

the Liberator

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IDEA-LOGY: MUSINGS ON BELIEF SYSTEMS

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This article first appeared in The Narrative Issue.

Written by: Elizabeth Teare

Ideology. From Greek *idea*, a form or pattern. From Greek *logos*, discourse or compilation.

Merriam Webster defines ideology as a “visionary theorizing; a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture”.

Slavoj Zizek, author of *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, associates ideologies with metanarratives, grand stories that mark societies.

Though they might originally have economic, political, societal or religious groundings, ideologies attempt to explain all aspects of human life. In forming ideologies, we look into our past—as feminism does when criticizing the patriarchy—in order to make sense of the present. The danger then lies when we fantasize the future, as Trump has done while claiming to “Make America Great Again.” Zizek comments on such ideologies, noting it “is not that bad people do bad things — they always do. It’s that good people do horrible things thinking they are doing something great.”

PRINT ISSUES

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~~ "The Language Issue" ~~

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- Slavoj Zizek and Sophie Fiennes *A Perverts Guide to Ideology* is a philosophical-cinematic portrayal of the ideologies around us. The opening scene of this film depicts the main character finding a pair of glasses which “function like critique of ideology glasses. They allow you to see the real message beneath all the propaganda, publicity and posters.” He sees dollar bills as sheets of paper marked with the words “this is your God,” billboards say to “conform” or “watch T.V.” The main character sees through the societal ideologies he had before accepted as normal.



It “is not that bad people do bad things — they always do. It’s that good people do horrible things thinking they are doing something great.”

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- Seen through the filter of their preexisting ideological lenses, UT students are faced daily with political campaigns, street sermons, and demonstrations. Recently in Texas, Planned Parenthood has been lobbying for support and donations, fighting to survive in an infamously red state. Two UT students, both women identifying as conservative Republicans differed in their stance on abortion. “I am a Christian, a Conservative, and a Republican,” says Madison Albrecht, “I believe that life begins at conception. Because all life is sacred, we have an obligation to protect all life, including the babies who don’t have yet have a voice to speak for themselves.”

While Clarissa Ureste explained “I hold my political beliefs most strongly. Though I was really religious at one point, I now consider myself to be agnostic. I do not have very strong opinions on abortion. However, I absolutely do not agree in late term abortions. I believe that once a baby is capable of surviving, they should no longer be aborted.” These two women, on a surface level hold identical political ideologies, yet it is their religious narratives that take precedence in shaping certain beliefs.

ARCHIVES

- o May 2016
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- Ideologies flourish at UT organization fairs. The International Socialist Organization or The Young Libertarians, University Democrats or the College Republicans provide young, malleable minds with political theories. Young Life and Ignite provide students with community based on religious ideals. Greek life offers a more elite set of ideologies. Students in search of belonging, a passion or an explanation, might find solutions within such communities. These organizations fill a social void that is common for incoming college students; the ideologies build a common thread and understanding.

Such a transition, however, could provide an opportunity to see the diverse, conflicting world we live in, to first remove our glasses before we put on another guiding pair.

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