

**Introduction to Cultural Studies**  
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**Lecture – 56**  
**Slavoj Zizek - Welcome to the Desert of the Real – I**

Hello and welcome to NPTEL course entitled introduction to cultural studies. We will begin with a final text for the course today which is love with shakes welcome to the desert to the real which is essentially a five essays on September 11th and related dates and this was the final text I have just mentioned, and we will just wind up the course. Not just with this textbook but so for rehearsing some of the things which we have covered across the text throughout this course.

So, before we begin with this particular book just a few sentences a few you know information about Zizek and its location and current philosophy and current philosophical debates. Slavoj Zizek is a very provocative philosopher. So, he is someone who writes in a very provocative tradition he is he is someone who you know draws on Lacan quite a lot. So, it finds a lacanian element in this particular book as well.

And he is of course of post structuralist in some sense you know he uses he draws in post structuralism post oriented post structuralism and his works. So, it is a very interesting mixture of post structuralism Lacanian psychoanalysis of course post modernism that he employs in terms of looking at the text that he chooses. And when I say text I am not just talking about a written texts or films, but he also looks at events.

He also looks at social phenomena and treat those as texts as well so Zizek is you know he is very popular. He is one of the very popular philosophers of a modern times and sometimes popularity you know undercuts to some extent his robust research you know content which is a and his essays. But this particular the reason why I have chosen this book welcome to the Desert of the real.

Is because it talks about it draws in popular culture law the references to Hollywood films Hollywood cinema. So, the references to matrix the matrix trilogy there are references to

Apocalypse now and you know true man show a whole host of other Hollywood films. But also, I think it is a very important book in terms of looking at culture studies in the context of 9/11. What happens to the western metaphysical tradition post 9/11.

What happens to the western cultural you know construct post 9/11 and when I say western, I of course mean in west Europe in an American right? that is the definition that is a working definition of western which I use for this particular book. But what Zizek is doing he is very interestingly combining the consumption of reality shows he is combining the consumption of popular cinema popular television with the traumatic failure that came after post 9/11.

And dramatically of course as an affiliation as a love for trauma as a love for consuming trauma. So, what he does essentially in this book he looks at how trauma becomes a commodity a visual commodity which is consumed ad infinitum ad nauseum actually and it is just repeated over and over again and how the entire grammar of reputation of trauma of a real traumatic event it draws on the grammar of cinema the grammar of populism or the grammar of hyper visual cinema.

And among the other things which this book does it talks about a very interesting blurring of board lines between reality and virtuality there is something that we saw anticipated to a certain extent in leotards post bond condition. And of course the biggest philosopher for that is its board lot who has this magnificent concept called simulacrum or simulacra which is a plural which is obviously a spectacle hyper real spectacle.

So, Zizek too in this particular book he talks about hyper reality as a commodity. So, the hyper reality of a particular event the hyper reality of the representation a particular event it becomes a consumable commodity a visual commodity which then very quickly translates through popular media and to a cool commodity a pop commodity. So, Zizek is in a way the philosopher or the pop the philosopher of popular culture the contemporary culture of the daily mess of life.

If you will but like I mentioned a little while ago and he is also someone who draws on a lacanian psychoanalysis quite a bit poststructuralism. As well as you know he is very much a postmodernist philosopher, so he makes references of Peter Sloterdijk for instance was a

magnificent book called critique of cynical reason and a most of other references that it comes up with Hegel as well he frequently mentioned together frequently leads to Hegel.

In terms of deconstructing him you know we are using has been a very interesting mixture of lacanian psychoanalysis and post structuralism. So, ZIZEK is a philosopher and that kind of tradition so I am just took a little time to in terms of defining or describing a ZIZEK location and current philosophical debates right okay so as you can see this particular book the right title of the book has an exclamation welcome to the desert area.

Which is actually aligned a dialogue a quotation from the film a matrix of course a very abundant references to two matrix throughout this book as we will find out very quickly.

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**INTRODUCTION:  
THE MISSING INK**

In an old joke from the defunct German Democratic Republic, a German worker gets a job in Siberia; aware of how all mail will be read by the censors, he tells his friends: 'Let's establish a code: if a letter you get from me is written in ordinary blue ink, it's true; if it's written in red ink, it's false.' After a month, his



Okay now so I will just start with the opening and we will see how ZIZEK sets out the question of agency in opening. So, a question of will agency and articulating agency become important in ZIZEK analysis and it gives the rape dark funny example of agency or of loss of agency in this particular section and this introduction is titled THE MISSING INK. So, it is a bit of a joke communities joke a communist German joke.

But it serves a very important purpose in terms of defining agency of describing what agency really is. So, this is what the joke is, and I will just read out in a line by line. So, in an old joke

from the defunct German democratic republic a German worker gets a job in Siberia aware of how all mail will be read by censor. He tells his friends let us establish a code if a letter you get from it is written in ordinary blue ink it is true

It was written in red ink It is false so know this is what you know the narrative says and that is a German worker get sent to Siberia because he is suspected of antigovernment activities and before it goes, he is aware that all his letters will be censored and read on the wire. So, he establish as the code with his friends and that is letters is written in ordinary blue ink it is true the content the letter is true. If it is written in red ink, then it is false and then he just reversed the logic.

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friends get the first letter, written in blue ink: 'Everything is wonderful here: the shops are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, cinemas show films from the West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing you can't get is *red ink*.' The structure here is more refined than it might appear: although the worker is unable to signal that what he is saying is a lie in the prearranged way, he none the less succeeds in getting his message across – how? *By inscribing the very reference to the code into the encoded message, as one of its elements.* Of course, this is the standard problem of self-reference: since the letter is written in blue, is its entire content therefore not true? The answer is that the very fact that the lack of red ink is mentioned signals that it *should* have been written in



After a month his friends get a first letter written in blue ink and this is what the letter reads everything is wonderful here the shops food is abundant apartments are large and properly heated cinemas show films from the west. There are many beautiful girls ready for an affair the only thing you cannot get is a red ink. Okay now obviously this is very funny but beneath the humor what you actually see is a very crucial and complex question.

And that is the red ink becomes the single signifier to articulate what you really feel like how you really feel like and you do not have that tool you do not have the instrument. So, you get everything else you get a you know get to do affairs you get to watch films you get to eat great

food everything is available to you in abundance. But the only thing you do not get, and this kind of a constructed condition is the instrument.

Through which you can tell people what really feel like or how you really feel like. So, that becomes very important a definition of agency existential agency. So, this is what ZIZEK says the structure here is more refined than it might appear. Although the is unable to signal that the what is saying is a lie and a prearranged way. He nonetheless succeeds in getting his message across how my inscribing the very reference for the code into the encoded message.

As one office elements of course this is a standard problem of self-reference. Since the letter is written in blue is this entire content therefore not true? the answer is that the very fact that the lack of red ink is mentioned signals that should have been written in red ink.

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wonderful here: the shops are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, cinemas show films from the West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing you can't get is *red ink*! The structure here is more refined than it might appear: although the worker is unable to signal that what he is saying is a lie in the prearranged way, he none the less succeeds in getting his message across – how? *By inscribing the very reference to the code into the encoded message, as one of its elements.* Of course, this is the standard problem of self-reference: since the letter is written in blue, is its entire content therefore not true? The answer is that the very fact that the lack of red ink is mentioned signals that it *should* have been written in red ink. The nice point is that this mention of the lack of red ink produces the effect of truth independently of its own literal truth.



So, again this becomes a very important philosophical debate so the red ink is mentioned in the letter and you know ZIZEK says the worker says yeah, we do not get red inks. So is open to different kinds of interpretations they are open to different kinds of semantic possibilities. So, one semantic possibility one interpreted possibility is because red ink is mentioned as an absence.

Then therefore you ought to read the entire letter as if it were written in red ink. So, in that sense you know in that case that would be reversed and I mean the content will be reversed. So, you have to guess you have to read a worker in Siberia is having a very tough time. Okay the nice point is that the mention of the lack of red ink produces the effect of truth independently of its own literal truth.

So, absence produce truth away absence producers and you know a dialectical truth in a way independently of his own literal truth.

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even if red ink really *was* available, the lie that it is unavailable is the only way to get the true message across in this specific condition of censorship.

Is this not the matrix of an efficient critique of ideology – not only in ‘totalitarian’ conditions of censorship but, perhaps even more, in the more refined conditions of liberal censorship? One starts by agreeing that one has all the freedoms one wants – then one merely adds that the only thing missing is the ‘red ink’: we ‘feel free’ because we lack the very language to articulate our unfreedom. What this lack of red ink means is that, today, all the main terms we use to designate the present conflict – ‘war on terrorism’, ‘democracy and freedom’, ‘human rights’, and so on – are false terms, mystifying our perception of the situation



Even if red ink really was available that lie that is unavailable is the only way to get the true message across in a specific condition of censorship. Now the reason why ZIZEK is using this example is that he talks about very quickly you will see it talks about the new liberal condition. Which appears to give you attribute all kinds of freedom except the real conditions of freedom. So, the red ink the missing red ink becomes the missing bits of real freedom.

So, you get everything else, but you do not get what you really need in order to articulate what how you really feel or what you really are. So, it is a specific condition of censorship is a particular kind of censorship that has been described the way up. And obviously we are aware of the fact now that this can quickly translate into a question of agency. So, agency and freewill are these things become very important in a new liberal context.

So, what ZIZEK would do very quickly is it going to compare the fascist content the fascist context with the new liberal context with the fascist context with a strong totalitarian context. You know for sure that you do not get any freedom there is absolute no freedom available etc. But in a new liberal context and the new liberal capitalist context we appear to get all kinds of freedom you appear to get all kinds of agency.

Except perhaps the only true agency which is what which is describing what you really are or how you really hoped that is unavailable to you. So, the missing red ink can be seen as a signifier symbolic signifier of the missing true agency in a specific censorship context. Or such a condition is this not a matrix of an efficient critique of ideology not only in totalitarian conditions of censorship.

But perhaps even more and a more refined conditions of liberal censorship. So, this is what I just meant to and I said this would be applicable to perhaps be more relatable to a more liberal censorship right? so the more liberal conditions of censorship that becomes more. This example becomes more resonant and more potent that kind of a condition. One starts by agreeing that one has all the freedom.

Once freedoms one once then one merely adds the only missing thing is red ink. We feel free because we liked the very language to articulate our freedom. So, again this is a very provocative kind of language but there is quite potent and quite articulate as well. So, the red ink becomes the language to articulate your unfreedom either you are not free. How do we say you are not free? so red ink becomes a symbolic signifier of articulating or for articulated that kind of unfreedom.

But then that is unavailable to you and a liberal context, so it appears if we just go back to the letter and supposed to read it to be literally true and perhaps in a real true. And what has been said the content is what is really what really is that particular condition you get everything you get food you get you know cinema you know you get entertainment and recreation you can hold some man and woman to have affairs with suppose all that is true.

But what is also true then is you do not get red ink. So, in that case what it means is suppose you have a situation where you have to sort of articulate the fact that you are not true. You do not have an option, so you always have to pretend that you are always happy, and you always have agency, right? so agency becomes a very strategic device or a strategic condition a conditional experience.

So, yeah, we have agency as long as you do not have the instrument in order way of the instrument that you know in order to tell people that you are not free. So, as long as I am not aware of that he held entire agency. But the moment you become aware of it the fact that they do not have the instrument to articulate your non-freedom your awareness that particular awareness a moment of awareness that will make you win less to a great extent.

So, you know as you can see what ZIZEK is doing using example from communities Germany or the joe from communities Germany is tying that with a liberal context that we internalize and inhabit today. In a world we live in today a great capitalist new liberal kind of world okay. So, and then it goes on to say what does lack of red ink means is that today all the main terms we use to designate the present conflict war on terrorism democracy and freedom human rights and so on are false alarms.

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instead of allowing us to think it. In this precise sense, our 'freedoms' themselves serve to mask and sustain our deeper unfreedom. A hundred years ago, in his emphasis on the acceptance of some fixed dogma as the condition of (demanding) actual freedom, Gilbert Keith Chesterton perspicuously detected the antidemocratic potential of the very principle of freedom of thought:

We may say broadly that free thought is the best of all safeguards against freedom. Managed in a modern style, the emancipation of the slave's mind is the best way of preventing the emancipation of the slave. Teach him to worry about whether he wants to be free, and he will not free himself.<sup>1</sup>





Mystifying a perception or the situation instead of allowing us to think it. So, you know ZIZEK says that the missing wedding can be read as an allegory of a present times. Where we are talking about the war and terrorism you know the war conflict of democracy and freedom human rights etc. As they always become false alarms which are designed to deviate a attention or distract attention from the real issues that concern us.

So, these are designed to mystify our perception of the situation instead of allowing us to think of it. In this precise sense of freedoms themselves self to mosque and sustain our deeper on freedom. So, the freedom becomes an instrument for unfreedom and this kind of a context. So, that is the paradox that Zizek is exploring in this particular context. 100 years ago in his emphasis on the acceptance of some fixed dogma.

As a condition of demanding actual freedom Gilbert Keith Chesterton perspicuously detected the antidemocratic potential the very principle of freedom of thought. So, Chesterton obviously is a great writer and esoteric tradition, so it is one of the finest exponents of satire in English literature. GK Chesterton and he gives a very interesting example and GJ draws an example in terms of.

How you know the antidemocratic potential is always embedded in a so called freedom of thought. So, freedom of thought can actually be quite antidemocratic in his own way and I was so, and this is a Gilbert Keith Chesterton. We may say broadly the free thought is the best safeguards against freedom. Managed in a modern style the emancipation of the slave's mind is the best way to preventing the emancipation of the slaves.

Teach them to worry about whether he wants to be free and not free himself. So, this is a very ironic example, but it serves the purpose that ZIZEK wants to convey to us and that is freedom of thought. I could actually be a very interesting you know save god against freedom of real freedom. So, if it makes someone free mentally if it makes them worry about freedom then that person will never wanted to free himself.

So, this is what Chesterton says over here teach him to worry about whether he wants to be free or not free himself right? so if someone is taught be you know if he wants to be free and not then that person will never end up freeing himself. Because you realized that you know the freedom comes at a cost freedom is always partial and his capacities there is no such thing as absolute freedom.

So, the best way to keep a slave and slave forever.it is the freed slaves mind into thinking whether he wants to be free or not and once a slave you know Juals and that thought once the slave tries to attain the ambivalence in terms of whether or not. You never end up becoming free right? so a mental freedom and real freedom are at war with each other in this particular example and ZIZEK draws an example and then it goes onto bring and count Immanuel Kant as well.

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Is this not emphatically true of our 'postmodern' time, with its freedom to deconstruct, doubt, distantiate oneself? We should not forget that Chesterton makes exactly the same claim as Kant in his 'What is Enlightenment?': 'Think as much as you like, and as freely as you like, just obey!' The only difference is that Chesterton is more specific, and spells out the implicit paradox beneath the Kantian reasoning: not only does freedom of thought not undermine actual social servitude, it positively sustains it. The old motto 'Don't think, obey!' to which Kant reacts is counterproductive: it effectively breeds rebellion; the only way to secure social servitude is through freedom of thought. Chesterton is also logical enough to assert the obverse of Kant's motto: the struggle for freedom needs a reference to some



As well as this is what he says is this not emphatically true of our postmodern time with its freedom to deconstruct doubt distantiate oneself? we should not forget the Chesterton makes exactly the same claim as Kant in his What is enlightenment think as much as you like and as freely as you like just obey right? so even Kant and as we say what enlightenment has a similar kind of paradox.

Or offers similar kind of paradox precise think as much as the lie you can you know you have all the freedom to think or the freedom of thought and expression. But just as long as you obey as

long as you stay to a particular kind of behavior the only difference is that Chesterton is more specific and spells out the implicit paradox beneath the Kantian reasoning not only does freedom of thought not undermine an actual social servitude it positively sustains it.

So, the paradox suggested and articulates is that freedom of thought actually informs social servitude it sustains social servitude. So, freedom of thought is not really an emancipation. Freedom of thought away acts as an anti-emancipation so again the question of agency becomes quite complex. So, you have the agency to think but the agency to think the freedom of thought actually works opposite direction.



The freedom of you know your social self that that actually go in opposite directions. The old motto don't think, obey, to which count reacts is counterproductive it effectively breeds rebellion. The only way to secure social servitude is true freedom of thought so Chesterton's definition of a sustaining social subject true freedom of thought. Becomes a very important example to Žižek's project particularly.

When the new liberal capitalist contexts that we inhabit today. So, Chesterton is also logical enough to assert the reverse of Kant's motto.

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motto: the struggle for freedom needs a reference to some unquestionable dogma.

In a classic line from a Hollywood screwball comedy, the girl asks her boyfriend: 'Do you want to marry me?' 'No!' 'Stop dodging the issue! Give me a straight answer!' In a way, the underlying logic is correct: the only acceptable straight answer for the girl is 'Yes!', so anything else, including a straight 'No!', counts as evasion. This underlying logic, of course, is again that of the forced choice: you're free to decide, on condition that you make the right choice. Would not a priest rely on the same paradox in a dispute with a sceptical layman? 'Do you believe in God?' 'No.' 'Stop dodging the issue! Give me a straight answer!' Again, in the opinion of the priest, the only straight answer is



The struggle for freedom and it needs a reference to some unquestionable dogma, right? so the unquestionable dogma is obviously here servitude social servitude or slavery. So, freedom can only come once you acknowledge the unquestionable dogma. So, as long as you admit or acknowledge, or you know remain within the scope of the unquestionable dogma we have all the freedom of thought that you require in order to be a free thinking person.

So, again we are looking at a very you know postmodern and very post structuralist take an agency that is something that Zizek is capitalizing quite well. Now the next chapter that Zizek moves onto it is called the passions that are real. Passions that are semblance now obviously real is used as a Laconian sense by Zizek a way yeah and that is something that he is drawing on quite heavily. Now let us take a look at some examples that Zizek offers.

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experience an irresistible urge to cut themselves with razors or otherwise hurt themselves); this is strictly parallel to the virtualization of our environment: it represents a desperate strategy to return to the Real of the body. As such, cutting must be contrasted with normal tattooed inscriptions on the body, which guarantee the subject's inclusion in the (virtual) symbolic order – the problem with cutters, is the opposite one, namely, the assertion of reality itself. Far from being suicidal, far from indicating a desire for self-annihilation, cutting is a radical attempt to (re)gain a hold on reality, or (another aspect of the same phenomenon) to ground the ego firmly in bodily reality, against the unbearable anxiety of perceiving oneself as nonexistent. Cutters usually say that once they see the warm red blood flowing out of the self-inflicted wound, they feel alive again,



So, on page 10 he gives a list of commodities and how this question real and unreal a minimum at an ontological level becomes very complex and postmodern commodity culture and how is that?

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flowing out of the self-inflicted wound, they feel alive again, firmly rooted in reality.<sup>7</sup> So although, of course, cutting is a pathological phenomenon, it is none the less a pathological attempt at regaining some kind of normality, at avoiding a total psychotic breakdown.

On today's market, we find a whole series of products deprived of their malignant properties: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol. . . . And the list goes on: what about virtual sex as sex without sex, the Colin Powell

time the regime most sensitive about *maintaining proper appearances*: it reacted with total panic whenever there was a threat that these appearances would be disturbed (say, that some accident which clearly revealed the failure of the regime would be reported in the media: in the Soviet media there were no black chronicles, no



So, this particular paragraph which opens a dose describe in todays market becomes a very important for example Zizek and this is what it is on todays market we found a whole series of products deprive of the malignant properties. Coffee without caffeine cream without fat beer with the alcohol and the list goes on. So, the question of producing more commodities become in a way very crucial you know what is happening is on the surface.

You know it is the benefit of act as on surface has benefited the commodity that we have in coffee with caffeine. So, you still consume the beverage without the harmful effect of caffeine. You still consume cream without the fat used to consume beer with the alcohol. Now what it also does a is that the unquestionable dogma that we just mentioned a while ago. The unquestionable dogma is consumption now it multiplies as consumption.

It does not decrease consumption it multiplies consumption on but on the surface, it gives you more options that increase your agency. So, again the freedom of thought freedom of choice becomes available to you at a surface superficial level but then it comes to the cost.

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warfare without warfare, the contemporary redefinition of politics as the art of expert administration, that is, as politics without politics, up to today's tolerant liberal multiculturalism as an experience of the Other deprived of its Otherness (the idealized Other who dances fascinating dances and has an ecologically sound holistic approach to reality, while practices like wife beating remain out of sight . . .)? Virtual Reality simply generalizes this procedure of offering a product deprived of its substance: it provides reality itself deprived of its substance, of the hard resistant kernel of the Real – just as decaffeinated coffee smells and tastes like real coffee without being real coffee, Virtual Reality is experienced as reality without being so. What happens at the end of this process of virtualization, however, is that we begin to experience 'real reality' itself as a virtual entity. For the great majority of the public, the WTC explosions were events on the



And the cost here is the question of obedience to a particular dogma unquestionable dogma and unquestionable dogma goes. And becomes the dictates of capitalism the dictates of you know consumerism etc. Okay now what this also does is you know this particular commodity culture. We have something without an which is defined by absence, so a particular beverage define with the absence of caffeine a particular food is defined by the absence of cream.

So, I know this definition to absence as a rate of example at a very micro level of what happens to the macro level. And the blurring board lines between the virtual and the real but in the absent and the present. And that is something that kind of an entanglement that borderline blurring is something that Zizek is very keen to explore and this is what it does in page 11 where he talks about virtual reality so what is virtual reality?

So, virtual reality simply generalizes this procedure of offering a product the pride office substance. So, as a dysfunction at a micro level we have something like coffee without caffeine a or beer without alcohol. So, you know it gives you a beverage without apparently taking away the harmful content. But what happens actually is it gives me another beverage, so it makes you consume more.

So, virtual reality works in a very similar structural way and that is simply generalizes this procedure of offering a product deprived of a substance. It provides the reality itself deprived of

the substance of the hard resistant Kernel of the real. Just as decaffeinated coffee smells and tastes like real coffee without being real coffee virtual reality is experience as reality without being served.

So, as you can see it is what I mentioned when this is what I meant when I mentioned that Zizek is a philosopher of the pop traditions they bring some pop culture quite an extent. And in terms of describing his philosophy and he is obviously looking at the blurry board lines. But in spirituality and reality and you say it happens at a micro commodity level and the micro consumption level.

But also at the macro level of consumption on consumerism where you are not quite sure that what you are consuming is real or virtual right? So, virtual reality is experienced as reality without being so just like a decaffeinated coffee is consumed as coffee without being. So, at the same can be spoken for a virtual reality at a macro level at a more higher level at the most spectacular level.

So, what happens at the end of this process of virtualization however is that we begin to experience real reality itself as a virtual reality as a virtual entity. So, again our experience the real reality gets problematize wants to get exposed to virtual reality, right? so virtual reality problematizes or unsettles our perception unsettles our cognitive schema. In terms of understanding of reality because then we come with a differentiation in virtual reality and real reality okay.

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ing remain out of sight . . .)? Virtual Reality simply generalizes this procedure of offering a product deprived of its substance: it provides reality itself deprived of its substance, of the hard resistant kernel of the Real – just as decaffeinated coffee smells and tastes like real coffee without being real coffee, Virtual Reality is experienced as reality without being so. What happens at the end of this process of virtualization, however, is that we begin to experience 'real reality' itself as a virtual entity. For the great majority of the public, the WTC explosions were events on the TV screen, and when we watched the oft-repeated shot of frightened people running towards the camera ahead of the giant cloud of dust from the collapsing tower, was not the framing of the shot itself reminiscent of spectacular shots in catastrophe movies, a special effect which outdid all others, since – as Jeremy Bentham knew – reality is the best appearance of itself?



And then does not mention that Zizek makes to the world trade center explosions 9/11 attacks and he talks about how those attacks were consumed in popular media as you know not just acts of terrorism but also as something of quasi virtual reality and with the same grammar of hyper realism. The same grammar of spectacle the same grammar or some of the crop that we that are employed in poplar cinema.

And again were looking at antagonism between public cinema and what happens in real life. So, the way the entire world trade center attack was packaged and visualized and consumed as a visual spectacle is very similar to the way we consume the visual spectacle of cinema hyper real cinema science fiction cinema etc. And this is where Zizek exercise quite clearly for the great majority of the public the world trade center explosions were events on the tv screen.

And when we watched the off repeated shot of frightened people running towards the camera ahead of the giant cloud of dust from the collapsing tower was not the framing of the shot itself reminiscent of spectacular shorts and catastrophic movies especially a special effect which outdid all others since as Jeremy Bentham name reality is the best appearance or itself. So, it is a very provocative description as you can see.

And quite disturbing as well where Zizek says that you know the way the people ran the way the people consume the world trade center collapse in television screen. There where the camera is

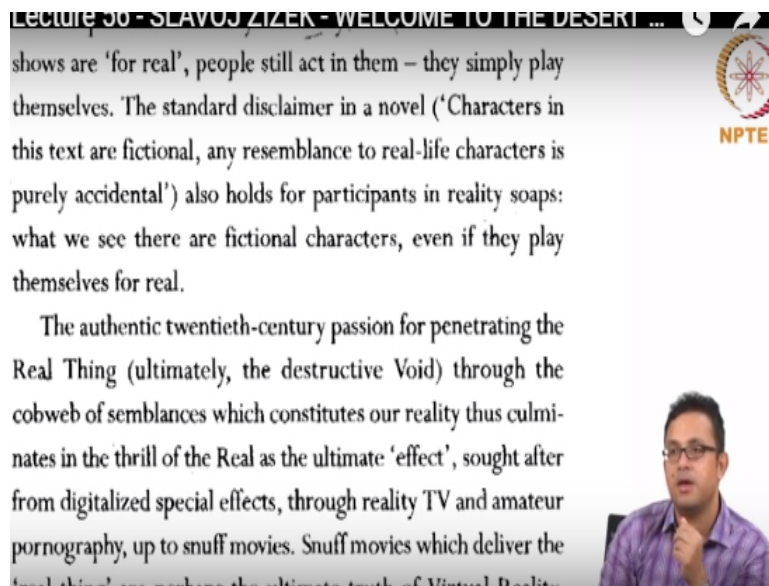


consumed, and the cameras conveyed the entire destruction is not similar to the way that cameras convey a particular scene in a movie in a catastrophic movie and it is not similar the way we consume a catastrophic movie.

So, what is the difference on logically speaking between real reality and virtual reality? so this is like decaffeinated coffee as well so separately watching catastrophic moving on tv we would just consume it a spectacle and tv are not we. But then suppose we also watching the world trade center collapse on tv which has a very similar kind of spectacle. So, there is no blow the borderline between the real event and the virtual event.

So, again we are looking at a blurring board now it has been a reality and virtuality in everyday life and postmodern times.

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The slide contains the following text:

shows are 'for real', people still act in them – they simply play themselves. The standard disclaimer in a novel ('Characters in this text are fictional, any resemblance to real-life characters is purely accidental') also holds for participants in reality soaps: what we see there are fictional characters, even if they play themselves for real.

The authentic twentieth-century passion for penetrating the Real Thing (ultimately, the destructive Void) through the cobweb of semblances which constitutes our reality thus culminates in the thrill of the Real as the ultimate 'effect', sought after from digitalized special effects, through reality TV and amateur pornography, up to snuff movies. Snuff movies which deliver the 'real thing' are perhaps the ultimate truth of Virtual Reality.

The slide also features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner and a small inset video of a man in a purple shirt speaking in the bottom right corner.

That is what Zizek is very keen to sort of highlight okay so and then he talks about how there is a plethora of firms the plethora of cinema which does exact which do exactly this and that is it dramatizes the blurring board line between virtuality and reality and it makes like a reality show and the way we consume reality tv the way we consume reality show and that makes it has a deep impact in the way we look at life post reality show.

And of course as we all know there is something real about reality show is entirely orchestrated entire is entirely choreographed it is a set up thing by the way it presented and where its consumed to us, we believe in it. We believe in the reality of the virtual spectacle and then what that also makes us believe is virtuality in the real spectacle. Okay so this ontological blurring is something Zizek is highlighting very dramatically in this section.

So, the authentic 20 20 20th century passion for penetrating the real thing through the cobweb of semblances which constitutes our reality thus culminates in a true of the real as the ultimate effect a sought after from digitalized special effects true reality tv and amateur pornography up to snuff movies.

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actors and extras in a gigantic show. The most recent example of this is Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998), with Jim Carrey playing the small-town clerk who gradually discovers the truth that he is the hero of a permanent twenty-four-hour TV show: his home town is in fact a gigantic studio set, with cameras following him everywhere. Among its predecessors, it is worth mentioning Phillip K. Dick's *Time out of Joint* (1959), in which the hero, living a modest daily life in a small idyllic Californian city in the late 1950s, gradually discovers that the whole town is a fake staged to keep him satisfied. . . . The underlying experience of *Time out of Joint* and of *The Truman Show* is that the late-capitalist consumerist Californian paradise is, in its very hyperreality, in a way *unreal*, substanceless, deprived of material inertia. And the same 'derealization' of the horror went on after the WTC collapse: while the number of victims – 3,000 – is repeated all the time. it is surprising how little of the actual...



So, and then it talks about different kinds of movies which have been made in recent times and a recent example that he offers as Peter Weirs The Truman Show and its page 13 on the screen. The most recent example of this is Peter Weirs The Truman Show a movie in 1998 with Jim Carrey playing a small town clerk who gradually discovers the truth that he is a hero of a permanent a 24 hour tv show.

So, you know this particular film is its a really interesting film and I do recommend you watch him. It is a supremely postmodern film in a sense that man suddenly realizes that his entire life as a space is actually a movie studio is a reality show and all the people around them are actors as

he is the only one not acting so he is very much is a set piece in reality show which is consumed a externally by millions of people outside.

Okay so his hometown is in fact a gigantic studio set with cameras following him everywhere among the predecessors it is worth mentioning Phillip K Dicks time out to join in which the hero living and a modest day in life in a small idyllic Californian city not in the late 50s gradually discovers the whole town is a fake stage to keep them satisfied the underlying experience of time our joint and The Truman show is that the late capitalist consumers California.

And paradise is and its very happy reality in a way unreal a substance less deprived of material inertia. So, California over here becomes a capitalist. You know a cornucopia of capitalists pleasures you know as some capitalist's heaven and so that kind of life for California life becomes the content of a reality show a perfect reality show where you know everything you require a dish talk to you and grab an abundant proportion.

So, again life in California and life in a reality show blurred together in these two films as Zizek analyses you know that kind of a grammar a spectacle and grammar of consumption. Okay so the hyper-reality and the unreality over here of a sort of ontological kins with each other in Zizek analysis. So, the hyper real quality and the unreal quality they often blended to each other and make our understanding of reality problematic in more ways than one.

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city in the late 1950s, gradually discovers that the whole town is a fake staged to keep him satisfied. . . . The underlying experience of *Time out of Joint* and of *The Truman Show* is that the late-capitalist consumerist Californian paradise is, in its very hyperreality, in a way *unreal*, substanceless, deprived of material inertia. And the same 'derealization' of the horror went on after the WTC collapse: while the number of victims – 3,000 – is repeated all the time, it is surprising how little of the actual carnage we see – no dismembered bodies, no blood, no desperate faces of dying people . . . in clear contrast to reporting on Third World catastrophes, where the whole point is to produce a scoop of some gruesome detail: Somalis dying of hunger, raped Bosnian women, men with their throats cut. These shots are always accompanied by an advance warning that 'some of the images you will see are extremely graphic and may upset chil-



And at the same derealization of the horror went on after the world trade center collapsed while the number of victims 3000 as a repeated all the time. So, you know repeatability becomes more important factor very important condition of hyperreality in something Zizek is pointing out quite clearly over here and that is something that post modernism does quite dramatically and repeats a spectacle over and over again.

A postmodern tv postmodern cinema and each reputation and creates a new kind of effect in new visual and new sensory effect in the audience. Okay the number of veterans 3000 is repeated all the time it was surprising how little of the actual carnage we seen no dismembered bodies no blood no desperate faces of dying people and clear contrast reporting on third world catastrophes.

But the whole point is to produce a scoop of some gruesome detail some others is dying of hunger the raped Bosnian woman men with their throats cut. So, this is a very important difference that Zizek is pointing out and is saying essentially that the world trade center attack was a first world catastrophic. I look at the way it was dished out on tv look at the way it was televised across screens across the world.

And we do not get to see in a dead bodies we do not get to see any mangled bodies. How do we get to see as the hyperreal spectacle of a massive tower being attacked by planes? And then we

see the aftermath of the attack and that is received smokes coming out of the or the buildings you see the building collapsing and then we hear the number of people who died 3000 the number is given to us all the time is repeated all the time.

And several media and several debates now contrast that to the way a catastrophic is a reported catastrophism third were reported to the first world where we get to see dead bodies. We get to see a woman who are abused we get to see you know people dying of hunger we get to see terrorists you know everything is so visceral and so corporeal under this immediate visceral reality is immediate availability of this reality.

Is something which becomes a very key component of the grammar of communication the grammar of you know and the real need for the hyper real grammar. Almost elegant hyperreal grammar you know transmission when it comes to your first world catastrophic first was event like the world trade center okay. So, this is a very important ontological contrast the Zizek is dramatizing.

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the WTC collapse: while the number of victims – 3,000 – is repeated all the time, it is surprising how little of the actual carnage we see – no dismembered bodies, no blood, no desperate faces of dying people . . . in clear contrast to reporting on Third World catastrophes, where the whole point is to produce a scoop of some gruesome detail: Somalis dying of hunger, raped Bosnian women, men with their throats cut. These shots are always accompanied by an advance warning that 'some of the images you will see are extremely graphic and may upset children' – a warning which we never heard in the reports on the WTC collapse. Is this not yet further proof of how, even in this tragic moment, the distance which separates Us from Them, from their reality, is maintained: the real horror happens *there*, not *here*?<sup>8</sup>

So it is not only that Hollywood stages a semblance of real life



These charts are always accompanied by an advanced warning that some of the images you will see are extremely graphic and may upset children are warning that we never heard in the reports that the world trade center collapsed. So, you know the gruesome bodily images gruesome

mangled visceral images of the third world catastrophic they always come with a warning a disclaimer that this may not be appropriate for children.

So, that is something we should be aware of this parental guidance which is given before the actual transmission. But we do not get that at all when it comes to the first one catastrophic world trade center collapsed obviously is a massive building collapsing received smokes coming out of it and then we see a number on a screen which tells us how many people have died. And there is no warning whatsoever about the violence with the viscosity of the event.

Is this not yet further proof of how even in this project moment the distance would separate us from them from their reality is maintained. The real horror happens there not here okay? so this is a very political statement that Zizek is making and that is quite clear about the horror the definition of the horror the reality of the horror the viscosity of the horror. So, viscosity of the horror takes place elsewhere in a third world not in a first world.

So, the first world horror is a different kind of horror it is more of a spectacle which can be consumed and popular media as hyperreal spectacle its grand spectacle as a grand narrative of destruction. Whereas when it comes to third world spectacles in a third world powers what happens is, we see the immediate bodily representations that kind of horror is real horror happens there not here.

So, what we have in first one as a hyper real horror right? so the hyperreality horror is something that is traumatized especially the way the world trade center collapsed was televised on screens. Whereas when it comes to the real horror so micro real horrors immediate horrors in a third world that is all about bodies and mangled bodies and women and children and to see the faces you see the bodies, you see the limbs etc.

That is something which is completely absent and any representation of horror in the first world so as re opening suggests a in this particular book what Zizek is doing is drawing on different kinds of you know resources is writing a popular culture is writing on a popular cinema is

writing on the current psychoanalysis or the word real time. Zizek uses it as real economy and its content and quality.

And also is talking about how the different political and ecological implications which operated in innocuous commodities as well as know really discursive commodities. So, the innocuous commodity would be say coffee without caffeine whereas the brain discursive and you know immediately profound political commodity is the way you know the horror is televised in screen the world trade center horror is televised on screen.

So, the world trade center collapsed the way its presented to you on screen it is a bit like coffee without caffeine. You see the horror without actually seeing the dead bodies we see the horror without actually seeing the abuse people in other the cop says the mangled flesh you do not see any of that. So, as coffee without caffeine it is a hyper real as well as unreal kind of a commodity which is constructed and produced and consumed in spectacles across the globe.

In a way that its televised in a way that its shot and recorded is the choreography and the cinematography is very similar to cinematography used in Hollywood cinema and again Zizek was very careful in terms of connecting the discursive content the discursive quality of Hollywood cinema or Hollywood shooting Hollywood cinematography and connecting that to the macro spectacle of political horror.

For instance, as operated in the world trade center collapsed in 9/11. So, we stop at this point the first lecture on Zizek welcome to the desert a real company with a spoke in the following lectures. Thank you for your attention.