

Europe?: a speech

Europa?: um discurso

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Abstract: My talk has two main points. One is a longstanding desire for continentality by the extreme northwestern edge of our continent, the island of Eurasia. It is a tiny edge and Imperial Europe is even a tiny edge of that one. The other point is a desire for a self, a mastership of interpellation. To be the master of “Hey you,” which is what interpellation is. The one hailed thinks s/he is the right person. There is thus a complicity in interpellation, culturalism allows us to forget that.

Keywords: continentality; interpellation; complicity.

Resumo: Meu texto apresenta dois pontos principais. Um deles é um antigo desejo de continentalidade para a margem noroeste extrema de nosso continente, a ilha de Eurasia. É uma margem pequena e a Europa Imperial é ainda uma margem minúscula daquele continente. O outro ponto é o desejo de um “Eu”, uma mestria de interpelação. Para ser o mestre de “Ei você aí,” que é o que a interpelação é. A pessoa saudada pensa que ela/e é a pessoa certa. Existe então uma cumplicidade na interpelação, o culturalismo nos permite esquecer isso.

Palavras-chave: continentalidade; interpelação; cumplicidade.

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It is a great pleasure for me to be speaking in the name of George Mosse, fellow Midwesterner—I taught at Iowa for twelve years, and he was there before he was in Wisconsin—fellow Cornellian—my PhD is from Cornell—who was in the same struggle well before some of us began. What I will say today will circulate around two of his statements that were important for us more than twenty years ago: “Economic and social revolution was not accompanied by sexual revolution,” and “assimilation always included a flight from a former identity.” We need to remember these today when the bitter phrase, “visible minorities,” is used officially. Genitalist gender-support has always depended on “visibility.” The problem with visible minorities—non-access to upward class mobility—is covered over on both sides with talk of culture, a strange word, to which direct subjective access is claimed. I am not going to discuss that, I am just kind of saying this. This forgets what Mosse said in 1985: “assimilation always included a flight from a former identity.” Darko Suvin says, “all immigration involves an emigration.” We could go on. We need to keep these things in mind. I did not really go to a book to look these up. Mosse was important enough for us that we thought of these two statements as things to remember. And Suvin’s communication was a collective e-mail from an intellectual less and less patient with class-obscuring pre-critical culturalism.

I thank Klaus Scherpe for walking me through the preliminaries of this visit, and for pushing me in a wheelchair across a snowy courtyard, through the preliminaries and actualities of this visit, with patience and care. And I give a remote thanks to my dear old friend Andreas Huyssen for having put up my name for the series.

My talk has two main points. One is a longstanding desire for continentality by the extreme northwestern edge of our continent, the island of Eurasia. It is a tiny edge and Imperial Europe is even a tiny edge of that one. The other point is a desire for a self, a mastership of interpellation. To be the master of “Hey you,” which is what interpellation is. The one hailed thinks s/he is the right person. There is thus a complicity in interpellation, culturalism allows us to forget that.

Complicity is an important point for me. It is an old point that has remained with me. I use the idea of complicity, not in a negative sense, but in the sense of being folded together. In the acknowledgment of complicity is a practice stronger than us-and them-ing: you bad, I good. I cannot be knowingly complicit with being called the old style

so-called poco who just points fingers at the essentialized colonizer, thus absolving the benevolent among them.

There are, then, two points: the desire for continentality and the desire for the mastership of interpellation.

I find it difficult to be interpellated as an “other,” reporting ontophenomenologically on “what do they think?” or “what is Europe in the eyes of others?” Our style of asking a question is, “what is it to do something”, “what is it to theorize?”, not “what is theory?” or “what do they think?” I work on cultural politics, not on being a native informant. Therefore I have decided to share with you my very minor expertise. I will read with you. There will be a good bit as usual about my own desire to choose self-interpellation. It is a problem I share with you, folded in with you. You mentioned “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. In that essay, which was really a beginning rather than an end, there is a sentence I construct because, as I say in the essay, I knew nothing. It was a sentence on the model of Freud’s “A Child is Being Beaten”.¹ My sentence was, “white men are saving brown women from brown men.” Judith Butler, like a good reader, went to “A Child is Being Beaten”. It is about a narcissistic patient. That is what I was saying: “hey watch it, go read what I am talking about, I do not know anything about this damn thing, if I do not turn it into a sentence I cannot write, but I must write.” And my sentence then was that “white men.” What was I doing? I was asking Freud, a white guy, to save brown women, those women who were dying, from brown men, the bad Hindus. In fact I was doing exactly what in that sentence many people have taken as a formula and thought that I was just pointing fingers at white guys. There was nothing against the British in that paper, it was all against the Hindus. It was not a postcolonial paper, it was a pre-emptive paper about the *longue durée*, poignantly relevant after the landslide victory of the Hindu nationalist party at the recent General Elections in India.

My own desire to choose self-interpellation you must read as complicity, with you—because you folks, you too are seeking self-interpellation as master of interpellation. Read this as complicity in the strong sense, folded together with you. In my abstract I had stated that I would close on a lighter note, focusing on a tiny group of those

¹ FREUD. “*A child is being beaten*”: a contribution to the study of the origin of sexual perversions, p. 175-204.

who cannot think “Europe.” In the event I thought I would read them first. They illustrate the long itinerary of the desire for continentality and because, apart from the small group I train, the landless illiterate electorate, the largest sector in India, savvy in many ways, do not know the name “Europe” at all. This is hard for you to imagine. My group has not seen white people. They almost do not know what the name “America” signifies. And yet, they are not fools, they are not primitive, they are not subaltern—the ones I train are smart and trying to move up, they are bringing subalternity into crisis, not fully of course. You do not undo 2,000 or 3,000 years of cognitive damage by having a nice guide for 30 years. I want to begin with them.

(This is not a claim for “Asia before Europe,” as in the brilliant book by my friend Kirti Chaudhuri.² I wrote a book called *Other Asias*, where I claimed that “Asia” did not exist.³ Eurasia is a big island. I have no interest in a critique of Eurocentrism, either. That was day before yesterday. That is not what I am talking about. The absence of the fractured continentality of Africa is a scandal in these discussions. I go to Africa all the time these days in order to be able to think about the scandal of never taking Africa as an example of anything unless you are an Africanist or an African. Yet elite Afrocentrism is a luxury.)

Back now to the landless illiterate near the Jharkhand-Birbhum border. In the elementary schools for the rural landless where I have trained students and teachers to learn and teach the state curriculum for nearly three decades now I try to make the groups friendly with the wretched map of the world on the back cover of the geography textbook. I am not interested in importing gadgets from all over the place. I tell them that I am their race enemy and class enemy. I may be a nice person, but I had all the advantages that they did not have. They know this because I am upper caste Hindu and they are former untouchables. In fact they are still untouchable for some rural gentry. It is illegal but who cares? I therefore say that they must stop needing me at all, that all I am doing here is stupid repayment for ancestral debt, that for thousands of years we have bred them up for manual labor, punished intellectual labor, and bred them into obedience so that the smart among them has only been

² CHAUDHURI. *Asia before Europe*. Economy and civilization of the Indian ocean from the rise of Islam to 1750.

³ SPIVAK. *Other Asias*.

cunning, with rare exceptions. I ask them to remember that intellectual labor cannot be taught, that if they obey me and imitate me they are not going to learn. I tell them I am in a hard place because I do not know how to teach them, because I had all the advantages and they are in a hard place because intellectual labor cannot be learned. I have these conversations with them. When I go to places like Utrecht on the 300th anniversary of what is called the Peace of Utrecht to keynote, I said to the whole group of teachers and supervisors as we were sitting together eating the last day, “I am going to say to them what I learned from you because I am going to use this sentence. Now I am going to say it in English, you won’t understand, but remember, this English sentence is exactly that Bengali sentence that I just told you that has come to me through trying to train you for so many years.” I just wanted to say this, so that you understand why we look at the dreadful map on the back of the Class 3 and 4 textbooks (now defunct because newer style textbooks without world maps are being manufactured to attract students away from English-medium schools) the government gives and takes away. I point at the northwestern corner of the huge Eurasian continent and I tell them that that is Europe. “So small, but they won.” I discuss with them how they won, in a very simpleminded way, and I use mid-Victorian examples, such as James Watt watching the lid dance on the pot of boiling water. This is a ridiculous thing, but on the other hand, what am I going to do? Revile colonialism when the rich-poor gap in the new nation expands? Be politically correct myself and Christian and say, “they really know everything, although they were miserably oppressed for 5,000 years”? Or, to speak in a way that they would understand, say that the big people, the *Borolok*, the rich, can make their head work and the poor are made to make their body work. It is very hard to learn how to make your head work, you cannot imagine cognitively damaged heads, how hard it is to make it move, it is really a scary thing. So I describe these things. And then I remind myself not to be an “improver,” which in Ranajit Guha’s *Dominance Without Hegemony*, is shown to be what the first British Permanent Settlers called themselves.⁴ “Improvers, not civilizing missionaries.” I remind myself not to be an improver and I discuss with my increasingly more aware coworkers, male and female teachers and supervisors from the community, the fact that I am not drawing profits

⁴ GUHA. *Dominance without hegemony*. History and power in colonial India.

from the work for and with them, except cultural capital—lack of time does not allow me to dwell on this—although they are not well-acquainted with the world map and know nothing about colonialism—they know the oppression that we have measured out on them very well. I do not know if other countries are like this because India is so big. Also, India was a different kind of British colonialism. In 1757 when the East India Company came in, it was the Ottomans who knew how to be emperors. The East India Company had Ottoman envy, they had no idea how to be emperors. The pattern in Latin America is different because it originated in mercantile rather than industrial capitalism.

At any rate, my rural co-workers know nothing about colonialism, they have not seen any factories of any significant size. Some of my students have not seen trains. Yet they are not dumb. They do understand what profit or *munapha* is. They are not “the East,” they are not “the non-West,” they can be examples of a general argument that notices that they vote in a postcolonial nation that they do not know as such. That is indeed a problem, not what they think about Europe. I know you are only thinking about the migrant problems on your own soil, but nonetheless, these are people after all, “the largest sector of the electorate in the world’s largest democracy” if CNN is going to be believed. These people do not know that they are voting in a postcolonial nation, but they vote.

A limited concept of “Europe” must come to terms with the fact that Europe’s internal problems cannot solve the world’s problems, although that claim is, at least tacitly, made. Not just in that old *Frankfurter Allgemeine* where European intellectuals came together and said that Europe would be better administering the world because it had known imperialism. Last week in Argentina someone in Buenos Aires writing about the fact that the EU woman had actually managed to do a deal, with some bad gender politics thrown in, with Iran. There was a great long essay about how in spite of everything it was the European Union, not the United States. But it is all in terms of *Innenpolitik*. A limiting concept of “Europe,” doing its *Innenpolitik* as a clue to a whole world politics, must come to terms with the fact that Europe is a part of a much larger world now. When you go to Asia with the fierce competitive nationalisms of India and China, no one is thinking about Europe. Europe’s moment was historically important but not all-consumingly determining. The sun rises at different times upon the globe today. Paying good attention to Europe is not going to place global southern modernity

in a global context. When the stock exchange closes in London—that is what globalization is, electronic capital moving—it must wait for Tokyo, and then Mumbai, and in between opens the turbulent and wildly unstable, speculative “marriage of socialism and capitalism”—I quote Karen Wong—where the turnover rates are ten times higher. Shanghai and Shenzhen. If you think of this, you have to take a deep breath about the idea of the ekphrasis of globalization inside something that you call “Europe.” Therefore I wanted to begin with my schools where Europe is also not known.

Why did Europe win? Braudel has a much more nuanced description. Since political cause and effect is not my thing—I am a student of cultural politics—I will just cite Samir Amin and move on. I do not know if these narratives are of any use, I am a literary critic, I learn from the singular and the unverifiable, but you cannot just be unverifiable when you’re lecturing in a very large room. So I will just cite Samir Amin here and move on. In European space, according to Amin, as you all will remember, the less advanced culture, the European indigenous tribes, won over a more advanced one, the Romans. Hence capitalism could develop out of the fractures in the feudal mode of production.⁵

In the place of political cause and effect I offer you now a fantasy. We’re all islanders. I am from the island of Eurasia of which I’ve been speaking and I have lived for 52 years. Jack D. Forbes.⁶

These are big islands. In 2001 I taught for a semester at the University of Hawaii and fell in fascination as one falls in love with the idea of Oceania. I began to think then that neither Europe nor the United States of America could think of itself as an island, and therefore they were out of touch with the reality of the world, not only that “no man is an island,” but that we are all islanders. In 2004, Maryse Condé invited me to speak to the descendants of indentured Indian laborers on the island of Guadeloupe. I sang to them an island dream song explaining each verse in French, because they were not an academic audience, it would have been really silly to give an idiotic, incomprehensible academic talk there. So I sang to them an island dream song by Rabindranath Tagore and demonstrated to them how distanced we mainlanders had been

⁵ AMIN. *Accumulation on a world scale*. A critique of the theory of underdevelopment.

⁶ FORBES. *Africans and native Americans*. The language of race and the evolution of red-black peoples.

in our island fantasies from the realities of their lives. India could not think of itself as an island, although it called itself an island in the old days, *Jambudvipa*. But it could not think of itself as an island, a corner of an island. I began to think then that the idea of nations, older than nationalisms, something like “born-sames,” men harnessing reproductive heteronormativity to push away the bigger heterogeneity of the island was ever in a double bind with our islandedness. Do not think island, think borders, is how we humans start to think.

History nestles in that denial of the impossible truth of space. I now think of Oceania as a heterogeneous place, a model for the world island, an invitation to develop island consciousness beyond continentality: there is no mainland. In today’s world everything is modern, the promise is of a level playing field. If we develop island consciousness, know that the globe is a cluster of islands and a sea of traces and approach the heterogeneity of the ocean world with patience, collectively, and bit by bit, rather than all at once, that may be the only way to find out why that field, that cluster floating in the world ocean, is so uneven a relief map.

How can someone who lives in this fantasy welcome Europe’s minority interpellation? In Britain, BBC invites me and when I state my position they withdraw the invitation. I am not a minority on a little island off the coast of France, I am a violent majority, 86%, in an extremely large country who must take responsibility for sometimes genocidal violence. I am not going to whine in Britain for the BBC. You see, classed immigrants, when they remove the difference between themselves and those for whom, supposedly, they’re agitating, create a complicated situation. Agitating is good, but witnessing? That is why I mentioned that I say to my fellow Indians in those villages, “remember, I am your class enemy, I am your race enemy.”

Thomas Hirschhorn did his *Gramsci Monument* in the housing projects in New York. He invited me to give a talk and very few people from the projects turned up to that thing but some turned up and I said to them, again, the same thing, “I am your class enemy, I bought a condo in Washington Heights in 2008, I am part of this mayor’s plan to get the rent-controlled people displaced, I am a foreigner, you remember that as I talk about Gramsci to you. The only reason why I am saying what I am saying to you is that by trade I am a teacher so what I am telling you is what I know might or might not apply to your situation.” Someone who lives

in this fantasy that I just gave to you, cannot welcome Europe's minority interpellation turning conflict into knowledge about knowledge, in answer to the onto-phenomenological question: *what* do these others think.

Mosse played with psychoanalysis. I will give fantasy here the heavier definition via Lacan and construct a fantasy of wanting, borders as power through Lacan's sense of the emergence of the subverted subject through fantasy. I have often said that gendering is our first instrument of abstraction. I have also often said that psychoanalysis does not give us a description of what really happens. I think of Freud as an ethical body-mind philosopher and Lacan as a poet, in the same line of work. It is therefore important that such an imaginative psychoanalytical thinker as Lacan imagines the construction of the possibility for the self-conscious sociogenetic abstraction in the presubjective drive falling upon, "anatomical trace of a margin or border, lips, enclosure of the teeth, rim of the anus, penile fissure, vagina, fissure of eyelid, indeed hollow of the ear, ... respiratory erogeneity coming into play through spasms."⁷ In other words, border-thinking is an undecided and primary constituent of our perception of reality itself where reason is fashioned out of what precedes it. Lacan is uninterested in going to perversions from here. Instead he proposes fantasy—I used it as a colloquial term, but here it is a serious, psychoanalytical term. Fantasy tries to win the unspeculable constitution of the possibility of a subject through the metapsychological drives into something the ego can manage by speculating. If you want to do a quick fix from ontogeny to phylogeny, or an individual to group, there is your "Europe?", an analogy to the programmed move to fantasy in the human subject to claim the transcendental intuition of border-think, to make itself exacerbated by its geography as a tiny corner of a huge island, this fantasy is something that one can make into an analogy. I am not in favor of making such an analogy. But this method is followed by many. The entire scenario of the Balkans wanting to be interpellated into Europeaness and on the other side being managed as old Ottoman neighbors, that little orifice out of which Europe sprang, can be accounted for this way.

Europe, as seen by the eyes of others also brings in the idea of interpellation. The Althusserian description of interpellation could be placed over against the Lacanian subversion of the subject by way of the

⁷ LACAN. The subversion of the subject and the dialectics of desire in the freudian unconscious, p. 692.

training of the subject by fantasy. “Interpellation,” Althusser wrote, “can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace, everyday police hailing, “hey, you there!” “Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined,” Althusser writes, “takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn around”—he is describing complicity—“by this nearly one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion”—the word complicity is being used literally here, turning together with the interpellator, conversion—“he”—the individual—“becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was really addressed to him and that is was *really him* who was hailed and not someone else. But in reality these things happen without any succession. The existence,” Althusser writes, “of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing.”⁸ And claiming us, the visible minorities of any class, and making the top of the class speak for the bottom of the class as others is also a move from thick subjectship to agency. So Lacan is describing a thick subjectship inaccessible, metapsychologically inaccessible coming through fantasy into the constitution of the ego. And Althusser is describing agency, institutional validation, so these three points we must keep in mind as you begin to think about your desire of choosing. Thick subjectship, the outer edge of it is inaccessible, through fantasy being turned into an ego-thing, and then, on this side, agency, validated action, and before that fantasy in the colloquial sense dreamed by a literary critic through experience about islandedness which then goes back to the longing for continentality of Europe.

Contrast this to the transformation of the object feeling in the affirmation given to Ovid’s Narcissus’ madness, “*iste ego sum*” to the “*Je est un autre*” of Rimbaud in 1871 where a tough description of the lodging of the self as disclosed in nothing but the other is the theme. 1871 was the second failed revolution Marx saw and so he moved the International, he disbanded it, and that is the year that Rimbaud writes, “*Je est un autre*,” which is a little bit different but not altogether that different from “*iste ego sum*.” In the displacement of syncategorems a history is written. One could trace this as the survival of the double othering machine as the mastership of interpellation through this history of a feeling of a failure of continentality. A more complicated fantasy is reflected in the story that I tell in my abstract.

⁸ ALTHUSSER. Ideology and ideological state apparatuses, p. 163.

In 1982 at the iconic Essex conference on “Europe and its Others,” I had suggested that we consider Europe as an “Other.” We were assured that the time for such a thought was not yet. In the changed context of globality the time for that thought is already passed. In what I had proposed, Europe was an object of knowledge, not an interpellator of others in the plural, seeking to know their thinking, Europe as an Other, because Europe is unified in this way as interpellator, so what do others think? That was the charge in 1982 which could not be taken up and anybody who was at that conference will remember that I had said it at the beginning of my speech and I was told that “Professor Spivak has said something very provocative but the time for it has not come yet.” It is interesting that, taking the self as object outside of the historical—Levinas proposed this as the very ground of the ethical, lodged in the fact that we’re all aging bodies, we are all alive and dying at the same time, the I as object, as the ground of the ethical. A bold move, a displacement of the Ovid-Rimbaud chain. You have claimed the ethical in the description of the theme this year. “Do the right thing” ethical is a fine thing in terms of cultural rights or welfare access. But it could also be thought of as mere *Zurechnungsfähigkeit*, lodged in Kant’s “mere reason.” You take a minus and you make it a plus, which is a good thing, this is the domain of public interest litigation, demonstrations, not merely lecturing to a captive audience. It is walking the walk, doing the right thing in terms of changing laws, fighting, and acknowledging that what’s happening is the denial of upward class mobility being rewritten as cultural damage. Culture alive is always on the run, culture is its own irreducible counterexample but you cannot actually work with that when you use culture as a word to cover over the inaccessibility to class mobility and the ones who do make it sometimes make it by selling culture. I think it is all right, you cannot be politically correct or theoretically correct all the time.

On the other hand in the heart of a university where I am fortunate enough to have so many people listening to me, I cannot say that that, in fact and ontophenomenologically, *is* the ethical. No, that is the political, a fight on the ground. You cannot interpellate yourself as subaltern, and you cannot interpellate yourself as the subject of the ethical. Unconditional ethics is the contingency that surprises you down the line, and this call you may not even be imaginatively trained enough to recognize when it passes you by. Either digital idealism or ease and speed of learning drops your confidence in the right to intellectual labor; or specialism so ties

you up that the idea of going beyond what you know, the security of it, towards the incalculable is closed down. Unconditional ethics.

I gave a long talk on this in Argentina, engaging with Balibar's book on Marxism, *The Philosophy of Marx*.⁹ The talk related to finding a way of working complicitously with the World Economic Forum. I am on the Council on Values, which uses knowledge management as a method. On the other hand, it is a nonprofit. Generally humanities folks do not participate because of the emphasis on knowledge management, which is a childish way of "solving" ethical problems for policymaking. My tendency has always been to try everything. So-called public awareness-oriented "activist" writing, with the electronic modalities now in place, is like Reagan's trickle-down economics. It all goes completely through a private circuit preaching to the choir, it helps the self-promotion of the person who writes, and it has for them huge crowds of student adorers, but it does not affect policy. And the reliance on corporate funding for radicals is just bad faith.

The folks who are on the Council on Values are Christians on the one side, technologists on the other. Fools to the right of me, jokers to the left. That is the only level of engagement where anything serious can happen. You'll die trying, as in the villages, 5,000 years of cognitive crimes cannot be quickly undone, nor can millennial ruling class greed. You find all kinds of people there—young Egyptian professionals trying to consolidate the gains of the Arab Spring, for example.

I was speaking about the World *Social* Forum at Humboldt some years ago, created in Brazil as a counter-image to the World Economic Forum, legitimizing it by reversal and people were critical of me. It cannot be denied that in the Global South, it connects with the old benevolent feudals, practicing feudality without feudalism.

When *you* think about the ethical, the European academic forum, as it were, do not therefore think that the ontophenomenological question of transforming conflict in the street into an object of academic knowledge about knowledge is going to move you toward it. Nothing moves you toward the ethical. You prepare for it by imaginative training for epistemological performance. You do not decide on it by rational choice of doing the right thing, which you must also do. As I have said many a time, it is just that there be law, but law is not justice. We have

⁹ BALIBAR. *The philosophy of Marx*.

to fight to change the law. The enforcers of the law, because of class apartheid in education, accept rape culture and bribe culture as normal. And at the top people are in rape culture and bribe culture because of bad gendering, but also because of a trivialization of the training of the imagination. Knowing what “others” are thinking about Europe is not going to lead to ethical practice. There is no line like that.

I have gone round and round to emphasize our shared problems. Let me end with a list of ingredients, part of this sharing. You might look at the proleptic sentences of the Introduction to the European Constitution. You might look at the fact that those who can think Europe in Africa or Asia still think of Britain-France or France-Britain-Germany, the old imperials. You might consider the cultural representation of the Balkans. I am indebted here to the work of Karl Kaser, who asks as to whether the way in which Austro-Hungarian scholars constructed autonomous scholarly interest in albanology, caught in a web of actual autonomous research interests and foreign policy ambitions, could be called postcolonial. You might think of the female Roma as the shadow of shadows, inside Europe millennially, outside. This is particularly interesting because of Mosse’s mention of the Roma. I work here with Suzana Milevska.

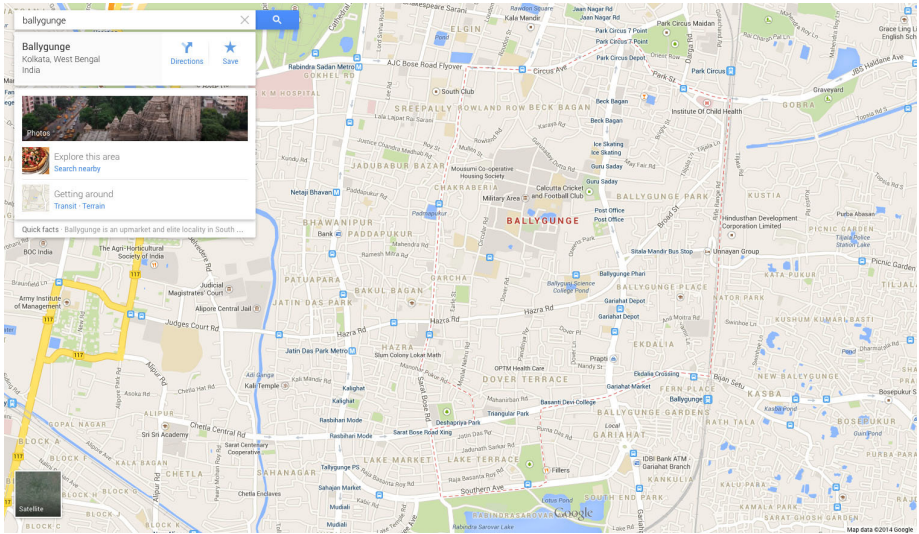
In Argentina, I was talking about using privilege, disclosing the use of privilege to those on whose behalf it is used, rather than disclosing nothing but identitarianism which destroys democracy by voting blocks. We work through that, remembering to be waiting for the contingent, for the subjectship of “revolution” has become the unprogramed “citizen,” rather than the “ideal subject” that we had in the proletariat. We must think of the “visible minorities” as citizens, equals though not the same, go easy on identity.

No one can be “against” identity. Yet politically one must fight against unexamined identitarianism for the sake of the austere hospitalities of democracy. It is hard to claim complicity with Hinduism after the recent General Elections have brought in a Hindu Nationalist Prime Minister. And “Can the Subaltern Speak?” was already a critique of Hinduism. Yet, like most of my caste, class, and gender at home and abroad, I too claim “identity,” just not for benevolent European interpellation. Here now is an image of the goddess on high holiday in my cousin’s house. For 101 years in her house they have had the worship, it is like Christmas. We couldn’t catch the goddess and all the women in the living room – she is the object of our collective gaze --, so the image is shown as she is

about to be deposited in the river (to be discreetly carried away by the municipal authorities).



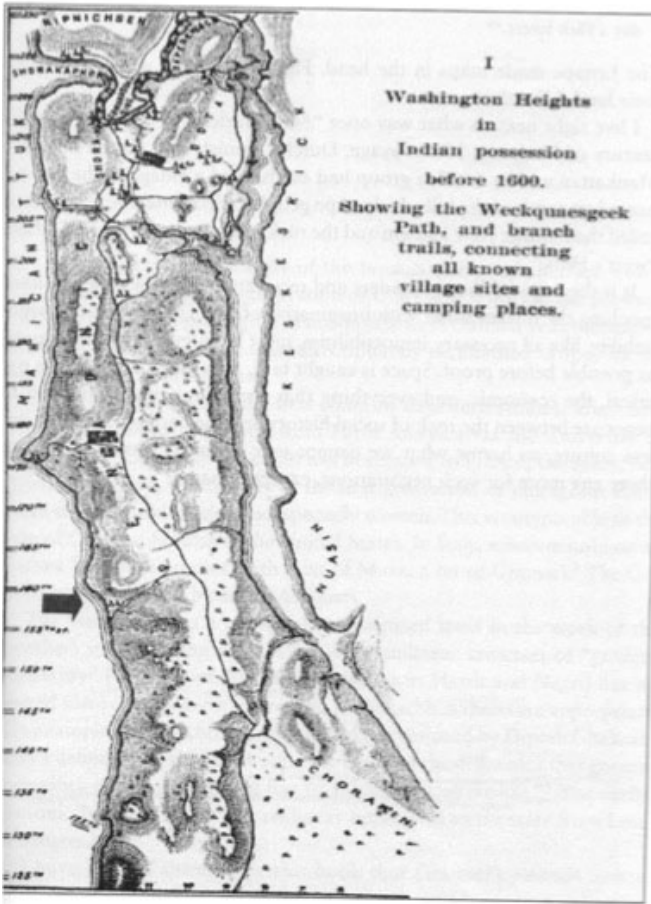
And my identity space. There is Ballygunge, just Ballygunge.



Ah, there is Ballygunge. I was born 200 yards from that post office, this is my birthplace, so I relate, that place still stands, I feel like I own that place, I have rights, I am an Indian citizen, but not really in India, rather in that place. I am not without a sense of home. This is something that can be cherished but has to be resisted in the interest of political action for all. This is complicity. I am complicit with everyone who says, “Europeans are so heartless and we have this wonderful home.”

And I am not against the impulse to ask “what do others think about Europe?”

And I am also a New Yorker. Such is the much-advertised benign schizophrenia of the well-placed ambulant diasporic:



Ah, there it is. My New York neighborhood in 1600—where I want to create a pre-colonial history, imaginative training for epistemological performance—Europe looking for us because the Ottomans closed the West-East passage, “Indians” found by mistake—my destinerrance. In Washington Heights, I can do it better, I own property, I pay income tax, I make a salary. It is very much my home. Yet, what I do there seems to translate easily, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, to native informancy.

To summarize, then: I began with your longing for continentality and the idea of claiming the mastership of interpellation, that reduces to the idea of transforming the immigrant problem into an *Innenpolitik* that will allow you to compete in the world, and then the idea that that *Innenpolitik* can be approached ethically by the intellectual action of turning conflict into knowledge and then the onto-phenomenological question asked of “others” at the top so that they can then actually translate what the small others scream in the streets. I wanted in the end to behave like such an other by showing these disconnected pictures so that I could demonstrate that I was indeed also somebody who was placed intimately within an otherness to Europe, an old otherness to Europe which could perhaps allow me to be interpellated as such. In the final analysis I refuse that interpellation in the interest of complicity with you.

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