Marx speaks about 'commodity metaphysics', about the 'religion of everyday life'. The roots of philosophical speculative idealism are in the social reality of the world of commodities; it is this world which behaves 'idealistically' - or, as Marx puts it in the first chapter of the first edition of Capital: This inversion through which what is sensible and concrete counts only as a phenomenal form of what is abstract and universal, contrary to the real state of things where the abstract and the universal count only as a property of the concrete - such an inversion is characteristic of the expression of value, and it is this inversion which, at the same time, makes the understanding of this expression so difficult. If! say: Roman law and German law are both laws, it is something which goes by itsel£ But if, on the contrary, I say: THE Law, this abstract thing, realizes itself in Roman law and in German law, i.e. in these concrete laws, the interconnection becomes mystical.20 The question to ask again is: where is the illusion here? We must not forget that **the bourgeois individual, in his everyday ideology, is definitely not a speculative Hegelian: he does not conceive the particular content as resulting from an autonomous movement of the universal Idea**. **He is**, on the contrary, **a good Anglo-Saxon nominalist, thinking that the Universal is a property of the Particular - that is, of really existing things**. Value in itself does not exist, there are just individual things which, among other properties, have value. **The problem is that in his practice, in his real activity, he acts as if the particular things (the commodities) were just so many embodiments of universal Value**. To rephrase Marx: He knows ve!J' well that Roman law and Genan law arejust two kinds oflaw, but in his practice, he acts as (the Law itself, this abstract end!)!, realizes itseffin Roman law and in German law. So now we have made a decisive step forward; we have established a new way to read the Marxian formula 'they do not know it, but they are doing it': **the illusion is not on the side of knowledge, it is already on the side of reality itself, of what the people are doing.** What they do not know is that their social reality itself, their activity, is guided by an illusion, by a fetishistic invers ion. What they overlook, what they misrecognize, is not the reality but the illusion which is structuring their reality, their real social activity. They know very well how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know. **The illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship to reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what may be called the ideological-fantasy.** If our concept of ideology remains the classic one in which the illusion is located in knowledge, then today's society must appear post-ideological: the prevailing ideology is that of cynicism; people no longer believe in ideological truth; they do not take ideological propositions seriously. **The fundamental level of ideology , however, is not that of an illusion masking the real state of things but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itsel**£ And at this level, we are of course far from being a post-ideological society. **Cynical distance is just one way - one of many ways - to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, we are still doing them**. It is from this standpoint that we can account for the formula of cynical reason proposed by Sloterdijk: 'they know very well what they are doing, but still, they are doing it'**. If the illusion were on the side of knowledge, then the cynical position would really be a post-ideological position, simply a position without illusions: 'they know what they are doing, and they are doing it'. But if the place of the illusion is in the reality of doing itself, then this formula can be read in quite another way: 'they know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion, but still, they are doing it'.** For example, they know that their idea of Freedom is masking a particular form of exploitation, but they still continue to follow this idea of Freedom.**The lesson to be drawn from this concerning the social field is above all that belief, far from being an 'intimate', purely mental state, is always materialized in our effective social activity: belief supports the fantasy which regulates social reality**. Let us take the case of Kafka: it is usually said that in the 'irrational' universe of his novels, Kafka has given an 'exaggerated', 'fantastic', 'subjectively distorted' expression to modern bureaucracy and the fate of the individual within it. In saying this we overlook the crucial fact that it is this very 'exaggeration' which articulates the fantasy regulating the libidinal functioning of the 'effective', 'real' bureaucracy itsel£ The so-called 'Kafka's universe' is not a 'fantasy-image of social reality' but, on the contrary, the mise-en-scene of the fantasy which is at work in the midst ofsocial reali9' itself. we all know very well that bureaucracy is not all-powerful, but our 'effective' conduct in the presence of bureaucratic machinery is already regulated by a beliefin its almightiness . . . In contrast to the usual 'criticism of ideology' trying to deduce the ideological form of a determinate society from the conjunction of its effective social relations, the analytical approach aims above all at the ideological fantasy efficient in social reality itselE **What we call 'social reality' is in the last resort an ethical construction**; it is supported by a certain as if(we act as ffwe believe in the almightiness of bureaucracy, as ffthe President incarnates the will of the People, as if the Party expresses the objective interest of the working class . . . ). **As soon as the belief**(which, let us remind ourselves again, is definitely not to be conceived at a 'psychological' level: it is embodied, materialized, in the effective functioning of the social field) **is lost, the very texture of the social field disintegrates**. This was already articulated by Pascal, one ofAlthusser's principal points of reference, in his attempt to develop the concept of'Ideological State Apparatuses'. According to Pascal, the interiority of our reasoning is determined by the external, nonsensical 'machine' - automatism of the signifier, of the symbolic network in which the subjects are caught: For we must make no mistake about ourselves: we are as much automaton as mind . . . proofs only convince the mind; habit provides the strongest proofs and those that are most believed. It inclines the automaton, which leads the mind unconsciously along with it.22 Here Pascal produces the very Lacanian definition of the unconscious: 'the automaton (i.e. the dead, senseless letter), which leads the mind unconsciously [sans Ie savoi􀅼 with it'. I t follows, from this constitutively senseless character of the Law, that we must obey it not because it is just, good or even beneficial, but simply because it is the law - this tautology articulates the vicious circle of its authority, the fact that the last foundation of the Law's authority lies in its process of enunciation: Custom is the whole of equity for the sole reason that it is accepted. That is the mystic basis of its authority. Anyone who tries to bring it back to its first principle destroys it. '3 The only real obedience, then, is an 'external' one: obedience o u t of conviction is not real obedience because it is already 'mediated' through our subjectivity - that is, we are not really obeying the authority but simply following our j udgement, which tells us that the authority deserves to be obeyed in so far as it is good, wise, beneficent . . . Even more than for our relation to 'external' social authority, this inversion applies to our obedience to the internal authority of belief it was Kierkegaard who wrote that to believe in Christ because we consider him wise and good is a dreadful blasphemy - it is, on the contrary, only the act of belief itself which can give us an insight into his goodness and wisdom. Certainly we must search for rational reasons which can substantiate our belief, our obedience to the religious command, but the crucial religious experience is that these reasons reveal themselves only to those who already believe - we find reasons attesting our belief because we already believe; we do not believe because we have found sufficient good reasons to believe. **'External' obedience to the Law is thus not submission to external pressure, to so-called non-ideological 'brute force', but obedience to the Command in so far as it is 'incomprehensible', not understood; in so far as it retains a 'traumatic', 'irrational' character: far from hiding its full authority, this traumatic, non-integrated character of the Law is a positive condition ofit. This is the fundamental feature of the psychoanalytic concept of the superego: an injunction which is experienced as traumatic, 'senseless' - that is, which · cannot be integrated into the symbolic universe of the subject**. **But for the Law to function 'normally', this traumatic fact that 'custom is the whole of equity for the sole reason that it is accepted' - the dependence of the Law on its process of enunciation or, to use a concept developed by Laclau and Mouffe, its radically contingent character - must be repressed into the unconscious, through the ideological, imaginary experience of the 'meaning' of the Law,** of its foundation in Justice, Truth (or, in a more modern way, functionality): It would therefore be a good thing for us to obey laws and customs because they are laws . . . But people are not amenable to this doctrine, and thus, believing that truth can be found and resides in laws and customs, they believe them and take their antiquity as a proof of their truth (and not just of their authority, without truth).'4 It is highly significant that we find exactly the same formulation in Kafka's Trial, at the end of the conversation between K. and the priest: 'I do not agree with that point of view,' said K., shaking his head, 'for if one accepts it, one must accept as true everything the door-keeper says. But you yourselfhave sufficiently proved how impossible it is to do that.' 'No,' said the priest, 'it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary.' 'A melancholy conclusion,' said K. 'It turns lying into a universal principle.'25 What is 'repressed' then, is not some obscure origin of the Law but the very fact that the Law is not to be accepted as true, only as necessary - the fact that its authonjy is without t1th.

#### Their fantasy is shown through the fetishization fear of existential crises. The affirmatives narratives of existential crisis act as an external arbiter justifying our actions by confirming for us we should fear and prevent extinction. They fail to recon with our internal view of extinction as a real and meaningful possibility, inevitably creating a politics only capable of passive criticism devoid of action – Zizek 09:

Zizek, Slavoj. [Slavoj Zizek is a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic. He is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, and a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His books include Living in the End Times, First as Tragedy, Then as Farce, In Defense of Lost Causes, four volumes of the Essential Zizek, and many more. Slavoj Žižek, the maverick philosopher, author of over 30 books, acclaimed as the “Elvis of cultural theory”, and today’s most controversial public intellectual. His work traverses the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, theology, history and political theory, taking in film, popular culture, literature and jokes—all to provide acute analyses of the complexities of contemporary ideology as well as a serious and sophisticated philosophy. His recent films The Pervert’s Guide to the Cinema and Žižek! reveal a theorist at the peak of his powers and a skilled communicator. Now Verso is making his classic titles, each of which stand as a core of his ever-expanding life’s work, available as new editions. Each is beautifully re-packaged, including new introductions from Žižek himself. Simply put, they are the essential texts for understanding Žižek’s thought and thus cornerstones of contemporary philosophy.] In defense of lost causes. Verso Books, 2009. // LHP BT Recut LHP PS

**Science and technology today no longer aim only at understanding and reproducing natural processes,** but at generating n ew forms of life that will surprise us; **the goal is no longer just to dominate nature** (the w a y it i s ) , **but to generate something new, greater, stronger than ordinary nature**, including ourselves — e x e m p l a r y here is the obsession with artificial intelligence, which aims at producing a brain more powerful than the human brain. **The dream that sustains the scientific-technological endeavor is to trigger a process with no return, a process that would exponentially reproduce itself and go on and on autonomously**. The notion of "second n a t u r e " is therefore today more pertinent than ever, in both its main meanings. First, literally, as the artificially g e n e r a t e d new nature: monsters of nature, deformed cows a n d trees, or—a more positive dream—genetically manipulated organisms, "enhanced" in the manner that suits us. Then, "second nature" in the more standard sense of the autonomization of the results of our own activity: t h e w a y our acts elude us in their consequences, the w a y t h e y generate a monster w i t h a life of i ts own. It i s thù horror at the unforeseen results of our own acts that causes shock and awe, not the power of n a t u r e over w h i c h w e have no control; it is thu horror that religion t r i e s to domesticate. What is n ew today is the short-circuit between these two senses of "second nature": "second n a t u r e " in the sense of objective Fate, of autonomlzed social process, is generating "second n a t u r e " in the sense of a r t i f i c i a l ly created nature, of natural monsters, namely, the process which threatens to run out of control is no longer just the social process of economic and political development, but new forms of natural processes themselves, from unpredictable nuclear catastrophes to global w a r m i n g and the unimaginable consequences of biogenetic manipulation. Can one even imagine what would be the unprecedented result of nanotechnological experiments: n ew life-forms reproducing themselves out of control in a cancerl i k e way, for example?^' Here is a standard description of this fear: Within fifty to a hundred y e a r s , a new class of organisms is Ukely to emerge. These organisms will be artificial in the sense that they will o r i g i n a l l y be designed by humans, tiowever, they will reproduce, and will "evolve" into something other than their original form; t h e y will be " a l i v e " under any reasonable definition of the word. [. . . ] [ T ] h e pace of evolutionary change will be extremely rapid. [. . . ] The impact on humanity and the biosphere could be enormous, larger than the industrial revolution, nuclear weapons, or environmental pollution. This fear also has its clear libidinal dimension: it is the fear of the asexual reproduction of Life, the fear of an "undead" life that is indestructible, constantly expanding, reproducing itself through self-division. And, as a l w a y s in the history of the last two millennia, the greatest master of exploiting this fear is the Catholic Church. Its predominant strategy today is that of t r y i n g to contarn the scientific real w i t h i n the confines of meaning —it is as an answer to the scientific real (materialized in biogenetic threats) that religion is finding its n ew ra'umi d'etre: Far from being effaced b y science, religion, and even the syndicate of religions, in the process of formation, is progressing every day. Lacan said that ecumenism w a s for the poor of spirit. There is a marvelous agreement on these questions between the secular a n d all the religious authorities, in w h i c h t h e y tell themselves t h e y should a g r e e somewhere in order to make echoes e q u a l l y marvelous, even s a y i n g that finally the secular is a religion l i k e the others. We see this because it is r e v e a l e d in effect that the discourse of science h a s p a r t l y connected with the death drive. Religion is planted in the position of unconditional defense of the living, of life in mankind, as guardian of life, making life an absolute. And that extends to the protection of human nature. [. . . ] This is [. . . ] w h a t gives a future to religion through meaning, namely by erecting barriers—to cloning, to the exploitation of human cells — a n d to Inscribe science in a tempered progress. We see a marvelous effort, a n ew youthful vigor of religion in its effort to flood the real with meanlng.^^ The Church's message of hope thus relies on a preexisting fear: it evokes and formulates the fear to which it then offers a solution of hope and falth.^-^ The Life that it promises in its defense of the "culture of life" is not a positive life, but a reactive life, a defense against death. W e are dealing IN DEFENSE OF LOST CAUSES 438 here with the latest version of the fear first formulated in M a r y S h e l l e y 's Frankeruitein. The dilemma faced by many interpreters of Frankeiwtein concerns the obvious parallel between Victor and God, on the one side, and the monster and Adam, on the other: in both cases, w e are deaHng with a single parent creating a male progeny in a non-sexual w a y ; in both cases, this is followed by the creation of a bride, a female partner. This parallel is c l e a r l y indicated in the novel's epigraph, Adam's complaint to God: Did I request thee. Maker, from my clay To mould Me man? Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me? {FaradLie Lost, X, 7 4 3 - 5) It is easy to note the problematic nature of this parallel: 11 Victor is associated with God, how can he also be the Promethean rebel against God (recall the novel's subtitle: ". . . or The Modern Prometheus")? The answer seems to be a simple one, spelled out b y S h e l l e y herself: Victor's sin is p r e c i s e l y that of presumption, ol "acting like God," engaging in an act of creation (of human life, the crown of the divine creation) w h i c h is and should remain the exclusive prerogative of God; if man tries to Imitate God and do something for w h i c h he l a c k s qualifications, the result can only be monstrous . . . There is, however, also a different (Chestertonian) reading: t h e r e is no problem here, Victor is "like God" precisely when he commits the ultimate criminal transgression and confronts the horror of its consequences, since God ut aLw the greatest Rebel—against himself, ultimately. The King of the universe i s t h e supreme criminal Anarchist. L i k e Victor, in creating man, God committed the supreme crime of aiming too high — of creating a c r e a t u r e "in h i s own i m a g e , " n ew spiritial life, p r e c i s e l y l i ke today's scientists w h o dream of creating an artificially intelligent living being; no wonder that his own creature escaped his control and turned against him. So what if the death of Christ (of himself) is the price God has to p a y for his crime**? It is precisely within the domain of ecology that one can d r aw the line that separates the politics of emancipatory terror from the politics of fear at its purest. By far the** predominant **version of ecology is the ecology of fear, fear of a catastrophe — human-made or natural—that may deeply perturb, destroy even, human civilization, fear that pushes us to plan** UNBEHAGEN IN DER NATUR 439 **measures to protect our safety**. **This fear and pessimism are as a rule fake**, as pointed out by Hans-Georg Gadamer: "**The pessimist is disingenuous because he is t r y i n g to trick himself with his own grumbhng. Precisely w h i l e acting the pessimist, he secretly hopes that everything will not turn out as bad as he fears**." **Does the same tension between the enunciated and the position of enunciation not characterize today's ecological pessimism; the more those who predict a catastrophe insist on it, the more they secretly hope the catastrophe will not occur?** The first thing that strikes the eye apropos this fear is the w a y it remains conditioned by ideological trends. Two decades ago, everyone, e s p e c i a l l y in Europe, was talking about Waßdterben, the dying of the forests; the topic w a s present on the covers of all popular w e e k l i e s —now it has almost disappeared. Although concerns about global warming explode from time to time and are gaining more and more scientific credibility, ecplogy as an organized socio-political movement has to a l a r g e degree disappeared. Furthermore, **ecology often lends itself to ideological mystifications**; as a pretext for New Age obscurantisms (praising pre-modern "paradigms," a n d so forth), **or for neo-colonialism** (First World complaints that the fast development of Third World countries like Brazil or China threatens us all —"by destroying the Amazon rainforests, the Brazilians a r e k i l l i n g the lungs of our Earth**"), or as an honorable cause for "liberal communists**" **( b u y green, r e c y c l e . . . as if t a k i n g ecology into account justifies capitalist exploitation). This ecology of fear has every chance of developing into the predominant form of ideology of global capitalism, a new opium for the masses replacing declining religion; it takes over the old religion's fundamental function, that of having an unquestionable authority which can impose limits. The lesson this ecology is constantly hammering a w ay at is our finitude: we a r e not Cartesian subjects extracted from reality, we are finite bemgs embedded in a biosphere which v a s t l y transcends our horizon. In our exploitation of natural resources, w e a r e borrowing from the future, so we should start treating our Earth with respect, as something that is ultimately Sacred, something that should not be totally unveiled, that should and will forever remain a Mystery, a power we should trust, not dominate.** While w e cannot gain full mastery over our biosphere, it is unfortunately in our power to derail it, to disturb its balance so that it will run amok, wiping us a w a y in the process. This is why, **although ecologists are all the time demanding that we radically change our way of life, underlying this demand is its opposite, a deep** IN DEFENSE OF LOST CAUSES 440 **distrust of change, of development, of progress: every radical change can have the unintended consequence of triggering a catastrophe. It is this distrust which makes ecology the ideal candidate for the hegemonic ideology, since it echoes the anti-totalitarian post-political distrust of large collective acts.** One of the most effective fictional versions of this distrust is Stephen Fry's Making Hutory, about a scientist traumatized by Hitler and the Nazi crimes who, in the 1950s, discovers a w a y to cross the time barrier and intervene in the past in a limited w a y . He decides to change the chemical composition of the stream from which the village of Hitler's parents was getting water, so that it renders women infertile; the experiment succeeds and Hitler is not born. However, when we switch into the alternate reality, the scientist discovers with horror what he has caused: instead of Hitler, a more intelligent upper-class high-ranking officer led the Nazis to victory, the Nazis win the war and kill many more J e w s than perished in the Holocaust, even obliterating the memory of their act. The scientist spends the rest ol his life t r y i n g to intervene a g a i n in the past in order to undo the results of his first intervention and to return us to the good old world with Hitler . . . Such distrust w a s given a n ew impetus by biogenetics, which is on the verge of a crucial breakthrough. Up until now, geneticists were confined to t i n k e r i n g and tweaking what nature has a l r e a d y produced—taking a gene from a bacterium, say, and inserting it into the chromosome of corn or pigs. What w e ' r e talking about is producing life that i s w h o l ly new — not in a n y w a y a genetic descendant of the primordial Mother Cell. The initial members of each newly created breed will have no ancestors at all. The genome itself of the organism will be artificially put together: first, individual biological b u i l d i n g blocks a r e to be fabricated; then, t h e y are to be combined in an entirely new synthetic self-replicating organism. Scientists designate this new life-form as "Life 2.0," and what is so unsettling about it is that "natural" life itself becomes thereby "Life 1.0" —it retroactively loses its spontaneous-natural character, becoming one in the series of synthetic projects. This is what the "end of nature" means: synthetic life is not just supplementing natural life, it turns natural life itself into a (confused, imperfect) species of synthetic life. UNBEHAGEN IN DER NATUR 441 The prospects are, of course, breathtaking: from microorganisms which detect cancer cells and eliminate them, to whole "factories" which transform solar e n e r g y into usable fuel, fiowever, the main limitation of this endeavor is no less obvious: the DNA of e x i s t i ng natural organisms is " a mess of overlapping segments and j u n k that has no purpose scientists can fathom," so when geneticists t i n k e r w i t h this mess, t h e y cannot ever be sure not only of the outcome, but also of how, exactly, this outcome was generated—the logical conclusion is thus to try to "build new biological systems; systems that are easier to understand because we made them that w a y . " f i o w e v e r , this project will w o r k only if w e fully accept the thesis that "at least 90 percent of the human genome is 'junk DNA' that has no clear function." (The main function envisaged by scientists is that the j u n k serves as a g u a r a n t e e against the danger of copying mistakes, a kind of back-up copy.) Only in this case w e can expect a project of g e t t i ng rid of the repetitious " j u n k " a n d g e n e r a t i n g the organism only from its " p u r e " genetic formula to work. W h a t if, however, the " j u n k " does p l a y a crucial role, unknown to u s because we a r e unable to g r a s p all the higher-level complexity of the interaction of genes which can only account for how, out of a limited (finite) set of elements, an "infinite" (self-relating) organic structure arises as an "emergent prope r t y "? Those who are opposed most ferociously to this prospect are religious leaders and environmentalists — for both, there is something of a transgression, of entering a prohibited domain, in this i d e a of creating a new form of life from scratch, from the zero-point. And this brings us back to the notion of ecology as the new opium of the masses; the underlying message is a g a i n a deeply conservative one — a n y change can only be a change for the worse: Behind much of the resistance to the notion of synthetic life is the intuition that nature (or God) created the best of possible worlds. Charles Darwin believed that the myriad designs of nature's creations are perfectly honed to do whatever t h e y a r e meant to do —^be it animals that see, hear, sing, swim or fly, or plants that feed on the sun's rays, exuding bright floral colours to attract pollinators.' This reference to Darwin Is deeply misleading: the ultimate lesson of Darwinism is the exact opposite, namely that nature tinkers and improvises, with great losses and catastrophes accompanying e v e r ) ' limited IN DEFENSE OF LOST CAUSES 442 success — is the fact that 90 percent of the human genome is "junk DNA" w i t h no clear function not the ultimate proof? **Consequently, the first lesson to be drawn is** the one r e p e a t e d l y made b y Stephen J a y Gould: **the utter contingency of our existence. There is no Evolution: catastrophes, broken equilibria, a r e part of natural history; at numerous points in the past, life could have taken a turn in an entirely different direction**. **The main source of our energy (oil) is the result of a past cataclysm of unimaginable dimensions. Along these lines, "terror" means accepting the fact of the utter groundlessness of our existence: t h e r e is no firm foundation, place of retreat, on which one can safely count. It means fully accepting that "nature does not exist , " in other words, fully consummating the gap that s e p a r a t e s the life-world notion of n a t u r e and the scientific notion of n a t u r a l reality**: " n a t u r e " ijua the domain of b a l a n c e d reproduction, of organic deployment into which humanity' intervenes with its hubris, b r u t a l l y throwing its circular motion off the rails, is man's fantasy; nature is already in itself "second nature," its balance is always secondary, an attempt to bring into existence a "habit" that would restore some order after catastrophic interruptions.' The lesson to be fully endorsed is thus that of an environmental scientist who comes to the conclusion that, w h i l e one cannot be sure what the ultimate result of humanity's interventions in the geosphere will be, one thing is sure: **if humanity were to a b r u p t l y stop its immense industrial a c t i v i t y and let nature on Earth take its balanced course, the result would be a total breakdown, an unimaginable catastrophe.** "Nature" on Earth is a l r e a dy so "adapted" to human interventions, human "pollution " is a l r e a d y so completely included in the shaky and fragile balance of "natural " reproduction on Earth, that its cessation would cause a catastrophic imbalance. **This is what it means to say that humanity has nowhere to retreat to; not only is there no "big Other" (self-contained symbolic order as the ultimate guarantee of M e a n i n g ) ; there is also no Nature qua balanced order of self-reproduction whose homeostasis is disturbed, nudged off course, by unbalanced human interventions. Not only is the big Other "barred," but Nature too is barred**. **One should thus become aware not only of the limitation of the ideology of progress, but also of the limitation of the Benjaminian notion of the revolution as applying the emergency b r a k e on the r u n a w a y t r a in of progress: it is too late for that too.** In his Reflectwnj at the Edge of Afkja, Pall Skulason reports how he was UNBEHAGEN IN DER NATUR 443 affected by Askja, a volcanic lake and valley in the middle of Iceland, surrounded by snow-covered mountains: Askja is the symbol of objective reality, independent of all thought, belief and expression, independent of human existence. It is a unique natural system, w i t h i n which mountains, lakes a n d s k y converge in a volcanic crater. Askja, in short, symbolizes the earth itself; it is the earth as it w a s , is, and will be, tor as long as this planet continues to orbit in space, whatever w e do and whether or not w e a r e here on this earth. [. . . ] Coming to Askja is l i k e coming to the earth itself for the first time; finding one's earthly grounding.^^ Gilles Deleuze often played with the motif of how, in becoming posthuman, we should learn to practice " a perception as it w a s before men (or after) [. . . ] r e l e a s e d from their human coordinates";^^ Skulason seems to be describing just such an experience, the experience of subtracting oneself from the immediate immersion into the surrounding world of objects w h i c h are " r e a d y - a t - h a n d , " moments of our engaged relationship with reality—or is he? Let us take a closer look at what kind of experience he is rendering: the world suddenly strikes u s in such a w a y that r e a l i t y presents itself as a seamless whole. The question that then arises concerns the world itself a n d the r e a l i t y that it orders into a totality. Is the world r e a l l y a unified totality? Isn't r e a l i t y j u s t an infinitely v a r i e g a t e d manifold of p a r t i c u l a r phenomena? One should be Hegelian here: what if this v e r y experience of r e a l i t y a s a seamless Whole is a violent imposition of ours, something we "project onto it" (to use this old inappropriate term) in order to avoid d i r e c t ly confronting the totally meaningless "infinitely v a r i e g a t e d manifold of p a r t i c u l a r phenomena" (what Alain Badiou calls the primordial multip l i c i ty of B e i n g ) ? Should w e not apply here the fundamental lesson of Kant's transcendental idealism: the world as a Whole is not a Thing-ini t s e l f it is merely a regulative Idea of our mind, something our mind imposes on the raw multitude of sensations in order to be able to experience it as a well-ordered meaningful Whole? The paradox is that the v e r y In-itself of Nature as a Whole independent of us is the result of our (subjective) "synthetic a c t i v i t y " — d o Skulason's own words, if we IN DEFENSE OF LOST CAUSES 444 read tKem closely (i.e., l i t e r a l l y ) , not a l r e a d y point in this direction? "Askja is used in this text as the symbol of a unique and important experience of the world and its inhabitants. There are numerous other symbols which men use to t a lk about the things that matter most."^\*" So, e x a c t l y as is the case with the Kantian Sublime, the unfathomable presence of r aw Nature-in-itself is reduced to a material pretext (replacable w i t h others) for "a unique and important experience," W h y is this experience necessary? To live, to be able to exist, the mind must connect itself w i t h some kind of order. It must apprehend r e a l i t y a s an independent whole [. . . ] and must bind itself in a stable fashion to certain features of what we call reality. It cannot bind itself to the ordinary world of everyday experience, except by t a k i n g it on faith that r e a l i t y forms an objective whole, a whole which exists independently of the mind. The mind lives, and we live, in a relationship of faith with r e a l i t y itself. This relationship is l i k e w i s e one of confidence in a detached reality, a r e a l i ty which is different and other than the mind. We live and exist in this relationship of confidence, which i s a l w a y s b y i t s nature uncertain and insecure. [. . . ] [ T ] h e relationship of confidence [. . . ] is originally, a nd truly, always a relationship with reality as a natural totality: as Nature.^^ One should note here the refined analysis of the tension between the inhabitable and the uninhabitable: in order to inhabit a small part of r e a l i t y that appears within our horizon of meaning, we have to presuppose that Realily-in-itself, "different and other than the mind," which sustains our w o r l d is part of r e a l i t y a s an ordered and seamless Whole. In short, w e have to have faith and confidence in Reality: nature-in-itself is not merely a meaningless composite of multiples, it is Nature. What, however, if t h i s relationship of faith in Nature, in the primordial harmony between mind and reality, is the most elementary form of idealism, of reliance on the big Other? What if the true materialist position starts (and, in a w a y , e n d s ) w i t h the acceptance of the In-itself a s a meaningless chaotic manifold? One is tempted here to turn a g a i n to Iceland's unique natural landscape: the magnificent misty-green coastal plain in the south, scattered with large rocks covered w i t h wet green-brown moss, cannot but appear as nature run amok, full of pathological cancerous protuberances— what if this is much closer to "nature-in-itself" than the sublime UNBEHAGEN IN DER NATUR images of seamless Wholes? **Indeed, what we need is an ecology without nature: the ultimate obstacle to protecting nature is the very notion of nature we r e l y on.' The true source of our problems is not "the most significant event to affect Western culture during recent centuries," n a m e l y the "breakdown of the relationship between man and nature,"**'^'^ the retreat of the relationship of trust**. On the contrary: this very "relationship of faith with r e a l i t y itself" is the main obstacle that prevents us from confronting the ecological crisis at its most radical.** That is to say, w i t h regard to the prospects of an ecological catastrophe, it is too easy to attribute our disbelief in it to the impregnation of our minds by scientific Ideology, which leads us to dismiss the sane concerns of our common reason, namely, the gut sense which tells us that something is fundamentally wrong with the scientific-technological attitude. **The problem** is much deeper. It **resides in the unreliability of our common sense itself which, habituated as it is to our ordinary life-world, finds it difficult to r e a l ly accept that the flow of e v e r y d a y reality can be perturbed. Our attitude here is that of the fetishistic split: "I know v e r y well (that global warming is a threat to the entire h u m a n i t y ) , but nonetheless . . . (I cannot really believe it ) .** **It is enough to see the natural world to which my mind is connected: green grass a n d trees, the sighing of the breeze, the rising of the sun . . . c a n one r e a l l y imagine that all t h i s will be d i s t u r b e d** ? You talk about the ozone hole — but no matter how much I look rnto the sky, I don't see it —all I see is the sky, blue or g r e y !" **The problem is t h u s that w e can r e l y neither on the scientific mind nor on our common sense—they both m u t u a l l y reinforce each other's blindness. The scientific mind advocates a cold objective appraisal of dangers and risks involved where no such appraisal is r e a l l y possible, while common sense finds it hard to accept that a catastrophe can r e a l l y occur. The difficult ethical t a s k is thus to " u n - l e a r n " the most basic coordinates of our immersion into our life-world: what u s u a l l y sein^ed a s the recourse to Wisdom (basic trust in the background coordinates of our world) is now the source of danger. We should r e a l l y " g r ow u p " and learn to cut this ultimate umbilical cord to our life-sphere. The problem with the science-and-technology attitude is not its detachment from our life-world, but the abstract character of this detachment which compels the scienceand- technology attitude to combine itself w i t h the worst elements of our life-world immersion. Scientists perceive themselves as rational, able to appraise potential risks objectively; for them, the only unpredictable**- 445 IN DEFENSE OF LOST CAUSES 446 **irrational elements a r e the panic reactions of the uneducated masses; w i th o r d m a i y people, a small and controllable risk can spread and trigger global panic, since t h e y project onto the situation their disavowed fears and fantasies. What scientists are unable to perceive is the "irrational," inadequate, nature of their own "cold and distanced" appraisal**. Contemporary science serves two properly ideological needs, "for hope and censorship," which w e r e t r a d i t i o n a l l y taken care of by religion: science alone has the power to silence heretics. Today it is the only institution that can c l a im authority. Like the Church in the past, it has the power to destroy, or marginalize, independent thinkers. [. . . ] From the standpoint of anyone who values freedom of thought, this may be unfortunate, but it is undoubtedly the chief source of science's appeal. **For us, science is a refuge from uncertainties, promising — and in some measure delivering—-the miracle of freedom from thought**, while churches have become sanctuaries for doubt. Indeed, as Nietzsche put it more than a c e n t u r y ago: "Oh, how much is today hidden by science! Oh, how much it is expected to hide!'"^' However, we are not talking here about science as such, so the idea of science sustaining "freedom from thought" is not a variation on Heidegger's notion that "science doesn't think**." We are talking about the w a y science functions as a social force, as an ideological institution: at this level, its function is to provide certainty, to be a point of reference on which one can rely, and to provide hope (new technological inventions will help us against diseases, a n d so o n ) . In this dimension, science is — in Lacanian terms — u n i v e r s i t y discourse at its purest**, S2 (knowledge) whose "truth" is S i (Master-Slgnifier, p o w e r ) . **The paradox effectively is that, today, science provides the security w h i c h w a s once guaranteed by religion**, and, in a curious inversion, religion is one of the possible places from which one can develop critical doubts about contemporary society (one of the "sites of r e s i s t a n c e , " a s it w e r e ). Louis Dumont'\*^ noted the paradox of cognitivist reduction-naturalization: man finally master of himself, recreating his own genome —but who is the agent h e r e ? The blind circuit of neurons? Here the tension between the enunciated content and the position of enunciation (what Foucault referred to a s the "transcendental-empirical doublet") is pushed to an extreme point: the more the enunciated content is limited to an objective material process, the more the position of enunciation is reduced to a pure cogita, the void of an empty subject. This brings u s to the problem of free will. Compatibilists such as Daniel Dennett"\*^ have an elegant solution to the incompatibilists' complaints about determinism: when incompatibilists complain that our freedom cannot be combined with the fact that all our acts are part of the great chain of natural determinism, they secretly make an u n w a r r a n t e d ontological assumption. First, t h e y assume that w e (the Self, the free a g e n t ) somehow stand outoide reality, and then go on to complain how t h e y feel oppressed b y the notion that r e a l i t y with its determinism controls them totally. This is what is wrong with the notion of us being "imprisoned" b y the chains of natural determinism: we t h e r e b y obfuscate the fact that w e a r e o f reality, that the (possible, local) conflict between our "free" striving and external r e a l i t y resisting it is a conflict inherent to r e a l i t y itself. That is to say, there is nothing "oppressive" or "constraining" about the fact that our innermost strivings a r e (pre)determined: when we feel thwarted in our freedom by the constraining pressure of external reality, there must be something in us, some desires, strivings, w h i c h are thus thwarted, and where should these strivings come from if not from this same r e a l i t y ? Our "free w i l l " does not in some mysterious w a y "disturb the natural course of t h i n g s , " it IS part and parcel of this course. For us to be "truly" and " r a d i c a l l y " free, this would entail there being no positive content that we want to impose as our free act —if w e want nothing "external" and p a r t i c u l a r / g i v e n to determine our behavior, then "this would involve being free of every part of ourselves."'''' W h e n a determinist claims that our free choice is "determined," this does not mean that our free will is somehow constrained, that w e are forced to act agaitut our free will^— what is "determined" is t h e v e r y t h i ng that w e want to do "freely," that is, without being thwarted by external obstacles.

#### The alternative is to reject the ‘big other’ and embrace the act. People run from responsibility by casting their decisions onto external metrics they claim to have no control over or relation to, but this historically back-fires and makes achieving any change impossible. We must accept ourselves as decision-makers who make the final call on what is important to us when we act – Zizek 12:

Zizek, Slavoj. [Slavoj Zizek is a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic. He is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, and a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His books include Living in the End Times, First as Tragedy, Then as Farce, In Defense of Lost Causes, four volumes of the Essential Zizek, and many more. Slavoj Žižek, the maverick philosopher, author of over 30 books, acclaimed as the “Elvis of cultural theory”, and today’s most controversial public intellectual. His work traverses the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, theology, history and political theory, taking in film, popular culture, literature and jokes—all to provide acute analyses of the complexities of contemporary ideology as well as a serious and sophisticated philosophy. His recent films The Pervert’s Guide to the Cinema and Žižek! reveal a theorist at the peak of his powers and a skilled communicator. Now Verso is making his classic titles, each of which stand as a core of his ever-expanding life’s work, available as new editions. Each is beautifully re-packaged, including new introductions from Žižek himself. Simply put, they are the essential texts for understanding Žižek’s thought and thus cornerstones of contemporary philosophy.] Less than nothing: Hegel and the shadow of dialectical materialism. Verso Books, 2012.

**It is only against this background of the fall of the big Other that one can properly grasp Lacan's famous formulation of the basic ethical axiom implied by psychoanalysis: It is because we know better than those who went before how to recognize the nature of desire, which is at the heart of our experience, that a reconsideration of ethics is possible, that a form of ethical judgment is possible, of a kind that gives this question the force of a Last Judgment: Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you**?;; **This is Lacan's maxim of the ethics of psychoanalysis: "the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire:** , ,6 This maxim, simple and clear as it appears, becomes elusive the moment one tries to specify its meaning. **For Lacan, properly ethical acts are rare: they occur like "miracles" which interrupt the ordinary run of things; they do not "express" the entire "personality" of the subject, but function as a break in the continuity of "personal identity**:' **Take the case of Maximilian Kolbe**, which confronts us with a weird but crucial ethical dilemma. **Kolbe was a Polish Franciscan monk who, during the 1920S and 1930S**, **was involved in writing and organizing mass propaganda for the Catholic Church, with a clear anti-Semitic** and anti-Masonic **edge**. **With the outbreak of World War II, he helped people threatened by the Nazis, among them many Jews, and for this he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz.** **When, in the summer of '94', after the escape of a prisoner, the Germans selected ten others to be starved to death as a punishment, one of them broke down in tears, claiming he had a family which needed him; Kolbe voluntarily offered himself in the man's stead and died three weeks later of starvation.** For this, he was later beatified by Pope John Paul II. **How to fit these two aspects of Kolbe's life together? Most commentators take one of the many easy ways out. Some simply try to deny or minimize Kolbe's anti-Semitism** (even dismissing the rumors about it as a KGB plot). **Some insist on the scholastic distinction between anti-Semitism proper and anti-Judaism**-a "mere" prejudice against Jews, not a murderous hatred of them-claiming that Kolbe's error was of the second, minor sort. **Others interpret his helping the Jews and final sacrifice as acts of repentance: having witnessed the suffering of the Jews under the Nazi occupation, Kolbe changed his view and tried to assuage his guilt**. **Still others take the risky step of minimizing not his anti-Semitism, but his final self-sacrificial gesture, pointing out that the man he saved was not a Jew but a Catholic Pole**. **All these versions are desperate attempts to avoid the embarrassing fact that the two attitudes (and activities) can easily coexist: a person who is anti-Semitic can also be capable of a dignified act of ethical self-sacrifice􀄉and, even more embarrassingly, the (explicit) motivation for Kolbe's noble self-sacrifice may well have been the very conservative-Catholic ideology \,vhich had sustained his anti-Semitism.** **An ethical act is one that does not comprise or express the entire person, but is a moment of grace, a "miracle" which can occur also in a non-virtuous individua**l. **This is why such acts are diffkult to imagine, and why, when they do OCCllr, one often tends to invent a narrative which normalizes them.** Recall the "Assassins;' the Ismaili sect, part of the Shia orientation of Islam, that fascinated the Western gaze from the twelfth century on: according to myth they were ruthless murderers who obeyed their master's orders unconditionally, without regard for their own lives; after they had killed their target (always in public and with a dagger), they did not run away, but waited to be apprehended and punished. They were able to perform these ruthless acts because they were under the influence of hashish. In the mysterious mountain fortress of Alamut in northern Iran, they were manipulated by their leader, who first drugged them and then, while they were comatose, moved them to a secluded garden decked out with all the features of the Muslim paradise, including beautiful girls ready for sex. On being returned to ordinary life, they were convinced they had experienced a heavenly episode-so when their leader told them that, if they succeeded in assassinating the designated target, they would return to paradise, they willingly complied. A closer historical study, however, qUickly dispels the myth: the name hashishi is local to Syria only, where it functions as a general term of popular abuse; it was applied to "Assassins" as "an expression of contempt for the wild beliefs and extravagant behaviour of the sectaries-a derisive comment on their conduct:'57 The standard explanation (they were called "assassins" because they used hashish to ready themselves for their ruthless acts) has thus to be inverted: "it was the name that gave rise to the story, rather than the reverse . . . For Western observers in particular, such stories may also have served to provide a rational explanation for behavior that was otherwise totally inexplicable:',s The story about the recreated paradise was thus a fantasy concocted to rationalize the traumatically "incomprehensible" fact that the Ismaiii followers were ready to fUllction as perfect killing machines, willing to sacrifke their own lives in the accomplishment of the task-a fantasy, in short, that enabled Westerners to re-translate a pure "ethical" act into an act determined "pathologically" (in the Kantian sense of the term). How, then, does such an ethics stand with regard to the panoply of today's ethical options? It seems to fit three of its main versions: liberal hedonism, immoralism, and "Western Buddhism:'" Let us run through these positions one by one. The first thing to state categorically is that Lacanian ethics is not an ethics of hedonism: whatever "do not compromise your desire" means, it does not mean the unrestrained rule of what Freud called "the pleasure principle," the functioning of the psychic apparatus that aims at achieving pleasure. For Lacan, hedonism is in fact the model of postponing desire on behalf of "realistic compromises": it is not only that, in order to attain the greatest amount of pleasure, I have to calculate and economize, sacrificing short-term pleasures for more intense longterm ones; what is even more important is that jouissance hurts. So, first, there is no break between the pleasure principle and its counterpart, the "reality principle": the latter (compelling us to take into account the limitations that thwart our direct access to pleasure) is an inherent prolongation of the former. Second, even (Western) Buddhism is not immune to the lures of the pleasure principle; the Dalai Lama himself wrote: "The purpose of life is to be happy" -not true for psychoanalysis, one should add." It was Nietzsche who observed that "human beings do not desire happiness, only the Englishmen desire happiness" -today's globalized hedonism is thus merely the obverse of the fact that, in the conditions of global capitalism, we are ideologically "all Englishmen" (or, rather, AngloSaxon Americans . . . ). So what is wrong with the rule of the pleasure principle? In Kant's description, ethical duty functions like a foreign intruder that disturbs the subject's homeostatic balance, its unbearable pressure forcing the subject to act "beyond the pleasure principle:' ignoring the pursuit of pleasures. For Lacan, exactly the same description holds for desire, which is why enjoyment is not something that comes naturally to the subject, as a realization of his or her inner potential, but is the content of a traumatic superegoic injunction. If hedonism is to be rejected, is Lacanian ethics then a version of the heroic immoralist ethics, enjoining us to remain faithful to ourselves and persist on our chosen way beyond good and evil? Think of don Giovanni in the last act of Mozart's opera, when the Stone Guest confronts him with a choice: he is near death, but ifhe repents of his sins, he can still be redeemed; if, however, he does not renounce his sinful life, he will burn in hell forever. Don Giovanni heroically refuses to repent, although well aware that he has nothing to gain, except eternal suffering, for his persistence. Why does he do it? Obviously not for any profit or promise of pleasure to come. The only explanation is his utmost fidelity to the dissolute life he has chosen. This is a dear case of hnmoral ethics: don Giovanni's life vvas undoubtedly ilnmoral; however, as his fidelity to himself proves, he was immoral not for pleasure or profit, but out of principle, ading the way he did in accordance with a fundamental choice. Or, to take a feminine example also frorn opera: George Bizet's Carmen. Cannen is, of course, irnn10ral (ruthlessly promiscuous, ruining men's lives, destroying families), but nonetheless thoroughly ethical (faithful to her chosen path to the end, even when this means certain death) Along these lines, Lee Edelman has developed the notion of homosexuality as involving an ethics of "now;' of unconditional fidelity to jouissance, of following the death drive by totally ignoring any reference to the future or engagement with the practical complex of worldly afhirs. Homosexuality thus stands for the thorough assumption of the negativity of the death drive, of withdrawing from reality into the real of the "night of the world:' Along these lines, Edelman opposes the radical ethics of homosexuality to the predominant obsession with posterity (i.e., children) : children are the "pathological" moment which binds us to pragmatic considerations and thus compels us to betray the radical ethics of jouissance.6t (Incidentally, does this line of thought􀄉the idea that homosexuality at its most fundamental involves the rejection of children-not justify those who argue that gay couples should not be allowed to adopt children 1) The figure of an innocent and helpless child is the ultimate ethical trap, the emblem-fetish of betraying the ethics of jouissance. Friedrich Nietzsche (a great admirer of Carmen) was the great philosopher of immoral ethics, and we should always remember that the title of Nietzsche's lnasterpiece is "genealogy of morals;' not "of ethics": the two are not the same. Morality is concerned with the symmetry of my relations to other humans; its zero-level rule is "do not do to me what you do not want Ine to do to yoU:'6Z Ethics, in contrast, deals with my consistency in relation to myself, my fidelity to my own desire. On the back flyleaf of the 1939 edition of Lenin's Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, Stalin made the following note in red pencil: 1) Weakness 2) Idleness 3) Stupidity These are the only things that can be called vices. Everything else, in the absence of the aforementioned, is undoubtedly virtue. NB! If a man is 1) strong (spiritually), 2) active, 3) clever (or capable), then he is good, regardless of any other "vices"! ,) plus 3) make 2)." This is as concise as ever a formulation of immoral ethics; in contrast, a weakling who obeys moral rules and worries about his guilt stands for unethical morality, the target of Nietzsche's critique of resentment. It is a supreme irony (and one of the greatest cases of poetic justice) that, among American writers, the one who provided the most precise formulation of the same immoral ethics was none other than the rabidly anti-Communist Russian emigrant Ayn Rand, in her first (still moderate) US success, the play Night of January 16th. Although written in a traditional realist mode, this courtroom (melo )drama engages its spectators in a very contemporary, almost Brechtian, manner: at the beginning, the twelve jury members are randomly selected from among the theater audience; they are seated on the stage and, at the play's end, they briefly withdraw before returning to deliver the verdict of guilty or not guilty-Rand proVided different final lines depending on which it was. The decision they have to make is not only about the murder of Bjorn Faulkner, a ruthless Swedish tycoon: did Karen Andre, his devoted mistress and secretary, do it or not? It is also about two opposed ethics-to quote the play itself: if you value a strength that is its own motor, an audacity that is its own law, a spirit that is its own vindication-if you are able to admire a man who, no matter what mistakes he may have made in form, had never betrayed his essence: his selfesteem- if, deep in your hearts, you've felt a longing for greatness and for a sense of life beyond the lives around you, if you have known a hunger which gray timidity can't satisfy . . . 64 In short, if you advocate immoral ethics, you will find Karen not guilty; if, however, you believe in social respectability, in a life of service, duty, and unselfishness, etc., then you will flnd Karen guilty. **There is, however, a limit to tbis Stalinist immoral ethics: not that it is too immoral, but that it is secretly too moral, still relying on a figure of the big Other. In what is arguably the most intelligent legitimization of Stalinist terror, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's Humanism and Terror Ii'om 1946, the terror is justified as a kind of wager on the h,future**, almost in the mode of Pascal: **if the final result of today's horror turns out to be a bright communist future, then this outcome will retroactively redeem the terrible things a revolutionary has to do today.** Along similar lines, even some Stalinists themselves-when forced to admit (mostly in private) that many of the victims of the purges were innocent, that they were accused and killed because "the Party needed their blood to fortify its unity"imagined a future moment of final victory when all the victims would be given their due, and their innocence and sacrifice for the Cause would be recognized. **This is what Lacan, in his seminar on Ethics, refers to as the "perspective of the Last Judgment;' a perspective even more clearly discernible in two key terms of the Stalinist discourse, "objective guilt" and "objective meaning": while you can be an honest individual who acts with the most sincere intentions, you are nonetheless "objectively guilty" if your acts serve reactionary forces-and it is, of course, the Party that decides what your acts "objectively mean."** Here, again, we get not only the perspective of the Last Judgment (from which the "objective meaning" of your acts is formulated), but also the agent in the present who already has the unique ability to jndge today's events and acts from this perspective.65 The name of Raskolnikov (the hero of Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment) evokes a split ( raskol); Raskolnikov is "the split one"bnt split between what and what? The standard answer is that he is "torn between the 'Napoleonic idea; the notion that all is permitted to a strong person, and the 'Russian idea' of selfless devotion to humanity"66-however, this version misses the properly "totalitarian" coincidence of the two ideas: it is my very selfless devotion to humanity, my awareness that I am an instrument of Humanity, which justifies my claim that all is permitted to me. The paradox is thus that what Raskolnikov lacks is the split itself, the distance between the two ideas, the "Napoleonic" and the "Russian:' **We can see now why Lacan's motto "i/ ny a pas de grand Autre" (there is no big Other) takes us to the very core of the ethical problematic: what it excludes is precisely this "perspective of the Last Judgment:' the idea that somewhereeven if as a thoroughly virtual reference point, even if we concede that we can never occupy its place and pass the actual judgment-there must be a standard which would allow us to take the measure of our acts and pronounce on their "true meaning:' their true ethical status.** Even Derrida's notion of "deconstruction as justice" seems to rely on a utopian hope which sustains the specter of "infinite justice:' forever postponed, always to come, but nonetheless here as the ultimate horizon of our activity. **The harshness of Lacanian ethics lies in its demand that we thoroughly relinquish this reference to the big Other-and its further wager is that not only does this renunciation not plunge us into ethical insecurity or relativism (or even sap the very fundamentals of ethical activity), but that renouncing the guarantee of some big Other is the very condition of a truly autonomous ethics**. Recall that the exemplary dream Freud used to illustrate his procedure of dream analysis was a dream about responsibility (Freud's own responsibility for the failure of his treatment of Irma)-this fact alone indicates that responsibility is a crucial Freudian notion. But how are we to conceive of this responsibility? How are we to avoid the common misperception that the basic ethical message of psychoanalysis is, precisely, that we should relieve ourselves of responsibility and instead place the blame on the Other ("since the Unconscious is the discourse of the Other, I am not responsible for its formations, it is the big Other who speaks through me, I am merely its instrument") ? **Lacan himself pointed the way out of this deadlock by referring to Kant's philosophy as the crucial antecedent of psychoanalytic ethics.**

#### The role of the judge is to be an analyst—vote neg to prefer not to adjudicate the aff in terms of their obsession with the last judgment, and their reintrenchment of ideology. The analysis is enough---the fantasy will reveal itself as long as we continue asking questions to expose their concealment of the lack---in other words, it’s your job to confuse and frustrate them via a refusal to partake in their politics – Dean 06:

Dean 6 Jodi, Prof of Political Science at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 2006, Zizek’s Politics. Xviii-xx Recut LHP PS

Žižek emphasizes that Lacan conceptualized this excessive place, this place without guarantees, in his formula for “the discourse of the analyst” (which I set out in Chapter Two). In psychoanalysis, the analyst just sits there, asking questionsfrom time to time. She is some kind of object or cipher onto which the analysand transfers love, desire, aggression, and knowledge. The analysand, in other words, proceeds through analysis by positing the analyst as someone who knows exactly what is wrong with him and exactly what he should do to get rid of his symptom and get better. But, really, the analyst does not know. Moreover, the analyst steadfastly refuses to provide the analysand with any answers whatsoever. No ideals, no moral certainty, no goals, no choices. Nothing. This is what makes the analyst so traumatic, Žižek explains, the fact that she refuses to establish a law or set a limit, that she does not function as some kind of new master.7 Analysis is over when the analysand accepts that the analyst does not know, that there is not any secret meaning or explanation, and then takes responsibility for getting on with his life. The challenge for the analysand, then, is freedom, autonomously determining his own limits, directly assuming his own enjoyment. So, again, the position of the analyst is in this excessive place as an object through which the analysand works through the analytical process. Why is the analyst necessary in the first place? If she is not going to tell the analysand what to do, how he should be living, then why does he not save his money, skip the whole process, and figure out things for himself? There are two basic answers. First, the analysand is not self-transparent. He is a stranger to himself, a decentered agent “struggling with a foreign kernel.”8 What is more likely than self-understanding, is self-misunderstanding, that is, one’s fundamental misperception of one’s own condition. Becoming aware of this misperception, grappling with it, is the work of analysis. Accordingly, second, the analyst is that external agent or position that gives a new form to our activity. Saying things out loud, presenting them to another, and confronting them in front of this external position concretizes and arranges our thoughts and activities in a different way, a way that is more difficult to escape or avoid. The analyst then provides a form through which we acquire a perspective on and a relation to our selves. Paul’s Christian collectives and Lenin’s revolutionary Party are, for Žižek, similarly formal arrangements, forms “for a new type of knowledge linked to a collective political subject.”9 Each provides an external perspective on our activities, a way to concretize and organize our spontaneous experiences. More strongly put, a political Party is necessary precisely because politics is not given; it does not arise naturally or organically out of the multiplicity of immanent flows and affects but has to be produced, arranged, and constructed out of these flows in light of something larger. In my view, when Žižek draws on popular culture and inserts himself into this culture, he is taking the position of an object of enjoyment, an excessive object that cannot easily be recuperated or assimilated. This excessive position is that of the analyst as well as that of the Party. Reading Žižek as occupying the position of the analyst tells us that it is wrong to expect Žižek to tell us what to do, to provide an ultimate solution or direction through which to solve all the world’s problems. The analyst does not provide the analysand with ideals and goals; instead, he occupies the place of an object in relation to which we work these out for ourselves. In adopting the position of the analyst, Žižek is also practicing what he refers to as “Bartleby politics,” a politics rooted in a kind of refusal wherein the subject turns itself into a disruptive (of our peace of mind!) violently passive object who says, “I would prefer not to.”10 Thus, to my mind, becoming preoccupied with Žižek’s style is like becoming preoccupied with what one’s analyst is wearing. Why such a preoccupation? How is this preoccupation enabling us to avoid confronting the truth of our desire, our own investments in enjoyment? How is complaining that Žižek (or the analyst) will not tell us what to do a way that we avoid trying to figure this out for ourselves?11 Reading Žižek in terms of an excessive object also means seeing his position as analogous to the formal position of the Party. Here it tells us that rather than a set of answers or dictates, Žižek is providing an intervention that cuts through the multiplicity of affects and experiences in which we find ourselves and organizes them from a specific perspective. As we shall see, for Žižek, this perspective is anchored in class struggle as the fundamental antagonism rupturing and constituting the social. So again, he does not give us an answer; he does not know what we should do, but his thought provides an external point in relation to which we can organize, consider, and formalize our experiences as ideological subjects.