

Summary article



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Summary Article Slavoj Zizek's *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!* is a commendable essay on the way the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center needs to be treated and the debates and discussions on the attack be directed. The material reality of the world around the citizens of the US may not be treated the "real" as there is always the presence of the "real reality" that may be experienced on the awakening, just the way the hero of the Matrix experienced the desolate landscape littered with burned ruins. The ironic greeting of Morpheus, "Welcome to the desert of the real," invites the hero to the desert of the real. "Was it not something of the similar order that took place in New York on September 11?" (p 15) The effects of the multi-national capitalism and the culture created by the Hollywood popular fantasies resulted in the actions to be seen as images entered and shattered in our social reality. To read the reality within the WTC attacks in the lights of Lacanian psychoanalysis, the people who are immersed in reality have turned to be "fully identifying oneself with the fantasy - namely, with the fantasy which structures the excess that resists our immersion in daily reality." (p 17) The approach of Zizek points out the need for seeing things as they are rather than missing the roots in the fantasy-driven world or the "artificially constructed universe." He wants the people to yield to the "irresistible urge to 'return to the Real', to regain firm ground in some 'real reality.'" (p 19) The Real has a compelling image of nightmarish apparition which is compelled to enter our reality and "the compelling image of the collapse of the WTC was: as image, a semblance an effect', which at the same time, delivered 'the thing itself,'" not the fantasized version of the reality. The same psychoanalytic view of reality that "we should not mistake reality for fiction," means that "we should

discern which part of reality is ‘transfunctionalized’ through fantasy, so that, although it is part of reality, it is perceived in fictional mode.” (p 19) The Lacanian view that unlike the animals which can “deceive by presenting what is false as true” humans “deceive by presenting what is true as false.” (p 20) The reality behind the WTC attack has been presented and viewed in the same manner, making the real as fantasized notion. “Not only were the media bombarding us all the time with the talk about the terrorist threat; this threat was also obviously libidinally invested - just recall the series of movies from Escape From New York to Independence Day.” (p 15) Therefore, the need of the day is that we face the real reality as it is and address the issue as it occurs before us.

Q. What is the real implication of the essay *Passions of the Real, Passions of Semblance*,” in the background of 9/11 attacks on WTC?

A. In the essay, “*Passions of the Real, Passions of Semblance*,” Žižek, deconstructs the existing philosophical concepts about the 9/11 attack and claims that the world is filled with examples where the Real of social opposition and the confrontation of the same is eluded. The so called “war on terrorism” has been the agency to conceal the Real of the attack. Žižek attempts to see things as they are and he expects the readers to do the same.

Q. Has the government, according to Žižek, dealt with the issue properly?

A. The policy of the governmental system did not help to battle through the “desert of the Real” (p 15) but to escape from the reality of things. We are not able to amalgamate the facts into the reality but perceive them as part of our fantasized view and the “ultimate twist in this link between Hollywood and the ‘war on terrorism’ occurred when the Pentagon decided to solicit

the help of Hollywood.” (p 16) Thus, the governmental intervention is not appreciated by Zizek.

Bibliography

Salvo Zizek, *Passions of the Real, Passions of Semblance in Welcome to the Desert of the Real!*: Five essays on 11 September and related dates. London and New York: Verso, 2002.