

Žižek and the Kantian gesture: Parallax and beyond

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Abstract

Early in his 1993 book *Tarrying with the Negative*, Slavoj Žižek asks contemporary philosophy to “repeat the Kantian gesture.” The implication is that (much like Plato did with the Sophists) Kant accepted the critique of metaphysics made by David Hume, affirming it in an unexpected positive sense. The analogous gesture for a would-be Kant in our time would be to accept deconstruction’s insistence on the contingency of meaning while treating contingency not as a failing, but as the very stuff of truth itself. For Žižek this is precisely what Jacques Lacan has already done, and this makes Lacan the pivotal thinker of our era. Yet as we follow Žižek’s pursuit of this theme in his recent article “The Parallax of Ontology” (an extract from his book *Sex and the Failed Absolute*), we catch sight of a new direction in Žižek’s thinking. His previous model of parallax in terms of two separate and irreconcilable realities seems to shift toward a new emphasis on the differential becoming of the two, rather than their paradoxical co-existence.

Keywords: Slavoj Žižek; G.W.F. Hegel; Jacques Lacan; Jane Bennett; Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO); onto-taxonomy; difference

Resum. Žižek i el gest kantià: paral·laxi i més enllà

A principis del seu llibre de 1993 *Tarrying with the negative*, Slavoj Žižek demana a la filosofia contemporània que «repeteixi el gest kantià». La implicació és que Kant (com va fer Plató amb els sofistes) va acceptar la crítica de la metafísica feta per David Hume afirmant-la en un sentit positiu inesperat. El gest anàleg per a un aspirant a Kant en la nostra època seria acceptar la insistència de la desconstrucció en la contingència del sentit mentre tracta la contingència no pas com un fracàs, sinó com la mateixa matèria de la veritat. Per a Žižek, això és precisament el que ja ha fet Jacques Lacan, i això fa de Lacan el pensador fonamental de la nostra època. No obstant això, mentre seguim la recerca d’aquest tema per part de Žižek en el seu recent article «The parallax of ontology» (un extracte del seu llibre *Sex and the failed absolute*), veiem una nova direcció en el pensament de Žižek. El seu model anterior de paral·laxi en termes de dues realitats separades i irreconciliables sembla desplaçar-se cap a un nou èmfasi en l’esdevenir diferencial de les dues més que en la seva paradoxal coexistència.

Paraules clau: Slavoj Žižek; G. W. F. Hegel; Jacques Lacan; Jane Bennett; ontologia orientada a objectes (OOO); ontotaxonomia; diferència

Summary

1. Onto-taxonomy Bibliographical references
2. A post-parallax Žižek?

In the Introduction to Slavoj Žižek's early work *Tarrying with the Negative*, we find the following dramatic passage:

One is tempted to risk a hyperbole and to affirm that, in a sense, *everything* from the fate of so-called "Western civilization" up to the survival of humanity in the ecological crisis, hangs on the answer to this related question: is it possible today, apropos of the postmodern age of the new sophists, to repeat mutatis mutandis the Kantian gesture? (Žižek, 1993: 5)

For Žižek, the two pivotal moments in the history of philosophy come with Plato and Immanuel Kant. What they are said to share in common is that both historical moments were faced with the collapse of what previously seemed to be knowledge: just as Plato was locked in combat with the sophists, Kant was shaken from his rationalist slumber by the skeptical challenge of David Hume. But far from simply rejecting the claims of their opponents, Plato and Kant both embraced and deepened their objections to traditional knowledge: "Plato *accepts* the argumentative procedure of the sophists; Kant *accepts* Hume's burial of the traditional metaphysics" (Žižek, 1993: 4). This provisional acceptance, followed by some sort of positive reversal, is what Žižek means by "repeating the Kantian gesture."

Despite his reputation as a showman, it is not really Žižek's style to nominate *himself* as the one to repeat the historic breakthrough of Kant. Instead, we might easily guess in advance that the Kant-like superhero he has in mind is either G.W.F. Hegel or Jacques Lacan, his two favorites in the post-Kantian period. And given the excessive proximity of Hegel to Kant in calendar time, Lacan is effectively the only person for the job. As we read in Žižek's aforementioned Introduction to *Tarrying with the Negative*: "The perception of Lacan as an 'anti-essentialist' or 'deconstructionist' falls prey to the same illusion as seeing Plato as just one among the sophists" (Žižek, 1993: 4). This analogy indicates that the Lacanian mission, on which *everything* in our time is said to depend, is to accept and deepen the challenges of the "anti-essentialists" and "deconstructionists." And this is exactly what Žižek has in mind. By analogy with Plato and Kant, "Lacan accepts the 'deconstructionist' motif of radical contingency, but turns this motif against itself, using it to assert his commitment to truth *as contingent*" (Žižek, 1993: 4). Lacan is thus a prophet who wields a familiar Hegelian instrument: affirmation of the negative of the negative. Two points come immediately to mind:

- (1) This notion is a perfect fit for Žižek's own conception of history, which is heavily retroactivist in character. He has the following to say about free-

dom, for instance: “it is not simply a free act which, out of nowhere, starts a new causal link, but a retroactive act of determining which link or sequence of necessities will determine us” (Žižek, 2012: 213). And further, radical contingency “amounts to a suspension of the Principle of Sufficient Reason: a suspension not only epistemological but also ontological” (Žižek, 2012: 231). The same holds true for his comrade-in-arms Alain Badiou, who in an important letter once stressed his adherence to “the contingency of necessity” as opposed to Quentin Meillassoux’s “necessity of contingency” (Meillassoux in Harman, 2015: 218).

- (2) Historical analogies of this sort are themselves always contingent. There was no specific reason that Kant had to divide the previous history of philosophy into “Rationalists” and “Empiricists,” but once he did so, this distinction seems to have been there all along. Likewise, even if we accept Žižek’s analogy and decide that it is Deconstruction that must now be reversed, it is far from obvious that “contingency” is the center of gravity of that movement. Other concepts seem more pivotal to Derrida’s thinking than contingency: it is my own view, and appears to be Martin Hägglund’s as well, that classical *identity* is Derrida’s major target, rather than necessity (Häggglund, 2008). In that case, “repeating the Kantian gesture” would amount to accepting the downfall of identity while nonetheless somehow affirming it. One might also claim that it is actually Michel Foucault (cited three times more often than Derrida by scholars) who must be reversed, or that Lacan is not the right person to repeat Kant for one reason or another. What really seems to be going on is that Žižek is deeply frustrated with the classification of Lacan as a “postmodernist,” and by positioning him as a *reversal* of Derrida – perhaps best understood as a modernist anyway – (Eyers, 2017), Žižek is in a better position to challenge that particular cliché. For what it is worth, I happen to agree with Žižek that Lacan belongs to a very different branch of contemporary thought from Derrida.

In any case, the retroactivism of the “radical contingency” that Žižek ascribes to Lacan (and endorses in his own right) runs the inherent risk of idealism. Consider the case of Badiou’s opposition between inconsistent and consistent multiplicity in *Being and Event*. While it might be tempting to interpret inconsistent multiplicity as a chaotic noumenon that precedes a phenomenal sphere in which everything has been efficiently counted as a unit, inconsistent multiplicity turns out to have a solely retroactive character: “What will have been counted as one, on the basis of not having been one, turns out to have been multiple” (Badiou, 2005: 24). Žižek expresses the same view in any number of passages, including in many cases where he is trying to explain the Lacanian *objet petit a*: “[w]hat we call ‘external reality’ (as a consistent field of positively existing objects) arises through subtraction, that is, when something is subtracted from it – and this something is the *objet a*” (Žižek, 2012: 958). There are times when Žižek shies away from the radical consequences

of this view, as with his insistence that between Newton and Einstein nature itself did not change; only our theory of nature did (Žižek, 2012: 908). But this sort of hedging makes a poor fit with his tendency elsewhere to reject “naïve realism” outright: just as Hegel put an end to Kant’s “deep” thing-in-itself, Lacan did the same for Freud’s “deep” unconscious. The real is something to be immanentized, as a flaw within the cosmic diamond rather than something external to the diamond, and this is typically Žižek’s go-to philosophical strategy.

One of his most systematic efforts to treat reality as constituted retroactively and hence contingently – and therefore to “repeat the gesture of Kant” – is the idea of “parallax” developed beginning in *The Parallax View* (Žižek, 2006). Since I have already published an article on that book recently, there is no reason to cover it again so soon (Harman, 2021). Let’s turn instead to Žižek’s most recent treatment of the theme, “The Parallax of Ontology,” contained in the anthology on parallax that Žižek himself co-edited with Dominik Finkelde and Christoph Menke (Žižek, 2021b), and which turns out to be an excerpt from his 2020 book *Sex and the Failed Absolute* (Žižek, 2021a). What is most remarkable about this piece is that, rather than presenting his now familiar parallax ontology, it seems to push beyond it in a somewhat different direction. I will register a number of disagreements with this article, not for the sake of being quarrelsome but because I think Žižek often overlooks options that pose a greater challenge to his position than the ones he openly confronts. To show why this is the case is to present an alternative picture of contemporary philosophy to the otherwise rich account provided by Žižek himself.

1. Onto-taxonomy

Although it is only near the end of his article that Žižek deals with the contemporary schools known as Speculative Realism (SR) and Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO), it seems best to begin with them here. It would be fair to say that Žižek’s relation to OOO is somewhat unusual. It is easy to see why Žižek would read OOO – which is little invested in the sort of Hegelian reflexivity that is Žižek’s intellectual trademark – as either a retrograde Kantian theory of the in-itself or a brand of vitalist “New Age Obscurantism,” usually the harshest insult in his arsenal. In what follows I will explain why these are misreadings. His first discussion of OOO engaged solely with the work of Levi Bryant, though at least Bryant can be considered a *bona fide* object-oriented ontologist, and Bryant and Žižek’s shared Lacanian background might explain why that was an inviting initial dialogue (Žižek, 2016). A bigger surprise comes in the article now under discussion, “The Parallax Ontology,” in which Žižek’s chosen example of a OOO figure is Jane Bennett, who is certainly not one of us, despite our collective interest in her work (Žižek, 2021b). How, one wonders, could he continue to avoid an *Auseinandersetzung* with my own books to such a degree? In fairness, I should add that Žižek has been generous enough to debate me in public twice, and in both cases was as friendly and

receptive as he always is when not facing unfair assault from rude critics (Žižek, Harman and Neimark, 2017; Žižek, Harman and Finkelde, 2018).

An explanation for why he has dodged my position in print is not hard to come by. In quoting a lengthy passage from Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*, Žižek simply overlooks the first sentence even while quoting it: "I believe in a single matter-energy, the maker of things seen and unseen" (Bennett, 2010: 115). Clearly, this affirmation of a "single matter-energy" locates Bennett intellectually where she belongs: in the camp of a Spinozo-Deleuzean monism where individuals are reduced to a derivative role. As she put it in her 2012 response to me and Timothy Morton: "One [should] understand 'objects' to be those swirls of matter, energy, and incipience that hold themselves together long enough to vie with the strivings of other objects, including the indeterminate momentum of the throbbing whole" (Bennett, 2012: 227). While this is a wonderfully written passage, it is the polar opposite of OOO, which belongs to the lineage of philosophies of individual substance running from Aristotle through G.W. Leibniz. Yet the difference between discrete and continuous models of reality is not one of Žižek's foremost themes, and thus he turns more quickly to another portion of the Bennett passage from *Vibrant Matter*, one in which she praises the vitality of nonhuman matter and recommends "a careful course of anthropomorphization" that can "chasten... fantasies of human mastery" (Bennett, 2010: 122). However, rather than taking one of his usual slaps at "New Age Obscurantism" or making an expected comparison of Bennett's vision with that of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy – as Žižek recently did in conjunction with Russell Sbriglia (Sbriglia and Žižek, 2020: 27n57) – he responds with the fresh accusation that Bennett remains a Kantian. By not clarifying whether matter is intrinsically vital or simply seems to be so, based on our anthropomorphizations of it, is she not merely repeating the Kantian ambiguity of the noumenal and the phenomenal? (Žižek, 2021b: 115-116).¹

Before turning to the relation between Kant and OOO, we are led to deploy one of Žižek's own famous witticisms back against him. In the famous opening of his classic *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek asks us to note a "curious accident... in a Sherlock Holmesian sense" concerning Jürgen Habermas's book *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, which contains just five passing mentions of Lacan while never mentioning Louis Althusser at all (Žižek, 1989: 1; Habermas, 1990). The lesson that the young Žižek draws from this curious accident is the rather pointed one that the famous Foucault-Habermas debate actually conceals a deeper dispute between Lacan and Althusser, one that Habermas has repressed, whether deliberately or not. In somewhat related fashion, I suspect that Žižek's critiques of Bennett and Quentin Meillassoux (see below) cover up a more important disagreement between Žižek's position and full-blown OOO, which abandons the modern philosophical assumption that amounts to life itself for the celebrated Slovene: onto-taxonomy.

1. A follow-up exchange can be found in Harman (2020a) and Sbriglia (2021).

The future historian of philosophy will have several possible angles from which to assess Žižek's intellectual career, of which one would be the German Idealist angle. Famously, the important thinkers who followed Kant rejected his thing-in-itself as a logical contradiction, or at least as a residue of rationalist dogmatism. To think of a thing outside thought is already to convert it into a thought; this position amounts to the basic condition of philosophical rigor for all who accept it. One such person is Meillassoux, who is too often glossed as a critic of correlationism and defender of straightforward scientific realism, when in fact he holds (just like Žižek) that the German Idealist "circle of thought" argument is uncircumventible (Meillassoux in Brassier et al., 2007: 413). They simply have different views as to how to handle that circle, and thus I am forever surprised that the Ljubljana School has been unable to see Meillassoux as what he is: their precious ally (See Zupančič, 2011). To be sure, there are important differences. Meillassoux attempts to find a complex back door to escape the correlational circle and obtain the primary qualities of things through mathematization (Meillassoux, 2008). Žižek views this gesture as simply another variant of naïve realism, and follows the differing lines of force in Hegel and Lacan to obtain an immanent rather than transcendent real:

The problem is not to think the real outside transcendental correlation, independently of [the] subject; the problem is to think the real *inside* the subject, the hard core of the real in the very heart of the subject, its ex-timate center. (Žižek, 2021b: 115)

Well, then: is the real located outside the subject, as Meillassoux thinks, or inside it, as Žižek holds? As is often the case, this debate only occurs against the backdrop of an implicit agreement that subject and object are the two basic poles of philosophy. So many authors have fruitlessly claimed to "surpass the subject-object divide" that it is necessary to be precise about the alternative I have in mind. Let's use the term "onto-taxonomy" to refer to the distinctly modern view that there are two basic types of things in the universe: (1) human thought, and (2) everything else (Harman, 2016: 237; Harman, 2020b; Young, 2021). Pay no heed to those who claim that the Husserlian transcendental ego is not human, or that Heideggerian *Dasein* is not the same thing as a person, or that the Lacanian subject is not to be read in any anthropological sense, or that the Badiouian subject can be collective and only exists in the context of events and retroactive fidelity to them. Until clear examples are given – and they will not be – of non-human entities that count as subjects, human beings are maintained in the astounding position of amounting to half of the universe in an ontological sense.

That this happens in modern philosophy, and remains so widely accepted today, is less the result of species-wide narcissism than of a basically admirable attempt at rigor. In Meillassoux's words: "If you think X, then you *think* X" (Meillassoux in Brassier et al., 2007: 413). As he puts it elsewhere: "On this point, we cannot but be heirs of Kantianism" (Meillassoux, 2008: 29). Two

cheers for Kant! But of course, one must also be an heir in just the right way; to be Heidegger's heir in politics rather than ontology would be a grim result indeed. Nothing that sinister is likely to happen with Kant, but I do think that the side of Kant ratified by Meillassoux, Žižek and the German Idealist tradition is the wrong side to inherit. One famous aspect of Kant is his thesis on human finitude: that we are forever sealed off from the in-itself and confined to a sphere of appearance. This is the Kant whom Meillassoux rejects through his speculative materialist argument, and whom Žižek rebukes by siding instead with German Idealism and its internalization of whatever is left of the noumena. For my own part, I have no problem with finitude, for the perfectly good and simple reason that no relation can ever exhaust its relata, and this includes the relations in which human thought is involved. What I reject in Kant, instead, is what was just termed "onto-taxonomy": the notion that we cannot talk about any relation involving non-humans except to describe how that relation appears within the sphere of human thought. The finitude that Kant restricts to the thought-world relation is, for OOO, just one version of any relation in the cosmos whatsoever. Against those who claim that this amounts to a regression to "dogmatic metaphysics," I would note that Kant avoids dogmatism precisely through the *Ding an sich*. Just as I can deduce the finitude of my own experience, so can I deduce the finitude of everything else, through the aforementioned principle that relations cannot exhaust their relata. This is what natural science misses when it asserts its present-day monopoly on discussing object-object relations: by limiting its account to mathematizable spatio-temporal processes, it completely overlooks the *bona fide* metaphysical side of the interaction between objects (whether or not a human is one of them).

When faced with an argument like this one, Žižek – who belongs to the historical camp of German Idealism despite his significant innovations – seems to become rather uncomfortable. His first impulse, as it is for all those who share his philosophical orientation, is to claim that some sort of crazy vitalism or panpsychism must be at work. But this merely reflects his own onto-taxonomical prejudice, shared by millions. For what OOO is discussing here is merely the ontology of *relations*, at a much more primitive level than human thought. To assume that finitude can only exist on the level of thought and perception simply repeats the bias of Kant himself: as if finitude were a uniquely human cross to bear. It should be easy enough to see that when two nonhuman objects collide, they are no more in direct contact with each other's full array of qualities than thought can possibly be. We humans are not finite because we happen to have brains and sense organs, but because we and the things with which we interact can never be fully deployed in these interactions. The fact that we cannot directly experience the finitude of rocks and dust does not make it "dogmatic" to deduce certain features of this finitude, since even our own human finitude is deduced rather than directly experienced. Thus, both are positioned on the same philosophical level.

2. A post-parallax Žižek?

In a manner that is too Hegelian for my taste, though it also contains some truth, Žižek contends that philosophy must be guided by the disputes found elsewhere in the spirit of its age (Žižek, 2021b: 107). In our own time, he explains, this is surely the familiar conflict between the “ontic” approach that treats everything as an existing reality, and the “transcendental” approach that focuses on the crucial role of our access to the world. As he puts it:

The transcendental approach reached its apogee with Heidegger, while the ontological one today seems kidnapped by the natural sciences: we expect the answer to the question of the origins of our universe to come from quantum cosmology, the brain sciences, evolutionism. (Žižek, 2021b: 107)

On this front Žižek remains justifiably annoyed by the late Stephen Hawking’s claim that “philosophy is dead” (Hawking and Mlodinow, 2010: 5; Žižek, 2021b: 107-108; Harman, 2012a). Nonetheless, existing philosophical solutions to the dispute between the ontic and the transcendental remain inadequate; among other problems, they remain unable to negotiate the famous divide between analytic and continental styles of philosophy (Žižek, 2021b: 109). Perhaps my favorite part of “The Parallax of Ontology” is Žižek’s dissection of the contemporary mainstream, with its “Kantian split between brute positive reality and the normative domain of meanings, argumentation, and validity; any attempt to overcome this duality is considered an illegitimate overstepping of the bounds of reason” (Žižek, 2021b: 109). This diagnosis brings Žižek as close as he will ever come to his recently deceased contemporary Bruno Latour, who makes much the same complaint in *We Have Never Been Modern* (Latour, 1993). In an intriguing remark, Žižek contends (incorrectly, I believe) that:

The paradigm was established by Habermas, for whom rules of communicative action function as a pragmatic a priori which cannot be reduced to the positive content (natural or social reality) since they are always-already presupposed in any approach to reality. (Žižek, 2021b: 109)

He adds Robert Brandom and Robert Pippin to the mix, though he suggests two others from Brandom’s lineage as the best exemplars of today’s real/normative deadlock:

The predominant view today is somewhere along the lines of [Wilfrid] Sellars and [John] McDowell, best exemplified by the title of McDowell’s book *Mind and World*, what one is tempted to call a dynamic Kantianism: one insists on realism, there is some impenetrable real out there, our mind does not just move in its own circle, but our access to this real is always mediated by the symbolic practices of our life-world. (Žižek, 2021b: 108; McDowell, 2006)

Needless to say, Žižek is not satisfied by this basically Kantian model. For where do the two levels meet? The familiar Žižek music can now be heard rising in the distance:

What eludes [the] transcendental approach is not reality itself but the primordial gap that cuts from within into the order of being making it non-all and inconsistent—a difference which is not yet a positive difference between two terms but difference ‘as such’... (Žižek, 2021b: 108)

But Žižek then pushes the point too far by claiming that Heidegger’s “ontological difference” works in much the same way, though this stark anti-identity view belongs not to Heidegger but rather to the misreading of him found in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (Derrida, 1997: 22-23; see also Harman, 2012b). For it cannot be argued successfully that Being and beings are not positive terms for Heidegger but exist solely in pure difference. Be that as it may, Žižek is always in search of ways to replace any “naïve” pre-Hegelian notion of an objective world existing outside the sphere of the subject, and when he speaks of a “primordial gap” we are immediately reminded of the parallax model underlying nearly all of his work for the past generation. According to the parallax gap, for instance, the two sides of any one of Kant’s Antinomies are not mutually exclusive and unknowable options lying beyond the phenomenal real, but two real *and* incompatible aspects of reality itself, no different from the two distinct positions of a star in astronomical parallax.

Since the title of the article we are discussing is “The Parallax of Ontology,” and since it was included in an anthology designed to assess the fallout from Žižek’s *The Parallax View*, I read it expecting to find a compact summary of his previous musings on the theme of parallax spread across his usual multiple areas of interest. What I found instead is that Žižek seems to be attempting forward movement beyond his previous ontology of parallax. For what most strikes me in these pages is that Žižek seems to be pushing the envelope on his career-long interest in retroactive causality, twisting it into a new form. For example, towards the middle of the article he discusses the structuralist conception of how the symbolic order emerges *ex nihilo* but in such a way that it seems to have been always there all along (Žižek, 2021b: 111). This leads him to make the expected remark about Derrida and his fascination with the “always already” (Žižek, 2021b: 111). But then we find that Žižek wants to press further: “Is the proper historicity... that of a succession of cuts each of which retroactively changes the past and creates its own eternity?” (Žižek, 2021b: 112). The implied answer seems to be no.

His proposed alternative is striking, although incompletely explored in the article in question. Rather than a retroactive projection of the past by the present, it amounts to something more like a proactive encounter with the present by the past itself. Žižek compares it to the Catholic author G.K. Chesterton’s method of “thinking backwards” (Žižek, 2021b: 112; Chesterton, 1925). For instance, rather than asking the standard question of how nature looks when

it is approached through language, why not ask, “What is language *for nature*?” in the sense of wondering how language not only retroactively projects nature, but how it *affects* it. Chesterton is again invoked to ask how the first humans appeared to animals. Žižek quickly deploys this trope against Meillassoux, arguing that:

[The arche-fossil] is not the Old the way it was/is in itself; the true [arche-] fossil is the subject itself in its impossible objectal status—[the arche-]fossil is myself, that is, the way the terrified cat sees me when it looks at me. (Žižek, 2021b: 114)

While the ontological mechanics of this reversal remain somewhat unclear by the close of Žižek’s article, it is a smart reminder of his capacity to continue to generate novelty from his otherwise familiar and prolifically unfolded past positions.

The other novelty worth noting can be found in Žižek’s introduction of “motion” and “becoming” in the place where we used to find parallax. Whereas in years past we might have expected him to treat both sides of the wave/particle duality in physics as irreducible parallax views untethered to any underlying original, we now find a hint of processual flavor in the discussion:

[T]he Real in quantum physics is not wave oscillation (as opposed to the reality that emerges from the collapse of the wave function) but this collapse itself “in its becoming”, as a movement, before it is stabilized into constituted reality. (Žižek, 2021b: 113)

Nor is sexual difference to be regarded, as one might have expected, as a parallax opposition of two sexes ungrounded in any mediating unified term. Instead, “the Real of sexual difference is not the difference between masculine and feminine identities but this difference ‘in its becoming,’ the movement of self-differentiation which precedes the differentiated terms” (Žižek, 2021b: 113). Instead of comparing this to process philosophy, perhaps I should have compared it to Derrida, as with my earlier mention of his (mis)reading of Heidegger in *Of Grammatology*. Indeed, I noticed more explicit and implicit references to Derrida in “The Parallax of Ontology” than in any other work by Žižek in recent memory. After years of his treating Derrida as largely *passé*, I wonder if Parallax Žižek will now be replaced by a somewhat transmuted Žižek of Difference.

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