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## **The Political Implications of Science: a Comparison between Badiou and Žižek**

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In Hegel's preface of his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* he makes an acute observation regarding philosophy. Hegel writes, "that everyone, whatever his condition, is convinced that he knows all about philosophy in general and can pass judgment upon it." (Hegel 1991: 15) The practice of philosophy, as Hegel notes, is held in utter contempt by the rest of society. If a layman is even in the slightest bit interested, they approach the subject like a hobby, instead of allowing it the respect it deserves. With the recent attacks on academia by those wielding the excuse of economic necessity, can we really say that Hegel's observation was wrong? It seems that 2500 years of thought can be easily dismissed out of hand.

One curious fact about this attitude is that it infects those who would be supporters of philosophy, namely scientists. Despite having roughly the same ends, the development of knowledge and a commitment to reason, the relationship between science and philosophy is ambiguous at best. Even philosophers who share some similar concerns and viewpoints will disagree on the issue of science. Slavoj Žižek and Alain Badiou share many of the same political

concerns but have varying degrees of enthusiasm for the natural sciences. Badiou holds that the natural sciences are extensions of the state and are used to enforce a kind of legitimating natural order for the social sphere. Žižek sees science as a rapidly self-sundering discipline that whilst publicly disavowing its philosophical core tacitly confirms philosophical arguments made centuries before.

This paper argues that Badiou's anti-naturalistic stance remains rooted in the reactionary recent past of philosophical history. The equation of state and science renders him unable to use the resources of the natural sciences to disrupt the functioning of the state apparatus. Žižek's philosophical engagement with the brain sciences however, points out the potential natural sciences to have within an emancipatory politics both in themselves and also in helping to think about political practice more generally.

Before getting to the details of Badiou's position, it is useful to briefly consider the recent history of the reception of the natural sciences in continental philosophy. In contemporary Continental philosophy, science has mostly been seen as a malevolent force, pulling people away from traditional forms of meaning and responsible for the major catastrophes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite early Marxists like Engels, Dietzgen and Lenin highlighting the importance of science to demolish bourgeois idealism and its hold on the mind of the working class, European philosophy is generally characterized by a critical stance towards the sciences. For example, Heidegger argued that technology led to contemporary forms of disconnected nihilism; he was particularly suspicious of the natural sciences for misconstruing the metaphysical status of nature. Similarly critical, Foucault blamed quasi-scientific rationality for creating biopower, viewing states as living organisms with various groups being excluded on the basis of their 'infectious' nature. Suspicious of the empirical sciences, and especially the application of them to the social and political field, these critical stances have done much to separate the humanities and contemporary philosophy from the physical sciences. Anti-naturalism, as a hostility towards empirical sciences, runs like a red thread through a whole series of continental figures up to the present day.

## **§ Badiou's Disastrous Anti-Naturalism**

In *Being and Event*, Badiou assigns nature an ontological role. Badiou writes, "Nature is what is normal, the multiple re-secured by the state." (Badiou 2006: 128) What this entails requires some basic familiarity with Badiou's metaphysics. What there "is", according to Badiou's appropriations of set theory, are multiples upon multiples. This endless expanse of pure multiplicity is "counted" or ordered and contained into sets. The result of the first count is to create an ontological ground, termed a situation. The situation created by a singular count, however, is mathematically unstable and thus requires a second count - which designates the state of the situation. These two counts create various levels of terms, according to which count applies to them. Singular terms are those

counted by the first count, but not by the second, excrescent terms are those counted by the second but not the first count, and normal terms are those counted by both counts. Nature is a normal term, both secured (counted) and re-secured (counted again). The State defines what exists in terms of the multiples it secures. Because natural terms are normal terms, and normal terms make up the state, Badiou equivocates the natural and the state.

This is not all that Badiou says about the dangers of naturalism. In a surprising move he equates the death of God with the death of Man. In *The Century*, (2005) a compendium of lectures from 1998 till 2001, Badiou insists that without “God”, the ontological definition of Human is constricted to its pure animality. Badiou writes, “Classical humanism without God, without project, without the becoming of the absolute is a representation of man which reduces him to his animal body.” (Badiou 2005: 174) This is an odd comment, because Badiou is an avowed atheist. God as an actual being is an impossibility for Badiou given his understanding of set theory and transfinite sets. What Badiou is lamenting is the destruction of worldview that retains a definition of humanity that defends a separation of man and animal. God and religion have a conceptual framework that demands of its followers a personal sacrifice. Specifically Man must give everything from animal sacrifice to praise back to God regardless of what displeasure or inconvenience it might cause. This is what Badiou calls, “Living for an Idea.” (Badiou 2009: 510) Without religion there are very little grounds to ensure that man is more than *just* another species. Badiou argues that with the death of God, man is elevated into Gods place as the central ethical imperative; the well being of man becomes our primary moral concern. This is what Badiou terms Humanism. The Man without God is for Badiou, a hollow concept; it doesn’t effectuate a positive ethical imperative. (Badiou 2005: 174) Badiou defines ethical actions as those that serve Ideas or Events.

For Badiou there is something unique in humanity’s ability to transcend its gross material wants and desires and instead fight for an Idea. An Idea for Badiou is a historically bound yet eternal set of circumstances that cannot be predicted nor encapsulated by the State. Ideas are the revolutionary offspring of Events, aleatory happenings that cause a rupture in the fabric of the state. Those who recognize the Event become Subject to it. Subjects do the work of translating the Event into a Truth, requiring Subjects to be faithful. These Subjects do not merely live because of naturally determining imperative to survive, but live to spread the Idea.

Badiou thinks that this man-qua-animal mentality is where our contemporary discourses of human rights and “victimization” (Badiou 2005: 175) comes from. The 21<sup>st</sup> century common sense ethics places man against an unending stream of various evil specters. Our spontaneous benchmark of how well human beings live is based purely upon their quality of life. The good life is one filled with an unlimited amount of entertainment and leisure time. Things like fidelity to a cause; civil sacrifice and correlative concepts that place the material life of singular individuals under a political or transcendental goal are always associated with totalitarian regimes. This is what Humanism’s sole ethical imperative amounts, to what Badiou calls life, “without Ideas.” (Badiou

2005: 177) We live our lives according to the dictates of mere survival, a false naturalization that legitimates one master, Capitalism.

Badiou suggests that science naturalizes capitalism. Badiou writes, “The Market economy, for example, is natural, we must find its balance, between some unfortunately inevitable millionaires and the unfortunately innumerable poor, just as we should respect the balance between hedgehogs and snails.” (Badiou 2005: 176) These “naturalizations” seem to confine us into living lives without Ideas, without positive political, scientific (i.e. mathematical), amorous, or artistic pursuits that mean more than our bare life.

Of course, the natural and social sciences, go wrong when they posit economic and social contingencies as natural necessities. In today’s world, we do not use words like capitalism anymore; they are replaced with terms like globalization. This terminological change has the effect of transposing meaning from a human made economic system, to an inevitable transcendent force that sweeps the world regardless of any regional agenda. This is what drives Badiou’s reflections on science. Pseudo-scientific jargon disguises political ideology and is used to justify policy decisions as well as legal and moral norms. Instead of positing our responsibility and real freedom, we attribute our actions to natural necessity. Our problems are always ‘genetic’, effectively absolving ourselves from responsibility for our behaviors. Facets of our lives like problems of obesity or alcoholism to our sexual preference are considered pre-written into our genetic make-up. We do not encounter our lives as historical products of a contingent historical system.

Nonetheless, in only considering the mathematical sciences as real sciences, Badiou ignores the emancipatory potential that natural sciences hold. For Badiou, “natural” sciences are tied to the ideological goals of the state and thus have nothing to offer a revolutionary program (Badiou 2006: 128). Revolutions – as truth-events - are the antithesis of the reigning ontology - they are not a part included by the state of the situation. In opposing science (as part of the state) and revolution, however, Badiou veers dangerously close to reactionary religious dialogues on the opposition between faith and modernism. In his use of religious frameworks to describe the emergence of events and the role of subjects, Badiou’s theory of change appears as ‘quasi religious’. Although at the end of *The Century*, Badiou argues for a “formalized in-humanism” (Badiou 2005: 178) he nonetheless imports several theological concepts into his supposedly atheistic theoretical apparatus. For example, Badiou takes up the self-sacrificial nature of Christianity and re-values it as the only true ethical dimension of life. Explaining the genesis of the truth-event, Badiou insists on a miraculous occurrence alongside a secular faith. An Event happens and disappears as quickly as it came, converting followers and raising movements, all without the need for explanation. The only ethical injunction that Badiou’s system proclaims is to “keep going”. (Badiou 2001: xi) Under this paradigm, we idolize the Event but need not worry about its origins. In doing so, Badiou also rejects any kind of empirical or natural explanation of Events (qua secular miracles).

This dismissal of the natural sciences potentially leads to a problem of quietism for Badiou. Badiou's description of the event requires that we abandon a central tenant of scientific naturalism, that things are inherently knowable. This attitude endangers Badiou's political radicalism by foreclosing the possibility of accounting for (even minimally) for the emergence of events. More problematically, it also appears at odds with the goals that Badiou expresses as central to his project. Badiou's philosophy was born out of the failures and successes of the May 1968. The horizon of Badiou's philosophy is said to be a simple question. How does change occur? (Johnston 2009: 6) However, in his anti-naturalist stance, Badiou risks depriving himself of the intellectual tool set necessary to satisfactory answer that question. Without the non-mathematical sciences, can Badiou adequately account for the emergence of Events? Our answer is negative. From a political perspective, Badiou's account of the event is dissatisfying. Must we forever rely on intuition and pure chance for any hope for a change? According to Badiou, this hope is all that we have.

Whilst there is certainly a danger in *specious* naturalization of human made social conditions, in guarding against this risk Badiou unnecessarily concedes the potentially hidden subversive power of the sciences. Science, like philosophy, is ultimately aimed at the Truth regardless of any temporary social condition. Its positive project is one of creating reasonably secure knowledge of the outside world, and as such has an uncanny and unpredictable ability to peel back the effects of contemporary political ideology. Badiou's opposition to all but the mathematical sciences prematurely forecloses the possible role that science and a critical understanding of it might play.

## § Žižek's weird materialism

The mind-body problem has always been particularly problematic for materialist philosophy. Not only must it explain the connection between (human) intellect and its corporeal substratum, but also it must do so in a way that accounts for 'thought' in terms of the physical world. Žižek approaches these problems combining some of the latest science and a Schellingian/Hegelian conception of nature. Using recent discoveries of neuroplasticity and environmental biology, he argues that the mind is in actuality, underdetermined by its physical substratum; that physical material can support a more-than material superstructure as well as account for freedom. Here, we explore Žižek's interesting re-evaluation of matter and how this plays out in his remarks on the brain sciences and philosophy of mind. We will then turn to look at some of the political implications of Žižek's engagement with brain sciences via the notion of Plasticity found in Catherine Malabou's work.

One of the problems that German idealism, particularly that of Schelling and Hegel, explore is the mind/body problem. Their speculative solutions provide Žižek with a way into contemporary debates, bringing refreshing explanations that are not found in Anglo-American philosophy of mind.

Today the dominant paradigm is one of reductive and eliminative materialisms that try to explain away (or completely subvert) the problem of phenomenal consciousness. However, these theories rely on a conception of matter, which entails that the brain, as the material base of the mind, is entirely deterministic. Adrian Johnston notes that these materialisms' "notions of matter are no more sophisticated than seventeenth-century conceptions of 'corporeal substance' moved solely by the mechanisms of efficient causes." (Johnston 2007: 5-6)

In *The Indivisible Remainder* (2007), Žižek starts with an interesting note on Schelling. He writes, "Schelling inverts the standard perspective: the problem is not how, in a universe regulated by inexorable natural laws, freedom is possible... but, rather how the world as a rational totality of causal interconnectedness made its appearance in the first place." (Žižek 2007: 16) What this means is that we must take a different approach regarding materialism. Žižek's reading of Schelling highlights how the question leads to the conclusion that Nature is not "natural." More precisely, that Nature is not a harmonious and well-regulated machine, "a grand design," but rather one that is improvised and pieced together, with cracks, fissures, irregularities and anomalies (Johnston 2007: 5). When we try to understand the problem of consciousness, Žižek describes how we need to re-think our conception of matter in order to fully account for mental phenomenon. In a similar way to Schelling, we need to ask how the genesis of the mental from the neuronal is possible in a way that does not introduce a hidden dualistic ontology. For Žižek, Hegel and Schelling are vital in this regard. Far from being fanciful and speculative philosophers, Žižek argues they are rigorous materialists<sup>i</sup> (Johnston 2007: 5). Moreover, in operating within the problematic of Cartesian Dualism, Schelling and Hegel deal with some of the same problems that crop up in analytic philosophy of mind. The mind-body problem can be dealt with differently from the perspective of German Idealism. In reference to Schelling's insight mentioned above, the question is not how the mind epiphenomenally arises out of inert matter, but how matter *already from the very beginning has the capability to support mind*. Žižek argues that Schelling and Hegel are philosophers of contingency. The connection between the genesis of the universe and human beings as thinking beings entails that the universe has peculiar properties that undermine any mechanistic and static philosophies of nature. These peculiar properties, according to Žižek, point towards the inherent fragility of the universe, its utterly broken status as a not-all unity. Žižek redefines Schelling and Hegel's respective ontologies as ones that take into account the "disjointedness" of the universe. (Johnston 2007: 5) Far from being a network of perfect efficient causality, the universe sometimes "makes mistakes," it does not *fully determine phenomenon*. (Johnston 2007: 9) For Žižek, Hegel's insight is that these contingent occurrences only *become* necessary retroactively. The universe does not guarantee that events will unfold according to some transcendent law of causality. It is this conception of matter that Žižek imports into debates on mind/matter dualities.

In *The Parallax View*, (2006) Žižek argues that the philosopher/scientist Daniel Dennett,

reproduces the binary logic common in arguments of cognitive philosophy, posting a dichotomy between a “physical” level of mechanistic causality and a “design” level of organic dynamism, where the physical level provides the support of the design level. Žižek raises a problem for this one-sided conception. He writes, “how do we get from here to (self-) consciousness?” (Žižek 2006: 241) Or rather, how do we get from what Žižek terms a ‘bricolage’ of multiple parts or agencies of the mind to their collaborative end of phenomenal self-consciousness? Žižek replies that consciousness arises out of a perturbation of the spontaneous self-organization of the different agencies of mind. Human consciousness is a result of a mistake in the smooth functioning of physical level. Žižek writes, “the only way to account for the status of (self-) consciousness is to assert the ontological incompleteness of “reality” itself.” (Žižek 2006: 242). We should not assume that these inconsistencies reside only with us, but take them as evidence that the universe itself, far from being a completely integrated and efficient system, is actually a giant bricolage. What is more, it is not the human subject that is proposed as a flaw. Instead of arguing for a type of human “exceptionalism” where thought is treated as an aberrant accident of a smooth and fully functioning system, Žižek suggests we must treat Man as a local symptom of a much larger phenomenon (Žižek 2006: 242). We should resist the temptation to collapse human thought to pure mechanical causality, but show how human thought reflects the incompleteness of the universe back to itself.

On the level of human subjectivity, we must not only accept the broken status of the mental *but also that of the neuronal*. That is, we cannot find a positive (and definite) nodal point from which we can proclaim the beginning of consciousness out of a material substrate. Inconsistencies and gaps are to be expected, and not automatically assumed as flaws to be explained away. This broken materialism allows Žižek to show the underdetermined nature of consciousness. The link between consciousness and freedom is to be found in this gap. We are free (underdetermined) due to consciousness’s inability to fully integrate itself.

In her short work, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* (2008) Malabou refers to recent discoveries in the brain sciences that suggest the brain includes the ability to design and re-design itself. In opposition to the traditional picture of the brain as an organ that develops during a short period early in life and then becomes static and rigid once it reaches maturity, new theories describe an essentially malleable structure. Brain plasticity describes a two-way movement, both from the neuronal to mental and also from the *mental to the neuronal*. With references to these discussions, Malabou describes how, reinforcement and repetition of mental tasks strengthens neuronal connection in the brain, so that, for example, if a replacement limb is attached to a body, the brain is able to rewrite and incorporate the foreign limb into its motor and sensory cortexes (Malabou 2008: 3). Different tasks emphasize different connections so that the brain of a karate expert is different from an engineer and different again from a philosopher. Given this malleability and constant re-designing Malabou argues, “Humans make their own brain, but they do not know that they make it.” (Malabou 2008: 1) The brain according to Malabou is a historical record written

in neuronal connections. Moreover, the history written onto the brain is not just one written by the individual, but the history of larger social and historical conditions. With reference to Malabou, Žižek writes, “surprisingly, the most ‘reductionist’ approach, that of the brain sciences is the most dialectical, emphasizing the infinite plasticity of the brain.” (Žižek, 2006: 209) According to Žižek, Malabou provides the key to unlocking the potential of cognitivist thought. In order to stay true to the discovery of brain plasticity – cognitivists need to manage the complex interplay of individual and society and the mental and neuronal. Žižek writes, “in Hegelese, we must conceive the identity of the two (‘the mental is the neuronal’) as an ‘infinite judgment’ which indicates a radical (self-) contradiction... ‘the mental explodes out of a neuronal deadlock.’ (Žižek 2006: 211) What Žižek continues to argue is that contemporary philosophers of mind, at their best, inadvertently burst into a “spontaneous Hegelism” (Žižek 2006: 211). The combination of German Idealism and contemporary neuroscience essentially makes the science legible to the scientists themselves. So Johnston is entirely correct when he states, “The natural sciences cannot even properly come to recognize and realize their true insights if their fashions continue to be mired in... conceptions of ‘corporeal substance’.” (Johnston 2007: 5) Žižek uses Schelling and Hegel to get to the truth of science, a truth not only for philosophy but also for science itself. In contrast to an Eliminative Materialist account which, in its rejection of most if not all of post-Kantian continental philosophy, withholds judgment, waiting for a better scientific understanding of the mind. Zizek and Malabou argue that a better scientific understanding needs the insights provided by German idealism!

So how do we understand the political dimension of this unique combination of German idealism and cognitive science? Zizek’s and Malabou’s engagement with the brain sciences and German Idealism have important implications for thinking about politics. First, both describe an essential dimension of freedom and under-determinedness that demolishes the myth of frictionless causality. They reveal any attempt to assert a regime of always-already causality as pure ideology. Our freedom for Žižek consists in the powerful negativity as the primary quality of human consciousness. Freedom is the result of a clearing, or empty space in reality, a period in which to say ‘No’. Our freedom to say no and to exercise a degree of retroactive determination is a result of the design level and the physical level, or the mental and the neuronal, being irreducible to one another. Our freedom, Žižek writes, “is a causality which determines which causality will determine us.” (Žižek 2006: 244) What Žižek is telling us to remember is that the gap between physical matter and transcendental thought is the subject proper, and the wellspring of our freedom. We are free only so far as there is no direct line of causality that binds the neuronal to the mental. Žižek uses the example of a pile of grain to describe this irreducible split, namely at which point does a certain quantity of grain become a ‘pile’ or ‘heap’? (Žižek 2006: 244) we can only determine two states ‘not a heap’ and ‘heap’ but never the exact count in which a given quantity moves from one category to the next. Freedom is found in this indeterminacy; because only at the point when there is a ‘heap’ can we retroactively determine ‘not a heap’. Žižek writes, “We can never single out a grain that



'makes the difference'; all we can do is point out and say, 'At some point, *at least one* grain before this was added, the grains formed a heap.' (Žižek 2006: 244) We can only determine the subject *after its emergence*. The direct causal chain is broken so that our freedom consists in retroactively creating a chain, or taking responsibility for what we already are. The broken chain of causality between raw material stuff and the transcendental subject proper is freeing precisely because we are forced to choose at a minimal level what determines us. (Žižek 2006: 246) If we did not have to choose, if we have direct access to our past, the Kantian noumenal 'Thing that thinks', the subject qua \$ (Žižek 2006: 244), we would be caught in what Žižek calls a "claustrophobic horror, like being buried alive with no breathing space." (Žižek 2006: 241) A direct access to the material universe would deprive us of the space between cause and our retroactive determination. No temporal delay between cause and determination would make us one with our life world. The gap constitutive of subjectivity is the space of freedom proper.

Moreover, for Žižek such freedom is revealed in a constituting inconsistency inherent to all structures. When we experience a 'crack' or 'fissure' in the fabric of the universe the goal is not to smooth it out or repair it with a more 'totalizing' theory, but to accept it as constituent of reality as such, and then use it for our political gains.

Every power structure is necessarily spilt, inconsistent; there is a crack in the very foundation of its edifice – and this crack can be used as a lever for the effective subversion of the power structure... In short, the foundations of Power can be shaken because of the very stability of its mighty edifices hinges on an inconsistent, fragile balance. (Žižek 2007: 3)

Second, more generally, Malabou's description of plasticity provides a useful alternative to contemporary discourses marked by a dichotomy of rigidity and flexibility. In today's world, post 9-11 politics presents itself as a series of forced choices between these two paradigms. Either one accepts American hegemony (rigidity) or terroristic unrest (flexibility), or Capitalist globalization (flexibility) or Islamic fundamentalism (rigidity), or Pope Benedict's dichotomy of Modernity (flexibility) or Faith (rigidity). The twin poles of Rigidity or Flexibility act as a dyad mutually reinforcing each other and keeping society and individuals in a kind of suspended animation. As capitalist subjects we are subordinate to the unending and uneven movement of markets, yet at the same time, to traditional systems of bondage.

Using Malabou's insights, we can begin to formulate a notion of 'Political Plasticity', which would offer a way to hold on to, in Badiouian parlance, an Idea without compromising the ability to adapt and learn. Malabou argues that plasticity is not restricted to our brains. As Hegelians, both Malabou and Žižek hold that the individual and the collective levels interpenetrate and are interwoven, so much so that in talking about one, we necessarily involve the other. The paradigm shift between modernity and post-modernity concerns the transition of thinking in terms of rigid

hierarchies to flexible networks, from tightly woven and specialized parts to total interchangeability units. Plasticity is a third way, offering an alternative to political rigidity that accepts change is possible and necessary, but not at the cost of a frantic perpetual motion, one that redefines itself with every passing fad.

## § Conclusion: Science at the Edge of Politics

Badiou's picture of the sciences can now be put into the proper light. Badiou conflates all natural and social sciences with practices misused by and legitimating the State. Certainly, the tendency to invoke 'scientific' research has become ubiquitous in our times. Neoliberalism, for example, often employs 'science' backed theories like Chicago school economics to argue for its own ideological supremacy and to legitimate the infinite expansion of free market Capitalism. Similarly, even creationists attempt to disguise their *a priori* beliefs under the sheen of pseudo-facts and cherry picked scientific terminology. Nonetheless, what we must not do is ignore the force of real sciences, the science that obeys no master except the truth. Badiou imposes a specious limitation on our understanding of the world. Pitting science against philosophy, he also risks reinforcing the false dichotomy between free-market capitalism and religious obscurantism. In opposition, we need to find ways to use the power of science to combat the lie of capitalist naturalization. What this might mean is a return to a mostly forgotten epoch of Marxism. Perhaps Engels, Dietzgen and Lenin were on the right track in their understanding of the role science could play alongside a revolutionary politics. We would do well to revisit their ideas, and consider whether natural sciences could compliment Marxism as an emancipatory project. There is no reason why science has to support the contemporary political status quo. Capitalism is a contingent and temporary situation, doomed like all other forms of social organization to eventually wither away.

Malabou links the notion of brain Plasticity to plastique as the name used for malleable compounds with explosive potential. (Malabou 2007: 5) C4, Semtex, or Noble 808, these shapeable substances allow for precise detonations and violent explosions, whilst ensuring the operator is neither injured nor killed. Perhaps this connection is also useful to think about the potentially explosive role that the natural sciences more generally might have. On one hand, after a 'detonation' a science is a frenzy of speculation and intense new research. On the other hand, these 'explosions' have wider, potentially political consequences, 'detonating' to potentially destroy or break down old institutions as well as pointing to the possibility of transformed political practices. In this way, science can inform and intermingle with a political program which seeks to break our enslavement to global capital.

<sup>i</sup> This is why Žižek focuses on Schelling and Hegel, for Žižek both are materialists. Hegel and Schelling are materialists because they think in terms of a not-all universe. In *The Indivisible Remainder* (2007) Žižek writes apropos materialist philosophical works, “that Schelling’s Weltalter drafts belong to this same series, with their repeated failure to provide the definite formulation of the beginning of the world.” (Žižek 2007: 7) Some major materialist works like Marx’s *Capital* or Lacan’s endless variations and reformulations never quite finish their philosophical project in a definitive way. Žižek argues that because of Schelling’s oscillations between System and Freedom never quite end they qualify as a ‘not-all’ materialism, our so-called weird materialism. This incompleteness of the work itself is not a failure but a testimony to the incompleteness of reality itself.

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