

THE BREAKDOWN OF RATIONAL ARGUMENTATION

Slavoj Žižek

In his latest reply to me, Sam Kriss described with the following words what he considers to be my opinion on the Muslim terrorists: “we cannot talk with these people because they are *incapable of speech*. It’s not just that we don’t share the same symbolic terrain; it’s a landscape on which they simply have no presence. They are incoherent Orientals, speechless and psychotic, objectively robbed of everything by the dispossessive whirlwind of global capitalism, but on the subjective level terrifyingly *uncastrated*.”¹ These lines are not only a totally wrong rendering of my position, and not only a theoretical nonsense, but also such a case of slander pure and simple that, at this level, any minimally rational debate becomes meaningless. And he is not alone in this nasty business. Among many others, suffice it to mention Hamid Dabashi who begins his book *Can Non-Europeans Think?* with:

“‘Fuck you, Walter Mignolo!’ With those grandiloquent words and the gesture they must have occasioned and accompanied, the distinguished and renowned European philosopher Slavoj Žižek begins his response to a piece that Walter Mignolo wrote...”²

No reference is given – no wonder, since I never uttered the phrase “Fuck you, Walter Mignolo!”. In a public talk in which I responded to Mignolo’s attack on me, I did use the words “fuck you,” but they did not refer to Mignolo: his name was not mentioned in conjunction with them, they were a general exclamation addressed (if at anyone) at my public. From here it is just a step to elevating my exclamation into “Slavoj Žižek’s famous ‘Fuck you, Walter Mignolo’,” as Dan Glazerbrook did it:

»The world of academia, too, has seen Europeans ‘lashing out’ at the suggestion that they are not, after all, the sole and divine arbiters of what constitutes social, political and philosophical thought: witness, for example, Slavoj Žižek’s famous ‘Fuck you, Walter Mignolo’ response to a suggestion that there might be more interesting philosophers than him in the (non-European) world!«³

Note how the accusation is here individualized: not only do I privilege European thought, I even claim that there are no more interesting philosophers in the non-European world than ME! –

Back to Dabashi's book, on page 8 the comedy reaches its peak: a long quoted passage is attributed to me (it follows "Žižek claims:", and after the quote the text goes on. "This is all fine and dandy – for Žižek. He can make any claim he wishes. All power to him. But the point is..." There is just one tiny problem: the passage quoted and attributed to me and then mocked as an example of my European racism and of my misreading of Fanon is FROM FANON HIMSELF (again, no reference is given in Dabashi's book - it is from Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press 2008, p. 201-206.) So let me reiterate my point again: cases like these are not worthy of an answer. If such slanderous lies convince anyone, there is no loss in it for me, because I prefer not to have the support of people like these.

¹ Quoted from <https://samkriss.wordpress.com/2016/01/28/all-cats-are-girls-and-all-dogs-are-boys-further-notes-on-slavoj-zizek/>.

² Hamid Dabashi, *Can Non-Europeans Think?*, London: Zed Books 2015, p. 1.

³Quoted from <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/03/16/with-enemies-like-this-imperialism-doesnt-need-friends/> .