

**Thematic lectures on „invisible violence“**

**We, 18 March 2015, 7 – 9 pm**

(in English)

Étienne Balibar

*The Other Scene of History: Extreme Violence and the destruction of the Political*

How does one articulate the looming crisis of the political worldwide when there is a redistribution of old and new forms of extreme violence? To try and answer this question, we have a philosophical principle, which is questionable but acceptable as a working hypothesis: politics never exists without violence, but violence can be political or unpolitical, convertible or inconvertible into institutions. Its preservation must not be a denial of or a protection from extreme violence. It must address the difference and seek antidotes which amount to reinventing politics in the middle of danger. This is what I call civility. Finally we have tentative criteria to distinguish violence from extreme violence (or cruelty), in order to understand the reversible or irreversible transitions and their overdetermination. This lecture will assemble elements of this puzzle and illustrate them with contemporary examples.

Étienne Balibar is currently Anniversary Chair of Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University (London) and Visiting Professor at Columbia University, New York. He graduated at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Sorbonne in Paris, later took his PhD from the University of Nijmegen (Netherlands) and has an Habilitation from Université de Paris I. He is author or co-author of numerous books, the most recent ones are *Equaliberty. Political Essays* (Duke, 2014), *Identity and Difference. The Invention of Consciousness* (Verso, 2014). Forthcoming are *Violence and Civility*. *On the Limits of Political Philosophy* (Columbia University Press, 2015), and *Citizenship* (Polity, 2015). ÉtienneBalibar is a member of Ligue des Droits de l’Homme (Paris), with a particular interest in the rights of migrants and asylum seekers. He is co-founder of the Faculty for Israeli-Palestinian Peace and acting chair of Association Jan Hus France. ÉtienneBalibar was born in Avallon (France) in 1942.

Suzana Milevska

*The Lack and its “Supplement”: The visible and invisible violence of monuments*

The aim of this lecture is to address an urgent need to deconstruct the visible and invisible violence that is produced in the realm of symbolic, imaginary or “real” contexts regarding memorials, monuments and other sculptures in the public spaces, especially those representing certain traumatic events from the past. Contemporary socio-political and cultural structures and strategies that call for re-writing different histories often prompt the relocation or even destruction of monuments from previous epochs. Parallel to this, the visible imbalance between male and female figures in public spaces constructs and reinforces a visual culture and public space that is dominated by masculinity, aggression, violence and militant tropes. I will particularly refer to the case study of recently-built monumental, public sculptures in the context of the governmental urban project “Skopje 2014” (capital of Macedonia) as an attempt to compensate for the incomplete, faulty national identity that is itself  treated as “rogue” (taking into account the “name issue”).

Suzana Milevska is a theorist and curator of visual art and culture from Macedonia. Currently she is the Professor for Central and South European Art Histories at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Her theoretical and curatorial interests include postcolonial critique of hegemonic power regimes of representation, feminist art and gender theory, participatory and collaborative art practices.She holds a PhD in visual culture from Goldsmiths College London. In 2004 Milevska was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at Library of Congress. In 2010 Milevska published the book *Gender Difference in the Balkans* (Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag, 2010) and edited *The Renaming Machine: The Book*. In 2011 she was a researcher for the project *Call the Witness – Roma Pavilion* at the 54 International Art Exhibition –Venice Biennale-Collateral Event and curated the exhibitions *Call the Witness, BAK, Utrecht,* and the *Roma Protocol* at the Austrian Parliament. In 2012 Milevska was awarded the ALICE Award for Political Curating and the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory.

Keti Chukhrov

*Dialectics of Culture and Violence*

The universal notion of culture has traditionally been related to imperialist expansion, that is, no less violent than territorial conquests or geopolitically-conditioned repressions. It has been denounced since Freud’s “Discontent with Culture,” The Frankfurt School’s critique of culture as industry, Post-structuralisms’ rejection of language as the source of authority, or as the mode of violence over life and its heterogeneity in postcolonial and decolonial studies. The problem appears when we have to decide whether what is considered to be generally emancipatory acquires such generality only on behalf of a certain place, thus being geographically local, but exerting expansion in the name of universal values, or whether emancipation as practice might imply violence by definition. On the other hand, certain explicitly violent local traditions are often defended against their integration into the universal premises of equality and emancipation, to the extent that class consciousness is completely replaced in them by the struggle against racial oppression**.** Then the national culture becomes the remedy against the imperial expansion of “universal” culture. By the same token, the national state established by means of violence might justify the cases of apartheid or artificially and forcefully forged cultural identity. This overlapping of violence of universal values with the violence of identity production had been the issue of numerous works from Said and Fanon up to Chakrabarty and Mignolo. But what if cultural universalism has nothing to do with civilizational development and geopolitical expansion, but rather, what if it is exactly the discarding of cultural universalism that constructs the subaltern regions and reciprocity of violence between the “center” and “periphery.”

Keti Chukhrov is an associate professor at the Department of Art Theory and Cultural Studies at the Russian State University for the Humanities and a head of theory department at the National Center for Contemporary Art. Chukhrov has authored numerous texts on art theory, culture, politics, and philosophy which have appeared in periodicals such as, among others: *Afterall*, *Moscow Art Magazine, Artforum*, *Brumaria*, *Documenta magazines*, *e-flux journal*, *New Literary Review*, and *Springerin*. Her full-length books include: *To Be – To Perform. ‘Theatre’ in Philosophical Criticism of Art* (2011); *Pound &£* (1999), and two volumes of dramatic poetry: *Just Humans* (2010) and *War of Quantities* (2004). Chukhrov lives and works in Moscow.