CHAPTER 2:
Towards a Minor Cosmopolitanism

It might seem ironical, in quite a commonsensical way, that one should be speaking about cosmopolitanism right after situatedness, that one should be discussing universalism in the context of regional identity. For, aren't they antonyms of each other? To speak of cosmopolitanism demands of us that we make clear our coordinates in its ever expanding landscape. Pauline Kleingeld, for example, lists out six types of cosmopolitanism that were prevalent in late-eighteenth century Germany. It is not her claim that these six types exhaust the kinds of cosmopolitanism, but that at least these six varieties, distinguishable from each other, did exist. These types were (i) moral cosmopolitanism which emphasised the belonging of all humans to a single moral community, (ii) “International Federative Cosmopolitanism”, which concerned itself with world citizenship, (iii) cosmopolitan law, which was advocated by Kant and concerned itself with the relations of states and individuals belonging to a foreign state, (iv) cultural cosmopolitanism, which advocated a view of world history as the narrative of a single human essence realizing itself differently in different locales, (v) market cosmopolitanism, which trusts the pioneering market forces to usher in a reign of world peace, and (vi) romantic cosmopolitanism, which emphasized shared beliefs, traditions and aesthetic occupations (Kleingeld, 1999). Robert Fine (2007) similarly calls for a distinction between “cosmopolitan outlook” and “cosmopolitan condition”. While the outlook is about normative values of living together, the condition just refers to the empirical
situations available, though he is cautious to note that such a categorization of the present moment is itself part of regulative principles which govern our terminologies. On a different register, even within discussing the cosmopolitan outlook, Fine distinguishes three aspects — “its theoretical moment (or way of engaging in concept formation in various social scientific disciplines); its empirical moment (or way of understanding the social phenomena of the modern age); and its normative moment (or way of judging what people do)” (Fine, 2007: 134).

Right at the outset let me make it clear that by cosmopolitanism we designate a project dedicated to an idea of democracy. Thus it concerns itself with the second and third varieties in Kleingeld, those which concern themselves with legal institutions for world citizenship as well as those which define the relations between states and foreign individuals. In Fine’s distinctions we are placed at the theoretical moment, i.e., what we aim at is to arrive at a theory of cosmopolitanism that would make itself relevant in a postcolonial context. For those like Mouffe (2013) who insist on the uselessness of the term cosmopolitanism itself considering the so many different meanings that have been attributed to the word this would be another corruption of the word. I would however like to argue that the word still holds good, if not for any other reason, for the fact that no other word can be more appropriate given the range of discussions already available on the subject. However, in my defence I submit that I would like to call this cosmopolitanism a ‘minor cosmopolitanism’.

A survey is in order: (i) to delineate the multiple trajectories and nodal points of the very different ideas called ‘cosmopolitanism’ within our coordinates, (ii) to account for the need for divergence from established cosmopolitanisms, (iii) to define the new cosmopolitanism.
This chapter is dedicated to those ends.

The Kantian Sublimation

The word cosmopolitanism derives from the Greek words κόσμος (order; world-order; world) and πολίτης (citizen). The idea, first propounded by Stoics and Sophists, was a worldview which asserted the common citizenship of all humans in the world.¹ The concept was central to the eighteenth century French Enlightenment thinkers. Though dating to the classical period, the concept of cosmopolitanism acquires a definitive institutional form in thoughts of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It is to Kant that we shall turn in our analysis of contemporary cosmopolitanism, for it is Kant who is our direct intellectual predecessor in times of the regime of human rights, war against terrorism, and pre-emptive strike on Weapons of Mass Destruction. It is to Kant we should turn to understand the notion of a world that is not-yet but always-becoming.

In his Critique of Pure Reason, written in 1781, Kant explains the laws of nature as necessary principles logically prior to and independent of experience. It was from these a priori principles that one can form a coherent and ordered uniformity of experience. The a priori principles and ideas of reason are thus, tautologically, independent and prior to experience. The idea of duty is such a Kantian a priori with regard to the moral status of the actions of humans. An action, which is issued out of the free will of the human beings, can either be moral or immoral. A moral action is so because it is done out of duty and not desire. These duties are called so because they are “categorical imperatives”. The

categorical imperative enjoins us to act in a way such that our actions could become Universal Law. The second formulation of the categorical imperative is to act in such a way that one treats humanity as an end and not as a means. The next imperative is to act as if one were "a law-making member of a universal kingdom of ends" (Kant quoted in Reiss, 1989: 19) Put this way, Man should be his own law-giver. On the contrary, desire, or happiness, cannot be the basis of our actions, or by extension the general law, because they are in principle heteronomous – they depend on consequence, and that too capricious.

Kant's political thoughts could be directly based on his philosophical thoughts abbreviated above. As he would write three years later in his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (1989b [1784]), it is the institution of the moral man that is the end of the universal history. In "Perpetual Peace" (1989a [1795]) Kant makes a distinction between democracy and Republicanism in favour of the latter as the form of governance required for the moral end. In a democracy the rule of the majority would mean a fusion of legislation, executive and judiciary subject to the whim of the majority. This whim, again, is heteronomous. The Republican dispensation, on the other hand, is one in which there is a separation of powers into legislative, executive and judiciary, in which the laws have to be in the service of rights, which assures a polity run in lines of the categorical imperative. By "right" Kant means the situation in which one's possession, not just material but also mental, is deemed to be so by the choice of action of the others too. Rights, for Kant, is what regulates the external relation of possession between men in a society. In his *Metaphysical Elements of Right* (1797), Kant considered human agency and personality to be dependent on a system which could permit the use of useful objects. Every human, by virtue of being human, possesses rights. In order to obtain a situation of relative respect for each other's rights men should enter a civil society bound by law. Thus civil society is necessary
for humanity in Kant’s definition of human agency. For the continuation of law and to keep
anarchy at abeyance, one should follow the law set by the sovereign. One should not rebel,
for rebellion would bring anarchy and therefore loss of humanity or would only be setting up
a new sovereign for an old one. One should however engage in public use of reason, that is,
engage in criticism of the law so as to improve it, without aiming for rebellion.

Kant’s views of the mode of cosmopolitanism arises from the separation of the form
and the content. The Republican form as that which assures peace in the polity is imposed by
law and is not dependent on the individual good-will of the citizens. If at all, it depends on
the individual good-will of the sovereign (considering that the first Republican revolution,
Paris 1789, was still a few years away). However, even the evil sovereign is no cause for
rebellion\(^2\), for even the asocial qualities in men, the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*,
was nature’s way to bring about the development of the capacities in men towards an era of
perpetual peace.\(^3\)

In his “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose”, ([1784] 1989b),
Kant is concerned with what could be the greater purpose of nature with a creature it has
willed with Reason. As mentioned earlier, in Kantian teleology, this ultimate goal of history,
its very end, is the realization of the moral man. Kant proposes that the full realization of the

\(^2\) And thus even the French Revolution is against the categorical imperative except that, as Kant justified the
Revolution, that the Emperor had already proclaimed it to be a Citizen-State and therefore there was no
revolution at all!

\(^3\) Other than the sources mentioned in the text, the section so far was also based on Reiss (1989) and “Property
retrieved on 16/11/2013
human potential is only possible in a society. However, man is as asocial as he is social. Kant resolves this tension of the asocial sociality by attributing to this complexity a hidden purpose – of it being the process through which a civil constitution at the level of polity is established. But the enforcement of any law requires a strong sovereign, who is again a man, and therefore subject to all passions of desire observable in a common man. There does not seem to be any solution to this, as man is made of “warped wood” (1989b: 46). However, no civil law or sovereign is capable of bringing peace on earth unless states relate to each other on foundations of reason. One should possibly surmise that the exhaustion of war on people would lead to a state of peace. Kant advances nature’s role a bit further – that war itself is nature’s way of bringing about the state of peace. Thus Kant comes to his eighth proposition:

The history of the human race as a whole can be regarded as the realisation of a hidden plan of nature to bring about an internally – and for this purpose also externally – perfect political constitution as the only possible state within which all natural capacities of mankind can be developed completely. (Kant, 1989b: 50; emphasis in original)

The most striking factor about Kant’s cosmopolitan purpose is what little role it has for human beings. Nature plays out a scheme which is unobtainable in its individual human actors, unlike in bees and beavers. But it is the very purposiveness in parts – in bees and beavers – that nature exhibits which is the supreme proof for Kant that in its whole too – the human being with free will – nature should hold for itself a purpose (Kant, 1989b; 48). However, not all human being is completely unaware of this purposive nature. Kant is aware
of nature's supreme goals. Philosophers are. In his concluding proposition, the ninth one, Kant characterises his own effort at working out the universal history as an act which furthers the purpose of nature itself (Kant, 1989b; 51). Thus man is not completely barred of agency. He can, by the very act of delineating the Idea (which in Kant's sense would mean "a regulative idea") of a universal history can will it to happen. Thus Kant's scheme can be said to have a telos in the sense that nature has a 'unifying principle' but not in the sense of an assured destination (Kleingeld, 2009: 175-6). Barbara Herman (2009) reads the Idea in this manner of willing and calls it the "proleptic effect" (154) and further demonstrates the teleology as human driven such that for the institution of the moral man it is necessary for the nature to become human habitat (159). That is, according to Kant (and Hegel), rights is a necessary requirement for humans through which they can raise intelligent claims against each other thus becoming bounded selves. This is what constitutes the self and the other. Thus civil society as the realm of rights is necessary. However, as long as members of the civil society accept law out of fear, they are being unreasonable, and thus nature has still not inhabited them. The task that Kant has taken upon himself is to make clear to the people why the laws have to be accepted out of respect – they are beneficial to man. Once this

---

4 Compared to lawyers, for example – "And they may boast that they know men (which is certainly to be expected, since they have to do with so many of them), although they do not know man and his potentialities, for this requires a higher anthropological vantage-point" (Kant 1989a: 119).

5 Herman does raise the question if this could be the only possible way of achieving civil society, and if the case be so then if it could be imposed from without. While Kant's answer would be a categorical "no" to the latter question, Herman states that it does not mean one should not benefit from such a civil society. In her opinion, for Kant the teleology meant that the fact that it is possible this way in one part of the world made it universally a possibility (Herman, 2009:164).
knowledge is internalized, it follows that universal history can be led to end in the moral man (Herman, 2009).  

The elitist nature of the surveying Kantian philosopher is in sync with Kantian thoughts on politics. While Kant upholds freedom and equality for everyone, he also maintains that law-making, on the other hand, should not be a right for everyone. Only those who are independent could make laws. These independent citizens are the active citizens, while those dependent on them are passive citizens. However, any law by the active citizens are to be enacted and carried out as if the passive citizens too were participating.

In “Perpetual Peace” Kant is concerned with three rights – the political, the international, and the cosmopolitan. In the realm of political rights, as discussed above, he identifies the necessity of a Republican constitution with a clear separation of powers between the legislative and the executive as necessary for a cosmopolitan community. The Republican constitution within the states is a definitive article for international peace. Kant opines that it is better if a state is ruled by smaller number of people, and that representative form is the only possible form of a Republican system. Democracy, as in a system in which the people is simultaneously the legislative and the executive, is a logical contradiction.

---

6 The Kantian notion of the sublime, as explicated in Critique of Judgement (1790), suggests a movement from nature to human – from the seeming impotence in the face of the magnitude of nature to the realization of nature’s harmony with rationality. Hence our subheading.

7 Hegel found little reason to be so optimistic. He pointed out that though Republican, the decision of war and peace usually lay with a ‘supreme commander’. Further, driving a wedge to Kant’s central thesis of the correspondence between cosmopolitanism and rationality, Hegel argued that it is rational to be patriotic, for in a Republic rationality itself is achieved through conformity with the state’s institutions. Thus the individuality of the state is dear to the individual as one identifies with the state. A Republic can resort to war to settle internal unrest. See Fine (2007)
because it would not explain the distinction between the accuser and the accused. Seyla Benhabib points out that Kant laid the foundations for a post-Westphalian legal order by conceptualising a move of sovereignty from unfettered authority over everyone and thing within a territory, to a sovereignty that has to be legitimated by adherence to certain values and principles like human rights, rule of law, etc. (Benhabib, 2006: 23)

In the realm of international rights, Kant pronounces six preliminary articles which are pre-requisites for perpetual peace, among which are articles which require states to end all hostilities; not to acquire any other state by inheritance, exchange, purchase or gift; not to involve in covert operations or involve in the domestic issues of another state, etc. The states should enter a federation. However, this federation would not be of coercive nature, but more mediatory. A federation of states is to be preferred over a universal monarchy, for the latter will ultimately turn into a soulless despotism. However, we are lucky enough to have passionate differences:

It is nonetheless the desire of every state (or its ruler) to achieve lasting peace by thus dominating the whole world, if at all possible. But nature wills it otherwise, and uses two means to separate the nations and prevent them from intermingling – linguistic and religious differences. These may certainly occasion mutual hatred and provide pretexts for wars, but as culture grows and men gradually move towards greater agreement over their principles, they lead to mutual understanding and peace. And unlike that universal despotism which saps all men’s energies and end in the graveyard of freedom, this peace
is created and guaranteed by an equilibrium of forces and a most vigorous rivalry. (Kant 1989a: 113-4; emphasis in original)\(^8\)

As is clear, Kant's account is teleological (arguably in the sense of "idea" discussed above), and is dependent on what he calls "providence"\(^9\), and advocates that even if man is crooked and self-serving by nature, this very inclination of man can bring about the ultimate institution of the moral world.

It is the third right, introduced in "Perpetual Peace", what he calls the "cosmopolitan right", that is of much interest in hindsight of a world of labour migration, asylum seekers and sans papiers.\(^10\) Benhabib (2006) points out that it was with Kant's third right that individuals, in their capacity as being individuals, acquired a new status of right-bearing

\(^8\) Robert Fine finds in Kant's cosmopolitanism a profound attempt to resolve the contradiction between the universality of the rights of man and the fact that it nevertheless has to be realized in the state. The turn of events after the initial euphoria in the post Revolution France can also be accounted to be a factor. See Fine (2007: 28).

\(^9\) "In the mechanism of nature, of which man (as a sensory being) is a part, there is evident a fundamental form on which its very existence depends. This form becomes intelligible to us only if we attribute it to design of a universal creator who has determined it in advance. We call this predetermining influence providence..." (Kant, 1989a: 108)

\(^10\) Kleingeld (2009) points out inter alia three major differences between the Idea and Kant's later writings on cosmopolitanism – "Perpetual Peace" and "Metaphysics of Morals": (i) while in "Idea" Kant speaks about a federation of states with coercive role, in "Perpetual Peace" he speaks of a weaker federation. Kant then proceeds the idea of strong federation from such a loose coalition, for it would contradict his own cosmopolitan principle if states were to be forced to enter coercive formations. (ii) While in "Idea" Kant is not clear how to resolve the issue of passion in man (in sovereign, especially), in later writings he believes even the self-inclinations of man will cancel out each other in a Republic, and (iii) Kant establishes a third category of public right – the cosmopolitan right – in "Perpetual Peace". This right refers to the right of individuals with regard to other states.
persons in a global civil society. Kant dwells on this the least, but the recalcitrance has only
made it more potent. First of all, he defines it as the right of individuals with regards to
states (which is synonymous with peoples in Kant whenever the discussion is on
international scale – Kleingeld, 2009) to conditions of hospitality alone. By hospitality he
means that the stranger would have the right to not be treated with hostility as long as he
behaves in a peaceable manner, and that “he can indeed be turned away, if this can be done
without causing his death” (Kant, 1989a: 105-6). The stranger cannot claim to be entertained
as a guest, but the fact of communal possession of the earth’s surface allows him to make
himself present and attempt to enter into relations with native inhabitants.11 Kant speaks
about the conditions favourable to the cosmopolitan right – that trade and wealth is after all
the biggest asset of a state, and this requires hospitality.

Kant does not have much to say about the third right, but the cosmopolitan right has
turned out to be of great import in times of the two globalizations – of capital and of labour.
In the final section of “Perpetual Peace”, where Kant formulates his ‘another transcendental
and affirmative principle of public right’, “All maxims which require publicity if they are not
to fail in their purpose can be reconciled both with right and with politics” (1989a: 130;
emphasis in the original), the subsection on the maxims of cosmopolitan right is to be noted
for its “silence” – “for its maxims are easy to formulate and assess on account of its analogy
with international right” (128). The maxims on international right can be briefly said to be of
the message that any act of silent usurpation, subterfuge or breaking of promise is bound to

11 Thus Jeremy Waldron’s conflation of Kantian civil society (a resolution of internal conflict) with Kantian
cosmopolitan right (which involves individuals in foreign lands) does not stand scrutiny because even though
hospitality is a right, it is limited to visitation, except in cases where it will lead to the stranger’s death. See
Waldron (2000)
fail if it is made public, and insofar as it cannot be made public, it is not in keeping with the
concept of right, for right is ultimately to be publicly acknowledged. It is against the
backdrop of this final maxim that one should assess the relationship between Kant’s
for Kantian anti-colonialist stance in “Perpetual Peace”, Gideon Baker (2011) has, drawing
from Niesen and Hunter, argued that Kant nevertheless saw the cosmopolitan right as
ultimately paving way for a global bounded community with no outsides. In this scheme the
cosmopolitan right is just an initial step for the resettlement of property claims on a universal
level, such that a global civil society is in the offering. Thus ultimately, the right of
hospitality is a necessary current requirement for its being superfluous in the future.

Baker’s position does not tally with Kant’s statements though. The Kant of
“Perpetual Peace” is clear in his preference for a “federal union” rather than a “universal
monarchy” (113). If, as Kant states in Metaphysics of Morals, civil society is the making
public of the societally acknowledged individual possessions evolved out of an age of
opposing claims, then surely the possessions acknowledged are so in the process of
deliberation and settlement, rather than a priori. In that light, Kant’s claim of the right of
hospitality to be based on the “right to communal possession of the earth’s surface” is not be
read as the stranger’s yet-to-be-settled claim on a strange land. Rather, this particular right,
by the very nature of it being given a priori rather than subject to the formation of a civil
society, thereby thus asserts Kant’s statist focus – that the communal possession of land is a
pre-given, but to be settled at the level of the state under the aegis of the sovereign, because
any interpretation of it that either undercuts the sovereign or elevates it from the level of the
state is bound to contradict the final maxim of the requirement of publicity. A global
settlement of possession of earth is only possible under conditions of what Kant would call "soulless despotism".

It might be instructive to consider Kantian teleology as teleology itself and not as prolepsis if we consider along with this the interchangeability between "states" and "peoples", as Kleingeld (2009) notes. Considering that Kant explicitly mentions irreducible cultural differences ("religious" and "linguistic") as being a guaranteed impediment for universal monarchy (and hence a boon), it is clear that Kant's conception of Right is not culturally specific. Rather, civil society is an(y) arrangement that comes into being as a settlement for mutually agreeing upon possession. Kant is clear that this agreement is bound to happen, teleologically, but at the same time clear that there is bound to be cultural differences forever – the implication being that civil society is not an exportable product, for it is universal, and so is the case with the Right bearing citizen. Thus, what we find in Kant is not "reducing subjects to bearers of rights" (Baker, 2011: 113) in the sense of defining them through the lens of a particular culture. Even though it could be argued, even if in the absence of a single empirical evidence, that not all cultures are individualistic, it could also be argued as vehemently, given the evidence, that Kant does not will it to be either. That is, the idea of a universal civil society *apropos* Kant does not require foreign intervention. The state is the site of particularity in Kant, at least of religious and linguistic, and is our guarantee against "soulless despotism".

Though concerned with the framework of institutions, their mandates and modes, Kant is ultimately concerned with morals, that is, a situation conducive to the setting up of laws according to which man ought to behave. It is directed towards equality and freedom for all, and it is in such actions which are duty bound (as in obeying the categorical
imperatives) not just in action but also in thought that Kant finds the moral man. An integral part of this process is ethical – it is issued from those in the power taking into account those without. Thus we have two streams branching off from Kant, often interacting, but at certain times reclusive too – one, which concerns itself with institutional arrangements, and the other, that of ethics towards the silent/silenced other.

The Neo-Kantians

The global conditions of the post-1989 world have given a spur to Kantian thoughts. Though the celebrated end of history, through such phrases such “clash of civilization”, has only been a farcical rehash of cold war propaganda and vocabulary, other developments have caught the attention of the world. The increased rate of movement following the formation of the European Union, the adoption of common currencies, the new global order of financial structural adjustments, the humanitarian military intervention in the Balkan crisis, the pre-emptive war and accusation of “weapons of mass destruction” against Iraq and many other incidents have caught the old vocabulary of national borders and sovereignty in for a fresh look. Immanuel Kant, who never left his native city of Königsberg in Prussia except on very few occasions, has rose to pre-eminence in the Anglophone world as one seeks the language to make sense of a new politics in the post-historical world.

What characterizes the neo-Kantians is their stress on the legal-institutional structures of governance and on the constitution as well as the optimism about a civil-society-in-

---

dialogue in ensuring a just world\textsuperscript{13}. Jürgen Habermas’s idea of a public sphere which takes as its prototype the decentralized freedom and informality of a café is one such version of a Kantian civil society (Habermas, 1989). Though Habermas himself is aware of the contemporary monopolization of opinions by political parties, he is still deservedly criticized for his overlooking of the empirical fact that individuals cannot be counted as the basic unit in their neutral form, rather the individual has to be taken as a complex of identification whose discrimination from the society is then overdetermined (Fraser, 1990). Similarly, in the context of global civil society as manifested during times of natural and manmade crises, Lillie Chouliaraki (2013) has built on Silverstone’s notion of ‘close-distance’ (Silverstone, 2006). The politics of this preferred solidarity is the active and continuous assertion of the ‘common and shared’ world, what is called in Arendt (1990 [1958]) ‘agonistic’ solidarity, while not thereby mistaking a common condition for all humanity, or indeed an encompassing ‘humanity’.\textsuperscript{14} This solidarity requires a judgement that identifies solidarity to be a practice of the public world than a private inclination. Solidarity – for whom, why and how – becomes a question of public deliberation in this politics. The imagination is what makes possible the humanization of the vulnerable other – by not reducing “them” to common fate as “us”, through our capacity to stand in the other’s shoes, through the inclusion of the voice of the sufferer. Ultimately, a new politics of cosmopolitan solidarity should bring to the fore “the political question of injustice that can become the object of our collective judgement and empathetic imagination.” (Chouliaraki, 2013: 92)

\footnote{13} Unlike Kant, whose basic unit of cosmopolitanism was the State.

\footnote{14} Kant himself never gave into the delusion of assuming equal living conditions for all, as can be seen in his division of those who can make laws and the others. However, the \textit{a priori} principles meant that those who can make laws could make them arrogating the experience of those who cannot too.
Focusing on governance, David Held (2013) argues for a new world governance structure in which funding, which undercuts the efficacy of the international regulations, is not the benevolence of a few powers. His vision for funding is a sort of “carbon fine” in which the nations have to pay in terms of their carbon print. Seyla Benhabib (2006) focusses on the institutional structures of the state. According to her, the liberal democracies have a dual paradoxical structure. On the one hand, being liberal would mean state’s commitments to certain principles on humanity and human rights which are considered *a priori*. However, the very idea of democracy leaves legislation and the choice of adherence to principles to the nation. On the other hand, the very institution of a democracy, considering that it is popular sovereignty, requires clarity on who constitute themselves as a nation – who is the “we” in “we, the people”. This indicates necessary exclusions at the civic level and thereby different status among people inhabiting a territory. Benhabib distinguishes between three kinds of inhabitants in a territory – citizens, second class citizens (Benhabib’s examples are women, workers, slaves, tribal people) and those belonging to a different bounded community and are categorized as “alien” or “foreign”. It is in the negotiation of these two paradoxes, the shifts between “rights of full membership, democratic voice and territorial residence” (Benhabib, 2006: 35) that Benhabib locates the new politics of cosmopolitanism. It is thus an act of mediation between the moral and the ethical (of negotiating belonging and non-belonging to a community) and the moral and the political (of negotiating the privileges and limits of the *demos* – those who are authorized to determine the contents of democratic law). In the contemporary world the three assumptions of citizenship – of belonging to an *ethnos*, of privileges of political membership, and of social rights and benefits have been disaggregated from each other. Thus there could be citizens who do not belong to the ethnos – foreigners with social rights, and so on. The task of cosmopolitanism is to engage in an ongoing
shifting of boundaries within the two complexes, thus engaging in a "jurisgenerative politics" in which the disaggregated citizenship rights are advocated along normative lines. This task of negotiation is called "democratic reiteration" in which citizens as well as those who are excluded from citizenship engage in repositing, resignifying and reappropriating already existing covenants of law (70). She thus extends the agency as well as moral obligation/authority that Kant had bestowed only upon the "active" citizens to the "passive" ones too. Benhabib is aware that not all demands by the people are of normative nature. However, "democratic iterations" signify only the normative demands. In the absence of a world-nation, the ontological status of cosmopolitan norms have to be derived from their "morally constructive" nature (72), and has to rely on "the power of democratic forces within global civil society" (71; emphasis in original) for its implementation.

In *Inhuman Conditions* (2006) Pheng Cheah argues against this version of cosmopolitanism. His argument against new cosmopolitanism is that it is essentially no different from the old Kantian cosmopolitanism in its basic modalities: "a world federation as the legal-political institutional basis of cosmopolitanism as a form of right; the historical basis of cosmopolitanism in world-trade; the idea of a global public sphere; and the importance of cosmopolitan culture in instilling a sense of belonging to humanity" (22). The primary fault of the new cosmopolitanism has been in its pitching itself against nationalism (like Benhabib's scepticism on majority). However, nationalism cannot be historically understood to be against cosmopolitanism, for in examples like the career of Mazzini, Lenin et al. nation provided basic unit of cosmopolitanism. Furthermore, nationalism and cosmopolitanism cannot be thought of as inherently regressive and progressive respectively. Genuine cosmopolitanism has to be divorced from capital cosmopolitanism, just like capital penetration has to be differentiated from labour migration. Nationalism could be the socialist
cosmopolitan project when it struggles against imperial capital. The state is drifting away from the nation under pressure from the cosmopolitan capital. The cosmopolitan programme today should be to strengthen the bond between the nation and the state so that they become mutually indistinguishable from each other.

Cheah’s partner in framing this new cosmopolitics, Bonnie Honig, similarly disapproves of the neo-Kantian cosmopolitans. Honig (2006) finds fault with two implications in Benhabib’s analysis of cosmopolitanism: one, the paramountcy of the juridico-legal order, and two, the optimism that the world is inevitably improving in its inclusivity. Honig presents an alternative to Benhabib’s neo-Kantian cosmopolitanism and calls it “agonistic cosmopolitics”. This alternative seeks to address two blindspots of the Kantian variety of cosmopolitanism – its overrating of the legal-juridical and its grounding in the (narrow) present. Agonistic cosmopolitics seeks the agents of change in political movements “in which a future is claimed on behalf of peoples and rights that are not yet and may never be” (Honig, 2006: 117). In a similar vein, Jeremy Waldron’s (2006) sardonic appeal is to shift our lenses from majestic events in world politics those “high-frequency but lower-profile uses and repetitions of norms in the mundane density of ordinary life” – international trade, currency standards, flight and customs regulations, etc. (Waldron, 2006; 97). The ontological status of cosmopolitan norms is not an issue once we realize its inhabitation of the everyday interactions among friends and strangers where roll-call is not the norm, and that these everyday interactions as custom emerge themselves into positive law.

Cheah’s arguments (mainly supported by Saskia Sassen’s studies on globalization) against postnationalism, the main architect of which has been Arjun Appadurai, merits our
attention and approval. The spread of global trade or communication does not guarantee a cosmopolitan vision. The labour force is not yet abstract, but is ordered and regulated on national basis. But these facts does not acquit Cheah of neglecting a crucial aspect of nationalism, even those bourgeois nationalisms Lenin supported for being anti-imperialists (Cheah, 2006: 28) – that nationalism, inspite or especially in postcolonial contexts, is culturally defined into selves and others. Nationalism defines its particularity via cultural self-definition, while adhering to principles of ethics and governance. While Cheah asks us to differentiate between globalizing capital and genuine cosmopolitanism, he is himself inadequately cautious of the hazards of such a conflation. In Cheah's repeated assertion of nation-state being the bulwark against globalization, exactly because he neglects the cultural element of postcolonial nationalism, he could neither see nor even imagine a possibility in which capital globalization can join hands with jingoist national aspirations – that nationalism could be the catchword for not just weapons manufacturers but even soft drink corporates. It is to one's peril if one mistakes the gate-keeping on "foreign culture" for a check on foreign investment in projects of exploitation of the nation's voiceless and the othered. Cheah conflates class with nation, forgetting that nation itself is a site of class and cultural struggle. This then brings to our attention the question of minority cultures within nations. How could cosmopolitanism relate to national minorities?

Jeremy Waldron is committed to finding a Kantian solution to the question of cultural toleration within the nation-state (Waldron, 1995). Although it is creative freedom on Waldron's part to interpret Kant's statement on pre-civil society asociality, "each will have

15 The obverse of Cheah's argument would be to point out that the juridico-legal measures doesn't matter, because people are imagining newer worlds through images made possible by globalization, even though the cosmopolitan theory is still to catch up with these. See Moore (2013). For other accounts of lived cosmopolitanisms, see Nowicka and Rovisco (2009)
his own right to do what seems right and good to him” (Metaphysics of Morals [1797] quoted in Waldron, 2000: 240) as extendable to cultural difference, it remains a crucial factor of Kant’s account of cosmopolitanism that Kant is not specific about either the cultural content of antagonism or its solution, i.e. the civil society. Rather, civil society is presented as a deracinated universal solution, a structure without content, an arrangement of external actions.

Benhabib’s response has been to insist on the necessity, though not primacy, of the state (Benhabib, 2006). Responding to Waldron’s position that law can follow the (supposedly) cordial interaction between friends and strangers at an everyday level, she asks if the latter is not aware of the violence between neighbours. “‘Mundane and repeated contact” among different human groups is absolutely no guarantee of the spread of cosmopolitan point of view that considers all human beings as individuals equally entitled to certain rights” (153).

It is pertinent here, especially in the context of Cheah’s anti-state centric position, to have a relook at the three distinct forms of government that Kant specified – despotic, republican and democratic. Of these three, maintaining the need for a republican government to achieve the cosmopolitan future, Kant says:

Of the three forms of sovereignty, democracy, in the truest sense of the word, is necessarily a despotism, because it establishes an executive power through which all the citizens may make decisions about (and indeed against) the single individual without his consent, so that decisions are made by all the people and yet not by all the people; and this means that the general will is in contradiction with itself, and thus also with freedom. (Kant, 1989a: 101)
As mentioned earlier, Kant, in his clear assertion of Republican values as well as his insistence on the rule of law even at the expense of a possible revolution, is found to be abiding by the state, for anarchy (even a temporary one) would result in impingement of rights of individuals. This is not to say that Kant was totally against revolutions — his insistence was, ironically, more on the Schmidtian sovereignty, as the following makes clear:

A state may well govern itself in a republican way, even if its existing constitution provides for a despotic ruling power, and it will gradually come to the stage where the people can be influenced by the mere idea of the law’s authority, just as if it were backed up by physical force, so that they will be able to create for themselves a legislation ultimately founded on right. If, however, a more lawful constitution were attained by unlawful means, i.e. by a violent revolution resulting from a previous bad constitution, it would then no longer be permissible to lead the people back to the original one, even although everyone who had interfered with the old constitution by violence or conspiracy would rightly have been subject to the penalties of rebellion during the revolution itself. (Kant, 1989a: 118)

Kant could not have been more categorical in his order of preference, that of the primacy of the law and the state. The legislation is to be founded on right, a universal condition, than on will, the caprice of the particular. What makes a law lawful is its allegiance to this order of right.

While Cheah might be right to mention that Kant cannot be against nationalism, for nationalism was not yet an option in Kant’s world, it is nevertheless clear that in a state with a division of majority and minority, Kant would not find nationalism — defined as it is,
culturally – to be the preferred option. It is however a matter of speculation if Kant would conceive of two distinct cultural populations as composing a nation-state. Kant’s basic unit has been the individual and not the population groups.

The debate nevertheless points out the important fact that Kant’s ultimate ideal of the moral result that ensues is solidly grounded on a particular conception of morality – a content which takes individual as the basic unit of action, an individual who is agential in the correspondence between thought and action, and thoughts and actions which corresponds to the Kantian idea of duty. This then brings us to the question of presentism in neo-Kantian thought criticized by Honig (2006). Are we to still think of the state as the only guarantor of the rights? Can there be no smaller unit for a cosmopolitan universe? Can cosmopolitanism itself be rethought other than as expressed by Kant?16

---

16 The specific way in which this question of presentism has been cast has been to point out the anthropocentrism central to Kant’s theory of Right. The move away from the culture/nature distinction is central to Cheah (2006). In the recent years the move away from human agency to distributed agency and the focus on non-human actors (“assemblage” [Latour, 2011], “vibrant matter” [Bennett, 2010], virtual world [Massumi, 2002]) have given rise to formulating new ways of cosmopolitanism in which the insistence have been on living in a world of blurred boundaries between human and non-human. Deleuze and Guattari’s “chaosmosis” (1987), Braidotti’s, and Connolly’s “becoming-word” (Braidotti, 2013; Connolly, 2011) have been some of the ways in which these new-cosmopolitanisms have been formulated. This school (meant in a broad sense) traces its intellectual precedence in Spinozist ethics which affirms that everything in nature are modes of a unitary substance. Interesting though it is, it is beyond the scope of this thesis which has set itself the task of addressing the question of cosmopolitanism in postcoloniality.
Keeping Faith: The Levinasian Infinitive

Pheng Cheah and Bonnie Honig, by insisting a move away from State and towards politics, are responding to Derrida's call—made almost a decade back—to turn to a cosmopolitics (Derrida, 2001: 4; emphasis in original). Jacques Derrida, writing in 1997 (in French; English translation in 2001), points out with reference to series of laws in France regarding the various categories of immigrants—sans papiers, asylum seekers, economic migrants, etc.—that the conditions for perpetual peace, drawn out by Kant, is as yet unobtainable in Europe. There is still no clear separation of powers, and the legislation itself is often dictated by electoral interests. In short, the republic is yet to arrive in France, and in Europe in general. Under these conditions, the universal right of hospitality is not respected. However, it appears, the problem could be traced back to Kant himself. While acknowledging that everyone has a common right over the surface of the earth, it remains that the state is not universally accessible. The right to hospitality remains, in Kant as well as in the present world, as treaties between states, who on the other hand still exercise sovereignty contrary to the spirit of cosmopolitanism. It is in such a juncture that Derrida asks if we should not be thinking about a hospitality that could be defined in terms other than circumscribed by the nation-state (Derrida 2001). In advocating this move, Derrida turns to the concept of hospitality, and to the thinker par excellence of the act of hospitality, of welcoming the Infinite—Emmanuel Levinas.

In an incisive critique of the Kantian universe, Levinas writes:

In this world without multiplicity language loses all social signification; interlocutors renounce their unicity not in desiring one another but in desiring
the universal. Language would be equivalent to the constitution of rational institutions in which an impersonal reason which is already at work in the persons who speak and already sustains their effective reality would become objective and effective: each being is posited apart from all the others, but the will of each, or ipsiety, from the start consists in willing the universal or the rational, that is, in negating its very particularity. In accomplishing its essence as discourse, in becoming a discourse universally coherent, language would at the same time realize the universal state, in which multiplicity is reabsorbed and discourse comes to an end, for lack of interlocutors. (Totality and Infinity, 1969 [1961]: 217)

Levinas is here responding to a problem which he confronts in the whole of Western philosophical tradition — that it is a discourse of totalizing where differences are reduced to themes and subsumed. In Totality and Infinity, Levinas etches out a new mode of being in the world which is in contrast to the Kantian (from war to society) or Hobbesian (from war to sovereign) way of comprehending the world. In a language at a far remove from the logical and reasoned maxims of Kant and proximate to that of the revelatory and prophetic, Levinas puts to question many of the basic assumptions of the Kantian schema. To draw out his argument, Levinas introduces the concept of “face”, or face of the Other. I shall briefly discuss some of the central features of Levinasian ethics below before we see how this new conception of being in the world has inspired newer versions of cosmopolitanism.

---

17 And therefore it is more correctly said that Levinas’s philosophy of ethics is a critique of philosophy from Plato to Heidegger. However, we have in this section limited ourselves to assessing Levinasian departure in the light of Kant.
Michael L. Morgan characterises Levinas's concept of "face", à la Bernard Williams, a "thick" moral concept. This is because, just like 'brutality', 'gratitude', or 'courage', concepts in which the descriptive and prescriptive of them cannot be separated. The face is thus not just the apparition, the view or the idea, but is also the appeal or the demand of the destitute, the widow, the orphan. The demand and its command on me is inseparable from the face itself (Morgan, 2011: 66). The face is not just an idea of the other, for the idea of the other presupposes the idea and therefore representation – i.e. its subsumption within a totality. The face is, on the contrary, Infinity. This radically other Other is therefore transcendent. This transcendence is called 'height' in Levinas. "The idea of Infinity is transcendence itself, the overflowing of an adequate idea...It is not the insufficiency of the I that prevents totalization, but the Infinity of the Other" (80). It is this face-to-face with the Other that is the primal scene. Subjectivity is formed at this juncture of face-to-face. Face-to-face does not imply knowledge of the Other. It is rather an expression, on the one side, of destitution and demand, and on the other, of responsibility from the self.

The absolute nakedness of a face, the absolutely defenseless face, without covering, clothing or mask, is what opposes my power over it, my violence, and opposes it in an absolute way, with an opposition that is opposition itself. The being that expresses itself, that faces me, says no to me by his very expression...[I]t is not the no of a hostile force or a threat; it is the impossibility of killing him who presents that face... The face is the fact that a being affects us not in the indicative, but in the imperative" (Levinas, 1998: 68)
The face-to-face for Levinas is a moral summons that calls into question the self’s powers. The Other calls out in his destitution. “To hear his destitution which calls out for justice is not to represent an image for oneself, but is to posit oneself as responsible, both as more and as less than the being that presents itself in the face” (Levinas, 1969: 215). Faced with such destitution, it would seem that one may claim to the Other in one’s sovereignty, in one’s ability to kill the Other. This should not be so. However, it would be banal to argue that the self is thereby not to murder just on account of this ethics. It is nevertheless the case that the first and foremost command of the Other is “You shall not murder”. If language is the realm of representations of finitude and thereby of possessions (since possessions require objectification), then it requires that there be a point outside the finite from which the finite is assessed. This implies that “I” is predicated upon the infinite Other. It is thus in this face-to-face that subjectivity is formed. It is still possible, however, that “I” shall commit murder. While this is possible, this also poses great threat, in terms of “my” subjectivity, but also because murder cannot settle the question of sovereignty precisely because of the “unforeseeableness” (Levinas, 1969: 199; emphasis in original) of the Other’s reaction, something which Agamben would later call the sovereignty of the bare body (Agamben, 1998). To thus resist thematization, the Other necessarily has to be someone who is as unpredictable as myself, and therefore free – “The alterity of the Other does not depend on any quality that would distinguish him from me, for a distinction of this nature would precisely imply between us that community of genus which already nullifies alterity” (Levinas, 1969: 195).

The equality that is so established between the self and the infinite Other brings in Levinas the category of the “third”. According to Levinas, the moment of the face-to-face is simultaneously the moment of the witness of the “third”. This third could be referred to as
“public order” (212) or even “humanity” (213). The moment of the face-to-face, while marked by my responsibility to the Other, is also marked by the responsibility of the Other to this “third”, and hence the equality (213) and the institution of the family:

Paternity is not reducible to a causality in which individuals would mysteriously participate, and which would determine by no less mysterious an effect, a phenomenon of solidarity. It is my responsibility before a face looking at me as absolutely foreign (and the epiphany of the face coincides with these two moments) that constitutes the original fact of fraternity (Levinas, 1969: 213)

However, the category of the “third” also redefines Levinas’s concept of unicity. The particularity of the face, in the light of the equalizing function of the third, does not mean particularity in its fullness, in its individuality and uniqueness. Rather, the unicity is taken to mean the infinity that is not thematized but also circumscribed by the idea of responsibility. Though put in terms of “public order”, this “third”, which institutes the law of equality, should not however be seen as equivalent to civil society or such mechanisms as framed by the nation—“It identifies itself outside of the State, even if the State reserves a framework for it” (306). It would be interesting in this context to note that Levinas characterised the feminine as the host par excellence. The feminine however does not relate to an actual woman. Levinas characterizes the meta-empirical Woman as the initial interiority of the

---

18 “Everything that takes place here “between us” concern everyone, the face that looks at it place it in the full light of the public order, even if I draw back from it to seek with the interlocutor the complicity of a private relation and a clandestinity”

19 “…but as an irreducible movement of a discourse which by essence is aroused by the epiphany of the face inasmuch as it attests the presence of the third party, the whole of humanity, in the eyes that look at me.”
Home that makes it welcoming to the Host who then welcomes the guest. Thus feminine becomes the "pre-original welcome...par excellence" (45). It is important that this pre-original is characterised as sexual difference. The importance of the female figure in Levinas is that it upsets any idea of originatory homeland, rather making land alienated, while public order, as expressed in terms of paternity, is without recourse to the idiom of nation. Levinas's ideas about land could therefore be seen as quite close to Kant in the sense that both of them termed as land as not belonging to anyone originarily. However, in Kant, the supposition is based on a common belonging of land, while in Levinas it is the radical un-belongingness.  

Levinas's account of the subject formation and its characteristics in relation to the infinite Other is, though fashioned in the religious imagery of Bible and Talmud, a reformulation of ontology as the first philosophy and is, in an ingenious reversal, heavily and categorically indented by the Cartesian reference to the infinite God in contrast to the finite imperfect self in "Third Meditation". Thus Levinas claims that if subjectivity is understood to be imperfect, then will is just arbitrary and violence to oneself. On the other hand, following Descartes, if subjectivity is understood to be fundamentally different from the infinite Other (God), and that the Other is understood to be at a higher plane than oneself,  

---

20 "The chosen home is the very opposite of a root" (Levinas, 1969: 172)

21 "For Levinas, the historical paradigm of one understands the primacy of the ethical character of human existence is the Jew; the Bible and the Talmud are the earliest Jewish texts that teach this lesson. Later examples of people abandoned by others and subject to injustice, persecution, and assault are all "honorary" Jews, for Levinas" (Morgan, 2011: 83, n78)

22 "In the next place, from reflecting on the circumstance that I doubted, and that consequently my being was not wholly perfect (for I clearly saw that it was a greater perfection to know than to doubt), I was led to inquire whence I had learned to think of something more perfect than myself; and I clearly recognized that I must hold
then will and intelligibility are separated, and hence intelligibility, by the very lack of it, calls for ethical behaviour. Thus in a fundamental sense, the will is not free of its ethical responsibility even when it is free to act as it wills (218-9). Levinas claims that when faced with the infinite, the thought of one's finitude is replaced by enjoyment, a template taken, again, from Descartes.

The myriad ways in which Levinas is opposed to Kant would be quite obvious. Let us nevertheless state them. While in the Kantian universe the primary interaction is that of laying claims, subsequent antagonism and then the institution of civil society, Levinas gets rid of this teleology. In Levinas the language to lay claim on possession is itself a product of the face-to-face. Thus the fact of being together precedes any mutually opposing claim. The bloodshed is just a contingency and not a necessity. Secondly, precisely because the language and subjectivity is formed in the context of an infinite Other, an Other which resists thematization, it also resists reducing the Other to definitions. The infinite Other makes it possible to acknowledge the singularities of the self and the Other. Subjects are to be seen in their singularity because, unlike Kantian universe, not everyone is of the same capacities—and hence Levinas's choice of the destitute.  

Speech is not instituted in a homogeneous or abstract medium, but in a world where it is necessary to aid and to give. It presupposes an I, an existence separated in its enjoyment, which does not welcome empty-handed the face

this notion from some nature which in reality was more perfect," writes Descartes in Meditations on First Philosophy, in 1641.

23 For a discussion on the convergences and divergences in Kant and Levinas, see Shaw (2008)Ch.4 “The Duty to Care”
and its voice coming from another shore. Multiplicity in being, which refuses totalization but takes form and discourse, is situated in a “space” essentially asymmetrical” (Levinas, 1969: 216)

Since language is instituted in the face of a singular Other, it follows that in this space of asymmetry the demands that are made of each could not be the same. This also follows that in society the intersubjective experience is asymmetrical. Given that, it is only rational that our languages, formed by our intersubjective experiences, can only formulate morality from experience, for there is no a priori to meeting the Other.24 It also follows from the infinite Other that what we have in language is, by virtue of it having been formed intersubjectively and not prior to it, contrary to being an act of abstraction, a force which resists thematization. This also follows that “Responsibility” in Levinasian terms is not a discursive act, but one that precedes it as a state of nature, as opposed to philosophies in which war is accorded this primal space.

Derrida finds in Levinas the key thinker to conceive a new cosmopolitanism - hospitality as cosmopolitanism. Derrida takes the Levinasian Infinite Other to mean the foreigner, stranger to our language, laws and customs, who arrives unannounced. This stranger has, just as we have to decide on hosting him, has already decided on us being his host. Thus the host is obliged to the guest. If that be the case, then the welcome is primarily a welcome by the other to which the self responds. Therefore in the beginning is the call of the Other (Derrida, 1999). Unlike Levinas, however, Derrida is not keen on limiting the welcome to the sphere of ethics, rather ethics itself weaves itself in and out of the juridico-

24 “Another way of saying it, if one still wishes to speak within the law of tradition, though against it, against its inherited oppositions, is that reason is sensibility” (Derrida, 1999: 26; emphasis in original).
political. It is therefore that Derrida is much interested in Levinas’s idea of the third – “the public order”. It is here that Derrida formulates his constitutive aporia that would guide the new cosmopolitanism.

In Levinas’s discussion of the “third”, of another person who is not a neighbour but also a neighbour, the one who is witness to the face-to-face, Derrida finds an aporia. While in a way the presence of the third seems to bring in transcendence beyond the reason that is solely arising from face-to-face and thus introducing a juridico-political role that blunts the threat of violation of ethics (32-3), this presence of the third is in itself a “perjury” (33) of my oath to the Other. The presence of the “third”, which can be read as humanity, justice and equality, is what holds me hostage. It makes me interrupt myself (Derrida, 1999: 52) and be unfaithful to oneself out of fidelity for oneself (52). It is thus that one is hostage in one’s own position as the host, as one is bound by the oath to the guest. In his lectures delivered two years later (1997; and published in 2002), Derrida concerns himself with Levinasian welcome, again, but adds to it what he perceives to be its correspondence in Islamo-Christian thought. Derrida’s focus here is however exhausted by “substitution”, i.e. what is it, whether as an apparatus or as culture, that could make the presence of “third” – “original sin prior to any original sin” (Derrida, 2002: 388), the perjury at the heart of Levinas? Derrida answers it elaborately to insist that substitution in Levinas does not mean that unicity is sacrificed at the altar of common laws. On the contrary. One has to approach the question of substitution by fully acknowledging the question of forgiveness inherent in the welcoming. For welcoming is first of all an act of asking for forgiveness, for two reasons, one, for not being able to

25 A point which Derrida exemplifies in detail with reference to Oedipus’s death wish to Theseus. elsewhere. See Derrida (2000).
provide adequately (for the other is the infinite Other), and secondly, since no hospitality is hospitality unless the guest is unforeseen, for not knowing in advance of the Other's coming (381). The act of forgiving is caught in a series of aporia — that it is impossible (for to forgive what can be forgiven is not forgiveness) (385), that it cannot be issued from oneself and therefore is not one's to forgive (386), that it cannot be said nor unsaid (398), etc. This need to be forgiven at once casts the self in a relation of being hostage to the Other while at the same time being the host — it is this subjection to the Other that makes him a subject. To ask for forgiveness also means that the subject should be at the same time free too. The act of forgiving constitutes the subject retrospectively, in deference, but not in a sense of time as excluded or being fully inside the subject, but as subjectivity itself as a product of the time as in forgiveness predicated on welcoming (391-5). It is this formation of the subjectivity that forms the common, the public order of the third, of what is otherwise singular subjects.

In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, published in French in 1997 (Derrida 2001), Derrida remains concerned with the idea of the third in the face-to-face. Continuing with the various aporias in forgiving, Derrida also introduces a newer aporia in the act of forgiving, that which is connected with language. If the victim and the guilty share the same language, then reconciliation has begun, and thus forgiving is no more pure forgiving (for the only pure forgiving is to forgive the unforgivable – an impossible act). On the other hand, if the two do not share a language, then the mutual unintelligibility renders forgiveness unintelligible and obsolete. It remains however, through the aporia and because of it, that the true act of forgiving is only face-to-face. It is thus heterogeneous to the order of politics and law. This again brings into question the role of the third — the public order. Derrida's suggestion here, not put in any straightforward terms, is to refer to the idea of sovereignty. Sovereignty is, in the act of instituting it, prior to the law. It is thus a pure act, but one that
gives rise to a law which then legitimizes it. In Derrida's "mad" suggestion forgiveness should be "unconditional but without sovereignty" (59), by which, with recourse to the analogy with sovereignty, one is to understand that the act of forgiving while with resort to unconditionality that is to be issued from the unicity of the victim or the situation and not bound by laws, must nevertheless be referred back to a public order which in the first place is instituted by this very unconditionality and uniqueness of the individual act of forgiving.

The oath of hospitality, found by oneself, nevertheless becomes a law.

That Derrida is not ready to leave hospitality on the terrain of ethics is clear from his repeated engagements with the theme of hospitality as it entwines itself with the juridical-political. As Derrida makes it clear, unconditional hospitality itself is a law (Derrida, 2000: 77-8). However, the two laws are not mutually exclusive, they are in each other. The laws of conditional hospitality are a perjury to the law of unconditional hospitality (55). At the same time the unconditional law of hospitality requires that there be laws of hospitality which makes it possible (Derrida, 2000: 79). The law and the laws are asymmetrical to each other. The decisionism thus involved on the side of ethics nevertheless dictate that it be heterogeneous to the order of procedures and at the level of the spirit.

If the two meanings of hospitality remain mutually irreducible, it is always in the name of pure and hyperbolic hospitality that it is necessary, in order to render it as effective as possible, to invent the best arrangements [dispositions], the least bad conditions, the most just legislation. This is necessary to avoid the perverse effects of an unlimited hospitality whose risks I tried to define. This is the double law of hospitality: to calculate the risks, yes, but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and
the foreigner. It defines the unstable site of strategy and decision. (Derrida, 2005: 6)

Derrida's larger project is to think of a new world politics, something that can go beyond the frames of nation-state. The aporia are thus necessary roadblocks that are constitutive of a new future.

The insight of Levinasian ethics have been the rejection of state of war in nature, the non-totalizability of the globe, and the insistence on singularity and experience. The monumental significance of Levinas has been, by deferring the subject formation from the moment of cogito to that of facing the infinity in Descartes, that it has replaced ontology as the first-philosophy with ethics.26 However, for all its insistence on difference and its derision of universalist programmes, it still remains that the Levinasian Other is the Cartesian God as thought of by the thinking subject at the dawn of Western subjectivity. Levinas does secularize it and brings it down to the Infinity of this world. While philosophies of fascism posit an originary harmonious world in which one was at home with oneself, it has been Levinas's ethical break, and add to this the not so distant backdrop of Fascist Europe, that the original harmony is now the harmony between the self and the other, one of whom is of a land without originally possessing it, and the other is the destitute to whom he owes a responsibility. The flip side has been that Levinasian ethics is still predicated on the acting, and hence the agential subject. Even while acknowledging that Levinasian 'responsibility' is

---

26 Levinas points out that the moment of cogito in itself is insufficient in the formation of the subject, since the doubting subject can doubt cogito itself. The confirmation of the subject should therefore come from an external point. "The I in the negativity manifested by doubt breaks with participation, but does not find in the cogito itself a stopping place. It is not I, it is the Other that can say yes. From him comes affirmation; he is at the commencement of experience" (1969: 93)
the pre-discursive state of nature, it still assumes that one therefore acknowledge this state of responsibility and act accordingly, though not in the framework of nation and citizenship. Therein lies the curious case of the Levinasian Other being at the same time equal to oneself and destitute. If only that should be so! It is only in the (one could say cruel) attribution of agency and false equality on both sides that Levinasian ethics work – because only that would allow its swap-ability. The self is to be free in terms of the Other, regardless of the empirical self.\textsuperscript{27} One could then see that Levinas is much closer to Kant. Though far from the kingdom of ends and professing a kingdom of being, the philosopher could yet only conceive of the subject who is agential, responsible (for his act and plight) and can account for the others. Ethics still remains a question for the legislator, though Levinas would argue that law itself being totalizing he will leave it to the action of the singular subject. It

\textsuperscript{27} The tense equality between the self and the Other belongs in Derrida too – the self is the one who should be asking for forgiveness as well as the one forgiving. The host is the guest of the guest and therefore the guest is the host of the host. Consequently the host of the host is bound by the oath of the host too. “These substitutions make everyone into everyone else’s hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality” (Derrida, 2000: 125).

Contra Levinas, and drawing from the same pool of resources, advancing Cartesian moment (again, against Levinas who is deferring it), and arguing against and through philosophy from Plato to Heidegger is Jean-Luc Nancy. Against the (false) inequality of the self and the capital Other, Nancy argues that the drive behind the idea of infinite Other (or God) is primarily a marking off of the self (Nancy, 2000: 12-3). Advancing the Cartesian moment to the moment of language itself (in which one thinks, which then leads to all what follows)(11), Nancy posits being as being in meaning, that in its sharedness and singularity simultaneously, what he calls “being singular plural”. Nancy’s point is that conceiving singular subjectivity does not require an infinite Other, but singularity is the singularity of multiple origin, that is, each being is an original repetition of a concealed origin. Nancy’s effort is to think society (inclusive of all that is other to humanity too) without reference to a higher being, and rather than to assert the coming off, or of having passed away, that we are in fact all being singular plural; but that philosophy has been taking the wrong turns.

Thus, as against agonistic cosmopolitanism which requires us to resign to difference, Nancy asks us to realize ourselves in difference. Nancy’s is as much an ethical notion as Levinas’s is, and suffers from the proposition of an equality which, in the terms of our study, is not of any guidance.
remains that Levinasian ethics is made for the welcoming self, the one though in solitude still
does belong, the Derridean founding subject of the law of hospitality to which nevertheless
he is hostage; not the migrating one, not the destitute, the orphan, or the low skilled
immigrant from the global south.

One can see that though against written rules and legislative imperatives, those who
derive their versions of cosmopolitanism are also burdened by the need to act, even if
ethically. Gideon Baker (2011) has drawn on Levinas and Derrida to promulgate a new kind
of international politics in which questions of international interference in the domestic
affairs of nations would be based on ethical decisionism based on ground realities varying
from case to case than any prefixed rules.

Honig’s version of agonistic cosmopolitanism (Honig, 2011) draws on Derrida’s
double gesture in aporetic conception of hospitality as a conceptual framework so as to avoid
the pitfalls of teleological progress predominant in thoughts about cosmopolitanism. The
reconfiguration of borders that Benhabib (2006) points to should be subject to a scrutiny
informed by such a double gesture – even while welcoming the inclusion of newer
populations, one should be aware of the new borders drawn in the process. 28 One could see
such a double gesture in Hannah Arendt. In her call for “the right to have rights” there is “a
reproach to any particular order of rights and a demand that everyone should belong to one
such order” (Honig, 2006: 107; emphasis in original). A closer look at history would suggest

---
28 Will Kymlicka points out in a similar vein that the disaggregation of citizenship is not necessarily a
progressive factor – it can be and is used to hinder rather than further claims to citizenship. See Kymlicka
that the world is not moving on a linear path, and is open to contingencies to be engaged with by politics.

Patrick Hanafin too underlines the need for moving away from legislative practices and advocates a politics of singularities (Hanafin, 2013). A critical praxis of cosmopolitanism will have to substitute such a belief in which the citizen is established by the stroke of pen with an active process in which the cosmopolitan subject is in the state of constant being. He is in agreement with Fuyuki Kurasawa on cosmopolitan solidarity as the latter states it to be:

A networked practice composed of a vast web of actors who labour to create nodes of commonality and points of intersection out of shifting, cross-cutting lines of affinity that remains grounded in local and national settings. This web takes the form of a patchwork pragmatically assembled and reassembled from disparate and overlapping pieces, rather than a pre-established, neatly laid out and carefully followed plan. A dialectic between convergence and decentralization is what produces common ground, as solidaristic bonds must be discursively negotiated between parties. (Kurasawa (2007) quoted in Hanafin(2013: 41))

To translate into the terms of our discussion so far, one could read Kurasawa's observation as the need to think of an active governmental subject who, inspite of being always already a site of policy, should nevertheless struggle for the realization of the policy [which, looking from the other side is not a policy but a right, to reiterate Tharu et al. (2007)] and simultaneously find him/herself in the gaps between the different policies a space for him to negotiate the multiple subjecthoods bestowed and asserted. Hanafin thus brings into the
discussion the crucial turn to think of political community as away from its being completely determined by the rights bestowed on them. From the citizen being a subject of rights, subject to criteria of inclusion and exclusion, and therefore a *what*, one has to think of the citizen as unexhausted by definitions, actively building solidarities as well as defining him/herself from and against others, and thereby becoming a singular *who*.

Citizenship, being as it is based on a set of exclusions, a "they" vs. a "we", extract our acquiescence in those practices of exclusion even when we struggle to be a part of those who are right-bearing. One has to then strive for what Hannah Arendt (1951) calls "the right to have rights" of mere humanity beyond categories. That there are people who are not right-bearing necessitates a continuous political struggle for those who are yet-to-be people. The very idea of citizenship being exclusive guarantees an excluded zone of peoples and right on behalf of whom and which there has to be constant struggle.

Though borrowing from Honig's terminology of agonistic cosmopolitanism (Honig, 2009), Hanafin is in fact presenting a novel way to think about cosmopolitanism. Burdened by the need to fight for those without right, Hanafin nevertheless is presenting a politics of singularities which cannot be easily circumscribed by the imperative to act. Rather, a politics of 'who' rather than 'what' also presents (drowned by Hanafin's ethical sense of duty) a politics of asserting a *being* as it is being rather than on the way to *being a what* — exactly undermining from the other side Hanafin's politics of action. It is towards this direction that, independent of Hanafin, Costas Douzinas (2013) points to. Tracing the history of cosmopolitanism, Douzinas argues that the theory has, drawing from Christianity and later colonialism, assumed a split in humanity. Christianity had the suffering and the redeemed, colonialism the civilized and the un-, nationalism its citizens and aliens (and, should we add,
postcolonialism, its civil and political societies). Cosmopolitanism perpetuates the binary between those who have rights and those who don’t. Douzinas puts forward a new split between law and desire, or what can be termed a split between language and desire. He argues that the politics of desire is to long for what does not exist according to law. As both cosmopolitanism as the idea and cosmopolitics as the praxis belong to the realm of law and therefore language, one could safely assume he would abstain from calling this politics of desire either of those. The question of singularities away from universal models needs to occupy us more. The question of the being as an excess of what and the point about desire has set the stage ready for a discussion on the psychoanalytic uses of Kant, but not before we explore another case for particularisms, that of rootedness.

**Rooted Cosmopolitanisms**

Kwame Anthony Appiah is a major proponent of what he calls “rooted cosmopolitanism” which poses itself as articulating a new language of belonging. By ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’ Appiah means that one need not be rootless to be a cosmopolitan. Rather one can be rooted and celebrate or atleast engage with cultural differences. One can even contemplate and effect a shifting of one’s roots. One could also have simultaneously different sense of belongings, from the regional to ever expanding horizons just as one occupy different roles and identities in life, from cultural to religious to career-wise distinctions to position in family and among friends. Identity being so many, national identity is just arbitrary – which is not to deny the power structures at work. By claiming that national identity is arbitrary, Appiah is pointing out (with historical examples of Ghana, Bosnia and Serbia) that prior to national identification one already requires a state in whose regulative policies the nations
come to be. Thus state is the regulative principle though not the determinant body of identities. Thus it is also the site that requires our loyalty, Appiah insists, if we are to be cosmopolitan – for the state alone makes the range of identities possible (Appiah, 1998; 2005).

Appiah’s position is self-declaredly liberal patriotic cosmopolitan. It is liberal because it believes in the individual choice to make identities as well as insist that the society should be based on respect and dignity for individuals. It is patriotic to the institutions of the state because it is cosmopolitan in tendency – for it is the state structures which allows the identities for one to choose from. There is, *prima facie*, much closeness between Kant and Appiah. Kant establishes the state to be the basic unit which allows for the cosmopolitan right, and so does Appiah. Kant as well as Appiah emphasize the need to uphold the state structures. However in Kant (“What is Enlightenment”) one finds that inspite of having to do one’s duty, one can have independent thoughts about it, thoughts which could even be critical of the duty. In Appiah, on the other hand, while one can be loyal to the state structures for different reasons, the reasons cannot have in it a reason against the state itself. Again, while in Kant the civil society is a natural outcome of individuals living together, neither the modus operandi nor the content of that civil society is fixed, Appiah makes “respect for human dignity” a universal value which has to be in place for a cosmopolitan society, and, ironically, something which already is available universally in all cultures. While it is possible (though an empirical analysis would be burdensome) that each society has an idea of and a vocabulary for the respect for human dignity, one should nevertheless emphasise that Appiah’s liberalism is a product of a particular historical juncture, and to find rootedness for such a universal is just an of acculturation.
Even if it be the case that Appiah's rooted liberal cosmopolitanism is in fact the Enlightenment ideal presenting itself for an evening of indigenous cultural show, this in itself is not an argument against it. Rather, the argument is that Appiah's cosmopolitanism falls into what Costas Douzinas (2013) calls the metaphysics of cosmopolitanism – which is the division of humanity into binaries (the liberals and not-liberals, in Appiah). This binary is reflective of another central faultline in Appiah – that loyalties and identities are conscious, and consciously articulated. This idea of voluntarism logically extends therefore to arguing that one has to choose from the available articulated options. This gives rise to a delimiting presentism which is blind to possibilities outside the binaries. Secondly, Appiah's cosmopolitanism is also indicative of a utopia – that a world devoid of the not-liberals is possible – the impossibility of which is exactly its source of enjoyment, for its possibility would erase the idea of cosmopolitanism itself.

Our interest in Appiah is solely focussed on its opinions on state, which tally with ours\(^29\). However, while Appiah sees identities as emerging from the state, we also see possibilities in the limits of the state. These limits of the state are not external to the state, which would then be anything in an endless drifting of signifiers. Rather, the limit of the state is what gives it consistency, thus occupying a space both within and without. It is this space too where we find alternatives to the current language of belonging\(^30\).

\(^{29}\) Though the focus of Appiah has been on cultural adaptation and formation of the self. In this regard, the most scathing criticism of Appiah has been from Pratap Bhanu Mehta who argues that if anything cosmopolitanism gives us an understanding of our own culture rather than turn the deeply affective cultural place invested with meanings and rationalities to an easily consumable market product. See Mehta (2000)

\(^{30}\) A long list of authors and their versions of cosmopolitanisms could be appended as examples of rooted cosmopolitanisms, some of whom are: Bruce Robbins's idea of “discrepant cosmopolitanism” in which the world is not given \textit{a priori} but is worlded by the self (Robbins. 1992); Sheldon Pollock's and Walter Mignolo's
Our project allies more with Mignolo’s “Critical Cosmopolitanism” (2000). “Critical cosmopolitanism” as a concept is an attempt to go beyond the thoughts of globalization as an ascription from above, or of the various reactions that it has engendered in different polities. Instead, it envisions a world in which the margins are in contact with each other, as opposed to the globalization model where the margins are individually connected to the center. While critical cosmopolitanism argues the need to move beyond uniform global designs (of democracy, for example) on a planetary scale, it does not fall into the trap of cultural relativism precisely by reading culture as a product of the coloniality of power. Instead, the focus is on “the coloniality of power and the colonial difference produced, reproduced, and maintained by global designs” (742).

The Psychoanalytic Parallax

Slavoj Žižek asks us to go back to discovering the uncanny Kant far removed from the one proposed by the neo-Kantians. Žižek’s Kant is he who first delineated the dimension ‘beyond the pleasure principle’ – the pure ethical act. Žižek’s moves towards discovering this Kant, “worth fighting for”, in two steps: first, to argue how the decenterment of the subject, an act imputed to Feud, is present in Kant; and secondly, to read in Kant, in consequence, the presence of the unknown remainder, the objet petit a.

“vernacular cosmopolitanism” which claims that each culture has its own version of cosmopolitanism (Pollock, 2000; Mignolo, 2002); Sneja Gunew’s “vernacular cosmopolitanism” which is, curiously, the experience of European travellers in European settlements (Gunew, 2013). I am more inclined to repeat Robert Fine’s argument that the present awareness of the need for or already existing cosmopolitanism can be traced to the development of the many rights which has then given rise to human rights (Fine, 2007). While it is of course probable that each culture has its own notions of cosmopolitanism, the very framing of the question already has the discussants in a particular universal framework.
The specular constitution of the subject (as in Lacanian mirror-phase through its improvisations along his career) in psychoanalysis implies that the subject is constituted from elsewhere other than from itself. It is in relation to the mirror that the infant constitutes itself as a unified subject and also discovers a field constituted by similarly unified subjects. Žižek connects this to Kant’s statement in *Critique of Pure Reason*: “In the pure thought of myself, I am the being itself, yet no part of this being is given to me thereby for my thought” (quoted in Žižek, 2000a: ix). In other words, I cannot constitute myself as the object of a thought from myself. I have to necessarily occupy a point outside myself. This condition of pure thought results in a void – the thought is without content and the being is absent in the thought – losing both thought and being. This void is, for Lacan, the absent thing, the veiled thing – desire! The void also means that there is no a priori universe in which the subject is grounded or of which the subject is a particularity. Rather, the subject herself is the provider of the standpoint from which she is seen to herself. The subject is the ground of the universal, the subject is she who grounds it:

That is to say, the intervention of the subject undermines the standard, premodern opposition between the universal Order and the hubris of a particular force whose egotistic excess perturbs the balance of the universal Order: ‘subject’ is the name for the hubris, the excessive gesture whose very excess grounds the universal Order; it is the name for the pathological abject, *clinamen*, deviation from the universal Order, which sustains this very universal Order. (Žižek, 1999a: 291)

Kant’s idea of pathological involves that we do what we do for heteronomous ends (for pleasure; to satisfy our ego, material needs, etc.). Even the moral satisfaction or superiority
one could attain by doing the duty is thus pathological. However, that there is in one’s own grounding the void, that one is in fact grounded in this void (because the look from outside is coming from a non-existent place) follows that the duty could be thus grounded in this void itself, in the pure desire (insofar as desire is the expression of a something lacking in oneself) that is not pathological (Ţiţek, 2000a). Thus doing one’s duty cannot be an excuse, for the grounding in the void makes duty *ex nihilo* rather than of a pre-existing order (Ţiţek, 1999a).

The terms are not set for us, the terms of the duty are set by the subject. The Kantian subject, being its own ground, is thus not the instrument of an Order/Other, but the very origin of its own horizon. This original grounding, the primordial gift does not constitute itself in terms of accruing benefits. This means that the ethical act, the act of pure desire, is separate from thoughts of public good (Ego-Ideal) or of guilt (superego). It is the pure act itself (Ţiţek, 2000a).

What are we then to make of the duty – isn’t that the universal Order to which the subject ought to comply with? One notices that the categorical imperative is pure form – it doesn’t recommend the actions, that is, is without content. It is not the *what* of it, but simply the *how* of it. The actions are to be grounded in the particularity of the subject who is assumed to be the ground of Reason. Given that this be the case, the kingdom of ends would mean to treat each human being as if he is already acting rationally. As such then punishing

31 Almost a decade earlier Ţiţek equated the Kantian categorical imperative with the impossible laws of the superego whose enjoyment results from the impossibility of the realization of its laws. What makes Ţiţek’s turnaround more startling is that he begins with the same premise – that the divorce in Kant of reason and experience indicates the new-born status of the subject, and that the Kantian reduction of the Law to pure form produces an excess – the *objet petit a*. How do we account for the two contradictory implications then between 1991 and 1999/2000, the move from Kafka to Antigone? Ţiţek then (1991) presumed that in Kant there is a primordially repressed Supreme Good which itself is the content, whereas later he retracts this and finding in Kant an act which is purer because it is just for the sake of itself. The ethical stance in Ţiţek remains the same then as in now, most succinctly put by Lacan as ‘never give up on your desire.’
the guilty is in accord with treating him as an end, because he was aware of the Order and is responsible for his translation of it into action (Žižek, 1999a).

Žižek is here launching a critique of the politics of particularity. The argument is that particularity is well in consideration and beyond the register of the Kantian ethical act. The ethical act is universal, and is grounded nowhere else than in one's own pure desire. It is the act of Antigone, who, by insisting on proper burial for her outlawed brother Polynices, was acting despite threats and towards no other goal than of doing one's duty. One can see here that the ethical act is not just to do one’s duty regardless of one’s intentions, and one could have one’s own interests in them (clearly what conditions Kant’s civil society); but to do one’s duty only because of one’s duty. Since there is no difference in outcome between duty done for ulterior motives and duty done only for the sake of it, in an ethical duty there is a surplus. This excess disturbs the simple opposition between desire and Law, for desire itself could be the law.

This theme is developed in more detail by Alenka Zupančič. In her rereading of Kantian ethics through the frame of psychoanalysis, Kant’s statement in *Critique of Pure Reason* with regards to the one who claims to have just done his duty while harbouring within him other motives, “the advocate who speaks on his behalf cannot silence the accuser in him when he is conscious that at the time when he committed the wrong he was in his, i.e., he was in possession of his freedom” (quoted in Zupančič, 2000: 25) posits a subject who is not phenomenal or noumenal. That is, in Kant one can see a subject who is not just a self-constituted conscious ‘I’ who can impute to himself the position of an agent or an instrument of the natural order (phenomenal) or a subject who is unaware of himself (noumenal). We also find in Kant a third subject, the transcendental I. The transcendental I is that which is
not visible in the phenomenal (the subject cannot say what it is) nor the noumenal (it cannot be easily figured from outside the subject). Thus we have a blindspot. It is this blindspot which acts as the empty place from which we (a "we" the status of which we will come to in a bit) choose not just whether to act but how to act at all.

To unpack: When the Kantian subject feels guilty of a fact inspite of her having nothing to do with the outcome of a certain series of events, it means that whatever be the outcome of events, whether it be connected or not, the feeling of guilt is the result of a choice. I need not have been guilty in the first place. That I am guilty means implication. That one feels guilty is because one has chosen to incorporate a certain maxim, and that one has accorded a particular object (courage, greed, immortality) as the Cause of the cause. But there is no such Cause which is \textit{a priori}, rather the Cause of the cause is within the subject itself. This corresponds to the psychoanalytic motto that there is no Other of the Other and the Other of the Other is the barred subject. It is the freedom of choosing one's Cause that is the ground of future guilt or fidelity. This \textit{transcendental} subject is the free subject who may give herself in to the ethical act. The ethical act, as we have seen, is that act done \textit{only} for the sake of duty and not \textit{because} of duty. If duty itself has to be grounded in the subject, in the free subject, it is that which escapes the Other, is not determined by it. Since the conscious I is nothing but the I of language and therefore of the Other, we have a double lack/crack here. It is a crack in the I as well as the Other. This crack is desire. The ethical act is the act of fidelity to desire, that empty space. It is this which makes the Kantian duty cosmopolitan, that it is devoid of content, that its content is mandated by the subject of desire.
What then is Reason? Isn't Reason, rationality, the Euro-centric core par excellence of Kant? Zupančič prays for a closer look. In Kant's scheme, understanding is the temporal accretion of concepts while reason is that place from which they compose a unity in purpose. Reason has no outside referent (71). It is thus very much a part of the ordering of the signifiers right at the inauguration of the subject. But where is this point outside oneself in which the accretionary progress is visible from? This is where Zupančič calls for the need to traverse Kant. For Kant this point is the immortal soul. This is because since a subject is so only because it is constituted from outside, this outside should remain for it to remain as subject and progress infinitely. In other words, translating the argument to a political scenario, the argument is in sync with Kant's view on revolution which we have discussed in the beginning of this chapter – that the status quo is to be maintained, because the subject is a subject because the state lends it consistency. Zupančič claims that Kant has slipped here. He has conflated the subject of enunciation (the subject of action) with the subject of enunciated (the subject). But there is an excess in the subject of enunciation in relation to the subject of enunciated that maintains its identity inspite of the revolution. The people after the revolution are not just masses but still continue to be people, a people newly inaugurated by their own authentic act. This excess allows the subject of enunciation to see the subject of the enunciated. That is, this transcendental I is not Thought or Being, but one which the two overlap. The transcendental I is further explained with recourse to Marx's idea of the three values – use-value, exchange-value and surplus value – by Kiarina Kordela (2007). In use-value what we have is the object in itself, in exchange-value we attribute to it its price or its status. In these two values we have two different kinds of temporality (or Kantian antinomy) involved. The use-value is diachronic, that is, there is no end to the objects in the world.

32 Which Zupančič reads as immortal body. But for conciseness we shall offer only the fundamental arguments.
(mathematic antinomy) – the list can go on in infinite regression. On the other hand, in exchange-value what we have is a decision based on an idea of totality – its relation to the total social structure. Here the temporality is synchronic (or dynamic antinomy). However, the surplus value is of a different order. The surplus value inheres between the use-value and the exchange-value and this is what drives the capitalist system. The surplus value then is an effect of the other two values but also the cardinal value which allows us to figure the other two values.

The question of the transcendental I in Kant can be translated as what is called Gaze in psychoanalysis. The Gaze is what the Other lacks and is lent to it by the self. Inasmuch as this Gaze is grounded in oneself, it is particular. Inasmuch as the Gaze is what allows the world to be constituted as such it is also an index of the totality and what allows us to see us as one among the others. To go back to Marx, money (or gold) is at the same time a commodity and that which defines all commodities. This follows that the objet petit a inheres in the parallax between the Universal and the Particular.33

A related confusion from which the Kantian conclusion on status quo results is about the source of the ethical action. For Kant, the moral duty stems from the will, and any act against the law will automatically be evil. However, Kant’s own conceptualization of duty

33 Agamben puts the point succinctly with relation to “example”: “In any context where it exerts its force, the example is characterised by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type, and at the same time, it is included among these. It is one singularity among others, which, however, stands for each of them and serves for all. On one hand, every example is treated in effect as a real particular case; but on the other, it remains understood that it cannot serve in its particularity. Neither particular nor universal, the example is a singular object that presents itself as such, that shows its singularity” (emphasis in original). He designates the example as an empty space which lends the particulars its communicability, “without being tied by any common property, by any identity.” It is in the example that Agamben can foresee the “coming community”. See 10,1 “Example” in Agamben (1993)
warrants another conclusion. Since will is constituted ex nihilo it is a law unto itself. It could not be immoral for it is the law. And in so far as law is the choice of the Cause, as we saw above, it is not necessarily an act of will. It is rather an act unknown to oneself — "the subject is not necessarily the hero of his act" (Zupančič, 2000: 101). The subject is retroactively created by the act itself (255). Insofar as guilt is not consciously engineered, the Cause incorporated is also not conscious. But the surplus allows in hindsight, after the act to relate back to it.

But if desire is the ground of one’s act, is the psychoanalytic ethic to follow one’s desire — the motto of consumerism? Never. The maxim is not to give up on one’s desire. To not give up on is not to follow but to follow through one’s desire, to see in one’s desire not the fullness of the phantasmatic object but the very gap itself, the crack that does not lend itself to healing. The act of following through one’s desire is drive.

Psychoanalysis knows many kinds of ethics; we could almost say that every “pathology” implies its own ethical attitude. The hysterical ethical imperative is to keep the desire alive at any price: apropos of every object which could satisfy it and thus threatens to extinguish it, the hysterical reaction is a “This is not that!” which sets the desire again in motion. The object of the obsessional desire is the Other’s demand: his imperative is to guess it and comply with it at any price. The obsessional is completely at a loss if the Other poses no

---

34 Žižek’s and Zupančič’s discussion on Kant are both their own commentaries on the comments on Kant by Lacan in “Kant with Sade” and Ethics of Psychoanalysis. I have not discussed them here as the ideas there have been explicated thoroughly in the texts that we discussed.

35 Which is then the same as saying as “not to give up on one’s desire” is to give up everything else but one’s desire, that is the gap itself — to realize oneself in not-having, as Zupančič reads Antigone.
demands on him, if he cannot in any way be “useful” to the Other; since this lack of a demand throws him face to face with the abyss of the Other’s desire beyond his demand – the obsessional sacrifices himself, works all the time for the Other, in order to prevent the appearance of the Other’s desire. The imperative of a pervert, on the contrary, is to work for the Other’s enjoyment, to become an object-instrument of it. (Žižek, 1991: 271)

The fourth ethical attitude which is “inherently ethical” (272) is drive – the point is not to remember the past trauma. “All we have to do is to mark repeatedly the trauma as such, in its very “impossibility”, in its non-integrated horror, by means of some “empty” symbolic gesture” (272)

The difference between desire and drive is further explicated by Žižek in greater detail:

[1]In the case of objet petit a as the object-cause of desire we have an object which is originally lost, which coincides with its own loss, which emerges as lost; while in the case of objet petit a as the object of drive, the “object” is directly loss itself – in the shift from desire to drive, we pass from the lost object to loss itself as an object. That is to say: the weird movement called “drive” is not driven by the “impossible” quest for the lost object; it is a push to enact “loss” – the gap, cut, distance – itself directly...

[A] drive does not bring satisfaction because its object is a stand-in for the Thing, but because a drive, as it were, turns failure into triumph – in it, the very failure to reach its goal, the repetition of this failure, the endless
circulation around the object generates a satisfaction of its own (Žižek, 2006: 62-63)

Psychoanalysis warrants some scepticism from the point of view of transformative politics at this point. Isn’t the core of drive what is suggested by its own name – death drive? The repeated marking of an impossibility seem to suggest nothing but nihilism. To resolve this doubt the exact status of the “object” which generates a satisfaction of its own is to be asserted. To restate, to desire is to be asking the question what does the Other want? It is in the particular context of the Other itself that desire is formed. And drive is to continue in the realization that the Other will be constantly lacking. The “object” is therefore lack itself, but a positive lack inasmuch as it is obtained from a positive order.

To translate into our concrete terms: nation-state, inasmuch as it is represented by the walled-in bourgeoisie, is just another community. But there is another level, a meta-level in which all the communities, including the bourgeoisie, partake in a nation-state. These two nation-states are not in correspondence to each other. The point of gaze directed by the community towards itself is thus of a meta-level nation-state. This is the nation-state which is a surplus, the idea of which is what given its particularities intelligibility. This is not transcendent, but is transcendental in the sense of being constantly conditioned by the conditions that accrue. This is the transcendental I which can see in itself the unity and agency of change even when the conditions that gave rise to it in the first place have been altered. It is within this particular universe that the drive of the communities makes sense. It is only by assuming such a universe that one decipher the drive in it. This follows that the ceaseless repetition of the drive is not aimed at dissolving every community by in repeatedly
asserting the lack within the formation itself. In other words, it is an act of improvising newer forms of community.

In the light of this discussion, let us go back to Derrida (and thus to Levinas). It is a common feature of the psychoanalytic ethics and the ethics of hospitality as advocated by Derrida that these cannot serve as any basis for legislation. The ethical acts are particular. One can say that the commonality ends here. On the other hand, the differences between the two are quite striking and deserve notice. If hospitality involves the double gesture of a conditional hospitality conditioned by the Other but always in reference to an unconditional hospitality, the object of one’s maxim, the Cause which induces in one satisfaction or guilt, is hospitality itself. In spite of the fact of the unknowable infinite other, it remains that our duty is to provide hospitality. Derrida does acknowledge the possibility of the Other refusing our offer. Nevertheless we are not left with anything else to do. The exceptions to hospitality suggest that the value of utmost importance is hospitality. It is hospitality for the sake of hospitality. It is majoritarian as long as it sets the agenda, not for oneself, but for the whole of humanity. It is majoritarian precisely in the way it can assume a universal status by common applicability erasing in the process its own particular point of enunciation. The particularity of the Other is of no real consequence except in determining the extent of my hospitality. Let us assume that the Other’s demand is not in accordance with, but quite detrimental to the third, the whole of humanity, as Levinas puts it. Of course this is possible, considering that we do not know in advance what the Other needs of us. He is as free as ourselves (let us not forget that in Levinas the host and the host of the host are both “he”). If this be the case, what would be our ethical reaction? It of course does not matter, because hospitality is the be all and end all of the particularist ethics as propounded by Derrida. As Kordela (2007) points out, what is missed by Levinas is that what we see in the Other is
conditioned by our own desire – i.e. the empty place from which the gaze is returned (138). To elevate hospitality to be the only ethic already speaks of a particular position. The concept of conditional hospitality also implies one’s own privileged position with regard to the home – its destiny is to be decided by me! What is occluded here is the possibility that the Other could be a better host.

As opposed to this, the Kant of pure act, as explicated by psychoanalysis, is cosmopolitan and minoritarian. Inasmuch as it is form without content, it is universal, inasmuch as its content is stained with its groundedness, it is Particular. It is in its markedness of particularity that it is minoritarian.

The important factor here is that Lacan moves the Other away from the imaginary to the symbolic. The subject of psychoanalysis is neither capable of knowing the Other nor herself. She does not set any one’s agenda – rather she is the effect of an agenda. It is not a question of deciding what would most benefit the world. It is an act of changing it. The Kantian law in itself is cosmopolitan in that it does not prescribe the action, it only elucidates its framework. It gives way to radical particularity, of the inauguration of new subjects. As when read through psychoanalysis, it is a minoritarian Kantian ethics. The subject does not assume her equality with the Other. Rather it is overwhelmed by the Other. The Other is in

36 But isn’t this view discrepant with Žižek’s accusation of Levinas that by raising the Other to the divine he dissipated the revolutionary potential, that the true potentiality is in the Other being equal as me – “This compels us to detach the Christian “love for one’s neighbor” radically from the Levinasian topic of the Other as the impenetrable neighbor. Insofar as the ultimate Other is God himself, I should risk the claim that it is the epochal achievement of Christianity to reduce its Otherness to Sameness: God Himself is Man, “one of us” (Žižek, 2003: 138)? While it might look so initially, Žižek’s God, it is pertinent to point out, is not the Other but the Other of the Other. Thus God is the one of deliverance out of the symbolic. The point is, there is no such agency from whom revolution will follow like the rains of June (to use a Malayalam expression). There is no Other of Other. The Benjaminian Messiah is here at this moment in a time which is heterogenous to the linear time.
herself than she knows. Yet, there is in her, unknown to herself a crack, a crack which is at the same time a crack in the Other. The Other is the originary site of one’s desire, yet it is not the desire of the Other that should dictate the ethical act. It is in the fidelity to this crack, this unfillable gap, that constitutes the ethical act which gives birth to a new subject.

Why do we find the psychoanalytic ethics of relevance than the others? First of all, as we have said, it does not imply a meeting of the equals. Neither is it a question of setting the programme for the world. In other words, it is not the ethics of the subject who constitutes the nation through a will of contract. It is the ethics of a shipwreck as she finds herself on an island totally foreign. It induces in us the sense of awe and confusion as in when set in a tumultuous infinity. It is the ethics of the migrant, those millions who leave their familiarity behind. There is always something from the past. There is the uncertain future.

It still remains a pertinent question as to what would be of value to a theory of cosmopolitanism. The answer depends on what one makes of cosmopolitanism. Is cosmopolitanism just about getting out of one’s culture? Is it of making an inclusive society? Is it about formulating a set of practices which can regulate one’s affairs in the world? If cosmopolitanism is all about regulating the movement of bodies and capital, we do not have much to offer. If it is about making laws, psychoanalytic ethics can serve as the basis of no law. On the other hand, if cosmopolitanism is also of transcending not culture or place but registers, then psychoanalytic ethic offers us a new outlook – the outlook of the gap. The psychoanalytic ethics is all about the impossibility filling of the gap (Stavrakakis, 1999). It is then also about traversing the fantasies of fascism, of the radical questioning of belonging, and finding in the gap the transition to the new. It is about introducing a new register in
transcendence of borders, a register of transcending borders of imagination and of effecting a new language of belonging.

Conclusion

The question of communities, of governmental subjects in the postcolonial state as they face the state, is the question of the subject and the principles of subjecthood. Yet, one is not dissolved in it. One does retain a stain in oneself, a stain that is not exhausted by the Other. Cosmopolitanisms which speak the language of legislation or of welcome are only of limited value to the minority subject. The minority subject is Kant’s shipwrecked sailor – he finds himself in a foreign land. Rather than attributing to him a false equality, one would do better by claiming for him the unequal and the abnormal status. Susan Koshy (2011), in her definition of “minority cosmopolitanism” has characterised minority by the asymmetry of cultural encounter, as well as by its contradictory pull of centripetal and centrifugal forces – “its centripetal capacity to intensify affiliations of race, ethnicity, and culture and its centrifugal capacity to extend these affinities outward into inventive affiliations” (594). Our task has been to outline a site of this asymmetry as well as the location of forging identities and alliances.

The postcolonial subject, be it the individual or the community, is underwritten by the state which defines her yet does not exhaust her. Cosmopolitan for this postcolonial subject should arise not from her power to make laws, for she doesn’t have it yet. She is not even in possession of the language of administration. Cosmopolitan then, which is the act of imagining oneself, the politics of civility, that hero-less politics of ours, results from an estimate position. The postcolonial subject simultaneously occupies a position within and
outside the postcolonial state. It is from this exterior limit that democratic politics can ground itself on.

To cling on to one’s desire, never to give up on it, is the ultimate act of cosmopolitanism, for it is the herald of a new world, to be effected through endless repetitions. It has been the inference of the long discussion on nation-state and globalization that the state is effectively the agency of globalization, its local agent. In the age of Empire where the walls effected between states is increasingly the barrier not for capital or their human faces but to prevent the refugees (of war, of economy, of sheer hate) (Brown, 2010), one finds that the language of ‘parochial’ nationalism and ‘cosmopolitan’ capital are not mutually exclusive. It is important then to point out and negate the fantasies of nationalism—that of true belonging and ordered spacing. The ethical act is to stain these purities, to introduce a radical heterogeneity, to reiterate the impossibility of belonging and thus to repeat un-belongings: belonging-without-belonging, or, cosmopolitanism.