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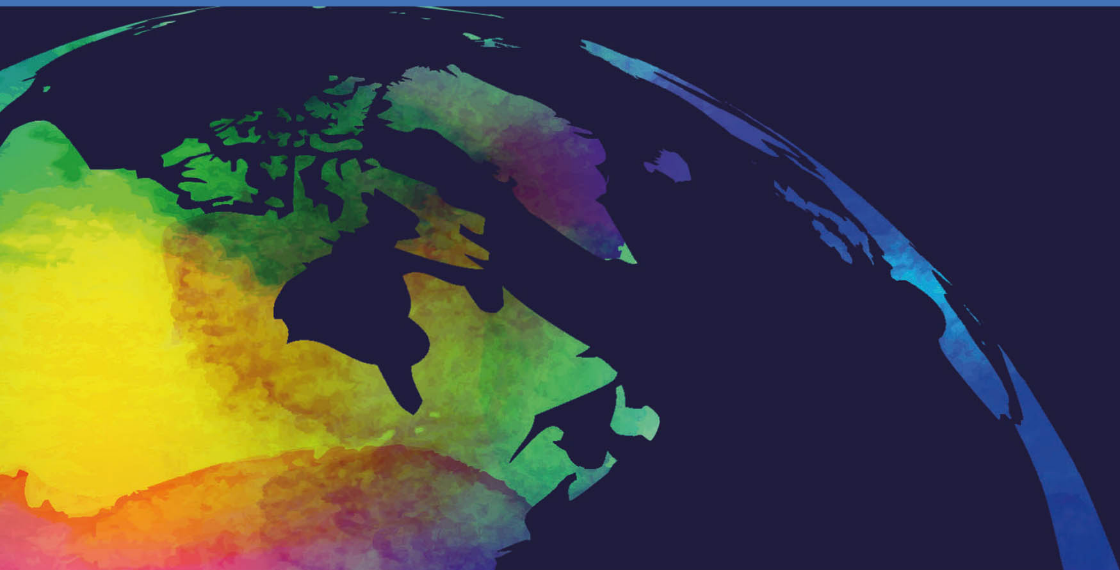

Ujamaa and Ubuntu

Conceptual Histories for a Planetary Perspective

BO STRÅTH

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1 Introduction

The book's meta-normative backdrop and the subplot: the lack of a language
Global translations for a planetary perspective
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The book's meta-normative backdrop and the subplot: the lack of a language

For over a decade, the world has experienced an accelerating erosion of a language that took hundreds of years to emerge. It is a language ordering time and space with words, such as enlightenment, reason, rationality, modernization, and the most recent by-word, globalization. However, it is a language that has been accompanied by colonialism, imperialism, racism, the exploitation of people and nature, an unequal distribution of the world's resources, pogroms, genocides, and world wars. There has been a gap between assumptions underlying a visionary ambition and the often-brutal practices that have accompanied it. Moreover, it is a language that expresses European values, with the implicit or explicit suggestion that they pertain to the whole world; a civilizing mission from a European centre.

Although the established narrative argued that there was continuous progress, it was a conclusion reached through hindsight. The idea of progress had to be repeatedly recreated through new visionary projects that attempted to live up to the high ideals their predecessors failed to achieve.

Today, however, no new vision of enlightenment and progress seems to be emerging. The tension between ideal and practice seems to have become overstretched. The historical capacity to rise above dread and disaster and create new, mobilizing hope seems to be lost. The knack of facing the future by learning processes, translating experiences of disappointment into new expectations, seems harder to master. The language of modernization – with its origin in the several centuries-old processes of industrialization, democratization, colonialism, and imperialism, culminating in the globalization tale – has lost its capacity to convince.

The world cries out for a language that can come to terms with and somehow help resolve today's entangled issues – the exhaustion of resources, the existential climate catastrophe, mass migrations in the wake of droughts, floods, famines and wars, cultures of hospitality becoming cultures of hostility, and the current attempt

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to create a new world order focusing on the world's nations, ever less united, and their strongmen leaders under the demonization of the Other. Authoritarian governments prosper by exploiting resignation and nurturing old-school nationalism and racism, which of course are no less incendiary than they were a century ago. Nationalism underpins the emergence of hostile geopolitical blocks transferring nationalism to a global scale of geopolitical hostility. It is no longer the bipolar world of the Cold War but something more fateful than the euphonious term multipolar suggests. Fateful because the pattern recalls historical catastrophes.

From this gloomy scenario of the world's ills, one conclusion is obvious – that there is an urgent need for a new orientation – something radically different from the attempt to look for the future in a nationalistic and xenophobic past. A new orientation means a new interpretative framework based on a new conceptualization. The peoples of the world must respond to the entangled challenges they face by building a global culture that connects local, regional, and planetary perspectives in new ways. The challenge is to find a language for a new economic order that encompasses ecology, that protects and nurtures rather than squanders scarce resources, and distributes their yield fairly. The challenge is to find a language that promotes our peaceful cohabitation by transforming hard borders into soft boundaries, demarcations into 'overlappings' and hostility into hospitality, and that pays attention to the distinction between hospitality as guest and inhabitant. In one of his last interviews, Bruno Latour said that the world urgently needs a new Copernican Revolution to create a language of understanding, not about the relationship between the Earth and the Sun, but about our life and earthly cohabitation in which we humans are not the only inhabitants. A key question is how any new conceptualization incorporates the new historical-geological era of the Anthropocene. The task is daunting.

Immanuel Wallerstein distinguished between modernization and modernity, the former being the supposed human triumph over nature through the promotion of technological innovations, the latter being the triumph of humankind over itself, an emancipation from oppression and economic servitude.[1] Beginning with the Bandung conference in 1955 and with a first culmination with the Third World claims for a New International Economic Order in the 1970s, the imaginary of emancipation widened from a European/Western concern to a global struggle for more justice and a fairer distribution of the Earth's resources. Aimé Césaire wrote at the time of Bandung about a project of Europeanization of the world without European domination.[2] The tail end of this discourse was Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* in 2001. The growth of the middle classes in China, India, and elsewhere outside the West under the motto of eliminating mass poverty, the desirable triumph of modernity at a global level clashed with the modernization goal of the technological triumph over nature. The growing warnings since the 1970s of exhaustion of natural resources, environmental pollution and at the end the climate crisis, suggests that technological capacity is not unbounded as Wallerstein might have believed. The Club of Rome Report *Limits to Growth* in 1972 about global resource exhaustion threw its long shadow over the 1970s. The vision of (Western) technology triumph over nature lost credibility. The emancipative

modernity approach at a global level, the other strand of Wallerstein's thought, has ended in a crisis as Bruno Latour and Dipesh Chakrabarty conclude.[3] The growing insights that earth's resources are limited weakened Wallerstein's modernity model. With declining resources and growing environment and climate problems, the scope for redistribution erodes, or better put, becomes a zero-sum game of giving and taking rather than giving to all through sustainable growth. The climate and environmental crisis hits both of Wallerstein's categories in their entanglements. Justified claims for a larger share of the pie clash with considerations of the global redistribution of scarce resources and the yields of their exploitation.

One might against this gloomy backdrop describe today's crisis as a lack of a language, a lack of a narrative that inspires and promotes action against the climate deterioration and the soil and resource exhaustion for our peaceful cohabitation on Earth appealing to human responsibility, a language of the type Latour demanded. Instead, what is emerging is a new language that leads our minds in the opposite direction, towards authoritarianism, xenophobic nationalism, and racism. A military project for the resurrection of the Soviet Union in the incarnation of a Russian empire 2.0 adds fuel to the chaotic situation and the martial mood. While the war has a unifying impact on the West, the Global South comment on it with an impassive shrug of the shoulders mixed with a cynicism engendered by their memories of the Cold War when many proxy wars were fought in the South. This cynicism stands in the way of reconciliation, but the question is on what historical grounds it can be overcome.

It is escapism when commentators in the West believe that colonialism is the ground for the indifference in the Global South, because the colonial experiences are seen as historical facts generations away without personal responsibilities or feelings of guilt. In that sense, they are a historical abstraction in the North. In the South much less so, since colonialism is seen as a historical continuity to the present-day North-South situation. Decolonisation is considered much less of a rupture in the South than in the West. However, the Cold War memories of proxy warfare in the South is a much more relevant factor for the weak preparedness to condemn Russia. The lack of readiness in this respect should not be misunderstood as a general support of Russia or of not seeing the neo-imperial dimension of the war on Ukraine, however.

It is difficult not to hear a similar indifference concerning support for the Western condemnation of the Hamas mass massacre on civilian Israelis during the proofreading of this book. The two frontlines of Western culture are connected and reinforce the cementation of new hostile geopolitical blocks just referred to. The comments from the South ask, explicitly or implicitly, where the West was when similar things happened in Sudan, Congo, and many other places. It is not that they all agree with Russia or Hamas, but they condemn the West's selective and self-centred attention, which can be labelled hypocrisy. One might see the Hamas horrific outrage and mass murder as a new earthquake along the old rift between the West and the rest. Many in the South consider Israel itself responsible for the terrible violence it is facing even if they on principle condemn it. The foundation of the state of Israel as a compensation for the genocidal attempt by a European state to

extinguish all Jews at the sacrifice of the Palestine population was never seriously questioned in the West – to deep was the Holocaust shock – and it was silently accepted in large parts of the rest of the world. The opposition grew when Israel developed to a settler-colonial state after the Six-Day War in 1967 ignoring the UN Resolution 446 in 1979 on West Jordania, Gaza, and Golan. The Western condemnation of Russia with reference to international law and the West's unwillingness to see and condemn the Israel ignorance of international law is a contradiction and hypocrisy. Hypocrisy connects the Russia-Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine crises.

Against this backdrop, another relevant factor behind the lack of general commitment in the struggle against the West's problems is the fortress reaction to the growing number of economic and climate refugees. The fortress reactions mean the reinterpretation of the asylum rules, and the redefinition of the subjects of protection from the refugees to the Western countries themselves who see the migrants as intruders. These recent developments and the hypocrisy that accompany them prevent reconciliation with the South and a unison planetary condemnation of an imperial war and mass slaughter of civilian populations. The problem is less faults and offences in the past than in the present. The problem is the hypocrisy that drives the reactions to the world crisis in the West. Here one might recall Reinhart Koselleck's warning that hypocrisy paves the way towards the hypocrisis, the (hypo)crisis as the negation of hypocrisy.[4] More self-critical reflection, scepticism, and political imagination and fantasy would be mental instruments against hypocrisy and the (hypo)crisis.

The globalization narrative lost legitimacy in the wake of the 2008 financial collapse. It described a world of market auto-play, with democracy subjugated to the markets' requirements, whoever determined those requirements. It was argued that what the market required was 'without alternatives,' and democracies needed to be market compliant. Three decades of this market discourse have played down the role of human agency and human responsibility in historical processes. Bottom-up redistribution, from the poor to the rich, from labour to capital, worldwide, became self-evident, a matter of course. Without really questioning it, humans had been brought under the control of an anonymous force called the Market, which, it was argued, orders the world more rationally than anything else. Until 2008, the Market was boundless and infinite. Few believe in that tale anymore. The alternative that emerges in protests against the neoliberal ravages is authoritarian nationalism. It is an emotional reaction of fury against the "cosmopolitans," whoever they are, argued to be the executors of the globalization.

We still live in the shadow of the collapse of discursive power that took place in 2008. Appeals to action against the climate change remain in many respects a moral meta narrative without a strong personal action imperative. Rather than a general mobilization of the opinions for a struggle against the climate crisis, polarizing and clashing languages for or against climate discourse emerge.

What in the 1980s came to be called the linguistic turn, saw a major epistemological shift from the conventional perspective, prevalent since Plato's time, that separated the 'real' from the world of ideas, and materialism from idealism. In the emergent view in the 1980s, language not only reflects the world but constitutes

it. What we cannot express through our concepts, we cannot know. We describe, analyze, explore, and discover ‘reality’ by conceptualizing it. Physics, by means of a continuous flow of increasingly refined concepts, maps and describes ever-deeper insights into the microcosmos of an atom as well as the macrocosmos of a solar system. This is arguably also applicable for mapping and describing life on Earth, life not only in a biological, but also in a cultural and historical sense.

The meta-normative argument set out here is that there is a need for a new language that constitutes a new reality, a new world beyond our current conceptualization of the chaotically entangled issues of climate catastrophe, racism, and xenophobic nationalism. The pacifying globalization narrative is dead and there is no need to regret its loss. Instead, there is a need for a new counter-narrative that embraces a global effort to engage people in a new ordering of life on Earth, one that is more peaceful and has a fairer distribution of resources, and one that reflects on the recently coined term Anthropocene.

The task is a redefinition of the meaning of ‘the global,’ one that will render it distinct from the globalization narrative and globalism that followed in its wake. ‘Global’ can no longer be reduced to market fiction but should be connected to the planet (‘Terra,’ ‘the Earth’) as seen from space. ‘Planetary,’ in turn, must be distinguished from its astronomical connotation of a dot in an endless universe. Planetary must mean the Earth as seen from orbiting satellites ever since the launch of Sputnik in 1957. The Earth, viewed from space, is finite but borderless. The satellites’ optic equipment discerns continents and oceans. From this viewpoint, the traces humans have left on Earth during their present, brief geological era, the Anthropocene, are also visible. The view discerns vegetation and perceives life on earth as an endless symbiotic system, infinitely complex and therefore also fragile and vulnerable. The view discerns how, on Earth, macrocosmos meets microcosmos, a meeting that provokes questions about planetary cohabitation and human responsibility as well as action for the maintenance of the symbiotic system itself.

The concept of the Anthropocene is at odds with the globalization narrative. Anthropocene focuses our attention on man’s impact on the world, seeing it as a quasi-geological force, though one which acts much faster than any natural agent can transform land masses and oceans. Man can destroy them. The term ‘Anthropocene’ is a correction and an objection to the dream of the globe as an unbounded market with endless resources, a dream that in a Freudian sense represses the term ‘exploitation’ (either of nature or of humans). One can only conclude that, in order to lead our action and vision for the world in new directions, globalization, and everything that concept came to stand for, must be replaced by a new conceptualization with the idea of ‘global’ in a planetary perspective at its heart.

The discourse around globalization was a strong expression of the nineteenth-century Eurocentric narrative in which capitalism and democracy, as ever-expanding forces in mutually reinforcing dynamics, civilized and modernized the world from its European centre. The launch of Sputnik in 1957 introduced a new phase in the story of European human progress. The Soviet Union’s hubris was matched by the USA’s fears of losing the space race. Hannah Arendt cut through the contentious Cold War perspectives, seeing the event from an Earth-human one,

as an extension of man's half-a-millennium-old ambition to discover the world. Since around 1500, the circumnavigators explored the world, and when they had mapped it, they foresaw space exploration and cherished the dream of escaping Earth once it had been fully explored. This goal contained the danger of Earth alienation, Arendt wrote – perilous because the Earth-bound nature of humans was impossible to disentangle from their human condition. Arendt's notion of Earth alienation hinted at the risk of humanity's destruction of itself.[5] In the same sombre vein, Reinhart Koselleck found that "our globe… has become a closed spaceship" roving in an endless universe.[6]

Arendt was far from alone in her warning of earth alienation and Koselleck was not the only one who shared her concerns. Already in 1956, the year before Sputnik, Harry Martinsson published his verse poem *Aniara* about the space transporter with 8000 emigrants from the Earth bound for March, escaping environment pollution and wars, clashing with meteorites and getting off course, but defying them continuing towards what had no end.

Arendt's focus was on all technological development since 1500 rather than man's more recent interest in space. Her concern was the technological development that had led to man's ability to escape the Earth's atmosphere. Her 1950s warning of technological hubris was connected to a long tradition of warnings about the destructive risks of the machine age, Nietzsche being one of the strongest voices in that chorus. Today Arendt's warning is reflected in our current fears about the transcendence of the human embodiment of reason into artificial intelligence. Who makes up the forces which programme AI? Who controls AI and who is it controlling? Who assumes the moral authority to replace Kant with anonymous algorithms?

Dipesh Chakrabarty comments on Arendt's concern in his development of a planetary perspective on life on Earth. Arendt's view, he argues, leaves humans with two alternatives: to feel homeless (referring to her notion of Earth alienation) or to work towards what he calls a planetary unity in which all humans come to identify with the planet as their home and, by implication, transcend racial, ethnic, religious, and class boundaries.[7] Chakrabarty's second option offers an alternative to Arendt's fear of Earth alienation, and to Koselleck's, Martinsson's, and many others' dystopian views. His scenario, a counter-image of hope and possibilities, is a response to their warnings. It is a counter-image in which people identify with the planet as their home, and it makes points similar to those in Achille Mbembe's work on the conceptualization of hospitality and hostility.[8]

Chakrabarty's invitation to the world's human inhabitants to "work on" planetary unity distinguishes that unity from utopian historical projects about final world unity, which are teleological and self-propelling towards a final goal inherent in the historical process itself, such as liberal market globalization, its Marxist counter-story, or other similar mystifications. To "work on…" implies hard work, facing and coming to terms with disagreements about how to shape the future and within the context of difficult discursive disputes, where nothing is predetermined. It is strenuous work by humans, with humans being responsible for their success or failure and their destiny. Human agency and responsibility, rather than beliefs in

goal-bound automatic processes intrinsic in history itself, are appealed to. There is no History – singular, and with a capital H – whether it's called Liberalism, Socialism, Nationalism, the End of History, or anything else. For good or evil, there are only human-made histories – in the plural.[9]

The planetary perspective in this book connects to and develops the planetary perspective outlined in my recent book about Willy Brandt's North/South commission.[10] Both books draw on Chakrabarty's outline of a planetary perspective.

Chakrabarty's *One Planet, Many Worlds* (2023) is a short book with three lectures given in 2017, thus four years before *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age* but updated to respond to critique in the debate on the latter book. It is thus both a presage and a follow-up. Chakrabarty expands in the short book on the distinction between the planet as natural history, which focuses on the geological period of the Anthropocene with humankind as a geological force, and the human-made histories in the plural based on human agency. The former refers to the planet, the latter to the many worlds. One might see the distinction as a development of Wallerstein's contrast between modernization and modernity, a contrast between entities that were and are entangled, but updated and reconceptualized problematizing Wallerstein's belief in progress. Anthropocene means an accelerating human impact as a geological force, the development of the planet by geobios powers. However, it is a different human impact than the human agency in the many worlds with many histories struggling to come to terms with poverty and famine, inequalities and human distress and destitution, part of which is a spillover from long-term processes in the natural history of the Anthropocene, increasingly and acceleratingly human-made with short-term implications. Wallerstein's conceptualization describes a virtuous circle whereas Chakrabarty tries to come to terms with a vicious circle. Two kinds of zeitgeist explain the difference.[11] The relative optimism about finding solutions and coming to terms with the world's ills in the 1970s has in the 2020s become scepticism and pessimism. The issue at stake is the connection between the many worlds and the one planet, the capacity of the strife in the many worlds without any superior ordering master mind to nevertheless mobilize and coordinate forces for a common struggle against the negative impact of humankind as a geological force. What Wallerstein saw as the prospects of a virtuous circle between modernization and modernity has become a vicious circle between the human power as a geological force and the human struggle in the many worlds for a better future, where the definition of better is highly contentious. The key to turn the vicious circle is what according to Latour requires a Copernican conceptual revolution.

Césaire and Chakrabarty have laid a foundation stone for this Sisyphean task. In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty argued that, though the idea that enlightenment and reason, in providing a criticism of and a corrective to the world's ills, might have a European origin, the use of such instruments of development was available beyond Europe, and even *against* Europe as the source of colonialism and imperialism. The European values that underlay critical reason became universal by provincializing their European origin.[12] Europe became only one part of a world that applied its values.

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*