



a state that has the market as its point of reference operate outside market imperatives?

When Žižek states that the free-market play of globalization is unregulated, he disregards the fact that the playing field has very clear demarcations. Think of international arbitration trials, for example, where companies are able to sue governments for failing to allow foreign corporate projects in their own countries. If the job of the state is to support the market, whose interests will such a state serve? Certainly, a strong state is desirable when the state's governance is focused on the welfare of its people, but not when the market is still very much part of the state.

When the pandemic began, I was halfway through Žižek's ***Sex and the Failed Absolute*** (<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/sex-and-the-failed-absolute-9781350043794/>), published in September 2019. This is a fine piece of theoretical thought, similar to ***The Sublime Object of Ideology*** (<https://www.versobooks.com/books/348-the-sublime-object-of-ideology>), the Verso book that made him famous. Amidst the convulsions of the events of the COVID-19 pandemic, Žižek seems to have once again lost his theoretical compass, and is simply regurgitating many of his overused ideas in a shiny new COVID-19 packaging.

Žižek's **book** (<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/550756/refugees-terror-and-other-troubles-with-the-neighbors-by-slavoj-zizek/>) on the 2015 migration crisis received so much backlash that he was basically blacklisted by major media outlets. *Pandemic: COVID-19 Shakes the World* is not even controversial enough to attract public hatred. It is rather destined to be received with indifference.

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