The Vision of a Future Europe: Infectious or Infected?
The Position of Education

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Contents

Abstract

This essay aims to examine the discourse that conceptualizes the educational exchange and the European culture within the framework of a theory of European identity construction. Then, I shall discuss the main positions of this discourse, their concern with the global market and their indifference about political and material inequalities. The following question is posed: which are the innovative proposals that could set in course an ideal of a unified, just and radical Europe? A first approach to it is provided by Habermas' and Derrida's recent publications. Their views constitute the starting point of my intervention in the debate on the educational future of Europe and the inculcation of a European identity in students' consciousness. But my response to the above question challenges the kind of European philosophical discourse that does not rethink the main objectives of the social and political elites of Europe. I suggest that we criticize the dominant position of those elites and that we promote an alternative normativity of equality and justice. In the absence of such a normative condition, the bad side of modernity may continue to prevail and serve the material and symbolic interests of the privileged European classes.

Introduction

My aim in this article is to critique some general theoretical tendencies in defining Europeanness and put forward a rough outline of what I would consider a cosmopolitan goal-setting of European multicultural education. My concern is with the normativity of a potential European social imaginary and not with the accomplished realities surrounding the topic. That is, I shall not deal directly with European measures that have already been taken or standards that have been set or any other empirical material operating in the direction of creating a common Europe and of associating it with ideas and phenomena of multiculturalism, transnationalism and migration. The latter are often examined thoroughly with regard to education in several European contexts and with regard to nation-state policies (Radtke, 2005; Bommes, 2005; Luchtenberg, 2005). Accounts of existing efforts of this kind at the empirical level and analyses of their significance abound (see, for instance, Lawn 2001, 176). Most of these accounts emanate, I believe, from functionalist concerns about stability and reflect empirical-pragmatic questions of identity as the cement of long-lasting collectiveness or examine the possibilities of new, transnational forms of identity and collectivity, again, in functionalist-systemic terms (see, for instance, Bommes, 2005). It is no surprise, then, that "the question has become what 'draws a body of citizens together into a coherent and stably organized political community, and keeps that allegiance durable?'" (Lehning 2001, 244). Yet I claim that many theoretical questions about the ideal of Europe are still open for discussion and have to be discussed prior to expounding on concrete policies for achieving this ideal and securing its durability.

Since the ideal of Europe has been molded along lines of European unity, active and powerful intervention in world affairs and identity that is distinct from both regional and extra-Europe otherness, a major issue remains the normative justification of this vision. In simpler words: what would the nature of a European consciousness be and on what conditions would such consciousness be politically desirable and promising of a better world future?

Education cannot sidestep this question, because the task it faces, that is, to effect (or contribute to) a transvaluation of European societies so as to nurture the ideal of Europe,[1] presupposes the

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[1] For instance, as Luchtenberg states, 'in 1988, the EC launched a directive, which requires that a European dimension be realized in the schools of the member states' (2005, 7).

closest possible reading of what such an ideal would consist of. The substance of this ideal, the meaning we attribute to it, could prove decisive regarding the role we expect education to play; for modern education is accused of having made common cause with the nation-state in consolidating exclusion, discrimination and chauvinism. The sustenance of the nation-state is said to have being accomplished[2] through educational strategies fostering a common identity and ethos while entrenching solid boundaries and blind commitment to national interests. Now, if education is called to forge a European consciousness and serve the development of Europeanism, what guarantees that it will not repeat the "mentality constructions" that it had effected in the name of the nation-state? Is the metonymy "Europe" nothing more than a larger-scale re-enactment of past identity-formation practices within which old priorities (such as competitiveness, success and profit) remain intact? Is it not a contradiction to condemn the role of education when it concerned the nation-state and to glorify it when it concerns Europe?

The only way I see out of this predicament is in the direction of a normative argument that the content of the European ideal is unprecedented in liberating force and free of immediate negative political implications. An educational role of transvaluation that is constructive or reproductive of a specific identity can be seriously defended only by recourse to some kind of normative justification that would show that educational risks deriving from experiments with the new are worth taking. To examine this normativity of Europe, (a) I sketch briefly the relevant conceptual landscape, (b) I discuss critically (and as an exemplary case) Habermas's and Derrida's suggestions about a European identity and the debate they initiated and (c) I conclude with counter-suggestions and their implications for education.

The conceptual landscape, the political contingency and the need for a European identity

It is said that, whilst in modernity identities were shaped by production practices, in postmodernity identities are shaped by communication practices (Usher 2002). If this is true, then education as communicatively mediated and formally organized human interaction appears more crucial than ever to the construction of a better human self. Yet, how should educators determine axiologically this construction? Political theory provides ample material for contemplation and selection expanding from the globalized self (Waldron, 2000) who is hybrid and ecclectic, to a cosmopolitan self (Nussbaum 2002; Lu 2000) who is more sensitive to global aid and other moral duties, down to more localized accounts of subjectivity, such as Taylor's (1994), emphasizing authenticity and embeddedness.

Educational theory is all the more aware of competing accounts of identity and the importance of arguments about the multiple ways in which people define themselves or are recognized by others. As Paul Standish remarks, "in contemporary policy and practice in education such arguments have become familiar enough, especially in the contexts of equal opportunities and multiculturalism" (2003, 248). All in all, it is now widely held in education, through the influence of Taylor's (1994) communitarianism and Kymlicka's (1995) qualified liberalism, that pupils differ in ways that are meaningful for their identity and that cannot be left out in the course of the cultivation of individual autonomy and freedom. Thus, the initial question seems to transform into a search for the kind of identity construction that does justice to the situatedness and singularity of the self, while admitting that the self can always become enlarged and elastic enough to go beyond the binding historicity of one's own origin.

More specifically, contemporary education must focus on differences such as gender, ethnicity, "race", religion, language and so on and take into account the extent to which they constitute pupils' identities. But "this does not mean that we essentialize them; it means we recognize that certain identities are built as durable dispositions via practices which should be used as resources rather than differences to be effaced" (Isin, Wood 1999, 13). In other words, we may respect differences without treating them as obstacles to a future reshuffling of identities or to an enlargement of one's self-understanding. One may describe oneself as, for example, British, Muslim, gay, middle-class etc., but none of these is inimical, say, to also describing oneself as European. Likewise, we could feel that another European is not just other but one of us (Papastephanou 2000b; Delanty 2005, 18). Hence, in principle, it is possible to have a European identity that people could add to their national identity.

Yet, a possibility is not quite a necessity, and much remains to be said in political philosophy and other disciplines about what would make a heightened European consciousness desirable enough to be felt as indispensable. A general and obvious reason, much rehearsed in the relevant literature, presents the enhancement of European identity as the long overdue step toward

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[2]   However, many arguments deriving mainly from Benedict Anderson's discussion of the construction of communal imaginaries through cultural and educational tactics are one-sided and fail to capture the complexity of the nation-state. They also lead, to some extent, to a needless and blanket incrimination of the nation-state that glosses over the real causes of Western ethical blindness. As this issue goes beyond the scope of this essay, see Papastephanou (2005).

legitimation that a large economic organization with political aspirations must take. Hence, European identity draws its desirability from the fact that the "increase of the power of the EU is not being matched by a like increase in legitimation through the consent of the citizens of the member states" (Lehning 2001, 240). Other, more axiologically-loaded, arguments come from consideration of the international context and the impact of globalization on identity. Current international conditions of de-territorialisation, mobility and disembedding (Usher 2002, 44) favor conceptions of identity as hybrid and diasporic. European consciousness being a broader category than national consciousness and comprising more heterogeneity and balance of differences than localist bonds appears more suited to the task of decentering the individual and breaking narrowness or isolationism. Evidently, such arguments stem from a largely positive interpretation of globalization.

A stronger argument in favor of the ideal of a united Europe and the enhancement of a corresponding sense of belonging comes from a less sympathetic reading of globalization. To unravel it, I shall digress for a short while, so as to establish a connection between globalized economy, its effect on cultures and international law and the way this effect is expected to be moderated through a powerful Europe. At the same time, this connection will prepare the ground for the more substantial discussion of the possible "content" of the European identity that is saved for the next section.

The neo-Fordist character of economic globalization "has dominated the policy agenda of the governments of Western nation-states as they attempt to position themselves favorably in competitive global markets" (Porter, Vidovich 2000, 453). Competitiveness and a neo- or post-liberal set of priorities have sharpened old class divisions (Bauman 1998), redirected nation-state energies (Hobsbawm 1998) and harnessed education to commercialization and performativity (Fitzsimons 2000; Bagnall 2002). The common denominator of all this is a systemic logic of the market that is automatically transferred to cultures as well.

Cultures viewed as commodities are invited to compete in the so-called "marketplace of ideas". Ironically, a non-essentialist treatment of the embeddedness in cultures that was initially meant to combat the theoretical constraints of bloodline and nationhood and their possible racist repercussions now solidifies a kind of eugenics of cultures. If your identity is just constructed and there is nothing attaching you inherently to your culture, shape your identity at will, "shopping" from a great variety of now accessible options. Yet, the imperative carries on in a subtler mode that is implied by the broader picture: shape yourself in the model of the dominant culture, the Western culture, if you wish to survive in a competitive world of profit and distinction. Nothing forces you to stick with your own habits of acting and living (e.g. a more relaxed sense of time or a more socializing ethos) but much does force you to give it up for the sake of mobility, productivity and a place under the sun. In a similar vein, if you have no means to escape from your rootedness and fly to the kind of socially enabling educated rootlessness of annihilated space and time, your chance of flourishing in a globalized world is scant. As Bauman writes, "enforced localization guards the natural selectivity of the globalizing effects" (1998, 47). Nowadays, issues of assimilation and/or integration tend to be presented in the light of the nationalism versus transnationalism debate in multicultural education (Radtke 2005; Bommes 2005; Luchtenberg 2005). Yet they acquire a different significance if approached from a perspective that questions this kind of cultural eugenics. Transmigration and transnationalism are not always or not in all cases the outcome of free and laudable exercise of existential choice, independent from aspects of global power and control. Rather, they sometimes are the product of no choice at all, in cases of deprivation in the country of origin, or perhaps of manipulated and inauthentic "choice" deriving from purely economic and opportunistic considerations. For some, leaving their country is a heart-rending necessity effected by the diachronic or synchronic exploitation of their place of origin by the Western world or by the standards and life patterns that are currently enforced by means of global culture. For others, especially footloose Western elites native or fluent in English, leaving their country is a profit- and distinction-bearing experience with very little personal and emotional cost. This by no means entails that the people who make such "choices" should be less welcome in host countries or that the motives for migrating should be of concern to public policy. It means, however, that the problem of the encounter of the local with the foreign is far more complex and political than it appears at first sight and far more related to global problems of depriving non-Western countries and cultures of their material resources and existential significance or of indoctrinating Western subjects in money-worshipping.

Of course, there is no question of defending an unreflective sense of commonality and belonging where one is chained to time and space determinants. What has to be realized, however, is that cultures and identities are significant and deserve recognition (Taylor 1994) in a more profound way than the marketplace logic has so far allowed. In Usher's terms, "both roots and routes play a critical role in auto/biography" (2002, 47). The implication of this for the issue of a European identity would be that the latter would make good political sense only in counteracting the quasi-natural selectivity that globalization imposes on cultures while encouraging multiple citizenship.

At this juncture, some theorists are pessimistic about the possibility of controlling the process of globalization and avoiding unmanageable and disastrous consequences (see, for instance, Hobsbawm 1998, 9). For others in political philosophy, the idea of Europe crops up as a *deus ex*

machina: perhaps the way to meet the pernicious effects of globalization is through Europe. According to Grimm, "one can, with good reason, claim that the European Union presents the most significant political innovation of the twentieth century. It does not dissolve the national states with their otherwise irreplaceable resources of legitimacy and solidarity but rather uses them in order to provide solutions for those kinds of problems that can overtax national powers" (2005, 101).

Therefore, the need for a stronger European bond emerges not only as a mere possibility but also as an appreciable political solution to "new global order" problems, political, economic and cultural. The European Commission has already displayed awareness of the association of culture, globalization and the threat the latter presents for the former. In its *Towards a Europe of Knowledge*, the Council of the European Commission states that "the need to assert and respect cultural identity is felt particularly acutely at a time when our economies are engaged in a process of globalization". And globalization "can be perceived as a source of cultural and linguistic standardization or 'dumbing down'" (cf Lawn 2001, 177).

However, the content that the "European remedy" acquires seems to be appropriate to defend some form of rootedness but inappropriate or insufficient to accommodate a non-Eurocentric flexibility and amenability to the other within and outside Europe. The reason for this is that the ideal of Europeanness appears subjugated to another ideal, that of knowledge economy and performativity (Hogan 1998). Lawn describes the tendency that has marked newer developments as follows: "a European collaboration based on cultural transfer and exchange has been replaced by 'European cooperation networks' pooling European excellence and creating real European expertise" (2001, 177).

But membership in the European collective imaginary on grounds of knowledge, competence and engagement in lifelong learning overlooks the fact that these grounds are ultimately cultural in the sense that they reflect Eurocentric views of what counts as important. Thereby, this version of the European ideal lacks open-endedness regarding its self-understanding and falls in the trap of exclusion and homogeneity at a deeper level. In fact, it is welcoming only to those that share the standard European view of what counts as important, that is the liberal conception of the good life as one of apolitical learning, personal achievement and economic progress. Ultimately, what has thus come about is a justification of the absence of political commitment to debating principles and virtues that are supposedly constitutive of a shared vision and available to critical scrutiny from an ethical and legal standpoint. Such an absence of political vision renders the European bond very vulnerable to any possible form of political distortion and manipulation.

In other words and from another perspective, only some kind of "rooted cosmopolitan" (Ackerman 1994) selfhood that is ethically (Nussbaum 2002) and politically (Pogge 2005) sensitive would protect Europeanness from coming down to a "Fortress Europe" syndrome (Braidotti 2004, 135) where footloose élites would only exploit "Europe" as a springboard for promoting their interests. Or, in Braidotti's terms, "being a nomadic European subject means to be in transit within different identity-formations, but sufficiently anchored to a historical position to accept responsibility for it" (2004, 137).[3]

The Habermas-Derrida Intervention

Having established the possibility of, and the necessity for, a European identity that mitigates the global and the local, there is still much to be fleshed out. For we has so far moved fumblingly within the constraints of a formal approach to European consciousness that specifies some peripheral issues without saying much about the substance of Europeanness.

After all, as one often reads in the relevant literature, European populations, despite their commonalities or affinities, are not united by the same set of historical experiences that have united the citizens of modern nation-states; for instance, the emotional element of liberation, essential for some European nation-states, is lacking. Also absent in Europe as a totality is the post-imperial phase that some of the big powers of Europe have undergone. Theorists diagnose that "Europe finds itself in a continuous tension between the desire to replicate the national experience that looks toward shared pasts (depending on whom you ask, they can be based on geography, values, religion, history, and so on)" and the difficulties of this. Thus, they acknowledge "that binding such pasts into a unified frame of reference complicates matters" (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005, xxii).

Perhaps also due to such difficulties, but primarily for other reasons, European policy documents from the 90's onwards have taken distances from the older treatment of European identity as fixed, i.e. as the sum of Europe's parts, "the histories and spaces of national states" (Lawn 2001, 176). They have resorted to "another kind of imagined Europe in which innovation, research, education and training are its pillars". Now identity means "having the required knowledge and competences, recognizing membership of a common social and cultural area and mutual understanding of others

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3   Still, Braidotti's idea that a relocation of European identity is all that is needed in order to undo its hegemonic tendencies is debatable.

within it. The dominant strand of identity is now more focused on individuated qualities, projected into a new space, than on a located citizen, enquiring into the places of others" (Lawn 2001, 177).

Yet this solution creates more problems than it solves as I have already pointed out in the previous section. In its effort to sidestep the emotive difficulty of lack of sufficient historical and ethnic affinity by means of a cognitive attachment to the development of skills and productivity, it replaces the ideal of a political community with that of a learning society. Thereby, it relinquishes any political impetus for change and European harnessing of undesirable globalizing effects; for nothing inherent in the notion of a learning society speaks for political involvement in debates over the course of global affairs and the ethical constraints that this course should confront. The subject of a community that is viewed as a major corporation rather than as an association of citizens (*rechtsgenossen*, in Habermas's terms) can very well be apolitical and apathetic.

One needs only to think over the educational objectives[4] set by some European Union directives to mark the absence of any connection of education with societal reform or the preparation of the citizen for political participation and responsibility. Hogan's discussion of a White Paper issued by the European Commission in 1996 is very revealing here. He shows that the White Paper is blind to the difference between education and training and promotes excellences of a mercenary kind as it views "the public sphere essentially as a social market and education largely as a service industry for that market" (Hogan 1998, 367). Ultimately, this market logic reinforces the negative effects of globalization instead of combating them. Can we opt for something different that is, however, equidistant from a narrow national organicism of original belonging and from a technicist ideal of performativity? Can legality play this role as Heraclitus anticipated when he said that "the people of a city should be ready to defend the law more than they would defend the walls of their city" (DK22B44)?

On this point, Habermas' notion of a constitutional patriotism becomes extremely relevant because it avoids both, i.e. the apolitical emphasis on performativity and the emotional element of a communal ethos grounded in a binding past. Instead, it opts for a purely political commitment to common principles and political visions. Applied to Europe, constitutional patriotism means that citizens will develop a patriotic stance toward a shared frame of political thought and action that will comprise all the maxims that would meet the agreement of all those affected by a European constitution. For sure, there have been many objections to Habermas' ideas on this kind of patriotism and identity formation as well as merits and important insights that I have discussed elsewhere (Papastephanou 2000a, 223; Papastephanou 2000b). I shall not delve into them now because there have been new developments in Habermas' intervention in the topic of Europe that are less formalist or abstract and to those I shall turn.

In 2003, Habermas and Derrida co-signed an essay on the issue of Europe (an essay that appeared in the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) that was presented as an analysis and an appeal. It analyzed the international political landscape, the tensions created by the Iraq crisis, the positioning of Europe in it and the treatment of the ideal of a stronger EU by the peoples involved or affected by it. The protagonists are "old" Europe (that took the EU initiative), "core" Europe (defending certain state qualities for Europe) and "new" Europe (the new member states or candidates for membership, most of which have regained sovereignty recently and seem unwilling to negotiate it for the sake of an overarching political project). The essay is an appeal because it invites European people to articulate an "attractive, indeed an *infectious* 'vision' for a future Europe" (Habermas, Derrida 2003, 293; emph. added). The publication of this text coincided with the publication in various European dailies of articles on the same topic by many other thinkers and motivated further publications and public dialogue among intellectuals. In 2005, the original essay, along with other responses, commentaries and interventions were published as a book with the title *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe*. As is explained in the Habermas-Derrida essay that stimulated the debate, Derrida shares with Habermas its definitive premises and perspectives. These are "the determination of new European political responsibilities beyond any Eurocentrism"; "the call for a renewed confirmation and effective transformation of international law and its institutions, in particular the UN"; and "a new conception and a new praxis for the distribution of state authority" (Habermas, Derrida 2003, 291).

According to Habermas and Derrida, European people must forge a more powerful European consciousness that goes beyond national identity. But they do not promote this as a kind of utopia in the dominant sense of the term as unattainable dream of humanity. They believe that the mobilization of European people in February 2003 in demonstrating against the Iraq war is an indication that this is not just a vision but an almost accomplished reality that needs to be carried on further.

But, as the authors themselves ask, "what could hold together a region characterized more than any other by the ongoing rivalries between self-conscious nations?" (ibid., 295). Habermas' older

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[4]   E.g., 'skilling pupils in the new knowledge needed for accelerated technological advance, bringing schools and business closer together, promoting communicative proficiency in three European languages, and treating capital investment in training on an equal basis' (Hogan 1998, p. 367).

response to a similar question had been a formalist and proceduralist suggestion that those affected by a constitution would debate maxims, principles and provisions that would be regarded as valid and inspiring enough to secure the interlocutors' commitment.

The more recent answer to this question (the one that Habermas jointly gave with Derrida) appears more substantive than formalist in its striving to standardize and give unity, continuity and consistency to some European achievements in recent history. A number of specifically European features of a common political mentality that are presented as binding and bonding are revealing of the content (the substance) that Habermas and Derrida attribute to the European identity. In the essay, as well as in commentaries on it, these characteristics are significantly accompanied with quantifiers that give a tone of reservation and comparative markers or turns of phrase that betray the tendency to define Europeanness in contradistinction to the American version of the Occidental spiritual form. To give some examples, secularism in politics is one such characteristic: "in European societies, secularization is *relatively* developed" (296). The next feature cited in the essay is that "Europeans have a *relatively* large amount of trust in the organizational and steering capacities of the state, while remaining *sceptical* toward the achievements of markets" (ibid.). Further, Europeans are aware of the shortcomings of technology and "they maintain a *preference* for the welfare state's guarantees of social security and for regulations on the basis of solidarity" (ibid.). Also, "the threshold of tolerance for the use of force against persons is *relatively* low" (ibid.). And, as Levy et al. summarize the Habermasian and Derridean account, Europeans display "*familiarity* with the potential brutality of state power (and hence the abandonment of the death penalty)" and recognition of "limits to the rights of state sovereignty". Finally, they take "a *more* self-critical attitude with regard to *weaker* outsiders that flowed from the experience of decolonization" (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005, xvi). As mentioned above, the comparative phrasing shows the relational character of the (re)construction of Europeanness. "In these features, 'Europeanness' was contrasted rather sharply with the characteristics of American society, which was portrayed as *less* secular, *more* violent and bellicose, and as cultivating a *more* unforgiving variant of capitalism" (ibid. All emphases are mine). Yet, I have highlighted this comparative way of conveying the meaning of Europeanness for another reason, one that has been overlooked in the relevant literature but will become important for my argument and my suggestions. The comparative forms reveal the lack of radicality in the European self-perception: more and less, relatively and preferably become the key words that produce the appeasement, self-satisfaction and complacency of the European individual. Is this what we expect from Europe, i.e. to be relatively better than the US? Why this is crucial will be seen later on.

Be that as it may, many critics and commentators have approached the Habermas-Derrida manifesto in a way that sheds light on perceptions of European consciousness. I turn to those perceptions because I maintain that a normatively filtered European consciousness, apart from being European, it also needs to be consciousness. By this I mean that it must be consciousness not only of similarities and bonds but also of itself, of who the Europeans are now and who they have been in the past. If what marked the nationalism of older conceptions of national consciousness was the convenient silencing or downplay of the nation's past dark moments and present shortcomings, it must not mark and *infect* a European consciousness that understands itself as something more than a novelty of human history. Thus, is the self-consciousness of European consciousness as discussed by Habermas, Derrida and commentators critical and convincing enough that here we have something historically unprecedented not only factually but also conceptually and normatively? Is the content they attribute to European identity accurate or not? This takes a much longer answer than the one I give here but the short answer I provide is important for the rest of the paper. I begin to articulate it by reference to comments on the Habermas-Derrida ideas.

In agreement with Habermas and Derrida, Vattimo goes further than them by emphasizing the different existential plan, the different notion of what constitutes a good life as that which separates Americans from Europeans (Vattimo 2005, 33). There is a socialist element in the European conception of the good that "provides a *less harshly* Darwinian concept of social life" (ibid., emph. added). True, this might be sufficient to differentiate European identity from other versions of Western identity but is it also sufficient to ground the normative expectations from Europe one might have for a genuine reforming effect on world politics and the stance to alterity? Is it enough for a proposed ideal to be just less exploitative or less blatantly competitive than ideals held by others to render it worthy of educational attention and pursuit? We have already seen that educational theory raises major objections to the competitive, performative and neo-liberalist perception of Europeanness and the role that education is expected to play in its entrenchment (Hogan 1998). How the neo-conservative rationale tarnishes the normative prospect of Europeanness is explained by Mathias Greffrath's succinct criticisms of the Habermas-Derrida manifesto. "The draft of the EU constitution provides neither for a European right to work, nor for any effective protection from the commercialization of the educational and health systems and of the public sector in general. And citizens of this Europe are supposed to save the world […]? Where is this idealism that European public opinion is to force on its politicians supposed to come from?" (Greffrath 2005, 138).

However, European consciousness fails not only at the level of synchronic self-understanding but also at the level of diachronic accuracy of its entanglement with the other within and out and the ongoing yet unaccounted accountabilities it generated. Europe today seems to avow its responsibilities for past exploitation only to minimize them and present them as a bygone matter from which it has effectively distanced itself. Instantiating a stance that is in any case commonplace, Adolf Muschg states that "what holds Europe together and what divides it, are at heart the same thing: common memories and habits, acquired step by step through the process of distancing oneself from *fatal habits*" (2005, 26, emph. added). I don't know how one could describe, let us say, colonialism as a habit (albeit fatal) without performing a most suspect understatement. Smoking is a fatal habit but, to the extent that it affects the people around, a polite request to extinguish it usually suffices to solve the problem without further talk. Those who suffered from colonial policies have not yet overcome their after-effects and the "habit" of their rulers to divide so as to maintain their rule was fatal for the subaltern rather than the rulers themselves. How might one talk about distances that Europe took from colonialism when the repercussions of it are still felt by the victims and not by those who initiated colonial rule and profited from it? Are we justified to claim that the realities of colonial power belong to Europe's distant past merely because colonialism is no longer institutionalized? And, in any case, is this distancing acknowledged by the long exploited others or is it a complacent self-declaration?

Worse, the synchronic convenient "deficiencies" in European self-understanding collaborate with the overlooking of diachronic complicities and make the latter appear vibrantly re-enacted. If a major cause of the monstrous in Europe was the fact that reason aspiring to escape from myth reverted to myth, as Adorno and Horkheimer argued in the dialectic of Enlightenment (1979), do we have any indication that this is no longer the case? De Sade's philosophy simply thought Occidental rationality through to its ultimate implication; as Adorno and Horkheimer explained (ibid.), this implication is that strategic rationality recognizes no moral hindrance in the course of reaching success. If that is the case, it rests with defenders of the idea that we have taken a safe distance from the past to account for how this can be secured when means-ends rationality not only remains intact but becomes all the more unquestionable and pervasive. And they have much work to do because current events do not support their argument. The almost theatrical staging and filming of beatings of demonstrators in Iraq by British soldiers and torture of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers, Pasolini's old film *Salo or a 120 days of Sodom* turned upside down, laugh sardonically at European intervention in global affairs. Filming fiction (de Sade's *A 120 Days of Sodom*) to critique and change reality is reversed by filming reality to make the "fiction" of a just war for global order vanish along with the myth of humanity's heading toward a better global condition. If it were not too tragic and gruesome, this epochal subversiveness would be felt as black comedy.

The above criticisms of Europe's self-understanding show how the comparative mode of defining Europeanness misfires. From a normative point of view, it is not enough to be relatively different from various others - although even the extent of this has been questioned. Some contributors to the debate have argued that Habermas and Derrida "overstated the differences between Europe and the United States" (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005, xix). For instance, Iris Young remarked that "from the point of view of most of the world's people, Europe's confrontation with the United States may look like sibling rivalry" (2005, 155). To be more convincing, Europe should not indulge in the self-assertive thought that it is relatively "better" than other political formations. If it is indeed a "work-in-progress", as Vattimo characterizes it (2005, 30), it needs to define the meaning of progress in normative terms of reform, redirection and radical change. It must work hard to construct "laws" that are so just and inspiring that its citizens would consider the task to defend them "more than they would defend the city's walls" worth-pursuing. If the only chance European identity has for avoiding old divisions of nationalism and exclusionism is some form of political patriotism, the only chance the latter has to become a warmly supported element of European identity is through signs of true and absolute commitment to justice.

Ironically, the first step in that direction is the one that is not theoretically taken, that is, a more open-ended, collaborative and inclusive vision of a radically altered world along cosmopolitan lines. As Young asked, "if the hegemony of the United States should be confronted and resisted, and it should, why not enlist the efforts of the peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as Europe, from the beginning?" (2005, 155). One answer that many European intellectuals would be ready to give would be pragmatic and would concern power and ability for such resistance. As I have explained above in the section that connects globalization and Europeanness, it is expected from Europe to function as an antidote to the new global order. Only Europe has the resources to do so albeit in a mitigated, inchoate way: all else is simply utopian reverie.

But what lies underneath is something far more complex and disheartening: the fact that such a mobilization of the world, such a cosmopolitan effort would presuppose changes in Europe's treatment of the rest of the world that Europe is not willing or ready to make. And that, precisely because it is a sibling of the US in its relatively lesser commitment to antagonism, means-ends rationality and a narrow sense of success. Thus, the comparative form and the quantifiers that determine the basic characteristics of Europe in its difference form the US now become most telling. A relational mode of defining the European identity may suffice to differentiate it from

another identity presented as rival. But it does not suffice to elevate it to the rank of an inspiring, "attractive, indeed an infectious vision of a future Europe". This is also the most damning evidence that the specific "utopia" evoked in the Habermas-Derrida manifesto is doomed to fail. Exclusionism is one reason for this bad prognosis as Young showed in questioning the cosmopolitan spirit of the manifesto and its encompassing potential. "From the point of view of the rest of the world, and especially from the point of view of the states and people in the global South, the philosophers' appeal may look more like a re-centering of Europe than the invocation of an inclusive global democracy" (Young 2005, 153). But what I find even worse than its exclusionism is its ethical "modesty" and lack of radicality in the demands it raises from Europeans.

Counter-suggestions - Implications for Education

This is why I believe that the formalism of the earlier Habermasian approach to the issue was more promising than the more recent grounding of the European ideal in the sense of commonality produced by existing political achievements. In the effort to meet objections to constitutional patriotism as supposedly emerging from thin air and lacking emotive commitment, the European vision is anchored in existing reality in a way that the latter sets strict limits to the former's normativity. Constitutional patriotism with its formalist emphasis on debating principles and its proceduralist openness to futurity, to the unexpected, aspired to be a supplement and a corrective of national identity, not an enlarged substitute operating in a similar way and deriving its force from historical contingencies. National consciousness owes much to the nation-state history. National history "can be a source of national pride and cohesion as it embodies the narrative of collective struggle for the realization of the principles of the democratic constitutional state under the specific historical conditions of a national polity" (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005, xv). Perhaps. But a European consciousness assigned with a specific political task, that is, to combat an existing order and articulate an alternative, cannot rest on its (supposed) laurels and cannot, even remotely, imitate national consciousness.

Let us recapitulate the reasons for this. First, the past in the case of Europe is not quite helpful because it is so diverse for the several peoples of the continent that even the basic features that Habermas and Derrida see as distinctly European cause a different stir in each nation-state. "The historical nature of Europe cannot be tied to a specific sense of identity that all European states, with their common experience, could share. Europe's countries have certainly some elements in common. However, these elements are neither so unambiguous nor equally constitutive for the respective cultural and political consciousness of individual nations that they could be used as components for the formation of an overarching sense of identity" (Willms 2005, 134). And second, the relational, comparative phrasing of the European features stated as salient and constitutive of European identity (betrayed time and again by the inexorable "realities" of profit) would hardly inspire a lukewarm commitment, let alone justify the more demanding expectation of an attractive and infectious vision of a future Europe.

Where does this leave us and what does it say about the role of education? My suggestion is that the content we seek for European identity, the defining substance that would give a new impulse in world politics should not stem from past accomplishments, it has to come from new and genuine ethical commitments. Fostering a moral identity that has the most heightened consciousness of past and present complicities, makes amends and intervenes in issues of global justice should not be presented as an exclusive task of Europe. But as a subtotal of a larger, cosmopolitan identity, European identity must delineate its province of self-critique and change of priorities. Since education is very active in shaping the consciousness of the younger generations, even when the route to this is not specified or recommended in curricula, its position on this matter should be critical of the European individual rather than affirmative.

My suggestion that we treat Europeanness as something to be woven piece by piece from the fabric of morality and justice and not from the relative preponderance of one Occidental spiritual version over another offers a way out of the usual mode of defining identity through contradistinctions from existing otherness. Young argued that "a European identity cannot exist unless there are others from whom it is differentiated. The call to embrace a particularist European identity, then, means constructing a new distinction between insiders and outsiders" (Young 2005, 155). But this is true only when there is lack of vision. For, vision is the outsider to which the existing order is contrasted and always found wanting; all efforts to begin with the opposite, that is with a differentiation from existing others of "lower" records inevitably leads to self-absorption. Thus, the Europeanness that should be cultivated in classrooms if at all should relate to a utopian effort and not to a counter-position to some kind of existing otherness.

The spirit that education should cultivate has to be critical of Europe first and foremost. Not in a Eurosceptic sterile sense of nostalgia for pre-modern regionalism but in an other-oriented way that would do justice to Young's objections while going beyond them. As she wrote, "Habermas' main concern is to distinguish a European identity from America. […] Other others, in the East and South, stand in the shadows, perhaps, huddled at the edges of this playground where the big boys

call each other names. And what of the other within?" (ibid.). The latter worry has already been voiced in educational discourse especially with regard to the issue of multicultural education. As Luchtenberg argues, the development of a European or global identity by learning about other cultures does not guarantee an understanding of diversity in one's own surroundings and even less a reflection on racism in one's own community. Thus, it seems "necessary to separate international or external contents of multicultural education from those of an internal character" (Luchtenberg, 2005, 9).

The way I answer the question of the construction of identity through differentiation overcomes the inclusion/exclusion problem because the futurist fabric of identity distinguishes the hoped-for-self from the already existing. A morally desirable identity is not already somewhere to be revealed or found; it has to be created, it belongs to the future. And the yardstick for judging its approximation is precisely the other, within and out, the exploited, wronged and misrecognized. What should unify a group of people is neither the glorification of the past nor the sanitization of the present but the commitment to the advent of a specific futurity, non-eschatological but no less inspiring for that matter. Amongst other things, this future should be one in which Luchtenberg's demand for a multicultural education dealing with local, European and global diversity (in such a way that all these three aspects will "assert themselves in their own right") will be placed centre stage. But, more than that, the construction of identity I am proposing is better qualified to serve a non adaptive and capitalism-free multiculturalism than the existing, performance- and success- oriented, functionalist model of understanding multiculturalism. For, a multicultural education understood as "a concept with the two main tasks of improving the school careers of students with a migrant background and preparing all students for a life in a multicultural society" (Luchtenberg, 2005, 7; also, Radtke, 2005, 4) lacks the normativity that is necessary for a more radical change of the society in its current (albeit multicultural) shape and of the life for which the students are supposed to be prepared. It is unable to grasp, let alone deal with, diachronic debts to otherness (within and out) as well as with subtler yet more profound forms of exclusion and exploitation.

Conclusion

In the effort to combating institutional and systemic inequalities of opportunities in education for immigrant populations while treating schools as mere organizations (Radtke, 2005, 4) rather than communities, contemporary educational discourse often ends up in a moralist approach to the whole matter of multiculturalism and identity. In the context of this moralist standard approach, relations to others within and out are reduced to the negative duty of avoiding to obstruct the minority's way to success and adaptation and to the quasi-positive duty of the majority to help or at least 'tolerate' coexistence with the minority. Against this moralism, I propose an ethical turn in the discourse of European identity in virtue of which what counts as a good life is not the existing life plan of the profit oriented rational egoist that liberalism surreptitiously asserts (while publicly denying its favoring a particular conceptions of the good life) but a life plan arranged according to an ethical ideal. The education that would emanate from this would be one that creates citizens' identities in a way that comparison is not sought in existing otherness. Comparison is with an ideal self that one would aspire to. This means that Europe cannot preserve its commitment to profit and competitiveness but it should direct its energies to changing levels of life within its territories and outside of them by promoting material aid and redistribution of wealth as well as a non-aggressive stance to what constitutes its other within and out.

Habermas' previous and current insights are helpful in that direction as they can equip education with valuable arguments against the apolitical "realism" of the "learning society" model of Europeanness. Yet, as I have argued, there have been noticeable normative concessions on his part that tie Europe more tightly on its existing realities. I have shown that a faulty diachronic and synchronic European self-understanding blocks possibilities for truly worthwhile intervention in global affairs. If one extends the Habermas-Derrida manifesto that defined a "core" Europe by its secular, Enlightenment, and social-democratic traditions (Levy, Pensky, Torpey 2005, xi) to cover education, one could set as a major aim of multicultural education today the building of a common European identity upon those traditions. But the position of education should be more dynamic and critical because only education can combat from very early the acculturation of the Western subject in forms of life that are contaminated with power- and profit- seeking priorities and self-exonerating stances. This is why the utopian element that is presupposed by a more dynamic and critical conception of education is not only positively meant in the most recent research in philosophy of education but it is also extremely welcomed and celebrated (Suissa 2001; Halpin 2003; Peters, Humes 2003; Wain 2006). Utopia in education (not as blueprint or end-state model but as aspiration for radical change) is no longer treated as chimeric and unrealizable fantasy but rather as the most important guiding thread of an education worthy of the name (Papastephanou 2006).

Education can help in the construction of a European identity that would counter those aspects of globalization that are undesirable. But this requires a reorientation of Western conceptions of the good along with a non-Eurocentric cosmopolitan diachronic search starting from material Western complicities that have effected an exploitation of otherness within and outside which generated

ongoing benefit for some and ongoing disadvantage for the rest. Nevertheless, debating how we treat or have treated others is insufficient on its own, as it would still trap us in inoperative politics. The ultimate goal must be to move to remedial and compensatory acts such as material aid and redistribution of wealth, as well as settlement of inflicted damages (when possible).[5] Anything less than that masks unconscious Eurocentrism: a concern for otherness and a guilt consciousness that does not go all the way turns out to support hypocritical and naturalizing tendencies. If the struggle is for anything less than genuine change, if it is for something we have already experienced in its mediocrity as complicit in systemic control and self-recuperative for the existing order, then, why bother?

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[5]   All that I have said presupposes reworkings of the Kantian notion of cosmopolitanism with more symmetrical emphasis shifted from the political and legal aspect of it (international right) to an ethical aspect of cosmopolitanism as change of one's narrow conception of the good as well as preoccupation with historical debt.

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