

Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in MB503, Alfred Nobels Allé 7, Huddinge, Friday, 5 April 2019 at 14:00 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in English. Faculty examiner: Assistant Professor Frank Ruda (University of Dundee).

### **Abstract**

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The principal aim of this dissertation is to answer the age-old question *What is diplomacy?* But this study approaches the question in what might, on first look, appear oblique. By employing Slavoj Žižek's reworked notion of *Ideologiekritik* with respect to the history, science, and artistic explorations of diplomacy, this work begins by extracting three of its essential problems: the name, death, and representation. A presentation of the central concepts and theoretical perspectives at play in Žižek's work is elaborated upon, focusing on his understanding of politics, ideology, and the core of the conceptual apparatus of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

The overarching argument of the thesis is that diplomacy constitutes an *Ideological State Apparatus*, i.e. that it offers a symbolic link destined to, through ideology, repress the fundamental inconsistencies of the modern nation state, in order to secure its continuous functioning. Diplomacy is shown to constitute the name that points to the impossibility of the state to become One with itself, and the thesis aims to capture how this impossibility, and that which must be excluded from the state to keep the fantasy of fullness alive, always returns to haunt it. Empirically, this is explored by way of re-reading the history of the word diplomacy, whose modern birth coincided with the events of the French Revolution. The study seeks to retrace diplomacy through three distinct historical formations, which here are referred to as the *archi-political*, *ultra-political*, and *post-political*. Each of these formations functions as a covering over of the fundamental impossibility of the state. Readings of Immanuel Kant, Henry James, André Brink, Mads Brügger, and 20<sup>th</sup> century IR-theory and Diplomacy Studies are presented in order to elaborate the way in which these formations are constituted as ideological fantasies protecting the state and, for that matter, diplomacy from their abyssal ground.

*Keywords:* Diplomacy, Ideology, Rhetoric, Slavoj Žižek, International Relations

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