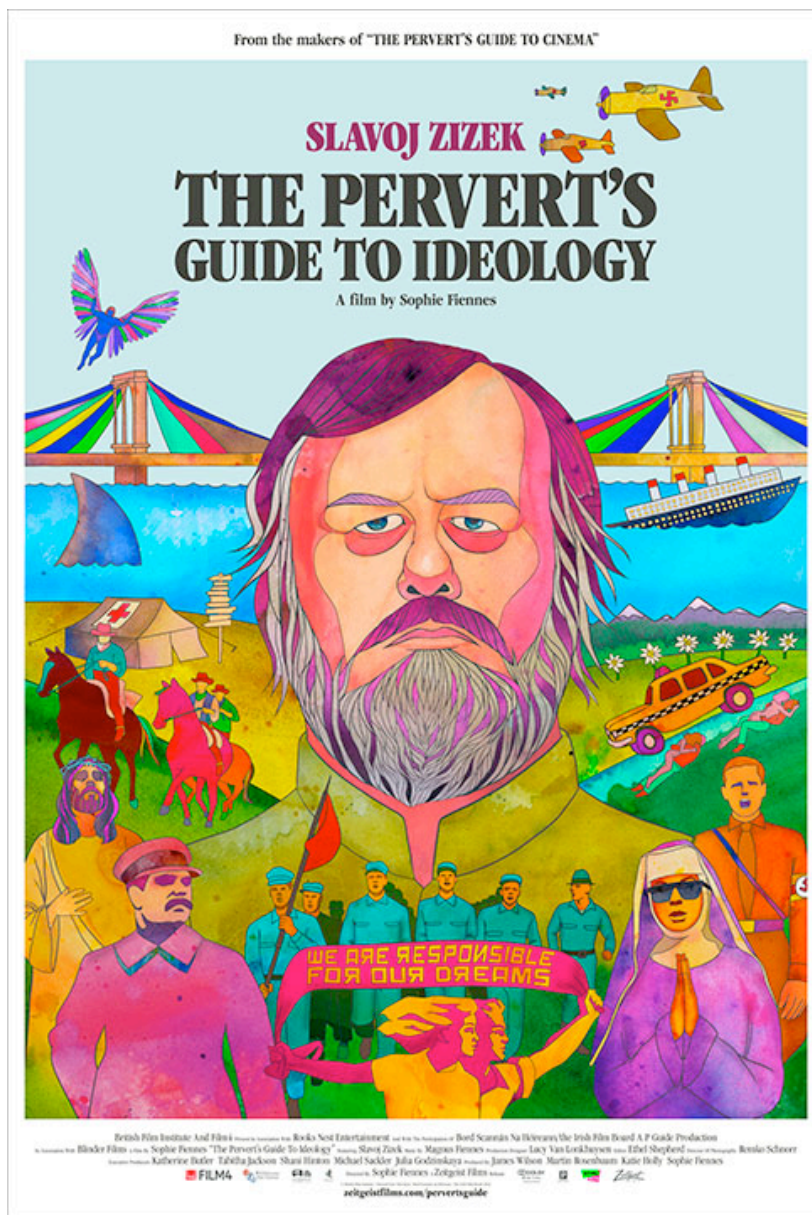


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The Pervert's Guide to Ideology

A film by Sophie Fiennes

Cultural theorist superstar Slavoj Žižek re-teams with director Sophie Fiennes (*The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*) for another wildly entertaining romp through the crossroads of cinema and philosophy. With infectious zeal and a voracious appetite for popular culture, Žižek literally goes inside some truly epochal movies, all the better to explore and expose how they reinforce prevailing ideologies. As the ideology that undergirds our cinematic fantasies is revealed, striking associations emerge: What hidden Catholic teachings lurk at the heart of *The Sound of Music*? What are the fascist political dimensions of *Jaws*? *Taxi Driver*, *Zabriskie Point*, *The Searchers*, *The Dark Knight*, John Carpenter's *They Live* ("one of the forgotten masterpieces of the Hollywood Left"), *Titanic*, Kinder Eggs, vérité news footage, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" and propaganda epics from Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia all inform Žižek's stimulating, provocative and often hilarious psychoanalytic-cinematic rant.

THE FILMS OF “THE PERVERT’S GUIDE TO IDEOLOGY”

They Live (1988)

The Sound of Music (1965)

A Clockwork Orange (1971)

West Side Story (1961)

Taxi Driver (1976)

Directed by John Carpenter

Directed by Robert Wise

Directed by Stanley Kubrick

Directed by Robert Wise & Jerome Robbins

Directed by Martin Scorsese



The Searchers (1956)

Jaws (1975)

Triumph of the Will (1935)

The Eternal Jew (1940)

Cabaret (1972)

I Am Legend (2007)

Titanic (1997)

The Fall of Berlin (1950)

Full Metal Jacket (1987)

MASH (1970)

If.... (1968)

The Dark Knight (2008)

Loves of a Blonde (1965)

The Fireman’s Ball (1967)

Brief Encounter (1945)

Brazil (1985)

The Last Temptation of Christ (1988)

Seconds (1966)

Zabriskie Point (1970)

Directed by John Ford

Directed by Steven Spielberg

Directed by Leni Riefenstahl

Directed by Fritz Hippler

Directed by Bob Fosse

Directed by Francis Lawrence

Directed by James Cameron

Directed by Mikhail Chiareli

Directed by Stanley Kubrick

Directed by Robert Altman

Directed by Lindsay Anderson

Directed by Christopher Nolan

Directed by Milos Forman

Directed by Milos Forman

Directed by David Lean

Directed by Terry Gilliam

Directed by Martin Scorsese

Directed by John Frankenheimer

Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Almost immediately after the release of *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, Slavoj suggested we make *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology*—and here it is. Ideology is a major theme in Žižek's body of work. His roots in psychoanalytic thinking produce a new understanding of how our world is structured. It feels that now is absolutely the right time to make this film. It has been thrilling and demanding for me to bring these ideas together in a film. Through the examples we use—which range between movies, music, history and current events—ideology emerges as an ever-shifting fantasy-frame shaping all societies. I am grateful to Slavoj for his generosity, trust and of course his phenomenal sense of humor!

—Sophie Fiennes



“PERVERT’S GUIDE” PRODUCTION NOTES

The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology was a long time in development. Following discussions and email exchanges, Sophie Fiennes created a 100-page document drawn from Zizek’s texts. During the shooting Zizek worked without a script, but elaborated on the agreed themes, to allow for an urgent and spontaneous delivery. “We were updating the material up to the last moment,” says Fiennes. “Flexibility was crucial in the shooting and the editing. You have to keep pushing to see how ideas connect. The UK riots happened one week before we shot, but they are important in what they say about ideology today. It’s fascinating to see how a film as old as *West Side Story*, not to mention *Beethoven’s 9th*, can inform our understanding of the UK riots and the response to them.”

Realizing the project was a truly collaborative process, one that both Fiennes and her unlikely leading man cherish, with Zizek keen to share the credit. “All the hard work was hers,” he says. “I had the easy part. Although she is not a philosopher by profession, she not only understands what I want to say, she translates it visually. The only thing I do not like is this experience of acting. This repetition, this thing of ‘Again, again, again...’ This was the fascist part for me. The rest was fun. But it would never have been possible for me to be an actor.”

“In terms of acting, I really try to impose very little on Slavoj,” says Fiennes. “He actually suggested he wear a priest’s robe, and the very last moment, after the credit roll, is entirely his idea. Even though he is not a performer in any strict sense of the word, he does have a brilliant sense of timing, and he intuitively turns our assumptions and turns them on their head all the time. He uses humor to push us deeper into his theories.” “Ideology is still a part of our everyday lives,” says Zizek. “We’re not making propaganda here. We just want to make people think. This film wants to offer a diagnosis of where we stand at this very moment. In this sense, the film is a progression on the first one.”

The film was shot on location in California and all remaining interior footage was shot in Dublin, Ireland, in September 2011. Sets were built at Ardmore Studios in August 2011 and the shoot took place over ten days in September 2011. All material was shot on the ARRI Alexa with Fiennes again enlisting her Dutch DP Remko Schnoor.

Like its predecessor, *The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology* responds to the hermetic world of fiction cinema. Says Fiennes, “Psychoanalysis asserts that ‘the truth has the structure of a fiction’, or as the last line in *The Pervert’s Guide to Cinema* states, ‘if you are looking for what is more real than reality itself, look into the cinematic fiction’.”

In *The Pervert’s Guide to Ideology* we draw a direct parallel between dreams and cinematic fiction, as a way to explore how we believe in social/political reality. The sets are a way of responding to the place that movies occupy in our personal and collective worlds. While movies do not exist as physical locations to be visited for the purposes of a documentary, through this filming approach, the suggestion is that they can still be “inhabited.” They are the necessary site from which Zizek delivers his excavation, comment and analysis.

The editing took almost a year, and post-production was all carried out in Ireland. The sound edit and mix took place at Ardmore Sound in August 2012 with Steve Fanagan designing. Fiennes worked for the first time with her brother, composer Magnus Fiennes. “It was a delight to work with him. I think his score captures something of the inevitability of ideology, but it also has wit.”

CAST & CREW BIOGRAPHIES

SLAVOJ ZIZEK (STAR/WRITER)

Widely acclaimed as one of the most original thinkers of our time, Slavoj Zizek is a Slovenian dialectical-materialist philosopher and cultural critic. He is the author of more than fifty books on diverse subjects ranging from opera and film, to religion and the war in Iraq.

Zizek has taught at universities including Paris, London, Columbia, Chicago, Duke, Princeton and New York's New School. He is 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. He is also a contributor to *The Guardian*, *London Review of Books*, and *Le Monde*, among other publications.

His books include *Living in the End Times*, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, *In Defense of Lost Causes*; four volumes of the *Essential Zizek*, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* and many more, published in the U.S. by Verso. He is also the star of the documentary films *Zizek!* (2005), *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006), and *Examined Life* (2009).

SOPHIE FIENNES (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)

Sophie Fiennes began making films in 1998. She is widely acclaimed for her unique observational eye and strong sense of cinematic form. Fiennes often employs a collaborative approach to filmmaking. Her films therefore also act as powerful portraits of some of today's most iconic individuals.

Her films have screened theatrically, on television and in festivals around the world, including Cannes, Sundance, Telluride, Locarno, Toronto, Rotterdam, Edinburgh, Sydney and London. Her films include *Lars From 1-10* (1998), *The Late Michael Clark* (1999), *Because I Sing* (2001), *Hoover Street Revival* (2002), *The Pervert's Guide To Cinema* (2006), *VSPRS Show and Tell* (2007) *Over Your Cities*, *Grass Will Grow* (2010) and *The Pervert's Guide To Ideology* (2012).

She has recently completed her first short drama, entitled *First Row Orchestra*, and produced by Didier Jacob for ARTE. Future projects include the completion of her documentary project on Grace Jones, *Grace Jones: The Musical Of My Life*.

MARTIN ROSENBAUM (PRODUCER)

Martin Rosenbaum formed Lone Star Productions in London in 2000 and has since produced critically acclaimed feature-length documentaries in co-production with other European and US producers. His films include *Searching for the Wrong-Eyed Jesus* (2003), *I Am from Nowhere* (2003), *The Room* (a two-part profile of Harold Pinter for the BBC), *Painting the Clouds with Sunshine: A Portrait of Dennis Potter* (BBC), *Calling Hedy Lamarr* (2004), *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006), *Dance with a Serial Killer* (the story of a murder investigation told by the French detective who brought a serial killer to justice), *The Strange Luck Of V.S. Naipaul* (BBC Arena, 2008), *The Hunt For Moby Dick* (BBC Arena, 2009), *Alan Bennett and the Habit of Art* (Channel 4; Royal Television Society Award Winner for Arts and BAFTA finalist, 2010), and *The Dreams of William Golding* (BBC Arena, 2012).

In 2006, Sophie Fiennes and Martin Rosenbaum formed P Guide Limited to distribute *The Pervert's Guide To Cinema* and develop other *Pervert's Guide* films.

JAMES WILSON (PRODUCER)

A graduate of the American Film Institute, James Wilson began his film career as a production executive at Fox Searchlight Pictures, and then Film4. Over eight years he worked on the development, production and acquisition of a range of films including *Sexy Beast*, *Dancer In The Dark*, *The Filth And The Fury*, *The Low Down*, *The Last King Of Scotland*, *The Full Monty*, *Nil By Mouth* and *The Ice Storm*.

Becoming a producer, he produced Joe Cornish's *Attack The Block*, James Marsh's *The King* (an Official Selection of the Cannes Film Festival), and served as an Executive Producer on Edgar Wright's *Shaun Of The Dead*. He is most recent film, as producer, is Jonathan Glazer's *Under The Skin*, starring Scarlett Johansson.

KATIE HOLLY (PRODUCER)

Katie Holly is Managing Director of Dublin-based Blinder Films, where she has produced award-winning films that have screened at numerous international festivals including Edinburgh, Seattle, Slamdance, Rotterdam, London, Toronto and SXSW. Her debut feature, *One Hundred Mornings*, received a Special Jury Award at the 2010 Slamdance Film Festival, an IFTA for Best Cinematography and won the inaugural Workbook Project Discovery and Distribution Award.

Other feature credits include *Sensation*, written and directed by Tom Hall and starring Domhnall Gleeson (*True Grit*, *Never Let Me Go*), which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival; and *Come on Eileen* from debut writer/director Finola Geraghty, which stars Jackie Howe, Keith Allen, Julia Davis and Noel Fielding. Her film *Citadel*, a psychological horror starring Aneurin Barnard, James Cosmo and Wunmi Mosaku, won the Midnighters Audience Award at SXSW and was released by Cinedigm in 2012. Also in 2012, she produced *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* with James Wilson, Martin Rosenbaum and director Sophie Fiennes.

She served as executive producer on *Jump*, a UK/Irish co-production directed by Kieron J. Walsh, produced by Brendan Byrne, and stars Martin McCann and Nichola Burley. The film screened at Toronto in 2012 in the Contemporary World Cinema section.

Katie is a graduate of EAVE, Chairwoman of Filmbase and she was Ireland's representative as "Producer on the Move" at Cannes 2010.

REMKO SCHNORR (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Born and raised in The Hague, Netherlands, Remko Schnorr is a 2000 graduate of the Nederlandse Film & Televisie Academie, Amsterdam. He worked as a cinematographer on short films, commercials and music videos before shooting his first feature, *Pluk van de Petteflet*, a children's film directed by Ben Sombogaard. In 2006, he shot his first documentary, Sophie Fiennes' *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, as well as the Dutch World War II drama *Het woeden der gehele wereld*.

Most recently, Remko finished three short films directed by Jochem de Vries that premiered at Film-Festival Utrecht in 2012. He has continued his collaboration with Fiennes on her two latest documentaries *Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow* (2010) and *Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (2012).

LUCY VAN LONKHUYSEN (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

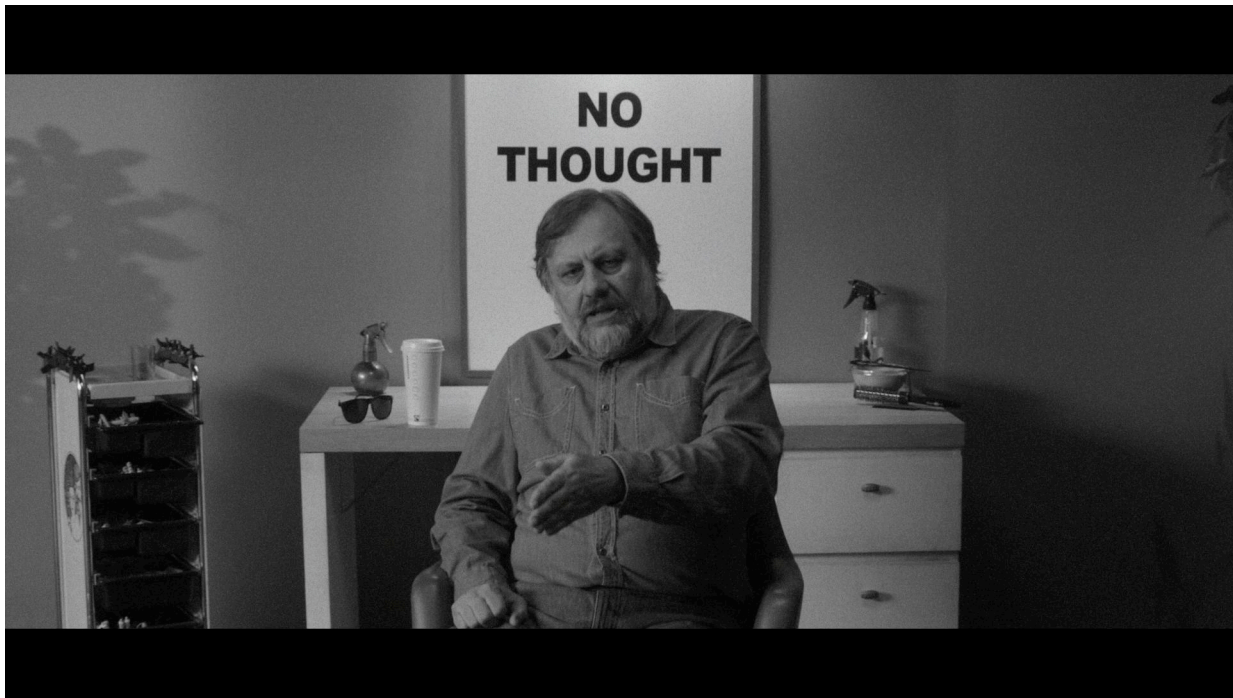
Lucy Van Lonkhuisen graduated from Ireland's National College of Art & Design (NCAD) with a Bachelor of Design in metal, in 1996. Lucy subsequently worked as a silversmith in the UK, the US and Australia. Upon her return to Ireland, she pursued a career in Production Design for film & television. Within the last twelve years, she has worked for Ireland's national broadcaster RTE, and is now freelance and working for different production companies on TV and film projects, both in Ireland and abroad. Recent credits include *Agora* (as Set Decorator); *The Tudors* (as Assistant Set Decorator); *The Guard* (as Art Director); *Neverland* (as Art Director); *The Pervert's Guide to Ideology* (as Production Designer); *One Hundred Mornings* (as Production Designer).

ETHEL SHEPHERD (EDITOR)

Ethel Shepherd was born in the Outer Hebrides in 1957. She studied Anthropology and Humanities at St. Andrews University, Scotland, and following this spent twenty years making ethnographic films in Papua New Guinea. She returned to the UK in 2000 and now lives in Norwood, South London, where she writes and works as an editor on selected projects.

Through the Glasses Darkly By Slavoj Žižek

This article was originally published in the November 2008 edition of In These Times. Reprinted with permission.



When the hero of John Carpenter's 1988 *They Live* puts on a pair of weird sunglasses that he has stumbled upon in an abandoned church, he notices a billboard that once invited us to a Hawaii beach holiday now simply displays the words:

“MARRY AND REPRODUCE.” Ad copy on another billboard—this one for a new color TV—says, “DON'T THINK, CONSUME!”

The glasses, then, function as a device for the critique of ideology. In other words, they enable him to see the real message lying beneath the glossy, colorful surface.

What would we see if we were to observe the Republican presidential campaign through such glasses? The first thing would be a long series of contradictions and inconsistencies:

- Their call to reach across party lines—while waging the cultural war politics of “us” against “them.”
- Their warning that the candidates' family life should be off limits—while parading their families on stage.
- Their promises of change—while offering the same old programs (lower taxes and less social welfare, a belligerent foreign policy, etc.).
- Their pledge to reduce state spending—while incessantly praising President Reagan. (Recall Reagan's answer to those who worried about the exploding debt: “It is big enough to take care of itself.”)
- Their accusations that Democrats privilege style over substance—which they deliver at perfectly staged media events.

The next thing we would see is that these and other inconsistencies are not a weakness, but a source of strength for the Republican message. Republican strategists masterfully exploit the flaws of liberalism: Its patronizing “concern” for the poor that is combined with a thinly disguised indifference toward—if not outright contempt for—blue-collar workers, and its politically correct feminism that is usually combined with an underlying mistrust of women in power. Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin was a hit on both counts, parading both her working-class husband and her femininity.

The earlier generations of women politicians (Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and even, up to a point, U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton) were what can be referred to as “phallic” women. They acted as “iron ladies” who imitated and tried to outdo male authority, to be “more men than men themselves.”

Writing in *Le Point*, a French weekly, Jacques-Alain Miller, a follower of the late French philosopher Jacques Lacan, pointed out that Palin, on the contrary, proudly displays her femininity and motherhood. She has a “castrating” effect on her male opponents, not by being more manly than them, but by sarcastically downgrading the puffed-up male authority. According to Miller, Palin instinctively knows that male “phallic” authority is a posture, a semblance to be exploited and mocked. Recall how she mocked Sen. Barack Obama’s work as a community organizer.

Palin provides a “post-feminist” femininity without complexity, uniting the features of mother, prim teacher (glasses, hair in a bun), public figure and, implicitly, sex object, proudly displaying the “first dude” as a phallic toy. The message is that she doesn’t lack anything—and, to add insult to injury, it was a Republican woman who realized this left-liberal dream. It is as if she simply is what left-liberal feminists *want* to be. No wonder the Palin effect is one of false liberation: “Drill, baby, drill!” Feminism and family values! Big corporations and blue collars!

So, back to Carpenter’s *They Live*. To get the true Republican message, one should take into account not only what is said but what is implied.

Where we hear the message of populist frustration over Washington gridlock and corruption, the glasses would show a condoning of the public’s refusal to understand: “We allow you NOT to understand—so have fun, vent your frustration! We will take care of business. We have enough behind-the-scenes experts who can fix things. In a way, it’s better for you not to know.” (Recall Vice President Dick Cheney’s hints at the dark side of power, as he successfully orchestrated an expansion of presidential executive power.)

And where the message is the promise of change, the glasses would show something like this: “Don’t worry, there will be no real change, we just want to change some small things to make sure that nothing will really change.” The rhetoric of change, of troubling Washington’s stagnant waters, is a permanent Republican staple. (Recall former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich’s populist anti-Washington rise to power in 1994.)

Let us not be naïve here: Republican voters *know* there will be no real change. They know the same substance will go on with changes in style. This is part of the deal.

Four years ago, Sen. John Kerry lost because he was President Bush with a human face. Today, Sen. John McCain is Bush with a lipsticked face. It’s a rhetorical lipstick of “No bullshit!” When Princeton philosopher Harry Frankfurt, author of the bestselling *On Bullshit*, was asked which U.S. politician breaks out of the predominant bullshitting, he named McCain – and thereby tragi-comically missed a key point. Talking straight, displaying no-bullshit honesty, can be the cleverest form of bullshitting, a mere populist pose.

What if, however, the between-the-lines Republican message (don’t be afraid, there will be no real change) is the true illusion, not the secret truth? What if there really *will* be a change? Or, to paraphrase

the Marx brothers: McCain and Palin look like they want a change and talk like they want a change—but this shouldn't deceive us, they might very well accomplish a change!

Perhaps this is the true danger, since it would be change in the direction of “Country first!” and of “Drill, baby, drill!”

Luckily, as an electoral blessing in disguise, a sobering thing happened to remind us where we really live: in the reality of global capitalism. The state is planning emergency measures to spend hundreds of billions of dollars—if not \$1 trillion—to repair the consequences of the financial crisis caused by free-market speculations.

The lesson is clear: The market and state are not opposed. Indeed, strong state interventions are needed to keep markets balanced.

The initial Republican reaction to the financial meltdown was a desperate attempt to reduce it to a minor misfortune that could easily be healed by a proper dose of the old Republican medicine (a proper respect for market mechanisms, etc.). In short, the Republicans' between-the-lines message was this: We allow you to continue to dream.

However, all the political posturing of lower state spending became irrelevant after this sudden brush with the real. Today, even the strongest advocates of diminishing the excessive role of Washington accept the necessity for a state intervention that is sublime in its almost unimaginable quantity. Confronted with this sublime grandeur, all the “no bullshit” bravado was reduced to a confused mumble. Where, today, are McCain's steely resolve and Palin's sarcasm?

But was the financial meltdown really the awakening from a dream? It depends on how the meltdown will be perceived by the general public. In other words, which interpretation will win? Which “story” about it will predominate?

When the normal run of things is traumatically interrupted, the field of “discursive” ideological competition opens up. In Germany in the late '20s, Adolf Hitler won the competition for the narrative that explained to Germans the reasons for the crisis of the Weimar Republic and the way out of it. (His plot was the Jewish plot.) In France in 1940, Marshall Petain's narrative, that France lost because of the Jewish influence and democratic degeneration, won in explaining the reasons for the French defeat.

Consequently, the main task of the ruling ideology is to impose a narrative that will not put the blame for the meltdown onto the global capitalist system *as such*, but on, say, lax legal regulations and the corruption of big financial institutions. Against this tendency, we should insist on the key question: which “flaw” of the system as such opens up the possibility for—and continuous outbreaks of—such crises and collapses?

The first thing to bear in mind is that the origin of the crisis is a “benevolent” one. After the dot-com bubble exploded in the first years of the new millennium, the decision across party lines was to facilitate real estate investments to keep the economy growing and prevent recession. Today's meltdown is the price paid for the United States avoiding a prolonged recession five years ago.

The danger is that the predominant narrative of the meltdown will be the one that, instead of waking us from a dream, will enable us to *continue to dream*. And it is here that we should start to worry—not only about the economic consequences of the meltdown, but also about the obvious temptation to reinvigorate the “war on terror” and U.S. interventionism in order to keep the economy running.

The Pervert's Guide to Ideology

A film by Sophie Fiennes

Starring **SLAVOJ ZIZEK**

Directed by **SOPHIE FIENNES**

Produced by **JAMES WILSON, MARTIN ROSENBAUM,
KATIE HOLLY & SOPHIE FIENNES**

Executive Producers **KATHERINE BUTLER, TABITHA JACKSON, SHANI HINTON,
MICHAEL SACKLER & JULIA GODZINSKAYA**

Director of Photography **REMKO SCHNORR**

Editor **ETHEL SHEPHERD**

Production Designer **LUCY VAN LONKHUYSEN**

Music by **MAGNUS FIENNES**

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