

transcript of introduction to Slavoj Zizek lecture

Thomas Keenan:

Welcome. I'm Tom Keenan, Director of the new Bard College Human Rights Project. And I'm happy and grateful that you all are here to welcome and listen to Slavoj Zizek.

I very clearly remember the day, a number of years ago now, when I got a postcard in the mail out of the blue from a friend at Cornell. This postcard said in its entirety--I can quote it to you from memory--"Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Chapter I. Pass it on. That was 1990. And this remarkable book about ideology and many other things had come out in English the year before and announced the arrival in English of the very first interesting interpretation of Marx really since Althusser or maybe Laclau and Mouffe. People were talking about it and they were passing it on.

Today, 10 years later, 10 years to the month after the Berlin Wall fell, taking with it so many other things, opening up so many possibilities and traumas and disasters, Slavoj Zizek has published or edited something like 13 more books 10 years later, often two a year, and established himself as one the dominant and most influential Western cultural intellectuals of the decade. He has written again and again on what for him is the great power couple of the second half of the 20th century: Jacques Lacan and Alfred Hitchcock, and pursued relentlessly the holy grail of rigorous theoretical, which also means political, articulation of Marx and Freud.

But this pursuit has taken him to some strange places: to American popular culture from Columbo to Full Metal Jacket, to the Internet, to the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, to analytic philosophy, opera, Kant, Hegel, Schelling, German idealism, and so on. Along the way, he's proved himself to be something like an renaissance intellectual in a way which has few parallels today. He does philosophy, psychoanalysis, economics, politics, literature, music, film, his own strange kind of ethnography, and lots and lots of popular cultural studies. He's produced some of

the most insightful analyses we have of the conceptual [?] of freedoms and of rights, of the relations between the sexes, of the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Western responses or non-responses to it, of totalitarianism and communism and democracy, and of all the issues that obsess contemporary psychoanalytic theory, like trauma and narcissism and perversion, and of many other things--innumerable and unforgettable readings, particularly of films, and news events, and popular politicians. And Hitchcock films, always Hitchcock films sooner or later.

He writes everywhere, about philosophy in philosophy books, about politics in politics books. He's edited an obscure text of Schelling recently, but he also reviews biographies of Vaclav Havel in *The London Review of Books*. He's currently at work on two more books, so prepare yourself: one on David Lynch with the very elegant title, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime*, and one on Christianity of which I believe you'll hear a little bit tonight, called *The Fragile Absolute*.

He's currently senior researcher at the Institute for Social Studies in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, and was recently a visiting professor at The New School. He's currently attached, I guess, in some way to Georgetown University, and next semester he'll be back in New York at NYU.

I'm extremely pleased to welcome here tonight, and I hope you are too and look forward to his lecture, Slavoj [Zizek].

Human Rights and Its Discontents

A lecture by Slavoj Zizek

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Olin Auditorium, Bard College

Slavoj Zizek:

Thank you for the kind invitation.

Let me go directly to the point: It is a well known fact that the close-the-door button in most elevators is a totally dysfunctional placebo which is placed there just to give individuals the impression that they are somehow participating, contributing to the speed of the elevator journey. When we push this button the door closes in exactly the same time as when we just press the floor button without speeding up the process by pressing also the close-the-door button. This extreme and clear case of fake participation is, I claim, an appropriate metaphor [for] the participation of individuals in our post-modern political process. We are all the time asked by politicians to press such buttons. But some things are excluded. What is excluded from this participatory, multi-culturalist, tolerant democracy?

In today's predominant ideological perception, I'm tempted to claim work itself--that is to say manual labor as opposed to so-called symbolic activity--work, not sex is more and more becoming the site of obscene indecency to be concealed from the public eye. The tradition which goes back to Wagner's opera, *Rhinegold*, or to Fritz Lang's film, *Metropolis*, the tradition in

which the working process takes place underground, in dark caves, today culminates in the millions of anonymous workers sweating in the Third World factories, from Chinese gulags to Indonesian assembly lines. In their invisibility the West can afford itself to babble about the so-called disappearing working class. Of course, it's disappearing from here.

But what is crucial in this tradition is the equation of labor with crime, the idea that labor, hard work, is originally an indecent criminal activity to be hidden from the public eye. Significantly, we ask ourselves a simple question: Where in Hollywood films do we see still today the production process in all its intensity? I claim, as far as I remember, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, only at one place: in James Bond or similar films when the good guy, James Bond the agent, penetrates the fortress of the master criminal. And then you see it's either the drug processing or putting together of some lethal weapon. That's the only place where you see the production process. Of course, the function of the agent is then to explode, to destroy, to repress again this sight of production.

This, I think, is the necessary background if we want to approach properly the problematic of human rights today. So how are we to approach this problematic? I want to do something which may be a surprise to some of you. It's no irony intended. I think the Christian legacy is all too precious to be left to, well, Christians themselves. So what I want to do is, in the first part of my talk, to propose a certain reading of Christianity, aiming to demonstrate how Christianity effectively provides the foundation to human rights and freedoms.

To put it in a somewhat simplified way--I simplify it very much, I know--there are two basic attitudes discernible in the history of religions along the axis of the opposition between the global and the universal: On the one hand, there is the pre-Christian pagan cosmos, the divine hierarchical order of cosmic principles which, when copied on the society, gives the image of a congruent edifice

in which each member is at each/his/her own place. The supreme good is here the global balance of principles, while the evil stands for their derailment or derangement, for the excessive assertion of one principle to the detriment of other principles, of the masculine principle to the detriment of the feminine one, of reason to the detriment of feeling, and so on and so on. The cosmic balance is then reestablished through the work of justice which, with its inexorable necessity, sets things straight again by crushing the derailed element. With regard to the social body, an individual is good when he or she acts in accordance with his/her special place within the social edifice, when he respects nature which provides food and shelter, when he shows respect for his superiors who take care of him in a fatherly way, and so on and so on. And evil occurs when some particular strata or individuals are no longer satisfied with their proper place within the global order, when children no longer obey parents, when servants no longer obey their masters, when the wise ruler turns into a capricious, cruel tyrant, and so on.

So the very core of the pagan wisdom resides in the insight into this cosmic balance of hierarchically ordered principles, more precisely, the insight into the eternal circuit of the cosmic catastrophe, derailment, and the restoration of order through just punishment. Perhaps the most elaborated case of such a cosmic order is the ancient Hindu cosmology first copied onto the social order in the guise of the system of castes, and then onto the individual organism itself in the guise of the harmonious hierarchy of its organs: head, hands, abdomen, and so on. Today such an attitude is artificially resuscitated in the multitude of New Age approaches to nature, society, and so on and so on.

So that's the standard, traditional, pagan order. Again, being good means that you fully assume your proper place within some global order. But Christianity, and in its own way already--maybe, I'm not sure, I don't know enough about it--Buddhism, introduce into this global balance, cosmic order, a principle totally foreign to it, a principle that, measured by the standards of the pagan cosmology, cannot but appear as a monstrous distortion, the principle according to which each individual has an immediate access to the universality of nirvana, or the Holy Spirit, or today, of human rights and freedoms. The idea is that I can participate in this

universal dimension directly, irrespective of my specific particular place within the global order. For that reason, Buddha's followers form a community of people who in one way or another have broken with the hierarchy of the social order, who started to treat this order as something fundamentally irrelevant. In his choice of disciples, Buddha pointedly ignored castes and, after some hesitation, true, even sexual difference.

And do Christ's scandalous words from Luke [14:26] look, not point, in the same direction? "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Here, of course, I claim we are not dealing with a simple brutal hatred demanded by a cruel and jealous god. Family relations stand here metaphorically for the entire social network, for any particular ethnic substance that determines my place in the global order of things. The hatred enjoined by Christ is therefore not any kind of dialectical opposite of love, but the direct expression of love. It is love itself that enjoins me to unplug, as it were, from my organic community into which I was born, or, as St. Paul put it, "There are neither men nor women, neither Jews nor Greeks."

We can see here how truly heterogeneous is the Christian stance with regard to that of the pagan wisdom. In clear contrast to the ultimate horizon of the pagan wisdom, which is the coincidence of the opposites--Namely, what is wisdom? The ultimate point of wisdom is that our universe is the abyss of the primordial ground in which all false opposites--good and evil, appearance and reality, and so on and so on--ultimately coincide. That's wisdom. Wisdom always is basically a fake platitude, I claim. You can be sure of it. Make a simple experiment. I think the proper attitude of a proper Christian or leftist today is to despise wisdom. What's wisdom? What's wisdom? Wisdom is that whatever happens you have a good excuse. Wisdom means you do something. If you succeed, then you have a proverb which is a form of wisdom to legitimize it, like we in Europe have a proverb, a standard one which says, Only those who risk can succeed. If you fail we have another proverb to legitimize it which says in very vulgar terms--something, I don't have it in English--You cannot urinate against the wind. That's wisdom for me. Anything goes basically. The basic wisdom is that

differences don't matter, what was up comes down, this eternal circulation of fortune, and so on and so on.

But in clear contrast to this logic, Christianity asserts as the highest act precisely what the pagan wisdom condemns as the source of evil: the gesture of separation, of drawing the line, of clinging to an element which precisely disturbs the balance of all. The pagan reproach that the Christian insight is not deep enough, that it fails to grasp the primordial One-All, this primordial abyss, primordial void, thus misses the point. Christianity is a miraculous event that disturbs the balance of the One-All. It is the violent intrusion of difference which throws off the rails the balanced circuit of the universe.

From this standpoint it would be interesting to approach the ideological ambiguities of a very bad movie, George Lucas's Star Wars I: The Phantom Menace. The film, one of whose few interests resides in the way it endeavors to outline the answer to the question of the origin of evil, How did Darth Vader become Darth Vader? That is to say, How did Anakin Skywalker, this sweet boy, turn into the monstrous instrument of cosmic evil? Two things are here crucial: First, the Christological features of the young Anakin. If you know the movie you know that his mother hints that she became pregnant with him in an immaculate conception. Then we have the ways in which Anakin wins. It clearly echoes the famous chariot race in Ben Hur, this tale of Christ. Second, the fact that he's identified as the one who has the potential to restore the balance of the Force. Now, here's my question: Since the ideological universe of Star Wars is the New Age pagan universe, it is quite consequent that its central figure of evil should echo Christ. Within the pagan horizon the event of Christ is the ultimate scandal. Furthermore, what if we take the premonition that Anakin will restore the balance of the Force, not as the faithful misapprehension, but as a correct insight? What if the suffocating character of the pagan universe resides precisely in the fact that in this universe the dimension of radical evil, that in it the balance was way too much in favor of the good? So I think that that's the solution, that precisely in this sense Anakin restores the balance.

It is in order to emphasize this suspension of social hierarchy that Christ addresses in an accentuated way those who belong to the

very bottom of the social hierarchy, the outcasts of the social order--beggars, prostitutes--as the privileged members of his new community. This new community is then explicitly constructed as a collective of outcasts, the antipode to any established organic group. Perhaps the best way to imagine such a community is to look at it in the lineage of other eccentric communities of outcasts that we know from past and present, from lepers and circus freaks to early computer hackers, groups in which the stigmatized individuals are united by a secret bond of solidarity. In order to specify further these two communities I'm tempted to risk the reference to Freud himself who, in his crowd psychology, provides two examples of crowd formation as we all know: the Church and the army.

Now usually one takes these two crowd formations as equivalent without considering the difference between the two. However, what if this difference is crucial, along the lines of (I'm referring here to) Ernesto Laclau, who developed the opposition between the structure of differences, the differentiated structure, and the antagonistic logic of equivalencies--us against them. The Church is global, a structured institution and [?] network of hierarchically differentiated positions, basically ecumenical, tolerant, prone to compromises, all-inclusive, dividing the profits among the sub-groups; while in the army the accent is on the antagonism, on us versus them, and on the egalitarian universalism. All of us are ultimately equal when confronted with them, the enemy. So that the army is ultimately exclusionary, prone to annihilate the other. Of course this is an abstract proposition; empirically the line can be blurred. We often have the militant Church or the army that functions as a Church-like corporate social institution.

But the fundamental paradox is that the two communities, again, often exchange their places. There is a Church who is close to antagonistic functioning of the army or vice versa. What I claim is that this opposition is actual even today in the field where I'm active, for example, in the relationship between [the] International Psychoanalytic Association, the orthodox one and the Lacanian movement. The IPA is the psychoanalytic church,

excommunicating people from its ranks only when it feels effectively threatened, prone to endless debates, compromises, and so on and so on. I claim that we Lacanians are, on the contrary, the psychoanalytic army, a combative group working towards an aggressive re-conquest defined by the antagonism between us and them, avoiding, rejecting even the tolerant olive branch of the IPA: Come back, we accept you only if you also make a compromise and change slightly the form of your activity. So with regard to political struggles, the Freudian formula, Where it was I shall come into being, can thus be read as, Where the church was there, the army should arrive.

However, does Christianity not go even a further step and enjoin us, not simply to hate parents on behalf of the Beloved One, but in the dialectical inversion of love for one's enemy, to hate the Beloved out of love and in love, as Kierkegaard put it? The proper way to understand this is to ask a precise question: What dimension in the Beloved Other am I enjoined to hate? Let me take hatred towards one's father in the Oedipal family tension. As we see all the time, this hatred disappears and new understanding for the father emerges the moment the son effectively gets rid of the shadow of paternal authority. In short, hatred disappears the moment the son perceives his father no longer as the embodiment of his father's symbolic function, but as a vulnerable subject which is disconnected, disattached from this function. It is in this sense that in true love I hate the Beloved out of love. I hate the dimension of the beloved person's inscription into the social-symbolic structure. I hate him or her on behalf of my very love for him as a unique person.

However, we should avoid a crucial misunderstanding here. This unplugging, this disconnection, has nothing whatsoever to do with the common humanist idea that one should forget about the artificial symbolic features and perceive one's neighbor in his or her unique humanity, that we should see the real human person beneath the other social role, beneath ideological mandates or masks. St. Paul is here quite explicit in his, what I'm tempted to call in today's terms, theoretical anti-humanism. A quote from

Corinthians [5:17]: "From now on, therefore, regard no one from a human point of view. Even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed away, everything has become new."

So in the uncoupling from the social structure, substance, whichever we want, the neighbor is thus reduced to a singular member of the community of believers of the Holy Ghost. To use the modern opposition, it is not the symbolic subject who is reduced the real individual; it is the individual, the person in all the wealth of his or her characteristics, features, who is reduced to the singular point of subjectivity. As such, uncoupling effectively involves a symbolic death. One has to die for the law that regulates our tradition, our social substance.

The term "new creation" used by St. Paul is crucial here. It signals the gesture of sublimation, of erasing the traces of one's past and the beginning afresh from a zero point. Consequently, there is also a terrifying violence at work in this uncoupling, that of the death drive, of the radical wiping the slate clean as the condition of the new beginning.

So again, I hope my point where I am, to put it in these terms, pro-Christian is clear enough. I claim that the way we--how should I put it?--the way to imagine any radical social change was opened by this logic, which again is not the logic of this eternal circular movement, the logic of disturbed and reestablished balance, where we are part of some large chain of being; but it's the logic of miracle, miracle not in the religious sense--I'm a materialist, to avoid misunderstanding--but miracle in the sense of you can begin from the zero point. We are not caught in an eternal movement. To be good does not mean to be identified to your place. And it's here I claim that human rights begin.

Human rights do not mean you have your proper place and dignity comes to you through being identified to that place. Human rights means precisely, no, you are something independently of your

proper place. Which is why every proper right-winger or proto-fascist always insists on one thing. This is the eternal organicist metaphoric of fascism or proto-fascism, that society is kind of a mega-organism, a body where the key to order is that everyone has to stick to his or her own place, and things go wrong when people want directly to participate at the universal dimension. While again, democracy, if this term has any meaning today, begins precisely when you have a direct access to the Absolute, where, independently of your place in this destructive, violent outburst you can acquire a distance towards the specific social structure. Because of this, against today's onslaught of New Age neo-paganism, it seems to me both theoretically productive and politically salient to stick to this Judaeo-Christian logic.

Along the neo-pagan lines, for example, John Gray, the author of *Men Are From Mars, Women are from Venus*, deployed in a series of Oprah Winfrey shows a vulgarized version of deconstructionist psychoanalysis. What is John Gray's thesis? His thesis is the following one: Since we ultimately are the stories we are telling ourselves about ourselves, the solution to a psychic deadlock resides in a creative rewriting of the narrative of our past. What John Gray has in mind is not only the standard cognitive therapy of changing negative false beliefs about oneself into a more positive attitude of the assurance that one is loved by others and capable of creative achievement, but a much more radical pseudo-Freudian notion of regression back to the scene of the primordial traumatic wound. That is to say, John Gray accepts the psychoanalytic notion of a hard kernel of some early childhood traumatic experience that forever marked the subject's further development; but he gives it, [...?] the individual a pathological spin. What John Gray proposes is that after regressing to this primal traumatic scene and thus directly confronting it, the subject should, under therapy's guidance, rewrite this scene, this ultimate fantasmatic framework of his or her existence, in a more positive, benign, productive narrative.

He himself presented, in a show that I watched, a woman in her late twenties whose primordial traumatic scene--that existed in her unconscious, deforming, inhibiting her creative attitude--was that

of her father shouting at her when she was a small girl, "You are worthless, I despise you, nothing will come of you!" John Gray said simply that through his collaboration, this woman should rewrite this scene into a new scene with a benevolent father kindly smiling at her and telling her, "You are okay, I trust you fully," and so on and so on. And they tried to convince us that this worked, and that at the end the woman gracefully embraced John Gray, crying from happiness that she was no longer haunted by her father's despising attitude towards her.

Now to play this game to the end: When Wolf Man, Freud's patient, regressed to the traumatic scene that determined his further psychic development, witnessing the parental coitus a tergo, sexual act from behind, the solution would be probably, from John Gray's point, to rewrite this scene so that what Wolf Man effectively saw was, let's say, instead of his parents having sex, only his parents lying on the bed: father reading a newspaper, mother, a sentimental novel. Ridiculous as this may appear, let us not forget that it also has its politically correct version--that of the ethnic, sexual and [?] minorities rewriting their past in a more positive self-asserting vein.

Along the same lines one can even imagine a rewriting of the Decalogue itself. If some command is too severe, let us regress to the scene on Mt. Sinai and rewrite it. Adultery? Why not? Yes, if it is sincere and serves the goal of your profound self-realization. What disappears in this total availability of the past to its subsequent retroactive rewriting is not the hard facts, but the Real of the traumatic encounter whose structuring role in the subject's psychic economy forever resists its symbolic rewriting.

This is the reason why we today prefer the Dalai Lama to the Pope. Even those who respect Pope John Paul II's moral stance usually accompany this admiration with the qualification that the Pope nonetheless remains hopelessly old-fashioned, medieval even, sticking to old dogmas, out of touch with the demands of new times. How can one today ignore contraception, divorce, abortion?

Are these not facts of our life, part of today's self-evident rights? How can the Pope deny the right to abortion, even to a nun who got pregnant through rape, as the Pope effectively did in the case of the raped nuns during the war in Bosnia? Is it not clear that, even when one is in principle against abortion, one should in such an extreme case bend the principle and consent to a compromise? One can understand now why the Dalai Lama is much more appropriate for our post-modern permissive times. He presents us with a vague feel-good spiritualism without any specific obligations. Anyone, even the most decadent Hollywood star, can follow him while continuing his money-grubbing, promiscuous lifestyle. In contrast to it, the Pope reminds us that there is a price to pay for a proper ethical attitude. It is his very stubborn clinging to old values, his ignoring the realistic demands of our time even when the argument against it seems obvious, as is the case of the raped nun, that makes him--conditionally I use this term--great.

So I hope you got my point here. I disagree radically with the Pope. But what I admire nonetheless in his attitude is the form itself. I think the argumentation, the usual argumentation against the Pope is even worse than the Pope, because the argumentation is really purely conformist argumentation. It's really the argumentation against paying the price for an ethical stance. It's the argumentation of "let's be realists," and so on and so on. It's basically argumentation from an unprincipled attitude.

So in this permissive, plastic universe of ours, human rights are ultimately in their innermost simply--why not? I follow here my friend from California, Ken Reinhard--aren't they not simply, ultimately, the way they actually function, the rights to violate the Ten Commandments? The right to privacy, what does it mean? Basically, the right to adultery done in secret when no one sees me or has the right to probe into my life. The right to pursue happiness and to possess private property, what does it mean? Basically, the right to steal, to exploit others. Freedom of the press and of the expression of opinion, basically what does it mean? The right to lie. The right of the free citizens to possess weapons--it is of course the right to kill. And ultimately freedom of religious belief: the right to celebrate false gods.

Of course human rights do not directly condone the violation of the Commandments. The point is just that they keep open a marginal grey zone which should remain out of reach of religious or secular power. In this shady zone I can violate the Commandments, and if the power probes into it, catching me with my pants down, trying to prevent my violations, I can cry assault on my basic human rights. The point is thus it is structurally impossible for the power to draw a clear line of separation and to prevent only the misuse of human rights, while not infringing upon their proper use, the use that does not violate the commandments.

There is a somewhat homologous situation with regard to the heterosexual seduction process in our politically correct times. The two sets, the set of the politically correct behavior and the set of seduction, nowhere effectively intersect; that is to say, there is no seduction which is not in a way an incorrect intrusion or harassment. At some point you, if you are a seducer, you have to expose yourself to make a pass, as we usually put it.

So does this mean that every seduction is all the way through an incorrect harassment? No, and therein resides the catch. When you make a pass, you expose yourself to the other, the potential partner, and she decides retroactively, by her reaction, whether what you just did was harassment or a successful act of seduction. And there is no way to tell in advance what her reaction will be. This is why assertive women often despise weak men, because they fear to expose themselves, to take the necessary risk. And perhaps this holds even more in our politically correct times. Are not the politically correct prohibitions rules which in one way or another are to be violated in the seduction process? Is not the seducer's art to accomplish this violation properly, so that afterwards, by its acceptance, its harassing aspect will be retroactively canceled?

So within this universe of permissivity, where human rights are reduced to what I said, just rights to violate Commandments, and so on and so on, how does the reference to human rights function

in politics? Here I will finally enter what probably you expect from me, the NATO bombing of ex-Yugoslavia, of Serbia. How did it function? Where did I find it problematic?--because I'm basically opposed to both positions there. I'm both opposed to those who oppose the bombing and those who simply condone the bombing.

It may appear comforting to see the NATO forces intervene not for any specific economic or strategic interest, but simply because a country was cruelly violating the elementary human rights of an ethnic group. Is not this the only hope in our global era, to see some internationally acknowledged force as the guarantee that all countries will respect a certain minimum of ethical and even health, social, ecological standards?

This is the message that Vaclav Havel tries to bring home in his essay significantly titled, "[Kosovo and the End of the Nation-State](#)." According to Havel, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia,

"places human rights above the rights of the state. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was attacked by the Alliance without a direct mandate from the United Nations. This did not happen irresponsibly, as an act of aggression or out of disrespect for international law. It happened, on the contrary, out of respect for the law, for a law that ranks higher than the law which protects the sovereignty of states. The Alliance has acted out of respect for human rights, as both conscience and international legal documents dictate."

Havel further specifies this higher law when he claims that--I quote again:

"human rights, human freedoms, and human dignity have their deepest roots somewhere outside the perceptible world. [...] While the state is a human creation, human beings are the creation of God."

Now, if we read Havel's two statements as two premises of a judgment, the conclusion that imposes itself is none other than that

the NATO forces [are] allowed to violate the existing international law since they acted as a direct instrument of the higher law of God Himself. If this is not a clear-cut case of religious fundamentalism, then this term is devoid of any even minimally consistent meaning.

There are, however, a series of features which disturb this idyllic picture. The first thing that cannot but arouse our suspicion is how, in the NATO justification of the intervention, the reference to the violation of human rights was always accompanied by the vague reference to strategic interests. So this is the old point of why exactly Yugoslavia? Why not Turkey? Why not now Russia, and so on?

Here, of course, we enter the shady world of international capital and its strategic interests. Let me just mention the case of what goes on now in Chechnya. In order to discern the ultimate costs of the Russian ruthless bombardment of the civil population in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, one has to forget all the prattle about the ethnic-religious conflict between Russian Orthodox Christian nationalism and the Islamic fundamentalist threat. One should rather focus the attention on the enormous oil reserves recently discovered in Azerbaijan--a country, incidentally, run by the democratically elected Aliyev, the chief of the KGB in the Breznev years. If these reserves were to become accessible for the West, they would threaten the privileged position of the Arab countries with regard to the oil supply. Furthermore, there is the secondary conflict between Russia and Turkey as to where the pipeline that will transport all this wealth to the West will run: through southern Russia, or through Turkey? It is the intricate ballet and changing alliances between these three parties, together with their Western sponsors, that provide the key to [the question] why such a meaningless war at precisely this moment.

There is, however, a deeper problem with the NATO intervention, I claim. The problem is not only that beneath the empty rhetoric of human rights there were particular interests. What is problematic for me is precisely the purely humanitarian ethic legitimization which depoliticizes the intervention, changing it into an intervention into a humanitarian catastrophe grounded in purely moral reasons, not an intervention into a well defined political

struggle. In other words, the problem with the militaristic pacifism (this was the term coined by German sociologist, Ulrich Beck apropos of NATO intervention in the Balkans, that we are approaching the era of militaristic humanism, or even militaristic pacifism), the problem for me here resides not in militaristic, but in humanism or pacifism. The problem resides in the way the militaristic intervention is presented as helping the victims of ethnic and so on hatred and violence, justified directly in depoliticized universal human rights.

Why do I find this problematic? Now I approach slowly the more problematic, probably for you, core of my talk today. The first problem I have is the following one: Let's go back to this famous disappearance of the working class. I did say nobody speaks of the working class today, but there is nonetheless, I claim, another term--immigrant workers, immigrants--which functions as a kind of metaphoric displacement. There we still talk about working class problems as the problems of immigrant workers. But what is the price that we pay for this displacement? It is that the problematic of power exploitation and so on is silently, in a secret way, retranslated into the multi-culturalist problematic of tolerance, tolerance for the other, and so on and so on. So at the end it appears as if it's not that we are racist in order to exploit the others, but that we exploit others--Hispanics here in this States, or African Americans, or Turks in Germany, and so on--that we exploit the other because we are not tolerant, because we fear their otherness, and then what enters is the Kristevian poetry about "strangers within ourselves and to ourselves," [that] the main problem is how to accept that we are strangers to ourselves, and so on. Again, I find this poetry suspicious because, again, it depoliticizes the situation. It changes what is the problem of what ultimately is not a problem of cultural tolerance, but of power, exploitation, [and] economy, it changes the problem into the problem of tolerance. Which is why I think that to approach today's racist outbursts and so on in terms of tolerance is totally misleading. I'm tempted even to say that the moment we put it in the terms of tolerance we falsify it. It's a totally false issue to formulate it in terms of intolerance versus tolerance.

What do I mean by this? Let me quote a report by The New York Times journalist, Steven Erlanger, on the suffering of the Kosovo Albanians, in an old issue of The New York Times, which renders

perfectly this logic that I'm attacking here. Already the title of his report is tell-taling [sic], "**In One Kosovo Woman, An Emblem of Suffering.**" So the subject to be protected by the NATO intervention in ex-Yugoslavia is from the outset identified as a powerless victim of circumstances, deprived of all political identity, reduced to bare suffering. I'm referring in detail to this article because I think that it constructs, presents, the ideal subject whom NATO wants to help, of NATO intervention.

The basic stance of this woman, according to the journalist Stephen Erlanger, is that of excessive suffering, of traumatic experience that blurs all differences: "She's seen too much, Meli said. [Meli's her name.] She wants a rest. She wants it to be over." As such, she's beyond any criminal recrimination: An independent Kosovo is not on her agenda; she just wants the horror over.

Another quote: "Does she favor an independent Kosovo? 'You know, I don't care if it's this or that,' Meli said. 'I just want all this to end and to feel good again, to feel good in my place, in my house, with my friends and family.'" Her support of the foreign NATO intervention is grounded in her wish for all this horror to be over. Quote again: "She wants a settlement that brings foreigners here 'with some force behind them.' She's indifferent about who the foreigners are." [. . .]--quote again: "'There is tragedy enough for everyone,' she says. 'I feel sorry for the Serbs who've been bombed and died and I feel sorry for my own people, but maybe now there will be a conclusion, a settlement for good. That would be great.'" So here we have the ideological construction of the idea of subject-victim to whose aid NATO intervenes--not a political subject with a clear agenda, but a subject of helpless suffering, sympathizing with all suffering sights in the conflict, caught in the madness of a local clash that can only be pacified by the intervention of a benevolent foreign power. A subject whose innermost desire is reduced to the almost animal craving to "feel good again," as they put it. So you got my point. This is what is [?], that beneath this depoliticized, let's-just-protect-human-rights rhetoric, there is an extremely violent gesture of reducing the other to the helpless victim.

What do I mean by this? I claim that the ultimate paradox of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia was not the one about which Western pacifists complained, this usual argument that by bombing Yugoslavia in order to prevent ethnic cleansing in Kosovo NATO effectively triggered a large-scale cleansing and thus created the very humanitarian catastrophe it wanted to prevent. That's the usual argument of a lot of my left-wing friends: What was the result? Only KLA, that is to say Albanians, are now doing the ethnic cleansing, Milosovic taking power, nothing really changed, only the Serb population was suffering. If you ask me, I find this argument, especially the argument that the result of bombing was an even stronger--in the first month of it--ethnic cleansing in Kosovo extremely cynical and unacceptable.

Why? Because, unfortunately, exactly the same argument goes also for the Allied bombing of Germany in '43 and '44. I can reconstruct how the argument would have gone in '43-'44. Why should we bomb Germany? Isn't it that even if we wanted to protect Hitler's victims from crimes, isn't it that the result of the bombing, or after the bombing, even more Jews were killed even more violently? Isn't it that only the innocent German population suffered while the topnotch elite survived, and so on and so on? Clearly something is wrong with this argumentation.

But the deeper paradox involved here resides in the ideology of victimization. While NATO intervened in order to protect the Kosovo victims, it at the same time, I claim, took care that they will remain victims, not an active political-military force capable of defending itself. The strategy of NATO was thus perverse in the precise Freudian sense of the term. NATO itself was co-responsible for the calamity against which it offered itself as a remedy, like the mad governess from my favorite Patricia Highsmith short story, "Heroine," who sets the family house on fire in order to be able to prove her devotion to the family by bravely saving the children from the raging fire.

What we encounter here is the paradox of victimization. The other

to be protected is good insofar as it remains a victim, which is why we were bombarded with pictures of helpless Kosovar mothers, children, elderly people telling moving stories of their suffering. The moment the other, the Albanian victim, no longer behaved as a victim but wanted to strike back on its own, it all of a sudden magically turned into a terrorist fundamentalist drug-trafficking other, and so on and so on. This is, again, the logic to which I was opposed. The other is good insofar as it is a victim. The moment the other no longer behaves as a victim it becomes the fundamentalist terrorist, or whatever, other.

To get a taste of the falsity of this logic of moralistic victimization it is sufficient to compare it to the great emancipatory movements based on the universalist moral appeal epitomized by the names Gandhi or Martin Luther King. Gandhi and King led movements directed not against a certain group of people, but against concrete racist-colonialist institutionalized practices. Their movements involved a positive all-inclusive stance that, far from excluding the enemy, white English colonizers, made an appeal to their moral sense and asked them to do something that would restore their own moral dignity. In contrast to this, the predominant form of today's politically correct moralism is that of the Nietzschean *ressentiment* and envy. It is the fake gesture of the disavowed politics, of assuming a moral depoliticized stance in order to make a stronger political case.

We are dealing here with a perverted version of Havel's power of the powerless. One manipulates one's powerlessness as a strategem in order to gain more power in exactly the same way that today, in our politically correct times, in order for one's voice to gain authority one has to legitimize oneself as being some kind of a potential or actual victim of power. This stance is not assertive but controlling, leveraging, bridling, like the ethical committees in sciences popping up everywhere today which are mainly concerned with how to define the limits, how to prevent things--say, biogenetic engineering--from happening. So in this perspective every actual act is bad. When Serbs cleanse Kosovo of Albanians, it is bad. When NATO intervenes to prevent it, it's bad.

When the KLA, Kosovo Liberation Army of the Albanians, strikes back, it's bad. Every excuse is good since it allows us to claim that of course we wait and want and act, but [it must be] a proper moral act, the conditions for which are just never here. Like the proverbial falsely enlightened husband who in principle agrees that his wife can take lovers, but complains apropos of every actual lover she chooses: "Okay, you can have lovers, but not this one. Why did you have to pick up this miserable idiot," and so on and so on.

That is to say, this is the problem I find: these famous excuses, arguments against the NATO bombing of Kosovo, which were a) All the diplomatic means were not yet exhausted; b) Why did we intervene here? Why not somewhere else? And so on and so on. But wait a minute. All diplomatic means are never exhausted, by definition. You can wait endlessly. And of course if you intervene here you cannot intervene everywhere. And so on and so on. You got my point. I claim that there is, how to put it--what I'm doing is not playing the middleman who is trying to prove how they are the both extremes (that is to say, this humanist NATO militaristic ideology and those leftists who opposed NATO intervention), that they're both wrong, that we should occupy some middle ground. No, I claim that paradoxically the legitimization of NATO bombing and the typical left-wing European at least, but here also I think, leftist rejection of it simply--They paradoxically, although they were officially opposite, share a whole series of presuppositions; for example, a certain naturalization, a purely racist perception of what went on in Yugoslavia, treating things there as a kind of almost natural catastrophe, as if a kind of primal ethnic hatred exploded there, tribal war, everywhere against everyone else, and so on and so on.

What do I mean by this? Around a year ago the Austrian TV staged a debate on Kosovo between a Serb, an Albanian, and an Austrian pacifist. The Serb and the Albanian each presented their view in a consistent and rational way--of course, consistent and rational if we accept the basic premise of each of them, that Kosovo is the historical cradle of Serbia to which they have an

inalienable right, that the Albanians oppressed by Serbs for decades have the right to a sovereign political entity.

Now in contrast to both of them the Austrian pacifist tried to play a reconciliatory role, imploring the two opponents: Whatever you think, just promise that you will not shoot at each other, that you will do your best to resist the terrible temptation of hatred and vengeance. At this point in this TV debate the Serb and the Albanian, the official enemies, briefly, I noticed, exchanged gazes in a solitary gesture of shared perplexion, as if saying to each other, "What is this idiot talking about? Does he understand anything at all?" I claim that in this brief exchange of gazes I see a glimmer of hope. If the Serb and the Albanian, instead of fighting each other, were able to join forces and knock off the stupid pacifist, there would have been some hope for Yugoslavia.

Now, to avoid the fatal misunderstanding, I'm well aware that it is easy to mock a powerless pacifist. However, I claim that this exchange of gazes between the Serb and the Albanian was not the mutual recognition of solidarity between the two aggressive nationalists, but their perplexion at what the Austrian pacifist was saying. Their surprise was not that the pacifist was not aware of the ethnic-religious complexity of the Balkan situation. Their perplexity was not, "He doesn't understand our primitive authentic Balkan warrior passions"--no. Their perplexity was that this idiot seriously thinks that in the Balkans, we have hundreds-years-old ethnic mix, passions. He didn't see that Serbs and Albanians themselves manipulate this mix, far from being caught in [it]. What was false about the pacifist was not his pacifism as such, but his depoliticized racist view that the ultimate cause of the post-Yugoslav war was the ethnic intolerance and reemergence of old ethnic hatreds. In other words, this apparently innocent pacifism really treats the other people in the Balkans as children. The idea is love each other, do not hate each other, do not fight each other, and everything will be okay basically. So I think, again, they were right.

The ultimate cause of this moralistic depoliticization is of course the retreat of the great leftist historical-political narratives and

projects in our time. What do I mean by this? A couple of decades ago people were still discussing the political future of humanity. Will capitalism prevail, or will it be supplanted by communism or another form of totalitarianism? They discussed this while silently accepting that somehow social life will continue. Today, on the contrary, we can easily imagine the extinction of human life, of the human race, or the end of the life on earth, but it is impossible to imagine a much more modest change of the social system--as if, even if the whole life on earth disappears, capitalism will somehow remain intact. Again, it's possible to imagine the end of the world; it's not possible to imagine the end of capitalism.

In this constellation, rationally convinced that the radical change of the existing liberal democratic capitalist system is no longer even imaginable as a serious political project, but nonetheless unable to renounce their attachment to the prospect of such a global change, the disappointed leftists invest the thwarted excess of their political energy that cannot find satisfaction in the moderate changes within the system into the abstract, excessively rigid, moralizing stance. So, to conclude, that's the problem I see. The term is not yet popular here, but as you maybe know, in Europe it's fashionable to speak about this new social democracy as the "third way."

Now my first sign of perplexion here is 'the third way'--Tony Blair and so on--okay, but which is the second way? I mean, isn't it significant that the talk about the third way becomes so popular at exactly the point when the last traces of second way disappeared? There is no second way today. So what the third way means is precisely there is no second way. In the same way we spoke decades ago about socialism with a human face, the third way is simply capitalism with a human face; that is to say, we accept the basic capitalist game, capitalism is the only game in town. All we can do is to present it a little bit more, how should I put it, with a human face. And again, the only way for the excess to articulate itself is in this helpless moralism.

Why? Let me add now a more specific improvisation on what

happened in Yugoslavia, what is usually missed. I claim that those who defended Yugoslavia, or at least those who opposed the bombing, who had this idea of deploring the disintegration of Yugoslavia, also had the idea that republics who left Yugoslavia were somehow guilty of some almost, I'm tempted to say, primordial crime. For example, my country, Slovenia, is often painted as the one who is really the ultimate culprit. We were the first to leave Yugoslavia, and I often hear this argument: "And you even didn't pay the price by first stepping out, you triggered the process. And where are the dead, where are the suffering? You didn't pay any price"--as if somehow morally we should pay some price for it. What's the problem here? The problem is that at the end, the one I claim who is really responsible for the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which is of course the Serbian Milosovic policy, is finally presented, perceived as a kind of almost defender of Yugoslavia. I claim that Yugoslavia died in '86, the moment Milosovic took over. At that point the old formula of Yugoslavia dropped dead.

For example, it's deeply significant that, with all its pro-fascist tendencies--I don't know if you know this, but even such a degenerate, sad regime as the Tudjman regime in Croatia still acknowledges Tito and the old Yugoslav legacy as a legitimate tradition. Even if he is--and he definitely is--a proto-fascist figure, Tudjman still includes Tito within the great Croat legacy, or however he puts it. Another interesting point: Do you know that Bosnia, the Muslim Bosnia, was the only entity of ex-Yugoslavia where all the time during the Bosnian War, from '91 till '95-'96, in the Muslim part, Tito's portraits were all the time still there in all--okay, most, at least--official buildings? That is to say, I claim that it's politically a catastrophe, a total misperception of the situation, to describe the disintegration of Yugoslavia as separatists stepping out. No. The true separatist is only one: Milosovic. And I claim that the war between Bosnia and Yugoslavia was the war between what was, to put it conditionally, good about the old Titoist legacy, the war between the idea of a multi-cultural, tolerant--why not use these terms?--Yugoslavia and the new logic of nationalism. So it wasn't simply a war between two ethnic groups. It was the war between multi-culturalist legacy of the old Yugoslavia, which is

why I tell to my friends who, for example, always, in order to show some kind of typically Western racist neutrality, always, whenever there were reports in the media about some Serb or Croat atrocities, were always obsessed by--this is already a tell-tale sign--by finding, by discovering also some Muslim atrocities in order to be able to play the game of, "You see, there are basically all the same, nobody is really innocent."

But wait a minute, this is again one of these horrifying arguments for me. You can always prove that nobody is innocent. Of course. For example, Goebbels was totally right: the British invented concentration camps. They were not innocent. They bombed Dresden probably for not justified reasons, and so on and so on. But what's the conclusion for this? Would you draw from this the conclusion that World War II was a war against European tribal madness, where only some benevolent foreign intervention could have solved it? This is again the example of hypocrisy.

I claim that one fact is crucial for me in the analysis: It is that--and this, I think, shows the limit of even so-called--with whom I sympathize very much, I was a couple of times there-- with so-called Serb anti-Milosovic democratic opposition. And you get in your media, I claim, a very watered down version, even now. For example, it was show on your TV, it was reported in the media how recently in Belgrade the demonstrators clashed with Milosovic police, demonstrators who wanted free elections, and then there was some fight, some blood. Was it reported here? The crucial point for me was what the demonstrators shouted at policemen. They shouted, "Murderers! Go to Kosovo and kill Albanians!" So much for Serb democratic opposition. All the time their reproach to Milosovic, even now, is not new democratic tolerant Serbia, but it is: You lost Kosovo, you betrayed [us]. Get my point: Even the most radical democratic Serb opposition, at least those who are organized politically, accept basically this national agenda. Their approach to Milosovic is basically, "You lost half of the Serbian territory," not, "You are non-democratic," and so on. That's secondary.

Another thing which seems to me crucial: There are some--and I

honor them, they are incredibly courageous--small human rights groups of Serbs who condemn Serb crimes in Kosovo. But it's interesting that it's again the logic of victimization. They condemn crimes against Albanians as victims. Okay, I accept it. But--and that's for me the true limitation--I know of no political power in Serbia who would go a step further and offer a political--not just sympathize with Albanians and victims--but propose a political platform which would directly address also Albanians as political subjects. Absolutely no one as far as I know does that, in contrast, I claim, to other, at least to most, of the ex-Yugoslav republics where this does happen. For example, it's for me a very significant fact that in the Bosnian War the commander of the so-called Muslim army under the Sarajevo government was a Serb. Did you know this? It was a Serb. It was a truly multi-national task, armed force.

So again, what I'm trying to say is that this idea that Yugoslavia somehow disintegrated because of some nationalist madness, and the main thing is to [teach] the people to be tolerant, to work [with] each other, and so on and so on, I think that it is totally misleading. The problem is not tolerance. You cannot treat people like children and tell them, Don't fight each other, and so on. The problem is the concrete dynamic, political power dynamic, where, again, all sides are simply not equal. Again, I repeat, the war between Bosnia and Serbia, or ex-Yugoslavia, was not simply the war between the two ethnic groups; it was the war between the two different political concepts, the legacy of the old Titoist Yugoslavia and a new nationalist logic. Which is why I claim those left-wingers who really like to insist on the precious legacy of the old Yugoslavia should be unconditionally on the Muslim side. The moment they do not accept this, the moment they treat all the warring factions, as they put it, as equal, they already take the Serb side. This is not a neutral statement. This very neutral case which says, "It's all a catastrophe, it doesn't matter who is guilty, just stop killing each other, learn to live with each other"--this is not a neutral case.

To be cynical--I know that this is not a fair metaphor because you cannot compare Milosovic seriously to Hitler--but nonetheless you can apply the same logic: Imagine a pacifist coming in '44, '43, to Europe and saying, "Isn't there enough of killing, shouldn't we stop

this madness?" For example, I remember some of my leftist friends thinking that they're saying something very profound when there was the question, "Should we send arms to Muslims, so-called Muslims, to the Sarajevo government or not?" [and] their argument was, "Wait a minute. Bringing more arms into that country will never lead to a peace. We should think about peace, not about putting more oil on the fire, not about bringing more arms there." It sounds very deep, very sincere pacifism, but again imagine the same argument in '43. Would you say to English people or to the French, "Okay, Hitler is horrible, but bringing more arms to Europe would just make it more crazy," and so on and so on. There is something profoundly false in this pacifist neutrality, I claim. I think that's my concluding thought.

Precisely, usually, a lot of people tend to assimilate a leftist position to opposition to bombing and the right-wing position to the support of bombing, or the left-wing position for Yugoslavia, the right-wing position for secession. But I think this is a totally false identification. First, it's empirically not true. Point two: the lesson that we should take is that ultimately there is no neutrality. Neutrality as such, pacifist neutrality means--in the concrete situation--it always means taking sides. There is no way to escape that. Precisely as leftists we should be aware of that.

Sorry if I spoke too long. Thank you very much.

Maybe we have some time for discussion.

Moderator (Thomas Keenan):
Slavoj has agreed to take some questions.

SZ:
Of constructive criticism.

Q:
[...?] are you not depriving other groups, including your own country, of historical agency?

SZ:

What do you mean by historical agency? I mean, I claim that each of other groups did have its agenda. What I know, because I was ten years ago pretty much involved in politics, and, for example, there was only one person at that point in '88 between me and Tudjman. And I can tell you that Tudjman, the president of Croatia, in '88, didn't have not even a minimal idea of Croat independence. In '88, Tudjman's dream was a big pact with Serbs dividing Bosnia and kind of a sharing power with Serbs within unified Yugoslavia. So what I claim is that we simply have different agendas. I don't think we were less agents because of that. We Slovenes did have our own agenda. Croats did have it. But what I claim is that the act which triggered disintegration was Milosovic. And I'm not blaming the Serbs, to avoid the minimum of misunderstanding. I say this without even the minimum of cynicism. I claim that of all--that's the saddest paradox--of all nations in Yugoslavia, the one[s] with the longest historical democratic tradition are without any doubt the Serbs. We Slovenes are no one, are backwards, copulating with sheep, animals. I don't have any illusions about us Slovenes. The point, the tragedy is that--you know, this is historical contingency. There was an open situation of, as my friend Ernesto Laclau would have put it, struggle for hegemony in the mid-'80s. There was an open situation. The point was who would seize the moment.

We Slovenes were simply lucky, not because we had any greater democratic tradition, but because of a series of totally contingent decisions, I claim. For example, proportional electoral system: we were lucky that in Slovenia, when socialism disintegrated, we didn't get one big nationalist movement monopolizing, hegemonizing, the political space. The political field was much more dispersed, and this simply prevented any nationalist logic along those lines. So again, I think to prove that you are an agent, it's not necessary to push into independence. The more tragic thing was that all other republics played too much opportunist games. For example, even in Bosnia, the true victims, are not quite innocent. When the war started--okay, in Slovenia it was only a kind of operatic short war--but then in Croatia it really exploded--

Bosnians did play a strange game there. Their secret idea was, "let Serbs and Croats fight each other and then we'll take over"--But of course this backfired terribly.

So again, no, I'm not depriving them [of agency]. I'm just saying that what makes the war so horrible for me is that retroactively--okay, it's easy to be a wise general after the battle--but how easy it would have been to prevent it earlier. I spoke with a lot of analysts who all agree: One simple measure would, one can reason, prevent the war. You remember when Yugoslavia disintegrated, or, as others would have put it, when Slovenia, Croatia, and others seceded. The usual American bemoaning is, Oh my god, didn't we recognize Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia too early. I agree with it. But I think they should have withdrawn recognition also from Yugoslavia. I think a very simple thing that the West should have done in '90, '91, is to establish the fact that Yugoslavia no longer exists, and then to set a certain series of minimal criteria, and every entity--which is of course not only political democracy but also respect for national ethnic rights, and so on and so on--and then only states which respect this will be recognized. Instead of this, the West, I claim, played a game which was for a long time basically a pro-Serb game. I'm not saying this as being anti-Serb; on the contrary--and I can prove it to you, I wrote this eight years ago--at the end, the true victims of this are Serbs themselves now.

So again, this is for me the tragic aspect of it: how easily it may have been avoided. I don't see any deep fate, any deep necessity in this war. And in one thing I do agree. I had a public discussion with Zoran Djindjic, the leader of Serb opposition, who told something else, which is that, in contrast to this stupid journalistic cliché according to which people in the Balkans have this long memory, they never learn anything new, they never forget anything old. No. The Balkans, if anything, is the area where people forget extremely quickly, extremely fast. Already now, you can imagine how much black market and so on is going on between Serbia and Croatia, between Serbia and Bosnia, and so on. I don't believe in any deep promise which will last I don't know how long. I'm here now cautiously, moderately, an optimist, even as to this Serbian loss of Kosovo.

A guy whom I appreciate very much although he's my political

opponent, the best known Serb political commentator, Aleksandr Tijanic, he says that we Serbs have one big public secret, a secret which everybody knows that it's a secret: We don't give a damn about Kosovo. We want to get rid of Kosovo. This is not a myth. The reaction of certain, practically most of the Serbia, this also explains in a way why Milosovic didn't lose as much as people expected when he lost Kosovo. It was that they really didn't care about Kosovo. I claim that the attitude of the average Serb is not, My god, we lost our cradle, we must get it back. No. The attitude of every Serb is, Good riddance. We got rid of that stupid part which only bring us trouble. I found this quite a sane attitude.

Q:

[...?] it seems you were trying to theorize a kind of radical social change [...?] through Christianity. I was wondering how this symbolic death is different from the [...?]

SZ:

Okay, I see your point, yes. What I would say here is that maybe, if I gave the impression that I aimed at such a quick transition, no, I don't aim at such a quick transition; that is to say, I don't think you can in this way directly connect the two aspects. What I was only trying to say is that the very imaginary, the very functioning of universe, ideological coordinates, which enables us even to think in terms of radically breaking out of the cycle of tradition and so on and so on is possible only through this, what I consider as--I don't see it anywhere else--the Christian logic. The message of Christianity is not for me God, all this Christian stuff: God, Christ; but that the good news, the gospel, is that you can erase the past. It is possible to begin from a zero point. This is the fascinating moment that I found in Christianity; that we are no longer this pagan universe of global order, where you must make compromises, this and that--[instead] you can erase and start from new. This is how I read, for example, that Christian, well-known phrase that if somebody slaps you on your right [cheek, you turn the other cheek]. It's not a kind of a masochism. The idea is to how to break out of this logic of revenge, tit for tat. The idea is that you can break this logic of balanced exchange.

I hope it's clear what I was claiming. What I was claiming is that the deepest core of the pre-Christian universe is this notion of

cosmic balance. There is some kind of a cosmic balance, and if you disturb the balance it must be reestablished. I claim that Christianity breaks with this. This is for me the big choice, where I'm frankly on the side of the Christian logic. Of course there is a certain, I claim, false ideological, ecological, whatever, usually oriented reasoning which claims, but isn't precisely Christianity here at the origins of modern subjectivity, which is the cause of our terrible ecological predicament. My answer to this is no. My answer to this is that it's easy to attack today Cartesian subjectivity--but there is no feminism without Cartesian subjectivity, I claim. Because what's crucial for Cartesian subjectivity is precisely the idea of the abstract, of this immediate access to abstraction.

Now back to your question, which I would have to elaborate, which is human rights. Well, my answer would be the following one: The notion of human rights is a much more ambiguous notion than it may appear. I am tempted to endorse human rights only when one qualifies them. The first paradox of human rights is of course that human rights by definition are never a definite list of human rights. Human rights always--by definition you never have all of them. You know what I mean. Human rights always means there is something more. You cannot simply objectify them and say that's a series of human rights. Human rights always have this--there is something terroristic in them.

Ultimately--to cut a long story short, I talk too much--my answer to you about human rights in this Vaclav Havel version of humanism would be that this is not necessarily a consequence of humanity. Incidentally, typically, Havel is not a Christian, he is a New Ager, incidentally. He is explicitly a New Ager. I claim that on the contrary, Christian logic, if you follow it closely, it's not a logic of the Church, but it's a fighting logic. Precisely what people deplore in St. Paul I appreciate in St. Paul. Not human rights; it's us versus them. Universality is a fighting position. Universality--it's not a position [where] we fight each other but beyond or beneath, whichever way you point it, there are some fundamental rights. No. No. Christianity means us against them. It means universality is a position of struggle. The conflict is not the conflict between two particular groups. The moment you conceive the conflict as the conflict between the two particular groups, you can play the pagan games: the balance, compromise, and so on. From a

Christian perspective, the conflict is the conflict between the global order and this radical universality. I see Christianity in this sense as an extremely politicized religion, if you want to put it this way. It's really a religion of a new community.

TK:

If I can abuse my position here, what would the Christian war about Kosovo have looked like? If the problem was that it was a depoliticized, humanitarian, soft, compromising, mushy war on behalf of victims, what would a good, robust, political, Christian war have been?

SZ:

Okay, my first paradox is the following one: To clarify my position about bombing Kosovo, the position of those who support the human rights but deplore this bombing is, in principle, We are for human rights and so on, but in this case it's clear that it was biased, and so on and so on. So they are for it in principle, but here they deplore it. My position is exactly the opposite. I'm in principle against justification of bombing in this abstract reference to human rights, but I think in this concrete case it was clearly a success, it did achieve, so I think it's absolutely hypocritical to deplore it. It's easy for a Western academic from his or her safe position to deplore it. I think one must simply accept this, accept this paradox.

But going back to Christianity, I think that, again, the basic lesson for me is don't accept--this is for me to use these bombastic terms here in a wild way--the false pagan attitude where you view each conflict as conflict of different particular powers, and then you try to play a kind of a neutral just position, like "it's not only this, it's not only them, all are partially guilty, let's reestablish the balance," and so on and so on. The Christian attitude, the way I--but again, I warn you, this is a materialist appropriation of a certain logic; I'm not a Christian, I'm an old-fashioned materialist, to make this absolutely clear--the Christian logic, the way I accept it, definitely would reject this abstract neutrality. All are not equal. Not all are not equal in the sense that one is a little bit more guilty than the others, but that they stand for different principles. That's the paradox--now I will be clear--that one should accept.

When parties are struggling, as it often happens, it's not simply that they both simply aim for their particular aims. Sometimes in the struggle one party stands for universality. Universality is always embodied in a particular agent. This is what you must accept. Universality is not a kind of a muddled compromise between different parts. No. There is an agent who says, "I am the universal," which is why I meant it quite seriously when I said that human rights and democracy emerged out of Christianity. For example, as my good friend the French political philosopher--in his work *La Mesentente* (Misunderstanding)--Jacques Rancier developed how democracy began: the French Revolution, not when the Troisieme Etat, the Third State, demanded also its own rights, not only aristocracy, not only clergy, but we also. This is not yet democracy. This is still this medieval balance, like we want our piece of the cake. No, democracy began when we said, "We, the ones who are excluded, we are the all, we are the people, we stand for universality." When they said not, "We want our balanced share of the cake," but when they said, "We stand for universality; you stand just for your particular interests". So this is the risk you should take, not this false, "We are all equal, let's make a compromise."

Q:

So you're advocating that, you're advocating an absolute point, an absolute stance, and forcing your domination? For instance, the French painted themselves into a position of power. So you're advocating that? Is that what you're saying?

SZ:

In principle, yes, although I see a trap in the way you put it. "You advocate your domination," and so on and so on. You know what's my point? Here we disagree. My point is that the position which I'm attacking, the position of "Let's just demand our piece of the cake within the global order," that already is the position of domination. It's not that I want all while the others want only their piece of the cake.

Let's go to feminism. I claim that the only alternative to such [an] approach to feminism is, I think, what is the worst catastrophe for

feminism, which is this grounding of feminism in the pre-Cartesian tradition. I have in mind here the claims that the Cartesian modern-age subject is a male chauvinist subject, before whose appearance there still was a proper place of women within the social body. Of course it was--the subordinated place inscribed in nature itself. I claim that all this search for some primordial matriarchal society, whatever, where you would have a more appropriate role, place, within the social body of women is, I think, a catastrophe because, again, even if you find there some kind of privileged position of women, it's defined as position in kind of a total organic order, it's simply a specific position. I claim that feminism in the modern sense becomes possible only with this Cartesian notion of subject which is the anti-subject, the denaturalized subject, subject with no natural properties. It's only in this way that you can ground radical feminism in the modern sense. Any return to this old organic notion, any feminism which plays the game of, "in the modern age the masculine principle was expressed too strongly, we need to reestablish the balance between the feminine and the masculine principle." The moment that you accept this, you are lost.

But you know what's the problem, where we maybe disagree. [...] lesson to be learned from the history of ideology and so on, and I will be very brief. Let me make a simple point: Let's take the opposition between left and right. It's easy to say okay, neither of the two poles should dominate, there must be some kind of a balance of principle, not too much left, not too much right. But wait a minute. There is no way to formulate in a neutral way the terms of this balance because the difference--when there still was left and right, now there is not--What's the paradox of the political opposition between left and right? It's not only that we have a social body. Some people in the political body, some people are left, some people are right. The problem is that if you ask a right-winger how he sees the whole of society, he will give you a totally different picture than a left-winger. A right-winger is usually a corporatist. A right-winger would have said, Society is a corporate body. It [...?], and then there are left extremists or whatever who disintegrate the body. A left-winger would give you--You know what I mean, there is no simple difference between left and right. Left and right differ in the very way they see their difference. In

this sense I claim that you must aim at universality.

This is what you must be conscious of, that when you fight for your position, you at the same time fight for the universal frame of how your position will be perceived within this universal frame. This is for me, as every good feminist will tell you, the greatness of modern feminism. It's not just we women want more. It's we women want to redefine the very universality of what it means to be human. This is for me this modern notion of political struggle.

Q:

[.....?] Have you changed, become less of a Marxist?

SZ:

No, not that I know. If anything at all I've become more of a Marxist. But you know what's only my problem? In principle, of course, it's clear that even now, I claim, the West basically wants Milosovic. It's the same with Saddam Hussein. It's absolutely clear that they want him in power, even pretty clear why, I claim, because of different geo-political considerations. The fear is that if Saddam falls, then Iraq disintegrates. If Iraq disintegrates, Iran will grasp it, and you have directly Iran versus Saudi Arabia, and so on and so on. I claim that for what the West perceives as the geo-political balance of the Middle East, the real fall of Saddam would have been the ultimate catastrophe for American interests. That is the unspoken secret I claim of American politics there.

As to Milosovic, no, of course I still subscribe all of that analysis. The only problem that I see is the following one: Of course Milosovic was the creation of the West, but in the same abstract sense that--let me take a leftist in the late '30s or at the beginning of World War II. Of course as a Marxist you can say that fascism was the ultimate result of capitalism. But it doesn't follow from this that you will not fight together with relatively liberal capitalists against fascism. The problem emerges at a point at which who will hegemonize. Again, it's the battle for universality. How will the defeat of Hitler be interpreted? Will it be interpreted as just a defeat of some false distortion, or a defeat of something which was the inherent result of capitalist logic itself?

Just to conclude, another provocative statement: Buchanan is not so strong here. A better example than Buchanan would have been the European neo-populist right: Le Pen in France, Haider in Austria, even the so-called Republican Party in Germany. I always found suspicious the radical rejection of these extreme right-wingers. Again, do not misunderstand me, I am radically opposed to them. But I think that in the strategy of liberal hegemony, of the center left liberal attempt to crash the left, they play a crucial role. In what sense? First, they are the pariahs, they are the excluded ones, no? It's a kind of a pact in Europe: Le Pen will never be in government; at least let's hope not. Republicans in Germany will never be in government. But what I find so suspicious is that they're excommunicated. They guarantee our solidarity. They provide to centrist liberals their freedom democratic credentials. This is their message to us, more radical leftists. We can hate each other whatsoever, but you see there is someone there, radical right, we exclude them. So I claim that they really need this radical right. It serves them to draw a certain line of separation so that then they can present themselves of the hegemonic force of democracy defending us against them.

There is even another much more uncanny and crucial aspect, which is that this so-called extreme right--strange as it may sound specifically today with this new "third way" social democracy--they are the only ones who still speak, or at least manipulate, with certain class struggle rhetorics. Do not underestimate, for example, Le Pen in France. He is not just a crazy racist. He's much more intelligent. I saw four or five years ago a congress of the National Front where Le Pen brought to the podium a Jew, a black African Frenchman, and an Algerian, and embraced them, and said, "They are Frenchmen like me. My only enemy is the big international capital who is betraying us because of its multi-cultural internationalist orientation." You know what I mean. The tragic thing is that the only one who still dares to interpolate in a perverted way--even Buchanan here--working-class interests are these radical right-wingers. And this is again where this elevation of the new populist right into a kind of excluded ultimate horror for the liberals plays a certain game. So taking all this into account,

not; if anything at all, I'm even more Marxist.

In what sense? Let me prove it to you, my last remark: Richard Rorty, otherwise my good friend, if there every was an honest liberal I think it's Richard Rorty. Of course I disagree with him, of course when we take power he will go to gulag, but I will provide for him a nice cell with a double ration of meat every day, and so on. Why? Because he made a very intelligent observation, Rorty. Today's official opponents, deconstructionists versus Habermasians and so on, they really seem to hate each other. But if you look closely--this was the nice common-sense observation of Rorty--whenever you touch a concrete political problem, basically the political distinction between Habermas and Derrida, who, as you probably know, cannot stand each other, disappears. Both occupy the same Left-of-center place. Okay, Derrida may be a little bit more messianic, but even Habermas now, Habermas is even not immune against this "post-secular" threat. This is the attitude that I really hate, which is why I prefer the Pope.

You know, this post-secular crap, it goes like this: Of course we no longer have the ontological god, but it is an Otherness which is a mystery; a gap is opened, something is present in the mode of absence. It's always to come, it is never here, it's the mystery of otherness to be respected. You know, that kind of stuff, which fits perfectly. And they all share this. So the conclusion of Rorty is that philosophical oppositions today do not matter, that they are irrelevant, that when it comes to politics, we speak all the same language.

I have a more radical, pessimistic conclusion. They do matter, and this precisely proves that, although they are officially opponents, share a whole set of secret presuppositions, and this is what should we attack. I can well tell you some philosophers who do not enter this consensus; for example, Heideggerians on the right, or Alain Badiou and some other people in France from the left side. So no, you don't have to worry there. If anything, I am getting more into that direction.

You know why? Because I think that, for example, let's take just the example of Russia. I think it's the Fukayama illusion that Russia will be slowly reintegrated into the West. It cannot. The problem with global capitalism for me, it's not that it's global capitalism where bad American imperialists are penetrating everything with their culture; the problem is that it involves its own logic of exclusion. What interests me in global capitalism is how it structures the world into those who are in, and those who are out. And here I see its limitation, and here I see the tragic predicament and at the same time the hope of Russia.

They will have to invent something. I don't believe they will, for structural reasons, that they will be able to rejoin the West, become another prosperous liberal democracy. Either they will become some kind of half-nationalist closed authoritarian regime, or they will have to invent something new--not because they have a specific Russian genius, but they will be compelled to do it.

Q:

[...?] how can you make the universal more concrete [...?]

SZ:

I can include that, but the only thing that--

Q:

[?]

SZ:

I can answer you, please, very precisely. First, apropos of Yugoslavia: What I don't agree with is the standard narrative which presents Germany and Austria as the bad guys who wanted to reassert their interests in Croatia, in Slovenia, and that's the reason why they supported the breakup of Yugoslavia. That's a simplistic narrative that I don't buy.

I claim that basically, until '92, '93, the American politics was definitely pro-Yugoslav, against the "secessionist" republics. Do

you know that until '92 I had to travel abroad with Yugoslav passport? So when they say Slovenia was recognized too early, no it wasn't, precisely it wasn't recognized. For one year-and-a-half I was living in a nonentity; that is to say, I traveled around with a Yugoslav passport, although formally we were independent.

So what I claim is that, if you want my answer to this question, first, the one big promise of American politics, the unfortunate one, is they're always trying to isolate in some region the strongest agent, and then they claim that only the stability of that agent can guarantee the stability of the entire area. Which is why I claim almost the obsession of the American politics in the early '90s was to say we must find a way out of the Yugoslav crisis without humiliating the Serbs too much. The idea was we cannot bypass Milosovic. This was the key to their politics there. So it's a more complex question. In what way. It's the same complexity as the one that I briefly improvised, you remember, apropos of Chechnya today. I wonder, why isn't it more written about this? My sources for what I said were not some so-called dismissed-by-the-large-media crazy leftist small-circulation papers; I read this in the main German dailies, what I said. Every idiot knows this in Europe, that what it really is about, this sudden war in Chechnya is that you know in Azerbaijan the oil reserves are at the level of the combined Arab reserves. This is what is actually behind this war. I'm not saying that this explains anything.

About concrete universality, that's a very good point. Precisely concrete universality means for me the following thing: When you have a certain universality, asserted this universality --and here to answer you would be my Marxism--you have always to ask what questions are not asked in order for this universality to assert itself. This is where I find problematic this multi-culturalist talk of thriving multiple identities, and so on and so on. It's very nice to hear these stories about how--and this is the great merit of the so-called post-modern politics, that a multitude of new spheres were repoliticized. We discovered how sex relations how politicized, ecology, and so on and so on. But nonetheless, what worries me is that certain--at least in the predominant version of it--certain

questions are no longer asked. Like nobody questions global capitalism, and so on and so on, and this is what I find problematic in this poetry of, you know, multiple new political identities. Yes, but in order to this multiplicity, some questions are no longer asked. And this is my problem with this new discourse on human rights, that it is part of a precisely concrete universality of a situation where certain questions are no longer permitted to be asked.

And I can even concretely tell you how. This is the reason I am skeptical about so-called modern liberal politics. Did you notice how the very same people who are deep into this poetry of human rights, the moment you propose a certain political measure which is a little bit utopian or radical, they use a kind of a totalitarian blackmail. They claim, But didn't we learn the lesson [that] this necessarily ends up in a new form of totalitarianism? That is to say, the political message of the very people who go into this depoliticized poetry of human rights is to denounce every radical political measure as potentially totalitarian.

So what I would like is such a discourse of human rights which will not have this dimension of dismissing in advance any radical gesture as potentially totalitarian whatsoever. This is, again, what I find problematic in this neo-liberal discourse. We really have something that in comparison with the--You know, in Germany they spoke in the '70s as a reaction to so-called terrorism, of *Berufsverbot*, the prohibition to employ radicals. Today I claim we have a kind of a *Denkverbot*, prohibition to think. We are literally prohibited by liberals to think--I mean predominantly in the media--to think a little bit more radically because immediately they then raise this threat. But do you know that ultimately what you are claiming? I remember once when I just made a suggestion that maybe some new measures will be necessary which will break this liberal consensus, the immediate explosion was, "But what do you want? Do you want gulag again?" This immediate equation--any radical political action means either total chaos or gulag--this for me is the problem of concrete universality today.

This is where, I think, at a different level maybe--I hope not too different--you share the same concern when we spoke. This is for me the problem of how to redefine socialism today, how to break out of this multi-culturalist [?] problematic, not because it is false, but because precisely it generates, because the way it operates it leaves the space open for this economic province to be reappropriated in a false racist way by the new populist right. Here I see the problem, at least I think. Although, again, it's easy to say here; it's difficult to do it, I know well.

TK:

One last question.

Q:

[inaudible question about presenting Titoism as a golden age]

SZ:

Basically I agree with you. I agree in what sense? I agree in the sense that I definitely do not share the nostalgia of those who now retroactively paint the Titoist Yugoslavia as any kind of a paradise, of a lost paradise. Everybody knows what was happening, that the regime had already started to break down in the early '70s, and then in order to get another round of life, they wrote a new constitution where they put more power into the regime of the different six Yugoslav republics. The wager was that in this way local communist bureaucracies, [?] in each republic, would gain additional legitimacy by presenting themselves as representing national interests against the Belgrade regime, and so on. And so I agree with you. What I'm only saying is that nonetheless--you see, that's for me the dialectic of history; here I may be not a vulgar Marxist at least. What I reject is this simplistic pseudo-Marxist criticism of so-called formal rights. Yes, the rights can be formal rights, but nonetheless, formal rights themselves have certain institutional consequences [that] are materialized. Of course the old Yugoslavia was a false multi-culturalism, but nonetheless, its results were a certain, however manipulated, coexistence, a certain level of tolerance.

For example, Bosnia itself was at least culturally a kind of a local success story. Isn't it a nice paradox--and here you can see how Muslim in the region is not in itself a kind of fundamentalist madness--Bosnia, the Muslim-dominated republic, was the center of rock and pop culture, was absolutely the most, the republic of Yugoslavia where rock music was by far the strongest, where mutual tolerance was relatively open. So what I'm claiming is that in spite of all its obvious--I mean it was a totalitarian regime, undoubtedly--but nonetheless, a certain utopian idea was generated there, although of course the system--Okay, I'll put it in this way: Of course the system couldn't fulfill its promises, but failed on its own terms in the sense that it raised certain promises by presenting itself as multi-culturalist tolerant. For example, another point which I think deserves a kind of a sign of recognition: Do you know that the old socialist Yugoslavia was institutionally the world center--which is now the politically correct term for gypsies, Roma, or what?--was the world center. Why? Because we gave them institutional support, they had their organization. So what I want to say is that even if something is a purely manipulative ideological invention, nonetheless it produces certain material effects. And when I say that in Bosnia in '94, let's say, they were fighting for Yugoslavia, I'm not saying they were fighting for the actuality of the old socialist Yugoslavia. I'm saying that simply they were fighting for that, let's call it naively, utopian element which was represented in the old Yugoslavia, although it was of course, I agree with you, this was your point, actually kind of retroactive illusion. But nonetheless I found that here history is more complicated, that often such illusions, although they are only illusions, have a material efficiency of their own.

Q:

[inaudible question]

SZ:

I think I can give you at least one hint, which is the following one. Again, maybe this will make me some enemies, but what I'm radically opposed to is this, at least a certain version of so-called identity politics which goes into the direction of a) only we--the we you can then replace some ethnic minorities, some sexual orientation, whatever--only we can really speak for ourselves. I

think this is a modern form of barbarism. I think it's complete catastrophe. We should absolutely speak to universality. The other aspect of this same attitude, of this same paradox for me is that I categorically reject--this would be the practical lesson--any assertion of particular political subjectivities which legitimize their specific claims on some of their specific properties, like, for example, at least if not herself, certain followers of Luce Irigaray. When you justify your demands in some of your specific properties, I claim that the moment you accept this game of identity politics where the point is to assert your specific identity, you are in a way lost. You are playing the game of apartheid. And paradoxical as it may sound, I claim that I tend to be surprised again and again to what extent so-called progressives today play the game of a renewed version of apartheid.

I put it this way: This doesn't mean what it may seem to mean. I can well understand that in a certain situation you have to play this game of, for example, for blacks, we don't mingle with whites, we want our own. But does not necessarily mean that you play the particularistic game, but you play this game because you know that the only way to assert your universality is in this way. I think that without this element of universality, the politics is lost. This is not an abstract universality. I'm sorry that I don't have time to develop this now. The best presentation that I know of this position is again, Jacques Rancier, *Misunderstanding*. But he points out that the universality that I'm talking about here is not a kind of formal universality that in the Habermasian style you can then formulate. It's just that, for example, when you have a certain situation, when you look at those at the bottom, the excluded ones, they have the right to say, "We stand for the universality."

For example, in concentration camps--this is the thing I wanted and I didn't have time, this had to be the other aspect announced in the title of this lecture, I wanted to go into Stalinism, Nazism, and so on--You know what was the most horrible phenomenon in concentration camps? The so-called *Muselmaenner*--"Muslims," they were called Muslims. It's a pure racist designation because in the European perspective they fit the racist idea of a Muslim, the

one who prays in a repetitive way, repeats gestures, surrenders himself to fate. Muslims, to cut a long story short, were those prisoners of Nazi concentration camps, death camps, who simply lost their will to live. They were the living dead. They were the ones who simply didn't defend themselves. You could have pushed them, you could steal [from] them, you could beat them. They just lived in their universe. The way they are described, it's literally that their eyes lost this glimpse of vitality. There was something so horrible that, according to some reports that I've read, when Americans entered the concentration camps--you know, we all know these shots of hundreds, or even thousands, of bodies, heaps of bodies, nothing horrible about this--but they were too terrified to shoot the "Muslims". There are almost no--apart from some passing, like for a split second you see them, they were not--This is the pathetic universality that I'm advocating. You're saying the fate of humanity is decided there, how we treat them, that you take the lowest and you elevate it into the symbol of universality. So it's a kind of a fighting notion of universality that precisely those--When in a social body you have some strata, some people who do not fit into it, who are out of place, displaced, and so on--

I here am tempted not to play the standard game of Judith Butler, although she and I in a dialogue found a common language here-- But okay, I refer to her previous position in the utopian hope that it's no longer the same, although she's a good friend of mine and a good Stalinist, this is the same. You know why, did you notice how Judith Butler, in every subsequent book radically changes her position while pretending, "I'm just clarifying, I was misunderstood before"? It's absolutely clear that the *Psychic Life of Power* radically turns around her first book, that is to say, *Gender Trouble*. Because it precisely, aggressively--and I wholly agree with her here--reasserts the notion of fundamental loss, renouncing passionate attachment, and so on. But I want to say is that she goes into this poetry of, you know, the marginal, the one who is dislocated, half-excluded, and so on. I have two problems with this poetry of the power discourse that wants to centralize, systematize everything, and then we should speak on behalf of those who are excluded without proper place. First I claim that here is the opposition between globality and universality. These half-excluded

are the site of universality in the most radical, strict philosophical sense it can be developed.

The second thing where I disagree with her apropos of this discourse of marginal disavowed agents is: why does she think that when we speak about something which is disavowed, repressed, that, to put it in somewhat simplistic and ironic terms, it's always the good guys, ours, who are repressed? I claim that--and this is my thesis that I developed in practically all of my last books--that isn't it that the power itself functions, the power itself has to disavow its own founding operation. For example, the classical example, which is for me the model of power: Let's take America in the '20s. You have Ku Klux Klan. It was the necessary support of power, but it was disavowed, it was not publicly acknowledged. This is what interests me, this obscene underside of power, how power, in order to function, has to repress not the opponent, but has to split in itself. You have a whole set of measures which power uses, but disavows them; uses them, but they are operative but not publicly acknowledged. This is for me the obscenity of power. For example--I don't know--torturing, disappearing in Latin America, the whole set of unwritten rules on which power relies. Okay, I talk too much, sorry.

TK:

I want to thank you all for coming. Go forth and assert your universality. And thank you, Slavoj.