



Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture (October Books)

By Slavoj Žižek

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Slavoj Žižek, a leading intellectual in the new social movements that are sweeping Eastern Europe, provides a virtuoso reading of Jacques Lacan. Žižek inverts current pedagogical strategies to explain the difficult philosophical underpinnings of the French theoretician and practician who revolutionized our view of psychoanalysis. He approaches Lacan through the motifs and works of contemporary popular culture, from Hitchcock's *Vertigo* to Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*, from McCullough's *An Indecent Obsession* to Romero's *Return of the Living Dead* -- a strategy of "looking awry" that recalls the exhilarating and vital experience of Lacan.

Žižek discovers fundamental Lacanian categories the triad Imaginary/Symbolic/Real, the object small a, the opposition of drive and desire, the split subject -- at work in horror fiction, in detective thrillers, in romances, in the mass media's perception of ecological crisis, and, above all, in Alfred Hitchcock's films. The playfulness of Žižek's text, however, is entirely different from that associated with the deconstructive approach made famous by Derrida. By clarifying what Lacan is saying as well as what he is not saying, Žižek is uniquely able to distinguish Lacan from the poststructuralists who so often claim him.

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- Sales Rank: #571711 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 1992-09-08
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .38" w x 7.00" l, .72 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 188 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

Zizek is one of the very few thinkers who has been able to reinvent Lacan's fundamental concepts with a freshness and elasticity that makes one remember what was genuinely exciting and revolutionary about the Parisian school. His work is saturated with the lessons of philosophy and psychoanalysis and he has a feel for film and literary culture that is quite breathtaking.

(Andrew Ross, Princeton University)

Looking Awry is a wonderful introduction to dialectical psychoanalysis; to a fresh approach to the subjectivities of mass culture, and to an extraordinary new voice we will hear often in the coming years.

(Fredric R. Jameson, Duke University)

Žižek is a one-person culture mulcher. Flinging out readings of film noir or Hitchcock's *The Birds*, drawing maps of the unconscious, analyzing the commodity form, Stephen King, or Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he plays the philosopher as standup comic...The elusive Lacan, who cultivated an aura of indecipherability with the care of a diva becomes a field guide to life in an age of media.

(Edward Ball *Voice Literary Supplement*)

From the Back Cover

In this book Slavoj Zizek, a leading intellectual in the new social movements that are sweeping Eastern Europe, provides a virtuoso reading of Jacques Lacan. Zizek inverts current pedagogical strategies to explain the difficult philosophical underpinnings of the French theoretician and practician who revolutionized our view of psychoanalysis.

About the Author

Slavoj Žižek, a philosopher and cultural critic, is Senior Researcher in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Ljubljana, Global Distinguished Professor of German at New York University, and International Director of the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at the University of London. He is the author of more than thirty books, including *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*, *The Parallax View*, *The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic* (with John Milbank), and *Žižek's Jokes (Did you hear the one about Hegel and negation?)*, these five published by the MIT Press.

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