

AN AESTHETIC  
EDUCATION IN  
THE ERA OF  
GLOBALIZATION

---

Copyright © 2012 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College  
All rights reserved  
Printed in the United States of America

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty.

An aesthetic education in the era of globalization / Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.  
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-674-05183-6 (alk. paper)

1. Aesthetics—Study and teaching—Philosophy.

2. Literature—Study and teaching—Philosophy.

3. Culture and globalization—Philosophy. I. Title.  
BH61.S67 2011

111'.85—dc22 2011013286

## Contents

---

Preface ix

Introduction 1

1. The Burden of English 35
2. Who Claims Alterity? 57
3. How to Read a “Culturally Different” Book 73
4. The Double Bind Starts to Kick In 97
5. Culture: Situating Feminism 119
6. Teaching for the Times 137
7. Acting Bits/Identity Talk 158
8. Supplementing Marxism 182
9. What’s Left of Theory? 191
10. Echo 218
11. Translation as Culture 241
12. Translating into English 256
13. Nationalism and the Imagination 275
14. Resident Alien 301
15. Ethics and Politics in Tagore, Coetzee, and Certain Scenes of Teaching 316
16. Imperative to Re-imagine the Planet 335

17. Reading with Stuart Hall in "Pure" Literary Terms 351
  18. Terror: A Speech after 9/11 372
  19. Harlem 399
  20. Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular 429
  21. World Systems and the Creole 443
  22. The Stakes of a World Literature 455
  23. Rethinking Comparativism 467
  24. Sign and Trace 484
  25. Tracing the Skin of Day 500
- Notes 509  
Acknowledgments 591  
Index 595

## Introduction

---

GLOBALIZATION TAKES PLACE only in capital and data. Everything else is damage control. Information command has ruined knowing and reading. Therefore we don't really know what to do with information.<sup>1</sup> Unanalyzed projects come into existence simply because the information is there. Crowd sourcing takes the place of democracy. Universities become adjuncts to what is called international civil society; the humanities and imaginative social sciences bite the dust. At this point, some of us remind ourselves that the legacy of the European Enlightenment is Doubt. Hope (or lack of hope) and sentimental nationalism (or sentimental postnational globalism) are where much of our world stands now. This book is about productively undoing another legacy of the European Enlightenment—the aesthetic. Productive undoing is a difficult task. It must look carefully at the fault lines of the doing, without accusation, without excuse, with a view to use. That is never far from my thoughts, but I must confess, in this era of the mantra of hope, undoing the Aesthetic that was the cousin of Doubt has made this Introduction less upbeat than the chapters in this book, where, in dark times—hope still seemed a valuable alternative.

The chapters themselves are in praise of learning the double bind—not just learning about it. Given the humanities' need to be supported in the academic world, this consistent praise often led to the conviction that the humanities could somehow learn to resolve double binds by playing them. But the fact that such convictions are shared, on different registers, not only by the humanities, and that the other ways of knowledge management can be made more consistent with the axiomatics of electronic capitalism has shifted the grounds of this conviction.

The most pernicious presupposition today is that globalization has happily happened in every aspect of our lives. Globalization can never happen to the sensory equipment of the experiencing being except insofar as it always was implicit in its vanishing outlines. Only an aesthetic education can continue to prepare us for this, thinking an uneven and only apparently accessible contemporaneity that can no longer be interpreted by such nice polarities as modernity/tradition, colonial/postcolonial.<sup>2</sup> Everything else begins there, in that space that allows us to survive in the singular and the unverifiable, surrounded by the lethal and lugubrious consolations of rational choice. Other kinds of institutional knowledge assume this base implicitly. What is the nature of this aesthetic education? There can be no global formula for it. I, most at home in institutions of tertiary education, give an idea in this book that can be described as sabotaging Schiller.<sup>3</sup>

When knowledge management tries to undo the double bind on these shifting grounds and calls it the practice of sustainability: doing the minimum of something in order to do the maximum of something else, it is a displacement of Schiller's transformation of Kant's critical philosophy, about which more later. Such top-down, balancing-out calculations may also be why Kant calls "mere reason" morally lazy. The world needs an epistemological change that will rearrange desires.<sup>4</sup> Global contemporaneity requires it. This too will be part of our concern in this book.

The humanities version of sustainability, in the early days, was to maximize imaginative training and minimize the mind-numbing uniformization of globalization. (Clues can be found for this in the British Romantic Movement.) As we were trying to achieve this, the increasingly corporatized and ambitious globalist university in the United States supervised the minimalization of the humanities and the social sciences—in order to achieve the maximum of some version of globalization.<sup>5</sup> When these essays were crafted, that tendency had not found its full flowering. Some of us were at the beginning of institution building at two ends of the spectrum, with hope and cautious confidence. Although the Gulf War (1991) and then the war in Iraq (2003–) were happening, the peculiar "end" of the Cold War, a conclusion perhaps too quickly drawn from the implosion of the Soviet Union, seemed something still to work with. Today the conjuncture has moved along—global social movements have fully internationalized into an alliance with feudalism in the North. The humanities and social sciences are peripheral at the top. The only hope for me lies at the subaltern end; and that cannot inform a university press book! The only link here may be work with a certain Gramsci, but that work post-dates these essays. I will refer to it here. It will be the readers' task to scan it between the lines of the book.

In the body of the book, there is also, occasionally, an unexamined conviction in the history-defying originality of the aboriginal. I have since come to realize that it might have come from a "feudal" protection and preservation that were no more than a ruse of primitivist benevolence.

The reconsiderations and realizations that I have here outlined are reflected in this Introduction, and not always in the body of the book. I ask, as usual, for an interactive reader. The Introduction opens with the double bind: learning to live with contradictory instructions. It traces a Kant-Schiller-Marx-de Man trajectory, where the European proper names are metonyms for epochal changes. Toward the end, the Introduction moves on to a place that contradicts the virtue of acquiring the skill of staying the double bind: schizophrenia as figure, reterritorialized and recorded. The Introduction ends with Gramsci's exhortation: instrumentalize the intellectual, in the interest of producing epistemological change, rather than only attending upon the ethical, in subaltern and intellectual alike.<sup>6</sup> I have invoked the world, as an unexamined empirical given, in the interstices of the Introduction.

The most pervasive double bind undoes the individual-collective dichotomy by way of a thinking, of death, that would undo the human-animal dichotomy as well. "The general future of mankind has nothing to offer to individual life, whose only certain future is death."<sup>7</sup> If I had the book to write over again, I would include readings of Tillie Olsen's *Tell Me a Riddle* and Christine Brooke-Rose's *Subscript and Life, End of*.<sup>8</sup> These are novels that dare to stage the ethico-political in general, together with aging and dying, relating without a relationship to textual practice. Is it because of the Baubo-factor—that women past reproduction can cast a cold eye upon reproductive normativity—that these are old women's texts? A post-normative queeredness? Is this why J. M. Coetzee chooses old woman protagonists as trace of the author in *The Age of Iron*, and the Elizabeth Costello texts?<sup>9</sup> Maybe on this register, the literary can still do something. Maybe not.

Please work at this double bind between Introduction and book as you read. I have provided a Preface that charts an intellectual trajectory: Should we credit the pessimism of the intellect of the Pre-Post-face weighted by the conjuncture, or the optimism of the will of the essays? No sustainability here; given the times, who wins loses.

In 1992, asked to give the first T. B. Davie Memorial lecture at the University of Cape Town after the lifting of apartheid, I suggested that we learn to use the European Enlightenment from below.<sup>10</sup> I used the expression "ab-use" because the Latin prefix "ab" says much more than "below." Indicating both "motion away" and "agency, point of origin,"

"supporting," as well as "the duties of slaves," it nicely captures the double bind of the postcolonial and the metropolitan migrant regarding the Enlightenment. We want the public sphere gains and private sphere constraints of the Enlightenment; yet we must also find something relating to "our own history" to counteract the fact that the Enlightenment came, to colonizer and colonized alike, through colonialism, to support a destructive "free trade," and that top-down policy breaches of Enlightenment principles are more rule than exception.<sup>11</sup> This distinguishes our efforts from the best in the modern European attempts to use the European Enlightenment critically, with which we are in sympathy, enough to subvert!<sup>12</sup> But "ab-use" can be a misleading neographism, and come to mean simply "abuse." That should be so far from our intentions that I thought to sacrifice precision and range and simply say "from below." This too rankles, for it assumes that "we," whoever we are, are below the level of the Enlightenment. A double bind, again.<sup>13</sup>

The phrase "double bind" comes from Gregory Bateson's *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, first published in 1972.<sup>14</sup> To begin with, the double bind was a way for him to understand childhood schizophrenia qualitatively. Bateson was, however, aware that "both those whose life is enriched by trans-contextual gifts and those who are impoverished by trans-contextual confusion are alike in one respect: for them there is always or often a 'double take.'" In other words, inhabiting thus the two ends of the spectrum, the double bind could be generalized. At one end, the need for cure; at the other, to recognize the healer. He was also aware of the need for the catachrestic concept-metaphors for which there can be no literal referent. In his essay on "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" he defines "the play of two individuals on a certain occasion"—play and therapy—never distant from what we are calling an aesthetic education—by way of "a set-theoretical diagram." It is when "the mathematical analogy breaks down" that he systematically outlines how the therapist must work at the limits of the double bind of the "abstract" and the "concrete" (EM, pp. 186–187). In the contemporary context, we can call this the double bind of the universalizability of the singular, the double bind at the heart of democracy, for which an aesthetic education can be an epistemological preparation, as we, the teachers of the aesthetic, use material that is historically marked by the region, cohabiting with, resisting, and accommodating what comes from the Enlightenment. Even this requires immense institution-changing initiatives, thwarted by the bureaucratic spirit accepted above and below. And yet, there is "the good teacher," "the good student," on the way to collectivity. Doubt and hope . . .<sup>15</sup>

In his essay Bateson spelled out the training of the imagination in terms of a *mise-en-abyme*, an indefinite series of mutual reflections:

speaking of “dilemma[s] . . . not confined to the contexts of schizophrenia” (EM, p. 258), he distinguishes between “people and . . . robots in the fact of learning . . . from passing on from solution to solution, always selecting another solution which is preferable to that which preceded it” (EM, p. 240). He “enlarge[s] the scope of what is to be included within the concept of learning” by way of “hierarchic series [that] will then consist of message, metameessage, meta-meta message and so on” (EM, pp. 247–248). This “training,” the bulwark of an aesthetic education, habitually fails with religion and nationalism: “Up in the dim region where art, magic, and religion meet and overlap, human beings have evolved the ‘metaphor that is meant,’ the flag which men will die to save, and the sacrament that is felt to be more than ‘an outward and visible sign, given unto us’” (EM, p. 183); it is interesting that Freud mentions the same two items—“Throne and Altar”—in “Fetishism,” as the monitors of fetishistic illogic.<sup>16</sup>

Play training, an aesthetic education, habitually fails with flag and sacrament, throne and altar. Bateson described habit altogether unsentimentally. A practitioner’s line connects him here to the Wordsworth of the *Lyrical Ballads*, interested in undoing the bad epistemo/affective consequences of nascent capitalism, and to Gramsci looking to produce the subaltern intellectual out of “the man [*sic!*] of the masses” in a place and time where clan politics were not unknown.<sup>17</sup> Here is Bateson:

In the field of mental process, we are very familiar with this sort of economics [of trial and error adaptability], and in fact a major and necessary saving is achieved by the familiar process of habit formation. We may, in the first instance, solve a given problem by taking them out of the range of stochastic operation and handing over the solutions to a deeper and less flexible mechanism, which we call “habit.” (EM, p. 257)

The passage above was written in 1959. Ten years later, at a symposium on the double bind, Bateson generalizes habit. Here the practitioner/philosopher’s connection is with the Freud who attempted to go beyond the pleasure principle to a more general “organic compulsion to repeat [that] lie[s] in the phenomena of heredity and the facts of embryology” (SE 18, p. 37). Here, again, is Bateson:

By superposing and interconnecting many feedback loops, we (and all other biological systems) not only solve particular problems but also form habits which we apply to the solution of classes of problems. We act as though a whole class of problems could be solved in terms of assumptions or premises, fewer in number than the members of the class of problems. In other words, we (organisms) learn to learn. . . . [The] rigidity [of habits] follows as a necessary corollary of their status in the hierarchy of adaptation. The very economy of trial and error which is achieved by habit formation is only

possible because habits are comparatively "hard programmed." . . . The economy consists precisely in not re-examining or rediscovering the premises of habit every time the habit is used. We may say that these premises are partly "unconscious", or—if you please—a habit of not examining them is developed. (EM, p. 274)

Kant's Critique of Judgment IX  
 The aesthetic short-circuits the task of shaking up this habit of not examining them, perhaps. I said to begin with that in the earlier stages we could find in British Romanticism our models. But as long as we take the literary as substantive source of good thinking alone, we will fail in the task of the aesthetic education we are proposing: at all cost to enter another's text. Otherwise, we will notice that William Wordsworth's project is deeply class-marked, and that he does not judge habit. He is clear about being superior to others in being a poet, unusually gifted with a too-strong imagination, capable of organizing other people's habits. I will quote at length to show his lack of interest in working with the subaltern, although he certainly acknowledges the power of their "real" language. His chief interest is in changing the taste of the readers of poetry; his confidence in "the poet's" (the trace of the author?) gifts is elaborately expressed in these passages, again even as the (unself-conscious?) power of the "real" language of "men" is recognized:

For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connexion with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified. (LB, p. 126)

[The poet] is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endued with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly

resemble the passions produced by real events, than any thing which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement. . . . (LB, p. 138)

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest Poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him, must, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the Poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself. However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a Poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his situation is altogether slavish and mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him, by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. . . . (LB, pp. 138–139)

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavours occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. (LB, p. 139)

Thus he may be a “man speaking to men.” For him, however, Marx’s third thesis on Feuerbach would have held no appeal: that since the knowledge gap between teacher and taught cannot be circumvented, not to let this develop into a power gap is a constant task that will keep society always in the state of upheaval that is necessary for liberation. (The English translation of upheaval—*Umwälzung*—is usually “revolution” rather than “upheaval,” thus destroying Marx’s important warning: the educators must be educated.)<sup>18</sup> The deeply individualistic theory of the Romantic creative imagination in Wordsworth must remain anti-systemic.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, Gramsci’s entire energies are devoted to producing the subaltern intellectual, by instrumentalizing the “new intellectual”:

The history of industrialization has always been a continuing struggle (which today takes on an even more marked and rigorous [*rigorosa*] form)

against the characteristic of "animality" in man. It has been an uninterrupted, often painful and bloody process of subjugating natural (i.e. animal and primitive) instincts to ever [*sempre*] new, more complex and rigid habits of order, exactitude and precision, making possible the increasingly complex forms of collective life which are the necessary consequence of industrial development. This struggle imposed from outside, and the results to date, though they may have great immediate value, are to a large extent mechanical: the new habits have not yet become "second nature." . . . Up to now all changes in modes of existence and modes of life have taken place through brute coercion. . . . The selection or "education" of men adapted to the new forms of civilization and to the new forms of production and work has taken place by means of incredible acts of brutality which have driven the weak and the non-conformists into the limbo of outcasts or eliminated them altogether.<sup>20</sup>

(It should be mentioned here that Gramsci manifests what all projects of "education" do, a need to establish a distinction from a homogeneous "animality." Derrida has analyzed this at great length in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*.<sup>21</sup> It is a compromise that we cannot escape. We see this in the rhetorical staging of Derrida's essay "University without Conditions."<sup>22</sup>) Gramsci and Bateson, interested in education and therapy, could not be satisfied with habit alone as more than the ground of epistemic change. Indeed, Bateson came to think of therapy itself as a species of double bind: "The difference between the therapeutic bind and the original double bind situation is in part the fact that the therapist is not involved in a life and death struggle himself. He can therefore set up relatively benevolent binds and gradually aid the patient in his emancipation from them" (EM, pp. 226–227). And, since his task is psychological rather than epistemological, he stops at making it very clear that habit does not question. It is Gramsci who insists, at least by implication, that the premises of an argument must indeed be "rediscoverable," "re-examinable," by the man of the masses as he is educated to be a citizen. I take the liberty of quoting myself:

If we want to "change the world," alter-globalism must think of the education of the disenfranchised into disinterest in a double bind with the interest of class struggle: "democracy . . . cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can become skilled," writes Gramsci. "It must mean that every 'citizen' can 'govern' and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this."<sup>23</sup>

In an important comment on Marx, Gramsci distinguishes between the psychological, the moral (our word would perhaps be "ethical"), and the epistemological. Our task is to "ab-use" this, not to excuse its seeming

systemic confidence (belied by much of the hesitation of what Gramsci wrote in prison), nor to accuse it of that very thing, but to see in the addition of the epistemological a way of reading Gramsci with "history in the reading".<sup>24</sup>

The proposition contained in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* to the effect that men acquire consciousness of structural conflicts on the level of ideologies should be considered as an affirmation of epistemological and not simply psychological and moral value. From this, it follows that the theoretical-practical principle of hegemony has also epistemological significance, and it is here that Ilyich [Lenin]'s greatest theoretical contribution to the philosophy of praxis [i.e., Marxism] should be sought. In these terms one could say that Ilyich advanced philosophy as philosophy in so far as he advanced political doctrine and practice. The realization of a hegemonic apparatus, in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain, determines a reform of consciousness and of methods of knowledge: it is a fact of knowledge, a philosophical fact. In Crocean terms: when one succeeds in introducing a new morality in conformity with a new conception of the world, one finishes by introducing the conception as well; in other words, one determines a reform of the whole of philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

The relationship between education and the habit of the ethical is as the relationship without relationship between responsibility and the gift that we must imagine in order to account for responsibility—an unrestricted transcendental deduction, if you like.<sup>26</sup> Training for the habit of the ethical can only be worked at through attending to the systemic task of epistemological engagement. We "learn to learn" (Bateson's more general phrase) how to teach from the historicocultural text within which a certain group of students might be placed. Thus Gramsci invokes

the active relationship which exists between [the intellectual] and the cultural environment he is proposing to modify. The environment reacts back on the philosopher and imposes on him a continual process of self-criticism. It is his "teacher." . . . For the relationship between master and disciple in the general sense referred to above is only realised, where this political condition exists, and only then do we get the "historical" realisation of a new type of philosopher, whom we could call a "democratic philosopher" in the sense that he is a philosopher convinced that his personality is not limited to himself as a physical individual but is an active social relationship of modification of the cultural environment.<sup>27</sup>

An aesthetic education teaches the humanities in such a way that all objects are "contaminated." I have repeated that I have not much hope for this in the current context. Let me at least quote Gramsci's hope:

The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, . . . but in active participation in practical life, . . . superior to the abstract mathematical spirit; from technique-as-work one proceeds to technique-as-science and to the humanistic conception of history, without which one remains “specialised” and does not become “directive” (specialised and political).<sup>28</sup>

I will come later to Gramsci’s “techno-scientific” lesson, “superior to the abstract mathematical spirit.” For now, let us remember that the prison notebooks, being notes to oneself for future work, are necessarily in an open form that requires careful acquaintance with the protocols of the text. I would like to propose that the training of the imagination that can teach the subject to play—an aesthetic education—can also teach it to discover (theoretically or practically) the premises of the habit that obliges us to transcendentalize religion and nation (as Bateson and Freud both point out). If, however, this is only a “rearrangement of desire” or the substitution of one habit for another through pedagogical sleight-of-hand, there will be no ability to recover that discovery for a continuity of epistemological effort. We must learn to do violence to the epistemological difference and remember that this is what education “is,” and thus keep up the work of displacing belief onto the terrain of the imagination, attempt to access the epistemoid. The displacement of belief onto the terrain of the imagination can be a description of reading in its most robust sense. It is also the irreducible element of an aesthetic education. In the context of the beginning of the twenty-first century, to learn to de-transcendentalize religion and (the birth of a) nation into the imaginative sphere is an invaluable gift. But this particular function of reading is important in a general and continuing way as well. Elsewhere I have argued that this type of education, with careful consideration of social context, can be part of education from the elementary level, where it is even more formal rather than substantive. In this book, that argument flashes up here and there, but the general terrain of the book is tertiary and postgraduate education, the reproduction of citizens and teachers. This is where we use the legacy of the Enlightenment, relocate the transcendental from belief, with a view to its double bind, producing a simpler solution: privatize belief, rationalize the transcendent. This particular solution, offered as liberal education as such, suits capitalism better.

We saw briefly how Bateson takes the double bind out of the limited context or narrow sense of a mental “disease.” Indeed, it may have become, for him, a general description of all doing, all thinking as doing, all self-conscious living, upstream from capitalism, a question of degrees. Contradictory instructions come to us at all times. We learn to listen to

them and remain in the game. When and as we decide, we know therefore that we have broken the double bind into a single bind, as it were, and we also know that change will have to be undertaken soon, or, things will change: task or event. Knowing this, the typical emotion that accompanies decisions—ethical, political, legal, intellectual, aesthetic, and indeed decisions of the daily grind—is a spectrum of regret and remorse to at least unease, otherwise self-congratulation followed by denial or bewilderment. This is different from the unexamined hope which animates much globalist and alter-globalist enterprise today, in the United States as in the global elite.

I will think of our relationship to the European Enlightenment and to “ab-use”/“use from below” by the Gramsci-Bateson model as I unfold my argument, always keeping in mind the uneven diachrony of global contemporaneity. This revises the unquestioning emphasis on the legacy of British and German Romanticism or the feudal benevolent primitivism of the global South. Indeed, it also revises the philosophical error of confidence in accessing the ethical reflex directly, rather than insist on an epistemological preparation into the possibility of a relationship without relation: the reflexive re-arrangement of desires, a recruiting of English teachers reaching hearts and minds, against the interests of a maximal capitalism and unmediated cyber literacy as the greatest good. My re-territorialization of Schiller may be an example of this. Remember also that a gendered access to the Enlightenment, which was often a way out of indigenous gendering, is doubled over a double bind, if possible.

Of course, the Enlightenment also had a strong element of control and, epistemologically, it harbored an encyclopedist impulse, which matched the classifying impulse that seems the strongest virtue of classical science. The study of literature can also make uncritical use of this. It is not necessarily a bad thing to do but this is not what globalization needs from an aesthetic education as supplement.

It is well known that literary studies became disciplinarianized concurrently with colonialism. In broad strokes, it may be argued that their construction as an object of discipline and study was also the inauguration of their exhaustion. As they became less and less useful to the self-determination of capital, they began to legitimize themselves by varieties of scientism. Hard-core structuralism and discourse analysis were part of this from the 1940s on down. The present tendency toward quantitative analysis of literature belongs to the same impulse. Literature can, of course, be studied in as many ways as one likes. The purpose of an aesthetic education is not, however, served by protective scientism. All double binds are well settled there under a seemingly scientific control.

Sometimes these scientists of the literary critical scene say that the close readers are emphasizing the “author function.” On the contrary, readers who are reading literature closely to exercise the imagination to play the double bind are, like Bateson, interested in form rather than the author. The death of the (authority of the) author (in establishing contextual correctness as literary criticism) is the birth of the reader (concentrating on the practice of reading)—a good formula from the 1960s that remains useful today, in sparser times. We would use the formula as a double bind, rather than understand it as turf battle.

For the sake of convenience, let us assume that the European Enlightenment can be philosophically metonymized by the Peace of Westphalia and Kant—the integrity of nation-states and the public use of a self-constrained reason. Here is another limit to this study. Other imaginations of the Enlightenment will generate other narratives. I believe my argument can, *mutatis mutandis*, work with them.<sup>29</sup>

The Peace of Westphalia announces the distant possibility of a Euro-partial, nation-state-specific globality which we have learned to acknowledge as European imperialism, as a social formation. Whatever we might call “history” is not a continuous narrative, except by the most sweeping metonymic generalizations. In that mode, we can read the self-conscious gesture of Westphalia also as announcing the symbolic end of an old world, just around the corner, itself metonymizable as a change in the meaning of the word “empire.” Whatever the Holy Roman Empire might have meant had to come to an end in 1795, chronologically over a hundred years later, but the semiotic change is supposed to have been launched with Westphalia, birthplace of Voltaire’s Candide. The Ottoman and Russian imperial formations, “inclusive” in different ways, became increasingly out of joint from this narrative, this mole-like semiotic recoding which accompanied what can be computed as the self-determination of capitalism, equally reductively, of course.<sup>30</sup> In the post-Soviet conjuncture, they become, in their diachrony, today, our warning signals when we generalize. With this expanded self-presentation of the norm, epistemic formations outside were exceptionalized, and anthropologized when “known.” This is coming undone in global contemporaneity, but the dominant presuppositions, including ours, remain the same. (Proposing alternative non-European epistemes is a variant of the old anthropologism.) “Local subjectivities within imperial space [remain] secondary.”<sup>31</sup> In global contemporaneity, thus, one way to “democratize” is to make space for rogue capitalism, taking advantage of the simultaneity of capital/data movement, even if it means military or party/clan violence, carrying with it the aura of the civilizing mission accompanying transformative projects from imperialism to devel-

opment. This aura carries over to the question of minority rights within developed civil societies, where it engages postcolonial radicalism of a more political sort, whereas "majority" and "minority" are Euro-U.S. constructs relating to democracy as body count. As Marx pointed out, capital is reduction. The change in the meaning of "empire" is the opening of the possibility of accessing an "other side of the world," nation by European nation, and paradoxically, the beginning of the dream of cosmopolitanism by a particular class.

When Goethe and Marx wrote about world literature, they presupposed this specifically European access to a world rather than the entire empirical world taken as a source of the literary. Goethe might have caught its aporetic nature by insisting on a "striving" toward it. Scientific socialism saw it as accomplished fact.<sup>32</sup> Kant, when he wrote as public intellectual rather than philosopher, also spoke of a world this way. That is the world that inhabits his thought of a cosmopolithea, a constitution for world governance. We must remember that in these contexts state-formation preceded democratization, one of the crucial factors in overcoming clan through capital.<sup>33</sup>

In order to understand the "world"'s double bind toward the European Enlightenment, let us look again at that prescient document, Kant's bid for cosmopolithea, "Toward a Perpetual Peace," as it emerges as a considered reaction to what may be considered a follow-through from the Peace of Westphalia: the Treaty of Basel (1795).<sup>34</sup> We are looking at a source-narrative of "European" access to a "world." Kant's understanding of this in terms of colonialism seems at first exemplary. Yet the rest of the argument also seems exemplary, for us in a less interesting way. Admittedly with irony, Kant sees capital (he calls it "money," but his argument is unmistakable) as the great equalizer, and proposes an implicitly master countries' world governance—since no other method of establishing equality is proposed—predicated upon a containment as well as a permission to warfare. Kant's prohibition of something like the U.S. intervention in Iraq, which commenced in the late twentieth century and continued into the twenty-first ("No state shall forcibly interfere in the constitution and government of another state") is uncanny; yet the following is also allowed:

The spirit of commerce [*Handelsgenst*] sooner or later takes hold of every people, and it cannot exist side by side with war. And of all the powers (or means) at the disposal of the power of the states, financial power [*Geldmacht*] can probably be relied on most. Thus states find themselves compelled to promote the noble cause of peace, though not exactly from the mainspring [*Triebfeder*] of morality. . . . In this way, nature guarantees perpetual peace by the actual mechanism of human inclinations. (PP, p. 114)

An early statement of MacDonaldist globalization as human nature as nature's cooperation with mercantile capitalism; the connection is mechanical—the talk is of an inappropriate mainspring.

This detail, easily missed, the irony of the opening passage of the work, and the philosophical sharpness of a closing injunction point toward the urgency of our task of ab-use (not abuse). The text signals its undoing and re-location, if we attend.

The opening passage, a “literary” invocation of a pub-sign, suggests that the only perpetual peace—“eternal peace” (*der ewige Friede*) would be more idiomatic—is that of death. In the closing invocation the sentence that I have in mind is “The deceit [*Hinterlist*] of a shady [*lichtscheu*]”—Kant’s wording is stronger than most English translations—“politics [*Politik*] could however easily be thwarted [*vereitelt*] through the publicization of philosophy’s maxims [*von der Philosophie durch die Publicität jener ihrer Maximen*], would it but dare to allow the philosopher to publicize his own maxims” (PP, p. 130).

Let us focus for a moment on the word “maxim”:

I call all subjective grounding propositions [*Grundsätze*] that are found [*hergenommen*] not from the nature [*Beschaffenheit*] of the object [Latin spelling] but from the interest of reason in regard to a specific [*gewiss*] possible perfection of the cognition of the object [Latin spelling], maxims of reason. Thus there are maxims of speculative reason, which rest unsupported [*lediglich*] on reason’s speculative interest, even though it may seem as if they were objective principles [*Principien*].

Before I continue with the quotation, I would like to comment on the translation modifications that I have made in it. Normally, this would be part of a “Translator’s Note.” I bring it up in the text because the difficulty of translating the nuances of Kant’s sustained practice allows a common reader, like me, or the reader of a literary-critical book, like this one, to miss the sustained private grammar of values. And, of course, a general assumption of continuous translatability is waylaid by the diachronic heterogeneity of our globe that I persistently invoke. For example, Kant has a sustained practice of distinguishing between *Grundsätze* and *Principien*. The former belongs within the outline of philosophizing as truth within what I call an “intended mistake.” They are the propositions that ground philosophizing. The latter is part of the objective world of pure reason as it is transcendently deduced by the philosopher, without the ability to produce evidence. Indeed, whenever Kant uses Latin spelling—as in the case of the two uses of the word “Object” as *Objekt* rather than *Gegenstand* in our passage—Kant makes this distinction. In

most English translations *Grundsätze* and *Principien* are both translated “principles.” This effaces the distinction between the philosopher philosophizing by programmed “intended mistake” and the philosopher bringing philosophy to crisis by transcendently deducing the characteristics of the ideas of pure reason, the crucial difference that a reader like Schiller must ignore as he changes aporias to reversible chiasmuses. I have also changed “taken” to “found,” because the notion of something already laid down or programmed for the philosophizing subject, available in the German deep background in *hergenommen*, is made more active if “taken” is kept. I want to insist that none of the English words in the excellent Cambridge translation is “wrong.” It is just that they seem here, surprisingly, not to have practiced the literalism that sympathy with Kant’s private grammar would have produced. I have written about this in “Translating into English” (Chapter 12 in this book). To continue with my comments on translation modification, let me point at “unsupported” for the *lediglich*. “Solely” is more idiomatic. But the idea of uncoupled as in a single person that *lediglich* carries is I think lost if we read nothing but “solely.” This way we can see that maxims like *Grundsätze* are subjective and principles as *Principien* are objective and the former cannot be taken objectively, although, and this is important, they might seem objective. Are we beginning to get a sense of what advice Kant is giving to the politicians? To understand that what they work with is interested rather than rational? In the protocol of Kant’s philosophical texts, some words relate to the programmed exigencies of the philosophizing reason and, mutatis mutandis, mere reason; others to the description of the functioning of pure reason. The former group is more often than not German and more colloquial; the latter Latin and more formal. Thus it is with *Grundsatz* and *Princip*. To translate both “principle” is to lose an important and continuing nuance.

Let us continue reading Kant:

If merely [this carries with it the place of “mere” reason within Kantian architectonics] regulative grounding propositions [*Grundsätze*] are considered as constitutive, then [as objective principles [*Principien*] they can be in conflict, but if one considers them merely [emphasis added] as maxims, then it is not a true conflict, but it is merely/a different interest of reason that gives rise to [*verursacht*] a divorce [the metaphor of a marriage programmed to come undone is already available in *lediglich*] between ways of thinking.] Reason has only a single united [*einig*] interest, and the conflict between its maxims is only a variation and a reciprocal limitation of the methods attempting to be sufficient to this interest [*ein Genüge zu tun*].<sup>35</sup>

Without a theory of Reason as such, Kant’s assertion of a single united rest of Reason can itself be (or not be) read as within the programmed

"intended mistake." An unavoidable double bind, which Schiller must avoid, or turn into a series of balances ending in play.

A "maxim," then, is something the philosopher devises in order to come to terms with the transcendental gap at the origin of philosophy. The conduct of the politician, at best "rational" in an altogether narrow sense, cannot be aware of this self-framing cautionary and pre-cautionary gap.

I should like to think that this framing of "Toward a Perpetual Peace" is the space in Kant where we can turn the text around into a permission not to excuse or accuse, but to use (ab-use), take the anaesthetized Enlightenment as self-deluded, a ruse for dupes, a place for excuses. The aesthetic might enlighten to crisis. One can hope that an education through the aesthetic can protect the rational choice of the political by understanding it as produced by the philosophers' methodological need for maxims rather than the unquestioned conviction of the supremacy of reason. Hope. Wish. No guarantees. A responsible buttressing of the possibility of the political in view of the tremendous uncertainties of the ethical.

This was Kant's effort to bring Plato's book on constitutions up to date. After all, Plato only knew a city-state. Kant had the world. Greek and Enlightenment colonialisms self-represented differently—an epistemic difference. Derrida points at the contradiction between a "borderless" world and Kant's demand for an unconditioned policing of the truth.<sup>36</sup>

This formulation of cosmopolithea troubles us because it seems allied to imperialism contemplating the world in its grasp. On the other hand, we want to rewrite it to suit us, from the toughest definition of politics to the most mysterious confines of literary theory. And not all of us can perform the translation into a thinking of a just world. Can class and gender struggle, so exploited by the benevolent harbingers of capital and clan, be sustained, can vanguardism be persistently supplemented by a (preparation for) mature aesthetic education in the tertiary and post-tertiary, so that it informs the general culture of the citizen?

It is with such questions in mind that we always remind ourselves of Kant writing specifically as a philosopher. And, in the management of the transcendental from belief to philosophizing reason (a faculty never named by Kant, but one of the driving subjects of *The Critique of Pure Reason* that can be accommodated within my broad and vulgar "definition" of the imagination, "thinking absent things," hardly distinguishable from thinking—not to be confused with Kant's tightly housed *Einbildungskraft*)—by way of the transcendental deduction, Kant is our master.<sup>37</sup> In "Terror" (Chapter 18 in this book) I have commented on how he turns grace itself, metaleptically, into an "effect," which, when successfully incorporated into thought (imagined?) can allow us to overcome the

moral laziness of mere reason. I have welcomed this last (non)faculty within my vulgar definition of the imagination. In the same spirit of vulgarization, let me point out that Kant calls the filling of the dialectic that results from the transcendental deduction "an illusion." We could think that the Hegelian Eurocentric teleology, filling philosophy with history, is pre-empted here. The content is irreducibly absent in Kant's thinking of the transcendental dialectic, and hence my feeling, that "the ability to think absent things" is not too far away.

As a philosopher, Kant wrote in a fractured voice, unacknowledged by him, of course, but that is another story. Writing about the "world" in the context of the practical function of pure reason, for example, he wrote as follows:

Its execution is always bounded and defective, but within bounds that cannot be determined, hence always under the influence of the concept of an absolute [*absolut*] completeness. . . . In it [the practical idea] pure reason even has the causality actually to bring forth . . . the idea of a necessary unity of all possible ends, it must serve as the entire original and limiting condition for everything practical. (PR, pp. 402–403)<sup>38</sup>

But when we use practical reason as such we should proceed in the following way:

But where reason itself is considered as the determining cause (in freedom [*in der Freiheit*]), hence in the case of practical principles, we should proceed as if we did not have before us an object of sense but one of pure understanding, . . . and the series of states can be regarded as if it began absolutely [*schlechthin*] (through an intelligible cause). (PR, p. 613)<sup>39</sup>

Writing about pure reason, the "as ifs," not just "world" but "self" as well, are clearly shown to be things needed so both experience and philosophizing can be possible. This is the best of the European Enlightenment, which recognizes the limits of its powers without either theologizing or pathologizing them. Ulysses among the sirens, who tempt with absolute knowledge.<sup>40</sup> When Nietzsche writes: "Truth is the kind of error without which a certain kind of living being could not live. The value for life ultimately decides," the rhetorical power of the word "error" and the clear designation of the decision to something other than the conscious philosophizing mind makes us miss the family resemblance between his statement and Kant's notion that a "world" and a "self" must be assumed in order for the human being to think that he (for Kant) has experience. The "as if" is as much error as truth. Your interest makes you decide which word you will use. And Kant's use of *Anlage*, a word that comes close to programming, carries the idea of an agency outside of the mind

as consciousness. If we can use this “from below” (ab-use, rather), we can have an enlightened practice that is not merely opposition.

Again, a double bind.

Academic and mechanical Marxists are as superstitious about the words “ethical” and “aesthetic” as academic and mechanical feminists used to be of something vaguely understood as “biology.”

I have often spoken of Melanie Klein, establishing biology as the terrain of ethical semiosis. Here let me point out the obvious failure of any Marxism to produce the impulse to redistribute without state control and enforcement. The breakdown of the first wave of Marxist experimentation through the seduction of capitalism for leaders and people alike may have something to do with the absence of the ethical aspects of communism in the epistemological project of popular education. If ethics and aesthetics are defined as devoid of and even as opposed to the political, which is confined to a certain state-formation and structure and a certain management of the economic, we can hope for a short or enforced life for the communist system. The fact that the relationship between a globalized socialist system, an unconditional ethics, and an open aesthetics is at best a double bind does not remove the problem. A quantified literary criticism is little more than a parlor game compared to the seriousness of the situation. These considerations lead to the epistemological projects that we call “education.” Otherwise, we would be obliged to give a wider scope to what George Caffentzis notes in the context of the Peak Oil Complex: “At first glance, [it] . . . could transform the modality of the [anticapitalist] movement’s slogan, ‘Another World is Possible,’ to ‘Another World is Necessary for there to be a World,’ but he is finally obliged to say: ‘For the most part, it is a politics of alternative energy without an alternative society.’”<sup>41</sup>

Current cosmopolitan double binds come clearer if we put Kant’s philosophical writings in relation with his political writings. As mentioned above, Kant never defined the subject of philosophy, philosophizing reason, merely brilliantly tabulating the not incontrovertible facts that establish experience as necessary. This is the most spectacular scene of the double bind. Our own more quotidian general tendency is to deny the double bind, even if we are adroitly managing it in practice by short-term single-binding, persistently hedged. The denial can take the form of emphasizing a single pole of the swing of the double bind as the correct solution. Eurocentric visions of rational choice or state—from Rawls to Kavka—are simply too many to mention—with Human Rights and alter-globalization on the way. Or it can suggest balance as a possible solution. (Our most persuasive current balancing act, as I mentioned in the beginning, is “sustainability.”)

In *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Friedrich Schiller tried to undo the double bind of mind and body by suggesting the *Spieltrieb*—the “play drive,” art as a balancing act that will save society.<sup>42</sup> It is commonly understood that he is influenced by Kant. I am a bit obsessed with Schiller because he, a non-philosopher, made the kind of mistake which a general reader of philosophy must necessarily make, turn the desire inscribed in philosophy into its fulfillment. He has been chided by Paul de Man for making this mistake about Kant, and also for the equally pervasive one of psychologizing Kant. (One might add that this last is so pervasive a misreading of Kant that an early deconstructive formula can be applied to it: there must be something in the text that allows for such psychologizing; no excuses, although one must mark the places in the texts where the possibility for such “mis”readings arises. Mark also how Kant himself deals with them. This is where Kant’s ultimately mechanical intuition of the functioning subject comes into play. Our task is also “psychologizing” to an extent—repeating Schiller’s mistake and transforming balance to an open series of double binds.)<sup>43</sup>

For our present purposes, we need only note how Kant manages the crisis of the double bind. I have noticed one case in chapter 1 of *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*.<sup>44</sup> In this Introduction, I have been suggesting that the other big one—I must philosophize, man cannot philosophize (understanding cannot access the ideas of pure reason)—is managed by the transcendental deduction. I recite the important passage: “I therefore call the explanation of the way in which concepts can relate to objects a priori their transcendental deduction, and distinguish this from the empirical [evidentiary] deduction” (PR, p. 220). As I have already pointed out, Kant forbids us to fill this gap with content, and calls such moves a “transcendental illusion, which influences ground rules [*Grundsätze*] whose use is not ever meant for experience” (PR, p. 385).

Schiller is unequivocal about resolving the double bind:

All the disputes about the concept of beauty which have ever prevailed in the world of philosophy, and to some extent still prevail today, have no other source than this: either the investigation did not start with a sufficiently strict distinction, or it was not carried through to a pure and complete synthesis. (AE, p. 125)

The drive toward form and the drive toward matter “cancel each other out, and the will maintains perfect freedom between them” (AE, p. 135). “As soon as two opposing fundamental drives are active within him, both lose their compulsion and, in the opposition of two necessities gives way to Freedom” (AE, p. 137). And nowhere is his domestication of Kant more apparent than in the celebrated definition of the aesthetic: “If we

are to call the condition of sensuous determination the physical, and the condition of rational determination with us logical or moral, then we must call this condition of real and active determinability the aesthetic" (AE, p. 141). From here it is no more than a step to an idealized account of education, to which the tough effortfulness of the Gramsci-Bateson model can bear no resemblance:

He must learn to desire more nobly, so that he may not need to will sublimely. This is brought about by means of aesthetic education, which subjects to laws of beauty all those spheres of human behavior in which neither natural laws, nor yet rational laws, are binding upon human caprice, and which, in the form it gives to outer life, already opens up the inner. (AE, p. 169)

Yet here and there, the aporetic intuition of the German nineteenth century does emerge, when, for example, Schiller talks about the effort to make the aesthetic emerge as something "which . . . might . . . serve as a pledge in the sensible world of a morality as yet unseen" (AE, p. 15). But, as the famous 11th Letter shows, he thinks of the Self as undivided, as something which can "annul time," or "subjugate the manifold variety of the World to [its own] unity" (AE, p. 77). The philosophical rigor of the unacknowledged, fractured Kantian subject is not to be found here. This kind of confidence seems altogether sympathetic in the season of unexamined hope that we are attempting to undo. Our social problem seems to be summed up so accurately by Schiller! "The moral possibility is lacking, and a moment so prodigal of opportunity finds a generation unprepared to receive it" (AE, p. 25).

I It may be adduced that Kant and Schiller show us two different ways of living in the double bind. If so, ab-using this enlightenment is to expand the scope of this by an "intended mistake": to bequeath a geography to it. I can claim that the chapters in this book are instances of such mistakes. Schiller did not intend his mistake; he was a Kantian. We are not invested in the value of intention. And yet, as I have insisted for a long time, in the field of agency, the fragile instrument of intention drives us. And therefore, it is on the ground of intended versus unintended mistakes that we can differentiate ourselves from Schiller.

I Indeed, Kant's own text can also be described as an intended mistake, where the intention is the program of reason and the "mistake" is the only correct procedure open to the philosopher. In Kant's world this phrase would not apply. Kant takes care of it through the transcendental deduction. As we have seen, the guarantee chosen against the possibility of "mistake" is not amenable to evidentiality: "no clear legal ground for an entitlement to their use either from experience or from reason" (PR,

p. 220). "Mistake" can only be used as a catachresis here, and the intent is programmed as the mark of reason. As I write, I begin to suggest more and more that the relationship of this style of reading with the Enlightenment is a taxonomy of "mistakes." Kant's intended, but managed; Schiller's unintended; ours intended and acknowledged; and all subject to the general taxonomic rule of future anteriority. By contrast, the style of the Enlightenment is generally recognized to be access to the self-identical, reasonable norm. Can this be historically our role? To make the Enlightenment open to a(n) (ab)-use that makes room for justice, because it takes away the absoluteness of guarantees and secures it from the mordant satire of a *Candide*?

Prabhat Patnaik, the Indian economist, would find a paragraph such as the above incomprehensibly "postmodern," and would be indignant if he were called "mistaken." Yet, when in the field of general education, he invokes Gramsci and writes as follows, he is with us:

What is meant by the "nation building" task of higher education however (I have elsewhere called it, following Antonio Gramsci, the task of creating "organic intellectuals" of the people) is something very different from these suggestions. It is indeed a striving for knowledge, for excellence, but unrestricted by the hegemony of the existing ideas which typically emanate from the advanced countries. These ideas must of course be engaged with, but higher education in developing societies cannot remain a mere clone of what exists in the advanced countries. Developing societies must go beyond the mere imitation of research agendas set by the established centres of learning in the advanced countries in order to take account of the people's needs.<sup>45</sup>

In our own ways, sufficiently different, we are both asking for a displacement of the Europe/non-Europe economy of correctness. I call it a "mistake"; he can call it the right way. It may even be the disciplinary difference between the humanities and the social sciences. It may be the secret of an aesthetic education today.

I will move to de Man by way of Derrida's globalizing last move toward "a New Enlightenment," a deconstruction of the first moves (though he never gave up on what I have called the constraints of the Enlightenment, a polytroping Mediterranean Ulysses calling up the siren song of deconstruction without giving fully in) that curb universalization (no "globalization" as academic buzz word in 1968!) by means of the trace. I think there is a difference between Derrida's New Enlightenment and the ab-use I am proposing. Yet I feel that in order for the reader to judge, I must draw her attention to those pages in *Rogues*.<sup>46</sup> Those pages continue the insistence on the Enlightenment throughout Derrida's writings, now, perhaps from a "different" intention contained within the program of deconstruction.

Early in his career, Derrida seemed to have felt that the thinking of the trace would halt the unintended “transcendentalizing” of Kant’s transcendental deduction—the structuralist transformation of language into a cause without a cause, displaced from an effect without a cause (which already literalizes the figure of metalepsis)—and thus the securing of the definitive predication of “man.” In line with this thinking, I have suggested that an important example of Kant’s account of philosophy within the bounds of reason (there may be no other kind) may retain the marks of the operation of the trace, without any necessary psychological figuration.<sup>47</sup>

Kant put a line through fourteen paragraphs in his own copy of the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason* (PR, pp. 305–311). In the second edition he added two opening paragraphs, but kept the fourteen deleted paragraphs as they were. In my fancy, they are forever “under erasure,” making visible the mechanical (eighteenth-century?) undergirdings of a method to which Kant’s language usually gives a more philosophizing (though not psychologizing) cast.<sup>48</sup> And it is here that Kant seems to admit to the idea that his task as a philosopher is to bring under control something as indecisive as a trace:

Since there is still something that follows, I must necessarily relate it to something else in general that precedes, and on which it follows in accordance with a rule, i.e. necessarily, so that the occurrence, as the conditioned, yields a secure indication of some condition, but it is the latter [the condition] that determines the occurrence. (PR, p. 307)

(We should note that “occurrence” here is *Begebenheit*, with the connotation of a given, rather than *was da geschieht* in the passage quoted in note 48, with the connotation of something taking place, which is also translated “occurrence.”)

Kant is talking about the apprehension of sequence as causality. The philosopher must have the apprehension of an objective sequence, because otherwise the subjective apprehension of sequence would be “entirely undermined” (PR, p. 307). And what is the object that will yield objectivity? By the dry logic of these fourteen paragraphs, Kant gives an altogether impersonal answer: “That in the appearance which contains the condition of th[e] necessary rule of apprehension [that distinguishes it from every other apprehension] is the object” (*Ibid.*). We are looking at the management of the undermining risk of the trace. Later Kant will tell us that the object that will give us real objectivity “cannot be given through any experience” and we must “regard all the concatenation [*Verknüpfung*] of things in the world of sense as if they had their ground in [an entity created by reason functioning rationally]” (PR, p. 611).

If we want to follow this line of thought, this trace, so to speak, we can even suggest that Derrida puts the trace in the place of transcendental deduction. Here is Kant:

To seek an empirical deduction of [space, time, and the concepts of understanding] would be entirely futile work, for what is distinctive in their nature is precisely that they are related to their objects without having borrowed anything from experience for their thinking [*Vorstellung*]. Thus if a deduction of them is necessary, it must always be transcendental. . . . A tracing [*Nachspüren*] of the first strivings [*Bestrebungen*] of our power of cognition to ascend from individual perceptions to general concepts is without doubt of great utility. . . . Yet a deduction of the pure a priori concepts can never be achieved in this way; it does not lie down this path at all, for in regard to their future use, which should be entirely independent of experience, an entirely different birth certificate than that of an engendering [*Abstammung*] from experiences must be produced. (PR, pp. 220–221)

We cannot not notice that the question of securing a better birth certificate (transcendental deduction) than a mere tracing of experiential birth is all too clear. [A fatherly origin, not a motherly engendering.] *up is the good place to make notes*

When in 1968 Derrida wrote “I have attempted to indicate a way out of the closure of this framework via the ‘trace,’” he was ostensibly speaking of Saussure’s espousing of language as causeless effect. “In and of itself, outside its text [*hors texte*], it is not sufficient to operate the necessary transgression,” the paragraph closes.<sup>49</sup> I suggest that “transcendental deduction” can be put in the place of “transgression” and it would make sense. For Kant closes off (“the closure of a framework”) the trace by transcendental deduction.

I therefore think that it is the connection of the “as if” with the suppression of the trace-structure in the interest of the more secure birth certificate of the transcendental deduction, establishing the performative conventions of philosophy, as it were, that makes Derrida write, nearly forty years later, in a section subtitled “The Neutralization of the Event,” that the idea of a “world,” as in “worlding” or “globalization,” is itself one of those architectonic, trace-stopping, event-neutralizing “as ifs” in Kant’s thought.<sup>50</sup>

I am suggesting, then, that the working of the trace resists figuration. I will also suggest that the impulse of the “human” is to turn the trace into sign—upstream from the debate about the figure and its literalization. Derrida mimes his “human all-too-human”-ness by making the final move toward a New Enlightenment, to expand the scope of reason, to “save the honor of reason,” even as, in the posthumously published *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, he frames the human itself in the “animot.”<sup>51</sup>

De Man's own reading of Schiller in *Aesthetic Ideology* specifically mentions that Schiller turns the stalling of philosophy at the transcendental deduction into a chiastic reversibility. This is because Schiller takes Kant's catachrestic use of psychology into a reference to psychological development. With these unintended "mistakes" (Schiller thought he was reading Kant right and even making a practical advance upon him), what emerged was a philosophy of balance.

De Man reads Kant as a philosopher for whom philosophizing was recognized as menaced by philosophizing to the last instance. He reads Schiller as domesticating Kant's critical incisiveness in order to re-valorize what he thought of as the "aesthetic." (Kant's own use of "aesthetic" is altogether more complex, as a sort of ambivalent refuge, beautifully captured in the phrase "truth" [a charming name] which he uses to name the island within which this lake is situated to which the philosopher travels altogether like Ulysses among the sirens [PR, p. 354]. We recall Derrida's revision of the Ulysses position. No handy sailors to wax his ears. Ab-use of the Enlightenment.) I will suggest that in the end de Man finds a way to point at persistent domestication as a way to handle the aporetic. I do of course go even so far as to suggest that for Kant philosophizing is precarious precisely because it too may be a species of domestication programmed by the very nature of the rational being.<sup>52</sup> De Man describes this as Kant's system breaking down under its own critical weight (AE, p. 134). Although de Man acknowledges that the *Spieltrieb* or "play drive" complicates the idea of balance in the interest of education, he faults Schiller for always assuming continuity between language and "man," which Kant's entire system, implicitly, could not presuppose. If Kant's system is always about to break down under its own critical weight, Schiller smoothly moves from polarity to polarity. Today's praise of the humanities must not make this niche-marketing mistake. Kant works with laws, Schiller with drives. (Our earlier comment on words like *Grundsatz* or maxim points at Kant's carefully shoring up philosophy—as "intended mistake" by an understanding grabbing at the intent of the law?—against the evidentiary impregnability of transcendentally deduced laws.) Kant's dynamic sublime stages the limits of the imagination. Schiller rewrites the difference between the mathematical and the dynamic sublime as the theoretical and practical sublime and valorizes his rewriting over what he perceives as Kant's difficulties. As usual, where imagination is a name in Kant for a structural moment with programmed functions in an architectonic of faculties, in Schiller it is a phenomenal human capacity. Therefore their expectations from the imagination are different. Schiller misses the hierarchy where, in Kant, the intellect trumps the imagination, and has an

altogether un-Kantian conception of freedom. (For Kant the invocation of freedom is imbricated in the programmed machinality of practical reason. De Man sums it up by saying: "Schiller appears as the ideology of Kant's critical philosophy."<sup>53</sup>)

In spite of Andrej Warminsky's careful attempt at teasing out de Man's notion of ideology as it was going to be contained in the theoretical conclusion ["Rhetoric/Ideology"] of his projected book *Aesthetics, Rhetoric, Ideology*, I will not here ponder the meaning of this sentence beyond a comment, a question, a displacement, as follows:

The comment: "Ideology" has something to do with idealism here. De Man repeatedly faults Schiller for undoing Kant's critical philosophy by resorting to idealism.

The question: Leaving it to the appropriately delicate and learned critical intelligence to tease out and develop a possible de Manian theory of ideology, can we draw out a rule of thumb here from what already exists—that attention to rhetoric will alert us to the staging of idealism subverting the critical? This attention is ideology critique, and, if we combine this with the post-Althusserian conclusion that ideology allows us to live, it may lead us toward the responsibility of the "intended mistake."<sup>54</sup>

The displacement into such an intended mistake will come at the end of this chapter. We will attempt to shake the Schillerian balance into a double bind, by way of Bateson's treatment of "Play," and we will come to the ab-use of the Enlightenment.)

Here now is the last move of my Introduction. I will move to the contradictory swing of the double bind—and say that this best lesson of European philosophy, not just by chance concurrent with the use of the difference (between needing and making) at the heart of the human by capital, cannot be remembered today: that smart work, saving work, comes, when you know its limits, with an auto-immune knowledge, alas. The Internet remains parasitic upon the human imagination which then sees in it a Faustian promise. It seems wonderful from our left perch when ecologists today can summon the whole world in the interest of biodiversity, fighting monocultures. Capitalism appropriates the organic world, but it's a fair fight, perhaps? When the metaphor of the monocultures of the mind is given its full potential upon the terrain of linguistic diversity, we see the situation break down. There is no adequate analogical fit between the mind and the sense-perceptible world. The natural or sense-perceptible world needs the help of capital-use—its uniformity—to access minds. Minds, in order to become amenable to the appropriately social use of capital, and therefore the ethical use of the earth, need to grow

away from the universalization of capital—and court singularity, of texture—so that the structures can keep working efficiently.

Linguistic diversity can only curb the global. *Death of a Discipline* was too hopeful a book.<sup>55</sup> In the ferocious thrust to be “global,” the humanities and the qualitative social sciences, “comparative” at their best, are no longer a moving epistemological force. They will increasingly be like the opera, serving a peripheral function in society. As to whether they will draw as much corporate funding as opera—whose glamour the curricular humanities and social sciences cannot hope to match—remains to be seen. Already it is the relatively glamorous think tanks and monolingual “interdisciplinarity” (read shrinking diversity and Americanized monoculture) that are gaining funding. U.S. “core curricula”—minimally “politically correct” by including “multicultural” classics—again in English translation—are traveling internationally. (It is ironic that China—with its bi-millennial tradition of imperial civil service core curricula—is a top candidate on this list.)

In this climate a plea for aesthetic education can hope for no more than a coterie audience—opera goers masquerading as “popular culturalists,” hoping for an impossible just world with the desperate outreach through the rhetoric of “to come”—a recognition of the aporetic, of the double bind. Muscular Marxists are giving way to the corporate-funded feudalism of the digitally confident alterglobalists. Deep language learning and unconditional ethics are so out of joint with this immensely powerful brave new world-machine that people of our sort make this plea because we cannot do otherwise, because our shared obsession declares that some hope of bringing about the epistemological revolution needed to turn capital around to gendered social justice must still be kept alive against all hope. The essays in this book were mostly written before these latest developments, the contradictory swing of the double bind. Treating this Introduction as a postface as well, then, let me, in conclusion, schematize:

Kant gave us headwork as limit-knowing “intended mistake.” Strong enough to undermine the unquestioning and impersonal, seemingly rational confidence of the social productivity of capital but irrelevant to the irreducible personal self-interest that accompanies the rational confidence in productivity. It is therefore not surprising that, as we pointed out above, Kant himself has confidence in commerce as bringing peace—without commenting on the inadequacy of the absence of violence in the interest of commerce as the ethical marker of a just society. Marx’s mistake was to think that the workers’ self-interest would decline if the secret of social productivity were revealed. Some had thought that the solution lay in ethical instruction. It was Gramsci’s genius to understand that the point

was to deconstruct Marx by inserting the lever in Thesis 3 and epistemologizing the project: instrumentalizing the new intellectual to produce a "revolutionary" subject as proletario-subaltern intellectual, so far invariably lost in the vanguardism of the immediate aftermath of revolutions. A disinterested episteme can allow and withstand the interruption of the ethical. Study humanism, said Gramsci, in somewhat the same spirit as some of us say deep language learning and literary textuality train the ethical reflex.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Schiller had neutralized Kant's courage by changing grounding error to reversibility. All "in-between" solutions make this move. Paul de Man notices that the *Spieltrieb*, being part of human programming, is, however remotely, related to Kant's "can't help philosophizing" scenario. This is where the lever can be inserted to deconstruct Schiller from reversibility into double bind. Indeed, Kant's philosophizing as "intended mistake," where intention is a drive, can also be read as the scenario of a double bind—between philosophy as truth and lie, psychology as figure or letter. ("Nothing but a figure," says de Man. "Nothing but," legitimization by reversal—a double bind.)

All this adds little to the opening of this Introduction. Let us push the argument forward by pulling up another item from that opening: that Schiller's *Spieltrieb* has something in common with Bateson's "play." It protects the subject from double bind as schizophrenia. The conclusion of this Introduction has taken us from the upbeat postcolonial task of abusing the European Enlightenment to the bleak landscape of the contemporary Euro-U.S. academy, turning out "the scholar," the *Gelehrte*, the felicitous subject of the Enlightenment, as an epistemologically challenged market analyst. The Enlightenment is sick at home. It is time to recode and reterritorialize a message from the 1970s, a time when globalization in its contemporary form was starting to get moving. The Euro-U.S. subject must court schizophrenia as figure.<sup>56</sup> In our dwindling isolation cells, we must plumb the forgotten and mandatorily ignored bi-polarity of the social productivity and the social destructiveness of capital and capitalism by affecting the world's subalterns, in places where s/he speaks, unheard, by way of deep language learning, qualitative social sciences, philosophizing into unconditional ethics. Behind every "ethical" use of the Internet is "good" education—familial, cultural, institutional—in our sense "aesthetic." Without this pre-set good education—immigrant literatures and movements as the end, Sino-Arabo-Indic civilizational golden-ageism as alternative, dreams of digital democracy, the feudalism without feudalism of world social fora—are all self-serving dead ends. The fear of this bi-polarity produces two apparently opposed current tendencies: the praise

of Empire and alter-globalization, sharing some common sympathies.<sup>57</sup> If, instead of each identitarian group remaining in its own enclave, some of us engage in ab-using the enabling violation of our colonial past to converse with each other, we may be able not only to turn globalization around, but also to supplement the necessary uniformization of globalization with linguistic diversity. But such hope is out of joint; better doubt.

With teaching: an aesthetic education; hope against hope, the idiom of the classroom. Scholars such as Lynn Hunt and Martha Nussbaum are certain that the humanities will bring enlightenment. "You could make the argument—well, I could anyway—" Charles Isherwood writes,

that some of the havoc caused by the subprime mortgage crisis [of 2008] can be traced to a collective amnesia on the part of the powers that be about the essence of human nature. At one point Alan Greenspan argued that it was not the lack of regulation that caused the firestorm; it was an excess of greed on Wall Street. He didn't see that coming? This apparent ignorance of our baser nature among top-tier economists should be quickly cured, lest more problems be caused. I hereby recommend for them a crash course in what men and women are, and what they will do to survive and prosper when the restraints of civilization fall away. I prescribe an evening in the hair-raising company of "Blasted."<sup>58</sup>

You have to be taught to (want to/how to) read "Blasted" so that you feel what Charles Isherwood, or Martha Nussbaum, or yet Lynn Hunt feels. Or else you may simply want to invest in the piece: a variety of greed. Schiller was indeed wrong in his understanding of Kant. But who is exactly right? Schiller's problem was not that he was wrong, but that he did not run with his version of his wrong, as did Kant, as did Nietzsche, as did Derrida, in different ways. All communicated action, including self-communicated action, is destined for errancy. This is so commonsensical a point that it is almost not worth making. Yet it is so hard to make this enter into theory. In order to conserve felicitous cases, we seem to be obliged to ignore destinerrancy.

I would rather suggest that we must know what mistake to make with a specific text and must also know how to defend our mistake as the one that will allow us to live. I assume that the passing of a text into my grasp is a mis-take, of course. As we move toward the subaltern, we can only learn through mistakes, if that remote contingency arrives.

Let us now turn to Gramsci's "techno-scientific" knowledge, "superior to mathematical abstraction." That knowledge and that abstraction may be read as the secret of Marx's message to the worker, required lesson for every leader involved with factory organization, as was Gramsci, and

often missed by readers of Marx involved with party organization alone, or with academic textual debates. It is the “jumping-off point” (*Sprengpunkt*) for the understanding of political economy, the homeopathy or medicine/poison character (*pharmakon*) of labor quantification (“abstract average” in Marx).<sup>59</sup> The point is simple. If the surplus generated by the definitive human difference, between making capacity and need, is used by the workers willing to quantify their work for use in social welfare, we will have scientific socialism. The model of the will and consent is simple here, sharing a simplicity with the agential concept of the vote. “How many votes for the unconscious,” asks Derrida, thus revising both Reich and Nancy into a double bind.<sup>60</sup> The point is that Marx did not situate this agent into a developed theory of the subject. The French Freudo-Marxists of the 1970s told us that Freud was like Marx, and complicated Marx in the process.<sup>61</sup> Perry Anderson complained that because Marx did not theorize the revolutionary subject, post-structuralism could arise.<sup>62</sup> On the other side, the entire alienation-reification camp implicitly supposed that Marx did in fact theorize at least the possibility of a free subject and launched their critique of capitalism as a critique of quantification (abstract average) roughly as dead labor over living.<sup>63</sup> In fact, what Marx did not theorize was the (post/para)revolutionary subject. Why should the agent of the “social” as quantification used for agential freedom of intention from capitalism devote their freed intention to the building of a welfare society, where the “social” is understood, by Marx and Marxists, in a general humanistic sense? (The “socius” of Deleuze and Guattari has psychiatry as its allegory of reading, and sees itself as a different sort of corrective, which, although important, is not relevant here.)<sup>64</sup> Here the play of the word “social”—on the one hand the ferociously original adjectives *gesellschaftlich* or *vergesellschaftet* in the sense of an association based on labor quantified as *pharmakon* and on the other hand the fuzzy noun, at best theorized through a deep background in theories of anthropologists such as Lewis Morgan.<sup>65</sup> The proletarian needs to be taught only the lesson of the first. This is where Gramsci steps in. He realizes that just the abstract mathematical techno-scientific lesson is not enough. The new instrumentalized intellectual must do more. Through his intelligence, experience, and enforced leisure, he comes to realize that Marx was able to think the social as *pharmakon* because he himself understood the social as consensual welfare of the class-diversified collective through his own humanistic education. Hence Gramsci’s insistence that the proletarian (plus the subaltern) needs to be the subject of a humanist education.<sup>66</sup> It is in the interest of this that all implicit support of the “progressive bourgeoisie” (Lenin’s celebrated phrase for the historical

ally of the revolutionary vanguard)—in short the Venn diagrams of hegemony and the state—must be understood as *pharmaka*.<sup>67</sup>

In “Supplementing Marxism” (Chapter 8 in this book), the understanding of the problem of the paleonymy of the social leads to a prescription for the ethical. This related to my confidence in the accessible originality of the aboriginal that I have mentioned in passing. The expansion of my work to a subaltern group of modern India—rather than a feudally “preserved” aboriginal community—has made me realize that my idea that the ethical could be called up simply because it was thought of as “cultural conformism ready for modernization” depended on the fact that my first batch of schools was in a district that is even more “backward,” and the subalterns there had been kept in a cruel “cultural isolation” as if in a museum by the benevolent landlord, who only understood duty toward the subaltern as fighting the party and the feudal culturalist writer whose work I have translated. In other words, the seemingly untarnished presence of a salvageable ethical sediment was the result of systematic subordination under benevolent despotism which I had not understood until those particular schools were closed because some boys were beginning to question authority in however unsystematic a way even as the girls were robotized. Gramsci was right in thinking the project epistemological. One must attend upon the interruption of the ethical. It cannot be part of a plan directly.

I said above that on the register of the Baubo, perhaps the literary can still do something. Or perhaps not. Let me end with gender, then, since reproductive heteronormativity is the world thing with which we secure the space between making and need, long before the emergence of capital from that fault. It is a space of neither reason nor unreason, altogether irreducible. Recall Oedipus’s lament: “O marriages, marriages, you put us in nature, and putting us back again, reversed the seed, and indexed fathers, brothers, children, kin-blood mingled, brides, women, mothers, a shameful thing to know among the works of man.”<sup>68</sup> If only we had been animals, without the abstraction of kinship inscription as a secondary revision, there would have been no sin.

Gender is our first instrument of abstraction.

If I give you a tiny working definition of culture—which “Culture: Situating Feminism” (Chapter 5 in this book) spells out—you will get a sense of this. Let us think culture as a package of largely unacknowledged assumptions, loosely held by a loosely outlined group of people, mapping negotiations between the sacred and the profane, and the relationship between the sexes. To theorize in the abstract, we need a difference. However we philosophize sensible and intelligible, abstract and

concrete, etc., the first difference we perceive materially is sexual difference. It becomes our tool for abstraction, in many forms and shapes. On the level of the loosely held assumptions and presuppositions that English-speaking peoples have been calling "culture" for two hundred years, change is incessant. But, as they change, these unwitting *pre-suppositions* become belief systems, organized suppositions. Rituals coalesce to match, support, and advance beliefs and suppositions. But these presuppositions also give us the wherewithal to change our world, to innovate and create. Most people believe, even (or perhaps particularly) when they are being cultural relativists, that creation and innovation are their own cultural secret, whereas "others" are only determined by their cultures. This habit is unavoidable and computed with the help of sexual difference sustained into something feminists who are speakers of English started calling "gender" in the last forty years. But if we aspire to be citizens of the world, we must not only fight the habit of thinking creation and innovation are our own cultural secret, we must also shake the habit of thinking that our version of computing gender is the world's and simply ignore it unless we are specifically speaking of women and queers.

Thought of as an instrument of abstraction, gender is in fact a position without identity (an insight coming to us via Queer Studies from David Halperin), sexualized in cultural practice.<sup>69</sup> We can therefore never think the abstracting instrumentality of gender fully. With this brief introduction I will go to the conclusion of de Man's "Kant and Schiller" and myself conclude this Introduction.

This is the displacement announced on page 25.

De Man did not meddle with gender. Yet he singles out a passage in Schiller that en-genders the aesthetic and leaves it deadpan. Allow me a longish quotation:

Hypothysis for Kant is . . . a very difficult problem that again threatens philosophical discourse; whereas here [in "On the Necessary Borderlines in the Use of Beautiful Forms"] it is offered by Schiller as a solution. . . . The sensory . . . becomes a metaphor for reason. This extends to humanity, which, it turns out, is not entirely a principle of closure, because humanity is not single—but it has a polarity, it has the polarity of male and female that inhabits it, and this is how Schiller copes with that problem. "The other sex," he says, the female sex, "can and should not share scientific knowledge with man, but by ways of its figural representation, it can share the truth with him. Men tend to sacrifice form to content. But woman cannot tolerate a neglected form, not even in the presence of the richest content. And the entire internal configuration of her being entitles her to make this stern demand. It is true, however, that in this function, she can only acquire the material of truth, and not truth itself. Therefore, the task which Nature

disallows women, the other sex, this task must be doubly undertaken by man if he wishes to be the equal of woman in this important aspect, in this important aspect of his existence. He will therefore transpose as much as possible out of the realm of the abstract, in which he governs and is master, into the realm of the imagination and of sensibility. Taste includes or hides the natural intellectual difference between the two sexes. It nourishes and embellishes the feminine mind with the products of the masculine mind, and allows the beautiful sex to feel what it has not thought, and to enjoy what it has not produced by its labor" (*Werke*, 21: 16–17). That much for women. Schiller's humanism is showing some of its limits here. [At any rate, the theoretical conclusion of this passage would be that just as the sensory becomes without tension a metaphor for reason, in Schiller, women become without oppression a metaphor for man. Because the relation of woman to man is that of the metaphor to what it indicates, or that of the sensory representation to reason.]

In the same way, Schiller's considerations on education lead to a concept of art as the metaphor, as the popularization of philosophy. Philosophy, as you saw, is the domain of men; art is—basically, the beautiful is—the domain of women. The relationship is that of metaphor.<sup>70</sup>

I have no interest in rescuing either Schiller or de Man into good gender politics, whatever that might be. It is not a secret that "feminization" is a putdown. Yet, by itself "feminization" cannot necessarily be a putdown. And the aesthetic, for Schiller, is a powerful thing, fit for princes, which can save the world from itself. It cannot be denied that these peculiar deployments of woman are the moment of transgression which calls for displacement, and my task is to undertake such a displacement.

Suppose we attempt to reverse and displace the ancient binary until "woman" is a position without identity. I say "attempt" because the force of the effort is the force of reading and thinking, since interest determined by sexual difference cannot disappear. Keeping this in mind, I recall our efforts in the early days of academic feminism: to distinguish between male tasks and domestic (female and servant) tasks, as one-time only and repeated because forever necessary, respectively. Something you can footnote as opposed to cooking and cleaning, let us say. Schiller's woman is upper class at first glance. If, however, you look closely at the passage de Man quotes, you will see that the distinction between access to truth and access to figuration is a displacement of the distinction between one-time and repetition that we discussed as historically assigned to male and classed male/female. It is in this sense that one can add the concept-metaphor of female to Baubo to think the place of the aesthetic as useful to shore up a world gone awry by rational choice and the extreme abstract rationality of the electronic, where imagination itself is empiricized into reasonable

programming, even as the imagination as event inevitably escapes. This is how Gramsci's shorthand phrase "humanist history" can be expanded in today's context, and this is how we must instrumentalize ourselves as new intellectuals in the hope of a good world in the aporetic mode of "to come." In a previous book I announced a death, and here I announce a hopelessness, because life and hope are too easily claimed by the camp of mere reason. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to end this Introduction with an impossible "female" task—in Schiller's sense and mine.

Let me end with the invocation of such a task in the conclusion of Jacques Derrida's *Rogues*. It is not a thankless task, but a gendered task, a necessary repetition of difference rather than the one-time-only securing of good theory, where gender is a position without identity, Schiller's injunction to feminize the aesthetic, the last best gift to me, a woman, his first Ph.D., bequeathed against the grain by my disgraced teacher, Paul de Man.

Here is the double bind. "To be responsible . . . would be to invent maxims of transaction for deciding between two just as rational and universal but contradictory exigencies of reason as well as enlightenment." Note the word "maxims."

And here is the task: "It remains to be known, so as to save the honor of reason, how to translate. For example, the word reasonable. And how to pay one's respects to, how to . . . greet . . . beyond its latinity, and in more than one language, the fragile difference between the rational and the reasonable."<sup>71</sup>

In the preface to *Allegories of Reading*, de Man describes a "shift," not an "end"—"a shift from historical definition to the problematics of reading . . . typical of my generation, . . . of more interest in its results than in its causes"—careful words, camouflaging the "causes" as "uninteresting."<sup>72</sup> Yet, the "pugnacious literalism" that this teacher taught makes this student sniff at those very causes: shifting a generation born in Europe in the 1920s away from historical definition to a problematics of reading which, for them, remained contained within the canonical principles of literary history.

Critics have noted these words, of course, and fitted them in with other instances of contrast between history and language. No one, however, seems to have noticed that de Man is speaking not just of himself but of his generation. My generation was born when de Man's generation was flitting with fascism, the uninteresting cause of a subsequent shift from history to reading. We came of age outside of Europe, when their war, where we fought for our masters, inaugurated the end of territorial imperialism. I am now a good bit older than de Man was when he died. "Typical

of my generation" is this concern for preserving the dreams of postcoloniality in the face of globalization. It is the story of that *parabasis* that was for me the most sustained lesson of Paul de Man: displacing the lesson of Paul de Man to another theater.

De Man goes on to say that the shift from history to reading typical of his generation "could, in principle, lead to a rhetoric of reading reaching beyond the canonical principles of literary history which still serve, in this book, as the starting point of their own displacement."<sup>73</sup> "Reaching beyond." Displaced to another place. How far beyond? As far as I pull, in these times? Altogether elsewhere? At least into an understanding, as the best universities counsel students to cut their dissertations to market demands, that an aesthetic education inevitably has a meta-vocational function?

Instrumentalize the essays that follow, then. Comfortably condemned as they are to use material from and in the dominant, they must be undone on the way to subalternity, remembering that in subalternity also reasonable and rational hang out as a difference. That any reader will waste the time to learn to parse the desires (not the needs) of collective examples of subalternity is my false hope.