

THE PUPPET AND THE DWARF  
THE PERVERSE CORE OF CHRISTIANITY



SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

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**The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity** Slavoj Žižek

**One of our most daring intellectuals offers a Lacanian interpretation of religion, finding that early Christianity was the first revolutionary collective.**

Slavoj Žižek has been called "an academic rock star" and "the wild man of theory"; his writing mixes astonishing erudition and references to pop culture in order to dissect current intellectual pieties. In *The Puppet and the Dwarf* he offers a close reading of today's religious constellation from the viewpoint of Lacanian psychoanalysis. He critically confronts both predominant versions of today's spirituality -- New Age gnosticism and deconstructionist-Levinasian Judaism -- and then tries to redeem the "materialist" kernel of Christianity. His reading of Christianity is explicitly political, discerning in the Pauline community of believers the first version of a revolutionary collective. Since today even advocates of Enlightenment like Jürgen Habermas acknowledge that a religious vision is needed to ground our ethical and political stance in a "postsecular" age, this book -- with a stance that is clearly materialist and at the same time indebted to the core of the Christian legacy -- is certain to stir controversy.

## The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity Details

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# From Reader Review *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* for online ebook

## Robert says

Zizek is an insightful thinker, an eviscerating cultural critic, and a pyrotechnical rhetorician that, when he isn't wallowing around in the confusing muck of Lacan or wasting time knocking down absurd straw men, regularly shares brilliant inversions/juxtapositions/perversions... but despite his creativity and intelligence, this text doesn't ever seem to add up to anything truly significant. Which is a shame, because it could have easily been edited down to a manageable and engaging psychoanalytic examination of Christianity from a political/materialist angle... but even if it had been shortened, it should be noted, that it would probably still have ended without a truly substantive conclusion. Because he doesn't really postulate anything tangible or workable, he just sort of finishes up his oscillating criticisms with a request for Christianity to reject itself to save itself... which he seems to suggest would result in some sort of equitable Post Marxist Community rooted in the Death of God/History/Hierarchy. Which is nice and all, but I would much rather hear him try to explain how that would play itself out in actual practice without falling into the same old patterns again and again.

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## Theresa says

One of Zizek's most approachable books.

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## Ryan Rebel says

Zizek is hilarious. People call him a rock star philosopher. My first exposure to him was a YouTube video in which he, twitchy and sweaty, monologued about shit. Take that literally.

Zizek is a bit like Foucault in his approach, in that he jumps around talking about whatever he's interested in -and just so happens to be an expert in all of it. His arguments are a good deal more tethered than Foucault's, though, so that's a plus.

*The Puppet and the Dwarf* is all about the secret ideology of Christianity, or in Zizek's words, the perverse core. He makes arguments like, "What if God became Christ not because we were so inferior, but because he was jealous of our mortality?" A lot of his arguments sound kind of dumb, but when he gets into the nitty gritty of parsing them out, they become enticing.

I could follow maybe 70% of this book. The problem is that these arguments are enticing, and I want to be able to share and think about them, but Zizek's mind is so complex that I lost the ability to capture and communicate the points of his book almost immediately after I finished reading it. So that's a bummer. It doesn't help that the dude is incredibly unfocused. That characteristic makes for some great tangents about movies, candy, advertisements, pop culture in general, Nietzsche, etc., but it also makes the thread of his arguments nearly impossible to follow.

But if you want to have your mind blown and not be sure exactly why afterwards, this is the book for you.

Zizek is getting at something real and insane here, in his own eclectic way. Also, the book jacket author photo alone is well worth the price of admission.

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## BlackOxford says

### Creative Betrayal

If confirmation of the merits of good philosophical thought were needed, this book is more than adequate to make the point conclusively. I find much of Zizek's work somewhat tedious; but his arguments in *The Puppet and the Dwarf* are the equivalent of rapid-fire body blows to inane conservative pundits like Jordan Peterson (he of *12 Rules of Life* fame. See <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>) and equally inane social theorists like Thomas Sowell (*Intellectuals and Society*.

See: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>) who make a living by peddling non-thought to non-thinkers, ideology for idiots.

Zizek calls his method 'short-circuiting', that is, bringing areas of thought which are usually insulated from one another into contact and watching the sparks fly. His stated intention is not to rubbish anyone's point of view but to reveal a more inclusive picture of the world in which various points of view create something new, something bigger not just in the sense of explanation, but also in the sense of promoting human understanding and solidarity. He makes this operational by allowing people to become "*aware of another - disturbing - side of something he or she knew all the time.*" This is not tendentious indoctrination. I think it is as close as one can get to supervised self-education.

So for example Zizek self-identifies as an atheistic materialist. But he also has a profoundly poetic appreciation of religion, particularly Christianity, that rivals most theologians. By allowing these two currents of thought to touch, he transforms both. His central thesis captures the result: "*My claim here is not merely that I am a materialist through and through, and that the subversive kernel of Christianity is accessible also to a materialist approach; my thesis is much stronger: this kernel is accessible only to a materialist approach—and vice versa: to become a true dialectical materialist, one should go through the Christian experience.*"

His intention is not to relativise Christianity but to make it real. For Zizek 'going through' the Christian experience doesn't imply abandoning it as obsolete, but appreciating it for what it is. How else is one to understand his explanation of Christian love, for example, as an exception to any universal ethic, even the ethic of Christian love: "*The underlying paradox is that love, precisely as the Absolute, should not be posited as a direct goal—it should retain the status of a byproduct, of something we get as an undeserved grace.*" Love, or for that matter salvation, is not a reward; it is a consequence of things like respect, and care, and dedication. And not necessarily a consequence elicited from the direct object of our respect, care and dedication. Karl Barth, arguably the most important theologian of the 20th century, would agree wholeheartedly.

So Zizek can cite G.K. Chesterton approvingly at length and conclude that "*true love is precisely... forsaking the promise of Eternity itself for an imperfect individual.*" The object of love cannot be an abstraction, even a divine abstraction; it must be a concrete person and it must include flaws, deficiencies, and irritations. Perfection cannot be loved. The God of Chesterton knew this. It is why even Christ loses his faith hanging on the cross. And as Carl Jung noticed in his book on Job, Yahweh had to have an audience, an imperfect human audience, to complete himself. Many theologians, as well as evangelical Christians could benefit

immensely by contemplating this insight.

Having recently read Reza Aslan's *Zealot* (<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>), I am struck by its coincidence with Zizek's identification of the central message of Christianity which he captures succinctly in his subtitle: "... *the hidden perverse core of Christianity: if it is prohibited to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in Paradise, why did God put it there in the first place? Is it not that this was a part of His perverse strategy first to seduce Adam and Eve into the Fall, in order then to save them? That is to say: should one not apply Paul's insight into how the prohibitive law creates sin to this very first prohibition also? ... Is Judas not therefore the ultimate hero of the New Testament, the one who was ready to lose his soul and accept eternal damnation so that the divine plan could be accomplished?... In all other religions, God demands that His followers remain faithful to Him - only Christ asked his followers to betray him in order to fulfill his mission.*"

Zizek and Aslan agree. This paradoxical undermining of itself, an almost Stalinist compulsion to destroy conventional culture, the things, that is, which we believe but don't take seriously, is the permanent messianism of Christianity. It makes Christianity dangerous. It created modernity by separating religion from politics. Perhaps it is also implicitly creating post-modernity by revealing the untenable consequences of that separation.

The critic Harold Bloom has made his reputation on the idea of creative misinterpretation as not just the motive for literary but also for political development. Isn't this how Christianity (and Judaism and Islam for that matter) was created? As Zizek claims "*Paul also 'betrayed' Christ by not caring about his idiosyncrasies, by ruthlessly reducing him to the fundamentals, with no patience for his wisdom, miracles, and similar paraphernalia.*" I think Zizek is following the same tradition of creative misinterpretation. If he's not right, at least he's interesting.

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### **Nuno Ribeiro says**

Zizek apresenta o Cristianismo como a religião do Ateísmo. E a ascensão de Cristo como a queda de Deus. Fã-lo de forma brilhante, mais até como homenagem analítica do que como heresia desconstrutivista, apoiando-se na teologia de G. K. Chesterton, em Lacan e Hegel e fundamentando criticamente o que diz, com citações e referências a muitos outros autores. O livro desenrola-se de forma interessante e inesperada, nunca se submetendo ao espartilho do tema da religião, antes procurando explorar a teologia (a marioneta de que fala o título) como arma para entender a cultura e a sociedade ocidental, tal como é habitual fazer em relação em relação à ideologia. Aliás o livro conclui com um pertinente epílogo que faz a ligação entre o cristianismo e a ideologia corrente e que permite perceber como a teologia cristã contribui para a sustentar, alimentar e perpetuar.

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### **Adam says**

Our friend, Amy, mistakenly left this Zizek book behind when she returned to Michigan, much to my delight. I've been wanting to read some of Zizek's work for some time now. He's a Slovenian philosopher, researcher, and Lacanian psychoanalyst whose written work and regular speaking has led him to be called "an academic rock star" and "the wild man of theory". He also appears (as I say this based solely out of my extremely and admittedly limited encounter with Zizek) to frequently address Christianity as a plausible

religious base for moral and ethical decisions and identity, running contrary to the postmodern assumption that religion is both unnecessary and counterproductive. Reading this makes me realize how "out of it" in regard to most continental philosophy I really am - it's like taking a slow walk through a vast crowd of brilliant people speaking brilliant thoughts, marveling at all of them and disagreeing with some of what you can understand, even as you delight and laugh aloud at some that you do.

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### **Phillip says**

Although this book is ostensibly about Christianity it really reveals a lot about Lacanian psychoanalysis. Like many of Zizek's books, this contains really brilliant analysis of a topic, with fascinating digressions dealing with pop culture and Stalinism.

As far as the analysis of Christianity goes, I think his main argument is that Christianity exposes what Judaism tries to hide--that God is impotent and human. I thought the most interesting and clear section about Christianity is when Zizek analyzes the story of Job and God's empty bragging in contrast to Christ's moment of atheistic doubt on the cross (this latter is an image Zizek returns to throughout the book). Zizek argues that because God cannot explain why he tortured Job, the story reveals a fundamental, though repressed, conviction in Judaism that God is impotent. Christ, however, directly opens up a gap within God, which identifies God with humans in a way no other religion does. Because God needed to become human, he divided himself from himself--"Father, why have you forsaken me?"--and because we as humans are always divided from God, through the division from himself God truly experienced the gap of humanity.

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### **Nasha says**

His Hegelian reflection on religion is not what i got after reading the lecture of the phil of history

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### **Jared Colley says**

Another perplexing work by Zizek. Here, he tackles the topic of Christianity, but he has no interest in the "otherworldly" - he is a materialist through and through. Like many recent European philosophers (Badiou, Agamben, Taubes), Zizek is re-appropriating Christianity for progressive, political purposes. He sees Paul and his circle more as revolutionaries than as apostles of a new religion. The truth of the matter is that they were both, but Zizek concerns himself with the political.

This work also engages Jacques Lacan (which I guess is unsurprising since he calls himself a "card carrying Lacanian"). I struggled with this book, but mostly because I struggle with Lacan. In fact, I really don't get Lacan at all; his writing frustrates me. The only time I understand Lacan and find his ideas compelling is when people like Zizek demonstrate his thought through practical application. Here, he applies it to Christianity along with other modern forms of religious practice (Judaism, Buddhism, New Age, and trends of "fundamentalism").

The main reason I give this work 4 stars (I thought about giving it 3) is his ingenious engagement with G. K. Chesterton all throughout the book. Chesterton was an influential Christian writer & philosopher who impacted figures such as C. S. Lewis and F. Schaeffer (sp?). Zizek demonstrates his masterful understanding of Chesterton and finds valuable insight in his work in relation to current issues. There is no animosity here -

only respect & admiration. In fact, Zizek expresses more disgust towards other materialist in what he terms the "post-secular age."

A difficult but thought-provoking read.

"What if eternity is a sterile, impotent, lifeless domain of pure potentialities, which, in order fully to actualize itself, has to pass through temporal existence? What if God's descent to man, far from being an act of grace toward humanity, is the only way for God to gain full actuality, and to liberate Himself from the suffocating constraints of Eternity?.....We have to get rid of the old Platonic *topos* of love as Eros that gradually elevates itself from love for a particular individual, through love for the beauty of a human body in general and the love of the beautiful form as such, to love for the supreme Good beyond all forms: true love is precisely the opposite move of *forsaking the promise of Eternity itself for an imperfect individual*...What if the gesture of choosing temporal existence, of giving up eternal existence for the sake of love is the highest act of them all?" -Zizek

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### **Dr. Lloyd E. Campbell says**

Immediately after reading this book I read it again. This week I finished reading it for the third time. I don't have the prerequisite knowledge to truly understand this book. I think I'll read his book on Lacan since Lacan seems to be the person who has influenced him the most. Why did I read this book three times while mastering perhaps half the ideas in the book? What I do understand is profound, entertaining and thought provoking. Some day, unless I run out of time, I'll try again to understand this author.

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### **Everett says**

This book was so good, I began reading it again from the beginning as soon as I finished. I'm really glad I had tackled **In Defense of Lost Causes** first, since it prepared me with the lingo and some of the Lacanian basics. Many of the points made (in fact, some of the same sentences) from "Lost Causes" appeared first in "Puppet and the Dwarf." This is because Zizek is always making more or less the same points (or maybe just point, singular).

Not exactly *hostile* to my religion of Christianity (the "perverse" of the title is not the same as "perverted"), it nevertheless diverges irreconcilably from my own beliefs around chapter 7. But what a wild ride until that point! Definitely got me to look at Paul in a new light.

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### **Readytoread says**

"Culture" is the name for all those things we practice without really believing in them"

"What if the gesture of choosing temporal existence, of giving up eternal existence for the sake of love is the highest ethical act of them all?"

"Eternity is the ultimate prison"

"Love desires personality, therefore love desires division." - gk chesterson

"The message of true love is thus: even if you are everything to me, I can survive without you."

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## Will C says

Zizek is a controversial theorist of literature, film, and pop-culture whose areas of expertise range from rigorous philosophy, through political science, and most interestingly, Lacanian psychoanalysis. This book, which is both very technical and unusually readable, reads like an interdisciplinary discussion on theology viewed through every conceivable lens. He looks at theology through the eyes of Hegel, Lacan, and Marx and finds an intrinsic "subversive" core at the center of Christian thought. The author's aim is to argue that: "not merely [...] that the subversive kernel of Christianity is accessible also to a materialist approach; my thesis is much stronger: [it] is accessible only to a materialist approach [...] to be a true dialectical materialist, one should go through the Christian experience."

This is exactly the kind of absurd thesis that Zizek is often criticized for and occasionally dismissed over, but it is irresistibly provocative, and deliberately worded to be so. Throughout the book, he uses elaborate "chunks" of theory to prove his point, and uses illustrations from pop culture not just to back up his arguments, but also to make allot of the more esoteric theory (Hegel's dialectical view of reality is carried to the limit here, and Lacan is often incomprehensible unless you know the specific sense in which he uses normal words and are familiar with his neologisms) accessible to any reader who enjoys thinking. The most frustrating thing about Zizek, as far as his critics are concerned, is the extent to which he takes previous thinkers out of context, and the extent to which he reads against the text. In this book, it's apparent that he does these things knowingly, half jokingly, and often with mind-blowing results. Although the points made about theology and the phenomenon of belief in general are intriguing, and worth reading the book for, the best part for me was watching the author's subversive thought process in action: starting with sources that are ostensibly diametrically opposed to his thesis and abstracting the intellectual gems (specific "patterns of thought," so to speak) from their content, and using them to subvert their authors and advance his own thesis. The result feels like a strange mix of entertaining pop-philosophy and the Socratic Method. After reading this book a couple times, I feel like I have a stronger understanding of many of the thinkers he cites. As for his thesis, it is an interesting perspective, and I think anyone who is interested in religion in general should read it if only for the points he makes about the nature of belief and the structure of religious morality.

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## Jonfaith says

**This perhaps, is also the most important ethics lesson of the twentieth century; we should abandon all ethical arrogance and humbly acknowledge how lucky we are to be able to act ethically.**

The Puppet and the Dwarf is dear Žižek at his best. I do favor his political and cultural projects. Those other sorties into ontology and associated Hegelian/Lacanian practices tend to baffle me. The point of departure here is a stand against the "vulgar" and "boring" atheism of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. I can see that. Atheism remains self-evident; telling the believer that such is horseshit isn't very productive and not that interesting, not any more anyway.

What proceeds is a series of approaches to the Epistles of St. Paul and how the framing nature of Genesis and the Passion are necessary to further the narrative. It is this anxiety between the Law (especially of Christianity's Jewish predecessors) and Love results in a sort of anxiety. This allows its excesses, its forays, its forbidden indulgence in the Pagan. Žižek ties this in nicely with Tolkien's middle earth chronicles.



Somewhere down the road, through the fables of Job and the atheistic recriminations of Jesus on the cross, we arrive at the effective foible of Mutually Assured Doctrine: it succeeded precisely because we are such irrational agents. Here's to the holidays and merry matters left unsaid.

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## **Joseph says**

Zizek is nothing if not a man of paradoxes. How else to explain this Marxist materialist atheist using little understood elements of Lacanian psychoanalysis to get to the true kernel (as he calls it) of Christian belief? As always, Zizek uses every possible random association in his brain to explain the subject at hand (primarily, Paul's radical reimagining of the individual's relationship to the law) and conversely, uses the subject at hand to talk about everything under the sun. Things under the sun: Hegel, Lacan, Heidegger, the failure of imagination of left-wing politics in recent years, etc. Don't be surprised if you find references to the movie Aliens, Kierkegaard, old bawdy Balkan wife jokes, and some French candy that translates roughly to nigger-heads (still on the shelves!) all on the same page.

The odd thing is, he manages to pull it together most of the time. Of course, you have to wade through pages of dense deconstructionist indecipherability to get to the moments of blindingly original insight, but he is an European academic, after all. My favorite section: Zizek quotes the Catholic apologist G.K. Chesterton basically saying God was the original atheist when he forsook himself (Christ, but you know, same thing) on the cross and had an earth shattering lapse of faith. Zizek then goes on to speculate God was taking a step up, not down, by becoming human:

"What if eternity is a sterile, impotent, lifeless domain of pure potentialities, which, in order fully to actualize itself, has to pass through temporal existence? What if God's descent to man, far from being an act of grace toward humanity, is the only way for God to gain full actuality, and to liberate Himself from the suffocating constraints of Eternity?"

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## **Jeffrey says**

Mind melting philosophy

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## **Esteban says**

Zizek sobre el cristianismo. Quien conozca su personaje público sabrá que es inútil pedirle que desarrolle una tesis con prolijidad, pero que a veces ofrece un ángulo desacostumbrado sobre temas demasiado saturados de doxa. Zizek se demora bastante en una interpretación muy personal sobre el goce en el catolicismo, al que caracteriza como un rodeo perverso (en un sentido no valorativo del término) para poder disfrutar los placeres sencillos de un paganismo cada vez más alejado por las fuerzas vivas del presente. Más adelante ofrece una lectura de Pablo que parece una variación improvisada sobre la de su amigo Alain

Badiou, cuyo *Ser y Acontecimiento* podría alumbrar bastante la posición de Žizek mismo respecto al cristianismo. Ninguno de los dos puede expresar directamente simpatía por la religión en general (Badiou es explícitamente ateo, a Žizek le gusta apilar críticas contra el budismo mahayana) ni por el cristianismo en particular, pero ambos parecen encontrar en la lectura paulina algo que actualiza la idea de acontecimiento que consideran fundamental.

En alguna parte Žizek afirma que el momento de darle fin a una terapia es cuando el paciente se da cuenta que no existe un Gran Otro. Las últimas páginas dan a entender que lo que Žizek pretende que suceda con el cristianismo no es una negación (como es el caso del positivismo retrasado de un Dawkins o un Onfray), ni tampoco un descreimiento (como logró imponer el utilitarismo humanista dominante), sino una trasposición del sujeto fiel de la religión a las nuevas esperas apocalípticas del materialismo revolucionario. Más allá de si uno comparta esa fe o no, es bueno encontrar lecturas de lo religioso que no lo confundan con la opresión de un Gran Otro, cuando es (o puede ser) precisamente lo contrario. Un campo de acción y pensamiento para emanciparse de la opresión internalizada que usa las máscaras históricas de un Conductor, del Estado, de la Humanidad, del Individuo Productivo y Feliz, o, más recientemente, del Algoritmo.

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### **Andrew Fairweather says**

You'd think an old leftist-atheist writing on Christianity wouldn't have much to say beyond the tired old pseudo-Nietzschean stuff we've all heard before. Think again! Žizek attempts to understand Christianity on its own terms rather than find (or poke) holes in its edifice. Žizek has an excellent take on what makes the Christian project so special--and why New Age Western Buddhism and privileging of the "Other" by way of Levinasian Judaism fall short of truly radical thinking.

Essentially, the thrust of his arguments hinge on Love and Christ--that it was by introducing difference into the world (that which causes so much antagonism) that Love was (is) possible. That, in Himself, God is incomplete. Only by introducing temporality could eternity be realized.

"[...] if Adam had chosen obedience to God, there would have been no sin and no Law : \*there also would have been no love.\*"

Adam's sin is redeemed by Christ. But what was the significance of the coming of Christ? Had the material world changed? Not so much. It was the introduction of a revelatory perspective. "We rise from the Fall not by undoing its effects, but in recognizing the longed-for liberation in the Fall itself." The true "event," that time in the future which we may jokingly refer to as "revolution weather," will never come insofar as it is already here, waiting for its recognition. In Christ, we realize our Salvation which has merely been misrecognized as the Fall of man. This sort of revelation is what founds new schools of thought, which rejuvenates and reconfigures the idea of what is possible in society.

Žizek makes the point--in what other religions do we find God himself in self doubt?

"It is preposterous to think that I can identify myself with the divine bliss—only when I experience the infinite pain of separation from God do I share an experience with God Himself (Christ on the Cross)."

Thus, what was a pure God in Judaism becomes fractured in Christianity, a split in God Himself which provides an opening for Love. The fact that Christ was the last Adam properly explains the infinite joy beneath the deceptive, caricaturesque surface of guilt and renunciation. What follows is Zizek's reversal of Dostoyevsky's famous saying from *Crime and Punishment*, "Without God everything is permitted." No, rather, "With God everything is permitted." Without God, there is simple cause and effect, a menacing give and take. This, of course, is a complicated idea. On the one hand, the name of God allows for the justification of heinous crimes--it also allows for divine interruptions in the lifeworld such as forgiveness and silence, among many of the finest things known to humankind.

In Lacanian terms (of course) this fracturing that provides an opening for Love is analogous to the imagination, which tears into the fabric of the real. Against Kant, the real is not some horrible nothingness behind the veil. Through Hegel, it is the horror of speculation that the veil conceals something terrifying that is the true veil, that last veil to be cast aside--we must pass through the night of the world in order to realize a different order! Language does not name or designate noumenal objects as much as it digs a hole into the real opening up a space for the visible, creating a dimension of the seen and unseen. In this light, the unity of the Trinity is the pain of the real, the permanent separation between Christ and God, the Holy Ghost.

In the beginning of the book, Zizek promotes the 'Love through subtraction' of Christianity against the popular Western Buddhist notion that to find Enlightenment, one turns inwardly to an all-effacing nothingness, essentially a withdrawal. This withdrawal actualizes as a rather pathetic acceptance--that the world is what it is, that essentially nothing changes. In such a state, one prefers the serenity of the void. Could this ever be Love?? For Zizek, no, not properly speaking, as Love is that stubborn privileging of what one conditional thing over all other conditional things. The Buddhist stance is one of indifference as a result of distancing yourself from passions, while Christian love introduces difference, articulating love through a violent imagination which privileges one object against others by tearing it out of its context.

This has consequences for activism. Truly radical thought can only be based on Love, this elevation of an idea which violently tears it from its context, its truth lying in its perspective. As a result, true knowledge is only accessible from an "interested" partial position. Truth is a perspective, provided its "interested." The truth is the truth of the perspectival distortion, not something pure which is sullied by a one-sided argument.

Apart from all this Zizek, by examining Bataille, has a great bit on transgression, that cuddly thing, is not longer effective when the Father tells you not only to enjoy yourself like a capitalist hedonist, but to tell you how it "went" afterwards--such is the society we are living today. The true way forward would involve escaping from the law of transgression or a romance of the "moment" of rupture, and realize the Law for what it is--that which intervenes, destabilizes, and is essentially excessive. This echoes what I have heard Zizek remind his readers time and time again--sure, we know about revolution--but what about the morning after?

I plead ignorant on matters of Theology, (and on most things, as a matter of fact) but this was an incredible journey, nevertheless.

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## **Beverly says**

I'm still reading Zizek but I can't wait until I'm finished to comment a little. I forgot, until I saw him on youtube (*Zizek on Love*), that I saw the documentary *Zizek! a couple years ago at the Siskel Filmcenter*. *I was enthralled with his energy and passion. Also, how comfortable he was to be himself. I didn't see his*

*eccentric habits as contrived.*

*I've just started reading this book, but I appreciate Zizek's courage to put his ideas out there even if they're not completely thought-through yet, because he leads you into new territory. Whether I end up agreeing with his ideas or not, he incites a rebellious spirit in me to venture beyond what's already been thought about. This, I believe, is what a philosopher should be doing; leading the way into unexplored thought. Zizek, if his concepts appear messy and unformed, at least he is "right" in the ,b>act of thinking.*

*I'm looking for others who have something to say about his work since I'm new to it. So far the responses I've got in person are simply one that consisted of mostly laughter and another that was "WOW!"*

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## **Justin says**

I want to give this 5 stars, because, like all or at least many Zizek books, it is eminently intellectually vast and poignant in the most fascinating ways and eminently entertaining as well. What Zizek lacks is the rigor of some of his intellectual forebears; I'm thinking about Hegel here. While Hegel was never easy to read by almost anyone's standards, one thing he never lacked was rigor and structure. This book, like all of Zizek's books, feels like a tidal wave of learning and erudition blasting you from all corners. But, after thinking about it some, one is hard-pressed to put one's finger on the "real point" of the book. This is due in part to the fact that to really understand Zizek's argument(s), one must have a certain working knowledge of, at the very least Lacan, and ideally Hegel as well as Kant and throw Schelling and Adorno and Horkheimer (yes, a strange triad) in for good measure. This is, of course, not something easy to come by. But, even with said knowlege, Zizek's books feel like stories without a real climax, or perhaps with many climaxes. On the last page of this book, Zizek writes, "The real point of this book is. . ." To me, that reeks of a college essay in serious need of a re-write. The problem is that pretty much every book he writes sort of feels like this.

If Zizek would have opted for some of the rigor of Hegel at the expense of becoming a bit more boring of a writer, I'd take it. Zizek is well into his writing career and it is clear that these sort of stream-of-consciousness books without clear connections from one chapter to another is something that is going to stop. I'm sure his publishers will print whatever he tosses on their desk. And I will continue to read Zizek with both affection and awe. And I'll keep reading Lacan and Hegel so I can understand Zizek. But I will not stop thinking that Zizek Can Do Better.

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