

## ■ BOOK REVIEW

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**Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, New Edition, With a new Preface by the Author, Princeton University Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-691-13001-9, xxi + 301 pp.**

"Provincializing Europe" is a critical (non-accusatorial!) discourse on the "valency" of Europe as the source or cradle of political and social modernity. It challenges the validity of crediting colonial and post-colonial Europe as being the generative place of social and political modernism. It posits that the global relevance of European socio-political thought and its models cannot be taken for granted.

For D. Chakrabarty (Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor in History, South Asian Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago), the global validity of social and political Europe makes, in the age of modernism, the impression of a self-generated historical myth. He in no way detracts from the merits and achievements of the European political and social mind, for example, the unique Western humanistic tradition with its interconnected fabric of meaning, but underlines that Europe has been, in a global context, in time and space, a province among provinces of the global community of mankind.

The author's thrust is concentrated on the term "Provincializing". It encapsulates the gist of his purpose, which implicitly also concerns "de-provincializing" non-Europe. Europe has, as an empire, parochially glorified its achievements. Uninformed colonial Europe has not been interested in achievements outside Europe and interest in the possible existence of comparable cultures outside Europe has been neglected. As a crucial point, the European socio-political mind has generated, in the social sciences, a unique, mythical, and paradigmatic status for itself in relation to non-Europe.

"Provincializing", in the book's title, is grammatically (and meaningfully) ambiguous; it deserves an introductory digression: (1) as a present participle, "Provincializing" refers to Europe as a grammatical object; but (2) "Provincializing" can also be read as an intransitive participial adjective qualifying Europe as being in a state of or undergoing a process of provincialization (or self-provincialization?); and (3) reading "provincializing" as an active verb mutates Europe into a subject actively capable to provincialize grammatical objects. (The last sentence of the present review refers to a further contextually implicit interpretation of "Provincializing Europe".)

For readers with a passion, or at least an interest, in the benefits and continuous challenges of inter-cultural relations, the book offers a rich gamut of ideas and critical points to ponder over. A topic for further research and

development, D. Chakrabarty's multidimensional and multi-disciplinary views on socio-political Europe and non-Europe lend themselves to extensive and fruitful inter-disciplinary discourse. The present review, with the intent on avoiding being too detailed and too long, selects and concentrates on the meta-political, meta-legal, implicit relevance of the author's most salient thoughts with respect to international relations, politics and law. They are rich in direct as well as implied inter-connectivity.

D. Chakrabarty's starting points are (i) the "simultaneous indispensability and inadequacy of social science thought" and (ii) European historicism's approach to non-Europe with the motto "first in the West/Europe, and then elsewhere". (p. 6 et seq.) He critically juxtaposes historicism with modernism.

The first (pp. 27-113) of the two parts of "Provincializing Europe", on "Historicism and the Narration of History", addresses, in four chapters: (i) the form of thought that has made it possible to postulate Europe as a socio-political myth, and (ii) the analysis of social and political Europe's relations with non-Europe. D. Chakrabarty is critical of the premises of historicism, as components of a mode of thinking allegedly capable to achieve socio-political predictability. He underlines how historicism has misled itself by believing that any concept, object under investigation could retain a unity of conception throughout its existence, attaining full expression through a process of development in secular, historical time. He shares M. Foucault's (1926-1984) critique that any historical category is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history. In Part 2 (pp. 117-236) of the book, "Histories of Belonging" are dissected in terms of domestic cruelty and the birth of the subject, nation and imagination, sociality, family, fraternity and salaried labour.

In reply to some hefty critique directed at the book's first publication in 2000, (with "Postcolonial Thought and Historical difference" as sub-title), a detailed preface of 13 pages with footnotes meaningfully enhances the contents of the 2007 edition. The preface's sub-title, "Provincializing Europe in Global Times" relates to the colonial/post-colonial treatment of Europe as a mythical, imaginary notion, (not necessarily) the original birthplace of modernity – a mythical, time-and-place bound, unilaterally self-generated and uncritically posited Europe. D. Chakrabarty elaborates how in many histories of capitalist transition in the world's non-Western regions, a state of (imaginary) affairs was bred, historicised and in slow motion catapulted from Europe into the realm of social sciences for potential, global consumption. Products of European empirically unchecked assumptions were associated with "mythical standards", without critical scrutiny as to their fragility, incompleteness in a global context; they were "provincial" conclusions not dealing with a vast, complex, extra-European, multidimensional reality not yet then studied in Europe.

He defines Europe's colonial and post-colonial past as a period which promoted the overseas establishment of European social, political and legal ideas and concepts. However, these ideas and concepts, commended as valid for universal consumption in colonial non-Europe, were bonded with a "not yet"; it was an appendage introduced, controlled and interpreted by Europe. Existing non-European socio-political cultures were, for Europe, exotic and, not least, negligible quantities; non-European reactions in an (by Europe) imagined socio-political

quasi-vacuum, that is, reactions to European/Western ideas, could be interpreted as transitional mental hurdles interfering with or foiling the unquestioned and predictable overseas reception, "translation", adoption and consolidation of self-evident European social and political achievements. In such a context, in his critical comments on European colonial and post-colonial thought, D. Chakrabarty refers to the particular significance of the term "translation", as a complex, non-linguistic, meta-linguistic, inter-cultural term which deserves attention.

"Translation" as a concept and process involves, for D. Chakrabarty, a dimension of abstract purity, important for a distinction between the discursive dimension(s) of a concept, on the one hand, and the way the concept is figuratively *visualised in practice* on the other. The inter-cultural acoustic communication of concepts, without *visualised practice* in support of it, is not necessarily proof for mental or intellectual communication in the meaning of meta-lingual "translation"; but he rightly, self-critically warns that, as a pitfall, the distinction could become partial and overdrawn.

European ideas were in non-Europe marked by an abstract purity; they were preached, unaware or forgetful of the fact that they were of singularly non-global, unique ("non-translated") European origin: they were products of histories embedded in the (parochial) pasts of Europe; colonial Europe considered its ideas, its culture to be globally valid. It ignored that irreducible elements, lingering into specifically European concepts, could not *ipso facto* apply to non-Europe too. He rightly points out how intertwined the sound-value of a word like 'right' or 'democracy' can be with its conceptual images, to the point of hiding them.

As ideas, concepts can and do include elements that defy (non-linguistic) translation (pp. xiii f); their (non-linguistic) "translation" may be no more than roughly achievable, from one place and/or time to another; (provincial) European thought, alleged to be universally valid, was in fact, D. Chakrabarty submits, not only parochial, provincial, but also the inevitably modified product of "particular [European] histories". (p. xiii) The "global relevance of European thought" was uncritically taken for granted. It was ignored that, "intertwined with the sound-value of a word like 'right' or 'democracy', concept-images, while being (roughly) translatable from one place to another, contained also elements that defied translation". (p. xiii et seq.) For D. Chakrabarty, "[t]o provincialize Europe was [...] to know how universalistic thought was always and already modified by particular histories". His critical remarks do not deny the possibility that some European ideas were in fact successful to develop roots in non-European soil, but other ideas, more than once, proved to be unfit, unsuitable for "translation", and transplantation. It can be added that some "translation" attempts and grafting of European socio-political ideas have ended even in peripheral Europe in catastrophes, for example, in the defunct Soviet Union, where disregard to Russian historically deep-rooted social and political values and a mis-"translation" of K. Marx' (1818-1863) critical socio-economic philosophy degenerated into an unviable socio-political ideology.

The author's critical remarks and conclusions are directly related to his biographical experience of a Europe which historically haunted debates on modernity in India. It was for him a Europe made in India, in the image of a colonizing power, but not made by Europeans alone; a Europe emerging as a

"myth" for propelling "emancipatory thought and movements in India"; a Europe seen as the original cradle, home of the modern. (Cf. p. xiv)

D. Chakrabarty's critique is equally, even if mainly implicitly, relevant to the sphere of current international relations and politics. For example, with reference to peaceful confrontations between the West and non-Europe within the framework of the United Nations (UN), why are the time-and-space bound European ideas meeting non-European resistance, or even hidden or camouflaged rejection? Can the poor impact of the UN Human Rights Council's work, as an example, be purely ascribable to unsatisfactory, unfruitful politics, or to problems of cross-cultural "translation" of human rights? Are historically conditioned diverging national "translations" hampering, in individual UN member states, the universal application of human rights? If yes, what would be the overall decisive implications for positive action for moving forward? How can, with reference to the originally European concept of (universal) human rights, the challenge of unity in diversity or diversity in unity be globally mastered? How to tackle, satisfactorily, "an abstract and universal idea characteristic of political modernity everywhere – the idea of equality, say, or of democracy or even the dignity of the human being"? (p. xii)

What valuable, inter-cultural contribution can modernist critique make to international law? Why and how does a particular, originally time-and-space bound socio-political model succeed in one place but become vulnerable and exposed to failure elsewhere? How exposed to challenge is the aprioristic assumption of a common background underlying the philosophy of the UN Charter? Answering such questions cannot be effected only in terms of a simplistic reference to the diverging will or level of development of members of the global community of mankind.

D. Chakrabarty implicitly hints that, when analysing answers to above raised questions, it is necessary to be aware of hurdles of cross-cultural, non-linguistic interpretations, non-linguistic "translations" (or "non-translations"). Such hurdles are challenges that transcend the boundaries and rigours of any accurate linguistic operation. The essence of D. Chakrabarty's point may be hinted (but not exhaustively clarified!) with reference to a situation in which, as an example, (full blooded, native, gifted) musicians faithfully reproduce the notes of a (non-native) (imported or imposed) musical composition; they succeed to re-create the printed notes acoustically, as to sounds, pitch, duration, even agogics, but miss or cannot capture the essence and/or original spirit of the imported (or imposed?) musical narrative. Implicitly invoking all that such a situation involves, the critical dimensions of D. Chakrabarty's discursive narrative deal, *inter alia*, with the weighty question as to how, in time and space, unilaterally exportable, receivable, translatable, digestible, applicable in non-Europe can be specifically European socio-political concepts.

(As an ultimate question, it may even be categorically asked whether, or why, answers to socio-political questions in non-Europe can or should, after all, refer dominantly or in the first place to Europe?) Remarks referring to human rights may equally apply, as examples, to the concepts of democracy, gender emancipation, tolerance, civil society and many more in terms of their "translation", interpretation, application in non-Europe.

Documenting, at the level of examples, the meta-lingual dimensions of "translation" (and "non-translation"), D. Chakrabarty refers to the multiple facets

of transition to capitalism in and/or outside Europe; in the light of "mythical standards", the reality of capitalist transition in the third world has been or is being treated, he points out, either incompletely or is left lacking. He argues that transition to capitalism, in or outside Europe, involves the challenge of respective "translations", that is, the way capitalist modernity is interpreted in worlds also endowed with their respective, particular thought-categories and self-understandings. Paraphrasing him, it is clear that the challenges of a conceptual pluralism cannot be overcome by generalised, catechistically historicising accounts of European history, experience and achievements. Historical (not historicising) interpretations can do better (global) justice to concepts with due regard to different contexts, not neglecting "[t]he necessarily unstable relation between an abstract idea and its concrete instantiation" at different places" (p. xii) (and different times).

For D. Chakrabarty, global capitalist transition is multi-dimensional. Europe may be historically relevant to it, but it is not an exclusive term of reference or paradigm for interpreting, understanding and directing capitalist transition(s) in the third world; manifestly incomplete research, absence of access to essential sources, archives, lack of interest, etc., have in the past produced, in Europe, a partial reality of a non-Europe where an a priori knowledge of third world capitalist transition(s) imposed itself as a necessity. Historical experience establishes that no country can be an unquestioned model to another country, though the discussion of modernity, underlining the significance of developing and 'catching up', precisely posits such models! (p. xii)

In extension of the author's critical line of thought, it may be asked as to what lessons can be extracted, with reference to modernism and diversity, from global experiences both before and after World War II (1939-1945)? Referring (critically) back to historicism, how reliable has a palette of prophetic predictions been for a possible grafting of European experience in non-Europe? In this context, D. Chakrabarty refers concomitantly, and repeatedly, to the neglect, lack of proper understanding, ignorance of the merits of non-European social and political experiences and traditions. A legacy of a nineteenth century Eurocentric historicizing (utopian) idealism made believe that the socio-economic causes and prospects of developments could be reliably analysed and quasi-empirically charted as a global road map for non-Europe. Results and achievements from Europe could be, benignly, scientifically, translated into socio-economic policies for imitative, extrapolated quasi-mechanistic application in non-Europe. However, has reference to Europe's experience as the source of social and political modernist wisdom yielded standard global solution packages?

For D. Chakrabarty, European social and political concepts and values are not principally non-exportable; as social and political fare they can be conditionally and partially digestible fare in non-Europe, with India as an example. However, a related challenge necessitates due regard to centuries old non-European experience and traditions. Disregard for them can effectively foil the purpose of any "translational" exports of socio-political ideas from (and not only from) Europe; deep-rooted non-European diversity traditions cannot be ignored and by-passed. As a provisional balance, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation in the current post-modernist world of some 194 states supports his critical views: among non-European states, less than three scores justify the "acclimatised"

applicability, to them, of originally time-and-space specific, qualitatively European concepts of state-building, mature statehood, democracy, civil society, etc.

As an important point of methodology, D. Chakrabarty explicitly as well as implicitly shows how new post/modernist concepts and critique can contribute to a better understanding and interpretation of current conflicts in non-Europe. Such concepts have to be invoked, however, beyond outdated mono-dimensional references to Europe as a treasure of social and political cure-all archaeology of ideas. (Although D. Chakrabarty does not refer to the USA, his discourse can analogously apply to the USA.) He recommends the search for additional new meta-European conceptual tools. In this respect, in the present reviewer's opinion, non-Europe is already making significant contributions, from Asia, Africa, and South America. Non-European insights are helping decode the intricacies of mutual interactions between socio-political thought and between modernity and non-European diversity. Non-European critique is dialectically scrutinising dogmatic assertions about Europe's unique achievements as commendable models. How justified is it to conclude that European theories and paradigms have, as universally valid, a legitimate anchorage in social science theories in textbooks? In the context of social and political achievements, and aspirations of the whole family of mankind, D. Chakrabarty commends systematic diagnosis of mistakes and assumptions of colonial and/or post-colonial conclusions. These are mythical relics of a past preponderance. As already mentioned, European achievements do make sense in their specific framework of reference, within their time-and-place related socio-political parameters; however, they cannot uncritically, paradigmatically commend themselves for unilateral imitation or adoption in non-Europe. External prophetic generalisations cannot be exclusively instrumental in shaping the future of non-Europe. Beyond meaningful "translation" and configuration, the universal concepts of political modernity have to be coordinated with pre-existing regional concepts, categories, institutions, and practices.

He pleads for conceptual completeness as a basis for intelligible discourse. For testing the possibilities of non-European applicability, the language used for it would have to illuminate meaning(s) which are at home in non-Europe, as complementary to European socio-political concepts and their non-European applicability. For example, how meaningful is it, if not contradictory, to assert that Europe is special and at the same time *ipso facto* fit for emulation overseas? In what ways is Europe different but at the same time imitable? What is the nature of the core of European identity on the one hand, and non-European identities on the other? How to explicate, interpret, explain the links between imaginative, narrative and symbolic languages, on the one hand, and reality or realities as experienced, respectively, in Europe and non-Europe on the other? What types of time-and-space bound qualitative concepts of non-European state and civil society exist; how can they be identified and documented?

In the sphere of linguistic matters, D. Chakrabarty goes with his remarks beyond the meta-lingual meaning of "translation" in socio-political relations between Europe and non-Europe. Expanding his remarks critically, he refers to "standard languages" developed and used by European scholars. As conceptual and terminological tools, these languages have been and continue to be essential components of scientific communication, narrative, discourse; but "standard

languages" are in fact place-bound languages generated, sanctioned and used by Europe, originally with Europe in mind. While being sufficient for scientific communication with in the first place Europe as a term of reference in mind, they are unilaterally generated and cannot avoid being restrictively European, suitable for European academic narrative and discourse. (European) "secondary languages", while supportive of Europe-bound knowledge and scientific ideology, exclude adequate, exhaustive regard and concern for comparably relevant non-European realities and their particularities. They lack specific conceptual and terminological adequacy for discourse on non-European topics and problems.

As a point of eloquence, D. Chakrabarty comments on how, with philosopher and economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) from Scotland, and Indian poet and philosopher Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and others from India as examples, proper linguistic approaches can better address, relate, mutually "translate", interpret and in a way bilaterally complement the worlds of thinking in Europe and non-Europe.

Dealing with modernity at the level of (earlier) colonial and (currently) global encounter, he pleads convincingly for a semantic re-examination and re-assessment of "standard language" concepts like rationality, universalism, etc., in their originally European meanings. Is their applicability adequate for the needs of current global comparative and other meanings? The unilateral European input into and formalisation of the conceptual, terminological and syntactic structures of the social and political science languages have a blank margin for global extension, inclusion and completion. The Europe-specific nature of ideas and their external linguistic "shells" by-pass and exclude the existence and adequate linguistic interpretation of problems specific to non-Europe; the incompleteness of unilaterally generated, Europe-related scientific languages becomes more cognisable and problematic, as the neglected consequence of the fact that time- and space-bound European ideas and concepts undergo mutations and "vitiation" while "travelling", "migrating" and "transplanting" themselves at varying speeds around our world, without proper response and adjustment to the specific challenges and needs of non-Europe.

For substantiating his views with examples, D. Chakrabarty invokes the multidimensional reception of and critical reaction(s) to European social thought and modernism in India. (His reference to Europe and India enriches his dialectical discourse with a worthwhile dimension of intellectual autobiography, as a welcome hint as to the roots and sources of his critical inter-cultural approach.) "Categories or words borrowed from European histories had found new homes in our (Indian) practices." "We all knew, practically, what these words meant without having to put them under any kind of analytic microscope." (p. ix)

The author's "early [and basically theoretical] unease" "about the tension between the European [provincial] roots of Marx's thoughts and their [alleged and taken for granted] global significance" "was made more acute" by his experience of "physical displacement" from his everyday life in India and exposure to historical differences. He diagnostically defines "the experience of migration" as "a profound combination of loss and gain, the opening up of new possibilities that do not necessarily compensate for the ones that get closed". Mythical Europe conditioned his "dislodgment from [...] everyday life [in India] in ways that were both metaphysical and physical", as words "familiar from everyday use" "now

grew analytical wings, soaring into the level that in Barthes' definitions [...] would be called 'second- or third order' meta-languages." Very worthwhile to note: "[t]he more I tried to imagine relations in Indian factories through categories made available by Marx (1818–1883) and his followers, the more I became aware of a tension that arose from the profoundly – and one might say, parochially – European origins of Marx's thoughts and their undoubted international significance." It might be added that European academic "introductory" or "general" treatises and textbooks on sociology, politics etc. could be "de-provincialized", by also referring in them to relevant thinkers and concepts from non-Europe.

Referring back to the extensive, multifaceted meaning of "provincializing" for the author, he may be quoted; "[t]o 'provincialize' Europe was precisely to find out how and in what sense European ideas that were universal were also, at one and the same time, drawn from very particular intellectual and historical traditions that could not claim any universal validity. It was to ask a question about how thought was related to place. Can thought[s] transcend places of their origin?" (p. xiii) Was political and social Europe a genuinely underlying factor, a *sine qua non*, for India's social and political awakening in modern times? Or do places leave their imprint on thought in such a way as to call into question the idea of purely abstract "universals" as "highly unstable" figures, necessary placeholders "in our attempt to think through questions of modernity"? It is worthwhile to refer again to D. Chakrabarty's reply in the negative to the following question: can a country be an *a priori* dogmatic model to another country, "though the discussion of modernity that thinks in terms of 'catching up' precisely posits such models"? (p. xii) He hints at a dilemma when he observes that "[t]here is nothing like the 'cunning of reason' to ensure that we all converge at the same terminal point in history in spite of our apparent, historical differences." (p. xii)

Some readers may find rather dominant references to India, as the place for documenting the author's arguments, to be methodologically incomplete; but would the author's critical discourse have been better substantiated by referring to a broader, global palette of examples reflecting subtle time- and space-conditioned differences in political and social developments in Europe, on the one hand, and global non-Europe on the other? The validity of the author's submissions would not be enhanced by referring to a greater number of examples beside those from India. His pioneering narrative and discourse are in the first place, with India as a cogent example, starting points or questions pointing to research, not short-lived answers and/or conclusions. His main thesis, focusing on Europe and non-Europe, is that in the age of modernism, complex non-European social and political developments cannot be decoded by invoking grand European theories only. Many more relevant examples beside India, in support of his fundamental points, would have made, so to speak, the woods possibly denser without helping to see the tree(s) better.

D. Chakrabarty points out how principles of humaneness, specific to Indian social and political tradition, have existed and can be identified as such, that is, without reference to the legacy and categories of European Enlightenment. He implies how research in the first place in India itself can be capable to illuminate possibilities for peaceful, synergetic coordination between complex modernism, on the one hand, and diversity as a legacy of the past on the other.

Equally valuable is D. Chakrabarty's reference to the growing significance of subaltern studies. A relatively fresh area of enquiry, subaltern studies focus on deciphering the significance of "the small [but legitimate] voices" of history, either from (i) lower income (not "socially lower"!) groups within states or (ii) currently and progressively active legions of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in international relations. The "input" of subaltern groups is conditioning, *inter alia*, the emergence of new domestic and international, political concepts and thereto related legal norms; they constitute topical contributions to efforts to reduce the "shore-less" miseries of the human condition and to endow life and global society with better human quality.

The book's style does not lend itself to fast reading; but a slow, detailed, careful reading of the author's positively provocative style will be rich in rewards, generating, in the reader's mind, new ideas with new questions pointing to inter-disciplinary, inter-cultural research, dialogue. As a reference reading text, it is rich in direct and implied questions on intricate inter-cultural interactions, gaps in communication, etc. As a discourse on basic themes of socio-political modernism and cultural diversity, it is more a starting point than a store of conclusions on debate dealing with cardinal themes pointing to research in inter-cultural and inter-societal studies. His dialectic, constructive discourse is keen on generating lasting questions and not dogmatic, ephemeral answers. It is free of dogmatic conclusions comparable, as an example, with the historicised (inevitable?) clash of civilisations.

The index could have been much more detailed; it in no way does full justice to the rich, interlinked, interwoven and mutually relevant contents of the book.

In (and by) "Provincializing Europe", D. Chakrabarty is submitting that a myth affecting the rest of the world as "provincial" (non-Europe) is not tenable. His critique fertilises in novel ways discourse on global sociology and politics; it points to the need for further developments in search of new conceptual and other ancillary tools of socio-political critique. For those interested in the challenges of inter-cultural and inter-societal studies, the book is a major contribution to opening many doors and windows for extending the horizons of global discourse.

With his (below quoted) concluding words, D. Chakrabarty in no way devalues European contributions to global social and political thought; he objects to uncritical trust in them, as sources of globally valid paradigms. He diagnoses how European thought has been adorned with a claim of "naturalness" (or Kantian imperativeness) while being in fact, like other ideas, in the first place time-and-space confined ideological products.

In the global age of modernism/post-modernism, European social and political thought will co-exist and compete with non-European social and political thought, in search of a global civil society marked by a creative tension between (i) an underlying idea of unitary purpose, and (ii) its many co-existential and centrifugal variations. In support of such a submission, Paul Ricoeur's (1913-2005) relevant thoughts may be paraphrased, concerning culture and civilisations, history and truth: when we discover that not one but several cultures exist, we reject, unless proven, the validity of an exclusive, self-imposing narrative – be it illusory or real – as a monopoly. When we realise and accept that *others* exist, we realise and accept that we are but "others among others." When all unilateral, mythical meanings and purposes disappear, it becomes possible to wander through civilisations as variations of a core idea.

While re-assessing Europe in a "provincializing" light, D. Chakrabarty has been no less re-assessing and "de-provincializing" non-Europe, as an exercise in a modernist dismantlement of a hierarchically historicized relationship between (ex-empire) Europe as the generating centre of social and political ideas, on the one hand, and non-Europe on the other. While opting for clearing the arena of creative discourse from one-sided obsolete myths, he is aware that new myths will emerge, because "critical thought fights prejudice and yet carries prejudice at the same time". All critical thought is circumscribed by the dimensions of specific place and time. With a touch of optimism it may be added thereto that in an *ad libitum* process, with no end, new pictures of the "socio-political globe" may in the meaning of Hegelian dialectics evolve, on the way to a new landscape and geometry of relationships, reflecting paradigms of coordination of modernity and diversity. In it, social and political ideas from Europe and non-Europe can, in an atmosphere of mutual, constructive critique, peacefully compete as equals from equal "provinces". D. Chakrabarty implicitly refers to this possibility as a chance, when at the end of his discourse, as an epilogue on reason and the critique of historicism, expresses his global credo, as follows:

"from what has been said, provincializing Europe cannot ever be a project of shunning European thought. For at the end of European imperialism, European thought is a gift to us. We can talk of provincializing [Europe] only in an anti-colonial spirit of gratitude";

and whatever meaning "provincializing" in the book's title may carry, "De-Provincializing Non-Europe" is a parallel, contextually fitting implicit title for the book. It meaningfully complements "Provincializing Europe".

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