

MIT 150 | Salman Rushdie named Honorary Visiting Professor of the Humanities

PRESENTER: Salman Rushdie is only the most visible individual victim of a worldwide struggle against tolerance. I think that his cause, honoring his rights and his exemplary conduct since the fatwa should be our cause.

This case is the great test of where we stand on the issue of freedom and solidarity, and the future of our own culture. That's the first thing I wanted to do to open this evening. And the second thing, not surprisingly, is I want to introduce Salman Rushdie.

RUSHDIE: The plan for me, is I was supposed to be a scientist. When I was 16, there's no question that my best subjects were math and physics. And everybody from my parents downwards assumed that that's what I would do. But at some point, for reasons of stubbornness and perversity, I took a dramatic left turn and did history, French, and Latin instead.

But I've always rather regretted the loss of that scientific dimensions. So it's nice to kind of get it back free. And I really do hope that this isn't just a symbolic moment, but that it can be the beginning of a long term relationship with this with this great institution.

I think many of us, righteous of my generation, have felt that in many ways, the cutting edge of the new is now to be found in the sciences, not in philosophy, not in the arts. That actually we have a great deal to absorb and learn from.

So I look forward to being able to do that in the company of all of you. And of the remarkable talents and minds present at MIT. And I think for that reason the fact that this is such a great institution dedicated to the search for the new, and to the openness of thought that that search requires.

I think it's very appropriate and a very great privilege for me to receive this honor from, of all places, this institution. And I thank them once again for that.