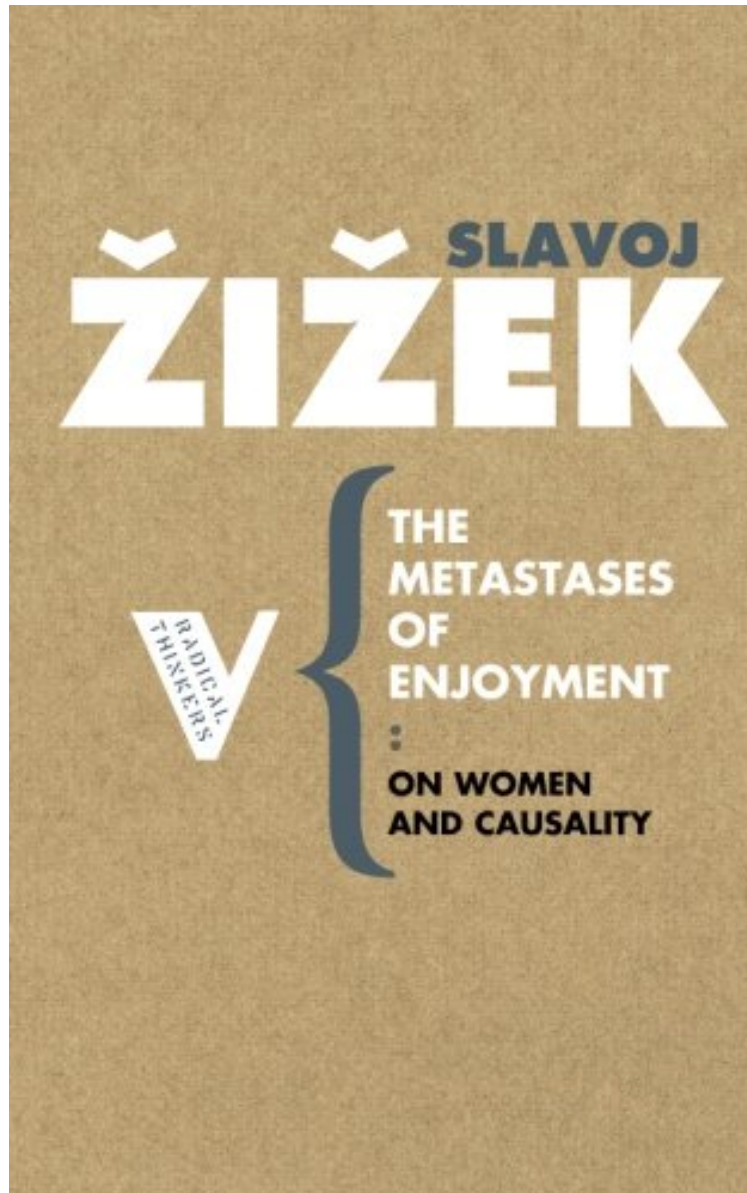


(Free) The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality (Radical Thinkers)

The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality (Radical Thinkers)

Slavoj Žižek

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Slavoj Žižek : The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality (Radical Thinkers) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Metastases of Enjoyment: On Women and Causality (Radical Thinkers):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book
By L Anne Breene
As a Jungian I am disagreeing on some things, but his insights are amazing. Now if I could only understand more of it - and I will - I will be awesomely happy. Thanks Slavoj, I am a fan and a student.
6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. There is no Better Way to Conceal a Crime than to Confess it Right Away
By Etienne RP
Who said that woman doesn't exist? Before becoming one of Lacan's favorite aphorisms--along with "there is no sexual relationship"--, this denial of woman's existence was pronounced by a minor Austrian philosopher in the beginning of the twentieth century. Born in Vienna in 1880, Otto Weininger died young: he committed suicide at the age of 23, not before publishing his maiden work, *Sex and Character*, in 1903. This essay, and the dramatic death of its author, had an impact on Viennese circles around that date: Ludwig Wittgenstein held the book in high esteem, and it may have inspired other Viennese luminaries. But the truth of the matter is that *Sex and Character* was a misogynistic and antisemitic tract. For Weininger, woman was entirely dominated by sexuality: "Woman is only and thoroughly sexual, since her sexuality extends to her entire body and is in certain places, to put it in physical terms, only more dense than in others." Woman lives only for sex: "The idea of pairing is the only conception that has positive worth for women." The female life is consumed with the sexual function: both with the act, as a prostitute, and the product, as a mother. By contrast, the duty of the male, or the masculine aspect of personality, is to strive to become a genius, and to forego sexuality for an abstract love of the absolute, God, which he finds within himself. Why does Zizek reproduce this sexist babble? What need is there to unearth this case of fin-de-siècle anti-feminism? The reason is that, for Zizek, there is no better way to conceal a crime than to confess it right away. Zizek specializes in borderline statements and outright provocations. His readiness to discuss anti-Jews propaganda, or violence against women, should not be read as an endorsement of hate speech. But neither does he denounce it, or reject it right away. Rather, by the elusive character of his politics, by the undecidability as to where he actually stands, he compels us to take position, and to decide upon our own values. Understanding Zizek is to reject him, and the reader should follow his admonition to throw the baby with the bathwater. For Zizek, this is all for a good cause: his aim is to "rescue for progressive thought authors who are usually dismissed as hopeless reactionaries"--Weininger of course, but Hegel and even Lacan could be added to the list. He does so by practicing a kind of intellectual jujitsu: when you want to put down an adversary, you stick close to him and use his own force to send him to the ground. Zizek never contradicts an author: he brings him to his point of absurdity, where Kant meets with Sade in his call for a genuinely ethical act, and where Hegel's dialectic runs in a purely negative mode, without any hope of sublation. Alas, the progressive thought Zizek is out to rescue is a pitiful mixture of Marx and Freud, of Althusser and Lacan, that might have been in fashion in the seventies, but that has lost whatever contact with reality it ever had. Where Zizek reconnects with reality, and pitches the interest of his reader, is with his references to popular culture and Hollywood movies. They are relatively few in this book, which is quite highbrow and loaded with heavy philosophical discussions. But Zizek reveals his proprietary trademark when he confesses, in the self-interview that closes the book: "I am convinced of my proper grasp of some Lacanian concept only when I can translate it successfully into the inherent imbecility of popular culture." Zizek also gets it right when he underscores the changes in the figure of authority in contemporary society. The modern father, or the political leader, is no longer the towering figure ordering us to do right and to follow the Law: it is the Master of Enjoyment who invites us to trespass law and bend rules, thereby obstructing our very access to transgression and pleasure. The Ego Ideal turns into the superego and reveals the obscene 'nightly' law that necessarily redoubles and accompanies, as its shadow, the 'public' Law. This unwritten code is meant to be kept hidden: in public, everybody pretends to know nothing about it, or even actively denies its existence. Its function is to sustain the Law and to hold the community together: solidarity-in-guilt is induced by participation in a common transgression. Identification with community is ultimately based upon some shared lie or disavowal of a founding crime. In Andersen's tale, of course everybody knew that the emperor was naked, yet it was precisely the denial of this fact that held the subjects together. What is new in contemporary society is that this shared lie is now made public: state authorities recognize using torture and other illegal means to reach their aims; greed is turned into a virtue by unfettered money-makers; and people no longer hide when they violate common decency or morality. The secret law becomes the official rule, and the legitimate law is denied as ineffective or out-fashioned. In today's epoch, a state power, or a political leader, can proudly admit to its dark side, advertising the fact that it is discreetly doing dirty things it is better for us not to know about. The emperor can rule as long as his subjects feign to acknowledge that he has clothes on: but when he goes around naked and boasts about it, the kingdom is in peril.
9 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Impressive: intellectual fireworks
By Edward G. Nilges
Zizek writes in the tradition of Adorno, because he takes the Continental philosophical tradition seriously, and, he understands it. I don't pretend to understand this book in full, but, reading it is not as anhedonic as my first encounter with Adorno in the 1980s, when I forced myself to attend to Adorno as a form of therapy-in-recovery. That's because Zizek is much more chukka chukka hip about popular culture and uses it, along with the canon, to make his points, whereas Adorno would refer to far more obscure literary texts. But both write in the shadow of what Arthur Koestler called a god that failed (Communism). Zizek writes as another Moloch, another god, fails, and that's globalized capitalism where the condition of entry is self-objectification narrated as freedom to choose. Freedom to choose...what? Zizek writes from the standpoint of the idle fellow temporarily stranded in a small

city on business back when there were movie theaters showing second-run films, and who wanders into the theater like Parsifal in the enchanted castle or at the puppet show, and masochistically gives himself over to an enjoyment which hasn't yet metastasised into its perverse reverse. The chapter on the extreme, almost catatonically anti-feminist Otto Weininger is interesting because unlike traditional political movements, feminism doesn't get to see its opposite. The reaction towards feminism hastens, whether religious or not, for the most part, to agree with its adversary and to make all sorts of concessions which are often accepted with a great deal of suspicion...as if feminism sought more an adversary like the late Norman Mailer with a mind of his own, who believed feminism just wrong and who invited many feminists to fart in a bottle and paint it. Marxism had in fact the American opposition to Marxism root and branch which started soon after the (American) civil war, and union busters, and finally the mad woman, Thatcher. Of course, opposition doesn't always invigorate a cause. Thatcherism and Reagan dealt a death blow to a Marxism already weakened by the discovery that Leninism didn't end competition in the new society. But, the second-wave feminism had only one man to talk back while the others, until Zizek, were T. S. Eliot's dried voices whispering together. Don't get me wrong. Zizek, in my understanding, isn't opposed to feminism. But, he won't go along with a womyn-centered programme drained of humanism, either. His invocation of the angry ghost of Weininger is as if to say, it still moves: culture *as we know it* is male, and is being destroyed by a metastasing American consumption barbarism which won't sign the Kyoto accords and is in hock to China...so, you better call it down and ring, you better pawn it babe: European culture is appreciating like the Euro itself. Like writing in Adorno, it is a home for the homeless mind. Perhaps "male" and "female" as adjectives are just too abstract to attach to anything but men and animals to describe their sex, and even this would require an interpretation of the pointy thing, and the receptive thing. Zizek comes in fact close to celebrating the male "detachment" which looked upon calmly, Spinozistically, sub specie aeternitatis and all that is simply independence from a set of biological concerns which are the domain of the female, having to do with the reproduction of daily life so celebrated by Tolstoy. Equally attractive is a feminine aporia, and this is the lack of the need to invade Russia. Specific "tough broads" like Hilary Clinton repel because the matching aporias are vulnerabilities absent in her...the invulnerable has no need of us. An "androgynous" male politician wouldn't be at all the mathematical opposite of Hilary; Zizek takes pains to remind us that in dialectics, the opposite isn't quantitatively the same as is $\sim p$ to p in traditional logic (which could without loss of signal represent p 's negation as p , and its assertion as $\sim p$). No, if someone came along scoring high as female and male, exceeding 100%, they'd lock him up. In a sense Kennedy, to a lesser extent Clinton, were steps in this direction and the hatred they attracted PLUS their attractiveness also was "out of the box": Kennedy was murdered by a man in sexual rage (probably not by a conspiracy after all, but, if you like, a conspiracy fueled by high-class sexual rage against early detente), and by the Clinton era, the fulminations of the likes of Rep. Bob "B1 Bob" Dornan were frightening...he saw Clinton as the AntiChrist. Zizek provides tools, if that's the word, which it probably isn't, to think about the whole where the whole is untrue.

The experience of the Yugoslav war and the rise of irrational violence in contemporary societies provides the theoretical and political context of this book, which uses Lacanian psychoanalysis as the basis for a renewal of the Marxist theory of ideology. The authors analysis leads into a study of the figure of woman in modern art and ideology, including studies of *The Crying Game* and the films of David Lynch, and the links between violence and power/gender relations.

Discussing Hegel and Lacan is like breathing for Slavoj. Judith Butler
The most formidably brilliant exponent of psychoanalysis, indeed of cultural theory in general, to have emerged from Europe in some decades. Terry Eagleton
The Giant of Ljubljana provides the best intellectual high since *Anti-Oedipus*. Village Voice
About the Author
Slavoj iek is a Slovenian philosopher and cultural critic. He is a professor at the European Graduate School, International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities, Birkbeck College, University of London, and a senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His books include *Living in the End Times*, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, four volumes of the *Essential iek*, and many more.