Provincializing Europe called for an end to the idea that Westernization equates to universalism. The provincialization of Europe has also meant the universalization of Europe, but it was a universalization of European values that no longer comes from within, but from without. Furthermore, as European values lost their European centre, what had been panegyric-confirming became critical-questioning. The achievement remains, and complaining conservatives, who take external criticism of the West personally and see recognition of it as unnecessary self-flagellation, form an increasingly weak rearguard. This argument connects to what was said about hypocrisy above. The final expression of the West's version 'from within' which claimed universal applicability was globalization. The future should be about a version 'from without.'

So far, this introductory chapter has described a meta-normative backdrop outlining a subplot for the pages that follow and hinting at the book's aim, which is to argue for work on a new conceptualization that will lead to a new planetary understanding of the global. However, that goal is not a teleological one constructed inside capital-H-History but a human-made one that continues the contentious work of shaping the future and will be continually revised to fit with Chakrabarty's alternative to Hannah Arendt's warning of Earth alienation. Chakrabarty's proposal about feeling at home on the planet – set against Arendt's dystopia – should not be seen as a new world emerging from an apocalypse, or a transcendence towards perfection, but, instead, as an ideal type, in Max Weber's sense, one to which we can measure the remaining distance in the attempt to approach it, progresses as well as reverses. The intellectual point of reference is not to Hegel, but to Kant and his mantra about the need for permanent progress without ever arriving at a final goal. The meta-norm is about promoting action in a Kantian way, action guided by ideas of a planetary future confronting the presentism that followed with the globalization tale where the dreams of an unbounded market and consumption in the present made the future collapse. Action towards a human-made planetary future like the one Chakrabarty proposes.[13] Action of a different kind than the raw and impulsive *re*action guided by backward-looking nostalgy about a past that should have been gone but is coming back.

The rest of the Introduction will provide more focus to this normative backdrop, formulate the intent of the book more precisely, and introduce the following chapters.

Global translations for a planetary perspective

The old Western narrative about enlightenment, development, modernization, and globalization was based on Western concepts such as freedom, human rights, and democracy, along with the belief in their universality. Arguably, a new global narrative should make non-European concepts more prominent. One might imagine the construction of a kind of global universalism with a conceptualization made from the bricks of many different languages. However, the aim is not a shared language such as Esperanto, or even English, though it functions as the world's lingua franca. This short book proposes the use of concepts from several language

cultures to constitute a global interpretative framework and an arena for debate. This arrangement would obviously involve translations between languages, translations for new understandings. It underpins and illustrates the proposal with the two case studies of *ujamaa* and *ubuntu*.

The founder of a new approach to conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck, with his arguments entrenched in European, and especially German empiricism, once referred to the concept of *citoyen*, the word that so helped mobilize people for the French revolution. He noticed that, while in English, the word would be translated as 'citizen' (almost the same but with a very different connotation), in German it would become *Staatsbürger*. Whereas *citoyen* refers to an emancipated individual who, through revolution, took destiny into his or her own hands and established a political order that defied repression and exploitation, *Staatsbürger* refers to a subject working obediently within the state and under its ruler, quite a different animal from the *citoyen*. Different words had emerged from different histories, and young Koselleck's conclusion was that the conceptual difference was too large to allow for useful comparison.

Later, he came to the opposite conclusion when he realized that difference could bring analytical strength. What, he asked, was the difference between the concepts, and what were the similarities? The questions prompted a comparative study of political cultures. Different concepts revealed different historical developments while attempting to define identical phenomena. They stood for both distinction and overlap. Taken together, they connected a variety of historical experiences and the various solutions to shared phenomena.

Walter Benjamin drew attention to the limits – and the potential – of translations. The original is not available for the reader, he argued. Translation is an art, not a transmission of linguistic content. It is something that builds a capacity for imitation. Benjamin did not despair because of this insight. Rather, he pointed out that mimesis, the principle of imitation, is a source of richness.[14]

Benjamin's argument and Koselleck's example demonstrate that there is no precise translation between any two languages. Translations are juxtapositions that point up what is shared and what isnt. Translations have the potential to promote understandings of difference and of the Other, which, in turn, encourage new perspectives on the Self. Translations are a key instrument for the development of a global approach to understanding difference and, on that basis, they promote questions about what is shared, and about how the different experiences expressed in various concepts can underpin the search for common ground based on understanding and accepting difference. Shared experiences do not necessarily mean shared interpretations of them but understanding the Other's interpretations even while disagreeing.

The point of comparison is not to develop a uniform, global perspective, even if that were possible, but to develop a global understanding of difference and, through that, begin to look to a common future that draws on the knowledge that we are all different from each other.

In the 1970s, Koselleck's conceptual history, *Begriffsgeschichte*, was undervalued and marginalized, but subsequently, conceptual history has established itself in

academia. We now see that the linguistic turn in the 1980s was an epistemological landslide that forced language and its concepts into the very centre of the Humanities. With the exploration of politically mobilizing concepts, and of how they were used to appropriate interpretative priority, new understandings of historical processes emerged. With conceptual history, an exploration of change became a matter of language and interpretation. Who had the power to give meaning to or interpret phenomena? What concepts lead to political and economic strength? Who had the power to define a problem and find its solution by redefining old concepts or inventing new ones? Conceptual battles played out through contested interpretations of political and economic power.

A new world history for a new understanding of life (in a biological, social, and cultural sense) and of our cohabitation on earth, must integrate perspectives understood through discourse in non-Western cultures. The optimal methodology to establish such an alternative world history would focus on social, economic, political, religious, and cultural fields, as well as a semantic understanding around them that would be reached through a comparative study of various languages, rather than by prioritizing one (Western) one.[15]

The argument here is that conceptual history provides a key for the development of a global understanding in a planetary perspective of what, despite our different experiences and interpretations of them, might be shared across language cultures, and for an increased understanding of the historical grounds of differences. Such a global understanding would be the point of departure for the elaboration of the planetary perspective that Chakrabarty and Mbembe propose. The exploration in this short book of the emergence of two discourses around two key concepts – *ujamaa* in Tanzania and *ubuntu* in South Africa – is meant as an illustration of the argument. The exploration shows that successful concepts are often close to failure or, indeed, fail, and that we might learn more from the failures than the triumphs.

In the end, the task is to come to terms with the North/South issue and transcend the polarity. Looking backwards, one might describe phases of North/South relations during the last three-quarters of a century as follows: (1) The development and decolonization discourse in the 1950s and 1960s, including the belief that, in terms of modernization and modernity, the South would catch up with the North through development aid and self-help. (2) The dependence and neocolonialism discourse in the 1960s and 1970s, which argued that the North wasn't helping the South but, instead, the growing wealth in the North was built on the exploitation of the South. The South developed the North and thus remained poor. This phase culminated in the 1970s when the South, then known as the Third World, claimed a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and assigned a new role for the United Nations. (3) In the 1970s and 1980s, the North fended off the South's claims, arguing that all countries were partners in a market, and that the countries of the South were responsible for their own development. This would occur through market opening. (4) Instead, market opening flooded the Southern markets with cheap agricultural and industrial goods and continued the exploitation of their raw materials. (5) The present, in which waves of refugees escape political persecution, economic destitution and environmental deterioration by risking their lives in search of the

North's protection. The Northern governments, reacting to populist pressures, confront the migrants with their redefinition of protection: the object of protection is no longer the poor migrants and refugees but themselves. They abandon established asylum rules and develop often brutal anti-immigration policies. Development aid is rechannelled towards unscrupulous dictators and military regimes on the proviso that they will prevent the movement of migrants and help the North protect its fortress. Why couldn't that money be used instead on cooperation projects focusing on green energy and environmental protection, making it possible to develop living conditions in the South and thus reduce the need for migration in the first place?

Ujamaa and ubuntu

Ujamaa became a catchword that fired imaginations in the young state of Tanzania when, at the beginning of February 1967, in a charismatic speech in Dar es Salem, the country's president, Julius Nyerere, proclaimed that Tanzania would become an *ujamaa* nation based on self-reliance. He spoke to one hundred thousand enthusiastic people of a declaration that the TANU (The Tanganyika African National Union), the country's only political party, had adopted in Arusha a week before. His outline of the future was inspired by British social-democratic Fabianism and Chinese Maoist communism and was accompanied by the ambition of translating them into an African experience or, perhaps better phrased, giving them an African origin.

The speech on the Arusha Declaration was galvanizing, charismatic and visionary, later achieving an iconic reputation. It was inspired and enlivened by Western thought, though Nyerere framed it in a determinedly Tanzanian context: socialism without class struggle, modernity through agrarian village and farm-labourer communities, democracy with only one political party. The speech on the Arusha Declaration was a performative speech act ('to say something is to do something'); a moment of clarity when certain Swahili concepts were loaded with new visions.[16]

Ujamaa was a concept intended to inspire Tanzanians to become self-reliant and think of themselves as a united people. The country was a nation of agricultural workers, a village community. *Ujamaa* has traditionally been equated with 'African socialism,' but this represents an attempt to define and classify the term rather than translate it. It exposes the Western and Chinese aspects rather than the wished-for African roots.

Ujamaa is an Arabic concept, meaning to collect or to gather, and it hints at some kind of community or collection of people. In Swahili, the term *juma* means Friday, connoting Friday prayer and religious community. *Ujamaa's* political meaning in Nyerere's speech referred to the village community, the backbone of the economy and the social life in Tanzania.

Ujamaa started out more closely resembling the sort of social democracy that Nyerere had come to know during his student years in Britain, reformist with a Fabian touch of slow, gradual change. However, in the political implementation of the declaration, key sectors of the economy were immediately nationalized, a step which hardly connoted Fabianism. Also, the further development of the *ujamaa*