

**Radikale Philosophie Revisited**  
**Eine postmoderne**  
**Alternativkonzeption**  
**21.11.2017**

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# Befreiung und Subjektkonstitution – was die radikale Philosophie von Badiou, Rancière und Balibar lernen muss

- Die Konstitution von Subjekten der Befreiung als Kampfaufgabe
  - Das schwierige Verhältnis von individuellen Subjekte und gemeinsam wirkenden ideologischen Mächten
  - Identifikation, Dys-Identifikation und Desidentifikation (Michel Pêcheux)
  - Subjektivitäten, Ideologien und Kämpfe in der Pluralität der Kämpfe gegen Herrschaft und für Befreiung
  - Diskursive und materielle Praxis Produktion und Handlungen)
  - Die Aufgabe der Wiedergewinnung des Bezugs zum Realen und die deliberative Einbringung des ‚Standes der Wissenschaft‘
- (-> „Wahrheitspolitik“)

Radikale Philosophie angesichts  
der postmodernen philosophisch-  
politischen Programmatik  
21.11.2017

Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau  
und Slavoj Žižek

# Ein zusammenfassendes Buch

"The result that you have before you thus represents the culmination of several conversations, of several written reviews and exchanges, and, in the case of Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau, a collaboration that dates back to 1985, the year that Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau published *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. In fact, that book provides the background for this dialogue, not only because it established a new direction to Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, but also because it represented a turn to poststructuralist theory within Marxism, one that took the problem of language to be essential to the formulation of an antitotalitarian, radical democratic project."

[Judith Butler / Ernesto Laclau / Slavoj Žižek: *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, London/New York: Verso, 2000, S. 1]

# Ein zusammenfassendes Buch, 2

„Subsequently Laclau, who continues to situate himself in the Gramscian tradition, elaborated the category of 'dislocation', drawing his tools from an intellectual spectrum from Derrida and Lacan to Wittgenstein. Whereas Žižek most emphatically makes use of Lacanian theory to address this issue, especially through recourse to 'the Real', he also makes use of Hegel, and offers reasons for eschewing the Derridan framework. Butler may be said to make use of a different Hegel, emphasizing the possibilities of negation in his work, along with Foucault and some Derrida, to consider what remains unrealizable in the discursive constitution of the subject.“

[Judith Butler / Ernesto Laclau / Slavoj Žižek: *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, London/New York: Verso, 2000, S. 2]

# Ein zusammenfassendes Buch, 3

„We thus differentiate ourselves (already internally differentiated) from the Habermasian effort to discover or conjure a pre-established universality as the presupposition of the speech act, a universality which is said to pertain to a rational feature of 'man', a substantive conception of universality which equates it with a knowable and predictable determination, and a procedural form which presumes that the political field is constituted by rational actors.“

[ib., S. 2]

„Whereas Laclau associates Hegel with the metaphysics of closure, Žižek understands him as a theorist of reflexivity in confrontation with the Real, and Butler makes use of him to inquire into the necessary limits of formalism in any account of sociality.“

[ib., S. 3]

# Ein zusammenfassendes Buch, 4

„We are all three committed to radical forms of democracy that seek to understand the processes of representation by which political articulation proceeds, the problem of identification - and its necessary failures - by which political mobilization takes place, the question of the future as it emerges for theoretical frameworks that insist upon the productive force of the negative. Although we do not self-consciously reflect upon the place of the intellectual on the Left, perhaps this text will operate as a certain kind of placement, one that recasts (and retrieves) philosophy as a critical mode of inquiry that belongs - antagonistically - to the sphere of politics. “

[ib., S. 4]

Judith Butler  
\*1956

Postmoderne Programmatik  
und Feminismus/Queer Theory



# Judith Butler: Zur Person

„**Judith Butler** (\* 24. Februar 1956 in Cleveland) ist eine US-amerikanische Philosophin und Philologin. Sie ist Professorin für Rhetorik und Komparatistik an der University of California, Berkeley. Ihre sozialwissenschaftlich-philosophischen Arbeiten werden dem Poststrukturalismus zugeordnet. Seit Ende der 1980er Jahre finden Butlers Arbeiten zur feministischen Theorie internationale Aufmerksamkeit. Mit ihrer Schrift *Das Unbehagen der Geschlechter* stieß sie 1990 die Diskussionen um die *Queer-Theorie* an. Einer von Butlers signifikanten Beiträgen ist das *performative Modell* von Geschlecht. Demnach werden die Kategorien *männlich* und *weiblich* als Wiederholung von Sprechakten verstanden, und nicht als natürliche oder unausweichliche Absolutheiten. Über Geschlechterthemen hinaus hat sie sich mit Fragen von Macht und Subjekttheorien beschäftigt, seit 2002 zudem mit der Ethik der Gewaltlosigkeit.“ (Wikipedia)

# Judith Butler: Die Fragen, 1

## [QUESTIONS FROM JUDITH BUTLER]

(1) I would like to know more precisely whether the Lacanian view on the constitution of the subject is compatible with the notion of hegemony. I understand that the notion of the uncompleted subject or the barred subject appears to guarantee a certain incompleteness of interpellation, but does it not do this by way of installing a bar as the condition and structure of all subject-constitution? Is the incompleteness of subjectformation that hegemony requires one in which the subject-in-process is incomplete precisely because it is constituted through exclusions that are politically salient, not structurally static? In other words, isn't the incompleteness of subject-formation linked to the democratic process of the contestation over signifiers?

# Judith Butler: Die Fragen, 2

Can the ahistorical recourse to the Lacanian bar be reconciled with the strategic question that hegemony poses, or does it stand as a quasi-transcendental limitation on all possible subjectformation and, hence, as indiferent to politics?

(2) What constitutes a viable theory of agency for contemporary political life? Does the Derridan notion of 'decision' suffice to explain the kinds of negotiations that political agency requires? Is 'decision' an ethical or existential category and, if so, how is it to be related to the sphere of the political?

# Judith Butler: Die Fragen, 3

(3) What is the status of 'logic' in describing social and political process and in the description of subject-formation? Does a logic that invariably results in aporias produce a kind of status that is inimical to the project of hegemony? (This question is a subsidiary to Question I.) Are such logics incarnated in social practice? What is the relation between logic and social practice?

(4) What is the relation between psychoanalytic versions of identification and forms of political identification? Does psychoanalysis provide the theory for politics? And which psychoanalysis?

(5) Is it possible to talk about 'the metaphysical logic of identity' as if it were singular?

# Judith Butler: Die Fragen, 4

(6) What does it mean performatively to assume a subject-position, and is that ever simple?

(7) If sexual difference is a deadlock, does that mean that feminism is a dead end? If sexual difference is 'real' in the Lacanian sense, does that mean that it has no place in hegemonic struggles? Or is it the quasitranscendental limit to all such struggle, and hence frozen in place as the pre- or ahistorical?

(8) Is the recent effort to divide critical theories into universalisms and historicisms part of a failed and blinded dialectic that refuses to discriminate among nuanced positions? Does this have to do with the place of Kant in resurgent forms of deconstruction and Lacanianism? Is there also a Lacanian doxa that prevents a heterodox appropriation of Lacan for the thinking of hegemony?

# Judith Butler: Die Fragen, 5

(8a) Are we all still agreed that hegemony is a useful category for describing our political dispositions? Would clarifying this be a good place to start?

(9) Does a serious consideration of Hegel lead us to rethink the Kantian oppositions between form and content, between quasi-transcendental claims and the historical examples that are invoked to illustrate their truth?

(10) In what does the critical authority of the critical theorist consist? Are our own claims subject to an autocritique, and how does that appear at the level of rhetoric?

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 1

„Hegel implicitly likens the Kantian to one who seeks to know how to swim before actually swimming, and he counters this model of a self-possessed cognition with one that gives itself over to the activity itself, a form of knowing that is given over to the world it seeks to know. Although Hegel is often dubbed a philosopher of 'mastery', we can see here - and in Nancy's trenchant book on Hegel's 'inquietude' - that the ek-static disposition of the self towards its world undoes cognitive mastery. Hegel's own persistent references to 'losing oneself' and 'giving oneself over' only confirm the point that the knowing subject cannot be understood as one who imposes ready-made categories on a pregiven world.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 2

„The categories are shaped by the world it seeks to know, just as the world is not known without the prior action of those categories. And just as Hegel insists on revising several times his very definition of 'universality', so he makes plain that the categories by which the world becomes available to us are continually remade by the encounter with the world that they facilitate. We do not remain the same, and neither do our cognitive categories, as we enter into a knowing encounter with the world. Both the knowing subject and the world are undone and redone by the act of knowledge. In the section of The Phenomenology of Spirit 6 called 'Reason', Hegel makes it clear that universality is not a feature of a subjective cognitive capacity, but linked to the problem of reciprocal recognition.“



# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 3

„Moreover, recognition itself is dependent on custom or Sittlichkeit: 'in the universal Substance, the individual has this form of subsistence not only for his activity as such , but no less also for the content of that activity; what he does is the skill and customary practice of all' (para. 35 1 ). Recognition is not possible apart from the customary practices in which it takes place, and so no formal conditions of recognition will suffice. Similarly, to the extent that what H egel calls the 'universal Substance' is essentially conditioned by customary practice, the individual instantiates and reproduces that custom . In Hegel's words: ' the individual in his individual work already unconscious!>, performs a universal work . . .' (ibid.).“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 4

„The implication of this view is that any effort to establish universality as transcendent of cultural norms seems to be impossible. Although Hegel clearly understands customary practice, the ethical order and the nation as simple unities, it does not follow that the universality which crosses cultures or emerges out of culturally heterogeneous nations must therefore transcend culture itself. In fact, if Hegel's notion of universality is to prove good under conditions of hybrid cultures and vacillating national boundaries, it will have to become a universality forged through the work of cultural translation . And it will not be possible to set the boundaries of the cultures in question, as if one culture's notion of universality could be translated into another's. Cultures are not bounded entities ; the mode of their exchange is, in fact, constitutive of their identity.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 5

„It may seem that such a temporalized conception of universality has little to do with the region of politics, but consider the political risks of maintaining a static conception, one that fails to accommodate challenge, one that refuses to respond to its own constitutive exclusions.

Thus we can come to some preliminary conclusions about Hegel's procedure here: (1) universality is a name which undergoes significant accruals and reversals of meaning, and cannot be reduced to any of its constitutive 'moments' ; (2) it is inevitably haunted by the trace of the particular thing to which it is opposed, and this takes the form (a) of a spectral doubling of universality, and (b) a clinging of that particular thing to universality itself, exposing the formalism of its claim as necessarily impure; (3) the relation of universality to its cultural articulation is insuperable; this means that any transcultural notion of the universal will be spectralized and stained by the cultural norms it purports to transcend; and (4) no notion of universality can rest easily within the notion of a single 'culture', since the very concept of universality compels an understanding of culture as a relation of exchange and a task of translation.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 6

„By emphasizing the cultural location of the enunciation of universality, one sees not only that there can be no operative notion of universality that does not assume the risks of translation, but that the very claim of universality is bound to various syntactic stagings within culture which make it impossible to separate the formal from the cultural features of any universalist claim. Both the form and the content of universality are highly contested, and cannot be articulated outside the scene of their embattlement. Using Foucault's language of genealogy, we might insist that universality is an 'emergence' [Entstehung] or a 'nonplace', 'a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence: no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice. Maintaining that universality is a 'site of contest' has become something of an academic truism, but considering the meaning and promise of that contest has not.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 7

„On the one hand - as Laclau and Zizek know very well, and Etienne Balibar has made very clear - universality has been used to extend certain colonialist and racist understandings of civilized 'man', to exclude certain populations from the domain of the human, and to produce itself as a false and suspect category. When we begin the critique of such notions of universality, it may seem to some - especially to the Habermasians - that we operate with another concept of universality in mind, one which would be truly all-encompassing. Laclau has argued persuasively that no concept of universality can ever be all-encompassing, and that were it to enclose all possible contents, it would not only close the concept of time, but ruin the political efficacy of universality itself. Universality belongs to an open-ended hegemonic struggle. But what does happen, then, when a disenfranchised group proceeds to claim 'universality', to claim that they ought properly to be included within its purview? Does that claim presuppose a broader, more fundamental notion of universality, or is it that the claim is performative, producing a notion of universality which exercises, in Zizek's terms, a retroactive necessity upon the conditions of its emergence? Does the new universality appear as if it has been true all along?“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 8

„This last formulation does not concede that it exists as a prior concept, but that, as a consequence of having been posited, it assumes the present quality of having always been so. But here, we must be cautious: the positing of new forms of universality does not produce this effect for everyone, and many of the current struggles over national sovereignty and the proper limits for extending group rights affirm that the performative effects of such claims are hardly uniform.

The assertion of universality by those who have conventionally been excluded by the term often produces a performative contradiction of a certain sort. But this contradiction, in Hegelian fashion, is not selfcancelling, but exposes the spectral doubling of the concept itself. And it prompts a set of antagonistic speculations on what the proper venue for the claim of universality ought to be. Who may speak it? And how ought it to be spoken? The fact that we do not know the answers to these questions confirms that the question of universality has not been settled. As I have argued elsewhere, to claim that the universal has not yet been articulated is to insist that the 'not yet' is proper to an understanding of the universal itself: that which remains 'unrealized' by the universal constitutes it essentially.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 9

„The main terms of modernity are subject to an innovative reuse - what some might call a 'misuse' - precisely because they are spoken by those who are not authorized in advance to make use of them. And what emerges is a kind of political claim which, I would argue, is neither exclusively universal nor exclusively particular; where, indeed, the particular interests that inhere in certain cultural formulations of universality are exposed, and no universal is freed from its contamination by the particular contexts from which it emerges and in which it travels. Slave uprisings that insist upon the universal authorization for emancipation nevertheless borrow from a discourse that runs at least a double risk: the emancipated slave may be liberated into a new mode of subjection that the doctrine of citizenship has in store, and that doctrine may find itself rendered conceptually riven precisely by the emancipatory claims it has made possible. There is no way to predict what will happen in such instances when the universal is wielded precisely by those who signify its contamination, but the purification of the universal into a new formalism will only reinitiate the dialectic that produces its split and spectral condition.“

# Judith Butler: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 10

„The reiterative speech act thus offers the possibility - though not the necessity - of depriving the past of the established discourse of its exclusive control over defining the parameters of the universal within politics. This form of political perform ativity does not retroactively absolutize its own claim, but recites and restages a set of cultural norms that displace legitimacy from a presumed authority to the mechanism of its renewal. Such a shift renders more ambiguous - and more open to reformulation - the mobility of legitimation in discourse. Indeed, such claims do not return us to a wisdom we already have, but provoke a set of questions that show how profound our sense of not-knowing is and must be as we lay claim to the norms of political principle. What, then, is a right? What ought universality to be? How do we understand what it is to be a 'human'?“



Ernesto Laclau  
\*1935

„Diskursivismus“ als  
Programm

## Ernesto Laclau: Zur Person

„**Ernesto Laclau** (\* 6. Oktober 1935 in Buenos Aires; † 13. April 2014 in Sevilla, Spanien) war ein argentinischer politischer Theoretiker. Er war Professor für Politische Theorie an der Universität Essex und Begründer der Essex School. Er rechnete sich selbst dem Postmarxismus zu und vertrat theoretische Positionen des Poststrukturalismus sowie des Post-Fundationalismus.“

(Wikipedia)

# Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 1

1. In many contemporary debates, universalism is presented as opposed to the plurality of social actors which proliferate in the contemporary world. There is, however, in this question of the relationship universalism versus particularism, a certain polysemy regarding the two poles. Is multiculturalism, for instance, reducible to a particularistic logic which denies any right to the 'universal'? Also: is the notion of 'pluralism' - which evokes a variety of subject-positions of the same social actor - directly assimilable to 'multiculturalism', which involves reference to integral cultural! social communities which do not, however, overlap with the global national community? Conversely, is it true that the only conceivable form of universalism is linked to a foundationalist or essentialist grounding?

## Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 2

2. One of the many consequences of the increasing fragmentation of contemporary societies is that communitarian values - contextualized in so far as we are always dealing with specific communities - are supplemented by discourses of rights (such as, for instance, the rights of peoples or cultural minorities to self-determination) which are asserted as valid independently of any context. Are these two movements - assertion of universal rights and assertion of communitarian specificity - ultimately compatible? And if they are not, is not this incompatibility positive, as it opens the terrain for a variety of negotiations and a plurality of language games which are necessary for the constitution of public spaces in the societies in which we live?

## Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 3

3. Classical theories of emancipation postulated the ultimate homogeneity of the social agents to be emancipated - in Marxism, for instance, the condition for the proletariat to be the agent of a global emancipation was that it had no particular interests to defend, because it had become the expression of pure human essence. In the same way, in some forms of classical democratic politics - Jacobinism would be the clearest example - the unity of the will of the people is the precondition for any democratic transformation. Today, on the contrary, we tend to speak of emancipations (in the plural), which start from a diversity of social demands, and to identify democratic practice with the negotiated consensus among a plurality of social actors. What notion of social agency is compatible with this transformed approach?

## Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 4

4. The theory of hegemony presupposes, on the one hand, that the 'universal' is an object both impossible and necessary - always requiring, as a result, the presence of an ineradicable remainder of particularity - and, on the other, that the relation between power and emancipation is not one of exclusion but, on the contrary, one of mutual - albeit contradictory - implication. Is the hegemonic relation, conceived in this way, constitutive of the political link? And if so, what are the strategic games it is possible to play starting from its internal tensions?

## Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 5

5. The category of difference, in one way or the other, is at the root of the most important theoretical approaches of the last thirty years. Nomadic identities in Deleuze and Guattari, micro-physics of power in Foucault, differance in Derrida, the logic of the signifier in Lacan, are alternative ways of dealing with the constitutive character of 'difference'. Are they incompatible with each other and, if so, where do those incompatibilities lie? How can we assess their respective productivity for political analysis?

## Ernesto Laclau: Die Fragen, 6

6. The question of transcendentalism has been haunting contemporary theory for a long while. What, for instance, is the status of psychoanalytic categories such as the Oedipus or castration complex? Are they historical products or, rather, the a priori conditions of any possible society? There is the widespread feeling that neither a radical historicism nor a fully fledged transcendentalism would constitute appropriate answers, and some kind of solution which avoids the pitfalls of the two extremes such as the notion of quasi-transcendentalism - has been postulated. The status of this 'quasi' is, however, so far insufficiently explored. What would be the preconditions for a theoretical advance in this field, and what would be the consequences of the latter for historical analysis?



# Ernesto Laclau: Die Argumentation

-> Bernardo Bianchis Darstellung

Slavoj Žižek  
\* 1949

Streitbarer Post-  
Modernismus

# Slavoj Žižek: Zur Person

„ **Slavoj Žižek** ['ʒizɛk] (\* 21. März 1949 in Ljubljana, SFRJ) ist ein aus Slowenien stammender Philosoph, Kulturkritiker und Theoretiker der lacanianischen Psychoanalyse. Bekannt geworden ist er durch seine Übertragung und Weiterentwicklung der Psychoanalyse Jacques Lacans in das Feld der Populärkultur und der Gesellschaftskritik. Er wird häufig dem Poststrukturalismus zugerechnet, hat sich selbst jedoch mehrfach von dieser Einordnung distanziert.“ (Wikipedia, Deutsch)

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Fragen, 1

1. The Real and historicity: is the Lacanian Real the ultimate bedrock, the firm referent of the symbolic process, or does it stand for its totally nonsubstantial inherent limit, point of failure, which maintains the very gap between reality and its symbolization, and thus sets in motion the contingent process of historicization - symbolization?
2. Lack and repetition: is the movement of repetition grounded in some primordial lack, or does the notion of a primordial, founding lack necessarily involve the reinscription of the process of repetition into the metaphysical logic of identity?
3. The social logic of (dis)identification: is disidentification necessarily subversive of the existing order, or is a certain mode of disidentification, of 'maintaining a distance' towards one's symbolic identity, consubstantial with effective participation in social life? What are the different modes of disidentification?

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Fragen, 2

4. Subject, subjectivization, subject-positions: is the 'subject' simply the result of the process of subjectivization, of interpellation, of performatively assuming some 'fixed subject-position', or does the Lacanian notion of the 'barred subject' (and the German Idealist notion of subject as selfrelating negativity) also pose an alternative to traditional identitarian-substantialist metaphysics?

5. The status of sexual difference: again, does sexual difference simply stand for 'man' and 'woman' as two subject-positions individuals assume through repetitive performative acquisition, or is sexual difference 'real' in the Lacanian sense - that is, a deadlock - so that every attempt at translating it into fixed subject-positions fails?

6. Phallic signifier: is the notion of phallus in Lacan 'phallogocentrist' -that is, the notion of a central signifier which, as a kind of transcendental point of reference, structures the field of sexuality - or does the fact that, for Lacan, phallus as signifier is a 'prosthetic' supplement to the subject's lack, change something?

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Fragen, 3

7. The Universal and historicism: is it enough, today, to follow the Jamesonian advice 'Historicize! '? What are the limits of the historicist criticism of false universals? Is it not much more productive, for inherent theoretical as well as for political reasons, to maintain the paradoxical notion of the Universal as simultaneously impossible and necessary?

8. Hegel: is Hegel simply the metaphysician par excellence, so that every attempt to assert the post-metaphysical complex of temporality-contingency-finitude is by definition anti-Hegelian, or is the very post-metaphysical hostility against Hegel a kind of index of its own theoretical limitation, so that one should, rather, focus on bringing to the light of day 'another Hegel' which does not fit the doxa of 'panlogicism' ?

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Fragen, 4

7. The Universal and historicism: is it enough, today, to follow the Jamesonian advice 'Historicize! '? What are the limits of the historicist criticism of false universals? Is it not much more productive, for inherent theoretical as well as for political reasons, to maintain the paradoxical notion of the Universal as simultaneously impossible and necessary?

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# Slavoj Žižek: Die Fragen, 5

9. Lacan and deconstruction: is it theoretically correct to conceive of Lacan as one in the series of deconstructionists, or does the fact that a whole set of features distinguish Lacan from the deconstructionist doxa (maintaining the notion of the subject as cogito, etc.) point towards an incommensurability between the two fields?

10. The political question: should we accept the 'postmodern' notion of the plurality of (mostly ethnic, sexual or lifestyle) struggles for recognition, or does the recent resurgence of right-wing populism compel us to rethink the standard co-ordinates of 'postmodern' radical politics, and to revive the tradition of the 'critique of political economy'? How does all this affect the notions of hegemony and totality? The Real and historicity: is the Lacanian Real the ultimate bedrock, the firm referent of the symbolic process, or does it stand for its totally nonsubstantial inherent limit, point of failure, which maintains the very gap between reality and its symbolization, and thus sets in motion the contingent process of historicization - symbolization?



# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband

„The realization of the world as global market, the undivided reign of great financial conglomerates, etc . , all this is an indisputable reality and one that conforms, essentially, to Marx's analysis. The question is, where does politics fit in with all this? What kind of politics is real[y] heterogeneous to what capital demands? - that is today's question.“

(Alain Badiou)

„false alternative today's critical theory seems to impose on us: either 'class struggle' (the outdated problematic of class antagonism, commodity production , etc. ) or 'postmodernism ' (the new world of dispersed multiple identities, of radical contingency, of an irreducible ludic plurality of struggles)“

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 2

„In Judith Butler's work, this notion is that of the fundamental reflexivity of human desire, I and the notion (concomitant to the first one, although developed later) of 'passionate attachments', of traumatic fixations that are unavoidable and, simultaneously, inadmissible - in order to remain operative, they have to be repressed; in Laclau, it is, of course, the notion of antagonism as fundamentally different from the logic of symbolic /structural difference, and the concomitant notion of the hegemonic struggle for filling out the empty place of universality as necessary/ impossible. In both cases, we are thus dealing with a term (universality, 'passionate attachment') which is simultaneously impossible and necessary, disavowed and unavoidable. So where is my difference with the two of them? To define it is more difficult than it may appear: any direct attempt to formulate it via a comparison between our respective positions somehow misses the point. “

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 3

„the aim of all three of us - is not to score narcissistic points against others, but - to risk an old-fashioned expression - to struggle with the Thing itself which is at stake, namely, the (im)possibilities of radical political thought and practice today“

“...the condition of impossibility of the exercise of power becomes its condition of possibility: just as the ultimate failure of communication is what compels us to talk all the time (if we could say what we want to say directly, we would very soon stop talking and shut up for ever) , so the ultimate uncertainty and precariousness of the exercise of power is the only guarantee that we are dealing with a legitimate democratic power.“

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 4

„While I fully endorse the well-known thesis that the very gesture of drawing a clear line of distinction between the Political and the non-Political, of positing some domains (economy, private intimacy, art . . .) as 'apolitical', is a political gesture par excellence, I am also tempted to turn it around: what if the political gesture par excellence, at its purest, is precisely the gesture of separating the Political from the non-Political, of excluding some domains from the Political?“

„Postmodern politics definitely has the great merit that it 'repoliticizes' a series of domains previously considered 'apolitical' or 'private' ; the fact remains, however, that it does not in fact repoliticize capitalism , because the very notion and form of the 'political' within which it operates is grounded in the 'depoliticization' of the economy.“

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 6

„Here I should just like to emphasize two further points: the exclusionary logic is always redoubled in itself: not only is the subordinated Other (homosexuals, non-white races . . .) excluded/repressed, but hegemonic universality itself also relies on a disavowed 'obscene' particular content of its own (say, the exercise of power that legitimizes itself as legal, tolerant, Christian . . . relies on a set of publicly disavowed obscene rituals of violent humiliation of the subordinated). More generally, we are dealing here with what one is tempted to call the ideological practice of disidentification.”

“premodern, modern and today's 'postmodern' notion and ideological practice of universality do not, for example, differ only with regard to the particular contents that are included/excluded in universal notions - somehow, on a more radical level, the very underlying notion of universality functions in a different way in each of these epochs. 'Universality' as such does not mean the same thing since the establishment of bourgeois market society in which individuals participate in the social order not on behalf of their particular place within the global social edifice but immediately, as 'abstract' human beings.”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 7

„In other words, the problem for me is how to historicize historicism itself. The passage from 'essentialist' Marxism to postmodern contingent politics (in Laclau), or the passage from sexual essentialism to contingent gender-formation (in Butler), or - a further example - the passage from metaphysician to ironist in Richard Rorty, is not a simple epistemological progress but part of the global change in the very nature of capitalist society. It is not that before, people were 'stupid essentialists' and believed in naturalized sexuality, while now they know that genders are performatively enacted; one needs a kind of metanarrative that explains this very passage from essentialism to the awareness of contingency: the Heideggerian notion of the epochs of Being, or the Foucauldian notion of the shift in the predominant episteme, or the standard sociological notion of modernization, or a more Marxist account in which this passage follows the dynamic of capitalism.”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 8

„problematic for at least two reasons. First, Laclau would probably reject it as relying on the Hegelian notion of the necessary historical development that conditions and anchors political struggles. Second, from my perspective, today's postmodern politics of multiple subjectivities is precisely not political enough, in so far as it silently presupposes a non-thematized, 'naturalized' framework of economic relations. Against the postmodern political theory which tends increasingly to prohibit the very reference to capitalism as 'essentialist', one should assert that the plural contingency of postmodern political struggles and the totality of Capital are not opposed, with Capital somehow 'limiting' the free drift of hegemonic displacements - today's capitalism, rather, provides the very background and terrain for the emergence of shiffling-dispersed-contingent-ironic-and so on, political subjectivities.”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 9

„in the democratic struggle for hegemony, each position accuses the other of being 'not really democratic' : for a conservative liberal, social democratic interventionism is already potentially 'totalitarian' ; for a social democrat, the traditional liberal's neglect of social solidarity is nondemocratic . . . so each position tries to impose its own logic of inclusion! exclusion, and all these exclusions are 'politically salient, not structurally static'; in order for this very struggle to take place, however, its terrain must constitute itself by means of a more fundamental exclusion ('primordial repression') that is not simply historical--contingent, a stake in the present constellation of the hegemonic struggle, since it sustains the very terrain of historicity.”

“It is the reference to such a zero-institution that enables all members of the tribe to experience themselves as such, as members of the same tribe. Is not this zero-institution, then, ideology at its purest, that is, the direct embodiment of the ideological function of providing a neutral all-encompassing space in which social antagonism is obliterated, in which all members of society can recognize themselves? And is not the struggle for hegemony precisely the struggle over how this zero-institution will be overdetermined, coloured by some particular signification?”



# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 10

„Dolar's key thesis is thus: 'for Althusser, the subject is what makes ideology work; for psychoanalysis, the subject emerges where ideology fails'.”

“From here, Dolar moves on to a double criticism of Althusser: first, Althusser does not take into account this objectal remainder/excess that resists symbolization; secondly, in his insistence on the 'material' status of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), Althusser misrecognizes the 'ideal' status of the symbolic order itself as the ultimate Institution.”

“Furthermore, Butler also accuses Dolar of idealizing the big Other, that is, of endorsing the (Lacanian) shift from material ISAs and their rituals to the notion of an immaterial/ideal symbolic order”

“the fact that the 'subject' itself is nothing but the failure of symbolization, of its own symbolic representation - the subject is nothing 'beyond' this failure, it emerges through this failure, and the objet petit a is merely a positivization/ embodiment of this failure”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 11

„This notion of the subject as the 'answer of the Real' finally allows me to confront Butler's standard criticism of the relationship between the Real and the Symbolic in Lacan: the determination of the Real as that which resists symbolization is itself a symbolic determination, that is, the very gesture of excluding something from the Symbolic, of positing it as beyond the prohibitive Limit (as the Sacred, Untouchable), is a symbolic gesture (a gesture of symbolic exclusion) par excellence . . . . In contrast to this, however, one should insist on how the Lacanian Real is strictly internal to the Symbolic : it is nothing but its inherent limitation , the impossibility of the Symbolic fully to 'become itself' .”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 12

“What happens in the passage from the position of strict class struggle to Fascist anti-Semitism is not just a simple replacement of one figure of the enemy [the bourgeoisie, the ruling class] with another [the Jews] , but the shift from the logic of antagonism which makes Society impossible to the logic of external Enemy which guarantees Society's consistency.) The paradox, therefore, is that Butler is, in a way, right: yes, the Real is in fact internal/inherent to the Symbolic, not its external limit, but for that very reason, it cannot be symbolized. In other words, the paradox is that the Real as external, excluded from the Symbolic, is in fact a symbolic determination - what eludes symbolization is precisely the Real as the inherent point of failure of symbolization.”

“In short, an authentic act is not simply external with regard to the hegemonic symbolic field disturbed by it: an act is an act only with regard to some symbolic field, as an intervention into it.”

# Slavoj Žižek: Die Argumentation in diesem Sammelband, 13

“The main form of the resistance against the act today is a kind of unwritten Denkverbot (prohibition to think) similar to the infamous Berufsverbot (prohibition to be employed by any state institution) from the late 1960s in Germany - the moment one shows a minimal sign of engaging in political projects that aim seriously to change the existing order, the answer is immediately: 'Benevolent as it is, this will necessarily end in a new Gulag!' The 'return to ethics' in today's political philosophy shamefully exploits the horrors of Gulag or Holocaust as the ultimate bogey for blackmailing us into renouncing all serious radical engagement.”

“What, however, if philosophical differences do matter politically, and if, as a consequence, this political congruence between philosophers tells us something crucial about their pertinent philosophical stance? What if, in spite of the great passionate public debates between deconstructionists, pragmatists, Habermasians and cognitivists, they none the less share a series of philosophical premisses - what if there is an unacknowledged proximity between them? And what if the task today is precisely to break with this terrain of shared premisses?”