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## Human Rights

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### *Human Nature and Natural Rights*

John Locke

John Locke might be described as the first theorist of liberalism. The following selections are taken from the *Second Treatise On Government* (1685). In them, Locke provides a philosophical foundation for “human rights” and argues that the sole purpose of an organized political society is to protect those rights.

#### Chapter One

1. I must of necessity find out another rise of government, another original of political power, and another way of designing and knowing the persons that have political power it than what the authors of the divine right theory hath taught us.

3. Political power I take to be a right of making laws, with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community in the execution of such laws, and in the defence of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good.

#### Chapter Two, *Of the State of Nature*

4. To understand political power aright, and derive it from its original, we must consider what estate all men are naturally in, and that is, a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of Nature, without asking leave or depending upon the will of any other man. A state also of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another, there being nothing more evident than that creatures of the same species and rank, promiscuously born to all the same advantages of Nature, and the use of the same faculties, should also be equal one amongst another, without subordination or subjection ...

5. This equality of men by Nature, the judicious Hooker looks upon as so evident in itself, and beyond all question, that he makes it the foundation of that obligation to mutual love amongst men on which he builds the duties they owe one another, and from whence he derives the great maxims of justice and charity ...

6. But though this be a state of liberty, yet it is not a state of licence; though man in that state have an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, or so much as any creature in his possession, but where some nobler use than its bare preservation calls for it. The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker; all the servants of one sovereign Master, sent into the world by His order and about His business; they are His property, whose workmanship they are made to last during His, not one another's pleasure. And, being furnished with like faculties, sharing all in one community of Nature, there cannot be

supposed any such subordination among us that may authorise us to destroy one another, as if we were made for one another's uses, as the inferior ranks of creatures are for ours. Every one as he is bound to preserve himself, and not to quit his station wilfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he as much as he can to preserve the rest of mankind, and not unless it be to do justice on an offender, take away or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another.

15. I affirm that all men are naturally in that state of Nature, and remain so till, by their own consents, they make themselves members of some politic society.

### Chapter Three, *Of the State of War*

16. The state of war is a state of enmity and destruction; and therefore declaring by word or action, not a passionate and hasty, but sedate, settled design upon another man's life puts him in a state of war with him against whom he has declared such an intention, and so has exposed his life to the other's power to be taken away by him, or any one that joins with him in his defence, and espouses his quarrel; it being reasonable and just I should have a right to destroy that which threatens me with destruction; for by the fundamental law of Nature, man being to be preserved as much as possible, when all cannot be preserved, the safety of the innocent is to be preferred, and one may destroy a man who makes war upon him, or has discovered an enmity to his being, for the same reason that he may kill a wolf or a lion, because they are not under the ties of the common law of reason, have no other rule but that of force and violence, and so may be treated as a beast of prey, those dangerous and noxious creatures that will be sure to destroy him whenever he falls into their power.

17. And hence it is that he who attempts to get another man into his absolute power does thereby put himself into a state of war with him; it being to be understood as a declaration of a design upon his life. For I have reason to conclude that he who would get me into his power without my consent would use me as he pleased when he had got me there, and destroy me too when he had a fancy to it; for nobody can desire to have me in his absolute power unless it be to compel me by force to that which is against the right of my freedom- i.e. make me a slave. To be free from such force is the only security of my preservation, and reason bids me look on him as an enemy to my preservation who would take away that freedom which is the fence to it; so that he who makes an attempt to enslave me thereby puts himself into a state of war with me. He that in the state of Nature would take away the freedom that belongs to any one in that state must necessarily be supposed to have a design to take away everything else, that freedom being the foundation of all the rest; as he that in the state of society would take away the freedom belonging to those of that society or commonwealth must be supposed to design to take away from them everything else, and so be looked on as in a state of war.

18. This makes it lawful for a man to kill a thief who has not in the least hurt him, nor declared any design upon his life, any farther than by the use of force, so to get him in his power as to take away his money, or what he pleases, from him; because using force, where he has no right to get me into his power, let his pretence be what it will, I have no reason to suppose that he who would take away my liberty would not, when he had me in his power, take away everything else. And, therefore, it is lawful for me to treat him as one who has put himself into a state of war with me- i.e., kill him if I can; for to that hazard does he justly expose himself whoever introduces a state of war, and is aggressor in it.

19. And here we have the plain difference between the state of Nature and the state of war, which however some men have confounded, are as far distant as a state of peace, goodwill, mutual assistance, and preservation; and a state of enmity, malice, violence and mutual destruction are one from another. Men living together according to reason without a common superior on earth, with authority to judge between them, is properly the state of Nature. But force, or a declared design of force upon the person of another, where there is no common superior on earth to appeal to for relief, is the state of war; and it is the want of such an appeal gives a man the right of war even against an aggressor, though he be in society and a fellow-subject. Thus, a thief whom I cannot harm, but by appeal to the law, for having stolen all that I am worth, I may kill when he sets on me to rob me but of my horse or coat, because the law, which was made for my preservation, where it cannot interpose to secure my life from present force, which if lost is capable of no reparation, permits me my own defence and the right of war, a liberty to kill the aggressor, because the aggressor allows not time to appeal to our common judge, nor the decision of the law, for remedy in a case where the mischief may be irreparable. Want of a common judge with authority puts all men in a state of Nature; force without right upon a man's person makes a state of war both where there is, and is not, a common judge.

Chapter Eight, *Of the Beginning of Political Societies*

95. Men being, as has been said, by nature all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without his own consent, which is done by agreeing with other men, to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living, one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties, and a greater security against any that are not of it. This any number of men may do, because it injures not the freedom of the rest; they are left, as they were, in the liberty of the state of Nature. When any number of men have so consented to make one community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make one body politic, wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest.

96. For, when any number of men have, by the consent of every individual, made a community, they have thereby made that community one body, with a power to act as one body, which is only by the will and determination of the majority. For that which acts any community, being only the consent of the individuals of it, and it being one body, must move one way, it is necessary the body should move that way whither the greater force carries it, which is the consent of the majority, or else it is impossible it should act or continue one body, one community, which the consent of every individual that united into it agreed that it should; and so every one is bound by that consent to be concluded by the majority. And therefore we see that in assemblies empowered to act by positive laws where no number is set by that positive law which empowers them, the act of the majority passes for the act of the whole, and of course determines as having, by the law of Nature and reason, the power of the whole.

97. And thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation to every one of that society to submit to the determination of the majority, and to be concluded by it; or else this original compact, whereby he with others incorporates into one society, would signify nothing, and be no compact if he be left free and under no other ties than he was in before in the state of Nature ... .

98. For if the consent of the majority shall not in reason be received as the act of the whole, and conclude every individual, nothing but the consent of every individual can make anything to be the act of the whole, which, considering the infirmities of health and avocations of business, which in a number though much less than that of a commonwealth, will necessarily keep many away from the public assembly ... For where the majority cannot conclude the rest, there they cannot act as one body, and consequently will be immediately dissolved again.

99. Whosoever, therefore, out of a state of Nature unite into a community, must be understood to give up all the power necessary to the ends for which they unite into society to the majority of the community, unless they expressly agreed in any number greater than the majority. And this is done by barely agreeing to unite into one political society, which is all the compact that is, or needs be, between the individuals that enter into or make up a commonwealth. And thus, that which begins and actually constitutes any political society is nothing but the consent of any number of freemen capable of majority, to unite and incorporate into such a society. And this is that, and that only, which did or could give beginning to any lawful government in the world.

119. Every man being, as has been showed, naturally free, and nothing being able to put him into subjection to any earthly power, but only his own consent, it is to be considered what shall be understood to be a sufficient declaration of a man's consent to make him subject to the laws of any government. There is a common distinction of an express and a tacit consent, which will concern our present case. Nobody doubts but an express consent of any man, entering into any society, makes him a perfect member of that society, a subject of that government. The difficulty is, what ought to be looked upon as a tacit consent, and how far it binds- i.e., how far any one shall be looked on to have consented, and thereby submitted to any government, where he has made no expressions of it at all. And to this I say, that every man that hath any possession or enjoyment of any part of the dominions of any government doth hereby give his tacit consent, and is as far forth obliged to obedience to the laws of that government, during such enjoyment, as any one under it, whether this his possession be of land to him and his heirs for ever, or a lodging only for a week; or whether it be barely travelling freely on the highway; and, in effect, it reaches as far as the very being of any one within the territories of that government.

121. Since the government has a direct jurisdiction only over the land and reaches the possessor of it (before he has actually incorporated himself in the society) only as he dwells upon and enjoys that, the obligation any one is under by virtue of such enjoyment to submit to the government begins and ends with the enjoyment; so that whenever the owner, who has given nothing but such a tacit consent to the government will, by donation, sale or otherwise, quit the said possession, he is at liberty to go and incorporate himself into any other commonwealth, or agree with others to begin a new one in vacuis locis, in any part of the world they can find free and unpossessed; whereas he that has once, by actual agreement and any express declaration, given his consent to be of any commonweal, is perpetually and indispensably obliged to be, and remain unalterably a subject to it, and can never be again in the liberty of the state of Nature, unless by any calamity the government he was under comes to be dissolved.

#### Chapter Eleven, *Of the Ends of Political Society and Government*

123. If man in the state of Nature be so free as has been said, if he be absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest and subject to nobody, why will he part with his

freedom, this empire, and subject himself to the dominion and control of any other power? To which it is obvious to answer, that though in the state of Nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain and constantly exposed to the invasion of others; for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very insecure. This makes him willing to quit this condition which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers; and it is not without reason that he seeks out and is willing to join in society with others who are already united, or have a mind to unite for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name -- property.

124. The great and chief end, therefore, of men uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property; to which in the state of Nature there are many things wanting. Firstly, there wants an established, settled, known law, received and allowed by common consent to be the standard of right and wrong, and the common measure to decide all controversies between them. For though the law of Nature be plain and intelligible to all rational creatures, yet men, being biased by their interest, as well as ignorant for want of study of it, are not apt to allow of it as a law binding to them in the application of it to their particular cases ... Secondly, in the state of Nature there wants a known and indifferent judge, with authority to determine all differences according to the established law ... Thirdly, in the state of Nature there often wants power to back and support the sentence when right, and to give it due execution ... It is this that makes them so willingly give up every one his single power of punishing to be exercised by such alone as shall be appointed to it amongst them, and by such rules as the community, or those authorised by them to that purpose, shall agree on. And in this we have the original right and rise of both the legislative and executive power as well as of the governments and societies themselves.

### ***Don't Worry About Theories of Human Rights***

Richard Rorty

Richard Rorty is a contemporary American philosopher who describes himself as a "liberal ironist." Others have called him a "post-modern liberal." Here, Rorty argues that attempts to provide a theory of human rights – such as John Locke's – is futile and unnecessary. You will probably find his conclusion either obvious or disturbing.

The non-West has a lot of justified complaints to make about the West, but it does owe a lot to Western ingenuity. The West is good at coming up with devices for lessening human suffering. The most conspicuous of these devices are of two sorts. The first sort includes ether, aspirin, codeine, various morphine derivatives, and a whole battery of recently developed, more sophisticated anesthetics. The second includes such sociopolitical institutions as free elections, a free press, free trade unions, a free judiciary, free colleges and universities, and various other time-tested devices. These devices are used to prevent the strong from having their way with the weak and, thereby, to prevent the weak from suffering as much as they would have otherwise. When the West hears of a great natural disaster in the non-West, lots of Westerners reach for their checkbooks and send money to organizations like Doctors Without Borders, hoping that part of the money will pay for anesthetics. When the West hears that the results of a free election

have been annulled by a military junta or that a publisher has been forced to write a self criticism or that a poet is being held by the secret police or that professors are being told that their jobs depend on getting certificates from the ruling party, lots of Westerners reach for their checkbooks and send money to organizations like Human Rights Watch or Amnesty International. These Westerners hope that their checks will give foreign governments reason to complain that their internal affairs have been subjected to outside interference.

Suppose that both sorts of checks stopped being written, not for lack of money, but because Westerners had ceased to care. Suppose that our grandchildren are surprised that such checks ever were written and wonder why the money was not used to diminish suffering closer to home. Then the worst we'll be in is a situation like that described by Philip Larkin in the last stanza of his poem, "Homage to a Government." I quote Larkin: "Next year we shall be living in a country that brought its soldiers home for lack of money. The statues will be standing in the same tree-muffled squares and look nearly the same. Our children will not know it's a different country. All we can hope to leave them now is money." Substitute "put away our checkbooks for lack of fellow feeling" for "brought its soldiers home for lack of money," and you see what I'm driving at.

The worst fate I can imagine for the West is becoming a place in which the idealistic youth of each rising generation no longer dream of a global utopia, a world in which the sick and injured always have pain killers ready at hand and in which the downtrodden always have ready access to the newspapers, the courts, and the ballot box. Imagine a West in which nobody ever volunteered for the Peace Corps and its various analogues; a West in which young people have come to mock the vision common to Star Wars and Star Trek. In that vision, human beings finally get their act together, establish a world federal government which abolishes both war and inequality of opportunity, and turn their eyes toward the surrounding galaxy. A West without idealism is not one any of us would wish to live in, nor should we wish to live in an America whose government did not do everything in its power to export the various devices which have made our country the envy of foreign idealists like Simón Bolívar and Ho Chi Minh.

The idealistic Americans who sign up for the Peace Corps loathe the thought that our government not only did not come to the rescue of democratic institutions in Guatemala in 1952 and Chile in 1973 but cooperated in destroying these institutions. But they don't feel this loathing because they think that, in Samuel Huntington's words, "the culture of the West is and should be the culture of the world" (*The Clash of Civilizations*). They are not interested in spreading a culture but simply in decreasing human suffering.

Maybe someday there will be non-Westerners who turn down Western anesthetics on cultural grounds. Baffling as we may find that refusal, we will not force aspirin down their throat. Maybe someday there will be non-Western fighters against injustice, defenders of the weak against the strong, who turn down free elections, a free press, free universities and the like, on cultural grounds. But until some such people turn up, it is a waste of time for us to worry about whether we're practicing cultural imperialism by doing our best to export these devices. As long as there are persecuted dissidents who think that Western devices are the only way to break the power of the local oligarchs, Western governments should continue doing everything they can to keep those dissidents out of jail, in the news, and on the Net. Ceasing to try to get dissidents out of jail, like ceasing to fly in planeloads of anesthetics, would mean that the West had become just a moneymaking enterprise. All we would be able to leave our children would be money.

On the other hand, the West should try to export only that portion of its own culture which gives people in the non-West a chance to choose a different culture or to reconstruct their own. Whether we export capitalism or Coca-Cola™ or Hollywood movies is optional; whether we export democratic institutions is not. Exporting these institutions is a duty we Westerners cannot avoid any more than we can avoid our duty to export anesthetics and to stop exporting automatic rifles and jet bombers. This is not because such initiatives are dictated by transcultural human reason—in my view there is no such thing as transcultural human reason—it's because we Westerners have talked ourselves into being the kind of people who cannot live with themselves if we neglect those duties. My reference to choosing a different culture may give rise to objections. It will certainly do so if it suggests a naked, not yet acculturated, Sartrean [Jean Paul Sartre] will making a choice behind a Rawlsian [John Rawls] veil of ignorance. But that's not the picture I have in mind. I'm happy to grant that the difference between abnormality and humanity is acculturation. Yet once a person has been created by acculturation, the result is someone who can say to herself, "The culture which made me what I am turns out to be inferior in the following specific respects to the culture I've been reading about or seeing on television." She is in a position to pick and choose elements from various cultural traditions, using the tools of her home culture to grasp the limitations of that very culture. Some cultures, of course, make this kind of criticism harder than others. We call a culture primitive just in so far as persons acculturated in it find such critical reflection difficult. We call a culture advanced just in so far as people raised within are articulate and reflective enough to make intercultural comparisons without much strain.

This invidious distinction is, of course, Eurocentric, but it is none the worse for that. For the European enlightenment invented the doctrine that cultures are means for the happiness of individuals rather than ends in themselves. That doctrine seems to me irrefutable. To deny it would be to adopt the perverse view that every culture has intrinsic value just by virtue of being a culture. I call this view perverse because it seems to rely upon an inference from the uncontroversial premise, every culture affords a means to human happiness, to the obviously false conclusion that human happiness can never require the modification or the extinction of a culture. There are lots of cultures we are lucky to have seen the last of—those of Nazi Germany and of William Faulkner's Mississippi, for example—just as there are lots of human beings whom we wish had never been born. The idea of the intrinsic dignity of a culture is as useless as that of the intrinsic dignity of a human being. For intrinsic, in both cases, is merely a conversation stopper. It's a word which signifies its user's refusal to debate further the issue of whether human happiness would be increased by getting rid of that culture or that person.

As I see it, most theoretical quarrels (between liberal individualism and communitarianism, for example) are tempests in a philosophical teapot which cannot be made relevant to any actual political choices. They only seem relevant if you think that the human rights culture, which has grown up since the Helsinki Declaration, needs backup from a theory about the nature of human beings. But I think it no more requires a philosophical foundation than does a recommendation to take an aspirin if you think you're coming down with a migraine. Nobody, except a few philosophers, cares whether human rights are intrinsic to every member of the biological species or whether they're rendered by God or whether they're just recent Western social constructions. Nobody needs a theory about how many of these rights there are or about which takes precedence over which. All we need to know is that, where there is a well-organized and vocal Helsinki watch committee, the strong have a slightly harder time inflicting unnecessary suffering

on the weak than they would have had otherwise. The proof of the analgesic is the fast relief; the proof of the human rights culture is that it has made it a little more difficult for the strong to increase their own wealth and power by grinding the faces of the weak.

In my capacity as a philosopher rather than a citizen, I'd plunk for the view that human rights are, like anesthetics, recent, ingenious, Western inventions. As a good pragmatist, I think everything is a social construct and that electrons, human rights, the Internet, and Doctors Without Borders are among the better things we Westerners have cobbled together lately. I have no use for the idea that rights are an intrinsic property of humans because I have no use for the term "intrinsic" at all. I think everything is what it is by virtue of its relations to everything else. I also have no use for the idea that there is a deep, human core which is unaffected by culture. I think, unless our culture goes all the way down, there's nothing inside us unaffected by language except the physiological arrangements we share with the beasts.

Still, I heartily disagree with one of my colleagues who says "The intellectual culture of the modern West is in sufficient disarray as to be practically unusable as a resource for the development of coherent models of cultural accommodation." This sentence would be plausible only if one identified the intellectual culture of the modern West with the worst rhetorical excesses of a human rights theorist such as Ronald Dworkin [a contemporary American legal scholar and political theorist]. But the core of that culture is a conviction common to Rawls, Kant, Marx, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and practically every interesting modern Western philosopher you can mention, except Nietzsche—namely that every human being has a prima facie duty to come to the help of any member of the species who is suffering unnecessarily. I don't think we need coherent models of cultural accommodation, any more than we need coherent models of cross-cultural intermarriage. People who fall in love and marry across cultures work things out without the benefit of models, and populations which are raised in one culture and exposed to another do the same. Even if we wanted to avoid exposing non-Western cultures to the West, we wouldn't be able to, thanks to the globalized economy and modern communications. So I think we should stop worrying about whether such exposure is going to make people unhappy and just make sure that the strong don't use non-Western cultural traditions as an excuse to continue their oppression of the weak.

When cultural traditions start making people unnecessarily miserable, they have outlived their usefulness and need to be replaced by other cultural traditions. In the United States, in 1950, white males were making the lives of blacks and women unnecessarily miserable. Thanks, among other things, to a free press, a free judiciary, and the like, American culture changed dramatically in the course of fifty years. We have no idea whether African cultures, which cut off the labia and clitoris of young women, or Asiatic cultures, which refuse to put aged parents in nursing homes, would change once these particular traditions had been freely, and widely, debated for a few decades. But this is my central premise. The value of free discussion of possible changes by participants in a culture should always take precedence over the value of preserving cultural identity. Without such discussion, nobody will ever know which cultural traditions are excuses for the strong to oppress the weak and which are traditions that even the weak would, given the option, prefer to preserve. It doesn't matter if readers of Kant and Rawls call something "respect for human rights," readers of Confucius call it "respect for cosmic harmony," and readers of the Christian scriptures call it "respect for the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God." What does matter is that every culture incorporates at least one

tradition whose founders inculcated what Nietzsche called "slave morality." In each culture, some famous teacher urged his or her disciples to work here below in order to make it harder for the strong to inflict unnecessary suffering on the weak. It's not only the West's duty to help create a world conforming to this transcultural imperative, it's our duty to export both aspirin and a free press in order to aid in its creation—at least until the non-West comes up with some better devices.

In conclusion, let me offer one qualification of what I've been saying. I don't think that either Britain or India or China had a duty to expose the Tibetans to foreign ways on the suspicion that the lamas were oppressing the peasants. If there is a Stone Age culture somewhere we haven't yet meddled with, I hope we'll leave them alone. But I do think that, once the West has made itself known in a non-Western region, then the West has a duty to the weak within that region. It has a duty to see that the benefits of exposure to the West are spread around the population rather than being reserved for the rich or the males of the higher castes. The West's attitude should be that any non-Western elite that treats itself to such modern Western conveniences as Swiss bank accounts, organ transplants, and jet travel cannot use preservation of cultural identity as an excuse for keeping democracy out of the reach of the masses.

## **Human Rights and Its Discontents**

Slavoj Zizek, November 16, 1999 Bard College

Slavoj Zizek, from Slovenia in the former Yugoslavia, is one of Europe's foremost philosophers and a prolific social critic. The following is a short version of a talk Zizek gave at an American university.

Thank you for the 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 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 from this participatory, multi-cultural, 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 idea that labor, hard work, is originally an indecent activity to be hidden from the public eye. Where in Hollywood films do we see still today the production process in all its intensity? 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. At this point I want to do something that may be a surprise to those of you who know me – quite accurately – as a thinker in the Marxist and Freudian tradition. What I want to do in the first part of my talk as a way of further filling in the background is to propose that Christianity effectively provides the foundation to human rights.

## 1.

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 each member /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, we are not dealing with a simple brutal hatred demanded by a cruel and jealous god. Rather, 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 should avoid a crucial misunderstanding here. This unplugging, this disconnection, has nothing whatsoever to do with the common humanist idea that one should just 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. Consider 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."

In the uncoupling from the social structure, the term "new creation" used by St. Paul is crucial because it signals the gesture of erasing the traces of one's past and the beginning afresh from a zero point: the possibility of radically wiping the slate clean as the condition of the new beginning. I hope my point is clear enough. I'm claiming that the way to imagine any radical social change was opened by this Christian logic, which opposes the pagan logic of disturbed and reestablished balance, where we are part of some large chain of being. It's the logic of miracle, miracle not in the religious sense — don't get me wrong, I'm a materialist — but miracle in the sense of you can begin from the zero point. 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 metaphor 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 Gray proposes 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.

Try playing Gray's game: For example, when "Wolf Man", Freud's patient, regressed to the traumatic scene that determined his further psychic development, witnessing the parental *coitus a tergo*, doing it doggy-style as you Americans say, the solution would be 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. The political version of this has ethnic, sexual and other minorities rewriting their past in a more positive self-asserting vein.

Along the same lines one can even imagine a rewriting of the Ten Commandments. 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 less the "plain facts," than the Real of some traumatic encounter — the Real kernel which forever structures the individual or group's psychic economy.

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.

I hope you don't misunderstand me. I disagree radically with the Pope but I think the usual argumentation against the Pope is even worse than the Pope, because it is really nothing more than conformist argumentation that resists *paying the price for an ethical stance*. "Let's be realists," and so on and so on. So in this permissive, plastic universe of ours, human rights actually function — why not? I follow here my friend from California, Ken Reinhard — as 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 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 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 and catches me with my pants down, I can cry assault on my basic human rights. 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 the use that does not violate the commandments. Compare this with 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. In this sense, do the politically correct prohibitions not function as rules that 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?

## 2.

So within this universe of permissiveness, how does the reference to human rights function in politics? Here I will finally address the issue you probably expected me to talk about -- 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 militarism, 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. Rather, we exploit others — Hispanics here in this States, or African Americans, or Turks in Germany, and so on — because we are not tolerant, because we fear their otherness. And then we start speaking the poetry of Julia Kristeva [a french feminist philosopher] about "strangers within ourselves and to ourselves"; in other words, 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 power, exploitation, and economy into the problem of tolerance. I'm tempted even to say that the moment we put it in the terms of tolerance we falsify it. 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. 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 German 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.

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, 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. A couple of decades ago, that is, 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.