

European integration as colonial discourse

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Abstract. A not infrequent musing on the growing European integration is that the process may signal a historic discontinuity with the logic and functioning of the modern state, forming an alternative to the Westphalian order. This article takes issue with this notion, holding that, more accurately, the interaction in Europe between the currents of post-national integration and the nation-state may have reduced the integrated Europe to a mere parody of the nation-state. In articulating this argument, the article draws on the ‘hybrid’ anxiety placed by Homi Bhabha at the heart of the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised – a binary perversely reproduced, the article claims, in the dichotomy between the European integration and the European nation-state. Next, through a discussion of ‘catachresis’ and ‘time-lag’, strategies of reversal introduced by Gayatri Spivak and Bhabha, respectively, the article rehearses ideas as to whether or not something of a post-Westphalian order can still be salvaged from the ongoing process of integration. Throughout, the article seeks to rely on the later Wittgenstein on meaning, especially his privileging of what is conventionally treated as secondary in meaning formation; namely appearances, difference, absence, mimesis, and the burlesque, as opposed to a transcendental essence, presence, or identity.

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In a seminal essay in 1993, on the origins of the modern state, John Ruggie argued that the growing integration in Europe may indicate a radical break from the ‘single-point perspective’ of the modern era to form a new, ‘multiperspectival polity’, asserting: ‘the institutional, juridical, and spatial complexes associated with the [integrated Europe] may constitute nothing less than the emergence of the first truly postmodern international political form.’¹ Here accordingly was a formation effectively challenging the binaries of the public and the private, and the internal and the external, which defined the modern rule. Further, the integrated Europe exhibited in its functioning, Ruggie noted, a clear insubordination to the Weberian notion of a monopoly on the use of legitimate force as the distinguishing mark of the modern state.

A possible transformation of the Westphalian order, as observed by Ruggie, may also be reflected in a myriad of developments not emanating directly from the

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¹ John Gerard Ruggie, ‘Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations’, *International Organization*, 47 (1993), p. 140.

European Union (EU). Rather, the EU as a novel polity may be argued to be simply an *ex post facto*, institutionalised form of some of the long noted, albeit mostly elusive, processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation across the globe in various terrains – such as decentralised business, frontier fluidity, increased and multifarious transnational movement, reconfigured urban space, and hybrid cultures – in short all that is often shorthanded in the term globalisation. The EU may be said, in other words, to have merely formalised some of these globalising processes which have emerged independently of the EU and which appear effectively to diminish the pivotal role attributed to territoriality by significantly deterritorialising policy-making in the pertinent areas.

That is, rather than the evidence which issues directly and originally from the process of integration in Europe, the general globalising trend and challenges posed by it to the modern notion of spatiality are probably what is at the heart of a possible transformation in the society of states. In this view, the European integration can be construed, more modestly, as a mere extension of the conventional, long-standing idea of European federalism. This idea has sought to integrate various European states into one coherent entity purely for reasons economic, strategic or ‘pacific’ (the ideal of ending conflict in Europe) without necessarily forming a challenge to the logic and language of the modern state. What is more, the EU in this old federalist mould may be argued to be firmly aligned with, rather than departing from, the ideology of the modern state. This ideology seems to be reflected, first and foremost, in the continuing, routine coupling of the question of European integration with the question of whether or not there is a European ‘nation’ to sustain the integration. A line of thinking sometimes associated with Euro-sceptics, who reject the idea of a European nation and hence greater integration, this thinking can actually be shown to be part and parcel of the general federalist project also, including its evolved, more recent forms, as communicated in the work of the present-day federalists such as Habermas, who, although rejecting an organic concept of a European nation, is nonetheless hopeful of a ‘nation of citizens’ or a ‘civic nation’ for Europe that ‘must not be confused with a community of fate shaped by common descent, language and history’.² A European nation, either organic, shaped by a common culture and history, or to be forged by policies and common institutions on a voluntaristic basis, continues in short to be perceived by federalists as a prerequisite for a full scale, sustainable integration. As such federalism, including the kind advocated by Habermas, appears simply to reiterate the old nationalist adage that the nation is the sole legitimate basis for an autonomous political association. Ruggie, who is aware of this possible regression from a new, multiperspectival notion towards the old and problematic Westphalian order, chooses nevertheless not to dwell on it, stating only in passing: ‘There is no indication, however, that this reimagining [of European collective existence] will result in a federal state of Europe – which would merely replicate on a larger scale the typical modern political form.’³

I would like to argue in what follows that Ruggie could be wrong in his reading of the signs arising from the project of integration in Europe. I think, in other

² Jürgen Habermas, ‘Why Europe Needs a Constitution’, *New Left Review*, 11 (2001), p. 15.

³ Ruggie, ‘Territoriality and Beyond’, p. 172.

words, that the 'single-point perspective' of modernity might be very much intrinsic to the EU. Far from being 'post-national', the continuing process of integration may be claimed to be very much national in a significant sense, even nationalistic, beyond what Michael Billig has termed 'banal nationalism', namely the internalised, less visible nationalism of established nations,⁴ considering that the European identity construction central to the evolving European idea often emulates the archetypal nation-building. If this is the case, rather than fully embracing some of the contemporary globalising processes in the face of a rigid Westphalian order, the EU can be more accurately described to be actively resisting some such transformation.

In the article I intend to provide an explanation for this apparent 'relapse', given the direction indicated by Ruggie and others. I observe, briefly put, that the EU is in the grip of the nation-state. In substantiating this observation I probe into the tense interaction between the purportedly post-national EU and the European nation-state by utilising a number of insights developed in postcolonial studies. I draw, in particular, on Homi Bhabha's notion of 'hybridity' as a moment defining the encounter between the coloniser and the colonised, the EU and the European nation-state, in which the latter, the term of difference, although ostensibly subjugated, imports in the identity term represented by the EU various hybrid demands.

The encroachment by the EU over what traditionally formed areas of national policy-making has already been described as 'internal colonialism'.⁵ Further, the EU has frequently been branded as a 'hybrid' entity governed in its functioning by the conflicting currents of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. Emboldened by the iconography of these stray references in the discussions of the European integration, I venture forth and argue that the nation-state, originally a term of identity in the discourse of the modern states system, performs in this colonial encounter with the EU as a perverse term of alterity, of difference. Identity and difference, transcendence and alterity, presence and absence, essence and mimesis are binary oppositions in which a specific metaphysics is immanent. Designated by Derrida a 'metaphysics of presence', this metaphysics is an 'exigent, powerful, systematic and irrepressible desire' in a system of signs for a 'transcendental signified', for an identity term.⁶ This assumption of a transcendental signified, of a timeless essence, negating ambivalence, is greatly reiterated in the antagonism of the coloniser and the colonised, the EU and the nation-state. Hybridity is a function of the deconstructive tension, of ambivalence, displacement and metamorphosis, originating from the engagement between the terms of each binary. Accordingly, discretely negotiating hybrid demands in the encounter with the EU bureaucracy, the nation-state ultimately subverts the presence, or identity, denoted by the idea of European integration. In the closing section of the article, I discuss the notions of 'catachresis' and 'time-lag', introduced by Gayatri Spivak and Bhabha, respectively, as instruments with possible use for a reversal of the

⁴ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995).

⁵ Chris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 64, borrowing the term from Michael Hechter's study of national development in the context of Britain and the 'Celtic fringe'.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 49.

process towards salvaging from the encounter between the EU and the European nation-state something of a genuine alternative to the Westphalian order. In so doing, I attempt to locate a site of relative autonomy which is mimetic, as opposed to essentialising, and yet which may be used for a catachrestic reversal. Last but by no means least, I utilise, throughout the article, the later Wittgenstein on meaning formation, drawing on his emphasis on what he calls ‘criteria’, namely the outward signs of meaning entailed in play-acting, iterability, mimesis, and the burlesque. I treat these sites as localities of criteria for meaning crucial in establishing the semantics of integration in Europe.

Hybridity as empowerment

By the hybrid demands made by the European nation-state in the encounter with the EU bureaucracy, I have in mind such insignia and markers of the nation-state smuggled in the otherwise post-national EU as passport, flag, anthem, citizenship, and constitution, alongside the forms of political agency, spatiality and historiography associated with the nation-state. The resulting hybridity is a form of sedition and defiance by the European nation-state reproducing resistance to the colonial authority by the colonised through the unlikely power and machinations of mimicry, of the burlesque, as described by Bhabha. ‘Resistance’, Bhabha explains in the context of colonial encounter, ‘is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or exclusion of the “content” of another culture, as a difference once perceived. It is the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses [...]’.⁷ The ambivalence effected in the central or identity term, and the resulting resistance, always and inevitably the case in the encounter of the same and the different, the coloniser and the colonised, is famously illustrated by Bhabha in a discussion of the native Indian encounter with Christianity in the early 19th century. He cites a missionary register of the period to describe the experience of Anund Messeh, an Indian missionary, who comes across a group of Christian converts near Delhi:

He found about 500 people, men, women and children [...] in reading and conversation. He went up to an elderly looking man [...]

‘Pray, who are all these people? And whence come they?’ ‘We are poor and lowly, and we read and love this book’ [...] Anund, on opening the book, perceived it to be the Gospel of our Lord, translated into the Hindoostanee Tongue [...] ‘These books’, said Anund, ‘teach the religion of the European Sahibs. It is THEIR book; and they printed it in our language, for our use’. ‘Ah! no’, replied the stranger, ‘that cannot be for they eat flesh’ [...] Anund explained to them the nature of the Sacrament and of Baptism; in answer to which they replied, ‘We are willing to be baptized, but we will never take the Sacrament [...] because the Europeans eat cow’s flesh’ [...].⁸

In the account, the natives appear to be willing to take up Christianity, but they also have demands which they will not readily give up. As another register of the same period cited by Bhabha makes it clear: ‘in embracing the Christian religion they never entirely renounce their superstitions towards which they always keep a

⁷ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 110.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 102–4.

secret bent.⁹ According to Bhabha, the native Indian embrace of the Christian faith via hybrid demands, as depicted in the case, is nothing less than a subversion of the imposed faith, constituting a form of resistance that is arguably more forceful than a straightforward negation. The identity term, the coloniser, that is out to suppress and eliminate the difference represented by the colonised, is subtly transformed and undermined in the process. Hybridity that marks the case achieves to 'estrangle' the Gospel, 'the English book', and with it, the very colonial authority. 'If the appearance of the English book is read as a production of colonial hybridity, then it no longer simply commands authority. It gives rise [on the contrary] to a series of questions of authority [...].'¹⁰

In other words, Bhabha departs in his reading of the colonial situation from the earlier and better known take by Edward Said by replacing an essentialised dichotomy of the coloniser and the colonised with one that is transversal and differentialising. Said can be said generally to perceive the term of difference in the binary as ultimately subsumed by the identity term, a state of affairs culminating in plain subjection. According to Bhabha, on the other hand, submission is mimicry and semblance first and foremost, which can be empowerment through the logic of hybridity, in turn subverting the identity term. This is somewhat akin to the much discussed Hegelian dialectic of the independent and dependent consciousness, the master and the slave: 'bondage [...] when completed, pass[es] into the opposite of what it immediately is.'¹¹ Bondage, or subordination, that is, may take the form of resistance insofar as, reduced to the status of a dependent consciousness, the slave is nevertheless empowered: in a position to issue recognition for the master, the slave not only comes to share in the authority, but it also effectively demeans the master by reducing the latter to the level of receiving acknowledgement from a mere dependent consciousness.

The hybridity that characterises the relationship between the master and the slave, the coloniser and the colonised, therefore, is not only: (1) a condition that crucially *destabilises* identity, or meaning, premised on a conventional binary of the same and the similar, identity and difference, essence and appearances, primary and secondary, and so on, but it is also, (2) an act of *subversion*. In the first sense, hybridity may be comparable to the Wittgensteinian notion of a 'family resemblance', which replaces the conventional notion of identity in meaning formation by negating that one essential feature, one common element, could be found to underlie all possible manifestations of a term of presence, though there may be discernible likenesses (as opposed to *one* single likeness shared by *all*) connecting various instances of the term.¹² Hybridity structured as family resemblance, defying a common, generic core, may therefore indicate the possibility of inhabiting several sites of identity at the same time, while not being reduced to one. And in the second sense, namely as an act of subversion, hybridity may function to *de-familiarise* the familiar in each of various sites of identity inhabited, and *particularise* the universal. The natives embracing Christianity, inevitably with a

⁹ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 113.

¹¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* [1807], trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 237.

¹² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* [1953], trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), paras 65–7.

'bent' towards other sites, simply de-familiarise Christianity as a term of presence. Further, Christianity as a universal site is significantly particularised, localised. The result is the subversion of Christianity as a fixed, universal referent.

This act of subversion is far from being a mere aberration or contingency. One way of indicating how fundamental this moment of subversion really is in meaning formation is to link 'family resemblance', as negation of transcendental identity, to another Wittgensteinian notion, that of 'criteria', or the appearances, which Wittgenstein introduces to emphasise mimicry and semblance over essence, difference over identity, in constructing meaning in language.¹³ Accordingly, mimicry as empowerment, as observed by Bhabha in the colonial situation, could be a primordial aspect of meaning formation generally. The great Wittgensteinian insight, now almost treated as given, is that appearances, pretences, *mise en scène*, in short the criteria, form the *sole* ground for meaning. Christianity, in this view, is nothing more or less than what is *staged* as such, what is made of it, or what simply *appears* to be Christian, as opposed to being a term that bears a transcendental referent, a fixed state of being beyond individual or historical manifestations of Christianity.

Mimicry relegated traditionally to a secondary status, then, is in effect what appears to be at the heart of each and every identity term. This is why the mimetic site passively 'colonised' by the natives through processes of hybridity may amount to empowerment on the part of the natives, enabling genuine, if subtle, resistance against the colonial authority. In other words, Bhabha can be said to apply the insight by Wittgenstein on meaning, privileging mimicry, to the authority represented by the colonial rule. Hybridity, accordingly, subjects the symbols of authority to dynamic and uncontrolled processes of presencing (that is, manufacturing identity) and re-presencing through the unlikely power of the mimetic, as articulated by Wittgenstein on meaning. The resulting ambivalence 'unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.'¹⁴

I argue, in what follows, that a similar reversal of authority may be the case in the encounter of the post-national EU and the European nation-state. In so doing, I move beyond what may be tagged the circumstantial ethics of the colonial situation, in which the hybrid resistance by the colonised, the term of difference in the binary, is morally privileged. I assume instead a moment of moral undecidability that is intrinsic to the mechanics of the hybrid anxiety defining the interaction between the two terms. That is to say, the specific term of difference in the discussion, the nation-state, with its practices of inclusion and exclusion, is treated as morally suspect rather than necessarily privileged.

My argument is exactly this: the nation-state confined to the mimetic, a site dismissed by the EU as contingent and secondary, has effectively subverted the EU in its colonising, supranational authority. The EU, in its efforts to overwhelm the nation-state, has been unsettled and shaped via a number of hybrid demands, as symbolised in the imagery tied to the nation-state, which the EU has incorporated: a European flag and a hymn, currency, citizenship, a constitution, and so on.

¹³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* [1958] (Oxford: Blackwell, 1969), pp. 24–5.

¹⁴ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 112.

Driven apparently by a policy of appropriating the cultural and political wherewithal of these insignia, the EU has in fact been trapped and undermined. This move by the EU has been facilitated via a mindset motivated by the conventional binary of identity and mimicry, in which the latter is dismissed as mere semblance. In short, through the imagery of the nation-state it has incorporated, through pretence, the EU now effectively is 'what it has pretended to be',¹⁵ subject to the logic and functioning of the mimetic attached to what it otherwise aspires to subsume, namely the nation-state.

The burlesque of integration

The hybrid demands by the nation-state on the growing European integration came to the forefront in the early 1980s through the concept of a 'People's Europe'. The concept sought to transform what was largely perceived as a commercial union into a fusion at the level of people, arguably an oblique indication of the ambivalence that defined the integration towards the attributes and prerogatives of the nation-state, which the integration otherwise aimed to exceed. In June 1984, at the Fontainebleau meeting of the European Council, the heads of state and government of the then European Community (EC), a working group was set up, the Committee on People's Europe, or the Adonnino Committee, after the former Italian member of the European Parliament who chaired it. The working group's mission was to suggest measures on issues of communal identity and on a more tightly integrated vision of European space at grassroots. In its second report to the European Council in Milan, in June 1985, the Committee on People's Europe made a number of proposals, which notably included the use of a flag and an anthem for the organisation.¹⁶ Both suggestions, accepted at the meeting and effective from 1986, drew on the stock of an earlier regional organisation, the Council of Europe, which had adopted a European flag in 1955 and an anthem in 1972, having subsequently called on European institutions to embrace these symbols as those of Europe generally.

The flag, 12 gold stars in a circular layout and set against an azure background, signified, according to the Council of Europe, perfection, union and completeness, alongside the obvious associations the number 12 had with the duodecimal time and with various landmark facts, political and cultural, in the history of the peoples of Europe.¹⁷ Based on the rationale provided by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the executive body of the EC, would describe the emblem as 'the symbol *par excellence* of European identity and European unification'.¹⁸ And for the European anthem, the Council of Europe had decided on the 'Ode to Joy' theme in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A standing committee set up for this purpose by the organisation had hesitated though on the lyrics by

¹⁵ Rephrasing Kurt Vonnegut in *Mother Night*, cited by Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. x.

¹⁶ European Community, 'Report Submitted to the Milan European Council, June 28–29, 1985', *Bulletin of the European Communities*, supplement 7/85, pp. 18–30.

¹⁷ See Shore, *Building Europe*, pp. 47–8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48, citing 'A People's Europe: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament' (7 July 1986).

Schiller, 'An die Freude', on the grounds that the words 'were in the nature of a universal expression of faith rather than a specifically European one',¹⁹ a veiled disapproval of the language of the lyrics, according to Caryl Clark, rather than a reservation on the aptness of the universalist philosophy behind the words,²⁰ suggesting in turn only the tune as the European anthem. The anthem, formally adopted by the Council of Europe, soon became an accompaniment to institutional ceremonies in Europe, with or without the lyrics, including the institutions of the EC, long before it was officially recognised by the latter. 'Finally', writes Clark, 'on 29 May 1986, the newly adopted flag of the EC [...] was hoisted with great solemnity in the forecourt of Berlaymont, home of the European Commission in Brussels, over the strains of "The European Anthem" sung by a massed choir of Schiller's still unofficial text.'²¹

The flag and the anthem, the two most striking insignia of the nation-state, seemed to signal the discursive space in which the nation-state ventured to re-negotiate authority with the post-national, 'colonial' entity. Chris Shore notes, reflecting on the symbols adopted, that 'far from embodying a new age in human history', the evolving project of European integration began increasingly to submit to 'much the same symbolic terrain as the old nation-states of the last two centuries', not to mention the immediately striking ambivalence of the notion of a European identity, which is mighty and hegemonic, guiding the whole process of integration in Europe, and yet which is at once vulnerable and in need of bureaucratic makeover and protection.²²

The apparent mimetic sway by the colonised over the discourse of the coloniser, re-defining the project of integration through mimicry and semblance offered by the term of difference in the encounter, the nation-state, would grow in the following decade through various pay-offs from the colonial authority, the EU, in efforts to remedy the so-called 'democratic deficit' in the process of integration. The colonial authority represented by the EU bureaucracy, seeking traditional legitimacy, the only discursive space for legitimacy made available to the organisation in the encounter, would introduce, for instance, a whole new concept of 'European citizenship' in 1992. The former EC had already decided on a common identity document for the citizens of the community, a standard passport having been deliberated over from as early as 1974, and adopted in 1981,²³ with the first European passports issued on 1 January 1985. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which transformed what was until then the European Community into the fully integrated project of the EU, would launch the new concept of European citizenship, declaring: 'Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union' (Article 8).

A common interpretation of the newly established concept of European citizenship by critics has been that the EU has sought in the act to pay a mere lip service

¹⁹ Caryl Clark, 'Forging Identity: Beethoven's "Ode" as European Anthem', *Critical Inquiry*, 23 (1997), p. 796, citing Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, 'Explanatory Memorandum by Mr. Radius' (10 June 1971).

²⁰ Clark, 'Forging Identity', p. 803.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 800.

²² Shore, *Building Europe*, pp. 50–2.

²³ European Community, 'Resolution of the Representatives of the Government of the Member States of the European Communities, June 23, 1981', *Official Journal of the European Communities*, C 241 (19 September 1981), pp. 1–7.

to what would be the European *demos*, aiming simply to re-assert credibility in the face of increasing criticisms of its lack of democratic authority, while being otherwise unrelenting in its elite-led notion of integration. What is perhaps more significant in the act is once again the mimetic intervention at play, with the nation-state subtly challenging the authority of the post-national organisation through the hybrid demand mirrored in the notion of 'citizenship'. It is a double bind: the EU appears to seek a strengthening of its authority in its operations to subjugate the nation-state; but because the EU appeals in so doing to none other than the very acclaim and prestige of the nation-state, as reflected in the plagiarised notion of citizenship, the EU becomes mimetically subservient to the nation-state. The mimetic, in turn, re-defines the EU. The semblance of citizenship, historically inseparable from the nation-state, suggests the 'nation' as the sole legitimate basis for authority. The term of difference, namely the national, purportedly subdued via the overwhelming presence or identity of the post-national entity, the EU, appears effectively to manipulate the formed meaning through smuggled-in mimicry. This is precisely what Bhabha describes as 'a strategic displacement of value through a process of the metonymy of presence',²⁴ one of the various definitions he offers for hybridity as resistance. Hybridity as empowerment for the colonised, the nation-state, renders vacuous the authority of the coloniser, the EU, through a functioning of the mimetic, a site perilously dismissed by the coloniser as secondary, as mere ornament, as that which does not pertain to the essence.

Clearly, the mimetic hold which the nation-state appears to exercise over the discourse of the post-national integration has the effect of a discreet transaction on the terms of the agreed post-national identity, re-defining it. This does not mean that the assumed integration is a fallacy, with nation-states subject to integration left intact as autonomous agents. That is, unlike what a roughly intergovernmentalist perspective on integration would claim, there can be no question that nation-states integrated within the organisation come to lose a considerable part of their agency, compromising on the conventional notion of sovereignty as a marker of the nation-state. The logic of hybridity that comes to define the supranational association means, however, that the end-result of the integration may be no more than simply the nation-state set out on a larger scale, as distinct from an aspired post-national entity. On the contrary, a European 'nation', complete with citizenry, a concept that seems to define the horizon of even the most imaginative among the advocates of integration, such as Habermas, indicates the degree to which the post-national imaginary is in fact estranged, mocked and humiliated by the nation-state.

It may look all the more bewildering that a form of European nationalism should be invoked for its assumed emancipatory value, as implied by Habermas, among others. Far from being an improvement on the age-old practices of inclusion and exclusion that define the modern territorial state, the new European nation-state in the making appears to continue, possibly with a vengeance, precisely those proclivities that have inspired the critics of the Westphalian order, including plain racism. According to the findings of a survey conducted in 2002 among the French-speaking Belgian students, those of the respondents who strongly

²⁴ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 120.

related to a European identity tended to be more xenophobic than the rest.²⁵ That is, what we observe in alterity to the idea of Europe is hardly a harmless, 'internal' other, as once suggested,²⁶ namely the horrors of Europe's recent past which gave an over-arching pacific direction to the emerging European integration in the immediate aftermath of World War II. What we observe, on the contrary, is that the brutalities that marked the European past continue unabated, now unleashed simply on the non-EU nationals and immigrant workers. This is the case not only in relation to the perceptions in European societies, of 'aliens', in both legal and cultural sense. But this perception is significantly aided and reflected also in the legal structure. The EU defines itself through 'the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law' (the Treaty of Amsterdam of 1997). Interestingly however, the right against discrimination, a fundamental and undisputed right in the body of human rights law, does not seem to cover discrimination on grounds of nationality, with non-EU nationals, described by Etienne Balibar as subject to an emerging regime of apartheid within Europe,²⁷ continuing to face brutal policies that hinder family reunification and that enforce various labour market and welfare benefit restrictions.²⁸

This new Europe may be asserted only to continue, rather than form a break with, the inter-war totalitarian politics in Europe. A passionate argument to this effect has been put forward by Gerard Delanty, who has pointed out the kinship between the idea of European unity and the authoritarian politics of the inter-war years, noting: 'It has been conveniently forgotten today that fascism and anti-semitism were two of the major expressions of the idea of Europe.'²⁹ According to Delanty, the project of a united Europe was focal to 'fascism', an ideology which manifested, he contends, supranational leanings in its both Italian and Nazi varieties.³⁰ That is, the compulsion in the present-day federalist thinking to have 'nation' as the template of the new Europe may rival the wildest dreams of the inter-war ideologues.

What is also being witnessed in the new Europe is precisely the logic that governs the spatial functioning of the nation-state, transforming the EU into a formidable territorial entity, often referred to as 'Fortress Europe'. The new European space thus established appears to be garrisoned through a set of formal agreements, first of which signed in Schengen, Luxembourg, in 1985. This initial agreement has launched and baptised a complicated frontier regime for the integrated Europe, creating a rigorous surveillance and information system, formally incorporated into the legal framework of the organisation in 1997 via a protocol annexed to the Amsterdam Treaty. The regime, joined also by the non-member states Norway, Iceland, and, later, Switzerland, European states long refusing to be members, abolished the internal frontiers in Europe, with the partial

²⁵ Laurent Licata and Olivier Klein, 'Does European Citizenship Breed Xenophobia? European Identification as a Predictor of Intolerance Towards Immigrants', *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*, 12 (2002), pp. 332–3.

²⁶ Ole Wæver, 'European Security Identities', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 34 (1996), p. 122.

²⁷ Etienne Balibar, *We the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, trans. James Swenson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 43.

²⁸ Bob Hepple, 'Race and Law in Fortress Europe', *The Modern Law Review*, 67 (2004), pp. 1–15.

²⁹ Gerard Delanty, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), p. 111.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–2.

exception of the UK and Ireland, members which opted out, agreeing nevertheless to the judicial cooperation and law enforcement aspects of the system. The new member states that acceded from 2004 were denied an opt-out clause, expected to fulfil the Schengen *acquis* on the dismantling of borders following a period of transition. By 2008, most of the new members had joined the Schengen area. Cyprus completed the transition phase in 2010. Bulgaria and Romania, the newest members, are estimated to join the rest in 2011.

But, surely, the discourse urging a European nation and a territory is not the only discourse in the integration? Another is commitment to dialogue between cultures, even a much highlighted attempt at transforming the traditional power politics, favoured by modern entities like the United States (US), into non-coercive practices, of an unmistakably post-Westphalian form? Unlike what has been suggested,³¹ the divergence in the respective attitudes and policies of the US and Europe in making sense of the post-Cold War security environment, often illustrated via the discord on the issue of the US 'War on Terror', may not necessarily mean that the EU as a novel polity formation has dramatically moved away from the type of rationality and the practices customarily associated with the modern state. The apparent disparity between the US and European policies may have come about through the interaction of various factors. One, if not the most important of these factors, obviously, is the relative frailty of the European military might, coupled with the question of the inadequacy of the still sketchy integration in Europe in the area of common foreign and security policy. An equally important factor, perhaps, is the more pragmatic strategic thinking in Europe, which has been paradoxically dubbed as 'realistic' in the face of the more 'utopian' outlook of the US strategy.³² In other words, the growing, irreversible interdependence in Europe may present no guarantee that an integrated Europe is necessarily a community of peace, a new concept *vis-à-vis* the Westphalian order. On the contrary, the integration *à la* Fortress Europe appears to reveal most of the tell-tale signs of the modern state seeking to organise power 'domestically', without necessarily, and once and for all, giving up the modern practices of the accumulation of power internationally, that is, outside the emerging European state, and by whatever means.

A further stage in the 'nationalising' of Europe has been achieved through the introduction of a single European currency, part of the stage props of the nation-state long considered as symbolising sovereignty and territorial authority beyond the immediate economic value. A European Monetary System (EMS), set up in 1978, with the aim of ensuring exchange rate stability between the currencies of the member states, had introduced in the same year a European Currency Unit (ECU). From 1 January 1999, the 'euro', a term introduced at the Madrid European Council of December 1995, replaced the ECU in the 12 member states participating in the euro zone, with the EMS correspondingly rendered redundant. The first euro notes and coins were issued on 1 January 2002. Typically in line with the age-old tradition of currency as an instrument of nation-building, often articulated in the

³¹ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003).

³² Felix Sebastian Berenskoetter, 'Mapping the Mind Gap: A Comparison of US and European Security Strategies', *Security Dialogue*, 36 (2005), pp. 71–92.

motto 'one nation, one money',³³ the symbols and images used on the notes form conspicuously an exercise in constructing an organic space of European history, with the painful aspects of conflict, intolerance and colonialism in this history bracketed off,³⁴ reminiscent of the dictum by Renan on 'forgetting' as constitutive of nationhood.³⁵ The attempt is clearly towards fashioning a collective European imaginary, complete with myths, no less fitting than that of a nation. Further, a deeper current of mimicry, the mimicry of money, as ultimately constitutive of identity appears to define the process. The minting of currency in the name of a sovereign historically meant, according to Giddens, a symbolic mastery of time and space.³⁶ In this view, facilitating credit, money is a deferral and a control over time. More important still, money signifies a de-fragmentation of space by enabling exchange between individuals in physical absence. Money as a term of absence, pure mimicry, nevertheless functioning as constitutive of sovereignty, pure presence,³⁷ may be argued simply to reiterate the logic of hybridity at work.

Finally, a European Constitution, reflective of a legal positivist philosophy in line with the centralising concerns of the nation-state, would attempt to round off the reversal of subjugation between the post-national integration and the nation-state, the coloniser and the colonised, the master and the slave, the Westphalian order having come full circle in the process. The heads of state or government of the EU had decided at the Laeken summit of 2001 to convene a European Convention on the future of Europe. The task of the Convention included making suggestions towards modifying, and incorporating in a single text, the main agreements that formed the normative framework of the integration. A draft treaty on European Constitution, completed by the Convention in 2003, was negotiated by the representatives of governments at an Intergovernmental Conference from the December of the same year. A final agreement on the treaty text was reached in June 2004. The treaty, officially known as the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe, was signed in Rome on 29 October 2004. Before long, however, the efforts towards putting the Constitution into effect would be hampered and the process would enter a dormant state, following the rejection the idea faced in France and the Netherlands, in May and June 2005, respectively, as member states, among others, that chose to consult the respective domestic societies in the matter through referenda, in addition to a parliamentary ratification of the document.

It is possible, of course, that too much has been made of the now defunct idea of a Constitution for Europe, that the proposed Constitution can be viewed as mostly 'rewriting and formalization' of the existing body of treaty law,³⁸ rather

³³ See Benjamin J. Cohen, *The Geography of Money* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), discussed in Matthias Kaelberer, 'The Euro and European Identity: Symbols, Power and the Politics of European Monetary Union', *Review of International Studies*, 30 (2004), pp. 161–78.

³⁴ Kaelberer, 'Euro and European Identity', p. 170.

³⁵ Ernest Renan, 'What is a Nation?' in Homi K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990).

³⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 18, discussed in Kaelberer, 'Euro and European Identity', pp. 167–8.

³⁷ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 296: 'Sovereignty is presence, and the delight in presence'. See Derrida's discussion, in this work, of the traditional binary of speech and writing, presence and absence, marked by a deconstructive tension and reversal, arguably reproduced here in the dichotomy between sovereignty and money.

³⁸ Juliane Kokott and Alexandra R  th, 'The European Convention and Its Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: Appropriate Answers to the Laeken Questions?', *Common Market Law*

than an undertaking in the sense of the conventional theory of constitutionalism, in which a constitution is historically linked to ‘the exercise of sovereign power in the state’.³⁹ What should be noted, however, is precisely this tension between the ‘treaty’ and the ‘constitution’, as reflected in the very title of the document, ‘The Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe’, marking a moment of hybrid anxiety between the respective ideas of consociation and sovereignty, power-sharing and power, diversity and unity, the latter revealingly contributing to the European motto ‘unity in diversity’. A continuing attitude that assigns the quality of mere mimicry and semblance to the constitution, while emphasising the treaty aspect as primary and essential, appears typically to repeat the established pattern of the post-national disavowal in the face of the subliminal and subversive practices of hybridity which characterise the integration.

The aborted European Constitution would be replaced in December 2007 by a ‘Reform Treaty’, the Treaty of Lisbon, which amends the two main treaties of the organisation. The Reform Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, after having been stalled by about a year by a rejection in 2008 from the electorate in Ireland, the only member state which put the treaty to a referendum, with a decision to be reversed in a second referendum the following year, is in effect a truncated version of the ill-fated Constitution, which keeps most of the institutional reforms in the latter, but which refuses to transform the main EU treaties into a single document, a constitution, that is apparently too closely associated with the nation-state. Correspondingly, the Treaty also drops most of the references in the Constitution to the EU insignia linked to the nation-state, such as the flag and the anthem. The insignia are removed from the Treaty not because they communicate a hybrid encroachment on the assumed post-national entity – a subversion of the EU by the nation-state – but ironically because the EU structured as a nation-state, in clear affirmation of the ideology of the Westphalian order, is considered anathema nevertheless for presenting a threat to the time-honored manifestations of that ideology in Europe, the European nation-states. What this signifies ostensibly is the strong Westphalian strain in the midst of integration in Europe, seeking to uphold the traditional mould, beyond a mere hybrid resistance to an assumed transformation. That the insignia in question are only made to look inconspicuous in this latest move, rather than banished from use altogether, may also mean that the disparity between the Lisbon Treaty and the European Constitution is effectively a form of conspiracy aiming to conceal the metamorphosis of the EU into what it once sought to inhibit, that is, the nation-state, complete with the sinister practices of inclusion and exclusion that define it.

A catachrestic reversal?

To recapitulate, then, the syncretism forced on the post-national authority via parody, impersonation and pastiche, as reflected in the appropriation of the various insignia of the nation-state, is ultimately capable of estranging the authority,

Review, 40 (2003), p. 1320.

³⁹ A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* (London: Macmillan, 1908), p. 22.

transforming it into a mere derivation of what it has otherwise sought to subjugate, the nation-state. This is an understanding made possible, I have claimed, by Wittgenstein's insights on meaning formation: it is the 'criteria', namely the burlesque ordinarily associated with a term of presence or identity, that shape and ascertain the meaning, not that which would be somehow intrinsic to the notion, which Wittgenstein terms in his much discussed argument against private language as 'the private object'.⁴⁰ Wittgenstein argues that a private language, namely a language with 'positive terms', as in the famous Saussurian dictum,⁴¹ relying on intention or essence, that is, on a private object, rather than mimicry, travesty and spoof, would not be conceivable. The mimetic, therefore, exercises an inevitable control over meaning, and is ultimately constitutive of authority. The displacement of value this process brings about in the colonial encounter is observed by Bhabha through his notion of hybridity. The sedition caused by the marginal term in the process towards subverting the authority claimed by the term of identity, he maintains, is central to the colonial situation. Empowered through the power of mimicry, the colonised is capable of reversing the colonial subjugation. I have argued that the encounter between the post-national integration in Europe and the European nation-state, the coloniser and the colonised, reflects a similar reversal of authority. The nation-state, with hybrid demands on the assumed post-national entity, has significantly undermined the latter, reducing it to a mere parody of the nation-state.

Now, in this section, I would like to rehearse ideas as to whether or not something of a post-Westphalian order can still be salvaged from this encounter through a series of catachrestic gestures on the part of the post-national integration. Catachresis is defined by Gayatri Spivak as 'a "wholesome" abuse of a figurative move'.⁴² Accordingly, as an exploitation or perversion of mimicry, catachresis may signify a possible way out from the poignancy that characterises the postcolonial intellectual seeking to articulate the voice of the oppressed through tropes structurally linked to the oppressor. As such, catachresis forms a conscious displacement which appropriates the metaphors of the oppressor and yet which 'abuses' them through interventions that exceed the order of the oppressor.

In rehearsing the idea of a possible sedition, along similar lines, of the order of the nation-state through catachrestic uses of its insignia, the flag, the anthem, the currency, the citizenship, and so on, I would like to try to operate once again from a position of absence, as opposed to one of presence or identity. This absence, I would like to suggest, may be provided by a particular instance of mimicry, one that involves Europe's recent brutal past often argued in the official EU historiography to be the unique impulse which directed the European policy-makers towards integration in the aftermath of World War II. In this view, the integration was inspired to a significant extent by the unspeakable savagery of the war, with a heavy toll on people, principally the victims of the Holocaust, forming the highest possible instance of alterity. The pretence, still being kept, as with the

⁴⁰ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, p. 207.

⁴¹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 120: 'in language there are only differences *without positive terms*' (emphasis in original).

⁴² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 14.

notion of Europe's own past as its other,⁴³ or 'the Jewish Holocaust as an all embracing foundational event' for Europe,⁴⁴ may be claimed, on the contrary, to have been paradoxically instrumental in maintaining the apathy in Europe towards the voice of the other. Tony Judt has convincingly argued that the early integration was an effective conspiracy to suppress the savagery, responsibility and guilt of the European past.⁴⁵ Is it possible, nevertheless, to use for a mimetic reversal this absence, this continuing pretence of the 'lost other' as the unique inspiration behind integration in Europe?

In a much debated reading of the encounter between the British colonisers and the Hindu natives in the early 19th century on the practice of *sati*, the widow sacrifice, Spivak observes that the voice of the woman, who is in the thick of the confrontation, is perversely lost.⁴⁶ The colonial authority abolished the practice in 1829 as part of its assumed civilising mission, treating the woman, according to Spivak, as little more than an 'object' of a brutal practice. The local patriarchy, on the other hand, defended the practice by appealing to the agency of the woman, who volunteered for self-immolation, thereby bestowing on the female a 'manipulated' subject-position. What was conspicuously missing in the encounter, Spivak articulates, was the authentic female voice, which could not be heard, and which cannot perhaps be reconstructed now. 'Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation', she notes, 'the figure of the woman disappears [. . .]'.⁴⁷ This argument has been criticised for its apparent defeatism in invoking the irretrievability of the voice of the oppressed; that is, for not giving in to a practical, if facile and false, metaphysics of presence that would empower and emancipate the oppressed. Of course, what the argument by Spivak draws attention to is the inevitably constructed, domesticated nature of the 'other' in each and every case when there is an attempt to retrieve or reconstruct it, which is ultimately far from being genuine empowerment. Greater empowerment, perhaps, stems from the aporia that defines the colonial encounter on the female position, 'a violent aporia between subject and object status',⁴⁸ one that may serve to undermine the discourses of both colonialism and patriarchy.

A similar aporia, I would like to argue, defines the debate on European integration. There seem to be two voices heard in the matter. One is the patriarchal voice of the nation-state, as represented by Euro-sceptics, of crude nationalist type, and anti-globalists, who appeal to a metaphysics of national sovereignty as the sole means of agency for the masses. And the other is the colonial voice, as represented by the EU bureaucracy, benevolent modernisers seeking to lead the obdurate patriarchy, denoted by the nation-state, out of oblivion. What is not heard in the debate is the voice of those who disappeared in the savagery of the second great war in Europe, and who, we are told, are the very inspiration behind the

⁴³ Wæver, 'European Security Identities', p. 122.

⁴⁴ Dan Diner, 'Restitution and Memory: The Holocaust in European Political Cultures', *New German Critique*, 90 (2003), p. 42.

⁴⁵ Tony Judt, 'The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe', *Daedalus*, 121 (1992), pp. 83–118.

⁴⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, from p. 287.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

integration. Those who disappeared in the brutalities of Europe's recent past continue certainly to be part of the discourse of the coloniser, the EU policy-makers, who can be heard from time to time to draw on the savagery of the war to justify the EU in its civilising mission. Yet the victims appear to be understood in this mentality as little more than mere objects, denied subjecthood. The other denied a subject status, and yet compulsively articulated in the official EU historiography, may be construed as an instance of the 'uncanny' in the Freudian sense, namely that which 'ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light'.⁴⁹ The question, now, is: can one possibly come up with anything approximating to that frightening lost voice constantly articulated, only to be buried and re-buried through vacuous gestures of mere articulation, in the discourse of authority? Is the instrumental rationality, argued by Adorno, Horkheimer,⁵⁰ Bauman⁵¹ and others, to have been the logic of the brutalities of Europe's recent past, anything of a clue in this regard? This rationality, obsessing over regulation and discipline, yet markedly indifferent to moral ends, seems still to define much of European policy-making, particularly in relation to aliens, reflective of tidy and smooth engineering, calculation and efficiency, yet bereft of a moral content.

The mimicry and semblance, represented by references in the discourse of integration to the savagery in Europe's recent past, motivated by an instrumental rationality, may offer both substance and leverage for a series of possible catachrestic reversals. The mimicry of the lost other, in a binary opposition with authority, presence and identity, in other words, may function in a deconstructive fashion to displace integration as simply a parody of the nation-state, enabling in turn a catachresis of the imagery that defines it presently, the flag, the anthem, the currency, the citizenship, the constitution, and so on. A possible strategy for a catachrestic treatment of these imagery is offered, I would like to suggest, in Bhabha's notion of 'time-lag'.⁵²

Time-lag is an attempt once again to articulate postcolonial agency, the problematic of Spivak's remarks on the voice of the oppressed constructed in a language, that of the colonial authority, which may only tame and domesticate alterity. Bhabha, indeed, notes the affinity between the striving for a catachrestic opening by Spivak and his own notion of a time-lag, both seeking to exceed, yet at once render serviceable, the embedded, totalising, 'sententious' language of authority.⁵³ More specifically, both authors are concerned with the question: is it possible to make non-ethnocentric, trans-cultural judgments without submitting to Western rationality and epistemology which signifies a closed positionality?

The closed, sententious character of the discourse, according to Bhabha, is formed fundamentally by a signified-signifier continuum, which needs to be disrupted if a temporary space of relative autonomy is to be effected. This question

⁴⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1994).

⁵¹ Zygmunt Bauman, 'Sociology After the Holocaust', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 39 (1988), pp. 469–97.

⁵² Homi K. Bhabha, 'Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt', in Lawrence Grossberg, Carry Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (eds), *Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 56–68; Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, ch. 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 183–4.

of relative autonomy, or of agency, in excess of time and space is obviously one that defines critical social theory generally. One recent, and equally inventive, example in addressing the issue is formed by Negri's post-*Empire* musings on time as *kairòs*, the instant, as an open and fundamentally multiple temporality that may exceed the space of total subsumption under capitalism, yielding in turn to sites of relative autonomy for a possible reversal.⁵⁴ The quest by Negri centred on multiple temporality appears to be one in Bhabha's venture based on sign, which, in its ordinary flow, ensures stability and, with it, conformity to the subsumed space. Time-lag, he introduces, aims therefore to form a 'caesura', a break, an instability in the flow of meaning by allowing a moment of delay between the signifier and the signified. Time-lag as such constitutes a temporary volatility of meaning in relation to the sign, enabling in turn a possible catachrestic moment. It may be important to notice that what is aimed here is to achieve a mere 'delay', rather than a final and metaphysical evasion of the sententious nature of language, which is not tenable. This ephemeral delay or discontinuity, Bhabha hopes, may have the capacity to engender a temporary space of relative autonomy, from which one can enunciate non-sententious, differential politics.

The delay sought by Bhabha may be argued to be starkly evident in his own deliberately impenetrable style of writing, which has gained him some notoriety. This non-flowing style, reminiscent of an Adornoesque resistance to 'culture industry', the totally subsumed order of culture under capitalism,⁵⁵ can be constructed as an attempt at delayed communicability which is intrinsically sententious. Language is intrinsically sententious because, as Wittgenstein would comment, language negates autonomy, what he would call 'privacy'. A vivid example of non-sententious delay provided by Bhabha, offering a temporary site of autonomy, is '[...] Fanon's famous caesura: "The Black man is not. Any more than the White Man". In this non-sententious, ungrammatical break, where the cut of the sign is the dereliction of semantic and symbolic synchrony, there opens up the site of another discourse [...]'.⁵⁶ Time-lag, in this view, may have the capacity to enable what is in effect a schizoid, split, disunited reading of the sign, with its rich, unbound differentiations and multiplicity, suspending the ordinary, trapped signifier-signified exchange, and leading, in the words of Fredric Jameson, to 'a signifier that has lost its signified'.⁵⁷

The strategy, then, is clear. A site for a catachrestic reversal may be possible via a caesura to be introduced between the sign and the symbol, signifier and signified, in relation to each of the markers of the nation-state currently in use in the process of European integration. This site of instability and displacement, uncontaminated by the persistent ideology of the nation-state,⁵⁸ may be used to articulate content informed by the mimicry of the lost other. In other words, substance that exceeds the mainstream modernity embodied in an instrumental

⁵⁴ Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution*, trans. Matteo Mandarini (New York: Continuum, 2003), pp. 139–261.

⁵⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

⁵⁶ Bhabha, 'Postcolonial Authority', p. 59; bracketed reference to Fanon omitted.

⁵⁷ Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), p. 120. See, for Bhabha on Jameson's 'postmodern schizo-fragmentation', *Location of Culture*, ch. 11.

⁵⁸ Stanley Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation State and the Case of Western Europe', *Daedalus*, 95 (1966), pp. 862–915.

concept of reason may be enabled by the standard semblance or spoof of integration which treats the savagery of World War II as an inspiration. This ‘absent’ substance, which is care and concern for the other, and which invites a radical questioning of sense and purpose in the context of integration, is not anything of the fabric of a timeless essence (*ousia*) motivated by an assumption of transcendence or identity, but it is mundane, worldly and differentiated. It is through this substance provided by a profoundly new and dynamic interest in alterity that the sign, disassociated from its content, acquires new meaning. That is, the lost and the faceless – that which only exists as an instrument of justification for European identity in the discourse of integration – may at last serve to fill in the space of relative autonomy created in relation to each and every one of the insignia of the nation-state, borrowed by the integrated Europe, as these insignia are subjected one by one to a ‘lagging’ and are disjointed from their respective symbols. These symbols seem to function presently to contribute simply to an emergent European nationalism, including the kind advocated by Habermas, which effectively reproduces the established visions of national space, culture and history, complete with practices of inclusion and exclusion motivated by an instrumental rationality.