

## Replacement Theory would not exist in Communism

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**Abstract:** Often cited quotation from the Communist Manifesto that capitalism can have an anti-racist, anti-sexist bourgeoisie is the starting point of this analysis. Deploying Žižek's work on the "rotary motion" in the Indivisible Remainder, along with aspects of Marx's analysis of Ideology in the German Ideology to give readers a deeper analysis of Trump's exploitation of white voter's 'new racism as the fear of the 'theft of enjoyment' pinned on the Other' who either threatens to snatch from "us" the treasure of our 'way of life', which conceals a deeper resentment which exploded on January 6th, and circulates through the back corners of the internet in white supremacist chatrooms. While these reports have been widely covered in mainstream news sources, a psychoanalytical treatment of "Replacement Theory" through Žižek's work (alongside a deeper reading of Marx, which would take much further work beyond the scope of this paper) reveals that the ideology behind so-called "Replacement Theory" is grounded in a metaphysics of scarcity, which would not exist in a truly communist society of automatic production, plenitude, and common property rights.

**Keywords:** Žižek, Marx, Replacement Theory, White Supremacy, Donald Trump

Firstly, I am not talking about your Father's (boomer era) communism of Stalin, Mao, and Fidel Castro. As often cited by Žižek, Marx and Engels duly noted that capitalism could create an anti-racist, anti-sexist bourgeoisie. Racism and Sexism pose no true threat to the interests of the dominant class. If there are still structures of private property that foster the accumulation of wealth into the hands of a few people, of course there will be conflict over those scarce positions at the top of the wealth-pyramid-scheme. Hence, white men being forced to compete with the "diversified" bourgeoisie poses a clash of interests. They will have to fight for maintaining a position - if and only if the capitalist property relations are maintained. In the commons, there would be no competition of this kind. Resources would circulate, reproduce, and distribute through common channels rather than the "private property, ego vs. the state" model of capitalism that Marx critiqued in the *German Ideology*.

Žižek's work is full of these sorts of hidden in plain sight dialectical inversions of the everyday ordinary sense of truth. An example from Žižek's own political positions, one that I understand yet to those looking in appeared bizarre, was his comments a few weeks prior to the 2016 United States elections between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump where asked in a coffee shop if he could vote in the elections who would he vote for, he responded without hesitation, "Donald Trump!" This caught the ire of many critics yet, it made perfect sense at the time, because the faux liberalism of Hillary Clinton gave a discursive facade to bourgeois interests, whereas Donald Trump offered pure ideology without the phoniness of a concealed gap. With a Trump Presidency there would not be the gap of mobilizing towards an objet petit a. With Trump as the president, there would be the dreadful movement towards the Thing, and the rupturing of stable ideological emplacement, which, no one in hindsight can question actually occurred. By the end of Trump's time in office America (and the world, although Trump was not necessarily

responsible for everything in the world) approached the dreaded Thing in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was also a failed attempt to violently take over the Capital building in January 6th 2020 when Donald Trump failed to concede the election to Joe Biden (the first time this has ever happened, except for when Al Gore turned back his concession call to George W. Bush in 2000), and his followers stormed the capital building. Was this move a matter of Trump's narcissism? Undoubtedly, yes.

However, the seeds of these “impenetrable darkness of drives”<sup>1</sup> could be felt gaining momentum during that Trump presidential campaign. To give a parallel example, turn to a story that Žižek quotes at the start of *Indivisible Remainder*, “The Sole Solution,” by Eric Frank Russell, which: “describes the inner feelings of someone filled with doubt, someone who turns around in a futile circle and cannot reach a decision, who makes all kind of plans which are then immediately aborted. Finally, he makes up his mind and says: ‘Let there be light!’ In short, what we took, all through the story, for the groaning of some confused idiot turns out to be the hesitation of God immediately before the act of creation. The beginning thus occurs when one ‘finds the word’ which breaks the deadlock, the vicious cycle, of empty and confused ruminations.”<sup>2</sup>

The release of these dark forces “*can occur only on condition that the rotary motion of drives which precedes the Beginning is itself not the primordial, unsurpassable fact.*”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Indivisible Remainder: Schelling and Related Matters*, is the best treatment of this ‘rotary motion’.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 13-14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Building off momentum from the inertia of a rather long history of racism in America, Trump's campaign was an approach to the Thing. That is to say, the "notion of a vortex of drives as the ultimate foundation, the 'origin of all things', renders inconceivable the fact of freedom: how can a Word emerge out of this vortex and dominate it, confer on it its shape, 'discipline' it? Consequently, this ultimate Ground (Grund) of reality, the primordial vortex of drives, this Wheel of Fate which sooner or later engulfs and destroys every determinate object, must be preceded by an unfathomable X which thereupon, in a way yet to be explained, 'contracts' drives."<sup>4</sup>

A 'rotary motion' could be felt in the way Trump galvanized support from humiliated white voters<sup>5</sup> who would have rather destroyed the planet than concede a grip on power. Žižek already wrote about these ideological movements since he began publishing, and drawing on themes in Jacques Lacan's work which predicted the emergence of subjects in the early 1970's that "capitalist globalization gives rise to the new racism focusing on the 'theft of enjoyment' on the figure of the Other who either threatens to snatch from us the treasure of our 'way of life,' and/or itself possesses and displays an excessive jouissance that eludes our grasp."<sup>6</sup>

When he says "our" he is not identifying with those racist discourses but articulating how the new racism produces the Imaginary figure of the Other as a threat, real or perceived. Strangely the idea that the Imaginary is only a figment of the imagination is quite contrary to how these paranoid fantasies function. The imaginary can manifest in very real events such as the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centers perpetuated by Islamic fundamentalists and thusly

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> To borrow a term from both Alain Badiou and Bifo Berardi.

<sup>6</sup> On Belief, pg. 32.

gives a corporeal form to the perceived dread inherent in the insubstantial psychic cathexis of the Thing.

An event can render the perceived dread of the Thing into an actual form, as a kind of hyperstition. Similar to the way that after 9/11 when the Bush Administration rushed to extend the war in Iraq, even though there were no so-called “Terrorist” cells in Iraq, the fomenting of colonial aggression to lay claim to the oilfields in Iraq produced violence and killing, the famous de-Baathification Process architected by Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Bremer led to unemployed angry anti-American former military personnel in Iraq, who quickly joined ISIS, and created new terrorist networks. Hyperstition describes a sort of superstitious idea that brings itself into actuality in the future by forces unleashed by a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy.

While hyperstition is an idea derived from Mark Fisher, Nick Land and others Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU for short), there is a sense that Žižek’s work does the same, although by looking historically. He often says, borrowing from Walter Benjamin, that a movement produces its own precursors retroactively. In the first chapter, I try to examine this process as an existential category.

Capitalism today functions without social norms, and somehow maintains a semblance of order without social repression. Even though the threat of violence constantly lingers in the air, we can laugh and be amused while watching endless amounts of entertainment which “transgression itself is solicited, we are daily bombarded by gadgets and social forms which not only enable us to live with our perversions, but even directly conjure new perversions,”<sup>7</sup> and allege to express the ‘truth’ of our concealed desires. We are on the brink of extinction level

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<sup>7</sup> On Belief, pg. 20.

catastrophes such as global warming making the earth uninhabitable for human life, and yet, life goes on in the realm of myth, a realm of denial. Myth is thus the Real of logos: the foreign intruder, impossible to get rid of, impossible to remain fully within it.<sup>8</sup> As one of Žižek's favorite lines to cite from the French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze warns us: "Beware of the other's dreams, because if you are caught in the other's dreams, you are done for!" This is why, in a way, it is the tough task of a philosopher who inspires so many others, and yet, when the flowers of a thousand video lectures blossom online the temptation is to trap the philosopher in the layperson's dreams, which would only hinder and domesticate the revolutionary hysteria and anxiety necessary to provoke an awakening.

Consider a sly joke that Slavoj Žižek often tells. There is a man who believes himself to be a grain of seed and is taken to a mental institution where the doctors do their best to convince him that he is not a seed but a human being. When they eventually succeed, he is allowed to leave the hospital. But he then returns immediately, trembling with fear. He reports that there is a chicken outside the entrance and he is terrified that it will eat him. "Dear fellow," says his doctor, "you know very well that you are not a seed but a man." "Of course, I know that," replies the patient, "but does the chicken know it?" the Master-Signifier is there in a concealment that is much more nefarious, because the punchline, akin to the ideological delusions that appear normal, in this joke seems to be that the patient is so neurotic that his delusions extend even to the "Other" of the chicken.

To reduce Žižek's philosophical project to a set of concepts, rules, or dogmas is to nullify the freedom inherent in thought itself. Thinking and provoking is not the same as reflecting as if

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<sup>8</sup> On Belief. pg. 11.

to encapsulate an object into a proper definition, rather than slipping away, for example Jacques Lacan's famous definition of the signifier. The signifier is that which the subject communicates with the other in relation to other signifiers. There is a signifying chain that is implied in meaningful communication, and one must be within the symbolic order with all of its reference points, circuits of production, distribution, reproduction, in order for the most minimal reference points to make sense. In other words, one must be caught in the dream to reflect upon the significance of the dream.

Books of philosophy are often, in part, particular genre-fictions in the detective and science fiction realms.<sup>9</sup> I borrowed this from Gilles Deleuze. Although he uses these terms much differently, not necessarily as a 'detective' novel per se, but as detecting a truth through our senses, and then also science fiction aspect of concepts arriving from the *Erehwon* - the not-yet no-place of conceptual production as the u-topos of thought. By detective novel one thinks about the philosopher piecing together clues in order to solve a mystery, and yet, there is commonly a juridical aspect to this endeavor. Is someone or something put on trial? Who are the prosecutors in the case? Who is the defendant? The philosopher who puts forth a thesis only to later be cross-examined after the evidence in the case is stacked against the thesis? Philosophy is the perfect crime - simply asking questions or rattling on a few cages can get thinkers into serious trouble - ask Socrates.

On the other hand, there are those who claim to be philosophers who then shun all detecting of the truth, and play the game of science fiction writers who fabulate new concepts to drop into circulation. Žižek, for all intents and purposes, appears to do neither. He talks endlessly

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<sup>9</sup> Gilles Deleuze. *Difference and Repetition*. Preface pg. xx.

about popular cultural references, while slipping in a myriad of deep ontological points that are not created as new concepts out of his own mind, but are almost always appropriated from prior thinkers, but not in the way of a classical philosopher who loves wisdom and tries to find the truth once and for all. Žižek, and I agree with this, hates “wisdom” (and thusly, philo-sophia as the “love of wisdom”) which would amount to a reified version of truth, there is always a historical dialectic at stake in the presentation of his work.

This is useful as a research tool and for diligent scholars of philosophy who are serious about studying Žižek’s theory of freedom. I try to condense difficult material and zero in on key passages in Žižek’s writing to distill a functional, serviceable philosophy of power and ideology and how it relates to freedom. This also means that there is no way to reify a concept such as “freedom” (because doing so would negate that which is free by trapping it in some kind of form); and also because Žižek’s work has taken so many twists and turns that it is impossible to encapsulate every single thesis he makes in the space of a single book. It would be absurd to think that I can encapsulate a thinker as wide ranging as Žižek. A thinker and activist-philosopher, who calls himself a madman, who is not trying to be domesticated or grounded, and yet claims that he grounds his thought in “Hegel” and “Lacan”.

People miss the mark as to why, he does this, mistaking that there is some affinity towards the personage of a once living corporeal being called “Hegel” or “Lacan” - rather, these are interesting historical figures because they were unique inventors of radically new methodologies. Hegel as forwarding the methodology of the dialectical process. Lacan as utilizing psychoanalysis to reveal the process of the shifting tides of desire as the ungrounded-ground of truth rather than forwarding any kind of “truth” that can be stabilized in the form of



propositional logic. Even these two points of reference are not enough, as most people approach Žižek’s work through these two entryways - whereas, what I want to do is show that there is something radically undomesticated about this work. When forwarding a criticism of “ground rent” for example, he does so as a communist who totally understands that ground-rent is a delusion of capitalist ideology, rather than as some so-called “marxist”-inflected economists who study ground-rent try to understand it through their own reified consciousness as an actual “thing”, rather than as the force of law imposing a “stratigraphic superimposition”<sup>10</sup> (an ideological superstructure) atop of the commons as the a-priori condition of land as a thing-in-itself.

### **Anti-Social Socialism**

First, this is not an essay devoted to a “subject supposed to know” named Slavoj Žižek, nor is it written from the perspective of a “subject supposed to believe” in Žižek named Bradley Kaye. This book is not written for “now”, it is not a timely meditation, yet there are meditations in it that appear to be forms of journalism (or is it “journalistic”; journal-entries - as David Foster Wallace once wrote somewhere: the point of a journal is to remain private, journals are not supposed to be read. Which, makes me wonder why the pathway to academic success is

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<sup>10</sup> OwB. pg. 11.

supposed to be marked by publication in academic journals - most of which are now allegedly “open source”; which carries with it all kinds of fascist tendencies outlined by one of my favorite lines from Michel Foucault about the panopticon - “visibility is a trap!” - we are so uber-social, uber-present, aware of others, that it makes me want to proclaim ala Slavoj Žižek’s version of Socialism - I want all the entitlements of quotas, mandatory universal income, but not the forced socializing of a kibbutz style commune. Just give me my entitlements and leave me alone (or, as I often say, I am a socialist, but I am also anti-social!); we as academics have lost something precious about the mole-like scholar tucked away “researching without teaching” as one of my favorite quips from Žižek went, now monumentalized online somewhere for sure, because the people do not really know much, and what the main problem seems to be, that Žižek’s work used to address (even when he was giving public lectures aimed at the “benevolently neutral” public of intellectuals at the Slovene Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis in 1989-90) was that far from positing a position of a “master supposed to know,” even while the lecturer acts as the analysand addressing the analyst composed of his public,<sup>11</sup> and even in recent years, as Žižek seems to embrace a sort of thesis of cynical agency propagated en masse ala Sloterdijk’s thesis “they know what they are doing, nevertheless, they continue doing it,” there is a sense of loneliness in his claim to be a hysteric that I see as inventive neurosis that should never be ameliorated by a talking cure (rather than simply continuing as a walking, talking, living, breathing embodiment of critique - which, in the wake of the corporeal body of some focus of carbon and nervous energy ceases to exist, still leaves a body of work, an oeuvre to be studied for future scholars, if there even are scholars in the future (there’s a virtual-Ego-Ideal projected into the future), to sift through the cultural trends and currents of our times. To see the evolution

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<sup>11</sup> For They Know Not What They Do, pg. 3.

of his thought and to sift through books like *Less Than Zero* (a title appropriated, or maybe stored away in Žižek's memory from a perverse Bret Easton Ellis novel from the 1980's), or *Parallax View* (a 1974 film starring Warren Beatty), or *The Year of Living Dangerously* (a 1982 film starring Mel Gibson), and when you move beyond all the film references and the funny jokes, which are also ways of provoking this anti-enjoyment thesis - there is a serious philosopher whose work will be remembered in future centuries. A figure who looms as large as Hegel walks among us today! Tragically, all techno-nihilist culture seems to do with Slavoj is mass produce an infinite spiral of videos online - which, again, waters down the effect of his work by multiplying it, and exposing it to those with no technical training to appreciate or understand the depth of the brilliance at work. A brilliance only expressed in the format of books.

### **Critique of the London Riots in 2011**

For example, Žižek's critique of the London Riots in 2011 where the city of London was looted, rioting occurred, and the response from the Prime Minister seemed to lament the lost commodities more than to respect any sort of political grievance on behalf of the impoverished people of London, this occurred precisely because there was no larger political grievance, the only act that this impoverished consciousness produced was to replicate and mimic desires for commodities, hence, there was no outside or marginality of consciousness beyond commodity fetishism, the reified consciousness of the lumpenproletariat has been completely subsumed within

the matrices of the “cash-nexus” as Marx and Engels call it in the *Communist Manifesto*.

Another common reaction is to reproach those who regard philosophy as a potentially revolutionary practice as hopelessly idealistic and needlessly utopian. Often conservative critics denounce the miserable and terrifying results of revolutionary upheaval as if this is the whole story. Žižek’s reference to an interview given by Gilles Deleuze reveals the conservative elision of the dimension of becoming:

“It is fashionable these days to condemn the horrors of revolution. It’s nothing new; English Romanticism is permeated by reflections on Cromwell very similar to present-day reflections on Stalin. They say revolutions turn out badly. But they’re constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people’s revolutionary becoming. These relate to two different sets of people. Men’s only hope lies in a revolutionary becoming: the only way of casting off their shame or responding to what is intolerable.”<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, a philosopher interested in a revolutionary concept of freedom should not turn to “the people” who have been most keen on signing up for their own oppression and exploitation. Most people are not saying many interesting things, nor do they really understand revolutionary subjectivity. What passes as this sort of gendered or racial revolutionary subjectivity is merely placed “within them more than even they know,” by forces of ideological

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<sup>12</sup> Cited in Žižek. *Organs Without Bodies*. Pg. 12.

interpellation, simulacrum, false representations of culture through the commodified production of culture to make a profit by exploiting enjoyment. As we know from simply talking with ordinary people, and yet reading Žižek's work gives articulation to these aporias of imagination, that we are now dealing with a situation where the absence of Law universalizes prohibition. Why? "There is only one possible explanation: enjoyment itself, which we experience as "transgression", is in its innermost status something imposed, ordered - when we enjoy, we never do it "spontaneously", we always follow a certain injunction.<sup>13</sup> These injunctions are concealed from the subject, yet often hidden in plain sight to others around them, and the crucial point is that the Imaginary is never fully beyond reduction to the realm of the Symbolic Order, there is no "pure imagination" out of which springs genuine ingenuity. "The Imaginary and the Symbolic are therefore not simply opposed as two external entities or levels: within the Imaginary itself, there is always a point of double reflection at which the Imaginary is, so to speak, hooked on the Symbolic."<sup>14</sup>

What makes Žižek's work far more interesting is that as a dialectical thinker, he never stops. His work is never fully reified, and has taken some interesting and unexpected twists and turns. On this point of how the Imaginary is hooked on the Symbolic he continues, in this brilliant way of swerving the thesis. Where one would expect someone to respond by asking: If the Imaginary is hooked on the Symbolic, then how can your critique of ideology stand external to the Imaginary as hooked on the Symbolic? His response seems to be that we must clear discern the function of the Ego-Ideal, as "symbolic identification - from its imaginary counterpart: symbolic identification is identification with the ideal ("virtual") point from which

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<sup>13</sup> For They Know Not What They Do. pg. 9.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. pg. 10.

the subject looks upon himself when his own actual life appears to him as a vain and repulsive spectacle.”<sup>15</sup>

Nor is it beneficial to anyone to advocate for some vague neo-liberalism of “individual-choice” as the standard baseline definition of freedom which spans back to the emergence of social contract theory, and representative forms of government based on individual voting rights, and consumer choice as the paramount value in marketplace capitalism. A term is often used to cluster these values together under the rubric of Liberalism. Not in the sense of a politician labeled liberal, but as basic tenets of the market system of capitalism, in this way, both major political parties in America are liberal insofar as nobody truly criticizes the basic philosophies that maintain these core values, even to the extent that these values are becoming increasingly destructive to the continuation of life on earth. Žižek has made a cogent point, time and time again in his work, that exemplifies these aporias in liberalism as posing a dead-end to human progress. For example, if you look back on the biggest criticisms of the French Revolution launched by the British philosopher Edmund Burke, you will see all kinds of historical relativist and subjectivist bias in his absurd criticisms. The revolution was wrong in his eyes because it forced a universal sense of rights upon the world where people always disagree, where individual differences were not respected, and where a diversity of opinions must remain open in order to respect the maximum amount of space for individual liberties and choices, cultures all think differently about these things and therefore nobody should force any universal sense of human rights upon anyone else, and so on and so forth.

One notable incarnation was when George Bush Jr. when confronted with questions

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<sup>15</sup> For They Know Not What They Do, pg. 11.

about protestors outside of the White House during his administration's invasion of Iraq, and when asked if the protests made him second guess the invasion because the people in America were losing their enthusiasm for the war, he responded with, "Of course, but that's exactly why we must remain resolved! We are fighting in Iraq to give the people there the same rights that those protestors outside are enjoying now. The right to protest," of course, every totalitarian dictator knows that the best way to become a totalitarian is not through a universal statement of general human rights, but through benevolent dictatorship where all kinds of pleasures and spectacles are offered to the people while the dictator maintains authoritarian control.

One can imagine that such a benevolent dictatorship would thrive in the midst of a technologically advanced modern world where computers, cellphones, television, films, and popular music all serve as mediums for a society of control through enjoyment and the sedation of consumers through a totality of meaningless choices (i.e. get the people to exchange their pointless assertion of sexual identity as an act of asserting their rights, in exchange wealth inequality spirals out of control, a more colorful boardroom with a more racially diverse bourgeoisie in exchange for more commercials, pop singers, and youtube influencers who are trans-gendered and can then become spokespeople for their favorite commodities, and thusly create a more diverse set of brand-influencers, etc.) All of this truly undermines much of the cogent critique that one might expect the philosopher to provide.

### **Dialectics and the Cynical Underside**

Žižek often remarks that the wonderful performance by Ben Kingsley that garnered him

an Academy Award for his portrayal of the pacifist peace activist Mahatma Gandhi, should be understood via the portrayal of his other academy award nominated performance as a ruthless bloodthirsty gangster Don Logan in the film *Sexy Beast*. Is it not that the pacifist tactics deployed by Gandhi can only be understood with the threat of violence, the kind of ruthless force that would inflict violence upon one's enemies if they did not comply with the demands of the pacifist? The pacifist uses indirectly violent tactics, such as strikes, boycotts, and other methods of civil disobedience to disrupt the powerful forces of oppression by attacking their economic support systems, one cannot think of a tactic more gangster-ish in nature than to behave in such a way.

There are other notable examples of this, while not necessarily those which rise to the level of academy award nominated performances. The two that spring to mind are the performances that Patrick Stewart is more well-known for, that of Jean-Luc Picard, the captain of the *Starship Enterprise* on the remake of the *Star Trek* series. He plays a philosophical reflective leader driven to make his leadership decisions on the basis of the highest ethical ideals so as to represent the confederation of planets with the utmost dignity in the eyes of the rest of the universe. His second, lesser known role, is that of Darcy Banker, the leader of a skinhead group that lures in young teenagers to the cause of Neo-Nazism and white supremacy. In trying to lure in teenagers to this cause, Darcy has set up a local punk club that lures in heavy metal, punk, and rock bands to perform at their bar and performance venue. The concerts are held in these remote locations far off in the distant woods where the subtext of musical performances is used to lure kids into ritual violence performed to enhance the cause of white supremacy. Viewed through the lens of the Obama to Trump years of American history, these films make perfect sense as the dual-identities of American history. On the one hand, there is a deep desire to elect dignified



eloquent, articulate, and supposedly ethical-idealists such as Barack Obama; and on the other hand, a retrenchment into the archaic politics of white nationalist exceptionalism upon which much of the economic hegemony of American exceptionalism was built (the white supremacy that produced the plantation system of economics which fomented class hierarchies and wealth inequality, so on and so forth). The idea is that somehow, it is a disservice to those who struggle for a liberatory politics to deny that the racist politics is not somehow integral to both. The white nationalist IS also Jean-Luc Picard, just as Barack Obama served in the exact same role as Donald Trump.

Another example of this are the two films, so far the only two, directed by the critically acclaimed filmmaker Tony Kaye. His first film has widely been accepted as a cinematic masterpiece, a careful study of how white nationalism becomes acceptable as a way of life among angst-ridden teenagers who join the cause, and then a carefully constructed rebuttal of those politics. The film is *American History X*; and it is widely considered a useful tool to understand the psychology of white nationalism. His second film, *Detachment*, completely bombed, although this may be the better film. Released in 2011, fully into the second term of Barack Obama's Presidency, new issues of racial politics emerge, especially in the detritus of public policies such as No Child Left Behind where funding for public education was stripped away from schools on the basis of underperforming test scores. You see in the film, a substitute teacher named Henry Barthes (Adrian Brody) who fills in to teach english in an inner-city (what city this is is left unnamed, and it really does not matter that much). Students are disrespectful, spitting on teachers, barely talking in full sentences, dressed in ways that induce sexual behavior, and you witness prostitutes approaching Mr. Barthes on his bus ride home. In *Detachment*, you get a richer, fuller, existential approach to the angst and dread involved in the socio-economic

decline into decadence that is occurring on an epic scale. The tragedy of being a teacher in the post-Bush era is that there is no hope anymore, nobody makes a difference, the economics of privatization has created an education system (and more importantly, a broader culture and politics) based on rapid-turnover rates, quick production, quick consumption, for low cost and high profits. As a result you have simplistic performance measures (tests to spit back information) rather than patient development of students skills and maturity level. Teachers are put under immense burdens to perform for menial pay. The main takeaway was that there are several scenes where the tables have been turned. A total subsumption in the “ubiquitous assimilation” into a society that sells on the basis of sex, telling us that all women are whores, to be screwed, and playing on the fantasies of sexual pleasure, and so forth, in other words, all the postmodern delusions of liberation through merely unleashing the pleasure principle that one sees in the worst forms of rap music as well as any other form of popular culture.

Detachment can be seen as the aufgehoben of American History X, racial politics as the liberation of drives to release the pleasure principle actually serves to deaden the drive necessary to bridge human intelligence because obstacles to push beyond are necessary for human development (this is Nietzsche’s will to power in a nutshell).

Conclusion:

One of the pitfalls in asserting the freedom as negation/contradiction thesis from Schelling. While absolutely true, it creates a lynchpin towards actual progress into a communist society. Capitalism \*always\* fetishizes this negation quality, even at the level of discourse. If you look at

all of the conservative voices online, these are not boring old-fashioned forms of quantitative analysis, conservative media relies entirely on spectacle, humor, and amusing distractions because it has no quantitative facts to fall back on to force its ideology onto the public. The overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, in the majority opinion offered by Samuel Alito, in *Dobbs vs. Jackson's Women's Health Organization*, he cites the fact that in the state of Mississippi the majority of voters in the 2020 election were women. Overwhelmingly the state voted for Donald Trump, and so his thesis was that women wanted a pro-life candidate or else the majority of women voters could have voted the other way. Hence, the 'negation' of women's rights is the norm among those who vote patriotically and in the name of so-called freedom. Not sure that ideology has given us the best tools to understand this, unless we look at the simple analysis offered by Marx in the *German Ideology*: In a capitalist system of property relations, private property is "mine" and the "Other" who wishes to shift to some other system, must do so on the basis of the 'state'; which comes to signify totalitarianism, un-freedom, simply on the basis of 'taking stuff' away from property-owners (in this day and age, nobody really owns their home, owners are simply those who pay mortgages to the banks, but that's a separate point, the ideology runs deeper in the delusion that one actually owns the home when in fact, nobody does), state is 'taking' away, and thereby, threatens the "ego", and therefore all definitions of freedom become assertions of ego-autonomy, and you wind up in a bizarre "repressive desublimation" of sorts, where selfish-pleasure seeking and ego-driven hedonism in more and more soliciting of perverse desires and calls to transgress social norms are the only ways that freedom is understood. In other words, the symptom of commodity fetishism and the pleasure of consumption is the only way to understand freedom in capitalism, thusly, we need a new definition, if anyone cares to listen, which amounts to temporary cessation of personal rights for

the sake of the goal of long term collective survival (ala, give up the consumer choice of purchasing a gas inefficient SUV in order to live without global warming).

The strange thing is that for years leftists had truly believed the mass shut down of the economy was impossible. However, when COVID-19 pandemic struck the world, before there was a vaccine, and the virus effected the rich and poor equally (anyone who was exposed to the virus could feasibly be killed, regardless of wealth or poverty, although the poor were much more vulnerable, and those in service jobs whose work puts them right in the heart of the ‘metabolism of social life’ rather than the wealthy bourgeois who can live out a mansion in a gated community for years); there was mass panic and a complete shut down of the global economy. What occurred was a blip in the production of carbon gasses which slowed down greenhouse emissions, the moral being, if the rich are scared out of their minds, the economy can shut down. What we watched on January 6th, was an inexcusable manifestation of “structures walking the streets of the capital”; wealthy or not so wealthy displaced white business owners who were pissed off because the government paused their stream of profits, wanted to exact revenge on the structures of government (personalized by the faces of Biden, Pelosi, Schumer, Pence, etc.) - it was a rotary effect that “orgasmed” in predictable fashion (as Trump was a corporatist as David Graeber correctly claimed. A corporatist is a person who says that employers and employees have common interests against financiers, and this is exactly the wedge that Trump struck against the idiotic solidarity that Hillary tried to strike between “wall street and main street”. Trump was correct to point out, you can have it both ways. When the Left wants to stop repressing the true desire for socialist candidates (such as Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez or Bernie Sanders) then there will be these right wing wedges that can cleave off parts of the petit bourgeoisie in order to serve its purpose of keeping capitalist property relations afloat.

## References

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