

Imperative to Re-imagine the Planet

THIS IS PERHAPS the first time that I was asked to speak from above rather than be part of the evidence at an organ of the international civil society. Just as, for the budget of my schools in rural India, I use NGOs that were founded long before the word came into being, so was the Stiftung Dialogik a member of the international civil society long before the phrase came into circulation. I cannot say what I said to them to the international civil society today. The idea of planetarity came to me as I pondered the occasion. Like the subaltern not speaking, planetarity has been altogether misunderstood; as something like community, thinking of the world's resources, or yet, at the extreme, sustainability. Let me ask the reader to work out the difference, to see planetarity as the source of a double bind that will not bind.

I was honored to have been asked to give the first lecture in Stiftung Dialogik's new series on refugees and immigrants. I was aware of the responsibility of being the remote vehicle of the honor and affection bestowed by a philosopher upon the memory of his activist wife. In Hermann Levin Goldschmidt's own words: "together we remember those who were not allowed, as survivors, to bear witness for those who did not, testifying anew, and in many different ways, to a Jewish and Swiss commitment to the world as a whole."¹

I was fortunate enough to deliver this paper in Goldschmidt's presence. I remember our spirited exchange two days later. It was clear to both of us that my remarks were a supplement to his notion of dialogics—freedom of contradiction without synthesis—critical of the comforts of

both dialectics and pluralism.² In this version, I have marked the moments when the supplementary character of my argument breaks upon the text.

I was born during World War II. In the estimation of my generation in India, the War was, to use an obsolete German adjective that Marx often uses, *zwieschlächtig*. The horror of the Holocaust was what made it *European*. It was a *world* war because for us, with our quarter of a million dead fighting for the Allies and the highest number of military honors won by any national group—and subsequently for a number of colonies—the War was a remote instrument for the end of specifically territorial imperialism. Goldschmidt begins our era with the discovery of the *entire* world in the sixteenth century. The end of World War II made it possible for that entire world to become “nothing but neighbors.” Goldschmidt gave me his *Frage des Mitmenschen und des Mitvolkes: 1951–1992* two days after the lecture.³ There the interpretation of “love thy neighbor” as dialogics is unfolded. I come from a generation for whom the obligation, de-theologized, could also be located on the other side. As I said to Goldschmidt on that occasion, and we both smiled: “I do not speak to you from within your community.” I contradict, then, freely.

Any narrativization of the restless limning of a world after the World War goes through many phases, large and small. Negotiated Independences redefined themselves as neocolonialism from the West. Failure of decolonization at home and large-scale Eurocentric economic migration began to fix the new world’s demographic outlines. With the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent events in Eastern and Central Europe, these outlines have become altogether unstable. This is the moment when I was asked to speak to the Stiftung. Today the world has moved on.

I spoke as a person from the very first waves of postcolonial migration, a *Mitmensch* who is not a *Mitvolk*.⁴ If anything I said should seem unpalatable to the audience, I asked them to put it down to the seriousness of my intent. Freedom, again, to contradict.

I came to the United States in 1961, when the virtualized demographic frontiers of the modern world were not yet set (I have spoken of this phenomenon in Chapter 14, “Resident Alien”). A bit of anachronistic nationalism clings to me still. I retain an Indian passport and remain no more than a permanent resident in the United States. However common this may be among European nationals, Asians and Africans emigrate to gain metropolitan citizenship. My small group, however, is in both worlds, deeply, without being quite of them. I believe that slight anomaly gives us a certain distance, which may be valuable. I am still working at the immediately postcolonial mandate of neighborliness rather than sub-

jection. In that belief, I could, then, speak in a somewhat utopian strain, although already aware of the dystopia around the corner which we inhabit now. You will judge.

“Migration Studies” was then just beginning as an academic subdiscipline. At its most theoretical edges we didn’t often stop to think of the difference between the cultural requirements of migration and allocthonic demographic patterns in the United States and in Europe, respectively. Yet it is precisely those differences that should have occupied us.

When we theoreticians of migrant hybridity allow ourselves to be concerned about the differences between the United States and Europe, we are of course and immediately aware that Europe is a conglomerate of relatively small units, each determined by its own colonial past. Here Switzerland, especially Zurich, with its history of republicanism, economic anonymity, and commitment to social welfare, itself stands as an anomaly. Statistical patterns of national origin among recent migrants to Switzerland do not reflect a colonial past. In order of volume, a recent count would give us, in 1997: Afghanistan, Bosnia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, Iraq, Croatia, Tadjhikistan, Burundi; the relative volume of guest workers would give us Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey. Switzerland has had a liberal, multicultural policy, however confined to “Europe,” and is engaged in seeking new ways to make the policy sustainable. But, as one Swiss Political Scientist points out,

to integrate foreigners in the same way as the native minority groups of the past will be much more difficult for Swiss society. . . . On the other hand Switzerland already has the highest proportion of foreigners of all European countries except Luxembourg, and integration of new immigrant groups could turn out to be a continuation of the successful historical experiment.⁵

It is in this context that I am proposing the planet.

I want simply to refer now to the role of a European nation-state in governmental and non-governmental international aid, a question not often asked in the offices and agencies concerned with migrancy or multiculturalism. Unofficially, however, certain connections seem obvious to both. Donor agencies that support aid to the South through a nationalist logic of self-interest regularly caution that, unless the South is built up, the waves of underclass immigration from the so-called least developed countries will overflow into Northern civic life. That the so-called green revolution—high-yield agricultural aid—prevented a “red revolution” is a commonplace of the development lobby. Any serious consideration of equitable immigration laws and multicultural legislation would have to elaborate these connections between the national and the international in

new ways. Of course it is practical that every government document should begin with “Rules of Exclusion” and “return-oriented training.” Yet it may be apposite to think how much we are involved in the constitution of the space to which the refugees return. I have neither the familiarity nor the experience to undertake this in the Swiss case. I would enter this often virtual yet altogether clear, electronic yet human, network through interpretative strategies toward the minutiae of such well-known institutions as the Berne Declaration and the Novartis Foundation. And no New Yorker can forget that Switzerland is the other home of the United Nations.

It is in this context too, then, of the global face of the European nation and the inter-national divide, that I hear the imperative to re-imagine the planet.

In that era, then, of a breakneck globalization catching up speed, I proposed the planet to overwrite the globe. Globalization is achieved by the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere. It is not too fanciful to say that, in the gridwork of electronic capital, we achieve something that resembles that abstract ball covered in latitudes and longitudes, cut by virtual lines, once the equator and the tropics, now drawn increasingly by other requirements—imperatives?—of Geographical Information Systems. The globe is on our computers. It is the logo of the World Bank. No one lives there; and we think that we can aim to control globality. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, indeed are it. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe. I cannot say “on the other hand.” It will not engage in a double bind.

(I hasten to add that I am not writing to endorse any and every use of the word “planet.” I am writing, rather, for a position that has this particular (non)relationship to the global, as I explain below: a position whose defining other is the outer as such, that cannot serve as other, dis-locating a position that only seeks to control by digital quantification. The place where the buck of the double bind stops as the bind on all double binds. Toward the end of his life, Derrida grappled with the *animot* this way.)

In order to think the migrant as well as the recipient of foreign aid, we must think the other. To think the other, as everyone knows, is one meaning of being human. To be human is to be intended toward the other. If to be human is also to be an occasional and discontinuous animator of what we call timing and spacing, like and unlike all living creatures, we provide for ourselves transcendental figurations of what we think is the origin of this animating gift of animation, if there is any: Mother, Nation, God, Nature. These are names of alterity, some more radical than others.

Planet-thought opens up to embrace an inexhaustible taxonomy of such names including but not identical with animism as well as the spectral white mythology of post-rational science. If we imagine ourselves as planetary accidents rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities, alterity remains underived from us, it is not our dialectical negation, it contains us as much as it flings us away—and thus to think of it is already to transgress, for, in spite of our forays into what we metaphorize, differently, as outer and inner space, what is above and beyond our own reach is not continuous with us as it is not, indeed, specifically discontinuous. My efforts for the last decade tell me that, if we ask the kinds of questions you are asking, seriously, we must persistently educate ourselves into this peculiar mind-set. This is where I join hands with Goldschmidt. It is only then that we will be able to think the migrant as well as the recipient of foreign aid in the species of alterity, not simply as the white person's burden:

Take up the White Man's burden—
 The savage wars of peace—
 Fill full the mouth of Famine
 And bid the sickness cease;
 And when your goal is nearest
 The end for others sought,
 Watch sloth and heathen Folly
 Bring all your hope to nought⁶

This—foreign aid and metropolitan migration—is the specific contradiction that I offer to the dialogic sensibility. It is interesting that *Die Frage des Mitmenschen* closes with the other Kipling poem: “Oh, East is East, and West is West, / And never the twain shall meet.” The problem now is that, in globalization, with the disappearance of “East” and “West,” North and South do meet.

Let me then modify my title: I speak of an imperative to re-imagine the subject as planetary accident.

The problem with thinking the migrant separately from the issue of international aid has been a narrowly dialectical vision of the other. Indeed, the word “recognition” in the title of one of the most influential books in this area puts us in mind of the Master-Slave dialectic: *Multiculturalism and “The Politics of Recognition.”* I am speaking of course of the work by the eminent Hegelian Charles Taylor.

Taylor's excellent book defines an impossible unitary multicultural subject in terms of the politico-intellectual history of Northwestern Europe:

To see what is new here, we have to see the analogy to earlier moral views. . . . This fact is part of the massive subjective turn of modern culture, a new form of inwardness, in which *we* come to think of *ourselves* as beings with inner depths. . . . This is the powerful moral ideal that has come down to *us*. (pp. 28–30; emphasis added)

On a practical level, this is incorrect. The only way we can bestow a modicum of plausibility upon such conclusions is by assuming the heritage of the imperialist adventures of Northwestern Europe as having completely obliterated politico-intellectual culture in its former subjects. By this assumption, what is left as simple “culture” for these subjects, who now want to be metropolitan citizens, is the part of unreason. There is no doubt here at all as to who is nominally the Master, however beleaguered. And, true to form, the Slave countersigns the Master by speaking unreason from below.⁷ The word “culture,” with its claim to a pattern of behavior beyond reason alone, is opposed to the claim of the culture of the European Enlightenment to Reason as such. In its paleonymic—as a name with a history, in other words—and in its idiomatic strength—multiculturalism performs a critique, however inchoate, of the limits of the rational structures of civil society.

Why must both sides be sure that a position of power signifies delicacy of human material, or indeed vice versa? A position of power means a position of power and actions to ensure its stability. Relative procedural honesty is efficient but not necessarily a guarantee of intelligence or independent moral excellence. And, *mutatis mutandis*, the migrant sometimes leaves a known pattern of corruption for an unknown one. Thus, although I speak to you here and now, the planetary mode of intending without guarantees must be urged on both sides. Otherwise, multiculturalist policy reduces itself to allowing unreasonable cultural practices as a sign of freedom, to the institutionalization of the interval between “colonial” and “pre-colonial” time, the negotiation of which ensured survival under imperialism proper. This institutionalization of the spacing of different methods of temporizing is deep-structurally marked in the gap between philosophical and political liberalism in John Rawls’s *Political Liberalism*, which pays no explicit attention to a multicultural society.⁸

Planetary imaginings locate the imperative in a galactic and para-galactic alterity—so to speak!—that cannot be reasoned into the self-interest that extends as far as recognizing the self-consolidating other as the self’s mere negation. It is perhaps this outrageous possibility that makes otherwise reasonable thinkers like Amartya Sen or Nancy Fraser speak of considerations of “capability” in Development strategy or “universal caregiving” as a general model for “post-socialist” society.⁹ How can we

provide adequate justification for giving care, for considering the capacity to help others as a basic human right? How can we inscribe responsibility as a right rather than an obligation? This is a paradox that has troubled intellectuals and philosophers as well as cultural leaders through the ages and is, indeed, one of the problems that most engaged Goldschmidt. He worried the problem tenaciously, drawing upon the Judaeo-Christian heritage. A random sampling within my meager circle of knowledge would yield us Plotinus justifying the ethical as a beautiful resonating: “the Soul must be trained—to the habit of remarking . . . the works of beauty produced not by the labour of the arts but by the virtue of human beings known for their goodness.”¹⁰ It would yield Hinduism offering a right to work but not to its labors—*karmanyebādhikaraste mā phalesu kadācana*¹¹—and Islam in my part of the world, combining right and responsibility in the tremendous concept or figure of *haq*. I have spoken of it in “Translating into English,” Chapter 12 in this book.

Haq is the “para-individual structural responsibility” into which we are born—that is, our true being.¹² Indeed, the word “responsibility” is an approximation here. For this structural positioning can also be approximately translated as birth-right. Whether it is right or responsibility, it is the truth of my being, in a not quite English sense my *haq*.

It is my conviction, although I cannot demonstrate it now, that this robust notion of responsibility is the one practiced by most precapitalist high cultures of the planet. The transcendental figuration of the origin of the imperative—*du sollst*—differs, of course, because it had to accommodate a rationally justifiable teleology. Yet it still retains the remnants of a planetary discourse in its two-worldism. By contrast, Islam, although a religion of the Book and therefore notionally two-world, carries the residuals of a nomadic past that thinks the earth, human habitation in community, as what I am calling a “planet,” planetary, by implication, in practice, if not always by scientific computation. You will indulge me if I say that the “planet” is, here, as perhaps always, a catachresis for inscribing collective responsibility as right. Its alterity, determining experience, is mysterious and discontinuous—an experience of the impossible.

The more ecological practice of living, where the opposition between the human and the natural is made indeterminate, is, of course, the Aboriginal. If we are focusing only on problems of immigration in Switzerland, it has no bearing on our concerns, except insofar as the *Umwelt* is thought by the European. But if we are thinking the planet, it may not be irrelevant to mention that, precisely in the interest of global financialization, the *Encyclopaedia of Life Support Systems*, aided by UNESCO, must now define the Aboriginal as having no concern for the ecobiome!

(I now know that the ecobiome as transformed by centuries of progress bears no resemblance to what the Aboriginal had learned to protect. At the time of my speaking, my experience was misled by the feudalist preservationism of the landowning class and its cohorts.)

Let us return to the episteme or mind-set that persistently undoes the conflict between right and responsibility. Our right or truth *is* to be responsible, in structurally specific ways. (The structure leads to hierarchy, to caste, to bureaucracy, which must be persistently undone.) The imperative comes *in* being-human, not necessarily in conscience, *from* planetary discontinuity. This is historically a precapitalist mind-set. Almost all examples of this that we have today are compromised by the victory of capitalist imperialism and by the conflict between different transcendental figurations of the source of the imperative for responsibility. On the other hand, so-called remedies for the current situation, whose goal still remains sustaining profit maximization, will only exacerbate the predicament that calls forth meetings such as the one I was addressing that evening.

As I have pointed out in Chapter 9 of this book, “What’s Left of Theory?,” the heritage of the public use of reason—shorthand for Enlightenment-model social engineering on the Left as well as the liberal-capitalist center—cannot think responsibility and right together. This contradiction—seen as that between reason and faith—is put beautifully by Goldschmidt: “we must learn to know, it is an enrichment; faith makes humble, it is to be gripped.”¹³

Also in “What’s Left of Theory?,” I have indicated Mahmood Mamdani’s understandable difficulty in thinking “responsibility.” Michel de Certeau speaks with rare understanding of “*collective fragments of memory* [which] constitute, whether consciously or unconsciously, the roots or the ‘fixed points’ by which a collective irreducibility is engraved in individual members” (p. 161). Yet he too, like Mamdani, cannot get beyond the language of “collective *rights*” as “capable of balancing the economy that, in the name of individual rights, exposes the entire social reality to the great universal light of the market and of the administration” (pp. 290–291; emphasis added). On the other side, Lévinas’s *autrui*—a nonspecific, pluralized otherness—is a nonphenomenological abstraction. His *visage*—too quickly translated as visage or face—is mostly a nominal construction from *viser*, to be directed toward, the verb of intentionality. The singular/universal remains a perennial moral dilemma, an ethical conundrum. Granted that this may be the outline of an irreducible experience of the impossible. But how can we loosen the bracket, how contaminate this austere landscape with the unevenness of grouped persons without falling into the abstraction of collective *rights*?

Learning the Aboriginal way of living as custodian of the planet—not part of your problem with immigration—is daily being compromised by the Development lobby's drive to patent not only so-called indigenous knowledge but the very DNA or life-inscription of the autochthone most separated from the cultures of imperialism. Bio-prospecting leads to bio-piracy, leading further to monocultures, leading to the death of biodiversity. Insofar as these rational projects are in the interest of globalization, you are indeed implicated in it, actively as capital, and passively as state.¹⁴ Thus your goal, in spite of all appearances, cannot reduce itself to merely integrating the underclass immigrant into this economic dynamic. Think, therefore, the planet, as the merely imagined proper receiver and transmitter of imperatives.

Some years ago I received the hospitality of an Algerian migrant family in Lyons, France. M. Benmelouka had retired as foreman at the Ciba-Geigy factory after forty years of service there. There was no way I could say that I was on my way to Bangladesh, where I was joined in struggle in a movement against Ciba-Geigy and such companies, for the harm done to women and land through pharmaceutical dumping. The planet became invisible in mere personal goodwill.

Madame Benmelouka died earlier that year. I used to live in her empty tenth-floor apartment in Oran when it was still possible for me to go to Algeria. I remember her in her altogether less roomy apartment in Lyon, initiating me into the mysteries of the home dialysis machine on long loan from a local hospital through the National Health Service, and exclaiming "Vive la France!" even as she had exchanged invectives with a racist white girl at the telephone booth on the street. I cannot think that mixture of gratitude-in-racism as the goal of an enlightened multicultural policy.

In a magnificent passage in the "Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment," Kant speaks of God:

We can thus assume a righteous man [*einen rechtschaffenen Mann annehmen*] . . . who takes himself to be firmly convinced that there is no God. . . . He would merely unselfishly establish, rather, disinterestedly to establish the good to which that holy law directs all his power. But his effort is limited. . . . Deceit, violence, and envy will always surround him, even though he is himself honest, peaceable, and benevolent; and the righteous ones besides himself that he will encounter will, in spite of all their worthiness to be happy, nevertheless be subject by nature . . . just like all the other animals on earth, and will always remain thus until one wide grave devours [*verschlingt*] them all together . . . into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter from which they were drawn. . . . If he would remain attached to the appeal of his moral inner vocation . . . he must assume the existence [*Dasein*] of a moral author of the world, i.e., of God.¹⁵

I quote this passage rather than other, better-known ones because here, in a supplementary section of the Third Critique, Kant is writing with his guard down. Here the source of the imperative is frankly and repeatedly conceptualized as a supplement to Reason. I have argued this at some length in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.¹⁶

The European secularism that took its strength from such moves, resting upon a division not only of Church and State but also upon the separation of public and private, will not stand to support a world devastated by the capitalist adventure. As a corollary to increasing globalization, whatever your national economic convictions, industries and services will privatize. This meaning of “private” is not, of course, identical with what is meant when we speak of the secular separation of the public and the private. However, given that welfare services that do not come under the rubric of corporate philanthropy are increasingly dependent, in this restructured world, upon voluntarism—the imperative for social welfare becomes increasingly “private,” as we privatize.

There can be no doubt that “democracy” in the general sense is an unquestioned good. But there can be no doubt, either, that in our current predicament, confidence in the formal democratic structures of civil society as sanctioning a cultural—public or private—superiority from which to dispense bounty to the migrant cannot find support. In the decolonized world, we have seen—repeatedly—the appropriation of democratic structures—the vote as body count—to move the polity toward theocracy. Elections in the United States would be bathetic in their histrionics if the results were not so consequential. In the global context, precisely because the limits and openings of a particular civil society are never transnational, the transnationalization of global capital requires a post-state class-system. The use of women in the establishment of this system is the universalization of feminism of which the United Nations is increasingly becoming the instrument. In this re-territorialization, the collaborative non-governmental organizations are increasingly being called an “international civil society,” precisely to efface the role of the state. Winston Churchill’s *boutade* about democracy will no longer serve today if the system stands alone. It is necessary today at least to attempt to fill it with an agency other than a private goodwill whose imperatives are at best received from a supplement to reason. This developed postcapitalist structure must once again be filled with the more robust imperative to responsibility which capitalist social productivity was obliged to destroy. And, to repeat, the imperative must be understood and valued (an aesthetic education!) as *defective for capitalism* rather than necessarily *pre-capitalist* on an interested sequential evolutionary model. Capital, being

the abstract as such, has no other path but toward globalization. Human beings are not only abstract, as even rational expectations must admit. Hence an unequally developed world, and hence, as I have argued above, its consolidation through the World Trade Organization. I quote that touchstone passage yet again.

If however wages are reduced to their general basis, i.e. that portion of the product of his labour which goes into the worker's own individual consumption; if this share is freed from its capitalist limit and expanded to the scale of consumption that is both permitted by the existing social productivity . . . and required for the full development of individuality; if surplus labour and surplus product are also reduced, to the degree needed under the given conditions of production, on the one hand to form an insurance and reserve fund, on the other hand for the constant expansion of reproduction in the degree determined by social need; if, finally both (1) the necessary labour and (2) the surplus labour are taken to include the amount of labour that those capable of work must always perform for those members of society not yet capable, or no longer capable of working— . . . then nothing of these forms remains, but simply those bases [*Grundlagen*] of the forms that are communal [*gemeinschaftlich*] to all social modes of production.¹⁷

Acknowledging the tremendous social productivity of capital (rather roughly equivalent to economic growth in Development parlance), Marx wrote this subjunctive formula for the transition from capitalism to socialism, but did not live to specify, if he could have, the magic for its continued exercise. In the event, the planning was as disingenuous internally as it was systematically thwarted externally. The development of the welfare state thrived on the edge of multiparty democracies that prided themselves on a “liberal revolution.” Under globalization, pushed by postcoloniality and a reported “ethnic cleansing” that often denies colonial constitution of history and applies a double standard on the legitimacy of mass destruction, that pride too is crumbling. Western critics like Jean-François Lyotard, seeing pride go in both social justice and economic growth, had diagnosed postmodernism.¹⁸ I say, looking back to the impractical philosopher who had tried to turn economic growth around to social justice, that the subjunctive can move to an imperative only in terms of that responsibility-as-right fixed by a truth-in-alterity collective structure that happened to have been conceptualized as *haq*. This is my supplement to dialogics, from the other side. Use the Enlightenment from below, from a gendered *haq*-laced space, shorthand, this, for the training of the imagination for epistemological performance of a different kind, called an aesthetic education when institutionalized.

I want it to be understood that I am not speaking for Islam. It so happens that I have linguistic access to how the youngest people of the Book institutionalized the practice and thus began its effacement. How ethics separated itself from the law in the history of Islam has been recorded by Fazlur Rahman.¹⁹ And, like most cultural logics institutionalizing responsibility, Islam has historically allowed the woman to take the other's part within it.

I should also mention that I am not speaking for cultural identity either. I was not born a Muslim. Indeed, as a caste Hindu, my identity-claims rest on an obliteration of the Muslim heritage of my national space. I am resolutely against the reduction of the ethics of alterity to a politics of identity, pro or contra, yours, ours, or theirs. What I am offering for our consideration is not historically Muslim, as was not the *Muselmann* in the concentration camp.²⁰ It is rather the lineaments of a social practice of responsibility based on an imperative *grounded* on alterity. As we have already noticed, Abdelkébir Khatibi has claimed that, in Islam, this grounding was writing rather than sacrifice.²¹ I am not competent to investigate such niceties.

I am simply suggesting that, without an education into an epistemic transformation whose most efficient description I happen to find in *haq*, capital—industrial and finance—cannot be persistently checked and turned around to the interest of the social as practically laid out in the Marxian passage, which has not grown old. I am further arguing that this social practice of responsibility based on an imperative imagined as intended from alterity cannot today be related to any named grounding—as in Kant or Islam. This is where educating into the planetary imperative—assuming and thus effacing an absolute and discontinuous alterity comfortable with an inexhaustible diversity of epistemes—takes its place.

I am further suggesting that, rather than honoring the historical happenstance, that the rational machine of capital logic required the destruction of this understanding of the individual, and thus dismiss it as “pre-capitalist,” we might imagine it animating and in-spiriting the abstract structures of democratic guarantees, which are indeed a great good. Speaking in South Africa, I have argued that democratic freedoms—both freedom from and freedom to—can be free as guarantees but can be exercised only when bound. Here also I resonate with Goldschmidt's work, but I cannot locate it in the dialogics of reason with a named faith. I must take another step—the contradiction between planetary *poiesis* (imaginative making) and a named faith with an inherited record. To Switzerland, the European nation-state with the longest history of liberalism—and conscientious about multicultural policy, however restricted—I said

in 1997: bind it to a re-constellated planetary imperative to responsibility, seen as a right precomprehending becoming-human, where the proper name of alterity is not God, in any language. In the United States at least, children's multicultural education divides into two broad areas: education into tradition and education into modernity. The following random example will give a sense of the divide. If I had bothered to update it, I would have been swamped with examples, every day, on every front.

On August 23, 1997, New York 1 News reported approvingly on two children's programs. One, called "Passing On," trained them in Caribbean dance steps. The other, where they got t-shirts, took them to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. This too is children's education: relegating "tradition" to "culture" and a past museumized into a dynamic present being played out on the subject's involvement with the Stock Exchange.

If in the area of cultural practice, multicultural demands circle around religious observance and (usually female) dress code; in the arena of education, multicultural demands, since they are usually emergent from economic migration (even when ostensibly seeking asylum), remain content to accept this divide.

I am asking you to imagine something different, much harder, not a quick fix. Something that you will never hear in discussions of multicultural policy. I am daring to take dialogics to its logical consequence: as a stereotyped example of an earlier-phase postcolonial still "responsible" within a monstrous hybrid "faith" without a Book—though constantly competing for one in "globalatinization"—I suggest that we have something to learn from the underclass immigrants, in the interest of a more just modernity: the remnants of a responsible pragma.²² I am asking if together we can re-invent this pragma to fit, however unevenly, the democratic structures of civil society. I am therefore suggesting that both the dominant and the subordinate must jointly rethink themselves as intended or interpellated by planetary alterity, albeit articulating the task of thinking and doing from different "cultural" angles.²³ What is new here is that the dominant is educated, persistently to attempt, at least, to suspend appropriation in its own interest in order to learn to learn from "below," to learn to *mean* to say—not just deliberately non-hierarchically, as the U.S. formula goes—I need to learn from you what you practice; I need it even if you didn't want to share a bit of my pie; but there's something I want to give you, which will make our shared practice flourish. You don't know, and I didn't know, that civility requires your practice of responsibility as pre-originary right.

(This is still pertinent, but seems completely undoable now, because there are so many pretend ways in action.)

To teach this saying is the support that cultural workers and educators can provide globally. It requires earning a right to win responses from both sides—responsibility once more.

I think the real winners in this transaction will have been women, on both sides. Let this remain a conjecture for the future anterior, to be opened up, again and again.

How is this to be done? Civil policy makers will have to learn some languages, clearly. Thus it involves changes in civil service training as well. The structure of general education will have to change some as well. (It requires a shift in emphasis in education, especially in children's education, where the mind is set in habits.) The real requirement is diversified social tact, persuasion rather than coercion. I am not speaking of an easy or cheap change. But if the exchange is a two-way road, a practical dialogic, as I have proposed above, there can be no question of interfering with the languages of national and international governance, for those control the abstract structures of civil society.

Under imperialism, the colonized often suggested that they had the better spiritual and the colonizer the better material culture. This view has always been dismissed as at best disingenuous, and at worst hypocritical. It has repeatedly been pointed out that this slogan was one way of keeping women backward, as holders of spiritual culture. If structurally planetarized and persistently freed from the accouterments of the cultural markers of migrant national origin on the part of the subordinate, and equally persistently freed from the nationalist prejudices of the dominant, the truth of this perception can be tested.

Otherwise, as it stands today, demands for "cultural" autonomy within a multicultural state is no more than a reaction to xenophobia and the lack of access to untrammelled upward class-mobility, combined with reaction-formation to cover over the guilt at having left the very "culture" that one wishes to conserve. Once upwardly mobile, a counter-modernity is claimed for the entire spectrum by the section that moves up far enough to set cultural definitions.

I have spent a good long time speaking of re-constellating the responsibility-thinking of precapitalist societies into the abstractions of the democratic structures of civil society, to use the planetary—if such a thing can be used!—to control globalization interruptively, to locate the imperative in the indefinite radical alterity of the other space of a planet to deflect the rational imperative of capitalist globalization: to displace dialogics into this set of contradictions. It cannot be denied that I have

been speaking of what may result in persistently critical institutional practice: politico-economic and ideologico-pedagogic accountability. The kind of lesson that I have learned from a more European ethical philosophy would suggest that institutional practice forgets ethical cautions, as follows: Our life is lived as the call of the wholly other, which must necessarily be answered (in its forgetting, of course, assuming there had been a gift in the first place in the subject's unanticipatable insertion into temporality), by a responsibility bound by accountable reason. Ethics as experience of the impossible—therefore incalculable—is lived as the possible calculus that covers the range between self-interest and responsibility that includes the politico-legal. Justice and law, ethics and politics, gift and responsibility are structureless structures because the first item of each pair is neither available nor unavailable. It is in view of justice and ethics as undeconstructible, as experiences of the impossible, that legal and political decisions must be made, empirically scrupulous but philosophically errant. (Even this opposition is not tenable to the last degree.) The calculus of the second item in each pair such as the ones named above is imperative for responsible action, always in view of this peculiarity. These pairs are not interchangeable, but move on an unconcatenated chain of displacements. In each case, the “and” in the pair opens up the task of acknowledging that the copula “and” is a “supplement” covering an indefinite variety of relationships, since the supplement both supplies a lack and adds an excess. When the thinking of this structureless structure turns to multicultural imperatives within a new Europe, it seems not to be able to move outside of thinking Europe as the giver—of hospitality, or neighborly love. It circles and recircles cosmopolitheia. This is, indeed, part of my response to Jean-Luc Nancy. This supremacism won't do any more.²⁴ As we have seen in the “Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment,” alterity becomes a mere supplement as the ethics of alterity changes to a politics of European identity. We must give to it a proper name within a planetary graphic, not within a continental metonymy. If religion is the mobilizable instrument of the subaltern, this will accommodate many subaltern pasts, release it from the dated burden of mere messianicity. We cannot simply feel accountability in terms of border crossings and free frontiers, while the head of the superpower state justifies NATO intervention in the name of an accountability where messianicity becomes indistinguishable from manifest destiny. We must think our individual home as written on the planet as planet, what we learn in school astronomy. In this defracted view of ethics, Space may be the name of alterity, not time, not nation, not mother, not *visage* as intending.

In conclusion, then, I repeat my invitation, sheltered within, but also a codicil to, Goldschmidt's thought. Imagine yourself and them—as both receivers and givers—not in a Master-Slave dialectic, but in a dialogic of accountability. Zurich must remember Geneva—where on a worldwide scale the gifts of the battered poor responsibility-cultures are being chained in Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights, and military peacekeeping is imposing hasty binary explanations upon the heritage of older empires: Bosnia, Rwanda. In the interest of globalization. It is within this framework, thinking the world, not just the nation-state, that I say to all of us: let us imagine anew imperatives that structure all of us, as giver and taker, female and male, planetary human beings.