

Lacan: The Silent Partners, edited by Slavoj Žižek. London and New York: Verso Press, 2006. \$95.00; paper, \$35.00. Pp. vi, 406.

Jacques Lacan is most well known for having “revived” Freud by providing a re-interpretation of his work that showed that it was not merely a theory of sexuality but instead a much larger theory of sociality, which deserved to stand beside the more fashionable theories of Hegel, Marx, Saussure, and Heidegger. And yet, having been similarly reduced in influence from being seen as either too difficult to understand or too obscure to be of interest, Slavoj Žižek has now taken it upon himself to bring Lacan back into prominence and prove that Lacan’s writings, like Freud’s, still have much to offer us today. Having already written several books in an effort to re-introduce Lacan, along with helping to create a journal dedicated to his philosophy, Žižek uses a slightly different tactic in this volume by, as he puts it, trying “to instigate a new wave of Lacanian paranoia: to push readers to engage in work of their own, and start to discern Lacanian themes everywhere” (3). Thus the contributions to this volume are not — as the title (and even the back cover) may suggest — meant to reveal hidden influences on Lacan that can help us to read him anew, but rather indicate how Lacan can be used to investigate contemporary issues, “with the underlying goal of recuperating Lacan for Marxist theory” (1).

Though there is no attempt to draw explicit connections between Lacan and Marx in this book, the presence of an implicit argument for this link can be felt throughout the first half of the volume, “Part I: Thought.” Alain Badiou’s opening chapter on the pre-Socratics, and how they “form part of the polemical genealogy of psychoanalysis” (13) by opposing the Platonic identification of knowledge with truth, can be seen as a reminder of Marx’s own early interest in the Ancient Greeks and in what they can tell us about the discordant essence of nature that science seeks to cover over. This line of thought is then continued in the following chapters by focusing more on how humanity, as both subject to and object of nature, is a product of this disharmony. Miran Bozovic’s analysis of Diderot’s novel *Les Bijoux indiscrets* shows that for a truly radical materialism we are all slaves to our physiology, mistakenly thinking we are free to think and want as we please, when in reality “my wishing is but a state of my corporeal organization” (28). Yet, as Adrian Johnston discovers by reading Schelling’s “theosophy” alongside Freud and Lacan, though we may be part of the determinism of nature, “the capacity for autonomy is a consequence of the deficient and incomplete harmonization of the various faculties forming the individual’s constitution” (50) — what Schelling referred to as the *Urgrund*, and Freud and Lacan named *Trieb* (or drive).

As Marx moved from the Greeks to Hegel, or from trying to describe the world to trying to change it, so too do we find in Timothy Huson's contribution a move to more explicit political concerns. By combining Hegel's theory of the "contradiction of relationships" with Lacan's theory of desire, Huson illustrates why the proletariat did not follow Marx's call to rise up and throw off their chains, for "even knowing there is no master, that the slave pulls the strings, still, since the desire she has come to know is named within that social order, the slave has good psychological motives — conscious or unconscious — to deceive herself, or simply to pretend," since "she is accustomed to the Other's desire" (76). Though Silvia Ons' treatment of Nietzsche as a forebear of psychoanalysis only fits tangentially into the schema I have here been presenting — "if Marx invented the symptom, Nietzsche also did so by having discovered the symptom in morality" (80) — the subsequent chapters by Joan Copjec and Bruno Bosteels certainly continue along the trajectory of Marx's career. In the former, we find not only the most thoroughgoing reflection on Lacan's project of any of the contributions, but also an investigation into why, in the face of the revolutionary spirit of 1968, Lacan responded with "an impassioned plea for a display of shame" (91), trying to reveal to his students that "our feeling of powerlessness . . . stems from conceiving ourselves as possessors of power" (110). In the latter, Bosteels takes us for a journey through Badiou's relationship to "that peculiar French version of Freudo-Marxism that is the school of Lacano-Althusserianism" (115) so as to examine how Badiou's theory of the subject and the "event" shows his allegiance with the "long tradition from Marx to Mao" in "forcing a new consistent truth out of the old order of things from the point where our knowledge of the latter is found wanting" (160).

Though Part I is certainly better suited for those interested in how Lacan can help us to be better Marxists, the essays in "Part II: Art" still have much to offer as well. Here we find Žižek's three contributions to the volume, which afford the reader a glimpse into his dizzying intellect as well as his recent work in *The Parallax View*, *Violence*, and *In Defense of Lost Causes*. Alenka Zupancic enlightens us as to why "Lacan described Hegel's *Phenomenology* as . . . a crazy humor" (189), and Robert Pfaller asks why "the subject of a thought experiment often also constitutes the subject matter of the comic and the uncanny" (207). In a similarly inquisitive vein, Sigi Jöttkandt tries to determine why literature is the "first love of psychoanalysis" (279), Mladen Dolar pursues "Kafka's recourse to animality" (314) in search of a possible "science of freedom" (333), and Lorenzo Chiesa questions Antonin Artaud's identification of Lacan as an "erotomaniac" (337). Yet the best example of what Lacan has to offer us today — and why this book is worth reading — can be found

in the concluding piece by Frederic Jameson on the “new development of dialectical thought” (368) offered by Lacan. The conclusion of this chapter can also perhaps be read as the motto for this work as a whole: “to be continued” (396).

NOLEN GERTZ

c/o New School for Social Research
 79 Fifth Avenue, Tenth Floor
 New York, NY 10011
 GertzN@newschool.edu

Favored Flowers: Culture and Economy in a Global System, by Catherine Ziegler.
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Favored Flowers is specifically about fresh-cut flower commodities and broadly about social relations of globalized production. Zeigler likens the fresh-cut flower commodity chain to “other contemporary global trading systems” in which “social relationships, technological innovation, and specialized knowledge help shape new global social and cultural interactions” (189). This historical, ethnographic, and cultural study showcases the dynamic role of “middlemen” — the exporters, importers, wholesalers, retailers, freelancers — who have assumed governance of the global fresh-cut flower trade. The main argument is that the global reorganization of production and distribution of fresh-cut flowers has thrust middlemen into the most commanding position along the global flower commodity chain, which is stitched together by webs of intensely social networks.

Do not look for a critique of globalization in *Favored Flowers*. Ziegler’s enthusiasm for many innovations made possible by the globalization of the flower industry remains unrepressed. At best, this book serves a descriptive rather than explanatory function. Working off a global commodity chain analytical framework, Ziegler closely examines flows of power within institutions and organizations of the middle sector and the social field of the consumer. Her goal of untangling the intricacies of complex social networks is accomplished through focused interviews with producers and traders in the Netherlands, Ecuador, and New York’s Manhattan. Zeigler’s microsocial/cultural emphasis leads her to the inevitable conclusion that “outside” economic forces, while influential, are overdetermined by social and cultural forces.

The first two chapters cover the rise and fall of U. S. flower growers and local retailers and the changes in flower culture, 1870–1970. During the