



Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture

Slavoj Žižek

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Slavoj Žižek, a leading intellectual in the new social movements of Eastern Europe, provides a virtuoso reading of the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan through the works of contemporary popular culture, from horror fiction and detective thrillers to popular romances and Hitchcock films.

Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture Details

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Author : Slavoj Žižek

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From Reader Review Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture for online ebook

Joshua Flanders says

A great intro to Lacan and the writings of Zizjek

Charlotte J. says

One can never know too much about (Hitch)cock.

Steven says

Have read this before so this time just came back to reread the extended analyses of crime-noir, film-noir, and Hitchcock films.

Aung Myat Minn says

although most of the reviews say this is really accessible to the readers familiar with Hitchcock's films , western literature(especially French) , horror films ,film theories and so on,but my bad luck is that I'm not familiar with them and it is not so easy to read for me. :(:(

Anton says

I'm just beginning to delve in to Lacan and want to read more before I make any comments other than I really enjoyed this book and am committed to reading it again after it gestates in my unknowable Thing. And after I read a couple of Lacan's books and do some more Googling. In other words, Lacan is sort of my project for 2016. I am a lucky 73 year old man to have good health and a spouse that lets me read all day.

Adam says

I could do with more Lacan and less pop culture. This is my first "return to Zizek" after lengthy immersion in Lacan and Freud. Zizek's noble goal is to provide revolutionary fervor with Lacanian linchpins. To that end, he makes use of what can be made to appear "readymade" from Lacan. Mind you, this is no simple endeavor, and--until you are acclimated--it is anything but simple to understand Zizek's pedagogic simplifications of Lacan. That is truly my only qualm: it seems to me that sometimes Zizek's cultural examples are merely the bare functional rudiments of the Lacanian notion to which they refer, and on rare occasions they may even be found deleterious when compared with what I think I've gleaned from Lacan himself. This is less an

aspersion cast on Zizek that an exhortation to you (potential?) readers of Zizek to listen to him when he says "Don't just do something--read Lacan!" Until then, read Zizek.

Renee Leech says

This is a very interesting and provocative read. Lacan's theories are nothing if not provocative. Parts of this book are pure intellectual joy! However, it is not an introduction as the title states. To truly appreciate this book, readers must know their Freud well beyond what is taught in Psych 101. One must have seen about a dozen Hitchcock films to truly appreciate this introduction, particularly Psycho, The Birds, Vertigo, North by Northwest, Strangers on a Train, The 39 Steps, and Rope. If you are a Hitchcock fan, and have a good memory for the plots and shots of his movies, you will probably appreciate this book a lot once you familiarize yourself with Lacan's and Freud's theories. You will probably even experience jouissance!

Vladimir says

Like it's often the case with Žižek - it's highly entertaining but lacks substance. If you are looking for a book to learn about Lacan in a systematic way, this is in no way a book for you. Generally speaking, words "systematic" and "Žižek" don't go together, so the fragmentary and digressive nature of this book should not come as a surprise. He has fun ways of presenting some of Lacan's ideas, but in this particularized form it's not worth much because the bigger Lacanian picture will still elude the reader. If you already know Lacan's work, on the other hand, you will no doubt enjoy Žižek's insightful application of his ideas to movies and literature.

Michael Ledezma says

This book is incredibly insightful, not to mention fun. It has example after example of Lacanian concepts taken from movies and novels. The meaning of the object petit a is demonstrated, each time more clearly, and each time being tied in with other aspects of Lacanian psychoanalysis such as the tri-partite structure of experience. (Imaginary/Symbolic/Real) It is not possible to be bored reading this book. Even if what Zizek is talking about in terms of content goes over your head, he will always render some kind of basic summary of his subject. (unlike some philosophers cough* Deleuze cough*)
Excellent.

Justin says

This is one of the most fascinating books I've read in a while. Zizek does for "serious" contemporary philosophy what no one has before: he makes it reasonably accessible and super interesting. But Zizek is not someone whose express goal it is to make the works of a giant like Lacan accessible to the public at large, but more to further explicate Zizek's own philosophy (two parts Lacan, two parts Hegel, one part Marx), which is not on the surface in this book, but is always just under the surface. Much of the work in this book finds itself reworked in Zizek's self-professed tour de force, *The Parallax View*. That being said, it is Zizek's goal to make Zizek's philosophy, while perhaps not "immediately accessible" to the public at large, at least clear enough that someone with an acquaintance with 20th C. Continental Philosophy would have a good

chance at wrapping his/her mind around it. At least more accessible than anyone like Derrida, Deleuze or even Lacan himself ever tried to make their work.

Anyone with a passing interest and some knowledge of contemporary philosophy/psychoanalysis vis a vis Lacan should read this. Zizek's primary goal here is not to make Lacan accessible in some kind of systematic way but to elucidate the work of mainly Hitchcock (as well as some others including the entire mystery genre of fiction as well as a little Stephen King) via Lacan. One gets the impression that wherever Zizek casts his net, he would reel in Lacan. The effect does not seem contrived but rather that Lacan does indeed pervade cinema and fiction if not our lives more generally.

Ivan Labayne says

there is a joke about hitchcock, the more you run, the more you stay in place and so on and so on too soon

Serhiy says

????? ?????? ????, ?? ?????? ??????????? ?????? ?? ?????????? ? ?????? ????????. ??? ??????? ? 1991 ???, ??? ??????? ?? “?????” ?????????? ?? ?? ?????, ????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ??????? ?? film noir. ? ????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????, ?? ?? ????? ?????? ?? ?????????, ?? ?? ?? ?????? ???. ?????? ?? ??? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????????: ??? ??? ?????? ?????? ??? ?????????? ?????????????? ?????????? ?????? ?????, ? ??? ?? ? ????? ?????????.

Cody Sexton says

For Lacan our unconscious is language itself. The emergence of language opened up a hole in our reality, and this hole shifted the axis of our gaze, language redoubling “reality” back into itself. Subjects can not communicate with one another (nor even themselves) directly, but only through the signifiers called ‘words’ in a language. Signifiers are neither fixed nor even fully understood by anyone, there is always hidden meaning behind what we say and how it’s said, therefore repression is required for us to assimilate the rules or orders constituting a language. The subject itself is neither fixed nor transparent and language doesn’t represent the subject passively but turns around and structures the subject. In fact, the subject only comes to be with it’s initiation into language. Zizek conceives the subject as something purely negative, a void or an emptiness of being (which Lacan refers to as the incomplete, divided, or “barred” subject of the unconscious). The result of all of this is that communication is never clear or complete, selves are both brought together and separated by language and the subject is subject to demands that remain unfulfilled and desires that are rooted not in the individual but in the symbolic order of which it is a part. Social reality then is nothing more than a fragile, symbolic cobweb that can at any moment be torn asunder by an intrusion of the real. The real being any traumatic event that shatters our coordinates, i.e. the part that is left over after symbolization, the part that resists symbolization altogether. Zizek took Lacan’s ideas and applied them to the genealogy of culture and it is here that we should perhaps look for the basic premise of a Freudian theory of culture: all culture is ultimately nothing but a compromise formation, a reaction to some terrifying, radically inhuman dimension proper to the human condition itself. Culture is something we all believe in without realizing we believe in it. What is a cultural lifestyle, if not the

fact that, although we don't believe in Santa Claus, there is a Christmas tree in every house, and even in public places, every December?

Since our desires themselves are rooted in the symbolic order we can use Lacan's ideas to interpret a text (movie, book, etc.) to see what it presents to us as objects of desire and since language and the symbolic order require repression, Lacan (Zizek) can offer us ways to discover just how the oppressive dynamics of our society actually work.

Phillip says

The ideas in this book are very similar to those Zizek began developing in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, but because *Looking Awry* is less grounded in the complex interplay of Hegelian dialectics and Lacanian psychoanalysis, this is a somewhat more accessible read. Certainly *Looking Awry* tries to explicate Lacanian theory, but unlike the earlier book, *Looking Awry* is more focused on making Lacanian theory accessible than it is in restructuring major traditions of ideology.

Part of what makes *Looking Awry* a more accessible book is that its analysis is grounded in film and literary studies, particularly through Hitchcock's films. Even if you don't actually know the film or story under discussion, Zizek is very good at explaining the relevant portions of the film or story in such a way that they illustrate his point. This is one of Zizek's particular strengths as a writer.

Tom Syverson says

This is by no means an "introduction" to Lacan. If you're not already quite familiar with Lacan, then I'd suggest reading something a bit more straightforward and comprehensive than this.

For the most part, this is great; Zizek has a talent for finding illustrations of complex portions of Lacan through a host of pop culture items, including film and literature. Divided into three parts, I found the first part the most interesting and helpful. The second was less so, but still quite interesting, and the third section I found a bit difficult to get through.

Must-read for fans of Zizek in his most fully Lacanian mode.
