"Boundaries. Differences. Passages": These three words signify something more than our scholarly reflections, our conceptual ambitions. They are signposts struck deep into the hard and stony ground, in those "contested fields", that map the terrain of inter-cultural communication and transcultural living. As heuristic devices, this trio of topoi – "Boundaries. Differences. Passages" – have set our scholarly agendas, turned social injury into information, opened up the norms of ideology to interpretation. But they provide us with more than our objects of knowledge, our topics of research. As rhetorical figures or figurative themes, these topoi project us into a future that provides a space for forward thinking, innovative interpretation, and aspirational activism. They move us from scholarship to sentiment; they direct us towards ethical horizons, those feint glimmers of light that illuminate the factual discourses devoted to policy, and the sententious prose of pedagogy. These keywords are tuned to the peculiar habit of humanistic thought – the quest of the humanities – for the process of poesis, for the craft of making, that reveals the literature, ethics, phenomenology. The humanities do not propose an instrumental or causal relation between the medium and the message, the object and its use, or technique and telos. The humanities are effective in the education of the senses – and in the education of elites and masses – because they produce knowledge 'at one remove'; they work within that realm of "representation" where form turns into feeling, and an aesthetic and ethical invocation of human experience creates a world of theoretical concepts and intellectual conjectures.

The 'gap' between the pedagogical and the performative, between disciplinary knowledge and the aesthetic or cultural experience (both are important) creates an on-going, productive tension in the humanities between what counts as subjective and what is objective, what is fact and what is value. It is because of such epistemological and pedagogical tensions that the humanities do not have a hard-wired principle or a method, but share a common
project or purpose: *this* is the act of interpretation that leads to scholarly interlocution, intellectual dialogue, and public debate for which the humanities are renowned. It is these ‘tension’ in the production of humanistic knowledge that establishes, in my view, the single most foundational contribution of the humanities to social life. *The humanities build communities rather than models.* Through interpretation, instruction and interlocution they create climates of opinion. Like the weather, humanistic knowledge can be changeable, turbulent and elusive. But does anybody seriously argue that we can do without air? In my lecture, this evening, I welcome you to this peculiarly humanistic project of the crafting of a community, of drawing an enabling boundary around us that may, I hope, feel like a circle of light.

*Boundaries, then,* are the disciplinary barriers we traverse/transcend in order to enter into interdisciplinary inquiries that establish "elective affinities", and facilitate our encounters with cultural diversity on a comparativist and cosmopolitan scale. In this sense, *boundaries* are liminal forms of definition.

It would be true, I think, to say that most of the research projects presented to this Conference have in some sense or other, subverted, but not superseded, that great boundary of modern times === the political border, and cultural frontier, of the nation-state. I will not labour the obvious point, that we live in a global age in which our existence is marked by the shadow-lines of sovereignty – be it the sovereignty of the Self or the State – which do not hold sway with the same authority and power as they once did in the age of Empire or the mid-twentieth century decade of postcolonial independence – the Bandung moment. The challenge of this conference is to think anew the concepts of *"Boundaries. Differences. Passages."* so I shall not spend much time on the subject of what we may call *Dissemi-Nation*, on which I have already written at length. On the question of the ‘subversion’ of the nation-state – as purveyor and protector of culture and consciousness – I take the rather disjunctive view that Michel Foucault espoused when he wrote, in 1979: *We are witnessing a globalisation of*
the economy? For certain. A globalisation of political calculations? Without doubt. But a universalisation of political consciousness – certainly not.¹

Political 'distortions', economic divisions that reproduce "colonial" structures (Joe Stieglitz, IBM CEO), and ethical dilemmas of cultural incommensurability, define the boundaries of our age of global transition (rather than transformation). Here 'extremes' exist in a relation of antagonistic – and agonistic – proximity (not polarity). The 'secular' liberalisation of the markets has seen, side by side, the rise of xenophobia and religious fundamentalisms; diasporic populations who live in the West, and participate in its modernising public spheres and civil societies, are also amongst those who most fervently advocate traditionalism and orthodoxy; Western governments who have become spokespersons for the democratic ideal the world over, are themselves in thrall to the profound intolerance, and lack of transparency, of the Religious Right movements in their own countries.

These caveats to celebratory globalisation lead me to raise the important issue of "global doubt". Global doubt, Amartya Sen argues in Identity and Violence, is an essential component of the humanitarian ethics of an integrational and inclusive polis. It leads him to a counterfactual evaluative judgement: "the central issue is not whether a particular arrangement is better for all than no cooperation at all … Rather the principle question is whether the particular divisions to emerge, among the various alternatives available, are fair divisions, given what could be chosen."² Global doubt is not a form of luddite defeatism; it is not a nostalgia for the nation-state of the Westphalian system. "Doubt" is a hermeneutic of truth: it is a social practice that consists in self-inquiry, critical intelligence, ethical-political deliberation, and social interlocution. It is the process through which we test the truth-conditions, and the practical, pragmatic consequences, of our acts as agents in the world. Global Doubt, in my view, attempts to balance the 'benefits' of global transfers with the costs and outcomes' of social transformation, while bearing in mind humanitarian ethics and the

politics of inclusion and equality. Doubt as a practice *preceding action and agency* is a powerful third element in the dialectic of *transfer* and *transformation* that creates the 'global' dialectic.

Languages of constitutional reform and public policy too often lack an adequate vocabulary of *global doubt* that addresses the *affective* life of citizens – their sense of public anxiety, ambivalence, uncertainty, indecision – as they ponder choices in life and politics. These are the difficult, awkward passions of the political life that are not easily classifiable as public 'virtues'. A renewed sense of *civic or civil belonging* in a globalised age demands a language of inter-cultural *interpretation* as well as the policy-oriented prose of social integration. It must be a language rich in metaphor and imaginative power; a language that is resorts to the ethical hermeneutic of doubt in order to sustain the *public representation* of social conflicts and political contradictions.

The profound degree of internal contradiction and contestation explored in Lidija Basta-Fleiner's project on the *poesis* of constitution-making in multicultural Europe, is an illustration of the paradoxes of "doubt" that must be negotiated in the creation of emergent political forms. Constitution-making as a cultural and discursive mode of "will-formation" articulates a problem of radical *liminality* in the central question posed by her research: "What would be the emergence of a supra-national constitutionalism without a 'constitutional' *demos*." Basta-Fleiner raises the issue of 'alterity' – whether it is signified as otherness, legal aporia, jurisdictional unsettlement, or cultural incommensurability – at the heart of constitution-making and the setting of legal and political standards. Aporia occupies an *axial* position (not a decentred or marginal location) in the construction of a liminal boundary of legality and culture. This differential "axis" creates a cross-roads (chiasmus) at the very point at which one expects a boundary to *fix a limit*, or integrate heterogenous elements or practices of cultural identity into a primordial unity. The question of cultural identity revolves on this axis of alterity: one eye turned towards it-self, the second looking other-wise.

The authority or integrity of the boundary – its relation to the pressures of power and domination – depends, to a considerable degree, on this mobility and
contingency that is constitutive of the liminal boundary – its axial alterity. This double 'axial' movement gives boundaries the flexibility for inclusion and exclusion, closure and conflict, identity and intervention, injunction and interpretation. Liminal Boundaries are binding and breachable, because of the potential for strategically turning the spatial dynamics of identity-as-sameness (the exclusion of difference) into the temporal dynamics of difference-as-the-revision/relocation of identity as diversity (the creation of solidarities). Such a liminal, constructivist boundary mimics the transformative and translational movement of an aesthetic genre – for instance, the transformation of the picaresque novel into the Bildungsroman – whose development is at once re-cognizable and re-visionary, diachronic and disseminatory, maintaining the tension between containment and contestation. It may be a long-stretch from the boundaries of aesthetic genres to the limits of the law, but Andrea Büchler's project is a case in point: What is the transitional boundary of integration – and what should be the threshold of tolerance – in integrating the cultural practices of migrant families into domestic family law? This interrogation positions the Law on an inter-cultural cross-roads; the culture of legality is placed at the axial point of a crucial issue: in what ways is it permissible to be, or belong, to a migrant family under the eye of the Law?

Boundary-thinking – and boundary-breaking – as I have described the process, bear some resemblance to Jörn Rüsen's concept of a "comprehensive humanism" wrought through the master-narratives of mankind, "mankind" as a trope – or topos – of cultural identity maintains a borderline existence, a dual function, at once a master-narrative of humankind, and a historical and cultural metonym of a specific diachronic image of 'mankind'. Such a humanism negotiates the tension between "people's understanding of belonging to and dissociation from the other, similarities and differences amongst them". "Mankind" as master-narrative sutures the boundary between "cultural identity" and the horizon of humanism; but it is a contingent boundary open to diachronicity, revision and interpretation – as much as it provides closure and identity. The "chance" of humanism beautifully reflects what I have proposed as
'doubleness' of boundaries, caused by their axial constitution, which gives them an aspirational and aesthetic efficacy. Hearing the word "chance" in Rüsen's title, reminds me of his use of that very word – chance – in his wonderful essay on Ranke. There, he suggests, that aesthetics "introduces the chance of autonomy within the framework of historical determinism".³ It is, indeed, the "chance" of humanistic identification that creates the possibility of an affiliation – through – alterity or otherness affiliation – a non-sovereign solidarity – amongst those who advance a "politics of difference".

Differences demand that we work across, or in-between, the separable (at times separatist) pedagogies of class dialectics, race analytics, feminist paradigms, media hermeneutics, minoritarian geopolitical locations. The Global Icons project, presented by Lydia Haustein, proposes an inventive trans-cultural conversation between iconic images, the global circulation of symbolic and commodified capital, and the practices of youth identification – what she picturesquely calls "tribal markings". Working across "the divides of various youth groups in Tokyo, New York and Rio", she identifies the way in which the 'identity' of an icon – a Che Guevara T-shirt for instance – can maintain a visual 'sameness' while signifying a cultural and interpretational 'difference' in each urban-national location. This 'diacritical' reading of urban and iconic boundaries shows up the range of values and meanings that can exist differentially within the same practice, meaning, text or object. The nearness of difference – its proximities – is as lethal and productive as any polarity of meaning or significance. This resonates richly with Andreas Wimmer's fascinating project on Ethnic Boundaries and Cultural Differentiation. The identification of 'difference' – or the 'difference of identity' – may be a negotiation of 'degrees' on a scale of cultural and psychic 'proximity' – rather than a dialectic of distance. "'Proximity', beyond intentionality, is the relationship with the neighbour in the moral sense of the term", Levinas writes of the encounter with the Other⁴; and Wimmer's skilfull attention to the diverse and disjunctive sites that constitute the signifying chain of

³ Jörn Rüsen, Studies in Metahistory (Berghahn Books: Providence, RI, 1993), 140.
⁴ Emmanuel Levinas, Collected philosophical papers (Nijhoff: Boston, 1987), 119.
any boundary illuminates the ethics and politics of proximity. "Social closure, political relevance, cultural differentiation, historical stability" – these strategic boundary-lines of division and displacement break-open to reveal a chromatic scale of identifications across the 'diacritica' of cultural proximity that can result in social polarisations.

A humanism of "proximate differences" that sets out to achieve intercultural communication – lets call it cultural inter-locution – must take a leap of 'chance' into an area of 'inter-subjectivity' governed by no dominant culture, no masterful dogmatism of the value of a singular or sovereign ideology of difference. It is this leap that defines the value of 'differentiations' through the performance of inter-cultural dialogue, without assuming polarities or binarisms of cultural belonging. Such interlocutions exist in a realm of human inter-est which is not enunciated on one side or the other of a pre-constituted, primordial difference, but uttered through a "third position" in-between cultural possession and trans-or inter-cultural performance: "something which inter-est, which lies between people and therefore can relate and bind them together."5

Intersubjectivity (as the site of intercultural communication), does not ground its claims to equitable 'rights and representations' on the sovereignty of cultural identitarianism. Inter/trans-cultural interlocution finds its insight and its inspiration in what Maurice Merleau-Ponty once envisaged as "a logic of human coexistence which does not make any event impossible [while creating, at the same time,] … a system in which at any moment no problem is separable from the rest."6

"Differences" must never become "islands of identity"; they are most useful and beautiful when the metaphoric and conceptual imagination conceives of them as archipelagos of identification – related systems of land and sea, islands and water flowing into each other, coastline and cresting wave in profound conversation. Islands, nations, communities, groups, individuals: lifeworlds of diverse ecologies and ethicalities, different cultures and customs, washed by the same sheet of water, but deeply, if fluidly, connected by the

shared sea of history. Islands in an archipelago are part of a signifying system, every identity at once secondary and supplementary to the other in a chain of dependence and dissemination. Each coastline has its characteristic markings, each eco-system its singular character, each culture its individuating qualities, each song its own burden and rhythm. However, here there is no single sense of wholeness; here there is no primordial form of totalisation or 'truthfulness'.

[...]

Agamben beautifully illuminates my concept of intercession when he explains that

"Next to similitudo (resemblance) there is similutas, that is the fact of being together (which also implies rivalry, enmity); and next to similare (to be like) there is simulare (to copy, to imitate … to feign). To grasp not the resemblance but rather the simultaneity … is the restless power that keeps [us] together and constitutes [our] being-in-common."  

Cultural inter-locution takes place through the process of "be-halfing" oneself, through the axis of splitting, in the encounter with an-other assymmetric subject, or disjunctive cultural practice or community […]. This […] brings us to the cross-roads-within-the boundary where, through the intercessive agency of "being-in-common" we are in the position to re-vise, re-cognize, and restructure our interests and our causes. In his posthumously published essay Humanism and Democratic Criticism, Edward Said argues powerfully for an "intercessive" humanism that intervenes in "history as an agonistic process still being made…"

"… always and constantly the undocumented turbulence of unsettled and unhoused exiles, immigrants, itinerant or captive populations for whom no document, no adequate expression yet exists to take account of what they go through … . Humanism, I strongly believe must excavate the silences, the world of memory, of itinerant barely surviving groups, the kind of testimony that doesn’t make it onto the reports …"  

9 Ibid., 81.
This is not a philanthropic or sentimental speech-act in favour of the oppressed waiting patiently to be emancipated and represented. To suggest this, is to strip the oppressed of the complexity of their conditions, and to suggest that they are not subject to the asymmetrical power-structures of "proximate differences", or that language of suffering speaks spontaneously "for itself" without the thought of an-other through whom it makes an appeal, and in so doing, attempts to make common cause of being-in-common. The intercessive subject also stands on a boundary pierced by the "axis of alterity" resulting in the anxiety and disorientation that results when you find yourself on the cross-roads of history, on the very edge of making a choice, taking a measure of the liminal boundary of being:

When does a life bend towards freedom? Grasp its direction? ...
Maybe through a teacher: someone with facts with numbers with poetry
Who wrote on the board: IN EVERY GENERATION ACTIONS FREES OUR DREAMS …

An intercessive approach – freedom … through a teacher, a fact, a poem, a number – is essential in achieving some sense of what it means to strive for 'equality-in-difference'. The phrase comes from Etienne Balibar's brilliant discussion of what is at stake in the minoritarian movements of our times: "an equality that is not the neutralisation of differences [universalist equalisation, based on a notion of a level playing field] but the condition and requirement of the diversification of freedoms."

There are few writers who understand the task of "the diversification of freedoms" with the same interventionist – to say nothing of intercessive – passion as the French Tunisian philosopher and political activist Albert Memmi. No-one knows better the experience of self-fragmentation in the service of speaking intercessively on behalf of others. To shadow the suffering of the oppressed has been a lifetime's mission for Albert Memmi.

[…]
It is Memmi’s hope that these 'partial sketches' will lead to a future portrait of 'the dominated peoples of our time':
"We have by now learned that oppressed people resemble each other. Their own peculiar features and individual history aside, colonised people, Jews, women, the poor show a kind of family likeness: all bear a burden which leaves the same bruises on their soul, and similarly distorts their behaviour. A like suffering often produces similar gestures, similar expressions of pain, the same inner paroxysms, the same agony of the same revolt."¹⁰

To suggest that the colonised, Jews, women, and the poor share "a like suffering" immediately raises the spectre of a sentimental solidarity. A claim to "resemblance" across group interests and identities based on analogies of affect – similar gestures, similar expressions of pain, the same inner paroxysms – smacks of the "culture of complaint" or the "vanguard of victimage". Both these phrases recall the controversial culture-wars of the '80s and 90s fought in the name of "a politics of difference". After 9/11 there has been a revival in attacks on some of the themes of those times – area studies programmes are now under investigation by a special parliamentary commission that has been charged to investigate the culturally relativist and anti-patriotic sentiments of various 'foreign study' centres and curricula with 'postcolonialism' singled out for special scrutiny.

The politics of difference engages with a corpus of institutional issues as diverse as curricular reform, cultural defense cases, national and international 'state' security, bi-lingual education, and hate speech.

Memmi's concept of 'family likeness' – the phrase is obviously alive with Wittgensteinian associations – provides us with an interesting revision of the assumptions and arguments associated with currently influential accounts of the "politics of recognition". The kind of "resemblance" between oppressed group-identities that Memmi proposes as a "family likeness" depends less on a pre-given 'commonality' of cultural value and more on the construction of what he calls a "community of condition". This is a phrase that comes from his essay Negritude and Jewishness, which proposes that "the similarity" in the condition of most oppressed peoples is a movement of distinction which alone will allow the false and restricting unity to be disposed of in recognition of the several

facets of black [and Jewish] reality. How can the movement of distinction be prevented from turning into an anodyne pluralism? Does 'distinction' describe the weave of cultural differences and intersections as they break out of any false or restricting unity, or does it describe Memmi's critical practice? Let me provide you with an example from Memmi's essay:

It would be sufficient for me … to point to the hypothesis that there is a similarity in the conditions of most of the oppressed peoples … Of course, these parallels do not do away with the specific meanings of each word, [that describes the identification of Jews and Blacks] and of its contents, for the main reason that, beyond the similarities, the differences between the conditions and the traditions are of the utmost importance. The oppression of the Jew is not the same as that of the black man, nor as that of the colonised nations. Neither, by the way, is that of each black man with that of all black men. And, furnished with these ideas and with the common tools, it is up to the blacks to make their own inventory. We can only propose the questions: How does one characterize the contents of Negritude, or more exactly from now on, of each Negritude? If it is agreed, as I proposed, that Negritude is only the degree of conformity [and hence of normative deviation or non-conformity] of each black man to the collective personality of the group, one can see that this would be an essentially dynamic concept with several variables. What part will the negative and the positive aspects play each time? Will we be able to describe and to define a coefficient of Negritude in the way that we found the coefficient of Jewishness?

A Wittgensteinian echo is apparent in the distinction that Memmi makes between minority groups identified at the level of 'names' and words as opposed to "contents" – an unusual way of thinking of the distinction between culture-as-ontology, and culture as an imaginative, semiotic or ethical practice in conversation with "other" defining and diversifying discourses and protocols. It is at this point that Memmi’s insistence on 'inter- and intra-cultural communication' develops a discourse that is intercessive, in the sense in which I developed the term to signify a political and ethical practice that enables cultures to discover what it means to "belong-in-common", without necessarily being like each other –

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11 Ibid., 38.
12 Ibid.
a representational solidarity of semblance rather than 'identity'. In playing the language-game of naming, Wittgenstein suggests, "Don't say that there must be something common to them all or they would not be called games … For if you look and see you will not see something common to all, but similarities, relationships …".

Memmi's language-games of emancipatory identifications proceed with caution and casuistry. He 'separates' each aspect of the naming of Negritude or Jewishness in a manner congruent with Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblances which suggests that

"a name only signifies what is an element of reality … we see component parts of something composite … We see a whole which changes (is destroyed) while its component parts remain unchanged … These are the materials from which we construct that picture of reality."\(^{13}\)

Memmi's portraits produce a dynamic of resemblance "with several variables" through a process of "splitting"; for in order to achieve family likeness, he writes, "it will be necessary to split the concept of Negritude, as I was obliged to split that of Judaism."\(^{14}\) Such 'splitting' is not merely a dry, definitional exercise, a splitting of linguistic hairs. For if the role of figurative language is crucial to cultural stereotypes, hate-speech, the clash of civilizations, all contested by the politics of difference, then Memmi's linguistic and discursive analyses demonstrate how "a movement of distinction" will free us from the pieties and proscriptions of the "politics of identity". Memmi makes this very point when he writes that

... [D]espite its appearance, Negritude does not correspond to a racial community, but to a community of condition, which is a condition of oppression under the [mythical] pre-text of race ... the ethnic response of the black man to the ethnic accusation of the white. We find the same global and probably provisional response in most of the colonized who have grown into ... pseudo ethnic solidarity to counter the ethnic contempt of the colonizer.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{14}\) Memmi, *Dominated Man* 35.

\(^{15}\) Memmi, *Dominated Man*. 
Memmi’s preferred procedure of group identification is a ‘movement of distinction’, which neither polarizes cultures nor totalizes them. Such a political or discursive movement demands a dual-mode of identification – a “coefficient of Jewishness or Negritude.” [...] This mode of identification as the ‘coefficient’ of a ‘community of condition’ allows for relations of equality within and across communities – majoritarian or minoritarian – such that one can go, as Memmi describes it, “beyond the false problems of all or nothing, of total acceptance or total rejection.”

If the movement of distinction leads the minority subject beyond ‘total acceptance or total rejection’, it also makes possible a form of ‘family likeness’ amongst minorities that emerges as partial identification. A shared sense of collective agency against suffering but borne out of it, need not be based on a quasi-ontological claim to the sovereignty of a particular ‘cause’ or political identity as embodied in a primordial class subject, or race subject. What might seem like ‘old hat’ to some, is now jauntily sported, once again, by those who will persuade us that we live in a world that is “after theory” and ought to take us back to the Lukacsian marxist future, or others who are convinced that our post-colonial age has seen the return of an immeasurable Deleuzian Empire!

In Memmi’s view, the process of partial or split identifications renounces the ‘right to sovereignty’ of any one group in order to achieve a community of condition across several. [...] This is part of a larger discussion, but let me quickly suggest some associated arguments that I have tendentiously, though not untruthfully, made my own. Freud’s seminal chapter on Identification in “Group Identity and the Ego” describes group ‘identification’ in mimetic terms as an “infection or imitation” – a kind of semblance or “looking alike” in which “one ego has to perceive a significant analogy with another on one point” – a point of affiliation that belongs to no-one singularly but is an intersubjective construction.

16 Memmi, Dominated Man, 38.
achieved through the act of identification. Such a semblant relationship does not assume a need for a "pre-existing sympathy", Freud argues, but does require an identification/affiliation that hangs "on this one point". This partial identification comes to represent the beginning of a new tie – the 'family likeness', if you will, of group identification. So the 'one point' is in fact neither originary nor singular; it is a pivot of partial-identification that inaugurates a 'new tie' that is collective, a condition of community, without demanding a foundational fealty to an origin, an ontology, or sovereign 'difference'.

[...]

The problematic of "semblant solidarity", [...] has a conceptual and metaphoric genealogy in my earlier concepts of "proximate differences", the "archipelago cultures" and, most recently, in the intercessive address of difference. Much of this is summed up in an essay Memmi wrote in 1968, devoted to issues in global ethics relating to the lives of foreign workers. The essay ends with Memmi's reflection on what it would mean to "arrive at rights and a morality which are actually universal; that is to say to consider the entire planet as a really single society."[19]

[...]

Whether Memmi is writing about the perversities of colonial power relations, or the complexities of gender relations in his essay on Simone de Beauvoir, he is of the view, that it is the proximity or intimacy of difference – "where so many groups, each jealous of its own physiognomy, live side by side" – that constitutes the enabling, of agonising conditions of freedom. Semblance, or fellow-feeling, is made possible because "the subject sees himself as others see him – which will enable him to support himself in a dual situation ..."[20] of inter-locution and intersubjectivity ... within the fragile framework of the

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18 Ibid., 136.
19 Memmi, Dominated Man, 137.
20 Memmi, Dominated Man, 268.
imaginary relation to the other, and it hangs on that very uncertainty."21 This, you will remember, is the process by which the splitting of Jewish or Black identity, for instance, allows for family likeness to engender new ties of affiliation by espousing political or ‘interests’ other than its own. The importance of establishing an intersubjective realm is beautifully made by Balibar’s belief that "the value of human agency arises from the fact that no one can be liberated or emancipated by others, although no one can liberate himself/herself without others."22

Albert Memmi twists the thread of ‘family likeness’ even further until it feels like a hanging-rope around your neck, dragging you to confront your diabolical twin. The ethical value of human agency, Memmi seems to be saying, arises from the fact that no one can liberate herself or himself without also confronting a dire, asymmetric 'commonality' upon which the banality of evil carries out its edicts of exclusion, oppression, suffering. For the perversity of power is such that it demands a mutilated mutuality, and emancipation requires that you look into that mangled mirror in order to make your historic choice to be free and fair. Surviving the boundaries and limits of living "side by side", even in relations of deep antagonism, requires one to confront what seems like an impossible, if indispensable truth: "In other words, either [the oppressor/r] no longer recognises the [oppressed/], or he no longer recognises himself." To this we may now add: "Either the oppressed recognises the family likeness of others or she no longer recognises herself."23

For such are the unsettling conditions of the fate of freedom – between enemies and friends – that I have shared with you this evening. It is from the turbulence of wars, occupations, segregations and evictions that I dare to hope that some form of semblant solidarity might emerge. In these times of the unsettled energies of place I search for a sign of the proximity of ‘difference’ that will settle into a design for living with shared borders and contrapuntal histories.

If oppression and destruction can tear down walls and destroy frontiers, then why can't those gates remain open, those spaces be resettled, in times of peace? Is there no place for aspiration? No voice for intercession? Today, I fear, it is as if hostility brings us closer to our neighbours, in a deadly embrace, than hospitality ever seems to do.

The door of history is neither open nor closed; it is our shared responsibility to do with it what we will.