

The Emperor's Old—and Perennial—Clothes: Two Spanish Fine-Tunings to Andersen's Received Wisdom

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Often Žižek has used “The Emperor's New Clothes,” as it has been received by most (in the European, 19th-Century, enlightened-romantic tale by Hans Christian Andersen). In these pages I will refer to two specific occasions in which he has mentioned the famous story: *For They Know Not What They Do*, and the colloquium with Assange about WikiLeaks in the Frontline Club in London. Of course, Žižek has mentioned the story much more often, but I will concentrate on those two instances, for they suffice in relation to what I have to say.

Žižek mentioning of Andersen's story in both cases constitutes, first of all, a case of directing an example to two different things exemplified (i.e.: it is a case of polysemy in allegory), because in the second case (the interview with Lassange) Žižek drives home the point of how Lassange is like the child in the story: the whistleblower, and that we are in need of such whistleblowers, and of the consequences of that act, which go

beyond the mere revelation of a Truth that is overrated. In the first case (the opening pages of *For They Know Not*), the consequences are equally important (actually they are “catastrophic”), but the title of the section is “Let the Emperor have his clothes!” (i.e.: let us *save* ideology). Žižek urges us to “abandon the usual *praise* [my emphasis] of the child’s gesture” (2008: 11-12) when in the TV interview he *praises* Lassange and the other whistleblowers. There seems to be a shift from Lacanian understanding and therefore acceptance of the “fetishistic split at the heart of [every] effectively functioning ideology” (2008: lxx) to post-Marxist longing for the catastrophe to occur. The mechanism of the whistleblower remains the same, but perhaps out of sheer sympathy for the Lassanges of this world Žižek abstains from re-iterating in the TV interview his call for the Emperor’s clothes to be left alone. In *For They Know Not*, in the foreword to the second edition, Žižek makes clear that he was using Andersen’s story to illustrate “the most succinct definition of ideology: ‘mass delusion is the only thing that keeps a people sane’.” (2008: lxx). This is what Žižek had written: “After the deed [the child’s revelation of the Emperor’s nakedness], when it is already too late, we suddenly notice that we got more than we bargained for—that the very community of which we were a member has disintegrated.” (2008: 11-12)

Žižek has used the story, then, with—at least—a two-fold purpose: the first purpose is to give an image of how ideology works around a *blind spot*, making it not just possible but necessary to dupe everyone in the peculiar way in which the delusion works in the Emperor’s clothes tale, creating a special tension with the least “dupable,” such as the King (or Emperor) himself, who bases his own right to the throne to the “fact” specifically set out by the con artists as condition for being able to see the marvelous garments—to be fit for his job. The story disseminated by Andersen is in resonance with one of Žižek’s favorite Lacanian quotes (“le nom du père /les non-dupes errant”). As the saying (based on wishful thinking) goes in some Anglo-Saxon countries, “you can’t con an honest man.” The problem, as with Diogenes, is to find such a hypothetical specimen. Žižek’s second purpose when he quotes and comments on “The Emperor’s New Clothes” is to illustrate the more specific mechanism of the “whistleblowers” (the Lassanges or Snowdens or Mannings of this world). There is a perverted logic (and dialectics) in “telling the truth.” And maybe more than WikiLeaks it

may very well be the likes of Noam Chomsky, with their penchant for “just telling the facts” that are represented in the child that says in the famous story “The King is butt-naked!” Whether this makes Chomsky a “setter-off of catastrophe” in opposition or in complement to Žižek is part of the veritable nest of paradoxical vipers that the brilliant tale of the Emperor’s new clothes reveals.

But my purpose in what follows is not to explain Žižek, or to interpret it, or to agree or disagree with his thoughts. My purpose is simply to disseminate two versions of the Emperor’s New Clothes’ story which I have never seen Žižek, or anyone else, mention as better, more complex, more analytical versions of the story than Andersen’s. I will be adding vipers—or cobras or black mambas—to the nest of illuminating paradoxes. By disseminating these versions, anyone who follows the issues that are illustrated by Andersen’s version will find several folds that to some extent remedy the insufficiencies that Žižek finds in it as an analytical tool. Both versions of the story are older than Andersen’s, and both come from Spain, but this does not mean that I will focus on Spain as a place of privileged insight into ideology: it simply means that the two better versions that I will expose of “The Emperor’s New Clothes” happen to fall within my field of expertise (I am a professor of pre- and early-modern Spanish literature). The fact that both versions are old points to the Emperor’s strange garments—i.e.: to ideology, fetishism, delusion—as very old, as perhaps perennial (or at least in a Lacanian-Hegelian tension with a naïf historicism). I am sure that other versions of the story exist, and maybe some of them are as good, or better, from the critical-theoretical point of view, than the ones I am bringing today to the discussion. I would beg the reader to bring them up to the discussion the moment he/she remembers them, as I also beg the reader to make a note of these two versions, probably unknown to her/him, more than to notice my interpretation of them, which I encourage the reader to substitute for mine at any time.

The first version of the Emperor’s new clothes’ story that I will bring into focus is the one written in the first half of 14th-Century in Castile by Don Juan Manuel with the title “Los burladores que fizieron el paño” (“The Tricksters that Wove the Cloth”). The story is *Exiemplo XXXII* of the fifty that form the collection called *Libro del Conde Lucanor o de Patronio* (*Book of the Examples of Count Lucanor and of Patronio*). The

second version that I will bring up of the story disseminated by Andersen is Miguel de Cervantes' *Retablo de las maravillas* (*The Puppet Show of Wonders*), a skit or interlude published in his *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos, nunca representados* (*Eight Plays and Eight Interludes. New. Never staged before*) of 1615. (In the bibliography I use an edition of the *Entremeses*, more readily accessible to today's readers. I list both Spanish and English editions for both books, although the translations used for this article are mine).

Don Juan Manuel's version

Leaving aside the obvious differences that a purely literary or even cultural-literary analysis of a story written in or around 1335 must have with one written in 1837, three significant differences appear between this old version of the story and Andersen's "standard" rendition of it.

The first difference is that in the 14th-Century text, the condition for being able to see the clothes emphasizes *legitimacy* (to be your father's son). Andersen's version, in typical modern European fashion, emphasizes incompetence or stupidity, rather than the obscure sins of the fathers, as the conditions that would prevent the seer to see. We will see in Cervantes how, in his version, this concentration on "blood" is compounded with a supplemental "blood-test." But what I want to emphasize is that the conditions for seeing or not seeing the garment are *politically variable* as much as they are *politically founded*. 19th-Century's *blind spot* must be differently constructed from 14th-Century's. For a modern European, to whom "all men are created equal," it is one's "inner capability" that makes one better or worse, put in sheer, undisguised capitalistic ideologeme. For a 14th-Century European it is precisely the fact that all men are *not* created equal that generates the blind spot. The King/Emperor cannot be King/Emperor if he is not his father's son.

The second difference between Andersen's "standard" version of the story and Don Juan Manuel's is perhaps the most significant one. In the standard version, known by everyone when the story is mentioned, it is a child that makes truth prevail when he says (or shouts) that the King/Emperor is naked. In Don Juan Manuel's version, it is a black slave that reveals the nudity of the King. The precondition for the truth is not

“innocence.” The precondition for the truth is *having nothing to lose*. The black slave, being the lowest of the low, has no “honor” to protect, and no “blood” to test for purity or for legitimacy. His is a much more historical-materialist adherence to “truth” than Andersen’s. The black slave is a Marxist agent where the innocent child was a spokesman for the bourgeoisie.

The third major difference that *Los burladores que fizieron el paño* shows with respect to *The Emperor’s New Clothes* is that Don Juan Manuel’s story is doubly framed. It is framed textually, and politically. Textually, all stories of the *Libro del Conde Lucanor* are constructed in the following manner: the fictional Count Lucanor has a political, practical problem. He asks his *consejero* Patronio for advice, and Patronio tells him a story, in the pure didactic mode of the times, which illustrates the Count’s problem, and thus offers advice conditioned to the Count’s understanding of the intended “profitable” meaning (*prodesse*) of the story. After that, the Count proceeds to *act* following the advice and always ends up “well.” Both the Count and Patronio are, obviously, alter-egos for Don Juan Manuel. But there is yet another alter-ego. At the end of each story, the author includes “himself” in a violent narrative loop and in the third person, in the form of “And Don Iohan, upon seeing that this was a good *enxiemplo*, had it included in this book, and wrote the following verses” (a couplet of very bad lines of poetry follows, in which a supposedly mnemonic-friendly “moral of the story” is encapsulated).

Don Juan Manuel was a King’s grandson and a King’s nephew. His world-view is not difficult to ascertain from this perspective. His other famous book—he wrote many—is the *Libro de los estados*. In it, he explains and defends the medieval system of estates, of social immobility, of the idea that God has created the world in his infinite wisdom, therefore condemning to hell anyone who dares say that the world may be different, that the poor need not be poor, or that the nobility ought not to have supreme power. He defends all of this precisely at the time at which the commercial city, the embryonic capitalism is beginning to allow for social mobility and therefore for the very ground to be moved from under Don Juan Manuel’s feet. But he himself is split: on the one hand he is the noble man (Count Lucanor), but on the other hand he is the story-teller (Patronio). Patronio’s name obviously longs for “Rome” as it rings of *Pater*—

Father (the old, wise times). But he is a servant. His power resides in the word, not in the sword. Actually, for a nobleman to be able to read—let alone write—was in itself a relatively new thing in Medieval Europe. Don Juan Manuel's uncle (King Alfonso X, the Wise) personifies this new form of power through knowledge, but if it is a *new* form of power, the basis axiom for the estate structure (that there can be nothing new under God's sun) crumbles. Moreover, in the tale told by Patronio the servant, it is a man of even lower status—a slave—that reveals the truth. Having nothing to lose, the black slave is perhaps the only free man. This story (probably brought to Spain from faraway places such as Persia or India—one can detect in the Count-Patronio structure that of the Caliph-Vizier, or the Maharaja-Guru) reverses the notion that “truth shall set you free” to the extent that it is freedom that sets the truth in motion: the freedom of the slave with nothing to lose, or the freedom of the servant Patronio given to him by knowledge as it is given to others by money.

It is curious how these two versions “bracket” the long birth and development of capitalism. If Don Juan Manuel writes defensively to try and protect the estate system when the “third estate” is merely beginning to rise to power, Andersen writes right after the French Revolution, when that “third estate” has taken over the others and revolution moves towards a “fourth estate” to which the black slave relates. Because Don Juan Manuel cannot perceive the black slave as a threat in 1335, he is able to use him as his whistleblower. For Don Juan Manuel in 1335 the black slave does not constitute a threat, but in more modern times (maybe not today but certainly in Andersen's times) his whistle-blowing can amount to something close to what Žižek said to Assange in the colloquium that I am referring to: “What is truly revolutionary is that you are changing the very rules on how we are allowed to violate the rules” (2012: around minute 23:00). This is the “catastrophe” that the innocent child of Andersen's versions brings, but its ugliness (the ugliness of slavery, of exploitation, of exclusion) is veiled. Andersen, for whom the have-nots are already a problem, disguises the whistle-blowing (and the very idea of truth) in a veil of “innocence.” Andersen also removes the obvious political frames that Don Juan Manuel's *Los burladores que fizieron el paño* have as necessary anchors of the story. Don Juan Manuel can see how deception, illusion, and revelation, are specifically political, that no “omniscient narrator” can account for them: only

Patronio, a narrator who addresses a specific narratee and not “the reader.” Don Juan Manuel nestles recipients of the “message” at different levels. And the message is not necessarily “the same.” If the “moral of the story” is so clear and unambiguous, why add the final verses (one extra version of that moral)? It is no wonder that Borges actually stole another one of the stories of the *Libro del Conde Lucanor* in which Patronio, the story-teller, does to the reader what the magician in the story he is telling does to the other character (making him believe that they have traveled in time and space when they have not moved from a moment and a kitchen in which a dinner is about to be put to cook). The power of story-telling is amazingly strong in this other story (*De lo que contesçió a un Dean de Sanctiago con Don Yllán, el grand maestro de Toledo* is Don Juan Manuel’s title; *El brujo postergado* is the title of Borges’ appropriation). Strong enough to reduce to meaningless didacticism the specific “moral of the story” applied to a specific political problem, none of which interests Borges in the least. A real pity, because those frames to the stories in the *Book of Count Lucanor* are a priceless political co-text. The political problem that frames the “main story” of the King’s clothes which Patronio tells the Count as an advice for the problem recounted in that framing story is precisely about secrets, even specifically about “state secrets,” and about how secrets often hide the one secret that is relevant (that there is no secret; perhaps that there never was). This is my translation of what Count Lucanor tells Patronio:

Patronio, a man came to me and told me about a great fact (or “feat”), and leads me to understand that it would be to my great benefit; but he tells me that no one in the world should know about it, no matter how much I trust him; and he insists so much on my keeping this secret, that he says that if I tell it to anyone, all of my estate and even my life will be in great danger.

Of course, the first thing the Count does is to break the secret, telling it, and the problem that goes with it, to his trusted Patronio. It is within this situation of trust/secret that Patronio tells the story of the tricksters who spun the magic garments for the King. In Andersen’s version, no reference to whether we should trust the story-teller or not is involved. The omniscient narrator takes over. Don Juan Manuel speaks about layers of trust (and therefore layers of possibility of ideological production).

Cervantes' version

Still, in both Don Juan Manuel's *Los burladores que fizieron el paño* and Andersen's *The Emperor's New Clothes*, once the whistleblower blows the whistle, the veil of deception/illusion is lifted, and truth is triumphant. It is Cervantes in his *Retablo de las maravillas* (*The Puppet Show of Wonders*) who will take the issue one critical step further. He does so at precisely the time at which the first of the mass media (theater for the masses) becomes dominant in Europe (especially in England and Spain). That is: Cervantes will give the old story of the King/Emperor's new clothes a crucial twist at precisely the time in which the modern *ideological (state) apparatuses* come into existence.

There are four fundamental differences between Cervantes' version and that of both Don Juan Manuel and Andersen. The first one is that, in Cervantes' skit, what the con men sell is not a garment, but theater itself. It is the apparatus of ideological production that is sold using the already blind spot of ideology. This is complicated by the fact that Cervantes' text is an interlude: it is conceived to be staged between acts of a "main feature." Cervantes is engaging in a critique of theater in general by telling the spectator that he is being duped. But in order to do so, he must *stage* his whistleblowing, hoping that the spectators of the main feature—who paid their money to watch that main feature, and not the skits between he acts—see themselves portrayed in the characters of the villagers of his skit, duped by the con men.

In Cervantes' skit, two con men (actually, one is a woman, almost a Brechtian character) arrive at a village in order to pluck the villagers out of their money by staging a "magical puppet show." But not everybody will be able to see the show (the identical premise of all the versions of the story), and this is the second difference of Cervantes' version.

In *El retablo de las maravillas*, what will prevent you from seeing the show is a double "blood condition": you must be—as in Don Juan Manuel's version—the legitimate son of your father, but you must also not have a single drop of "impure" blood (i.e.: Jewish or Moorish) in your veins. This is especially important in Renaissance and Baroque Spain, a country constructed ideologically around the premise of "us" (Christians) vs "them" (Jews, forced to either convert or leave in 1492, and Moors or

Moriscos, conquered in 1492 and forced to leave in 1609). Since many of the remaining inhabitants were actually descendants of some Jewish great-grandfather or of some Moorish great-grandmother, paranoia settled in: even after the kingdom had been “ethnically cleansed,” there remained the issue of “old Christians” vs “new Christians.” For some jobs, or for obtaining a permit to go to the American colonies, a Certificate of Blood Purity (“Ejecutoria de limpieza de sangre”) was needed. It is easily imaginable how the very procurement of such a certificate would render you suspect of not being what the certificate says you are. It is also imaginable how easily an official could be bribed, in direct proportion to your need, in order to provide you with a false, or fake, or altered certificate, just as the growing need for a “green card” in the United States propels the market for fake green cards.

The third difference is, I think, the most crucial, and this one alone could be mentioned as the big step in critical acumen beyond the standard Andersen version which Žižek uses so often. I will summarize the plot a bit, leading my reader to the moment in which this difference is presented.

The con artists tell the villagers about their wonderful show, and about the conditions for being able to see it. They demand to be paid in advance, and proceed to show their *retablo*. Of course, nobody sees anything, because there is nothing to see: the con artists simply describe to the audience what is supposed to be happening: there is a bull, great for bullfighting—so one of the villagers actually will step out to fight the bull—; there are mice in the room—so all the women, naturally, climb on top of their chairs screaming like lunatics and closing their skirts so the mice can’t climb up their legs—; mass hysteria and mass delusion are easily produced, reinforcing each other, and reinforcing the sensation of each individual of being the only one that cannot see the show, thereby faking more and more that he/she sees it and experiences it better than anybody else. Finally, the con artists make a beautiful woman “appear.” And have the village men dance with her. At this point, the whistleblower emerges. In Cervantes’ version of the old story, it is a *furrier* or army sergeant that comes from outside. When he is invited to dance with the “beautiful maiden” he says, of course, that there is no maiden, and asks if everyone has gone mad. This is “the moment of truth.” The sergeant is not “innocent” like the child in Andersen’s version. He is not “one with

nothing to lose” either, as was the case in Don Juan Manuel’s version. In this case he is a) an outsider, and b) a representative of an oppressive power structure (the army, which the villagers had the legal obligation to house and feed, and which was feared like all armies have always been feared by villagers). In any case, it is he who proclaims the truth. It is he who blows the whistle. The moment is exactly the moment in which Truth is supposed to triumph, having undone the deception and disillusioned the illusion, and, yet, this is Cervantes’ master stroke. Upon hearing the truth (“there is nothing to be seen”) from the sergeant, the villagers retort that he can’t see the wonders of the show because “he is one of them.” Cervantes even uses Latin for this accusation (“*ex illis es; ex illis es*”), for, after all, Latin is the official language of the Inquisition, of excommunication, of anathema... “You are one of them; you are one of them,” the villagers keep saying. Not only truth does not prevail: deception is reinforced. Now it has a logic of its own (“of course the sergeant can’t see: he is ‘one of them’; this proves that I am ‘one of us’...”). Now, isn’t this the same logic that applies to the cases of our contemporary whistleblowers? Haven’t they been branded “*ex illis*”—i.e.: haven’t they been *exiled*, some literally? Hasn’t their branding as “un-American” displaced their dissidence to an “outside,” the very difference from which is what constitutes “us” (the United States in this case, but all nations qualify to being “us” in the same manner)? Isn’t the *furrier* being applied the same logic that Žižek (2012: at the end of the colloquium, around 1:56:00) applies when he says to Assange that if he were “on the other side” his critique to WikiLeaks would be that “it is a good thing but it has been taken over by an extremist, a terrorist”—i.e.: “one of them”? But, most notably, isn’t the refusal to destroy the illusion the very glue that binds them together? Of course, “keeping the collective sanity” does not mean “peace,” as I shall show.

Cervantes’ is a cleverer picture of how ideology works than the one presented by Andersen’s “standard” version of the story. In it “*les non-dupes errent.*” It is precisely the un-duped by the intervention of the outsider that persist in their error (now a reinforced error). The status of truth is relativized, put in its connection with the fetish, and showing how in modern times (the times in which ideological apparatuses appear and become ubiquitous to the extent of there being no escape from them) whistleblowing is reincorporated into ideology as much as resistances to capitalism are reabsorbed and

re-appropriated by it. One curious fact: Cervantes never staged this skit, or at least he published it in 1615 as “never staged before.” Could this be an instinctual perception that “the medium is the message”? I—who hate computers and feel very uncomfortable in the so-called Information Age—have often wondered if the very fact that many whistleblowers are web-whistleblowers, starting with the names of their whistles (“WikiLeaks”), does not automatically reabsorb their whistleblowing into the general silence. Cervantes’s skit, as a skit, is supposed to bring a mirror to the very site of mass deception (the theater) making the real audience see themselves in the fictional audience of duped villagers. But he never stages it. Instead, we read his text. Cervantes feels that there is a danger of himself being another failed whistleblower if he does not *distance* himself from the very activity of whistle-blowing. If the sergeant is akin to Snowden or Lassange, or perhaps Manning, or even Chomsky with his passion for revealing the facts—facts which become fetishized by being subjected to that process—, Cervantes would be akin to Žižek or any other practitioner of *theory*. They are not whistleblowers: they put in (parallactic) perspective the very act of whistle-blowing. Ideology not only is based on that *blind spot* that all three versions of the Emperor’s new clothes’ story show so accurately, but it also perpetuates that blind spot beyond all attempts for a “meta-language.” “The truth” is as much a part of the game as any illusion.

But before I finish, I will refer to a fourth difference that Cervantes’ rendition of the old tale of deceptive deception has when compared to Andersen’s standard version. This fourth difference I have already mentioned in relation to the other differences. This difference is that in *The Puppet-Show of Wonders* the whistleblower comes from the structure of power that sustains itself by force, rather than by ideology. This difference makes it worth to re-examine the three versions of the tale. The *furrier* is a synecdoche of the Army, an army that the villagers have to lodge and feed. It is the Army that blows the whistle. By refusing to accept “truth,” the villagers are resisting—perhaps involuntarily—power. In Cervantes’ plot, the villagers actually *insert* the sergeant into the show. The con artists even protest that he is not part of the show, and, at one point, comment to each other, fearing that their whole con job may go awry, that the army’s arrival has been “the Devil’s work” (“el diablo ha sido la trompeta y la llegada de los

hombres de armas”). But the villagers’ mechanisms of self-delusion prove to be mechanisms of *active* denial of an oppressing reality. Thanks to the “magic show” they actually attack—physically—the *furrier*. The skit suddenly shows an actual, violent revolt. In Andersen’s version, the child, while providing for the escape, constitutes a *utopian* point of departure—no one is that innocent; certainly not Lassange or Snowden or Manning; no one is beyond (or before) sin—. In Don Juan Manuel’s version, the slave is, as is the Andersen’s child, an outsider to the structures of power—that is his only “innocence”—, but it is “class struggle,” as it were, that provides for this liberating connotation. Ironically, both the child and the slave, while being “outside of power” are “insiders” to the society (Žižek underscores this in his analysis of the tale in *For They Know not...*). The army sergeant, on the other hand, an insider to the brutal power of the Army, is an outsider to the village. In a way, it is his kind (like Jack Nicholson’s character, Colonel Jessup, in *A Few Good Men*) that claim to be the handlers of the truth (and deny this ability to others: “You can’t handle the truth!”). In Cervantes’ skit it is power itself that provides the whistle-blower. It is, as with Watergate, “Deep Throat.” And “Deep Throat” is a mechanism of self-preservation watching over, controlling, and properly spinning, other mechanisms such as the one that has been called—always provisionally—ideology. Yes, modern capitalism and modern power regulate themselves “smoothly” in comparison to the old ways which required overt repression, etc., but the *furrier’s*—ultimately failed—“act of correction” reminds us—as with Ferguson, Missouri, etc.—of the latent paranoia of those who are also whistle-blowers, because, after all, it may not be a complete delusion to think that we have a beautiful maiden ready to dance with us—all we have to do is go ahead and dance—, but it is a delusion that may lead to bigger delusions: to a Don Quixote—it is Cervantes, after all, who wrote both texts—. And Don Quixote is dangerous. *Really*—in the Lacanian sense—dangerous. He is mad, quite mad. He defies merchants, or windmills, believing them to be evil knights or giants, but he *does* fight them. Don Quixote is the ultimate realist in “demanding the impossible” (Dulcinea del Toboso could be that Lacanian *Real* that under-wraps his entire story). It is through the delusions provided by ideology and its apparatuses (chivalry books, for instance, but also “less dangerous” pastoral romances or other genres) that an assault to the Real surpassing “reality” can begin.

We are back to Žižek's reading of Andersen's version of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, but if we supplement that version with the two Spanish versions that I have dealt with in these pages we can see how a more complex analysis can be achieved.

One last note. Cervantes' skit ends with a combination of three things:

- a) Violence (the villagers actually fight the sergeant, who draws his sword to defend himself).
- b) Music which soothes the situation (both a) and b) were common, conventional ways of ending an interlude).
- c) The con artists proclaim that the show has been a total success.

It is easy to see how this peculiar way of blowing the whistle—from the structure of power itself, against the persistence of the villagers in remaining blind to the truth—does not destroy the illusion created by ideology, but instead initiates a *real* physical struggle against a *real* enemy. Of course, the rules of the game require that a skit be only an interlude (Carnival, after all, even Bakhtinian Carnival, is a brief parenthesis after which come Lent and “normal life” until the next Carnival). So the villagers' revolution is brief: music replaces it, and right after the music the audience will keep enjoying Act Three of the play they came to watch in the first place. But in Cervantes' interlude the con artists have the last word “El suceso ha sido extraordinario” (“The success has been extraordinary”), they say. The very last words are “¡Vivan Chirinos y Chanfalla!” (“Long live Chirinos and Chanfalla”—those are their names). Long life, then, for that supposedly “new” garment of the Emperor. Those magic clothes are very old, indeed. And very resilient. They do not seem to fade with Enlightenment or with WikiLeaks: to the contrary. Truth is often their ally. Critical theory must go on, being critical if it wants to be theory, and being theoretical if it wants to be critical.

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