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FOR A EUROPEAN CULTURAL SPACE

Diversity and complexity

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Introduction

Under the title *A Soul for Europe*, a proposal by Jacques Delors, intellectuals and politicians were invited to a meeting in Berlin in November 2004; a meeting organised with the aim of defining a soul for Europe and some basic ideas to ensure peaceful coexistence between all EU members, including the recently incorporated states. At the height of the euphoria over the EU enlargement, it seemed that no doubts existed over the EU's cohesion and, confident of the political success of the European integration project, the only question people asked was what this new Europe could do for "culture", and what "culture" could do for Europe. The political project was seeking a way to strengthen itself by means of a new cultural soul that would include all of us. The problem was (and still is) that the concept of "culture" is a mainly descriptive one, and lacks a normative dimension, which means that it cannot constitute a political project. And if we bear in mind that the basic functions of culture as identity are a reference point of meaning for cohesion, the social community cannot exist, nor can, a fortiori, policies, without the ability to construct the collective imaginary that this provides. It represents the appropriate

foundations for ensuring legitimacy for a political project that has a deficit of citizen support. This deficit is worrying, mainly with respect to the European elections, even if it is only a symptom of latent indifference, a "viral indifference that is beginning to infect the system and erase its hard disk." (Baudrillard, 2002)

In the opinion of Joschka Fischer, "politics was impossible without culture" and he wondered whether we had to "give Europe a soul, or to free the European soul". Five years later, on the eve of the 2009 European Parliamentary elections, Joschka Fischer (2009) began his article "Europe in reverse gear" with a quote by the US investor Warren Buffet: "When the tide goes out, everyone can see who's swimming naked" (El País, 05/03/2009). In the article, he expressed his concern over Europe's current situation which, he claimed, had ruth-

lessly exposed the defects and limitations of the European Union itself. Meanwhile, at the 2004 "A Soul for Europe" meeting in Berlin, Garton Ash said that perhaps instead of a soul, what was needed a heart and a voice. A heart to feel that we are together, and a voice with which to tell it to the outside world. Five years later, Garton Ash (2009) writes: "The true symbol of Europe 2009 is not represented by yellow

Abstract: The present paper explores the significance of "Europe" both in its conceptual, metaphoric dimension and in its territorial conception, as it is experienced for those who reflect upon it "from inside", and those who identify it "from the outside". The aim is to think about the possibility of constructing a notion of Europe in cultural terms, as well as critically interrogating the necessity of including notions of "European identity" within such construction. Against those who appeal to notions of identity in order to replace old borders with new ones, this study invites the reader to take diversity seriously, as a central element of any project that has a globalized Europe as its aim. Thus, through a discussion informed both by political theorists of radical democracy and complexity theory, the present paper argues for thinking key steps towards a European "cultural space".

Palabras clave: Europe, cultural space, identity, diversity, complexity

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stars on a blue background, but a grey ostrich sticking its head in the sand”.

Where has all the euphoria gone for a project which, some claim, seemed to have been the victim of its own success? Why haven't we managed to create, transmit and promote a feeling of common experience that represents the “union” between Europeans?

Experience has shown us that a common base is not sufficient to create this European spirit; we must build, not in spite of differences, but through them; instead of juxtaposing, we must sketch a common future using a language of shared feelings that will then enable us to take action. Does the “European identity” exist, or would it be better to speak of Europeisation as a process, a project or a feeling? Or perhaps as an understanding of the present oriented toward the future, in which the identity consists of setting off on the path, “of opening ourselves up, discovering, advancing, orientating ourselves, getting confused, getting lost, seeking, estimating, building and inventing”? (Beck, 2006)

What does “Europe” mean for Europeans and for the outside world?

The view from inside Europe

If “Europe” is a yet untested possibility of coexistence, as Claudio Magris claims, or a variable geometry (De Lucas, 2006), then the EU offers us the example of a utopia realizing itself, since it represents, in fact, a pioneering experience, a plausible prefiguration of what could tomorrow be a reconciled humanity (Maalouf, 2009). The European process of political integration is an “unprecedented response –perhaps an exemplary one day– to the circumstances currently determining the exercising of power in the world (Innerarity, 2006).

“Perhaps what we need is not a single identity that connects all the identities, but a narrative of Europeisation that makes the connecting of initiatives and failures understandable. (...) Perhaps Europe’s crisis lies precisely in this deficiency; that is, in the inability to understand contradictory events as being part of the Europeans’ common enterprise” (Beck, 2006).

Even when the political project has been acknowledged as a fact, and the euro is now present in almost all of Europe’s houses, surveys show, however, that most of the people interviewed in different countries do not feel that they are represented or included in a common identity project. The demand for meaning has come to be crucial for the system. “Without that demand, without that receptiveness, without that minimum of participation in the meaning, power is no more than an empty simulacrum and a solitary effect of perspective” (Baudrillard, 2000b). That is why we are going to attempt to understand this “European identity” through a bibliographic study, in a period of global processes championing a “Euro-

pean” future. I have taken for my points of reference those authors who believe in and advocate this “European” future, while including ideas from different disciplines capable of rethinking and consolidating what it is that unites us, from inside and outside Europe.

Why do we need a “European identity”? How do we use that identity? The Mexican philosopher Luís Villoro (2008), referring in his writings to interculturality, claimed: “If you want to know what a term means, don’t analyse the concept, search for its uses”. It might be interesting to share and discuss these different approaches to “Europe” and “the European”, not with the aim of achieving uniformity, but simply to discover other uses in which we would doubtless find similarities, as well as some interesting differences. We have to unravel, once again, the question of what the European Union is “for”, and to persuade a population that is currently worried about the “why” and the “how” of this Union. On the other hand, does this “Europe” possess an inclusive answer for the new Europeans? And what about for those citizens which are born in Europe but with a dual sense of belonging, one of which is subjected to discrimination, while the other is not considered

capable of providing elements for a common “European” vision? Citizens who, in turn, represent a European feeling in their countries of origin. It is urgent, therefore, that we acknowledge, or even invent a space in which each all the citizenry has the ability to creatively organise their place in

this world.

“The issue of immigration is the great challenge of our times, and the place where the battle will be won or lost. Either the West succeeds in integrating them by drawing them closer to the values that it upholds and thus turns them into decisive intermediaries with the rest of the world, or they will make its problem worse” (Maalouf, 2009).

The view from outside Europe

Europe’s cultural diversity is greater than the diversity of its nations, and this “maximum diversity in minimum space” (Kundera, 2009) is the product of the mutual interaction and fertilisation of its nations. There remains, however, a certain ambiguity, or even confusion, in the way we use concepts such as Europe and the European Union; a confusion that grows and multiplies when these entities are viewed or defined from areas or spheres outside Europe. In many cases the view from outside turns “Europe” into a synonym for the West, in which multiple historical, political, social and cultural fragments share a single space. There is not just one Europe, but Europe: there is a European political thought, a European colonial enterprise, a European modernity, but Europe is also a silent presence, an imaginary of consolation or of response and an everyday practice. A view which, in the majority of cases, represents a tale of victors and the defeated, in which the West always appears as the victor. All these fragments are bound together in the concept of the West, as if it were

a unit, one single tale and one single history that give rise to one single anti- or pro-Western discourse, depending on the historical and political moment in time of each response. Resistance to Westernisation has a strong presence in today's world. It can be manifested through a rejection of ideas that are perceived as Western, even if these ideas originated and flourished in many non-Western societies, and form part of the world's common past (Sen, 2007).

Adonis (1993) sees the tragedy of this Western victory in the fact that it is technical and commercial, and not intellectual or artistic, thereby concealing an immense bankruptcy of the West's ego, which is confirmed by the growing rejection of cultural and human otherness that is manifested in the West: "Europe appears to be turning into a simple geographic continent, when it had always been an idea; a closed space, when it had always been defined by its openness". Moreover, Darwish Shayegan (2008) speaks of the exhaustion of the West itself, and how it is surrendering to a bitter truth: "Not only is it no longer the master of the universe, it does not even believe in the values it has wielded so gloriously for several centuries". He also speaks of the rebirth of tense nationalisms as a result of globalisation and how, in light of the cultural crossroads, the old demons of the tribe are emerging, and the ankylosis of identity is increasingly withdrawing into itself.

Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) believes that provincialising Europe is an urgent task: "European thought is simultaneously indispensable and inadequate for helping us to think about the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincialising Europe becomes the task of examining how this thought—which is currently the inheritance of all of us, and affects us all—could be renewed from, and for the margins". He speaks of centres in the plural, but he also says that margins are just as plural and diverse as centres. He describes Europe as an "imaginary figure that remains profoundly rooted in stereotyped, comfortable forms of certain habits of everyday thought, which invariably underlie certain attempts by the social sciences to tackle issues of political modernity in Southern Asia".

Thus, we encounter that an extensive anti-colonial and anti-Western bibliography is available, but it is difficult for us to achieve this current view of Europe from outside. On one hand, these external views of what "Europe" signifies have been elaborated, in the majority of cases (and as tends to be the case with all cultural descriptions) by autochthonous elites who, while describing "Europe" from outside, have all received a European academic education. The critical sense has mainly been used to constitute and explain a link between colonisers and colonised at certain historic moments of European de-colonisation and claims for independence. The view of Europe from outside needs to be broadened with contemporary opinions, views and

criticism from young people, students, artists, professionals, academics from non-European countries and Europeans with a dual sense of belonging; in this way, we can understand to what extent (in the opinion of these new generations) European imperialism has been replaced by contemporary forms of globalisation.

Though anti-colonial thought might seem antiquated, it is re-emerging with strength in this globalising age (which some consider to be just another kind of imperialism). To what extent are we victims of this globalisation in the same way that 'others' were, in another age, victims of imperialism/colonialism? In this respect, the critiques of these thinkers who are "committed to the traditions that modernised Europe, but who have experienced at first hand the exclusivist tendencies of the humanism with which European colonists lectured the colonised" (Chakrabarty, 2008) are not a particularly valuable resource for us. Why not? Because at the heart of all these criticisms, considerations, and sometimes even contradictions, we can find a discourse that is in favour of a dialogue between cultures, of theories on the administration of diversity and of a tenacious fight against racism to create a

tradition of plural humanities, which is so urgently needed today.

The question reappears, in different ways and from different authors, as to "whether" and "how" a global conversation between human beings could truly acknowledge cultural diversity without organising that diversity into a hierarchical scale of humanity; that is, a need for intercultural dialogue

without the baggage of imperialism (Chakrabarty, 2009); or acute reflections, such as the one by Aimé Césaire (2006), on the role of racism in our societies: "European colonial imperialism has grafted a modern abuse onto an old injustice; hateful racism onto the old inequality".

We must bear in mind, however, that the "Europe" as such is not a priority for thinkers outside Europe who have been invited onto many European programmes in their capacity as interlocutors from the South. The "South", however, finds itself in constant transformations, in the process of which other interlocutors and other relationships of co-operation are established, and that for all those reasons it would perhaps be useful to hear a re-interpretation of Europe and the European in light of these new presences and multiple interactions that take place with citizens from other countries (China, Japan, Mexico, etc.). If, on top of all this, we add the lack of bibliography that reaches us today (given that most non-European or non-Western publications are not only not published here, they do not even arrive in translated form), then the task of research proves to be almost impossible. But without any doubt, the view of Europe from outside is an important factor that means that identities that appear to be distanced from each other –by political context or by an essentialist vision owing to

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incompatible religious/cultural values– are able to talk together and find common denominators.

Is there such a thing as a “European Identity”?

At first, the construction of a European identity followed in the footsteps of national identity: a flag and an anthem (a wordless one, since most national anthems call upon their nationals to be against something or someone). Nevertheless, the great cultural work that has been done to build a feeling of belonging still has not been taken into account. In order for these imagined communities to come into being as nations, thinkers, writers and artists were mobilised to construct a history, a narrative and a common culture out of a reality that was radically fragmented. The strength required did not emerge by itself: it had to be created and it had an investment in new representing symbols had to be inscribed. Thus, what was needed was culture, as a political actor, to shape a collective identity by means of certain common references and practices, and thus achieve or strengthen the will to coexist and live together. In this respect, national identity was a way of unifying diversity, while national culture was a category that was blind to the profound cultural differences that exist within national societies.

In the search to grant the European project an “identity”, the analogy with building a “national identity” is inevitable. An identity that has always been in the process of construction, and has succeeded in accelerating its development through a reactive-defensive process, a centripetal logic of an external aggressor (De Lucas, 2004). But who is the aggressor of a supposed “European identity”? We should rather be asking: Are all those who, at some point, helped to create the cultural imaginary of European national identities of the recent past implicated in its present? Have we succeeded in developing something similar to a “European identity” through which we can feel solidarity with each other, and to which we belong? A negative response to the latter question should not necessarily be read as a sign of failure. That Europe has not succeeded in instituting itself as a single, fixed, immobile identity –like classic national identities– may mean however that we can aspire to something else that would allow us to include multiple identities and new identifications without coming into competition with the local, regional and national identities with which we coexist.

“And we in Europe, who are we? Who would dare to grant the same importance to a work of culture (of art, or philosophy) than (for example) to the disappearance of communism in Europe? Does no work of similar importance exist anymore? Or have we just lost the ability to recognise it? The Europe in which we live no longer seeks its identity in the mirror of its philosophy or its arts. And where is the mirror? Where should we go to seek our face?” (Kundera, 2005)

Based on this construction of identity, we speak of an “us”

and a “them”. An “us” produced out of inclusion, which gives us a comforting security, isolated from a hostile outside that is inhabited by “them”. We identify with those inside and categorise those outside to create “our” illusion of positive identity, and we also discover in the “other” those defects that one is afraid of finding in oneself. This confrontation has to do with the “dimension of antagonism present in social relations, with the ever-present possibility that the “us/them” relationship is constructed in terms of “friend/enemy”. To deny this dimension of antagonism does not make it disappear, it only leads to us being unable to recognise its different manifestations and to deal with them.” (Mouffe, 2007). One of the main tasks of the political is to consider ways of curbing tendencies towards exclusion that exist in all constructions of collective identity. Acknowledging the need of a “them” for the “us”, but without “them” necessarily being “enemies”; without any hierarchisation or exclusion. For Chantal Mouffe, another way of considering the them/us relationship is in terms of adversaries instead of enemies. The basis of the distinction between “adversary” and “enemy” is that “the adversary is someone who agrees with the principles that underpin society, but does not agree with their interpretation. The enemy is the person who does not agree with the principles”. Are we really free to exist solely self-referentially, to our identity and our version of the world? “Everything comes to us from this adversariness, from this twin complicity. Destiny is shared, like thought, which we receive from the other; everyone is the destiny of the other. The individual destiny does not exist.” (Baudrillard, 2000)

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This is why the vocabulary of cultural description and analysis must be broadened in order for it to find a place for irregularities, exceptions and disagreement. We need a more global framework of reference that includes the divergence of interests, changes and innovations. During the 1960s, Raymond Williams (1994) proposed broadening the simplistic binary oppositions (us/them) so as to be able to include the residual, the emerging and the dominant aspects of the dynamics represented by relationships, interactions and interests. Along the same lines, John Urry (2000) discusses the crisis of the social and how “transformations, and especially different mobilities are reconstructing the “social as society” as the “social as mobility”. Ulrich Beck (2006) argues for a “European identity” that must be able to discover this dimension of “identity-in-movement” as an “identity-to-movement”, by wondering where we should include the dynamics, the flows and the changes, if we work through a “European identity” based on a model of static cultural identity and what place we would give to the memories, the desires, without them being obstacles to thinking of a common sense of belonging. These points remain pertinent to the issue of the links between social change and cultural change. “In the most complex societies we can establish crucial sociological differentiations by defining not only a (stable) existing group of relations and interests, but by considering the dynamics that these relations

and interests represent. To examine these relations in their dynamic forms we need a system of organisation between disciplines on one hand, between societies and between their social actors on the other" (Williams, 1994).

Identities?

A Europe considered ambiguously, without direct communication, without reflection to arrive at a future, might be dangerous in the sense that it leaves a vast range of feelings available to anyone who wants to take advantage of them. We can see how anti-Europeanists know how to connect with citizens by filling their discourses with elements that encourage counter-identification. You only have to look at the French Front National (FN) party's advertisement for the 2009 European electoral campaign (the message is direct): "Europe is harmful"; meanwhile, the advertisement image on the hoarding shows *Marianne*, the symbol of "free" France (nostalgia for the past) being hit in the eye by a "European" enemy who is hurting her as if it were a case of domestic violence (insecure present).

All symbols are cultural, they connect with our feelings and describe the present by appealing to an imaginary that refers back to a time when this unknown factor did not exist, this factor that threatens us simply by the fact that it is unknown. It is the kind of easily-interpretable situations, based on a certain familiarity, that make communication possible and generate trust (or distrust) as a commitment to the future. Is there any discourse in favour of European construction that possesses a similar communicative power by connecting directly with our feelings? Meanwhile, at this time of economic crisis and uncertain futures, there is a temptation to assimilate the European project with global processes. This confusion and lack of clarity is also included, in a populist way, by the extreme right in its discourse against mobility, migrations and European enlargement. And the foreigner is (as Adonis [1993] says) the enemy who does not share our principles; he is the "Other", the answer to a question that is known beforehand and which one prepares oneself for in accordance with one's imagination, needs or interests.

Europe needs to renew its coherence, but it also needs to make it publicly known. Understanding Europe is the first step toward defining a direction and communicating it to citizens. Seeking a soul for Europe, but not a soul-substitute dictated by some bureaucratic fog in Brussels (De Lucas, 2004), or in the form of best practices discussed at academic meetings, but a soul in which the citizens find solidity, warmth, and they become involved and begin to trust the project: "An active trust, one that has to be earned, which involves bi-directional negotiation instead of dependence, and which must be coherent and deliberately renewed"

(Giddens, 2007). A new narrative that puts aside nostalgic discourses and seeks to connect with new generations, new Europeans. The originality of the European project lies, above all, in considering a *worldised* Europe which could serve as a model for an interdependent world.

What are the borders of this "European identity"?

Can we talk about an absence of old borders and a desire for new ones? Or is it still just the same space: a shared "border", where "our" similarity is "their" difference? Viewed in this way, this "border" is not an accumulation or a synthesis of different components, but a space of tension: identity illusions shared with those inside, conflictive categories of differentiation for those outside. It is the (sometimes perverse) game of identification and categorisation (we are what they are not) and which in turn produces agreements and disagreements over what is included and what is excluded. It is also that space where, rather than come to terms with the difference, we emphasise it, measure it out and use it... given that we need to categorise the unknown in order to be sure

that what is strange and foreign does not worry or threaten us. We need categories; we cannot live without them, even though we might try to flee from their tyranny by not taking for granted the claim that no new forms of interpretation or categorisation are possible. In this present time of growing interdependence, it is precisely in the mobility and variability of societies as

wholes (a reality that does not fit at all well into the conceptual framework of methodological nationalism) that the EU's identity of movement and the secret of its success both lie.

Transculturation

In recent years, at first hesitantly but ever more insistently, we have seen the word "transcultural" crop up, in an attempt to provide new frameworks for intercultural understanding. Conceptualised by Fernando Ortiz (2002) in the Cuba of forties, it was used in opposition to acculturation, a term that was in vogue in those years to describe and explain the contacts between cultures. Transculturation refers to the "product of an encounter between a culture or an existing subculture and a newly-arrived migrant culture where both end up transforming into a neo-culture, which will in turn also be subjected to transculturation". This transculturation, rather than a result, is a project, a possibility that better expresses the different stages of the transitional process from one culture to another; a process in which a new reality emerges, composed and complex. Not a "mechanical agglomeration of characters, but a new, original and independent phenomenon" (Ortiz, 2002).

There is no doubt that the reappearance of the term transcultural has taken place as a result of the new transnational

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connections, the juxtapositions beyond national structures and the complex connectivity between different local realities. Interconnection is the key word, and it needs to include new spaces. Can we speak of a new social imaginary that questions who participates in what, where, how and why? In 1996, Appadurai pointed out how “territories surrounded by customs offices and borders could give way to circuits and networks. What future prospects can we expect from the concept of transnation? As populations become more de-territorialised and incompletely nationalised, as nations are shattered, fractured and recombined, and as states encounter increasingly inescapable and insurmountable difficulties in constructing their people, transnations have to be the main social spaces where the different crises of feelings of belonging are expressed”.

The processes and effects of cultural diversity need a new framework that is sensitive to the effects of interdependence so that they can organise the desire. This new grammar must combine the theoretical with the practical in any commitment to a political project. We need a knowledge that is concerned with action, that can formulate a response to the global challenge of multidimensional realities, and which can streamline fragmented, compartmentalised and immutable knowledge. How can we renew theoretical and conceptual discourses, bearing in mind the new mobilities and the new kinds of diversity and complexity based on multiple connections? Can we include new kinds of juxtapositions, encounters, exchanges and cultural mixtures in the existing structures? We need to rethink the cultural and its links with experiences and practices. Does the practice reflect the culture? Or rather, is culture the result of practical actions? And these practices, do they sustain a particular way of “being” in the world which might in turn necessitate the creation of new borders, precisely to maintain and strengthen the old ones? To speak of identification as a process with multiple effects goes beyond any description of one single idealised identity, or one single stereotyped difference.

“Hybrids, that’s us. Our vehicle is the notion of translation or network. More flexible than the notion of system, more historical than that of structure, more empirical than that of complexity, the network is the Ariadne’s thread of combined histories” (Latour, 2007).

Movements make us rethink the meaning and value of identity and cultural diversity. In a report, Kevin Robins (2006) considers two aspects that have a special meaning in relation to this transcultural approach, and which are: cultural diversity and public space, on one hand, and cultural diversity and citizens, on the other. The approach to interaction based on “complexity” and “transculturality”, apart from avoiding essentialist binary oppositions, has also displaced the simplistic minority/majority opposition, and it has even forced the issue of minorities out of its national framework. It also broadens the mental and

imaginary horizon of ethnic categorisations by including differences of other kinds such as gender, age and sexual orientation. We could say that it has served to de-ethnicise difference, and to see difference not solely as a problematic phenomenon, but as a positive option for any cultural category. The multiplication and acceleration of transnational migrations, people, goods, information, images, ideas and discourses make it vitally important that cultural policies should be not only included in a supranational frame of reference, but also be treated as transcultural currents, with multiple effects and a marked transnational dimension. We can see that transnational institutions’ responsibility for intervention is increasing, as cultural diversity issues overwhelm and exceed the capacity of governments and national institutions. For Giddens (2009), the present is a time of opportunity for Europe, and he considers the European Union to be “a pioneering system of transnational government” which could, in principle, serve as inspiration for other areas of the world. The future of Europe will depend to a great extent on its ability to build pluralist societies in which “diversity is not the problem, but the solution”.

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We have praised multiculturalism, we have spoken of interculturality and we now re-situate the transcultural by culturalising other problems

and concealing other uncertainties. But today “us”, that gave security in the past, has produced its own orphans. New transnational “we”s are emerging: those are the ones that are excluded from that single, armour-plated, monolithic “us”. New problematic issues arise there where strategies are coming into being, solidarities are dying, mentalities are changing. Why? Because it is people and not cultures that interact; people, with their memories, their fears and their hopes. “And cultures emigrate through people. No censorship exists that can stop them conversing and interacting beyond the borders” (Affaya, 2004).

Is diversity a genuine component of this patrimony and an added value?

Diversity

The concept of diversity has become an indispensable tool for describing and formulating the identity processes faced by most societies. In the case of Europe, particularly, it has become a multipurpose idea in which the diverse constitutes, furthermore, everything that concerns us and that causes us uncertainty. In this way, diversity ends up transforming into a category for understanding our society and our major collective concerns.

It is important to stress that in the construction of the identity, the championing of diversity tends to act on different levels of the collective. It acts on a level that we could call local, where people who feel discriminated against, owing to the fact that they belong to minority groups, call for the

recognition of their identities compared with the dominant majorities; it acts on a global level, which includes social resistances to the homogenising dimension of globalising processes. On both levels, this recognition of diversity “aims to legitimise and support policies that seek a new model of society, the structuring premise of which is based on a supposed harmonious coexistence within diversity” (Wieviorka, 2008).

This diversity has placed identification, which as a process of signification has always sought singularisation and differentiation from the other, before a series of original and complex social aspirations, such as the plural and the heterogeneous. Out of this strange scenario of the plural and the heterogeneous, countless new forms of identification will emerge, the resulting product of which will always be a hybridisation of ways of belonging in constant transformation, and which, curiously, end up representing a whole that, far from the theories of simple thought, will be quite a bit more than the mere sum of their parts (Urry, 2003). The multiple connections and crossovers between the subjects of which it is constituted will turn the process of identification into a process that is dynamic and unpredictable, in which the old categories will prove to be no longer useful. It is out of this inability to understand that a need arises for “a change of vocabulary that will enable us to understand the plural, amalgamated, irregular, changing and discontinuous world in which we live” (Innerarity, 2006).

Complexity

That is why, in recent years (and especially since the 1990s), certain researchers in the field of social sciences (such as John Urry, Edgar Morin, Zygmunt Bauman, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, among others), in their search for new types of analysis, have started working with Complexity Theory to be a more suitable tool for examining the new forms of social relations, constructions and identifications in which we exist. The complexity of society calls for a reform of academic and political thought, so that it can deal with an endless number of events, actions, interactions, retro-actions, determinations and chance events which, just like in physics, take place in today’s local and global world.

“Given the complexity and accepting the plurality, the structures or frameworks of analysis need to go beyond the static description, and to be capable of including that which moves, changes and gathers speed” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2003).

Out of all the new categories and parameters offered by Complexity Theory for social analysis, I would like to highlight three ideas that could be particularly useful for achieving a new way of understanding identity:

1. The *idea of multiple times and spaces*, in which the local and global are maintained intertwined through a dynamic connection with flows of continuous information;
2. The *unpredictable*, where all political action becomes a bet,

and where every bet must take on a certain degree of risk and uncertainty (Morin, 1994);

3. The *emergent*, as identity phenomena, in which the infinite interactions and interferences of their members give rise to new products which maintain a self-organized equilibrium upon an apparent chaos (Urry, 2003).

Why would a theory of complexity be useful for explaining and resolving our societies? Because it enables us:

- To work with an extreme quantity of interactions and interferences between a very large number of individuals;
- To unite antagonistic notions to examine the processes;
- To combine and distinguish, without isolating or reducing.

The social complexity in which we live requires us to imagine scenarios for action that can be modified in the course of the action. Strategies that can be adapted to the new, changing, open and fluid forms of the social, where individuals are a part of society and at the same time, society is present in each individual.

“Complex thought is, in essence, a thought that incorporates uncertainty and which is able to conceive organisation. A thought that is able

to reconnect, contextualise and globalise but, at the same time, to acknowledge the singular and the specific; a dialogic principle that unites two antagonistic principles or notions that apparently reject each other, but which are inseparable when it comes to understanding one single reality which is increasingly seen as more fluid, open and variable than ever” (Morin, 1994).

Strategies in which participation and dialogue become basic instruments in the construction of the political and social; strategies that have to accept dissent, crisis and difference as part of this process, and which at the same time will have to honestly accept the plurality of participants and the multiplicity of ways of life that all this involves.

Which Europe do we want for tomorrow?

Dialogue and European “cultural space”

What are we talking about when we talk about dialogue? “Dialogue” is yet another word that has been increasingly devoided of content due to repeated use, and that now seems suspicious. We have dialogues of all kinds, we even hold dialogue programmes with expiry dates, but we forget that this is something that “is only useful if it brings together people who think and feel differently from each other” (Debray, 2007). According to Gadamer (1979), dialogue is a process through which two people seek to mutually understand each other, not to find an absolute truth that lies somewhere in space, but a “fusion of horizons” by which, despite each participant’s prejudices, mutual understanding becomes possible. Habermas (1984) shares Gadamer’s idea, but he stresses the need for minimum con-

ditions to ensure that this dialogue between individuals becomes possible. It does not have to be absolute equality, but it does require a certain reciprocity and symmetry between the parties: an “ideal speech situation” that enables the participants to reach a merging of perspectives or to come to a rational agreement.

As a consequence, dialogue means giving and receiving; being able to give but also having the humility to receive without attempting to force the interlocutor to agree with you. It is not a question of finding a single truth, but of making dialogue a continual process in which discussion is possible (Vattimo, 2008). Neither does it have to lead to a consensus on something, and much less so as regards values: it respects and listens to difference because the aim is for the discussion to continue... and that people should get used to listening to each other. Finally, according to Bohm (1996), to dialogue does not mean analysing things or winning an argument; instead, it means “suspending your opinions, listening to those of others, and to suspend them, too, and work out what all this might mean.”

What might it mean to dialogue politically?

Chantal Mouffe (2007), in contrast to the latter authors, contests by emphasising that this liberal rationalist view of dialogue avoids recognising the “passion component” that underlies all human relationships, and avoids dealing with the conflict: “What makes people act politically is what I call ‘passions’”. Group identifications have to do with desire, with fantasy, with precisely everything which interests and the rational not. Instead of conceiving politics as a place where we all have to come together to find a rational solution (that is not the function of politics at all), politics should speak to people of their passions, so as to impel them toward democratic projects. “Only when we acknowledge this dimension of ‘the political’, and we understand that politics consists of subduing hostility and trying to defuse the potential antagonism that exists in human relations, can we consider the fundamental issue of democratic politics (...) This presupposes that the ‘Other’ is no longer perceived as an enemy, but as an ‘adversary’ that is to say, as someone whose ideas we will fight, but whose rights to defend these ideas we won’t question. Transforming antagonism into agonism” (Ibid).

As a prior step to dialogue, let us propose a conversation (Kwame, 2005) in which we commit ourselves to the experience and ideas of others through a certain curiosity and an attitude of receptive disposition. We might simply be intrigued about ways of thinking, feeling or acting that are different to our own; discovering them and recognising them, even if we do not share them. Every day we come up against more ways of thinking that are different, either directly, indirectly or virtually; more transformations owing to mobilities and dizzyingly rapid changes. We need to be able to situate our way of seeing so that we do not feel threatened by other ways of seeing.

A shared cultural space

And it is in the public sphere (communication space), thus, that many conversations and connections between speakers are brought together. This space must provide the right conditions so that plural identities can converse, construct and try out views of the future of Europe that, as Calhoun (2004) suggests, go “beyond its definition or delimitation as a specific space, but rather as a spatial metaphor in which, by transcending the particular, every person has the right to express, participate, speak and converse with the community, and be taken into consideration”. A public space of socialised individuals, a space shaped by cultural practices in which culture –extensive, controversial and ambiguous– bears in mind the multiple forms of communication, interaction and mediation that take place between the participants.

Key notes for a European cultural space

- A more transparent, responsible institutions are needed, a governance with a human face that involves a conversation between citizens and politicians;
- A broadening of the vocabulary available for description and cultural analysis so that a place can be found for irregularities, exceptions and disagreement as part of a common enterprise of Europeans;
- A true acknowledgement of cultural diversity without organising that diversity into a hierarchical scale;
- An inclusion of multiple identities and new identifications without coming into competition with the local, regional and national identities with which we coexist;
- An export activity of an idea of Europe that is capable of building pluralist societies within a system of transnational government;
- A promotion and maintenance of active dialogue with and between young people;
- An acknowledgement of those emerging transcultural cultures that unite in diversity.

Thus, we can begin to think of a European cultural space as a space of relationship, interaction and communications in which the conversation between citizens generate, in the words of Garton Ash (2009) “a heart to feel together, and a voice with which to tell it to the outside world”.

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